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Tampa Bay History Essay Contest

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FROM THE EDITORS

War and preparation for war has occupied Americans for much of their history. Florida did not avoid the battles or fear of attack that Americans experienced periodically in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeed, Florida’s location, relative isolation and long coastline made it a special concern for military planners. Moreover, Floridians could not escape the effects of wars fought elsewhere.

In this issue of *Tampa Bay History* the articles by co-winners of the 1989 Essay Contest examine the impact of war and preparation for war in the Tampa Bay area. The lead article by Alicia Addeo and Bart Moore, "From Crossbows to Bombers," traces the military history of Mullet Key, the Pinellas County site of Fort DeSoto. This fascinating study shows the ways in which the isolated island at the mouth of Tampa Bay figured in national and international conflicts from the arrival of Spanish explorers in the sixteenth century to World War II. Another war is the subject of Lisa Tignor’s prize-winning article about "La Colonia Latina: The Response of Tampa's Immigrant Community to the Spanish Civil War." The conflict that tore Spain apart in the 1930s had repercussions in Tampa’s Latin community, which raised funds for the Spanish Republic and campaigned for U.S. intervention in the struggle.

War also figures in the photo essay, "Musical Traditions in Florida," by Kent Kaster. In wartime, as in other periods of stress, Americans used music both to rally the public and to escape the tensions of everyday life. The photo essay shows that music often served a social function and frequently reflected political and technological trends.

Finally, an intriguing document records an 1860 expedition down the Peace River. As Canter Brown, Jr., makes clear in his editorial comments about the journey, this expedition by seven men was sandwiched between two wars that shattered the calm of Florida’s last frontier. The first, resulting in the defeat of local Indians in the Third Seminole War of 1855-58, opened the Peace River valley to settlement by whites. It also made possible the 1860 expedition, which is described in detail by one of the participants who could not have known that an impending civil war would delay further development of the area.

The editors take this opportunity to express their appreciation to all subscribers, especially those listed on the facing page who have made special contributions to *Tampa Bay History*.

CORRECTION: In the last issue, the editors incorrectly identified a photograph in the article "The Building Boom in St. Petersburg." The last photograph on page 33 shows the Snell Building, not the St. Petersburg Times Building.
CROSSTROWS TO BOMBERS: THE MILITARY HISTORY OF MULLET KEY
by Alicia Addeo and Bart Moore

The rustic campgrounds and beaches of today’s Fort DeSoto Park belie a priceless legacy in southern Pinellas County. According to legend, the first European act of war in Florida occurred on Mullet Key, the W-shaped island on which the fort now stands. In 1513, Juan Ponce de Leon supposedly beached his ship there to scrape off barnacles and pump the bilges. While preparing to continue his pursuit for gold and “the Fountain of Youth,” his expedition withstood an attack by Timucuan Indians. The crew’s crossbows and cannons repulsed the attackers, but one soldier was killed. The story eulogizes that nameless Spaniard as the first European battle casualty in North America and depicts the first use of artillery in the Tampa Bay area. The legend less credibly cites Mullet Key as the locale where Ponce de Leon returned in 1521, to start a settlement and seek revenge on the Indians. Scholars do agree, however, that somewhere on the west Florida coast an arrow prematurely ended Ponce de Leon’s life – an ironic fate for one seeking eternal youth. Equal controversy shrouds Hernando DeSoto, noted for his alleged landfall in Tampa Bay and brief sojourn on Mullet Key during 1539. Areas from Apalachicola to Sanibel Island vie for the honor of claiming DeSoto’s beachhead.¹

Considering its location near the mouth of Tampa Bay, the verdant island of Mullet Key was long regarded as a strategic point for coastal defense. With little doubt, a succession of conquistadores, pirates and colonial explorers sighted Mullet Key and perhaps made unrecorded landings. As permanent settlements were established along Tampa Bay and on the Pinellas peninsula during the nineteenth century, the need arose to protect local inhabitants from foreign navies which expanded their size and their range of maneuvers.²

Three centuries after Spanish caravels probed Florida’s coastline, another small ship, the schooner Phoenix, sailed into Tampa Bay. On board, four U.S. Army engineers visually surveyed Mullet Key and nearby Egmont Key. They may have rowed ashore for further scrutiny. The board of engineers on this 1849 coastal survey of Florida included Brevet Colonel Robert E. Lee, who served as recording officer. In his report to his superior, General Joseph G. Totten, Colonel Lee recommended both the construction of fortifications at Egmont Key and the preservation of other keys in the mouth of Tampa Bay for additional study as possible sites for defense works. His document constituted the first formal recognition of Mullet Key’s strategic importance. General Totten, the Army’s Chief Engineer, had helped start a program of U.S. coastal fortifications which dated back to 1817. Once Florida was admitted to the Union in 1845, defense of its coast became Totten’s responsibility. On March 23, 1849, a few weeks after Lee’s observations, an executive order reserved Mullet Key for military purposes, thereby preventing its sale for private development. The government did not, however, take steps to fortify the keys at the mouth of Tampa Bay even after the advent of the Civil War.³

A small detachment of Confederate troops occupied Egmont and Mullet Keys after hostilities commenced, but they soon withdrew to concentrate their strength in Tampa. Union forces controlled the islands as early as July 15, 1861. The Confederates removed equipment essential to the operation of the Egmont Key lighthouse, but its tower served as an observation point for
Map by William M. Murray and Miles Pennington.
the Union blockading fleet. Ships in and out of Tampa Bay had to sail through narrow channels near Egmont and Mullet Key, and several would-be blockade runners were captured in the attempt. Northern sympathizers also found a haven in the keys, under the guns of blockading union vessels. In February 1862 troops from the federal encampments attacked the homestead of Abel Miranda, near current southeast St. Petersburg. This, the only military engagement in Pinellas County during the Civil War, resulted in a one-sided battle. Miranda, an ardent secessionist and a pioneer to the area, suffered the destruction or confiscation of his property by the Union invaders, and he soon left the region. Miranda did not return until the war ended. In 1864, the U.S.S. Sunflower, a blockade vessel stationed in Egmont Channel, aided an expedition from Key West under Brigadier General Daniel P. Woodbury. Together, they attacked and occupied Tampa on May 6 and 7, 1864. After failing to locate all the Egmont lighthouse equipment, the northern troops withdrew from Tampa.

During Reconstruction, the Board of Engineers for Fortifications advocated the continued reservation of Mullet Key. The island was officially surveyed in January 1876. An executive order assured permanent reservation of the keys in November 1882.

An influx of new Pinellas residents in the 1880s encouraged Peter Demens, co-founder of St. Petersburg, to seek a seaside terminal for his Orange Belt Line Railroad. He and Thomas Hoge, the Orange Line representative, planned a bridge to Mullet Key for that purpose. The ninety-foot Egmont Channel, they concluded, could accommodate civilian passenger ships arriving at the terminal. In 1885 Hoge wrote Secretary of War William C. Endicott, requesting a railroad right-of-way, or the transfer of Mullet Key to the Department of the Interior for sale. However, Endicott reiterated the defense status of Mullet Key, and he pointed out that Congress alone had-authority to grant the desired right-of-way.

The same year, 1885, Endicott headed a special board of Army, Navy and civilian personnel assembled by President Grover Cleveland. The board was to review the entire coastal defense situation and suggest revisions based upon newer weapons and fortification design. Endicott’s studies led to extensive work on new coastal fortifications and the up-dating of old ones, around 1890.

Forts of pre-Civil War days were usually constructed with vertical brick or stone walls and armed with smooth-bore, cast-iron, muzzle-loading cannons. Fort Sumter adhered to this design. Direct fire from rifled artillery heralded the obsolescence of such architecture and weapons. Fort Sumter suffered severe damage later in the Civil War from rifled bombardment. Other forts, though not destroyed in combat, fell into disrepair thereafter. General Totten’s death in 1864 curtailed efforts to maintain the old fortifications. The Endicott Board called for a system of modern fortifications at an eventual expenditure of over $126,000,000.

The new fortifications reflected late nineteenth changes in weaponry. By the 1890s primary artillery pieces were steel, rifled, breechloading weapons that fired cylindrical projectiles. In the case of mortars, the method of loading and high-trajectory aim enabled gun crews to remain behind thick walls unexposed to enemy gunfire. Coastal fortifications of this period usually made a low profile on the shoreline. The structures were built of concrete, sometimes reinforced by a barrier of sand with battery walls up to twenty feet thick.
Construction of the Mullet Key batteries did not begin until 1898, prodded by the increased likelihood of war with Spain. Temporary batteries were erected on the southwest corner of the island even before the declaration of war in April. Lt. Colonel W.H.H. Benyaurd, the district engineer, received orders on June 7 to plan permanent batteries. On July 25, 1898, Benyaurd submitted plans from his headquarters in St. Augustine. He chose the general site of the temporary batteries, facing the Gulf of Mexico, just south of due west, in order to guard the shipping channel. Benyaurd estimated the batteries’ total cost at $200,000. The Chief of Engineers in Washington amended and approved Benyaurd’s plans on July 30, 1898, appropriating $150,000 for construction.¹¹

Half a century after Lee’s proposals, the strategic potential of Mullet Key became a reality. The location was selected as a site for a class of armament comprising 12-inch mortars, designed to be fired simultaneously in a battery. The principle behind this concentration of fire entailed throwing large projectiles in high arcs, for a vertical descent on the thin armor of ships’ decks, in a shotgun-type pattern.¹²

Between November 1898 and March 1899 the battery site was cleared and several preliminary wooden structures built. The construction plant, a 275-foot wharf, stables, workmen’s quarters, mess balls and an office were finished during this time. A small railway ran between the wharf and construction plant. Although the Spanish-American War had ended in December 1898, work
continued. However, delays in receipt of stone and cement, shipped by sail from New York and
New Jersey, postponed the completion of mortar emplacement and magazines until the early
months of 1900. With an additional $5,000 allotment, construction proceeded. Workmen cut
parapets, completed the sandfill and installed mortar carriages, observing stations, access stairs
and electrical equipment. The battery was completed on May 10, 1900. Captain Thomas H. Rees,
the engineering officer in charge of construction, reported a surplus balance of $16.73 from the
$155,000 allotment.13

The 613 acres on which the military installation stood was named Fort DeSoto, by order of the
War Department, on April 4, 1900. By venerating the young conquistador who died while
exploring the southeastern United States, the naming of the fort celebrated his supposed landfall
in Tampa Bay. The day before the battery’s completion Fort DeSoto officially became a sub-post
of Fort Dade, a larger post which had been developed on Egmont Key.14

Fort DeSoto’s eight mortars, manufactured at the Watervliet Arsenal in West Troy, New York,
were mounted on their carriages between May and August 1902. However, military red tape
delayed their trial firing over a year after their installation. Technicians used that time to convert
the unassembled breech locks from the lanyard-activated percussion firing mechanisms to newer
electric devices. The mortars were test fired on November 19 and 20, 1903, five years after the fort’s foundations were laid. The mortar emplacement was officially designated as Battery Laidley, in honor of Colonel Theodore T.S. Laidley, who had served in the Mexican and Civil Wars and died in Florida.¹⁵

The eight mortars, most powerful of the fort’s armament, were model M1890. Like most large ordnance of the period, they were rifled and breech-loading. However, the 12-inch M1890 was the first American mortar molded entirely of steel, with no cast-iron core. In case of a power failure, the M1903 electric-firing mechanism could be converted back to a lanyard-activated primer. Whether percussion or electric, a safety device prevented activation of the firing mechanism until the breech was securely locked and the weapon elevated to at least 45 degrees. The highest obtainable trajectory was 70 degrees. The mortar could lob a shell about seven miles. The mortar’s carriage, model 1896M, limited the recoil by means of two hydraulic piston-operated recoil cylinders and large counter-recoil springs in the mortar pit. The circular steel base plate could revolve to aim the mortar in any direction.¹⁶

Despite electric detonation and safety features, the aiming and loading of the mortars was still done manually. Trajectory and direction were set by handwheel. The projectile, weighing either 700 or 1,046 pounds, was retrieved from the shot room, round-per-round, on a hand-operated shot truck, designed to the precise level necessary to insert the shell at the mortar’s horizontal loading position. Two soldiers delivered the 48-to-65 pound powder charges, sealed in silk bags, to the gun crew on a litter-like tray. Although some other weapons of the early 1900s were loaded by an electric ram, the twelve-man crew of the M1890 used muscle, like artillerymen of previous centuries, to load the round.¹⁷

With additional funds, another battery was completed in early 1902. It was designated Battery Bigelow, in honor of First Lieutenant Aaron Bigelow, killed in the War of 1812. Two three-inch Driggs-Seabury rapid-fire guns were mounted about a year after Battery Bigelow’s construction, and they were test fired with the mortars. Designed for close range defense against anti-torpedo boats, the Driggs-Seabury Model of 1898 rested on a smaller, elevated Barbette Carriage, with a steel shield to protect the crew. The carriage allowed an elevation of 12 degrees. The gun could hit a target with a fifteen-pound projectile four and half miles away. Unlike the 12-inch mortars, the propelling charge of the Driggs-Seabury was sealed in a metal casing, the primer being activated by a firing pin. The three-inch weapon operated in a manner similar to a modern rifle or pistol.¹⁸

Artillery spotters in towers at opposite ends of the reservation directed the firing. They relayed, by visual signals (and later by telephone), readings to the relocation room; then the information was transmitted to the data booths just behind the gun pits. The pertinent data were interpreted there and posted to the mortar crews by slate boards. A floating target was pulled by a small ship during practice firings at Fort DeSoto.¹⁹

Construction of post buildings progressed from 1900 to 1906. Quarters for three married officers, two non-commissioned staff officers, one hospital steward and 120 men were completed first. The hospital was capable of treating six in-patients; the mess hall and bake house, once completed, served the entire garrison at one time. An administration building provided office
space for one officer and two clerical personnel. The guardhouse could accommodate six prisoners. Additional facilities built during this period included a woodshed (all buildings were heated by stoves or fireplaces) and an oil house to supply fuel for the mineral oil lamps. A storehouse served the commissary and quartermaster. The blacksmith and carpenter shared one workshop, and a stable sheltered eight animals and several wagons. In 1903, a private company established a small ice house on the reservation. All buildings outside the battery were wood frame with slate roofs. A pump house installed over an artesian well provided water for bathing and flushing the sewer system into the gulf or bay, while cypress cisterns, with a total capacity of nearly 80,000 gallons, collected rainwater from the roofs for drinking. Prior to completion of these systems in 1902, a water shortage postponed the quartering of a full garrison. In late 1901, only one officer in command of forty-three men manned the complex. The first full garrison, comprising the 1st Company, Coast Artillery (formerly Company A, 1st Artillery) became effective on February 5, 1902. From April 18, 1907, until June 8, 1910, the 39th company of the same regiment manned the fort.

As with most isolated army posts, Fort DeSoto was not a preferred duty assignment. Only one boat a day served the post, and there were no telephones to the mainland. Since the closest...
sizable town, Tampa, was over thirty nautical miles away, the lack of recreational pursuits intensified boredom for the off-duty artillerymen. Egmont Key’s Fort Dade, when completed, had a movie theater, tennis court, baseball diamond, gymnasium and bowling alley. No records indicate any such diversions at Fort DeSoto, but in 1904 an inspecting general recommended the sale of beer and wine at the fort to enhance morale.

Besides its unique drawbacks, Fort DeSoto presented its personnel with the usual discomforts associated with a southern climate. The humid Florida summers posed a threat of sunstroke and dehydration to soldiers pursuing their duties. Until the early 1900s uniforms were made of flannel, kersey or other woolen fabrics, deviating very little from thick Civil War clothing. During summer drills, the Fort DeSoto garrison endured untold misery as a result of wearing heavy uniforms in the stifling heat. Mosquitoes also bred in the sector of the island near the fort. Various officers at the post addressed the problem, but the biting insects prevailed, in spite of screens and mosquito nets (then called mosquito bars). The insects rendered an already undesirable outpost intolerable in warmer weather and ruined the charm of Mullet Key’s beaches which provide such excellent recreation today.\footnote{22}
Although isolation and boredom might have undermined discipline at Fort DeSoto, the post’s very isolation discouraged absence without leave and prevented undisciplined soldiers from escaping punishment. However, it also discouraged re-enlistments. All the problems notwithstanding, the command at Fort DeSoto was described as well-instructed and well-disciplined.  

Between 1904 and 1910, the fort changed classification several times. First it became independent of Fort Dade, while remaining under joint state and federal jurisdiction. The governor of Florida soon ceded sole authority to the U.S. government. Fort DeSoto attained its highest responsibility as temporary headquarters for three years for the Artillery District of Tampa, while construction was underway at Fort Dade, but upon completion Fort DeSoto reverted to a sub-post of Fort Dade on June 2, 1910.

Florida militiamen trained with the fort's coastal artillery in three joint maneuvers on the island. In theory, the militia was to reinforce the batteries during an attack. Part of the 1st and 2nd Infantry, Florida State Troops, participated in ten-day war games at the fort during October 1907 and May 1908. The fort's original garrison, the 1st Company, Coast Artillery, substituted for the state troops in a twelve-day maneuver in October 1909. The 1st Company at that time was part of the Florida National Guard.

Fort DeSoto reached its zenith during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. Roosevelt acknowledged the importance of coastal fortifications, as part of his “big stick” philosophy. In 1905 he assigned a board under Secretary of War William Howard Taft to update the programs of the Endicott Board. The Taft Board did not suggest any major changes for Fort DeSoto, but it confirmed the fort’s role in coastal defense.
Improved ships’ weaponry and a change in administration foretold the decline of Fort DeSoto. The reservation was inactivated when it returned to its sub-post status on June 2, 1910. Six days later, the 39th company shipped out for re-assignment at Fort Morgan, Alabama. Caretaking detachments from Fort Dade occupied the fort until 1914. The only personnel at Fort DeSoto that year were a sergeant and a Department of Agriculture game warden.\textsuperscript{27}

With the approach of American involvement in World War I, another caretaking detachment was assigned to the fort. The detail reached a maximum of two officers and twenty-two enlisted men in October 1917. Earlier that year, the detachment disassembled four of the mortars for shipment to Fort Rosecrans, California.\textsuperscript{28}

During the “War to End All Wars,” new battleships with improved aiming techniques and higher trajectory weapons steamed into combat. Their guns’ range surpassed that of the coastal armament in most of the American coastline fortifications. Their higher firing angle voided the protection of concrete walls and hidden gun crews. The concept of protecting the coastline during this era shifted to railroad artillery, dispatched to different areas as needed. As a result, Fort Dade was inactivated in 1921, and on May 25, 1923, both Tampa Bay forts were abandoned except for one caretaker each. Neither fort had ever fired a shot at any foe.\textsuperscript{29}
The period between world wars witnessed the gradual deterioration of Fort DeSoto’s batteries and buildings. Hurricanes wrought significant damage to the post buildings in 1921, 1926 and 1935. By October 1932 Battery Bigelow had collapsed because gulfside waves had eroded its foundations. Some inspecting officers even suggested that the batteries be razed. Fortunately, this recommendation never became official.

Fort DeSoto was briefly up for sale. In 1926, Congress authorized the Secretary of War to sell surplus military reservations, but no negotiable transaction materialized for either Fort DeSoto or Fort Dade. Both were withdrawn from sale in 1929 and reserved for future defense purposes. From 1929 through 1930, the rusting mortars and carriages were refurbished by a detachment from the Pensacola Harbor Defense. They pumped out the flooded mortar pits and placed all moveable parts in storage.

During the 1930s much of Mullet Key passed temporarily into the hands of civilian agencies. In 1938, the War Department transferred the greater part of Mullet Key to the Department of Agriculture for use as a wild bird refuge. Twenty-seven acres, site of a former quarantine station, were purchased by the Pinellas County Board of Commissioners. In 1939, due to departmental changes, the Department of the Interior assumed control of the bird refuge.

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 revived military interest in Fort DeSoto as neutral America prepared for possible involvement in the fighting. The War Department negotiated the return of the entire island for anticipated use as a sub-post, this time allied to the new air base at Tampa’s MacDill Field. Fort DeSoto was activated with MacDill on April 16, 1941. A token force camped on the island to maintain a bombing range and to improvise an auxiliary landing strip.

Mullet Key found itself in the shadows of another type of fortress during the war years. The B-17 bomber, the famous “flying fortress,” became a common sight in the skies of Tampa Bay. Both Captain Paul W. Tibbets and Second Lieutenant Thomas W. Ferebee, who later flew the B-29 which dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, trained on B-17’s that practiced “bombing” Mullet Key with “bombs” that contained sand in February 1942. Wartime production later enabled rookie bomber crews to use armed ordinance in their practice runs over the Mullet Key Bombing Range. Several unexploded bombs were discovered years later on Bonnie Fortune Key, at the eastern sector of Fort DeSoto Park.

The introduction of nuclear weapons in 1945 changed the nature of warfare forever. Harbor forts, an essential part of U.S. defense policy since 1794, had no military role in the cold war years. By 1948 the United States government had abandoned coastal fortifications as a defense alternative, and most of the guns were scrapped by the following year. Fate intervened on Fort DeSoto’s behalf. In 1948 with no further need for a bombing range in Tampa Bay, Congress approved the sale of Mullet Key to Pinellas County. The transaction, completed on August 11, was celebrated with formal ceremonies on September 8, 1948.

The establishment of a museum at Fort DeSoto Park seemed a viable possibility in 1956. Backed by the St. Petersburg Chamber of Commerce, Spanish-American War veterans from a local Florida encampment passed a resolution to use the rooms at Battery Laidley for that
Noted St. Petersburg historian Walter P. Fuller endorsed the project, and he offered the aid of the St. Petersburg Historical Society to assist in displaying Fort DeSoto and Spanish-American War memorabilia. In October 1957, the Pinellas County Park Authority consulted architects and engineers and drew up plans for a separate museum building. In spite of preliminary approval and on-going promotion by columnists and county employees, the museum has not as yet been established. However, in 1977 the Bureau of Historic Preservation placed Fort DeSoto on the National Register of Historical Places.35

Today Battery Laidley and the ruins of Battery Bigelow display the only evidence of Mullet Key’s martial heritage. The four remaining 12-inch mortars are the only surviving M1890’s in North America. They miraculously escaped the dismantling of 1917 and the large scale scrapping program in 1949. The only other known models are in the Philippines.36 Two refurbished 6-inch guns seem to guard the grounds facing the battery. The quick-firing Armstrong guns were salvaged from Fort Dade’s Battery Burchsted in 1980, after almost sixty years of neglect. Refurbished over a two-year period, they were installed near Battery Laidley on March 19, 1982. The Armstrong, like the Driggs-Seabury, rested on a shielded Barbette carriage allowing an elevation of 16 degrees. It detonated with a firing pin on a metal-cased powder charge; however, like the mortars, the breech-lock contained an interchangeable percussion and

Two 12-inch mortars as they appear today at Fort DeSoto.

Photograph by Alicia Addeo.
electric-firing mechanism. The guns, manufactured around 1898 by the W.B. Armstrong Company in England, were each capable of launching a 106-pound projectile about nine miles.  

A reminder of Fort DeSoto’s contribution to America’s role in world War II came to light in 1968, and again in 1980 and 1988, when park employees discovered live bombs. Rangers evacuated the park, and the bombs were detonated by explosives experts.

As in the past, the fate of Mullet Key today remains linked to outside developments, especially those in the Tampa Bay area. The popularity of Fort DeSoto Park required the building of urban structures, such as bridges, causeways, parking lots and concession stands. However, as a Pinellas County park, Mullet Key should be safe from the encroaching condominium craze on nearby keys. Environmental factors, including pollution, beach erosion and killing frosts, have taken their toll, but Battery Laidley appears secure from advancing tides and tempests which destroyed other post buildings.
Fort DeSoto still awaits its long-delayed museum. Nevertheless, the fort remains a silent reminder of the military past of Mullet Key. From the time when Spanish explorers encountered Timucuan Indians in the sixteenth century to the bombing of the key by B-17 crews during World War II, Mullet Key has served as an arena and testing ground for various forms of combat from crossbows to bombers.


7 Rita Slaght Gould, Pioneer St. Petersburg (St. Petersburg: Page Creations, 1987), 26; William C. Endicott to Thomas G. Hoge, October 24, 1885 (Land Papers, Florida, Brooke and Tampa Bay), RG 77, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

8 Lewis, Seacoast Fortifications of the United States, 77.

9 Ibid., 3-9, 77.

10 Ibid., 79.


12 Lewis, Seacoast Fortifications of the United States, 79.


14 Quartermaster General’s Office, Military Posts and Reservations, 115.


16 War Department, “Technical Manual No. 9-456: 12-Inch Seacoast Material” (Washington, October 17, 1942), 4-6, 24, 28-29.

17 Lewis, Seacoast Fortifications of the United States, 79.

19 Dick Bothwell, “From Fort to Port,” *St. Petersburg Times*, November 2, 1975.

20 War Department, *Military Posts and Reservations*, 115-16.


23 Inspection Report, Major General Adna R. Chaffee, April 16, 1903 (Document File), RG 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.


25 Ibid., 24

26 War Department, General Orders No. 101, June 2, 1910 (Document File) RG 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C.


28 Post return, Fort Dade, 1917-18 (Returns, Coastal Defenses of Tampa, Fort Dade, Florida, 1921-23), RG 98, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

29 Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications of the United States*, 101; 7th Ind. to Hq. 4th C.A.Ag602 (23-26).


31 *United States Military Reservations, National Cemeteries, and Military Parks, Title, Jurisdiction, Etc.*


33 Interview with Chris Karas (Lieutenant Colonel, USAF, retired), July 14, 1989; *St. Petersburg Times*, February 18, 1988.

34 Lewis, *Seacoast Fortifications of the United States*, 125; Public Law 666, June 17,1948 (BLM Miscellaneous File No. 33623), RG 49, National Archives, Washington, D.C.


36 Phil Melfi (Curator, Harbor Defense Museum, Brooklyn, New York) to Alicia Addeo, February 23, 1989. (In possession of author.)

37 Hines and Ward, *The Service of Coast Artillery*.

LA COLONIA LATINA: THE RESPONSE OF TAMPA’S IMMIGRANT COMMUNITY TO THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR
By Lisa Tignor

In 1936 civil war erupted in Spain. On July 18, 1936, General Francisco Franco’s forces, supplemented with Moorish recruits and legionnaires, launched an attack on southern Spain. These self-proclaimed Nationalists, with the support of the Spanish Catholic hierarchy, were determined to restore authoritarian rule by destroying the Republic. Earlier in the year, the Spanish people had elected a government under the leadership of the Popular Front, a coalition of various leftist organizations, parties and unions. When the civil war began, each side thought it would end quickly. Nationalists believed they had the edge because of their military superiority, bolstered by aid from Germany and Italy. The Republicans expected to triumph because they had the support of the people, and as defenders of the legitimate government of Spain, they expected to receive assistance from other democracies. However, by January 1937, after five months of fighting, it was clear that the civil war would be a protracted struggle. The war eventually turned in favor of the Nationalists, but not until the spring of 1938 did it become certain that Franco would succeed. Until then, partisans of both sides had retained hope of ultimate victory.

Although the United States remained officially neutral during the Spanish Civil War, American public opinion divided over the issue. According to one observer, most Americans “had no opinion, they did not know, they did not care.”1 A majority of citizens in Tampa, Florida, undoubtedly shared this apathy with the rest of the United States, but Tampa’s Latin community decidedly did not. Local Latins reacted immediately to the Spanish Civil War, which was not entirely unexpected by people who had closely followed recent developments in Spain.

Tampa’s Latins, residing primarily in Ybor City and West Tampa, comprised some 30,000 to 40,000 of the city's 100,000 residents. Cubans, Spaniards and Italians had created a relatively homogeneous ethnic enclave in Ybor City and West Tampa. Despite some cultural differences, Latin immigrants shared common craft traditions, mutual aid activities and a commitment to labor organization. As skilled cigar makers with a strong sense of their rights as workers, they had collectively confronted employers in a series of strikes dating back to 1887, shortly after the first cigar manufacturers opened factories in Tampa. Outside the workplace, local Latins had also historically survived hardships by joining together and helping one another. For instance, the various ethnic groups had organized mutual aid societies which provided medical care at low cost. Over the years, intermarriage among once distinct émigré groups strengthened these bonds.2

The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War heightened longstanding differences between Tampa’s immigrant community and the native-born Anglo-Americans who dominated the city. For example, religion separated Anglo and Latin Tampans in an unusual way as compared to other American communities. Like the majority of Americans, Anglo Tampans typically attended Protestant churches. While many Latins considered themselves nominally Catholic, a strong anti-clerical feeling dominated their actual behavior. Indeed, the majority of the community did
This poster called for “Aid to the families of the fighters of the North (in) Asturias,” a region in Spain that sent many immigrants to Tampa.

Photograph from *The Palette and the Flame* by John Tisa.
not adhere to the basic sacraments of baptism, marriage and burial with the church. Italians, Spaniards and Cubans in Tampa derived some of their anti-clericism from radical ideologies, and some from personal experiences. But whatever the source of this attitude, the anti-Catholicism of Tampa Latins mirrored the sentiments of Spanish Republicans. Moreover, many Tampa immigrants had been born in Spain, and they and their children still had relatives there. Other Tampa Latins, besides those with personal ties to Spain, generally rallied to the cause of the Republican government during the Spanish Civil War. This included Italians living in Tampa. Elsewhere in the United States, Italian-American communities often supported Benito Mussolini who sided with Franco’s forces, but according to one contemporary observer, Tampa’s Italians demonstrated the opposite sentiment by booing newsreels of Il Duce.

Victoriano Manteiga provided a voice for Tampa Latins, and he became another unifying force in the community during the Spanish Civil War. Once a reader in the cigar factories, Manteiga had founded La Gaceta, a local Spanish-language daily newspaper, in 1922. He established a reputation as an ardent defender of cigar workers and their causes, especially unionization, which leading Tampa Anglos usually opposed. In 1936 Manteiga helped organize and manage many of the fund raising efforts for the Spanish Republic. His most important role, however, may have been in providing an alternative source of information about the civil war. Latin workers wanted sources they could trust, and leading English-language newspapers, such as the Tampa Tribune, had long presented a decidedly anti-immigrant view of labor struggles and vigilante activities directed at local Latins.

The Tampa Tribune refused to take sides in the Spanish Civil War, but it lacked sensitivity to the Latin community’s emotional response to the civil war. Although the Tribune carefully reported the numerous donations made by Latins to the Republican cause, its editorials frequently showed a bias that offended Latins. For example, it simplistically labelled the Republicans as reds and communists. Moreover, on October 2, 1936, the paper asserted that each side in the Spanish Civil War was equally guilty of excesses. Just a few weeks later the Tribune stated in an editorial, entitled “Savagery in Spain,” that “the Spaniards are courageous, cruel, and proud.” These opinions infuriated Victoriano Manteiga who responded in his own column, calling the Tribune editor not only discourteous to the Latins who helped build Tampa, but naive about the situation in Spain.

In his editorial column Manteiga criticized the generally poor quality of the press coverage of the war by the international wire services, especially the Associated Press, which issued inaccurate or false reports. A similar complaint came from the U.S. ambassador to Spain, Claude G. Bowers, who wrote to President Roosevelt that “nine tenths of the press reports are false. I have never seen, not even during the World War such persistent and outrageous propaganda.” In November 1936 Mangeiga specifically accused his colleagues at the Tampa Tribune, of falsely reporting the surrender of Madrid based on AP information.

Because of their involvement in national and international labor politics, Tampa’s Spaniards, Cubans and Italians had a world view that extended well beyond the scope of most Anglos. Whether they intended to move back to Cuba or Spain or remain in this country, Latins wanted news of events affecting their families and relatives at home. La Gaceta prominently featured news about Latin America and the Caribbean region. Indeed, readers looked southward, sharing
cultural ties with Latin Americans which were more significant than any links with their North American neighbors. They wanted information about Latin Americans who were just as passionate about the war, but with some favoring the Nationalists and others the Republicans. Manteiga applauded when Mexico supplied the Spanish Republic with war materiel.\textsuperscript{10} The local Latin community hoped that the United States would follow Mexico’s example and side with the Republic.

Of all Latin American countries, Cuba and its response to the Spanish Civil War most interested Tampéños. \textit{La Gaceta} had obtained some of its information about Spain via short wave radio from Cuba, but it soon reported that the Cuban government was censoring press and radio reports favorable to the Republicans.\textsuperscript{11} In 1936 Cuba had not officially endorsed either side in the civil war, and the United States was pressuring for Cuban neutrality while Spain sought support for its government. Evidence suggests that Cuban President Fulgencio Batista may have considered aligning Cuba with Franco and the Nationalists in order to break the hegemony of the United States, but Cuba remained neutral until 1938 when it finally supported the Republican government.\textsuperscript{12}

Unlike Latin Americans and Tampa Latins, most North Americans did not take sides in the Spanish conflict during 1936. They were concerned with economic problems and upcoming national elections, not international events. Some thought the Republican left in Spain would become merely a pawn of the Soviet Union. Clearly, the public mood in the rest of the United States was isolationist, as demonstrated by the neutrality legislation passed by Congress from 1935 to 1937.\textsuperscript{13}

The neutrality of the United States, in the face of German and Italian intervention on the side of Franco and the Nationalists, disillusioned Tampa’s Latin community. Victoriano Manteiga dismissed North American responses to the war as at best misguided and at worst dangerous to the future of the world. He asserted that U.S. neutrality helped the Nationalists and did not stop any fighting or killing. According to Manteiga, no one could be neutral; if one were neutral, one supported Fascists.\textsuperscript{14}

Soon after Franco and his troops had marched against the Spanish Republic in July 1936, the Latin community in Tampa organized to support the Republicans. Led by local labor activists and officials of their mutual aid societies, Tampa Latins created the Committee for the Defense
of the Spanish Popular Front (Comité de Defensa del Frente Popular Español) in early August 1936. The leaders sent a sub-committee to visit Raul Vega, a cigar manufacturer and president of the Ybor City Chamber of Commerce, to ask permission to collect funds in the Latin community's businesses, especially cigar factories. Vega replied that he would consider the matter.\textsuperscript{15} Within several days, \textit{La Gaceta} published the cigar manufacturers’ answer: the owners refused to permit collections in the factories because they wished to comply with U.S. neutrality.\textsuperscript{16} The community responded quickly and in force. The following evening one thousand residents assembled to hear leaders of the Committee for the Defense of the Popular Front, and they voted to collect funds in defiance of the owners. Manteiga observed that the owners who opposed the collections had to surrender to the will of the Latin community.\textsuperscript{17}

This initial opposition overcome, the defense committee in a week collected $2,000, which it sent to Spain.\textsuperscript{18} Jose Yglesias, a West Tampa native who lived in Ybor City at the time, later recalled: “Everybody gave ten percent of their pay for the Republic. It was wild. The total community was with Loyalist Spain. They used to send enormous amounts of things. It was totally organized.”\textsuperscript{19}

Despite the general indifference and occasional opposition of North Americans, the Latin community in Tampa sustained its effort to aid the Spanish Republic. The generous contributions to the Republic demonstrated the depth of Latin feelings. According to one contemporary observer, “Altogether the per-capita aid rendered by the cigar workers was greater than that of any other group in the United States. They sent nearly $200,000, two ambulances, tons of food and clothing, and six million cigarettes to war-torn Spain.”\textsuperscript{20} Victoriano Manteiga echoed this appraisal: “Tampa aids the cause of the legitimate government [of Spain] and this aid is comparatively greater than any other city in the nation.”\textsuperscript{21}

Fund raising for a common cause was familiar to the workers since they had regularly collected union dues and strike funds in the past. Volunteer collectors visited the cigar factories on pay day to collect what they could for the Spanish cause. Although it was an economic hardship, workers gave generously throughout the course of the war and took pride in their contributions. Every week \textit{La Gaceta} listed cigar factories in order of the total amount of their contributions. Another list named individual and small business contributors with their donations. Mutual aid societies of Ybor City and West Tampa supplemented the workers’ weekly contributions. The three major Latin clubs, Centro Español, Centro Asturiano and Círculo Cubano, offered their assistance. Centro Español declared in August 1936 that for the rest of the year, its fiestas would raise funds “for those who suffer and for the Spanish Republic!”\textsuperscript{22}

The Tampa defense committee participated in a loose network of volunteer groups working in behalf of the Spanish Republic. This network operated locally in Tampa, as well as regionally and nationally. In addition to working closely with the local cigar makers union, the Tampa committee cooperated with the Italian Antifascist Group in Ybor City. The committee’s leadership also corresponded with various organizations in other cities.\textsuperscript{23} For instance, Jacksonville cigar workers forwarded funds for the cause to Tampa.\textsuperscript{24} Similar organizations were active in New York City and Chicago, according to letters printed by the Tampa Committee in \textit{La Gaceta}.\textsuperscript{25}
Activities on behalf of the Spanish Republic coincided with increased union organizing in Tampa. The depression had been extremely hard on Latin workers, but in 1936 the cigar business began to recover. A trade magazine of manufacturers, *The Tobacco Leaf*, reported factories operating on a six-day week and production and employment levels reaching the highest point of the 1930s. However, wages lagged behind rising prices. Luisa Moreno, an organizer for the cigar makers union, complained that cigar workers could not get wage increases despite the improving economy. Manteiga agreed, quoting high prices for basic consumer commodities, such as ice, eggs and milk, and declaring that wages remained too low.

With employment expanding and the cost of living rising, the time seemed right to organize cigar workers again. The leaders of the Committee for the Defense of the Popular Front came from the ranks of union organizers, and they combined efforts to support the Spanish Republic with renewed attempts to increase union membership among the cigar workers. The annual convention of the American Federation of Labor (AFL) was scheduled to meet in Tampa in
November 1936, and this undoubtedly also helped raise union consciousness among Tampa cigar workers.

The visits of two prominent Spanish officials in late November 1936 heightened the community’s enthusiasm for Republican Spain and indicated the significance of the Latin community’s support for the Republican government. The Spanish ambassador to the U.S., Don Fernando de los Ríos, was feted by prominent Latin citizens for four days. During his stay he toured some cigar factories and enjoyed the hospitality of the centros. Isabel Palencia, a member of the Spanish parliament who toured the United States and Europe to promote the cause of the Republicans, arrived in Tampa near the end of the ambassador's stay, and both were greatly encouraged and moved by the response of the Latin community.

Ambassador de los Ríos and Isabel Palencia asked to speak to the AFL convention in Tampa, but the federation refused. Despite widespread sympathy for the Republic, a resolution urging AFL support for the Spanish Republic also failed. Victoriano Manteiga argued in La Gaceta that the AFL and its president, William Green, should be condemned for their failure to back Spain and acknowledge labor's support of the Republic.

Defenders of the Republic also encountered local resistance. One source of opposition was the cigar factory owners. During the fall of 1936, Jock Murray, a writer for Tampa Tribune and local correspondent for The Tobacco Leaf, described disinterest, neutrality and even opposition to the Spanish Republic among cigar factory owners. Manuel L. Pérez, a member of the executive committee of the Association of Cigar Manufacturers and Leaf Tobacco Dealers, wrote an article entitled “Views on the Tragedy of Spain.” He unequivocally declared his position on the war: “the present Spanish government is NOT a popular government representing the will of the people; it is a government of reds running wild with power.”

The resignation of the Spanish consul in Tampa, Paul Ubarri, surprised the Latin community and revealed another source of opposition to the Republic. Ubarri suddenly declared his support for Franco’s Nationalists and his desire to return to Spain after their anticipated capture of Madrid in November 1936. When they failed to do so, the Republican government announced that it could no longer support Ubarri and recalled him to Spain. The local community had welcomed Ubarri, and he had originally played a prominent role in the activities on behalf of the Republic. Manteiga expressed shock at Ubarri’s deceitful behavior. In response, Latins supported their own citizen, Gustavo Jimenez, as interim consul.

Further opposition arose in the Anglo community in Tampa. A public condemnation of the Latin community’s support for the Republic came from the Catholic pastor of Sacred Heart Church, the Reverend Felix J. Clarkson. According to reports in La Gaceta, Father Clarkson delivered a virulent attack from the pulpit and exhorted his congregation to “not give a penny of your money nor one word of support to to Loyalist government of Spain, or the government of Mexico, or the government of Russia, because they are communists and atheists to the bottom of their hearts. They are against God – Remember God First, Afterwards and Always.” Since most of the residents of Ybor City and West Tampa did not go to his church, it is unclear whom Father Clarkson wished to reach with his highly emotional message in support of General Franco. Perhaps he appealed to some of the families of the successful factory owners or leaders
A poster issued by Spain’s Republican government to rally support during the battle of Madrid.

Photograph from *The Palette and the Flame* by John Tisa.
in the Anglo community. His position certainly paralleled that of the Catholic hierarchy in Rome and North America.\textsuperscript{38} In any case, these attacks by factory owners, the Spanish consul and the Catholic Church had no demonstrable effect on the continuing ardor of the Latin community for the Republic.

During the first months of the Spanish Civil War, Latins in Tampa succeeded in raising a substantial amount of money to aid the Republic. However, they were unsuccessful in convincing others to support their cause. The \textit{Tampa Tribune} recorded amounts collected, meetings attended and dances held, but it was not swayed to change its “neutral” editorial policy. The AFL did not feel enough pressure, even in this city with an eventful labor history, to allow representatives of the Republic to speak to its assembly. Thus, while Latins collectively responded to the crisis in Spain, they enlisted no allies, even locally, to join them.

The Spanish Civil War assumed heroic proportions during the later months of 1936. The war was not simply about political leadership. Spain served as a training ground for the Axis powers, as Germany and Italy practiced war on a defenseless civilian population. The United States, by denying help to the defenders of democracy, virtually insured the victory of fascism.\textsuperscript{39}

Although most Americans viewed the conflict without emotion or concern, Tampa’s Latin community understood what was at stake in Spain. They were personally connected to the conflict because of relatives still living in Spain and because of their culture and language which emanated from Spain. Additionally, they shared with Spanish Republicans a political ideology based on radical politics, labor organization and anti-clericalism. The Spanish Civil War has been called the last opportunity to side with the forces of good against evil. Only years later could some look back and see the lost opportunity to halt fascism and perhaps prevent World War II. Some individuals who influenced U.S. foreign policy during the Spanish Civil War eventually recognized their errors.\textsuperscript{40} Tampa Latins, on the other hand, knew they had fought “the good fight.”

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\textsuperscript{3} \textit{La Gaceta}, August 6, 1936; Mormino and Pozetta, \textit{Immigrant World}, 216-21.
\textsuperscript{5} \textit{Tampa Tribune}, October 2, 1936.
\textsuperscript{6} Ibid., October 21, 1936; \textit{La Gaceta}, October 23, 1936.
\textsuperscript{7} \textit{La Gaceta}, November, 14, 1936.
\textsuperscript{9} \textit{La Gaceta}, November 24, 1936.
\textsuperscript{10} Ibid., October 31, 1936.
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11 Ibid., September 25, 1936; see also October 7, 1936.


13 Taylor, Spanish Civil War, 43.

14 La Gaceta, September 2, 1936.

15 Ibid., August 7, 1936.

16 Ibid., August 13, 1936.

17 Ibid., August 14, 16, 1936.

18 Ibid., August 17, 1936.


20 Kennedy, Palmetto Country, 322.

21 La Gaceta, October 29, 1936.

22 Ibid., August 18, 1936, p. 4.

23 Ibid., October 8, 12, 16, 1936.

24 Ibid., June, 19, 1936.


26 The Tobacco Leaf, October 3, 10, November 7, 28, December 19, 1936.

27 La Gaceta, September 22, 1936.

28 Ibid., October 16, 1936.

29 Ibid., October 1, 1936.

30 Tampa Tribune, November 22, 24, 1936; La Gaceta, November 21, 22, 1936.

31 La Gaceta, November 22, 23, 1936.

32 Taylor, Spanish Civil War, 136; Tampa Tribune, November 16, 19, 1936; La Gaceta, November 18, 1936.

33 La Gaceta, November 18, 1936.

34 Kennedy, Palmetto Country, 321.

35 The Tobacco Leaf, November 28, 1936.

36 La Gaceta, November 12, 1936; Tampa Tribune, November 17, 1936.

37 La Gaceta, November 25, 1936.


Ibid., 262.
MUSICAL TRADITIONS IN FLORIDA:
A PHOTOGRAPHIC ESSAY
by Kent Kaster, II

Music has figured prominently in American life throughout the nation’s history. Although in some instances music served as pure entertainment, it often reflected deeper social, economic or technological trends. Looking closely at music’s interaction with people and events provides insights into the history of the country and the Tampa Bay area.

European musical traditions arrived in the possession of the earliest colonial settlers. The first important cultural center in the American colonies was Charleston, South Carolina, and distinguished Charlestonians founded the St. Cecilia Society in 1762 to organize music supporters into a club. However, the New England area boasted the first formal concert with a Boston performance in 1731. Four years later Charleston recorded the first authenticated performance of an opera in this country with the staging of a ballad opera entitled *Flora, or Hole in the Well*.

In the late nineteenth century, budding communities along Florida’s gulf coast organized bands even before they developed basic public services. Indeed, it took a band to herald the opening of new bridges and buildings. No public celebration was considered complete without musical accompaniment. Even education featured music lessons, assuring that high school bands would take to the streets for festive occasions.

The presence in Florida of people from diverse ethnic backgrounds infused local culture with a wide variety of musical traditions. In their churches and segregated clubs African-Americans found outlets for both gospels and blues. One of the most peculiar – and dated – American art forms was the minstrel show in which whites assumed the role of black musicians, often reinforcing racist stereotypes. Tampa’s Latin community also had distinctive musical styles that set it apart. For example, Spanish clubs produced zarzuelas that drew on old world culture.

Beginning in the 1920s, the communications revolution nationalized musical tastes. In 1922 the first local radio stations arrived with WSUN in St. Petersburg and WDAE in Tampa. Radio featured not only live music but also recorded music through the new phenomenon of phonograph records. The combination of radio and mass-produced records brought music from far and wide into the homes of Floridians. The decade of the 1920s produced many standards such as “Stardust.” Florida’s real estate promoters also pitched their appeals in long-forgotten songs, such as “City of Palms,” a composition romanticizing Fort Myers. Indeed, the medium of radio gave advertising a musical voice.

The devastation wrought by the depression of the 1930s turned songs into a vehicle for social and political commentary. Even Franklin D. Roosevelt used the theme “Happy Days Are Here Again” to herald his rise to power. During the 1930s the radio remained the most important and least expensive medium for entertainment, including music. Following the trail blazed by WSUN and WDAE in the Tampa Bay area, stations made stars of singers and musicians such as Bing Crosby, Kate Smith, Guy Lombardo and Gene Autry.
Few people could afford the luxury of recorded music during the depression years, and the 1940s brought new restrictions. In 1942 the military’s need for shellac prompted the federal government to order record manufacturers to slash their use of shellac which was essential in the production of records. Nevertheless, during the war, music served as a means of escaping the burdens of everyday life. Off-duty soldiers flocked to dances organized by local communities, and the radio kept Americans abreast of the latest musical sensations, such as the young crooner from New Jersey, Frank Sinatra.

In the aftermath of the war, Floridians had more opportunities for musical entertainment. In Tampa an advertisement in December 1946 announced that local favorites Heavy Hammond and his “Florida Playboys” would once again draw crowds on Friday and Saturday with “Round and Square Dance Music” at the Gandy Boulevard Nite Club. For those with different musical tastes, the Florida West Coast Symphony opened it first season in 1948.

Each new decade after the war brought changes in technology and popular musical tastes. However, even with all the changes music remained an art form that touched most Americans as they listened alone to recorded music on headphones or attended a live concert at Tampa Stadium with 70,000 other fans. The accompanying photographs offer silent testimony to the important and continuing role of music in the lives of Floridians from the 1880s to the 1970s.
Formed in 1885, the Tampa Silver Cornet Band played at the Branch Opera House on Franklin Street. In 1890 the band included three members of the Lowry family: Charles and Lafayette (third and fourth from the right) and Samuel (seventh from the right).

Photograph from *Tampa: A Pictorial History* by Hampton Dunn.

At the Second Depot in Clearwater, a band greeted a train arriving in 1911.

Photograph courtesy of Pinellas County Historical Museum.
An advertisement for the Great Barlow Minstrels in the early 1900s promised an evening of “music, mirth and melody...absolutely free from an objectionable word or action.”

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.
The completion of the Panama Canal in 1910 provided the occasion for this celebration in Clearwater which featured a local band on a decorated wagon.

Photograph courtesy of Pinellas County Historical Museum.

Beginning in 1904, Tampa’s Gasparilla Day featured a parade with floats and musicians. This photograph of the 1914 parade shows Plant Park and the Tampa Bay Hotel in the background.

Photograph courtesy of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.
A picnic organized by Tampa’s Centro Asturiano early in this century included musicians (in the front row) who played the Asturian bagpipe and drum.

Photograph courtesy of Pizzo Collection, USF Special Collections.

WDAE, Florida’s first radio station, went on the air in 1922, and three years later the Tampa station carried the first singing commercials by a trio known as the Southern Songsters, composed of (left to right) Edith Price Montgomery, Sue Jones Klintworth and Georgia Goodell Rogers.

Photograph from Tampa: A Pictorial History by Hampton Dunn.
In 1937, Tampa Latins still celebrated “La Verbena del Tobacco” (“the Tobacco plant”), a festival with Spanish costumes, dances and guitar accompaniment.

Photograph courtesy of Pizzo Collection, USF Special Collections.

From its store on Tampa Street, the Dixie Music Company sold and serviced “automatic musical instruments.”

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.
Music teacher Fred Market poses with a group of his students in 1930 at the Faith Mission, located off Habana Street in Tampa.

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

From the days of slavery, African-Americans expressed themselves in music, especially songs grounded in religion. This 1942 photograph shows the members of the Tampa’s Beulah Baptist Church Choir.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.
Songs and sheet music were among the many methods used to promote Florida’s real estate boom in the 1920’s. “City of Palms” portrayed “The Beautiful Fort Meyers” as so idyllic that people may well have overlooked the fact that the song’s publisher in North Carolina misspelled the city’s name.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.
Watts Sanderson’s Central Terrace Beer Garden on Central Avenue in Tampa attracted a sizeable crowd on this summer night in 1942. Among the prominent features of the tavern was a coin-operated, counter-top jukebox shown on the right.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections

During the depression of the 1930s, New Deal work relief paid for this WPA orchestra to entertain Tampa citizens.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.
An evening of dancing at Tampa’s Starlight Club, located at 10011 Nebraska Avenue in Tampa, provided an escape for these couples in 1941.

Photograph courtesy of USF Special Collections.

The director of the 735th Army Band sets the pace as these military musicians stage a benefit show to promote War Bonds at Tampa’s Lincoln Theatre in 1944.

Photograph from *Tampa: A Pictorial History* by Hampton Dunn.
Dixie Lily Milling Company, which advertised that its fine foods went “From the Farms to the Mills – From the Mills to Your Grocery,” sponsored performances by country and western bands, such as this one at the 1951 State Fair in Tampa.

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.

After World War II, local musical tastes became more varied as the Tampa Bay area sought to duplicate the cultural attractions found in big cities. In 1951 members of the Tampa Symphony Orchestra accompanied a local ballet troupe at the Municipal Auditorium, which is today known as McKay Auditorium, on the grounds of the University of Tampa.

Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System.
A 1944 dance at Tampa’s USO Club on Madison Street featured a live band and marked the third anniversary of the USO Club.

Photograph from *Tampa: A Pictorial History* by Hampton Dunn.

Bobby Lord was one of many Tampans who launched their musical careers locally and went on to national fame. Lord, shown here at a concert in Tampa in the 1950s, became a favorite at Nashville’s Grand Ole Opry.

Photograph from *Tampa: A Pictorial History* by Hampton Dunn.
These members of a “kitchen band,” with their decidedly low-tech instruments, demonstrated at a Bradenton concert in 1979 that amateur musicians with skill and imagination could still attract an audience.

Photograph courtesy of Manatee County Historical Society.
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INTRODUCTION

The magnetic aura and excitement of the frontier have captivated Americans since the first explorers breached coastal swamps and inland forests some four centuries ago. The frontier offered danger, adventure and, most importantly, opportunity as generation after generation of white and black settlers moved inland from coastal plains. Its legacy remains as enticing today as its reality once was, and it continues to be celebrated in print, on film and through the electric eye of television. In 1893 the historian Frederick Jackson Turner attempted to explain the importance of the frontier to American history. Turner’s classic paper, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” argued that the essential element in American development was the availability of vast areas of free land coupled with the gradual movement of the American frontier ever westward.¹ When considering the frontier as a factor of American history, many writers have made the mistake of assuming that the frontier existed only in and to the west.

In fact, there were many frontiers and, if the presence of a frontier is measured by danger, adventure and opportunity, then the Florida frontier of the nineteenth century was the equal of any. Florida became a territory of the United States on July 17, 1821.² For four decades thereafter the frontier of American settlement gradually and – for whites, blacks, and Indians – painfully was pushed ever further down the peninsula and into its interior. By 1860, it consisted chiefly of the Peace River valley.

It was no accident that the Peace River, or “Peas Creek” as it was called by some, came to demark the Florida frontier. After 1842 and the close of the Second Seminole War, it had served as the western and northern boundary of the Indian nation.³ Beginning three years later and extending until the early 1850s, a neutral zone of some twenty miles to the west as far north as Bowlegs Creek had stood, often feebly, to protect against white encroachment on Indian lands.⁴ The culmination of the Third Seminole (or “Billy Bowlegs”) War in 1858 pressed Florida’s remaining natives to refuges further southward near Lake Okeechobee and the Everglades. In so doing, it also opened the lands along the entire length of Peace River to settlement by whites. As the Florida Peninsular, a newspaper published in the small village of Tampa, proclaimed in May 1858: “To our citizens, and all others who are desirous of cultivating the soil, now is the time to brush up your plantations or seek new ones. Strike while the iron is hot; on Peas Creek are large bodies of good land, and throughout South Florida are lands that cannot be exceeded anywhere.”⁵

White settlers had first put down roots in the upper Peace River valley late in 1848 or early in 1849. By the outbreak of the Bowlegs War in December 1855, the limits of such settlements had reached down into modern Hardee County. During the ensuing conflict, many pioneers chose not to abandon their new home. They clustered for protection in isolated outposts along the frontier.

* The author wishes to express his appreciation to Julius J. Gordon of Tampa for his kindness in sharing research materials and personal files.
These havens included Fort Blount (today’s Bartow), Fort Meade, Fort Green (Fort Green Springs) and Fort Hartsuff (Wauchula). However, widespread settlement of the river area had to await the war's end.

“The Indian War of 1855 brought many new recruits into the country,” remembered pioneer Benjamin F. Blount, “which, after the close of the war in 1858, remained here and its development was very rapid until the beginning of the Confederate War.” On another occasion
“Uncle Ben” expanded upon his recollections: “After the war, which lasted through 1858, there was a noticeable acceleration in the growth of the community. Many of the young men returned to their former homes to marry and bring back their wives to the land of their choice. This period was, according to tales that are handed down, one of the most interesting of the section’s history. It was the big formative period of the community life. New settlers came in so rapidly that the older inhabitants were kept busy showing them the place, and giving them food for their sojourns until they too should bring back their families.”

Benjamin Blount’s memory of a deluge of pioneer settlers exaggerated reality. Although the number of residents in the area increased substantially and the limits of settlement by 1860 had been pushed as far south as Fort Ogden, the section remained in great part a frontier. This pleased most of the residents, who were generally not farmers desirous of neighbors and civilization, but rather cattlemen lured to the area by the availability of vast open range lands.

Francis Asbury Hendry and his father-in-law, Louis Lanier, reputedly became the first Florida cowmen to transfer their herds to ranges east of Peace River. Hendry settled just to the north of Fort Meade in 1852, and Lanier arrived the next year. Scores of others followed in their paths, and from 1852 to 1860 holdings ranging from a few head to herds of thousands roamed on both sides of the river. The cattle business received a major boost in 1858 and 1859 when Captain James McKay, Sr., of Tampa opened up the Cuban market to Florida beef. McKay initially based his shipping operations at Ballast Point on Tampa Bay, but record drought in the spring and summer of 1860 resulted in the deaths of hundreds, if not thousands, of cattle awaiting shipment. McKay and his associate, cattleman Jacob Summerlin, by November of that year had transferred their operations to the Peace River at a site not far from modern Punta Gorda.

During that spring of 1860, important political events unfolded in Florida and across the nation. On February 27 an Illinois Republican by the name of Abraham Lincoln stood in New York City’s Cooper Institute and proclaimed to an audience, many of whose members believed slavery a great wrong, “Let us have faith that right makes might, and in that faith, let us, to the end, dare to do our duty as we understand it.” Anti-slavery sentiment as reflected by Lincoln’s remarks fanned flames of anger and fear throughout the South. Florida’s dominant Democratic Party met at Tallahassee on April 9, endorsed black slavery as a necessity and demanded that the Congress protect the institution in American territories and assure strict enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Act. The conflict continued to build in intensity with the approach of the November presidential election. As one early historian put it, “The year 1860 in Florida was one of unrest, suppressed feeling and vague military preparation.”

In this context five white men, accompanied by two black slaves, ventured forth on a voyage of discovery and adventure down the Peace River. The group included William H. Meredith, Christopher Q. Crawford, Oscar A. Myers, Edward A. Clarke and Furman Chaires. Their expedition, the record of which was preserved in a published journal, revealed just how much the river area remained a rugged and exotic frontier. The journal, published in the Florida Peninsular from June 9 to August 18, 1860, allows us to share the excitement of their discoveries, the discomforts of their travails and the immediacy of their adventures. It is a remarkable document and provides a rare contemporary glimpse of that frontier period.
Perhaps the most important member of the “Peas Creek Expedition” was William H. Meredith, author of the published journal. Forty-seven-year-old Meredith hailed from Tennessee and Alabama. In 1860 he owned sixteen slaves with whom he worked a sizeable Hillsborough County plantation. Meredith combined his vocation as a planter with the duties of a lay preacher. His wife, Mary, is thought to have been a member of the Brandon family. At the time of the expedition they had at home five children, aged thirteen to less that one year. It is believed that in 1859 another child, Fredonia, married William Jasper Hooker, son of south Florida’s cattle king of the time, William Brinton Hooker. Tragedy had touched the Meredith family in April 1856, when the couple’s eighteen-month-old son, Robert, had died.\textsuperscript{15}

Christopher Q. Crawford was the senior member of the expedition in terms of age. The fifty-one-year-old man was a native of Virginia. He had married Nancy Ridgedale near modern Plant City on April 3, 1856, and two years later they had a son, James. Crawford had served a term as Hillsborough County commissioner and as a member of the Tampa city council. In 1858 he left Tampa for Manatee County where, in October of the following year, he lost an election for judge of the county’s probate court. By early 1860 he was at Fort Meade, the closest thing the area had to a village, where he constructed and then supervised the operation of a saw mill for Louis Lanier. At the time Crawford was described as “one of the best steam saw mill men in the Southern States.”\textsuperscript{16}

Oscar A. Myers, aged thirty-seven and another member of the 1860 expedition, was a native of Leon County. In December 1857 he had been admitted to the Florida Conference of the Methodist Church as a minister. He spent one year thereafter at Bainbridge, Georgia, and another at Fernandina, Florida, before being appointed in December 1859 to the church at Tampa. It appears that Myers’ life also had been visited by tragedy in the 1850s for the wife and two-year-old daughter living with him in 1850 were absent from the census ten years later. At the time of the Peas Creek expedition, Myers was a boarder in the Tampa home of William B. Hooker.\textsuperscript{17}

Edward A. Clarke was a thirty-three-year-old Tampa merchant. His place of business, known as the “Blue Store,” was located for many years on the southwest corner of Washington and Marion streets. In 1855 the New York-born Clarke had married the daughter of Tampa’s Dr. Franklin Branch. Two years later their infant daughter succumbed to yellow fever. The following year his wife, Helen Mary, also was a victim of the disease, and in the spring of 1860 Clarke was preparing to remarry.\textsuperscript{18}

Of the five white members of the expedition, Furman Chaires stands out as perhaps the most unusual. The thirty-six-year-old Leon County planter was the only participant not a resident of Hillsborough County. A son of the wealthy plantation owner, businessman and power broker Benjamin C. Chaires, Furman possessed some $35,000 worth of real estate as early as 1850. His family ranked in the highest circles of Florida’s planter aristocracy.\textsuperscript{19}

Though a resident of Leon County in 1860, Furman Chaires was well acquainted with south Florida. His family maintained ties of kinship, friendship and business with many of the former Leon County men who had established sugar plantations along the Manatee River. Shortly after his release from duty as a Mexican War volunteer, Chaires had lived briefly along the Manatee.
A few years later, in March 1856, he again was in the area when the home of his host, Joseph Ward Braden, was attacked by Indians. Joining the other men of the house, Chaires had taken up
a gun and returned fire from an upstairs window. From April 8 to October 7 of that year he had served in John Addison’s Volunteer Company and was probably involved in reconnaissance of the Peace River valley area.  

The journal of the Peas Creek expedition gives us few clues as to the identity of the “servant boys,” Rome and Lewis, who accompanied the party. The 1860 census indicates that neither Crawford, Myers, nor Clarke held slaves. It is tempting to believe the young men were local residents, bondsmen of W.H. Meredith, but certainly they could have accompanied Chaires from Leon County. Their appearance in the journal does illustrate, however, the presence of black slaves in south Florida, a fact which at times has been overlooked or underestimated. Manatee County, which included all the Peace River valley area from present-day Bowling Green to Charlotte Harbor, contained 854 residents in 1860, 30 percent of whom were slaves. Fifteen percent of the 2,981 settlers in Hillsborough county (modern Polk, Pinellas, and Hillsborough) were bondsmen. W.H. Meredith’s slave holding was the county’s fourth largest.  

What brought these explorers together and compelled them to undertake their voyage of discovery? According to W.H. Meredith, self-described “Scribe” of the expedition, “The leading object of this trip was to ascertain something more about the capacity of the river for navigation.” But to what purpose? While the answer is uncertain, the presence on the expedition of two of the leading slaveholding planters of Hillsborough and Leon counties may give us an important clue.

As previously mentioned, some fifty miles from Fort Meade, near today’s Bradenton, large plantations already operated. Many of the men who owned these plantations had ties to the Chaires family. The Manatee planters, or their families, had actively participated in Florida government and politics, including the Florida Constitutional Convention held at St. Joseph in 1838. One other delegate to that convention was William Brinton Hooker, and his acquaintance with the Chaires family probably dated at least as far back as that event. In 1860 the Peace River frontier was being touted as an ideal location for new plantations. High, fertile land, available at little cost, was a great attraction. The relative isolation of the area also may have beckoned to a planter anxious for the security of his slave capital as the possibility of civil war loomed ever larger on the horizon.

The pieces of the puzzle of the Peas Creek expedition thus begin to fit together in a speculative, but persuasive, pattern. Consider, for example, that Furman Chaires had an interest in transferring some or all of his planter operations from Leon County to a location within the fertile belt of land which ran from Fort Meade northward for some fifteen miles. Either out of prior acquaintance or through the agency of his planter friends at Manatee, Chaires made contact with wealthy cattleman William B. Hooker who was as knowledgeable as anyone about the potential for such plantation activities. Hooker, in turn, may have placed Chaires in touch with a local planter, W.H. Meredith, who shared many of the same interests, and with a Tampa merchant, Edward A. Clarke, who could act as factor for Chaires’ crop sales and purchase needs.

Chaires, Meredith and Clarke could then have taken an exploratory trip to the area of Fort Meade where Chaires may have met Louis Lanier and Lanier’s millwright, C.Q. Crawford, both men well known to Meredith and Clarke. While satisfied with the land he saw, Chaires may have
worried that the sandy soil, frequent flooding and, at times, bridgeless roads to Tampa could present a major problem in terms of getting his crops to market. The Peace River might then have been suggested as an alternative to land transportation, someone mentioning that groceries and supplies already were being hauled by boat from Fort Ogdén to the settlers in the vicinity of Fort Hartsuff. The logical step at that point would have been for the principals to examine the navigational possibilities of the river for themselves, with Crawford agreeing to have a suitable craft constructed and to serve as their guide. Chaires, Meredith and Clarke could have then returned to Tampa, where they discussed their determination with Hooker. Oscar A. Myers, a boarder at Hooker’s home, could have found the proposed expedition interesting and been invited to join the party. This scenario is highly speculative, but it contains enough grains of truth to provide a context for today’s readers of the journal of the Peas Creek expedition of 1860. The following document reproduces the journal in its entirety, as it originally appeared in the Florida Peninsular.

PEAS CREEK EXPEDITION

Florida Peninsular, June 9, 1860.
Mr. Editor: - Public expectation “in these parts” is up, and we must withhold no longer a short account of a voluntary and self-sustaining exploration of this stream from Ft. Meade to its mouth. The leading object of this trip was to ascertain something more about the capacity of the river for navigation. The following pages will give, in part at least, our impressions and convictions as to the river and its adjoining bottom, hammock and prairie lands, and their claims to public attention and enterprise.
Our party consisted of seven persons, viz: C.Q. Crawford, of Ft. Meade; F. Chaires, of Leon County, Fla; Ed Clarke and Rev. O.A. Myers of Tampa; Rev. W.E. Meredith of Alafia; Rome and Lewis, servant boys.

The expedition was intrusted, by acclamation, to the command of Mr. Crawford. Mr. Meredith was appointed Recording Scribe. The other requisite offices were filled according to circumstances and emergences, and, especially, according to the aptitude of talents and inclinations of the various members of the party. Hence, what more reasonable than that Ed. should be Steward – ever provident and assiduous - true to duty “as the needle is to the pole.” He always provided plenty and that of the best, and never forgot the hours of eating and sleeping. Mr. Chaires was Oarsman - with an energy and go-aheadativeness in perfect accordance with the old adage, “where there’s a will there’s a way.” Mr. Myers was Gunner-General - and woe-betied the bird or beast, alligator or snake, that showed its insolent pate, above land or water, to his two-eyed pot mettle, during that voyage. Servant Rome (Cook) - clever boy, true to duty; may he soon have a good master as well as mistress. Servant Lewis, Porter and jack-of-all-trades.

Of this group of companions in travel, let me speak a word or two more. Sir, you never traveled with a better, nobler, set of fellows in your life, leaving out of view the Scribe (and here he takes the opportunity of recording and acknowledging the uniform respect, and even deference, shown him throughout the entire trip, by every member of the expedition). You know, and everybody also knows, old C.Q. like a book. Then you know he was a man for the post assigned him. And as to the other three, may St. Peter, and St. Patrick and all the rest of the holy saints, bless their souls - their widowed souls - I have no choice between them, and let me further state: Ladies, if you know these gentlemen as well as I do, you, if you are at all marriageable, would each have a husband or a foot-race, sure.

Every man, except the Scribe, did his duty promptly; and the Scribe did all he had engaged to do. And, kind reader, let me assure you, there was labor to perform. If you do not believe us, try a similar trip yourself. Our Outfit. - Capt. Crawford had built, for the purpose, with his own bands, a first rate skiff - about 10 feet long, 4 feet wide, and 20 inches deep. The naming of the boat was intrusted to the Scribe; whereupon, in respect to the builder, he named her Nancy Crawford, after the Captain’s wife. The best commendation that we can give her is, that she carried us all “over” - down and up the river – “safely.” We had two fine propelling oars, one steering oar, two heave-poles (with iron spikes from 5 to 6 inches - the full length of which many a poor snoozing or half-witted alligator received into his proper person) a sounding pole, a gig pole and line, hooks and lines, and a spirit level. We had one rifle, two shot guns and one repeater (I believe they call it), and ammunition enough to worry old “Sam Jones” for a day or two, had he shown himself.24 Our Bedding. - We bad blankets, overcoats, cloaks and mosquito bars, suited to such a trip and such a season of the year. Our Boarding. - We bad one barrel of Fletcher’s best hard bread - put up to order of Steward Clarke - one round of pork, two hams (sugar cured), and side of bacon - donated by Maj. Lanier - and one whole half of a large Sheshire cheese; a good lot of Mrs. L’s best biscuits, bag of rice, jug of molasses (to make mild of!), coffee, sugar, black pepper, salt, (for a bear, but we did not kill him) No Hayties.25 Alas! what shall we do? Furniture. - Only one Chair(es.) hence we generally sat on the ground. We had one boiler, small pot, skillet, frying pan, two quart cups, three pint cups and two ½ pint cups.
We could raise, at eating time, 3 iron spoons, two old well-practiced case knives, one carving or butcher knife, gular spoon - called a silver spoon, without handle, which was preserved and used with kind remembrance. Gunner M., being a man of invention, made himself a very useful spoon out of wood. We had also a large water-demijon. I shall not forget to mention, with some extra particularity, some other important items in our outfit. We had a first-rate pole (Oak), one hatchet, and a small demijon, holding a gal. or less, of the most formidable type of weapon; offensive and defensive, which our men called snake poison. We put all these weapons upon the same footing - innocent if used aright, but awfully destructive if improperly used. Be it said, to the credit of our company, there was but little used during the trip. Snakes and other venimous reptiles were harmless, in the main.

On the evening of the 25th April, we met, according to previous agreement, at Ft. Meade, and spent the night at the hospitable home of Maj. Lewis Lanier. Reader, did you ever stop at the Maj.'s house? If you have not called on him yet, I presume you will soon. I believe everybody else stops there, as we did, to save his bill. For the Maj. does not charge anybody, I am told.  

Thus equipped, and last but not least by any means, attended by the ladies of the house (and who is not happy when he has woman’s company, and woman’s smiles?) we went to the boat.
Omission in the above Statement - We had four well-selected pipes and stems and a box of first-beat smoking tobacco - laid in by our ever-thoughtful Gunner. - This part of our outfit we regarded as equivalent to another, important companion to drive dull cares away. We had also a bailing cup, which we never used but upon one or two occasions. Ours was not a leaky craft - all the surplus water we had aboard came down from the clouds or over our skiff’s gunwales.

The reader will bear with us in this seeming prolix narrative. Our companions urged, again and again, that every thing and incident should be noted. More anon.

May 21st

THE SCRIBE

From Our Journal - First Day Out

All aboard and uncabled, at 7 ½ o’clock, a.m., April 26th, with a tender adieu to all behind. We acknowledge that we commenced our trip with serious misgivings. How could it be otherwise? The river was lower, by six to eight inches, than ever known before by Maj. L., and known to be fearfully obstructed by logs, shoals and sand-bars, by every body who had passed it before us. Then again, it had been predicted by interested friends that we would have a laborious and unpleasant voyage, rendered so by incessant labor, sand-flies, mosquitoes, red-bugs, and every other evil surmise. Nevertheless, we did not intend to surrender. With our indomitable Commander at the helm, and with heave-poles in hand, and the determination of a meat axe, we pushed off from shore. And what next! The word of command is given, but not by our “green ones” understood. Now, too far to the larboard, now too far to the starboard. “If I take this oar to you, you will understand me.” The threatened discipline results in a gradual improvement in skill. So on we move. One half-mile brought us “biff up” to an abrupt fork in the river, one prong to the East and the other to the West. There did not seem to be water enough in either channel for us to pass. Inwardly we inquired, shall we take land, take a tree, go back, or risk the water, and run the risk of a worse difficulty still ahead. “Onward,” our brave fellows seemed to say, and Nancy moved to the right “like a thing of life.”

Obstructions, by logs of all sizes, and fallen and bending trees, and shoals and breakers, we found of great frequency. – The jams and squeezes, the bumps and thumps, were most inconveniently frequent and trying. Now over, now under, a log or limb or bending tree; now all on foot and looking out; now all seated; now in the water; now aboard; now astride a log. In short our trip was made with all sorts and degrees of antics, ups and downs. And our best-skilled bone-power, and patience of the first-water, seemed to be absolutely necessary to meet these emergencies.

For several miles the spirits of our comrades seemed to flag in view of our prospects. The realization of some of the predictions of friends, and our previous fears, seemed to be coming upon us. However, after passing several creeks and rivulets, and small falls and shoals, the river gradually became wider, and deeper, and less obstructed.

We moved on the East side of the river, with the interesting and always convenient accompaniment of a good dinner, well relished – strange as it may seem – by the whole party.
In the afternoon, we used our oars with telling results. Some of our hands were exceedingly, and ludicrously, and, I may say, (to the Capt. at least) most provokingly awkward. Now, look at that boy L., be scarcely knows which end of the oar to put to water. And he was not all the novice we had aboard. Made fine headway. Our Oarsmen had not yet learned to take advantage of their trade.

There now, Myers and Clarke overboard in a pile. The Stewart takes a pop or two at an alligator’s head, with his repeater, without effect. There, some poor fellow’s foot log is displaced and nearly cut in twain, for our passage.29

At six o’clock, struck camp for the night, near the “burnt store,” on the West side of the river.30 Here, blood and life and ashes were consecrated to the cause of early, and, perhaps, indiscreet pioneering. Of this, however, let others judge. Some of our party took a walk – found the stone that told, mournfully yet truthfully, the sad tale of poor Whidden and Payne, who had been brutally murdered and then burned at ashes, by the cruel and treacherous Seminole.31 No, that stone did not tell it all – it could not speak the whole truth. – It spoke not of broken hearts, blasted hopes and disappointed expectations of surviving friends. It whispered naught of individual and governmental wrongs! No record was there of governmental perfidy, on account of which, the hardy pioneer’s life is often sacrificed to savage vengeance and cruelty. Our ramblers saw two deer, but got no meat. The wind was high and the heavens were rather dark and threatening.

The river, so far, has varied from twenty-five to forty yards in width. It has been generally shallow, with mud bottom, and occasional rocks and shoals.
We have found cypress abundant, and pine, hickory, live and water oak. With all the usual
growth peculiar to the Peninsular streams. We have seen no Cedar scarcely, for either private use
or speculation; saw some fine hammock and swamplands, on both sides of the river, mostly
subject to inundation.

Supper and pipes, with the usual gusto.

All of us being fatigued, went early to rest, without mosquito bars. No sleep with our men, till
bars were spread. Our Scribe alone, as he was, snoozed till three o’clock in the morning, not
bearing well enough to feel the bites of his enemies. Then being brought to consciousness by his
sanguinary tormentors, finished his nap by intruding his noodle under a companion’s bar.

From this time forth we did not await the attacks of a regiment of these omnivorous insects
before we spread our bars for home protection.

These were some of the experiences and impressions of the first night envoyage.

May 28

THE SCRIBE

Florida Peninsular, June 23, 1860.
From Our Journal - 2nd Day Out

All awake at an early hour, refreshed and ready for breakfast. Some complaint, among our
men, of tender hands and sore bones. Aboard and started, at six o’clock. We had, for many
miles, a shallow river, often from sixty to eighty yards wide. Rock bottom, shoal and crooked,
with high bands. And here, suffer me to say, that this stream is a stubborn, twisting, winding,
crooked, affair at best. It does not set out to be anything else, judging from what we saw of it,
then a meandering, doubling up concern, from source to mouth.

At 9 o’clock, we came to W. Whidden’s Ford. Having been called into a committee of the
Whole, and having, by a unanimous vote, decided that there was, at least, a possibility of our
larder growing short, at the wrong time and place, we concluded to adopt some plan by which
our stock might be increased. Indeed, it appeared, upon overhauling our pantry, that we had, by a
sad mishap, applied the wrong rule of gauging to our natural repositories. Even our Steward,
with all his unquestioned forecast, had woefully undersighted his own capacity, as well as ours,
for stowing away this sort of goods. Hence, our whole party (except the Scribe, who was,
generally, pantry guard) with this very inedible object, went to the house of Mr. W. Of course,
their object was secured. For when did you call on a Floridian for something to eat, and fail to
get it, if he had it by him! If nothing else, he is very apt to have a stand-overpatch.

There, we secured a sack of Hayties, some eggs and sugar.

From this point for many miles we passed a fine river, straight sometimes for a half mile or
more, deeper and wider with banks from 8 to 12 feet, and scrub hammocks and cabbage tree
prairies on both sides.
At 11 o’clock came to an abrupt fall of nearly 2 feet, with jutting table rocks on both sides of the river. These rocks, forming a channel of about 40 feet, precipitates the water into a roaring cascade. On nearing this water-fall, our party heard its roar for several hundred yards. The expedition by common consent, called this cascade Meridith’s Falls. We have no hesitancy in pronouncing this a good seat for water machinery. Having to unship bed and boarding, as well as the live-stock, in order to pass the falls, we concluded to moor at this place. Here, our cook gave us an excellent repast from our improved store.

Re-embarked at 12 o’clock, all good humor, as you would suppose. Passed a fine river for many miles, with banks from 10 to 14 feet, overhung, and I may say, ornamented (as usual), with bending willows, narrow-leaf hickory, vines and water-plants of every description, and flowers gay and bright, of various tints and hues.

At 3 o’clock, p.m., we struck what may be appropriately called the Great Rafts of the river, consisting of the trunks and roots of trees, gravelly shoals, and deep sand-bars. These, we consider the chief obstacles to the successful and profitable navigation of this valuable stream. The river fills up or changes its channel from time to time, in proportion to the size and number of these timbers. And, here we may say that for more than one-half the distance from Ft. Meade to the mouth of the river, these obstacles, more or less, lie in the way.

Just above the commencement of the Great Rafts, we came to Brannon's ford33 - Some of our men went to the Sulphur Spring, a few hundred yards from the river, on the east side. They reported the water very fine. Indeed, it smelled and tasted as strong as any water we have tasted in South Florida. Our Scribe found another small spring gushing out of the bluff of the river, on the same side, a few hundred yards below the ford. Our Fisherman killed a good trout, which passed well for supper.

Only one or two alligators killed today. Cloudy with lightning.

Gunner M. took a shot at a deer feeding among the bonnet leaves, from the skiff. It was supposed that he wounded it - got no meat, however.

After looking out for “a good place,” and being hurried by approaching night, we struck camp on the east side of the river, in a swamp of defiles, deformities, and sand bars. We felt ourselves called on to name this part of the river, and this camp place especially, All Points, having steered to every point of the compass, in a distance of a mile or two.35

This is a dreary, and to the expedition, certainly, a memorable portion of the river. Great changes in the bed and course of the river have evidently taken place in time - brought about by the coming together and parting of the waters.

Supper, and in good spirits, though the Heavens are dark and unpropitious.
Commenced raining, as we anticipated, about 9 o’clock - grew worse and worse. The reader may easily imagine how it went with us, without tent-cloth or shelter.

Our quiet was suddenly disturbed, in the early part of the night, by an alarm - cry from companion Chaires’ bunk. It appeared that an Opossum, snake, or some other insidious intruder seemed inclined to force or steal an entrance into his bed chamber, to which he could not willingly submit; whereupon he called for quarters. After a few minutes, however, his nerves seemed to grow quiet, and we heard nothing more of him til the general uproar in the after part of the night, “Water! Water, too much!!”

The Captain and Scribe, in adjusting their preparations for a wet night, took the precaution to spread their tarpaulin upon the top of their mosquito bar. This worked well in theory only. The rain came down in torrents, and we got the full benefit of a concentrated shower, from a small hole in our otherwise good friend, the tarpaulin. Now, we have the consolation left us of exhibiting each the high and low water marks upon our persons. Our darkies sheltered their heads only under the bowdeck of the skiff.

THE SCRIBE

Errata. - In the account of the Peas Creek Expedition published last week, the compositor made an error in one of the paragraphs which somewhat destroyed its sense: “We moved on the East side of the river with the interesting and always convenient accompaniment of a good dinner.” should have been read “moored” instead of “moved.” We mak this correction in justice the “Scribe.” Printers d - ls are not always au fait of bad chirography. In this case, the error was corrected by us in the proof sheet, but, from some cause or other, was not put right in the types.

Ed. Peninsular

Florida Peninsular, June 30, 1860.
From Our Journal - 3rd Day Out

Wet under foot and dark and threatening overhead. Light showers upon us between 6 and 7 o’clock, with a prospect of much rains.

Re-embarked at 7 o’clock, with resolution, we think, commensurate to coming emergencies.

Still in the Great Rafts, working our passage. There now, is a huge log extending from band to bank “or bar.” What now! Our “pass-word” is go over, or under, or sever the log in sunder. We must and will pass. Now the limb to be cut off - now a bending willow, ornamented with a wasp’s nest, from which our cook makes his escape by taking water.

Mullets are now plenty, but very hard to take with prongs.

Myers and Clarke both, in cold blood and murderous intent, slaughtered an alligator a piece.
We are still satisfied that the bed of the river, upon the low lands, is in a ceaseless routine of change. The primitive or original channel, as we believe, is indicated by rock banks on one or both sides of the river, and the proximity of pine forests, thereto. Indeed, there can be no great change in the channel, when one or both banks are skirted by pine woods.

The timber on the river today is generally sorry, as it was on yesterday. The live oak is plenty but low and scrubby with long spreading boughs. These often exhibit their stag-born tops, that have made battle, no doubt, with a hundred winters. The cypress is short and trifling.

Had a heavy rain upon us, in an open river, between 9 and 10 o’clock. Each man snailed himself into as small a compass as possible, to avoid the wetting to which we all seemed fated. We bore the shower, however, with reasonable patience and submission. Perhaps, though, the result of unmeritorious necessity.

We took a cold snack in and about the skiff, at one o’clock, the only entirely cold dinner we took upon the voyage. We would in spite of haste or weather, take time to eat! And, our meals, always, had a most salutary, and, even, happy effect on us!

About this time, Messrs. M. and C. had sanguinary and exciting battle (with heave-poles) with a large alligator. His gatorship had offered no insult, further than an insolent glare of his eye. This was considered provocation for the cruel onslaught. Pitch into him was the word of command. Whereupon Mr. Myers made a fearful incision into his back. Then Steward C. made a still more dreadful stroke and wounded his antagonist severely. At this time the enraged enemy attempted to pass under the skiff and heaved her bow suddenly to the left, and thus tilted both his assailants into the river. Mr. M. re-embarked with great adroitness. Our Steward, however, supposing that the odds might be fearfully against him, in single combat with this monstrous reptile, made a hasty and, even, ludicrous retreat to the other side of the river, while his wounded foe made his escape the other way. This battle scene was much more amusing to the immediate spectators than it can be made to the reader. Our negro boys continued this bloody persecution and pursued the monster till he made his final escape to a pile of drift timber, leaving only his blood and musk as memorials of this bloody conflict.

The stench from the battlefield, on our return trip, told most ungracefully his certain demise.

We passed, this afternoon, on the east side of the river, an extensive ledge of soft or soap stone. Some of our party, after trying it upon their hands, pronounced it a clever substitute for soap. Indeed, it lathered well, and seemed to cleanse our hands as well as bar soap! It would be a pleasing affair could it be substituted for soap, as it would be much cheaper. But alas! it would be appropriated to human monopoly and speculation.

We found another ledge of what seemed to the eye to be mica or slate stone which upon examination on our return, proved to be evidently, an immense bank of peat.

Bed clothes and provisions being unpleasantly wet, we struck camp at 4 o’clock p.m. on the East side of the river on quite an elevated bluff in the open pine.
We now have a stiff wind from the west. We have hope and prospect of better weather. The sun is upon us with bright and cheering rays.

We are all well, though some of us are quite fatigued and sore. Our appetites are improving. In the way of grub, every man can do and does his duty.
Capt. C. and others are now gone across the river - being invited in that direction by that interesting domestic fowl, the cock. And how would we have fared by the way without lowing cows, bleating calves and crowing cocks?

Their object was to seek “light” upon all subjects connected with our expedition and, especially our present whereabouts. Our men returned and reported that they had been to Stephen Hooker’s had seen several acquaintances.\(^{38}\) We are now about 2 to 3 miles from John Parker’s, and 25 to 27 miles from Ft. Meade.\(^{39}\)

Mr. M.’s mosquito bar fixtures are interesting him very much. Will the man work all night? At last, and rather late, matters seem to be adjusted, and we are all stretched out helter skelter, for sleep, every body delighted with the prospect of the approaching Sabbath’s rest.

4th Day Out

Not up as early as common, but all ready for breakfast.

We are resting and settling apart this portion of time, at least in part, as required by the great Law Book. The morning is bright and bracing with stiff winds from the Gulf.

Capt. C., Messrs. C. and C., and Cook took a stroll down the east side of the river, to see whatever might be interesting; but, especially to see the mouth of the Charlepopka.\(^{40}\) Steward C. growing leg weary, soonest return to camp.

Ever thing that required it was put out today to dry. Our bread required and obtained an opportune sunning.

Messers. M. and Scribe were happy in being permitted to remain at camp, to rest and read, and guard the pantry!

Two deer fed near to camp, but our piety prevented any violent disturbance.

Our ramblers returned at noon with no news of much interest. did not find the mouth of the far-famed stream - the Charlepopka.

The afternoon was spent in camp gossip, reading and short rambles around our camp fire. The evening was cool and fire was very pleasant.

All hands drew near to the fire to sleep.

THE Scribe

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Yellow Peninsular, July 14, 1860.
From our Journal - 5th Day Out
Our party was up at an early hour and ready for duty.
Companion Myers having run pretty well “foul” of his pants, was called to needle work by an early firelight. Ladies, he is quite an expert with needle and thread.

We had a charming serenade this morning from the owl, the gobbler and other feathered musicians. The morning broke upon us bright and clear. We have a full moon to give us light for the night and a cloudless sun to cheer us by day.

Capt. C. took two shots at a gobbler, before starting, and made the feathers fly, only.

We decamped at 6 o’clock, all well and in good spirits.

We found the river quite improved as to capacity for navigation. Land is sorry on both sides of the river for many miles. Passed the mouth of the Charlepopka after having looked for it - gentlemen, will you say how long! Timber on the river sorry - banks high, averaging from 10 to 20 feet.

The killing of alligators was interdicted, as we did not wish to pollute our drinking water with their dead carcasses, though they were very numerous and often most tryingly insolent.

Mullets and trouts in abundance. Turtles, hard and soft shell. Our fisherman took a fine soft-shell turtle with the gig, and, while our men were butchering it, he killed a trout and a mullet.

We passed several gravelly shoals. Also, three islands which we named “The Three Sisters.” After this, we passed three straight cuts in the river, which we called “The Three Shoals.”

We had a beautiful row for many miles, affording us fine opportunities for travel. The river here, for stretch, is bordered by large scrubby live oak and cabbage trees, and but little obstructed by logs and rocks, and sometimes wide and shallow; then again narrow and deep.

Nooned - not “moved” nor “moored,” as the Compositor will have it on the west side of the river. Capt. C. took a solitary stampede, hunting land and landmarks, somewhat to the grievance of our appetites. All right, though, in fifteen minutes after his return without any apology on his part.

Eating, we often decided, was a fine invention.

We saw several deer this evening. O! it is most provoking that we cannot get some venison.

Struck camp at the usual hour, on the east side of the river, in a palmetto rough, which we called, with kind remembrance, “Turtle Bluff,” as we bad turtle meat, with her whole cargo of eggs, for supper.

The night was cool and fire very pleasant. All ready for grub and cheerful, as usual. Pipes and anecdotes and jokes - and never were jokes and jibes enjoyed with greater zest. And, here let me
say, we had some capital jokers aboard. I do not know that our Steward gave us any, but, depend upon it, he enjoyed them finely.

Sixth Day Out -

All refreshed. Aboard and moving at 6 o’clock. Banks still high on both sides.

Turkies are giving us a fine serenade. Let them gobble on for future voyagers.

A good and gradually deepening and widening river, from 50 to 70 yards wide generally. We find the river still crooked, though the crooks are not so abrupt and provoking as above narrated.

At 7 o’clock we came to what seemed to be a crossing place for cattle. It had the appearance of being a kind of forceford, having two strings of log fences, made in funnel shape, widening from the river to the pine woods. And such a fence! The reader will know but little about it without further description. It was built of forks, and logs, log chains and trace chains! One of our party being an observing man, remarked, “That looks like some of Capt. Hooker’s work.” Sure enough, on our return, we learned that it was one of his cattle fords. Capt. H. makes his mark wherever he goes, as well upon the earth and rivers and trees of South Florida, as upon his numerous stock of cattle. Here we found a piece of zinc-sheet, upon which the Scribe was directed to record our names, day, and date of passing.

At 9 o’clock we met three boatsmen with two cypress skiffs-large and small one-laden with groceries from Ft. Augden, for the upper settlement. Of course, all parties were ready and anxious for a confab. These men, among other items of information, informed us that we were still 40 miles from Ft. Augden! This was unwelcome news to us. The timber and water still improving.

Dined on the west side of the river at a place called Haygan’s bluff there is a fine body of hammock land, perhaps a little too low but rich, with a fine place for settlement not more than half-mile from the river. We passed the mouth of Horse Creek about 2 or 3 o’clock. Here, too, we found some rich bottom land. From H.’s bluff we found cypress abundant and pine, on both sides of the river, for many miles. We did not give ourselves time to examine the lands - but, from the looks of the timber, were of opinion that there is a great deal of rich land in this neighborhood.

We arrived at Ft. Augden at 4 o’clock. This is a fine bluff on the east side of the river, indicated to the navigator by a lone black jack standing on the bank. This bluff seems to be formed by a sand ridge which makes out from the river, in a southeastern direction, for many miles. this, we were told, was a noted hunting ground for the Indians, in the rainy season.

Several of our men went hunting and saw 2 turkies - no deer, but found whortle berries in great abundance, which paid the hunters, at least in part, for their stampede.
Our fishermen took some fine freshwater cat at night, with hooks and lines. We found them most excellent meat. Here we found mosquitoes in countless numbers, and as voracious as ever.

Here, too, we found, and left, a whole cargo of unprotected groceries - corn, flour, salt, etc., in an open, shutterless log cabin, without lock, bar or bolt! I guess the folks, if there be any, in these parts are honest.
Every man to his tent or bar.

THE SCRIBE

P.S. The Scribe is not at all surprised that the Editor, Compositor, and all the rest of the d___ls, should be unable to decipher his “bad chirography,” as he sometimes fails to do it himself, greatly to his own annoyance.

*Florida Peninsular*, July 21, 1860.

From Our Journal – 7th Day Out

Left camp, at 6 o’clock, with buoyant hopes and cheering prospects. Indeed, we began to feel that we were, of a truth, nearing “old Salt” himself. The river water was still soft and sweet.

Capt. C. and Myers left us for a cruise, or rather a bear-hunt, on the east side of the river, to intercept us some several miles below. The Scribe at the helm. We found cypress abundant and fine for a few miles.

We passed Ft. Winder, on the west side of the river, at 7 ½ o’clock. We halted long enough, only to have our visit recognized by the dreary silence that prevailed thereabouts.

Alligators were numerous, huge, and often most insolent. We passed them with a threat of vengeance on our return.

The timber was inferior – low and stubby – from Ft. Winder to the mouth.

We found the river widening very perceptibly from Ft. Augden. We passed several bayous, *dead-rivers* and *pocket-islands*, saw grass and flag marshes. Indeed, but for the specific directions given by our Capt. to “keep to the left hand,” we should have been badly befogged. – We found numerous changes and *cut-offs* in the river which seemed to widen into a bay, or rather, archipelago.

At the appointed time and place we took our foot companions aboard, who reported that they had seen “bear sign” plenty.

Being all aboard and the Capt. at the helm, we begin to grow impatient to be at the mouth of the river. We are now regaled by the sea breezes and behold seabirds. We are now passing large islands, with rich-looking soil and growth. We still keep to the left. Now, we pass a school of large porpoises. Know not, but that they may, in their quaint evolutions, give *Nancy* a toss. We took several unavailing shots at them, with our shot guns.

The sun is now upon us with burning brightness. Yet, we row on, and yet we row on, in good earnest, anxious to make the mouth by noon for dinner.

At 1 o’clock we dropped anchor, on the west side of the river, in sight of the “tripod,” raised by the topographical engineers of the government. Being too much fatigued to look about us, for the present, we are now stretched in the shade to snooze till Rome calls us to dinner.
I should not forget to notice, that we made, for the first time en voyage, an important discovery – important to the entertainment and pleasure of our expedition, this forenoon. And well may we exclaim, “Full, many a flower is born to blush unseen, And waste its sweetness on the desert air. Many a smouldering genius lies dormant and unobserved, and awaits in numurmering silence an opportunity for immortal development!” Little had we thought, and less had we cared. (however pleasing it turned out to us afterwards) that we had several expert musicians aboard! All of a sudden, a long dominant silence was broken by a beautiful strain of native – not cultivated – melody, from one of our oarsmen – “Row, boatsmen, row.”

This astonishing performance was succeeded by another equally so – “O come along, John, walk along, John. Ai’nt you mighty glad your day’s work’s done?”

And thus, and hereafter till our voyage terminated, we had music in considerable variety, and every body knows - "Variety is the spice of live, And gives it all its flavor."

Companion Chaires’ labor-ejaculations, such as “O! Poor Nigger,” &c., were especially amusing to the company – well suited to “drive dull _____.”

Refreshed by our short nap and a plentiful dinner, we arise to greet our present surroundings. Yonder, to the S. West, two miles or more distant, our old friend – the river – is disembogued into the Charlotte Harbor. To the S. East we behold a long stretch of pine forest, arising above the broad expanse of waters, islands, marshes and sand bars, a distance of some 3 or 4 miles. A cloudless sky is smiling upon us and we can see every way, as far as “our eyes will let us see.”

At length the work of command is given, and the expedition is set in motion.

The Capt. and three subalterns take land for a hunt. Mr. Chaires is in command of the craft, to meet us at a point designated. Our huntsmen find deer and turkies – get shots – but alas! alas! no meat. They found plenty of good water, breaking out in the bay-heads, along the river, near the Harbor. This information we give for the benefit of future navigators. Our point is made at 3 o'clock.

The river is high, the tide ebbing and the sea is rough. With all hands aboard we commence our return trip. Nancy is too light and small to encounter a wide, rough sea. Mr. C. having discovered a bird island, where birds were reported in great abundance, our whole party hastened to their noisy and filthy habitation, for profit as well as sport. Here, we found birds of great variety and in countless numbers, and of all ages and sizes. We caught and slaughtered till our larder was greatly improved, with squabs “as fat as butter.”

The Scribe shot a pink curlew, on the wing. This was a fat and heavy fowl, with plumage too gay for description. You must see it in order to know what sort of fowl it is.

After struggling against “wind and tide,” our camp was made by 7 ½ o’clock at the same point at which we had dined on the same day. The most of our party relished our fresh meat finely; rather to fishy, however for the delicate palate of our Scribe. THE SCRIBE
Florida Peninsular, July 28, 1860.
From Our Journal, 8th Day Out

All awake, breakfasted, and ready to decamp at 6 ½ o'clock. Our jug was filled with good water from the bayhead near by. All quarantine interdicts were raised upon the free use of our firearms against all enemies whatsoever. And, depend upon it, alligators “suffered in the flesh,” for a few days.

Our feelings, upon embarkation, were quite different from what they were on a former Thursday morning. Then, we raised anchor for an adventure upon strange waters, and going from a home. On the last mentioned Thursday, our races were turned homeward, on a stream whose shallows and breakers we had successfully and pleasantly passed before.

Some of our party, after getting under headway, raised the question as to the probable width of the river, straight across from our camp. Our Capt. proposed to Mr. Chaires an old device in order to get the measurement, by the eye, of the river. – This was to look across the river between his legs! Reader, did you ever look at a distant object, or at a waterfall, between your legs, or over your own forehead? Try it, if you have not.

The expanse of the river, at the mouth, is greatly increased by the influx of a large stream or creek, called "Prairie Creek," which is sometimes mistaken by strangers for the river itself.

Wind and tide, and weather, and health, and, I may say also, confidence, were all in our favor. Hence, we made good headway. Our bands were all accustomed to labor and endurance.

At 6 o'clock we made a halt at a large island. Found plenty of compte, of a very luxuriant growth. The soil of this, and several other islands, seemed to be fine. There was an abundance of this valuable starch plant upon those islands near the mouth of the river.

At Ft. Winder, Capt. C. and Mr. Myers left us for a cruise of a few miles, on the west side of the river. As they were making ready to leave the skiff, Capt. C’s rifle was accidently discharged into the bulk of our baggage. Upon overhauling, to ascertain the damage, we soon discovered that the ball had spent its fury upon Mr. Chaires’ saddle bags. He could take but little comfort to himself from the fact that they were “borrowed,” as the wicked ball had made fearful incisions into his linen.

Steward C. at the helm. Made Ft. Augden by 11 o’clock.

Here we found a company of cow hunters - glad to meet them. We shared each others’ friendships, and divided hospitalities. Left at 1 o’clock after a refreshing dinner. Arrived at the mouth of Horse-Creek at 3 o’clock - passed up the stream ½ mile or more, and met our comrades according to appointment. They had gained another companion in the person of Jockey Bill Whidden, who kindly turned Cicerone to pilot them to the river. Did you ever see Jockey Bill, reader? I want to see him once more. Our men reported that he had received them most cordially at his solitary cabin, and entertained them most hospitably, and fed them most bountifully, and then gave them as much beef as they were willing to pack to the boat!
Capt. C. and Mr. Chaires took another stampede, on the same side of the river, to meet us at Hagan’s bluff.

Here, at about the usual hour, we struck camp for the night.

Our foot friends came up in due time - Mr. Chaires, among the incidents of the afternoon, reported that he had seen, with his own eyes, a bear! But got no shot, and also! and worse! no meat!

Several of us took a ramble of several hundred yards, with firearms; but without profit to our larder.

Servant boy L. caught us a fine string of perch.

Smoking tobacco failing alarmingly - One pipe lost irrecoverably.

Now, to supper - now to sleep and dreams.

9th Day Out

Being contiguous to an extensive hammock, we had an early serenade, given us, it would seem, by all the owlets of that vicinage. For this gratuity on their part, we did not offer any acknowledgements - We had a fine squab and fish fry for breakfast.

We celebrated our sojourn at the bluff by the display of our empty bread barrel, upon the top of a hickory sapling. This exhibition we intended to designate the head of navigation (as yet) and a signal of commerce upon the river.

Uncabled and moving about the usual hour.

We noticed the tide marks at this point. The banks indicate a tide of more than a foot at times though 25 to 39 miles from the mouth of the river.

Alligators were dispatched with the usual mercilessness, almost amounting to cruelty. Our attacks upon them were often insidious and unprovoked. Indeed, such was the havoc played upon these reptiles by our men, that we felt induced to leave a standing claim to our first year’s meat, upon our settlement in the Peas Creek Country, free of charge.

Capt. C. left us to look out for grub. Went to Mr. Tyce’s on the west side of the river.53

We passed Capt. Hooker’s cow ford, (the time of day not noted) leaving a billet for our Capt.; also, marking the day and date of our return trip, accompanied with a small scrap of rhyme, viz:

“Man is a vapor and full of woes
He cuts a caper and down he goes!”
Our long absent Capt., after a lonely and fatigueing ramble, came up at the right time and place. We had just struck camp at “Turtle Bluff,” where we had spent a pleasant night upon our downward trip. The Capt. made our pantry smile most complacently, with the recruits be brought of beef, biscuits and coffee.

Camp confab over and more sleep.

THE SCRIBE

*Florida Peninsular*, August 4, 1860.
From Our Journal - 10th Day Out

Home, and friends and interests began to occupy the thoughts and sway the feelings of some of our party. It was suggested that, possibly, one of our comrades was growing anxious to see his intended, who has since had the good fortune to see and wed her. 54 May they - once twain, now made one - never want sunshine for their pathway, nor grub for their table, not the *purest bliss* for the cup of mortal life.

A part of the day we had a beautiful river, as noted on our downward trip.

Steward C., as was his misfortune from time to time, and our cook, went overboard in an indiscriminate heap. It really seemed to be as easy for Mr. C. to go overboard and into the river as for a turtle to slide from a log. His mishaps in this way were often the occasion of much merriment to the company.

We commenced on yesterday to gather and examine the fossils which had been said to be abundant along the shoals of the river. 55 We found these bones in great quantities all along the river to Ft. Mead, of all sizes, and in every stage of petrifaction. They were to be found in the banks and upon the bottom, and especially among gravelly and shoaly places. These fossils are evidently the remains of that once numerous family of cetacean animals, called the *Manatee*. Perfect specimens are but seldom found. Mr. Myers found in the bed of the river a large mass of vertebral bone, of some five or six joints, measuring about eight inches in diameter. These curious relics are not only found in the bed and banks of the river, but also in the bottom lands adjoining, showing that this now (probably) extinct animal was once the predominant (sea) cow of the South Florida sea coast. It is rumored, we know, that this monstrous amphibious animal yet lives in some of the streams of South Florida-perhaps in Indian river. Our party expressed great solicitude to see one in its original and perfect state.

Captain proposed, in view of the fact that this stream bad no name – “Peas Creek” being no name - and in view of the countless number of fossil bones, and in view of the further and no less important fact that we were the first organized company known to ourselves at least, who had explored the river to its mouth, to learn its full capacity, that the stream should hereafter be called *Bone River*. 56 We, thereupon, raised and discussed at length, our right to name a water course or river. 57 We decided that, although ours was not a mission of science, we had as good a right as any man or set of men in the land to give a name to this or any other unnamed stream or
locality. Hence, we shall insist that we have adopted the old Adamic rule of nomenclature - we have “called the river after its kind.”

We are now beginning to encounter again our old acquaintances, logs and sand bars and shallows. Hence, we all have something to do - some of us take land, some take water; all have to heave and set, and pull and push, in order to make headway. By frequently unshipping we
found but little difficulty in passing the obstructions of the river with good speed. Whether there was much water - or if there was but little - or if there was none - we passed any how.

It was our wish to reach the same point where we had spent the former Sabbath to spend the approaching one. This we failed to do, however, and struck camp on the east side of the river. And here let me say, some of us bad a great aversion to that side of the river through the entire voyage. It was Sam Jones' side, and we did not feel that we were “on speaking terms,” although peace has been formally proclaimed long since. Our camp was pitched in a gloomy cabbage palmetto rough. We raised a huge bonfire, by igniting the rough about us, which drove darkness away, and greatly mitigated the dreariness of the place for the night.

11th Day Out

Awoke with approaching daylight, and arose at the bidding of nature’s choristers. A well relished breakfast was soon prepared and dispatched with the usual gusto. – Mr. Chaires, as usual, was the last at this interesting ceremony. After mutual consultation, the expedition decamped, with the view of reaching S. Hookers, or better quarters, for spending the Sabbath. – Capt. C. and Mr. Myers afoot, the latter in Sunday attire! Some of our oarsmen in rather a pout for rest. After toiling till 10 or 11 o’clock without reaching a “better place,” we struck camp on the east side of the river again! Some of our party, in the afternoon, crossed the river and went to Mr. Hooker’s. Not finding the family at home, and yet finding the table set and furnished with pies, biscuits, butter and milk, they turned most voracious bookers themselves – will not make further disclosures. And what next! Here are three impertinent deer within less than 100 yards of our camp! being invited by the reigning silence of the Sabbath evening. Capt. C. did his utmost, but got neither shot nor game. No Sunday hunting pays.

Our camp is near a body of good looking hammock land. The live oak is large, but not tall, with immense trunks and expansion of bough. We noticed one in particular with trunk measuring, I suppose, 7 or 8 feet, and putting forth six forks or branches not 10 feet from the ground.

All our ramblers at camp for supper and sleep.

12th Day Out

Our company was early called up by our Captain, who, we agreed, would do on less “grub” and less sleep than any member of the party. All moving about the usual hour.

Mr. M. and the Scribe, equipped with their firearms in band, took land for a bunt, and especially with the view of making reparation for damages done to the lady’s table. Mrs. H. would have no pay acknowledged no damage. The footmen called at Col. John Parker’s; saw some good hammock land - rather too low, without considerable drainage. They intercepted “Nancy” and her crew at 11 o’clock, when we rested and dined. Col. Parker kindly invited us to his house for dinner. Messrs. C. and C. accepted the invitation with due appreciation. We made
the acquaintance of Rev. Mr. Maulden of the Manatee Circuit at Col. P.’s. If his physical dimensions indicate anything as to his future, the cause of Truth will have an able champion. May his mission be effective for our common Christianity, and his life be spared to bless the Church and world.

Our foot companions dined, and procured a recruit of sugar at Col. P’s - thence went to Mr. D. Carlton’s where they took a second dinner and made the rise of a sack of Hayties, which Mr. C. donated to the expedition, then helped our men pack them to the river, where we met our company according to appointment. Mr. C. is a small man, but it was the sense of our party that he had a large heart.

Steward C. overboard, and actually in the river again! It is a settled fact, be will take water, if there be any chance. He is not an amphibious animal, we know; but is certainly strongly inclined to be an aquatic one!

Fatigue, hunger and night-fall all being bard upon us, we struck camp on the east side of the river.

P.S. The next paper will close our journal narrative.

THE SCRIBE

- Florida Peninsular, August 18, 1860.
- From Our Journal - 13th Day Out

After a night of sound and refreshing sleep, and, no doubt, pleasant dreams, we awoke and arose for duty. All well and, as usual, in fine spirits.

Decamped at 6 V2 o’clock, feeling like travelers “going home”.

Messrs. Chaires and Scribe took a ramble on the east side of the river, with rather a “forlorn hope” of killing some meat. Saw some excellent prairie and hammock lands, which seemed to be untenanted, and unclaimed, as we supposed. Came up with our comrades at Brannan’s Ford, near the Sulphur Springs. Here we took the measurement of the falls, which we found to be 31 inches.

Before leaving this point we took a very interesting lunch of bread and cheese, which put us all in good humor “with all the world and the rest of mankind,” till our noon repast.

Falls just above 12 inches - good river for several miles.

Whidden’s falls - a series of falls of several hundred feet continuance 3 feet and 10 inches.

Dined on east side of the river. The Scribe, followed by the Captain, took a stroll on the east side of the river, and killed a fine trout with our grains, which made our party smile, as our meat was growing rather scarce.
Meredith Falls 2 feet. Falls from this point to camp, on the west side of the river, three miles below Chokanikla, 3 feet.\textsuperscript{63}

At camp about the usual hour.

In recounting the events of the day, Capt. C. reported the loss of his watch - silver watch. He planted it along the river - when it grows and bears fruit, many watches may be gathered somewhere along the river!

14th Day Out

Once more a cloudless sun dawned upon us. Decamped at 6 o’clock. Out of meat, but not our of heart, having bread, cheese, potatoes and coffee plenty.

Our music increased considerably and improved in quality.

We had a great deal of towing and heaving to get our craft up and over the shallows. But our men were true to duty. The word of command made all bands take water or land, as circumstances seemed to require. The free use of our heave-poles in connection with our oars, gave us fine headway.
Servant L. made a most ludicrous plunge into the river, head-foremost, the bottom of the river seeming to fall out all of a sudden!

Our captain (having forgotten how his boy - James Gettis - looked) in company with Mr. M., left us at the mouth of Bowlegs’ Creek, took land, by Capt. Kendrick’s and hastened on home.54

The whole expedition arrived, 6 o’clock, at the Mill at Ft. Meade, with improved health and an extended acquaintance with one another that was truly pleasant and often filial.

Here we give them our opinion that Ft. Meade is 30 to 40 feet only above the level of the salt water.

From Ft. Meade to the mouth of the river it is by land 66 miles and by water, we suppose, about 130.65 We pretend not to give the average width and depth of the river.

We further give it as our opinion that the judicious expenditure of $10,000 or $15,000 upon this stream would make it a good navigable stream, for six or eight months in a year, for light draft steamers. Besides this direct advantage to the river, the drainage of thousands of acres of the richest land in South Florida would be the indirect result. Here is an open field for enterprise and profitable outlay of labor and means.

And now, kind reader, we close our narrative of this expedition. It has, no doubt, been more interesting to the immediate witnesses and actors than to any others. We have asked no person to read our scribble. We suppose the editor or Compositor has been more heavily taxed than any others.

Reader - invalid reader especially, and indolent reader still more especially - if you want something to do; if you want improved appetite and health, at small money expense, make a similar trip. Do not get insulted at our advice – it shall cost you nothing. Once, in great kindness and sympathy, we advised a medical invalid friend of ours to travel and “rough it,” as we bad some experience upon this subject. Not taking it kindly, he tartishly replied that, should he make a trip of that sort, he would be seen to take a metallic coffin with him. Poor man! he lay in his close bed-room and watched by day and night the rise and fall of the mercury till the last sand of life ran down and out. Conform to nature, in the manner of your life, and, as a general rule, let medicine alone. Adieu.

THE SCRIBE

AFTERWARD

“Here is an open field for enterprise and profitable outlay of labor and means.” With those optimistic words “Scribe” approached the conclusion of the journal of the Peas Creek expedition. Unfortunately, W.H. Meredith’s hopes were not soon borne out. For, as explained by Peace River pioneer George W. Hendry, “Just as the country became settled and every one inspired with new life, the convulsions of 1860 demoralized everything.”66
The clouds of strife which had been gathering as the Peas Creek expedition made its way from Fort Meade to Charlotte Harbor burst within a year into a terrible civil war. The struggle wrought devastation and division along the entire length of the river from Fort Meade to the south. In its aftermath the opportunities and optimism of 1860 were slow to return. Not until the mid-1880s and the coming of the railroad was the isolation of the Peace River frontier broken. Even then it shifted only slightly, to the east and south. One hundred years later its legacy still clings tightly to the land and people of the Peace River valley.

If Furman Chaires and W.H. Meredith had harbored plans in May 1860 for plantations at Peace River, those ideas soon were set aside as the specter of secession consumed their thoughts. By November Meredith had joined with W.B. Hooker, Clarke and even the Reverend Myers in clamoring for the protection of slavery and the dissolution of the Union.67 Their wish, of course, soon was granted.

The Civil War at least temporarily altered the lives of these men. W.H. Meredith seems to have left south Florida before the end of the conflict although it remains possible that he died there during the war at a time and place where no newspaper could record the event. Edward A. Clarke remained at Tampa. During the war be engaged in blockade running, and in its aftermath he reopened his mercantile business. In 1866 be was elected mayor of Tampa. He continued to serve the community in one capacity or another until his death in November 1886.68 C.Q. Crawford returned to Hillsborough County by 1862 and settled in the vicinity of Cork (near Plant City), where he built and operated a mill. Crawford lost his eyesight about 1870, and his fortunes waned. He died September 18, 1871.69 Oscar A. Myers left his post as minister of Tampa’s Methodist Church in December 1860. He remained in town for some time thereafter, but the war’s end found him living at Gainesville. There he served as minister and, in the 1870s, as editor of the Gainesville New Era and the Gainesville Florida News. In 1873 he was appointed United States District Attorney for the Southern District of Florida and served in that position until September 30, 1874.70 Furman Chaires returned to Leon County. He died there in August 1867. The Tallahassee Sentinel in its obituary said of him: “Few men have gone to their reward who have left a clearer record behind them – who had fewer enemies – or who were more generally esteemed in the circle of their acquaintanceship.”71 Sadly, the fates of the expedition’s “servant boys,” Rome and Lewis, are unknown.

The fact that none of the Peas Creek expedition’s members returned to make a home along the river says much about the persistence there of the frontier. For decades after their voyage that frontier remained a reality. A resident in 1874 summed up the situation when he wrote of a great part of the area, “Farming is not carried on to any greater extent that what is necessary for home consumption, as there is no market convenient.” He then concluded, “As it is, it is almost a barren wilderness, save here and there, at intervals of three or four miles apart, a squatter on the public lands, cultivating a potato patch and tending his cattle.”72

3 Ibid., 315-16.

5 *Florida Peninsular*, May 15, 1858, quoted in Tallahassee *Floridian & Journal*, May 29, 1858.


7 Bartow Polk County Record, January 30, 1940.

8 Ibid., October 11, 1921.


10 *Tampa Daily Times*, December 18, 1923.


14 Ibid., 38.

15 Manuscript returns of the Eighth U.S. Census, 1860 (hereafter cited as Eighth U.S. Census), Hillsborough County, schedules I (population) and II (slaves); Julius J. Gordon, “Church History, Hillsborough County, Florida, 1840-1880” (working ms.); telephone interview with Kyle S. VanLandingham by author, January 12, 1990, notes in collection of the author; *Florida Peninsular*, April 26, 1856, December 1, 1860.


21 Smith, *Slavery and Plantation Growth in Antebellum Florida*, 26; Eighth U.S. Census, Hillsborough County, slave schedule.

22 *Florida Peninsular*, June 9, 1860.
23 Matthews, *Edge of Wilderness*, 143.

24 Following the departure of Billy Bowlegs from Florida in May 1858, Sam Jones, or Arpeika, remained as the most prominent chief of the state’s native population. Army officer George McCall described him in 1842 as “a proud, independent, self-willed man, who once having made up his mind, is not likely soon to be diverted from his purpose.” McCall noted, however, that when Fort Brooke was established in 1824 Arpeika was “poor and apparently supported his family by fishing; the fruits of his labor being disposed of at the Fort.” His English name, Sam Jones, was granted him at the time by the regimental sutler based upon a popular ditty about “Sam Jones, the fisherman.” Arpeika’s death was reported in the Tampa newspaper in January 1859. It was said that, at the time, he was over 100 years old. Covington, *Billy Bowlegs War*, 81; George A. McCall, *Letters from the Frontiers* (Philadelphia, 1868; reprint ed., Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1974), 411-12; *Florida Peninsular*, January 1, 1859.

25 “Hayti” potatoes were a staple food of South Floridians of the time. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, April 5, 1889.

26 Louis Lanier’s reputation for hospitality at Fort Meade was noted as late as 1881. He died there November 23, 1884, and is buried in the town’s Evergreen Cemetery. Bartow *Informant*, September 15, 1881; Spessard Stone, “Profile of Louis Lanier,” Wauchula *Herald-Advocate*, June 19, 1889.

27 The 1860 census lists the ladies of Lanier’s house as his wife, Lucretia Ross Lanier, and a Georgia-born seamstress, Harriet Farrel. Eighth U.S. Census, Hillsborough County, schedule I.

28 The expedition apparently was launched just to the south of Fort Meade’s Peace River bridge. The span constituted the gateway to the Peace River frontier south of Fort Meade and was constructed in early 1858 by a company of volunteers commanded by former Hillsborough County Sheriff Edward T. Kendrick. Fernandina *Florida News*, April 7, 1858.

29 Late in the afternoon the party left Hillsborough County and entered Manatee County (now, respectively, Polk and Hardee Counties).

30 The “burnt store” was the site of a trading post burned by renegade Indians in July 1849 and of the subsequently constructed Fort Chokonikla (1849-1850). During the July 1849 incident George S. Payne, the store manager, and his assistant, Dempsey Whidden were killed. Whidden’s sister, Nancy, and her husband, William McCullough, were wounded but managed to make their way to the home of relatives at Alafia. The site, near present-day Bowling Green, now is encompassed within the Paynes Creek State Historic Site. For more information on the “burnt store,” see: Michael G. Schene, “Not a Shot Fired: Fort Chokonikla and the ‘Indian War’ of 1849-1850,” *Tequesta*, 37 (1977):19-37; and James W. Covington, “Billy Bowlegs, Sam Jones, and the Crisis of 1849,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, 68 (January 1990): 299-311.

31 The “stone” was a monument to the memory of Payne and Whidden. It was erected over their gravesites. Jean Plowden, *History of Hardee County* (Walchula, Florida: Florida Advocate, 1929), 10.

32 South Florida pioneer and family patriarch Willoughby Whidden lived just to the north of modern Wauchula on the west side of Peace River not far from the mouth of Little Charlie Apopka Creek. He passed away almost one year to the day after the visit mentioned in the Peas Creek Expedition journal. Survey Plat, Township 33 South, Range 25 East, Florida Department of Natural Resources, Division of State Lands, Land Records and Title Section, Tallahassee; “Willoughby Whidden 1799-1861,” *South Florida Pioneers*, 11 (January 1977): 8-11.

This spring came to be known as Zolfo Springs. Tradition has it that Italian workmen employed in railroad construction during the mid-1880s, attempting to say “sulphur water,” could pronounce only “zolfo water.” Robert Lee Thompson, Peace River Valley: The Puritan’s Utopia (Morganton, North Carolina: R.L. Thompson, 1980), 132.

Names granted to river features by members of the expedition failed to stand the test of time. The “All Points” area later was known as Three River Shoal and Horseshoe Bend. “Letter from the Secretary of War,” 5.


The camp may have been near what later was called McClelland’s Ford, some five and three-quarter miles above the mouth of Big Charlie Apopka Creek. “Letter from the Secretary of War,” 5.

Stephen Poleman Hooker was the 24-year-old stepson of cattleman, political leader, and former Hillsborough County Sheriff John Parker. In July 1860 Hooker had been married for seven months to sixteen-year-old Sara “Sallie” Carlton, daughter of Alderman and Martha (Alderman) Carlton. Hooker died January 7, 1863, while serving in the Confederate Army. Sallie later married William C. Hayman. Spessard Stone, “Profile of Stephen P. Hooker,” Wauchula Herald-Advocate, February 16, 1989.

Cattleman John Parker was one of the most affluent and influential of south Florida’s leaders in 1860. From his Peace River homestead he ranged thousands of cattle on both sides of the Peace River. At the time of the expedition he was forty-one years of age and had just been elected lieutenant colonel of the 20th Regiment of Florida Militia. That October he was elected to represent Manatee County in the Florida House of Representatives. Virginia W. Westergard and Kyle S. VanLandingham, “Parker & Blount in Florida” (1983), 83-89.

Charlie Apopka Creek, also known as “Tsala-apopka” Creek. “Letter from the Secretary of War,” 5.

The name “Turtle Bluff” may offer an interesting exception to the rule of disappearance of placenames given by the expedition’s members. The location of their camp and turtle dinner appears to be that of present-day Arcadia. Prior to the early 1880s the site was known to pioneers as “Tater Hill Bluff.” One tradition suggests the name derived from the presence of salamander hills on the high banks which bad the appearance of hills of potatoes. The name, however, could easily have been a corruption of “turtle.” Thompson, Peace River Valley, 150.

In 1860 William Brinton Hooker boasted ownership of 10,000 head of cattle which he ranged on the prairies to the east and west of Peace River. In the fall of the year he disposed of his herds to Tampa’s Captain James McKay, Sr., who, in turn, transferred their ownership in May 1861 to Jacob Summerlin. Hooker was the brother of Fort Meade’s owner, John T. Hooker, and uncle to river resident Stephen P. Hooker. Kyle S. VanLandingham, “William Brinton Hooker 1800-1871,” South Florida Pioneers, 5 (July 1975): 6-12; Hillsborough County, Deed Records, Book C, 200-201; Florida Peninsular, October 20, 1860.

A Hooker descendant who currently is writing the cattleman’s biography, Kyle S. VanLandingham, believes the zinc plate was placed at the crossing by Hooker as a form of memorandum board on which his employees could record dates and numbers of cattle moved from one side of the river to the other. Telephone interview with Kyle S. VanLandingham by author, January 12, 1990, notes in collection of the author.

Fort Ogden, actually Camp Ogden, had served as a U.S. Army post for several months during the summer of 1841. It was there that Colonel William Jenkins Worth and his Indian ally, Coacoochee, lured the chief, Hospetarke, onto a schooner moored in the river and seized him. The site remained deserted thereafter until cowhunters began using it as a rendezvous point after the close of the Billy Bowlegs War in 1858. John T. Sprague, The Origin, Progress, and Conclusion of the Florida War (New York, 1848; reprint ed., Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1964), 294-303; Kissimmee Osceola Sun, September 11, 1975.
No one by the name of Haygan or Hagan appears in the Manatee County census of 1860. Francis Burdette Hagan was in the county, however, by 1861 at the latest. He and his wife, Elizabeth Jane, were living at the time near Lily in the vicinity of her parents, John and Alice Platt. The Platts had arrived prior to the outbreak of the Bowlegs War.

The name of the enterprising Fort Ogden merchant is unknown, although Enoch Daniels had been living in the area for a year or more. In October 1860, Charles Wesley Hendry opened a regular monthly freight and passenger business between Tampa and Fort Ogden. Thus, he also may be a candidate for the honor. Hendry called his business the “Peas Creek Packet Line.”

Early in 1852 Colonel John H. Winder, commander of U.S. Army troops in Florida, ordered the dismantling of Fort Brooke at Tampa and the construction of a replacement post on the west bank of Peace River some fifteen miles from its mouth. Although two log buildings were erected, the post – named Fort Winder – shortly was abandoned by order of Winder’s superior, General David E. Twiggs.

Navigation aids in Charlotte Harbor and the lower reaches of the Peace River had been destroyed by violent storms on October 28 and November 13, 1859. From December 22, 1859, to March 20, 1860, a Coast Survey party under the command of Lieutenant W.R. Terrill, U.S.A., completed a retriangulation and marking of the area. The “tripod” was one of the aids installed by Terrill’s men.

The presence of a bountiful and exotic avian population was a source of delight and sport for early Peace River area settlers. In 1852 a medical officer at Fort Meade reported having sighted in the vicinity of that post alone some thirty-eight varieties of birds, a number he was able to compute only after including as a single entry, “ducks (various kinds).”

The compte, or “coontie,” plant was a major source of food among Florida’s native population. The plant was bountiful in the vicinity of Fort Ogden and, at least as late as 1879, Seminoles visited the area every winter to gather its roots and manufacture flour from them.

In south Florida cowmen were known as “cow hunters,” rather than as “cowboys.”

Interest in fossils was intense among religiously and scientifically interested individuals at the time of the Peas Creek Expedition. On July 1, 1858, Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace had read to England’s Linnaean Society their joint paper propounding the theory of natural selection. Darwin’s *The Origin of Species* first was
56 “Scribe” was inaccurate in stating that this expedition was the first to explore the river to its mouth. General Persifor F. Smith and a force of Louisiana volunteers had ascended the stream from Charlotte Harbor as far north as modern Hardee County as early as April 1836. There were many repetitions of the trek during the Bowlegs War. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 157-58; Covington, *The Billy Bowlegs War*, 58 and passim.

57 The name “Bone River” passed from use upon its coining. The 2,000 square mile phosphate-rich Bone Valley Foundation, which lies to the west of the Peace River, remains today as an echo of the attempt. Ed McNeely and A R. McFayden, *Century in the Sun: A History of Polk County* (Bartow, Florida: Polk County Centennial Committee, 1961), 26.

58 The western boundary of the Indian nation which was agreed to at the conclusion of the Second Seminole War (August 1842) was Peace River. Its northern limit was Bowlegs Creek, which enters the Peace River from the east three miles south of Fort Meade. St. Augustine News, June 8, 1839; Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 315-16.

59 Stephen P. Hooker.

60 The Reverend James D. Maulden had been admitted on trial to the Florida Conference of the Methodist Church on December 28, 1859. His first assignment was the Manatee Mission, which included all of the Peace River valley in Manatee County. The young preacher does not appear to have taken well to the wilds of the frontier for he soon was transferred to the far more settled St. Mary’s District in the state’s northeastern corner. Ley, *Fifty-two Years in Florida*, 84, 97; Tallahassee *Floridian & Journal*, January 14, December 22, 1860.


62 Zolfo Springs.

63 “Chokonikla” was the Seminole and Creek term for “burned house.” The party again was near the site of the renegade attack of July 17, 1849. Schene, “‘Not a Shot Fired’: Fort Chokonikla and the ‘Indian War’ of 1849-1850,” 25.

64 C.Q. Crawford’s son, James Gettis Crawford, was about two years of age at the time. The mention of Captain Kendrick refers to Edward T. Kendrick who had moved to Fort Meade the previous year. Eighth U.S. Census, Hillsborough County, schedule I; Charles E. Harrison, *Genealogical Records of the Pioneers of Tampa and of Some Who Came After Them* (Tampa, 1915), 107-08.

65 The exact measurement of the river's length is open to question, based upon what is determined to be its mouth. A U.S. government survey conducted in 1879 concluded: “The length of the river from Fort Meade Ferry [the bridge had washed away in 1878] to the west boundary of township 40 south, range 23 east, by map measurement is 74.91 miles. This is erroneous; it is more nearly 160 miles.” “Letter from the Secretary of War,” 6.


67 *Florida Peninsular*, December 1, 1860.

C.Q. Crawford to H.A. Corley, September 5, 1862, Internal Improvement Trust Fund, General Correspondence, record group 593, ser. 914, Florida State Archives; Florida Peninsular, November 3, 1869, June 29, 1870; Tallahassee Sentinel, August 5, 1871; “Roster of Members of Hillsborough Lodge No. 25, F. & A. M.,” Masonic Temple, Tampa.


Tallahassee Sentinel, August 19, 1867.

BOOK REVIEWS


First Encounters is the ninth publication in the University of Florida’s Ripley P. Bullen Monographs in Anthropology and History. It also doubles as the introductory volume of the Columbus Quincentenary Series and is intended to accompany the Florida Museum of Natural History’s traveling exhibit (also called “First Encounters”).

The two editors and majority of the contributors are associated with the University of Florida, making First Encounters essentially an “in-house” production. This is evident from the fact that the book was tailored to the thirteen essays included rather than commissioning essays to fit into a well-planned volume. There is no other way to explain how, or why, this particular collection was assembled. No serious work dealing with the history of the United States in general, and Florida in particular, should ignore Juan Ponce de Leon or Jean Ribault. Nevertheless, all of the references concerning these two would not fill one page in the text if they were combined. The thirteen essays in First Encounters include an introduction and a conclusion that deal with the notion of trans-Atlantic contacts. Of the remainder, seven are concerned with history and pre-history in Florida, two focus on archaeological excavations in Haiti, one describes Columbus’s favorite ship (Nina), and one takes the reader on a hunt for the Columbus landfall.

Eugene Lyon’s essay on the Nina is virtually an adaptation of the piece he did for National Geographic in November 1986, yet no reference is made to that article. Despite that minor point, this is clearly the most enjoyable chapter in the book and gives one a feel for life at sea in the late fifteenth century.

The other previously published essay, by William F. Keegan (“Columbus’s 1492 Voyage and the Search for His Landfall”), is the weakest essay of the lot and should never have been published. It is a slightly edited book review that was published in The Sciences in 1989. He still quotes from one of the books he reviewed (because it supports his theory), but he deleted all references to the other (which runs counter to his thinking). Keegan fails to inform his readers that his ideas have been thoroughly demolished by Joseph R. Judge of the National Geographic Society; that his hero (Samuel Eliot Morison) has recently been dethroned by most scholars; that the translation of Columbus’s log he refers to is grossly incorrect in places; and that he follows the geography of Morison, not the geography of Columbus.

Despite some weaknesses, First Encounters is an attractive book, with more than 150 illustrations (many in color), ranging from fifteenth and sixteenth-century maps and woodcuts to contemporary photographs of archaeological sites and artifacts. Fourteen original maps by Heidi Perry enhance the volume and clarify the text. She should have been mentioned in the acknowledgements.
The University of Florida is to be commended for making the Columbus Quincentenary Series available for the 500th Anniversary of America’s discovery. Additional titles will be anxiously awaited and the complete set should make an excellent souvenir of the 1992 celebration.

Robert H. Fuson


During the American Revolution, a thirty-four-year-old Spanish officer enjoying the patronage of the powerful Galvez family sailed for Havana armed with an extraordinary commission from Charles III to resolve discord in the Caribbean high command, coordinate activities with the French and expedite three allied operations: to capture Pensacola, expel the British from Nicaragua and conquer Jamaica. Original and revised versions of journals and other manuscripts in which don Francisco Saavedra de Sangronis described his three year mission to the Indies have survived in his papers, housed in the Archives of the Jesuit Fathers of Granada. In this volume his first journal is published in its entirety, along with excerpts from his daybook and selections from volume four of his unfinished autobiography.

It took the special agent seven months to reach his destination. First, storms scattered the Franco-Spanish convoy; then the British captured his vessel. As a prisoner in Jamaica, he spent two months making notes about the island’s economy, defenses and political climate in preparation for a possible invasion. Jamaicans, the Spaniard observed, were anti-American. After his release, Saavedra crossed to the south coast of Cuba and travelled by road to Havana to restore harmony between Spain’s land and naval forces and press for the recapture of East Florida.

During the siege of Pensacola, Saavedra occupied himself by observing the Choctaws, Tallapoosas and Alabamas of the vicinity, who with their languages “limited to a few words” and “arbitrary gestures” seemed to present “a clear idea of the infancy of the human race” (pp. 175-176). “[I]f they were more numerous and if they had more ambition,” he mused, “conquerors as famous as the Tartars and the Celts would emerge from them” (p. 183). His account of the Battle of Pensacola, told from the standpoint of the reinforcement expedition, will not further the Bernardo de Galvez “Yo Solo” legend, as the editor points out in his analysis of the sources and historiography.

The journal of a traveller in the American Mediterranean during the early 1780s might be expected to trace the spread of disaffection in English and Spanish colonies. “The face of the Indies has been altered greatly with the rebellion of the Anglo-Americans,” Saavedra acknowledged. There were disturbing reports of provinces in revolt in Santa Fe (New Granada) and Peru, and taxes were the cause in these cases as in the North American one. If Spain would only devise “equitable trade and tax regulations,” she could yet save her colonies (pp. 258-260). His experience with creoles in Cuba, Mexico, Santo Domingo and elsewhere persuaded him of their loyalty. About France he was ambivalent, especially after a visit to the “French Cape” on
Hispaniola. In his opinion, French officers took their mess too seriously; even the men got freshly baked bread. Moreover, it was difficult to keep the peace in port between French and Spanish sailors, despite their being allies.

The publishing of Saavedra’s journal is itself an example of the problems of joint command. Francisco Morales Padron of Seville selected, transcribed and arranged the materials; Spain’s Ministry of Culture underwrote their publication. The late Aileen Moore Topping of Miami translated and annotated them. Her translation was reviewed by Francis C. Hayes and her translation and notes were reviewed by James A. Lewis and Allan J. Kuethe at late stages of the book’s production – too late to supply chapter headings or to assemble a translator’s introduction out of the extensive material. Lewis and Kuethe did not, unfortunately, review the editor’s introduction and notes nor apparently did anyone else. The author’s elegant prose is encased in a scholarly apparatus marred by masses of irrelevant data, repetition, missing attributions and inconsistencies. The illegible reproduction of several rare maps from the University of Florida Map Library is a gratuitous irritant. What the project badly needed behind the scenes was someone of standards and style, armed with the power to pull it all together – someone extraordinary, like Saavedra.

Amy Turner Bushnell


The image of a dashing adventurer going to exciting extremes to recover valuable, ancient artifacts is far from the reality of the daily drudgery of archaeological field and lab work. Though there may still be some romance in digging up unknown relics in remote places, there was certainly much more excitement at an earlier time in American archaeology. This captivating book brings that period to life in the story of the 1895-1896 excavations into the Key Marco shell mounds. The Key Marco investigation detailed in this volume was sponsored by the Bureau of American Ethnology and the University of Pennsylvania Museum. The ancient wonders recovered were remarkably well preserved items of carved wood, fiber, shell and bone, painted masks, figures and images never before seen in the material culture of the aboriginal Southeast.

The prehistoric record of Key Marco (Marco Island) in southwest Florida shows that native Americans lived well amid the rich coastal/estuarine environments. Their discarded mollusc shells were built up over millennia into mounds, canal walls and constructions for habitation on high ground in the mangrove wetlands. The Calusa, as these aboriginals were called historically, had powerful tributary chiefdoms supported only by the collection of wild resources, not by agriculture. They were the least hospitable natives to the Spanish and the last to be conquered. The next permanent settlement on Marco was in the mid-nineteenth century by William T. Collier, a millwright, who had traveled widely. His son William D., a boatbuilder and trader, was host to the 1895-1896 expedition, and he was thrilled to have the thick, black mud from diggings to fertilize his orange groves.
Foremost among the colorful characters of this book is Frank Hamilton Cushing, the sickly, controversial, yet intrepid leader of the expedition. Gilliland gives an excellent background of Cushing’s work for the Smithsonian. Appointed Curator of Ethnology by age nineteen, he studied Zuni ethnology and material culture in New Mexico, persevering for six years despite rivalries, fragile health and miserable living conditions. His acceptance by the Indians and real participation in their lives provided him with a wealth of new information.

Among the other enchanting characters of the Key Marco expedition was Wells Sawyer, a young artist whose landscapes and artifact paintings grace the book as beautiful plates. In some instances, his depictions of the wooden sculptures, masks and painted boards are all that is left of the original artifacts. Frequently there was no way to preserve these perishable items once they were taken from the watery ground. Constant ill health, lack of sufficient funds, notable procrastination in writing up the findings and accusations of artifact fabrication plagued Cushing’s efforts. The author combines good narrative with excerpts of vivid prose from original diaries and letters of many primary and secondary characters. Gilliland is thus able to describe effectively the day-to-day labors of the excavations, as well as the response in the outside world. She also explores the events after Cushing's death which included difficulties in dividing the collection between institutions and clearing Cushing’s name of misconduct charges.
The book is an excellent companion to Gilliland’s 1976 volume on the Key Marco artifacts. It is a true adventure story as well as a scholarly treatise. She closes with a brief discussion of the dating on the site (now estimated to have been occupied from at least A.D. 750 to 1500), and she describes the advances in technology that now allow us to dig wet sites with better scientific controls and to preserve marvels of ancient craft. As more of Florida falls to commercial development, we need greater vigilance to protect those wonders of prehistoric culture which might lie in the next swamp or estuary scheduled for destruction. Preservation of the archaeological record will allow us to understand how earlier peoples lived on this land we now enjoy.

Nancy Marie White


The field of Seminole Indian history has attracted the talents of some of Florida’s finest historians. John Mahon’s magisterial History of the Second Seminole War (1967) and James Covington’s The Billy Bowlegs War (1982) come to mind. And for several decades Harry A. Kersey, Jr., has offered consistently high scholarship. His latest book, The Florida Seminoles and the New Deal, 1933-1942, comprises the second volume of an expected trilogy. In 1975, Kersey wrote his much acclaimed work, Pelts, Plumes and Hides: White Traders Among the Seminole Indians, 1870-1930. The monograph traced the beleaguered and embattled Seminoles in the decades following the Third Seminole War (1855-58), analyzing the emerging social and economic bases of survival by the remnant tribes. By 1930, the completion of the Tamiami Trail, the draining and diking of the Everglades and the drastic depletion of migratory birds and native animals had wrought a new chapter in Seminole history.

The Great Depression and New Deal signaled fundamentally new challenges in federal Indian policy. The Seminoles seemed to succeed where other tribes failed in the new alignment. The era opened auspiciously with the appointment of John Collier as commissioner of Indian affairs. In 1934 Collier helped promote and pass the Indian Reorganization Act, the cornerstone of the Indian New Deal. Several positive accomplishments resulted from new state and national legislation.
The Seminoles added substantial amounts of land to their reservations during the 1930s and 1940s. “The consolidation of a Seminole land base,” noted Kersey, “provided an isolated, secure haven in which the Indian people could determine their own rate and extent of acculturation” (p. 86). Overall, Kersey paints a symbiotic relationship between the New Deal and the Seminoles. The federal government provided myriad benefits while the Seminoles entered American life on their own terms. Kersey brings a refreshing perspective to this aspect of Seminole life. He neither despairs nor disapproves of some Seminoles raising cattle, wrestling alligators or attending school. *The Florida Seminoles* raises a number of questions. First, the book is narrowly conceived and developed. The argument would have been strengthened by bringing the storyline into the 1950s. Kersey never adequately explains why 1942 provides a suitable termination for this volume. Secondly, a stronger foundation for the book’s setting is needed. Social and ecological factors, such as the Tamiami Trail, tourism and the evolution of the Everglades, should be more fully developed and integrated. Overall, however, readers of Florida history are indebted to Kersey for his love affair with the Seminoles.

Gary R. Mormino


Any biographer of a Ringling runs the risk of getting caught in a crossfire between the descendants of the five Circus Kings. Quarreling over the estate of John Ringling began after his death in 1936 and continued in and out of court until 1968 when the circus was sold. Nobody knows how many lawyers were gainfully employed during the protracted legal wrangles within the family. But they must have been numerous if the ones fending off suits by the I.R.S. and the state of Florida are included.

John Ringling North, the subject of Ernst Albrecht’s biography, was in the middle of fiesty controversies, enlivened by the frequency with which the combatants changed sides. Much of the feuding has been covered in earlier books on the Circus Kings and their descendants, but a fresh rehash is probably necessary to illuminate North’s career. The paucity of relevant private letters and diaries has inevitably driven the author to rely on the uneven memories of survivors of the circus wars. He has cast fresh light on North’s motivation, but it is difficult to believe anyone as indolent could outmaneuver his relatives so often.

North was the son of the only sister of the Circus Kings. Born in 1903, he held odd jobs as a teen-ager, tried other professions, but returned to the circus to help Uncle John after the latter suffered a crippling stroke in 1932. Uncle and nephew were too much alike to care for each other. The one disinherited the other but absent mindedly left young John as executor of his estate. It was this omission that enabled North to outmaneuver his relatives most of the time.

He managed to control the circus from 1937 to 1942, was ousted for five years, regained his position, and then held it for the next twentyone years. North was never what the journalists call a “hands-on” manager. As a reincarnation of Uncle John, he went to bed when most people were getting up and squandered enormous amounts of energy throwing parties or attending them. In
John Ringling North standing outside the newly opened John Ringling Hotel in Sarasota, circa 1944.

Photograph from *A Ringling by any Other Name*. 
the process, be consumed quantities of alcohol, played music, danced and chased a succession of women. Being a playboy helped North to make useful contacts in the upper levels of the entertainment world. How much the circus benefited from these boozy exchanges is a matter of conjecture.

The author commends North for innovations that revived attendance in the wake of the Great Depression, but faults him for gradually losing interest after World War II and turning management of the circus over to subordinates. His withdrawal was partly due to factors beyond his control that undermined the popularity of circuses: competition from television, rising transportation costs, shortages of unskilled labor and prolonged warfare with unions. Albrecht speaks with authority about such matters, and any specialist preparing an institutional history of American circuses will be grateful for his contribution.

George H. Mayer


Creating a good architectural guidebook is a very difficult undertaking. Buildings must be identified, researched and photographed, and the information then packaged in a fashion that addresses the interests of professional architects, history buffs, students, motorists and armchair travelers. When a guide covers an entire state, its publication becomes particularly challenging.

The Florida Association of the American Institute of Architects has undertaken the task of assembling a guide to Florida’s historic architecture with resourcefulness and vigor. The association called upon architects in each of its chapters to document locally significant properties. Beginning with basic information prepared by graduate students in the Department of Architecture at the University of Florida, the chapter architects prepared thumbnail histories of 945 sites, located each on a map and photographed all but four of them. The project coordinators, F. Blair Reeves and Mary N.G. Reeves, dealt with scores of writers from the sixty-seven counties that are included in the guide.

The result is a fascinating chronicle of regional architecture and construction traditions. All types and styles of buildings are included. There are grand mansions like Vizcaya in Miami, millworkers’ cottages and homesteads on the Gulf Coast, Spanish Revival theaters, sturdy lighthouses, Victorian churches, classical courthouses and downtown business blocks. Particularly interesting are the vast resort hotels and industrial structures that served the specialized Florida economy – a citrus packing house in Avon Park, a warehouse at a long-staple cotton processing factory in Madison and an ice plant in Melbourne that supplied households as well as fishermen.

The book focuses on buildings that were erected in Florida before the advent of air conditioning, when builders and architects were forced to accommodate their designs and construction techniques to the demands of the tropical climate. The book’s introductory essay on the state’s architectural history laments how more recent development has created buildings in
which climate and location are often “misunderstood or ignored” and how “large corporations, with heads and hearts elsewhere” have typically commissioned “architecture of national appeal with little Florida accent” (p. 5). The authors optimistically suggest that the closing years of this century “may be remembered as a period of return to a Florida vernacular architecture that takes into account both tradition and innovation” (p. 5). This admirable volume offers a wealth of information that can assist in the process of reinstating a “Florida accent” to the state’s architectural future.

Many readers may wish that the production of the book had been equal to its contents. The postage stamp-size photographs serve mostly to create a desire to see the buildings more clearly. An index would have made the locations of sites and other factual information much more accessible. But these changes can readily be made in future editions, of which there will, hopefully, be many.

Diana S. Waite
ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lakeland Public Library has received a grant from the Florida endowment for the Humanities for an exhibit entitled "Pilots in the Sun: Civilian Pilot Training Schools, 1940-1945, Lakeland and Avon Park, Florida." This grant will allow the library to construct a traveling photographic exhibit which will open at the library in September 1990. The project will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Lodwick School of Aeronautics in Lakeland. In addition to framed photographs, there will be an exhibit catalog with brief histories of the pilot schools in Lakeland and Avon Park, as well as oral histories of former pilots, instructors and personnel of the two schools. The Lakeland school was an outgrowth of one of the nine original schools in the Civilian-AAF (Army Air Force) Pilot Training Program. The program was a significant force in building this country's air strength, which in turn helped win the war. The two schools trained more than 10,000 pilots, 1,200 of whom were British. For further information, please contact: Hal Hubener, Project Director, Lakeland Public Library, 100 Lake Morton Drive, Lakeland, FL 33801. (813) 682=2168.

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The Fort Myers Historical Museum has set aside one section of its front gallery for local collectors to share their individual treasures with visitors for a period of eight weeks. The items are displayed in two well lighted locked cases - approximately five feet long and 4 ½ feet high, with two glass shelves in each cabinet; each shelf is 12 inches deep. Security cubes are also available for some small items. Some participants prefer to remain anonymous - others supply attractive signs or obtain their own labels. This arrangement has become very popular and at the present is booked until the Fall of 1990. If you are interested in joining the venture, please contact either Patricia Bartlett or Mildred Santiago at the Fort Myers Historical Museum at (813) 332-5955, Monday through Friday.
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COVER: In 1926 the jazz band of Isham Jones, featured at the Davis Islands Country Club in Tampa, was broadcast live over radio Station WDAE. (Photograph courtesy of Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library Systems.) See "Musical Traditions in Florida," page 29.
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