"Hot, Cold, Whiskey Punch": The Civil War Letters of Charles H. Tillinghast, U.S.N.

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Despite the publication of thousands of letters written by Civil War participants, relatively few collections of correspondence from sailors or naval officers have reached print. This remains particularly true of those individuals in the East Gulf Blockading Squadron (EGBS), the unit responsible for blockading much of the Florida coast during the war. The EGBS was a small squadron operating in a remote theater of the war. It received little publicity and participated in few large-scale operations, but it proved successful in restricting blockade running along the Florida coast, in attacking the extensive salt works in the area, and in providing support to the state’s Unionist inhabitants.1

The U.S.S. Tahoma served from 1862 until 1865 in the EGBS. One of the squadron’s more successful vessels, it captured or assisted in the capture of twelve enemy ships and conducted a series of devastating raids on Confederate salt works along the northern gulf coast. The "4th rate screw gunboat" weighed 507 tons and was 158 feet long and 28 feet wide with a draft of less than eleven feet. Its armament consisted originally of five large cannon.2

Most of the Tahoma’s seventy-nine man crew enlisted at Philadelphia in 1861. Among them was Charles H. Tillinghast, commissioned as an acting master’s mate on October 15, 1861. There is little information available on Tillinghast’s pre- or post-war life. Sketchy official records indicate that he was born in Rhode Island in 1839, and in his letters Tillinghast refers to his family in Providence. Evidently he lived in
Philadelphia immediately before joining the navy. The letters reproduced below are all addressed to Jennie Koehler of Philadelphia, believed to be the sister of Tillinghast's comrade on the Tahoma, Master's Mate John Green Koehler.  

Tillinghast would serve aboard the *Tahoma* or one of its tenders from late 1861 until mid-1863. His colorful letters provide details on the ship's military actions along the Florida coast, as well as descriptions of the day-to-day life aboard a blockader. Although he began his naval career in high spirits, by late 1862 Tillinghast's letters indicate a growing dissatisfaction with the hardships of naval life, as well as anger over the Emancipation Proclamation and the increased emphasis on the abolition of slavery as a northern war aim. These issues, coupled with personality conflicts with the Tahoma's captain, Alexander Semmes, led Tillinghast to offer his resignation on April 7, 1863. In a letter to Jennie Koehler the young officer described an argument with Semmes which prompted his resignation, but his official letter of resignation provided a different reason: "I respectfully tender my resignation as Act'g Master's Mate in the Navy of the U. States. My reasons are account of deafness, it is very difficult for me to hear orders."

Tillinghast remained in service for more than a month, waiting for official acceptance of his resignation. He probably left the EGBS in late May or early June 1863. While we may assume that Tillinghast returned to Philadelphia, no details have emerged concerning his post-war life. Unfortunately, he did not apply for a Civil War pension, which might have provided additional information.

With one exception, the Tillinghast letters reproduced below are in the private collection of Richard J. Ferry. They were obtained several years ago from a Civil War documents dealer. The lone exception is the letter of March 2, 1862, which has resided in the P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida for a number of years. The provenance of the letters thus cannot be traced, and the possibility remains that additional letters may be in existence in the hands of collectors or descendants of Tillinghast.  

The Tillinghast letters have been reproduced as closely as possible to the originals. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation follow Tillinghast's, and the editors have avoided the use of "sic." To aid in readability, bracketed words have been added by the editors in several instances. Where a word in the original is illegible, a blank line followed by a bracketed question mark has been added. The identification of most persons and places mentioned in the letters is in the endnotes. 

The editors express their appreciation to Belinda Coles for assisting in the preparation of the article and to Frank Alduino, for checking several sources at the National Archives.

Jany 14th 1862  
On board U.S. Gun Boat  
Tahoma, off Key West

Friend Jennie

I suppose you would think it very strange if I did not write, and as their is a mail leaving to day I take this opportunity of informing you as to our whereabout. We left Chester Sunday morning Dec 29th and after an extremely long passage of eleven days, we arrived to the famous little town of Key West, which is situated about ninety miles to
the northward of Cuba, it is very warm here but we manage to keep cool under the awnings for we have them spread fore-and-aft on the vessel. We have been quite busy since we arrived turning in our rigging and repairing the engine, for it broke down when we were three days out and we were twenty four hours drifting about at the mercy of the wind and sea, for she does not work well under canvas, we have to depend altogether on steam or we never should get any where. Two days before we arrived we made a sail on our starboard bow bound to the Northward, mustered all hands to quarters, cast guns loose and loaded with shot and shell, in half an hour we came up with her and fired a shot across her bow, and brought her too, lower'd away the boat and boarded her, she proved to be a schooner fourteen days from South America, bound to Boston, we was very much disappointed for we where in hopes to find her Secesh and take her as a prize. The Gun Boat Itaska has been here for two weeks repairing her engine for she broke down worse than we did and was twenty one days on the passage, She sails this afternoon for Ship Island to report to the Commodore. We expect to sail Saturday for the same place, where we shall receive orders as to our future destination which will be some place in the Gulf of Mexico. Sunday the Steamer Illinois arrived from New York with the ninetieth regiment on board. She leaves for New York tomorrow. Yesterday while the Captain was on shore, the Lieutenant sent me in the Cabin to paint some small boat signals and it looked so natural, that I could, but think of the fine times, we had their drinking the Captains health and eating his preserved Oysters. Did you ever think of it Miss Innocence? Please give my I-e to the family and to Miss Emma and Mary Maine and my respects to Mr Louis DeRuse. I wonder if you ever found that picture you was in search of when I left if you have, do not show it to Mr Weeks, for he might think rather hard of me, as I had claimed the ownership of the said article once. I have a piece of poetry presented by Miss Emma Maine, it is called, What, Said, She! I shall keep that to remember old times, I ought to have one to remember you by, but you always came off victorious on the poetry fights. I suppose you have no objections of my taking a comfortable smoke, Well! I should like to very much, but I have not had the said pleasure since I left the Hotel de Koehler, No 17 Catharine St. I suppose you will honor me with an answer and oblige your Old Chummy

Chas. H. Tillinghast
Please direct as follows
Chas. H. Tillinghast Esq
Masters Mate
U.S. Gun Boat Tahoma
Gulf Blockading Squadron

U.S. Gun Boat Tahoma
Off Cedar Keys, Florida
March 2nd 1862

Friend Jennie

Since my last letter I have been looking very anxiously for an answer, but have been disappointed, not even hearing from home. On the 27th of Feby 1862 The Steamer "St Jago de Cubas" arrived here from Ship Island with the mail and fresh provishions, John received two letters, one from you, and one from his wife and he is as happy as a clam at high water to hear that his family is well. I see by his letter that you had answered mine, but I suppose it is just my darn luck, (excuse me for swearing) to have it mislaid on some of the Steamers, but I trust it may come to hand by the next mail. As the Steamer Rhode Island will be due on the Sixth of this month, I take this
opportunity of informing you that we are on
the lookout for Secesh, and are ready for a
fight at a seconds notice, we have had no
fighting to do as yet, but it is my opinion
that we will all smell powder before we
return. The Captain received despatches
from the Flag Ship, by the last mail, that
we where to be relieved from this station,
and join the Western division, which
extends from Ship Island to the western
extremity of the United States, or the so
called Confederate States, we shall probably
Join the Mississippi expediton, but how
soon I can not inform you, we may lay at
Cedar Key’s for months and not have any
fighting to do, and if we join the Western
division we shall have all we want, for my
part the sooner we leave for the fighting
grounds the better, for we entered the
service to fight and fight we will, until this
cursed rebellion is crushed to its foundation.
I see by our latest news that our western
troops had gained a splendid victory in
Tennessee, and that the Burnside
expedition have got a footing on the
Atlantic Coast; and I hope you will hear
from this quarter next. The life on board of a
Man of War is lazy enough I assure you,
nothing to do, but eat, drink, sleep and Smoke,
and exercise at the Guns occasionally. We lay to an Anchor in the
midst of a group of Small Islands most of
them uninhabited, when we arrived here
there where a number of Soldiers on Depot
Key, but since we fired a few shot at them,
they have retreated out of shot on the main
land, if we had force enough we could land
and take possession of the railroad, but it is
doubtful whether we could hold it, as the
Rebels could send large forces down on us
from the interior of the State. On Sunday
Feb 23rd the lookout at the mast head
reported a small sail boat in back of one of
the Keys, we lowered a boat and went in
persuit, but where unsuccessful, they
discovered two small boats laying to an
anchor in a creek on the opposite side of the
Key, but as we fired a gun for them to return
they where obliged to leave them. At Six
P.M. Dispatched two boats with picked
crew’s in charge of Lieut and Mr. Hurley
“Master”, to capture the boats, but as hour
after hour passed away and no boats
returned the Captain began to feel anxious
for their safety. At 9.30 the next morning the
boats where seen coming round the Keys. In
a short time they arrived along side bringing
the body of John Patterson who had been
shot through the head, Killing him instantly
he belonged to Philadelphia. It seems that
the boats had entered the creek and where
laying aground all night by the prizes, in the
morning while in the act of towing them out,
they were fired at by a company of Rebel
soldiers, and had they been good shots, not
one would have returned to tell the tale, for
both boats where badly riddled, but they
scuttled the prizes and pulled out of range,
in the heat of the fire waving the American
Ensign all the time, it was a miracle they
escaped, for they waided waist deep in the
creek and fired at them. The Captain swears
he will have revenge for the intends burning
every house on the Island. I see by John’s
letter that you had received a letter from
Hammond and he intends sending the two
dollars when he gets it, I wonder if he will
send the twenty five cents with it, if he does,
go down to the water and get a Cold Hot
Whiskey Punch and when you return look in
the looking glass and you will notice
something peculiar about the Eyes. I wonder
if he has got his shoulder straps yet? for that
is the time he sets for getting married,
perhaps he intends giving Pauline a call, I
can imagine I see him draw his chair by her
side and asking her how the world uses her
& c & c. Have you heard from the Masters
Mates on the State of Georgia or from
Sweat the Banjoe player, for if I knew what
station they where on I would write them?
While I am writing the lookout at the Mast
head, cries out *Sail Oh*, and than the
Boatswain’s pipes all hand to weigh anchor
so I shall have to drop my pen for the
present and go on deck. We steamed out of
the bay and ran along side of the vessel,
which proved to be the Barque James L
Davis, our relief. She brings letters
countermanding our previous orders, and we
are to procede to Appalachicola and join a
fleet and shell them out if possible, So if you
hear that *Appalachicola* is taken, you may
know that the Gun Boat "Tahoma" had a
hand in it. We escorted the Barque in the
bay, and came to an Anchor, and made
preperations to Sail on Monday.

**Tuesday March 4, 62**

Shortly after we came to an anchor on
Sunday it came on to blow heavy from the
westward and did not abate untill this
morning, which prevented us from Sailing
on the day set, however we Sail to day at
high water. We leave our malls on the
Barque James L. Davis, and when the
Steamer Rhode Island returns they will go
north. The mail leaves the north every two
weeks for the Gulf Squadron, So of you
would drop us a line and send us a
newspaper occasionally, they would be
thankfully received, for we can get no
information what ever from the Southern
resources - I should like to give you a call by
the firse of June but time only waits to tell
where we will be at that time Give my
respects to Miss Emma and Mary Maria and
tell them to have a bag of chestnuts ready by
the time I return and be good Girl’s and not
get tight any more. I suppose that Capt
Fauckner has left before this, if he has we
will keep a bright lookout that he wont run
the Blockade again. Give my respects to
all enquiring friends and don’t forget to write
your old Chum.

C.H.T
(alias)
Innocence
P.S. Excuse me for not posting this letter,
for postage stamps are not to be had in this
part of the country.

U. S. Steamer "Tahoma"
Off Cedar Key
May 4, 1862

Friend Jennie,

Your kind letter of March 13th came to hand
on the 26th inst. John received one at the
same time. I expected to get one from home,
but was disappointed. I have as yet received
but two from that quarter since leaving
Philadelphia. I expect I shall have to trust to
you for the news, as I get but little from
Providence. I ought to have a number of
letters before this, for I have written a good
many, and have received no answers, dull
work I assure you. We are still at our old
station, blockading "Cedar’s Key’s," which is
getting rather dull, or I might say played out,
not having any fighting to do, nor taking any
prizes, so as a matter of course, very little
excitement ensues on board of "Uncle Sam’s"
renowned Gun Boat "Tahoma." We
have to content ourselves with what the
other "boats" are doing, and what we intend
to do some future time. Although the past
ten days has wrought a change in our soli-
tary confinement.

On the 24th of April, while our Tender Alias
"Polly Hopkins" was sailing out over the
barr she run a shore, and was high and dry at
low water. We discharged some of her
ballast and towed her off at the next flood
tide.

At 11 A.M. same day, the look-out at the
mast head, cries out, "Sail Oh," two points
on our starboard bow standing down the coast. We weighed anchor, took the Polly Hopkins in tow, and was standing out over the barr, but owing to the ebb tide, as well as our miserable run of luck, we run ashore, hard and fast on the barr. We fitted out the "Polly Hopkins" and sent her in pursuit of the sail in the offing. We came off at high water, having sustained no damage. We have had poor luck, since leaving Philadelphia, probably owing to having sailed on Friday, which is termed the unlucky day. You may think me a little superstitious, if so, I think I learnt it from you.

The 26th inst. the Steamer Rhode Island arrived with the mails and fresh beef, which had been killed about a month you can judge for yourself, it was rather tenderer than the Philadelphia Market affords at this season the year, although it was very acceptable, as our diet consists, chiefly of beef, pork, hard bread, coffee & c.

At two P.M. Same day Store Ship "National Guard" arrived from which we received three months provishions. If I remember correctly we where to return at the end of three months, but it begins to look rather dubious, however, it is all the same to me, "happy go lucky" is my motto.

The Polly Hopkins arrived at 5 P.M. same day, she had three old flags of different Nations flying at her main. The Lieut. who had charge reports that he chased the vessel about twenty miles down the coast, and when about two miles off, fired several shots at her from the twelve lb. Howitzer, but the distance was to great to be effectual. She was a fine fore and aft Schooner, about eighty tons burden of light draught of water, evidently trying to run the blockade, the chase getting to hot for her they up helm, and run for the land, She run run ashore in about 4 ft of water about two miles from the beach, Our Tender chased her until they had but six foot of water, when they came to an anchor, put the Howitzer in the Launch and was rowing off to her, and when about half a mile from her a column of smoke rose from her decks, a clap of thunder followed, and to true to relate she was blown to the d-. The crew having set fire to her and rowed to the land in there boats. The Lieut. estimated the cargo and vessel to have been valued at fifty thousand dollars at the least calculation. She was loaded with a general cargo, such as Medicines, Powder, Saltpeter, Soap, Brooms & c. Our Tender made three trips to her and brought away her anchors, cables, Rigging, one hundred corn Brooms, twenty boxes of imported soap, cargo quantity of French Medicines & c & c. She was apparently from Cuba. The Rebels for such I took them to be, in there great haste to get ashore, left a little dog behind, She was found floating on a spar near the wreck not injured in the least. The Captain named her "Polly Hopkins," after his wife. I think he must think considerable of her. On the 28th inst. the U.S. Schooner "Beaureguard" arrived to blockade one of the channels off Cedar Key's under the orders of our Captain. On the second inst. he ordered her to Key West with dispatches to the Commodore and Cargo taken from the Rebel Schooner. She is to return, and will probably bring us a Mail. Old Man "Jackson" growled considerable when he heard the Schooner had been blown up, for he is to be the first prize Master. On Saturday last Mr Jackson and John went out on a cruise in the "Polly Hopkins" with ten men, well armed, to cruise up and down the coast for vessels running the blockade. He is to return on Thursday. I hope he will catch a "Secesh," it would be a joke if a secesh caught him, but I think there is but little fear of that.

May 9th 1862
Yesterday the Polly Hopkins returned not having seen a sail while on the cruise. I am to go with Mr Jackson on the next cruise, we shall probably sail in two or three days. ... John and myself have reformed, No Hot Cold Whiskey punches on the blockade, and no cabin Rangers neither, that's played out entirely... I wonder if Mr Hughes has improved in his navigation. I suppose the "State of Georgia" is at "Port Royal." I would much rather been on that station than in the Gulf for it is tedious laying here doing nothing, and not even knowing what is going on in our own station. We expect to hear that New Orleans has been bombarded if not taken, when the Steamer Rhode Island returns. She will be due on the 12th. At your request I have written you a long letter, although not much news, yet I have managed to fill two sheets with writing. I hope you will confer a like favor by the next mail.

Your Old Chum
Hot, Cold, Whiskey Punch.

May 14, 1862

Mr Jackson and myself have just returned from a cruise of three days, in the "Polly Hopkins." We had a fine time, but caught no "Secesh" not even seeing a sail on the cruise. We cruised between Suwanee River and Anclote Key's. I hope the next time we go out on a cruise, we may get orders to cruise as far as "Key West," and then we might stand some chance of taking a "Secesh." Tell Miss Emma & Mary to drop a line or two to the "Tahoma" and when the said "Tahoma" returns will send Mrs Kohler out to see her grandmother, and we'll have a birthday or a Kitchen Blow out.

Very respectfully your old chum.
H.C.W. Punch

U.S. Gun Boat "Tahoma"
Off Key West Florida
May 29th 1862

Friend Jennie

Your kind letter of March 27th inst came to hand May 19th by U.S. Steamer "Somerset" and I am rejoiced to say she has relieved us on our old blockading station "Cedar Key"! I shall long remember the day for I was officer of the deck at the time. I have just cautioned the lookout at the Mast head to keep a bright lookout and shortly after the Steamer "Somerset" was made steaming up the coast. I reported to the Captain. We immediately got up steam, weighed anchor and proceeded out to her. When we learnt She was our relief, three hearty cheers rose from our decks which was responded to by the "Somerset." The sudden news seemed to give every one new life for we have all been dead for the past two months, only we did not know it. The two Steamers came to an anchor off the bar, near the Store Ship "National Guard" which had been laying here the past week, giving us coal provisions, whiskey & c. At 9:30 on the 20th inst a detachment from each vessel embarked on board the Steamer "Somerset" and steamed up to the town. All the Officers but old man Jackson and myself went on the expedition, we were left behind to look after the saucy "Tahoma." I was one of the first who volunteered to go on the expedition, but as the Lieut. and I don't hitch horses, I was politely refused, however there was not much honor gained "as no one had an opportunity of being wrapped in the American Ensign & c & c. As John wrote all the particulars of the expedition I will say nothing about it any more than it was a slim affair. Tuesday 21st inst. at two A.M. We bid adieu to "Cedar Key's" and sailed for Key West. After two days Steaming we arrived at "Key West" having seen nothing
but two fishing Smacks on the passage. We reported to Flay Officer McKeene, who has ordered us to cruise of Havana, after making Sundry repairs to our decks which are in a very bad condition. While I am writing, about fifteen caulkers are to work caulking the decks directly over my head and it is impossible to write or think of an idea while such hammering is going on overhead. We will remain here about ten days and then proceed on our cruise. There is a very large number of vessels laying at Key West, probably more then was ever here before at one time. There are some five or six Prizes laying here which where taken by the Gulf Squadron, one of which is a magnificent English Steamer and is a very valuable prize. Although late in the day I hope we will take one if no more, for we are going to the right place to catch them. The Captain thinks we will be sent to the northward in the fall, hope it will turn out true, for this is a miserable station. I think the war will soon be ended as all the principal Sea ports on the Atlantic and Gulf coats are in possesion of the Union forces and I see by the late northern papers that the President has issued a proclamation to open some of the Ports under blockade by the 1st of June. I should like to blockade No 17 "Catharine St" on the 1st of June and I bet we'd have 4th of July in the morning, wouldn't. we chum.... If you write to my sister look out, although far from home, you are under my jurisdiction yet, for I will inform Uncle Sam you are "Secesh" and he will find you a new boarding place.

Your Old Chum
Hot, Cold, Whiskey, Punch

U.S. Gun Boat "Tahoma"
Key West June 28th 1862

Chum

Your kind letter of June 2nd came to hand June 25th per U.S. Stmr "Rhode Island." She brought a very large Mail for the Gulf Squadron, I was very much disappointed in not receiving a letter from home, So hereafter I shall trust to you for letters altogether, what few I receive from other resources. I shall consider as chance shots. I see by your letter that you and Emma paid a visite to the old woman of color, and it seems she told you strange things, now if you would go back to the Old Woman’s and make her Shuffle those cards over again, she might possibly solve the deep secret the said light complexioned person holds from you. I wonder when the said Woman looked so knowingly at you, if you saw anything green, for I begin to see a very small mice in the distance .... John and Myself have been in luck for the past week as papers and letters are concerned. I received that package of papers you sent by Bark Conrad bound to New Orleans, John received a letter at the same time. We were on our way from St Andrews Bay to Key West by the way of "Tortugas" which place we ______ U.S. Stmr Rhode Island, I received a letter from Emma Maine the day following 25 inst. We arrived in Key West where I received a letter from you and a package of papers from Hartford. We are to coal Ship and make some sundry repairs to the Boilers and then we go to Sea again to cruise off Nassau (?) for some Rebel Gun boats that were built there. We shall probably be back again in course of two weeks time. I hope we shall have the pleasure of failing in with something that will show fight, for we have had no excitement since we left Phila and I think a little would do us good. This is the fifth letter I have written to day, one to Emma Maine which continues a discription of our cruise to the blockading Station in the Gulf I send you a Key West Herald which contains the glowing account of our attack on St Marks, great loss on the Confederate
side, the Federals having Sustained no loss whatever\textsuperscript{35} \ldots I have written this letter at a double quick time, as the mail bag closes early in the morning.

C.H. Tillinghast

U.S. Steamer "Tahoma"
Key West
July 19, 62

Friend Jennie

... July 15th John rec'd a letter from Mr Dan McGwin bringing the ill-fated news of the death of his two [?] children. He took it very hard, and fears the worst is to come yet. He is very anxious about his wife. He thought it very strange that he received no letters from home. Perhaps you had better write the full particulars when you receive this. I would like to write you a long letter but I have no time as we have Steam up and will get under weigh in a few minutes. On our last cruise we took a prize loaded with cotton, we towed her to Key West I have had charge of her ever since we arrived.\textsuperscript{36} I delivered her over into the hands of the Marshal [?] at a late hour last evening and was informed we were to go to Sea at day light this morning so you see I am some what hurried. We are to visit all the vessels blockading on the Eastern division, and return. The Pilot has just come on board and all hands have been called to get the vessel under weigh.

So I must Close.
Write Soon
Your Old Friend,

C.H. Tillinghast

In my next letter I will give you the full particuler of our last cruise. We shall probably be gone about two weeks. I shall expect a letter from you when we return. Excuse writing & c.

"Chum"

U.S. Steamer "Tahoma"
Key West, Florida
July 29th 1862

Chum

Your interesting letter of the 9th inst. was duely received yesterday afternoon, shortly after our arrival, John received three, one from his wife, one from you, and an other from some other source. So you see we fare much better than we did, while laying on the Blockade it is seldom a mail arrives, but we get one our more letters and papers, So much for having friends! Ahern [?]. Since John has received a letter from his Wife, he has been in much better spirits, he received her picture with the letter, she looks very much worn and fatigued, and must have had a very severe time of it.... I will write you a few lines concerning our last cruise. We sailed from Key West, 3rd inst. to cruise of Cape San Antonio, but as we were short of water, the Capn. concluded to run for the coast of "Yucatan," We spoke a Spanish fishing Smack off the Coast, who informed us, there was a Mexican Settlement a few miles down the coast, which place we arrived at 1 P.M. on the 7th inst. We were obliged to Anchor seven miles off shore, as the water was very shoal. The Lieut. went ashore to purchase some fresh provishions, he bought off three of the largest green Turtles I ever saw, weighing between five and six hundred pounds each. Three of the boats crew deserted taking their Arms with them. The Lieut. offered the Mexicans a reward of sixty dollars if they would capture them. At Six PM. same day we took a prize in a very singular manner, Early in the
afternoon a Sall was reported by the lookout, coming down the coast. At first we took but little notice of her, as she resembled the vessel we spoke [to] the day previous, but as she neared us, we could see the loom of Cotton Bales on her decks. On she came not dreaming of running into the hands of an enemy. When she was about a mile off, we fired a shot across her bow, brought her to the wind, sent a boat to her, and set the "Stars and Stripes" at her Main. We put a prize crew on board of her, and took her officer and crew on board the Stmr. She cleared under Confederate Colours and papers, from "Matagorda Bay" Texas bound to some port in the "Bay of Honduress." She is a center board Schooner, registers Sixty one tons, and has a cargo of one hundred and fifteen bales good staple cotton. The following morning I went ashore with Lieut. to see if the deserters had been taken. We were informed they were seen some twelve miles beyond the town, but they were afraid to take them because they were armed. You would have laughed to have seen me trying to talk to the Governors Wife for neither one of us could understand each other. She kept a store, "or rather a bar." I managed to make her understand Cegurs and something to drink so I was all right. These were some very fine looking girls among them, I will tell you how they were dressed. They wore what you would call a dessable [?], a white loose gown low neck short sleeves and a string of ____[?] shells around their necks. How do you like the style? At six RM. weighed anchor took the prize in tow and steered for Key West. When we arrived on the 11th inst, I have been obliged to write in the in the double quick as the Stmr is getting up steam-to go out- we are well.

H.C.W.P.

Tampa Bay Augst 15th 1862

U.S. Steamer "Tahoma"

Your interesting letter of June 15th came to hand (Augst 2nd) per U.S. Stm'r "Connetticut" on her homeward trip. John received one at the same time. They must have been carried to "Ship Island" instead of "Key West," which accounts for not receiving them sooner. Those papers mentioned in your letter I have not received. We left Key West Augst 2nd inst. (Friday) at 11.30 A.M. and arrived at "Tampa Bay" Saturday at 4.30 P.M. relived the U.S. Stm'r "Sagamore" which has been blockading here for the past month. Our stay at "Key West" was very short, owing to a few cases of Yellow fever. There were three deaths on the Island and two on board the "Flag Ship" (San Jacinto) the night previous to our sailing. Flag Officer "Lardner" has put a "Veto" on Officers and crew's going ashore; no person in the "Navy" is allowed to visite the "Island" except on special duty. Every precaution is used to keep the disease clear of the Shipping. On the 7th inst. the U.S. Barque "Ethan Allen" arrived. She will blockade for a short time, and return to Key West when she will be ordered home as her crew shipped for one year and their time has nearly expired. From her I learned there were some twenty cases of Fever on the "Flag Ship" and the Commodore had transfered his flag to the U.S. Frigate "St Lawrence" and ordered the "San Jacinto" to Boston. We have no fear of the Yellow Jack at Tampa for we lay to an anchor off in an open bay, and any breeze stiring we are sure to get it. Our only trouble is the blasted "Musquitoes." I have often heard of the "Musquito Fleet" but never was an eye witness before. We act entirely on the defensive, for to take up arm's against such innumerable numbers we'd meet with sure destruction. Every night we are attacked by these unmerciful devils, (if I may call them
such) "for they are regular old gray black's," with probosis long enough to penetrate three over coats. You would laugh to visite the "Tahoma" just one night, and you would see sights, some are roaming round the decks with rubber coats, rubber boots on and stockings drawn over their hands, others might be seen with a thick blanket wrapped around them, occasionally uttering some Oath, wishing the poor D____’s no good. As for my poor self. I sling my hammock on deck, and all that is visible is a pair of Sea boots hanging over the gunnel of the hammock. There are six white people and ten contraband's living on "Egmont Key" at the expense of the Government, they wash for us, and supply us with fresh fish. On the 7th inst. we captured a Secesionist in a small boat the Capt holds him a "prisoner of war," he was wounded in the foot having been in the Rebel service, and was accidentally shot while on picket duty. I have written about all of the news; it is a difficult task to sit with the thermometer at 136º and write a long letter, more especially when we can't get anything to revive our drooping spirits. I will take that little bet you are so anxious to make about the "Phil Ladies" going ahead of the "Prov Ladies" in regard to brass buttons and guilt belts, for I received a letter sometime ago from my Sister stating they were all the rage. ... And you wish me to kiss the little rebel dog for you: perhaps I am not as fond of kissing dogs as you are! The Capt got tired of his dog's and sent them ashore in "Key West." . . As I have nearly filled my sheet and have no more news to write, I will go on deck and take a comfortable Smoke, but would much rather puff my little Bryerwood at No. 17. C_____. St. (Phila) and occasionally go and take a look at the river (that never freezes). Respects to all.

Respectfully Yours
Ht Cd Wy Ph

Aug 30th 1862

Yours of Aug 1st was duly received on the 27th inst. by the U.S. Schooner "Beuareguard" from "Key West." As I have filled one sheet you can't expect me to write much more, but I will honor you with an answer....

Last Thursday we were informed by the Contrabands that two of the Refugees living on "Egmont Key" had been killed and one seriously wounded by the Rebels, while they were up the Bay in a small boat after some pig's they had on their farms. Now that's what I call a cold blooded Murder. Those men were neutral, not taking part on either side, and to be shot while approaching their own property and in their own boat, it is horrid to think of. If we had an enerjetic Captain we might have our revenge —but "Capt Howell" is not the right man in the right place. He is a very good man over a bottle of Whisky and can blow as loud as the best of them, but I can't say much for his fighting qualities, for we have done barely nothing since we have been in Commishion. While I am writing the U.S. Stmr Connecticut has been reported as running in towards us and great preperations are being made on deck to get the Vessel under weigh and run out to her- There goes the "Boatswains" call. (All have up Anchor) so I must leave you for the present.

I assure you I feel in no humor to write any more for I received no letter by the Mail, not even a Newspaper. John was no more fortunate than Myself- I see by your letter that Forest is trying to get Luis De Russe in the Navy. Now I don't wish to discourage him but I would advise him as a friend not to accept an appointment as "Masters Mate." If he could get the Appointment as "Paymaster" or Captain or Paymasters clerk it would it would be a very good situation.
for him.... I must close now as I have filled my second sheet. I hope you can manage to read it. This is my business hand writing. You would excuse me if you knew how warm it is here.

Very Respectfully Your Old Chum
C.H.T

U.S. Stm'r "Tahoma"
Cedar Key's
Nov 16, 1862

Friend "Chum"

Your kind letter of Sept 28th was duly received on the 20th of Oct by the U.S. Stm'r "Conneticut."

I had just returned from a cruise in the "Tender" with Mr Jackson. Slightly disabled, having cut the end of my fore finger off, on my right hand, while in the act of bringing the "Schooner" to an anchor, it blowing quite fresh at the time. So you must excuse me for not answering your letter sooner for I find it quite difficult in writing left handed letters.

I find it don't pay to loose fingers if I had lost an arm or a leg, I might have drawn a pension for life, that would have been "Bully, " wouldn't it "Chum." . . .

Nothing of any importance has taken place since the 1st of Oct.- with the exception of destroying the Rebel Salt Works, and as John has sent you all the particulars of the affair, I will not trouble you with it again.47

Two Contrabands came off to us some ten day's ago, the Capt gave them refuge on board and shipped them before the Mast.

There has been a general change among the Officers since leaving "Key West," Our Executive Officer "Lieut. Crossman" was ordered three weeks ago to take command of the U.S. Stm'r "Somerset." Actg Master J.S. Higbee has also been transferred to the U.S. "Somerset."48 Mr Jackson's appointment has been confirmed by the Department as Actg "Ensign." A Mr Harrison & Hamlin Actg. "Ensign's" have reported on board for duty.49 Capt Howell has been ordered home, he leaves us in "Key West." We are hourly expecting our relief, when we shall proceed direct to "Key West."

It is rumored that a "Mr Semmes" Lieut Com'd'r will take charge of the "Tahoma" in "Key West," but it is not reliable.50

Where we are to go after leaving "Key West" I can't inform you. I hope it will be to "Mobile" as they will make a demonstration on that port as soon as the "Iron Clads" arrive.51

I hope our next Capt. will show himself more energetic than our present one. Capt Howell would make a very good "Fishmonger" but he has proved himself a very poor warrior.

I see by Emma's letter that you have moved from Catherine St. to where you formerly lived. I should think you would appreciate the change very much, as there is much more excitement in Third St....

I shall expect to hear from you soon. Give my respects to all the family.

Very Respectfully Your Friend
H. C. W. Punch

U.S. Stm'r "Tahoma"
"Tampa Bay" Florida  
Dec. 23rd 1862.

Friend "Chum"

I received your interesting letter of Nov 9th on the 9th of Decr a few hours before we went to Sea and as we had considerable to do at the time I had to delay answering it until we arrived at "Tampa Bay." On our arrival at "Key West" I wrote to you, Miss Emma, and Mr Derousse, on the 6th inst. I received a letter from Louis Derousse also Several Philadelphia "Enquirers" and I assure you they were a great treat, as they were the only Philadelphia papers on board.

I see by your letter that you are having a very disagreeable time with the rising generation, (alias niggers) Well! that's what we are fighting for now, and there is no getting over it.52 I wish this "war" was over, or order us home, one or the other and I would resign my posish as M.M. under "Uncle Sam" for I am tired of fighting for such trash. Capt Howell's relief did not arrive by the last Steamer so the Commodore sent us to Tampa Bay to Blockade for a short time. On our arrival at "Tampa Bay" we took the U.S. Schooner "Beauregard" as a Tender and proceeded some twenty five miles up the Bay to reconnoitre. Perhaps you don't understand the Style of our reconnoitering Expeditions! we want in search of Rebels; Oh; No! but for fish and oyster's and we found them in abundance some of the largest and finest Oysters I ever ate.

On the 19th inst. weighed anchor and proceeded down the Bay, as it was blowing fresh at the time we could not go to sea. So we Anchored under the lee of "Egmont Key" at daylight on the 20th inst. weighed anchor and proceeded about twenty five miles down the coast in company with the U.S. Schooner "Beauregard," came to an anchor off "Saro Sota" inlet, Spent the remainder of the day in working the Schooner "Beauregard" in the Bay and at sundown anchored her off a Mr. Whitaker's Plantation.53 At day light the following morning manned our boats and proceeded to the "Beauregard" mounted one of her boat Howitzer's in the "Launch" and the expedition left for the plantation. At 9.AM landed burnt a "Sloop" of about twelve tons burden and then proceeded to his house found him with his wife and children, he was strong Secesh, but as he did not use any rash expressions, we done him no harm, he had a fine Orange grove in front of his house, it was about half a mile long and some three hundred yds wide, and the tree's were loaded down with the handsomest oranges I ever saw. We loaded three boats and proceeded to the Ship. I wouldn't have you think that we Stole the oranges, No! we confiscated them, that's the way we do business in "Florida," we keep standing accounts with each other. At 3. PM. weighed anchor and proceeded to "Tampa Bay" in company with Schooner "Beaureguard." On the 22nd inst. got under weigh and proceeded some ten miles up the Bay in company with our tender, the B__, and anchored off Manitee river, the Beauregard kept on up the river and anchored off the Town of "Manitee" landed, had a chat with the enhabitance, confiscated three Bullocks one pig and six chickens, burnt a small Schooner of about twelve ton's burden, and had a good time generally, brought off one refugee, he will probably take passage with us to "Key West," he was drafted in the Rebel army and held the position of a lieut. he was discharged from the service on account of sickness. The inhabitance of Manitee are really in a pittiful condition, the men are away to the "war" leaving the poor women at home to look out for themselves. One house I went to about three miles from the
town I saw an old lady all alone, her husband having been drafted in the army since last March, from her we heard that the prisoner we took the last time we were laying at "Tampa Bay" and we released shortly after, had been last in prison at "Tampa," merely because he spoke of the kindness he received while on board the "Tahoma" that's southern hospitality for you. After visiting all the farm houses in the vicinity of the river, manned our boats and proceeded down the river. As my sheet is full I must close and fill my bryerwood pipe and take a bully old smoke. While I have been writing John has been spinning a yarn and a Mr Richards is playing on the Banjo. So you see we manage to enjoy our selves after a fashion. Remember me to all the family & c. I hope your mother's presentment will prove true, but I doubt very much that the "Tahoma" will be ordered home before next summer. As we are not in a fit condition to go to the No. this winter. The "Circassion" is expected in every day and I hope she will bring a large mail. The Schooner "Beaureguard" will leave for "Key West" in a few days with the mails.

So long for the present.
Very respectfully
Your old "Chum"
U.S.N.

U.S. Stm’r "Tahoma"
Tampa Bay Florida
Jan 9th 1863

Friend Jennie
Your kind letter of Dec 11th was received on the 26th inst. it came to hand by the U.S. Stm’r "Circassian," Capt. Howell’s relief also arrived, it was quite affecting to see the Old fellow take his departure, although I didn’t regret in the least, to see him go. He shook hands with all the Officer’s and bid them and his crew "good bye," he had tears in his eyes as he went over the "gangway," and as his boat shoved off, the rigging was manned by the crew who gave him three rousing cheer’s, his boats crew then returned the compliment. Thus ends our career with "John C. Howell Esq." Capt. "Semmes" is a very different man from our former "Commander," he is very strict and further more has an eye to business. We have seen more service and boarded more vessels since Capt. Semmes came on board, then we did the whole year under Cap’t Howell. When ever a sail heaves in sight, we up anchor and give chase, that’s what I call enforcing the blockade. At day light on the 8th inst. saw a sail off Manitee river, got under way and gave chase, on arriving near we perceived her to be on fire, manned boats and proceeded to put the fire out. She was a small Sloop named the "Silas Henry" cotton loaded. It seems that she came down from "Tampa" the night previous with intentions of running the blockade and run run ashore - and as day light came on before they had a chance to get her off the Rebels set fire to her and went ashore. We managed to save the hull and cotton in a damaged state, towed the wreck off the Shoal and discharged the Cotton on "Egmont Key" to dry, it is to be bailed up and sent to "Key West" to be sold, it will probably sell for about four thousand dollars Well! Chum, I shall be lucky if I get enough prise money out of that lot to buy a "H.C.W.P" with. If we had taken her before they set fire to her, we would have had a handsome prize, for She would have sold for twenty five thousand dollar’s. We are daily expecting the Stm’r "Magnolia" from "Key West" with coal, provisions and the "Mail." If she does not in course of a few days we shall start for "Key West" to coal ship as our coal is getting very low. Chum! what do you think about the "Tahoma's" going to the No, it is rumored on board that the Cap't intends
having a survey held on the vessel and very probably they will condemn her and send her home in the Spring. Our Steam pumps are continually at work to keep her free, the leak has gained on us very much within the last two months. I think there is a better prospect of our going home under Cap't Semmes than there was with our former Cap’t.58

Key West Jany 15. 1863

We arrived in Key West at 9 am today. We are to take in coal and provisions and will go to sea tomorrow, probably for Tampa Bay...

Jan 16. 1863

I heard this evening that we will go to "Cedar Keys" from there to "Tampa Bay" It has been blowing a gale from the No ever since we arrived, we have our coal and provisions in and will probably go to sea as soon as the weather bids fair.

We had the d___l's own time last night, the crew managed to get some liquor (alias H.C.W.P) and fighting, Swearing too was the order of the night, since ten or twelve were put in double Irons, and we'll have to pay pretty dearly for their night's "Spree." I had a row with one of the men this morning, since heavy words were exchanged between us, I made a written report out to the Cap't which he approved of, he will be tried by a Court Martial tomorrow, and no doubt his sentence will be a severe one - As my sheet is about full, I will close for the present, as I am quite tired this evening having had considerable to do throughout the day in Stowing ship provisions, remember me to all the family also to your Aunty Green and Your Grandmother - I shall expect letters from you by the next mail. I remain as ever Your Sincere Friend

C. H.T U.S.N.

Tender to the U.S. Stm'r "Tahoma"
At Sea Feb 10. 1863

Friend "Chum"

Your's of such a date has not come to hand yet. So I will have to refer to letter of Dec 11 th which I think I answered while we were in "Key West," however I will go one blind, which will cost you two to see the blind, understand? Chum! you may think it strange to hear of my being detached from the "Tahoma" but such is the case, not for good though - Well! I will give you the details of our "dull monotonous life"(as you call it) since leaving "Key West." We left "Key West" at 9.30 P.M. on the 18th of JanY blowing a gale from the No Wt at the time, with our Capt under the effects of a Stronger beverage than water. (Say something like H.C.W.P). We came very near going ashore, having showed the water to two and a half fath's, the Capt came to the conclusion he would anchor and wait untill day light. At day light got under way and proceded to sea, it still blowing a gale from the No and as there was a heavy sea on at the time we rolled and pitched about pretty lively. At 11 A.M. boarded the U.S. Mail Steamer "Ocean Queen" from "New York" for "Aspinwell" with a large number of passenger's, from her we received New York papers to the 12th inst. The passenger's appeared to be much alarmed for fear the Rebel privatee (290) would overtake them.59 It was rumored in "Key West" the day we left that the "290" has been in sight of the Fort and has sent a challenge in to the U.S. Stm'r "San Jacinto," as to the trooth of the rumer1 can't say, however we went to sea that evening and navy "290" did we see, for we gave chase to every sail that hove in sight, going many miles of our course several times, on the
20th inst. came up with and boarded the U.S. Transport Steamer Princess from New Orleans bound to New York. From her we received New Orleans papers up to the 17th inst. giving an account of the Sinking of the U.S. Stm'r "Hatteras" by the Rebel "290." On Friday the 23rd inst we finally arrived in "Tampa Bay" after a long and tedious passage. I forgot to mention that we towed the Sloop "Julia" from "Key West" She mounts a 12 Pdr Howitzer and has over a hundred round of Shot and Shell on board.

On Sunday 25th inst took Sloop "Julia" in tow and proceeded some twenty five miles up the Bay and at sundown anchored off Old Tampa point some five miles below the town. At 10 P.M. the Executive Officer & John with eight picked men and a "Refugee" Mr Clay went on board tender and started for the town. At Midnight they landed went up to Clay's house, brought off his wife and two children. It seems that the Rebels have had a guard stationed near his house for a long time, but they were either afraid to make an attack or were not in hand at the time. The Expedition having accomplished all they went for returned to the Stm'r and we proceeded down the "Bay" on Monday the 26th inst. the Sloop "Julia" went into Commission as Tender to the U.S. Stm'r "Tahoma" Wrn H. Harrison Actg Ensign Comdg my self as Prize Master, provided we are lucky enough to take any prizes, and five men. At 5 P.M. the same day the Tahoma went to sea bound to Cedar Key's leaving us in her place to Blockade untill she returned, after the expiration of five day's she returned and on the evening of the 30th inst we went to sea on a cruise, proceeded some twenty five miles up the coast and cruised off Anclot Key's. On the 2nd of Feby at day light made a sail to the No & W on approaching near she proved to be the Tahoma in search of us. She took us in tow and proceeded some twenty miles to the So of Tampa Bay and came to off "Sara Sota Inlet" - hearing that a vessel had run in there a few day's previous. At 7 A.M. on the 3rd got under way in company with two boats from the "Tahoma" and proceeded in the Bay in search of said vessel, but to no effect as the Bird had flown. Effected a landing and went to Squire Whitaker's Plantation and paid a visite to the Orange Grove, but the oranges were gone too, as our trouble was fruitless we got under way and run out to the Stm'r again. On arriving at the Stm'r we received orders to proceed some Sixty miles down the coast as far as "Sinable Island" and over haul all the Bay's and Inlets to said place. On the 4th inst came to an anchor in "Charlotte Harbour" the U.S. Schooner "Wanderer" blockading main entrance of the harbour on the 7th got underway and proceeded to sea and on the day following (Sunday) came to off the entrance of the Catachuachuoychee River. I went ashore and examined some old buildings but could find no sines of life. As we were on the point of leaving I saw a sail boat standing toward us, fired a shot across her bow and brought her to. Made her a prize as she had a cargo of Contraband Goods. twenty sacks of salt and twenty five cases of Brandies & ______[?], there were five able bodied men and a small boy on board and all pretty well set up to took them in tow and proceeded out of the Bay, they didn't appear to care much about being captured but kept on drinking and singing and enjoying them selves in general. They prevailed on us to join with them and take a (H.C.W.P.) but that game was comptely plaid out, and would not work with us. We kept the boat in tow astern and two men walking up and down our decks with Musket in hand to watch her - At 9.30 P.M. 4 of them absconded in a small boat they had towing astern, we fired several musket shot at them and let them go. We could have taken them again if we wanted to, but we was glad to get rid of them so easy as we
would have had them to feed, and our provisions were getting Short. I think they all went to the d____1 together as the boat was to small for the numbers that was in it, and they had the tide and wind against them and were five miles off shore, I pitied the poor fellows, but it's all the same in dutch, as we have four less to contend against. Yesterday one of the crew that was on board of the Schooner broke open a Box of Brandy and smuggled a number of bottles on board and by 8 P.M. two of them were blasing drunk, and making more noise than was neccessary and going to whip all hands. Mr. Harrison rammed a revolver down one of the fellows throat while I put him in double irons, after that we gaged them, We shall probably get in Tampa tomorrow, we have had light winds ever since we left Snable and make slow progress with the Boat in tow, The "Sloop" is a miserable affair and not fit for a "Tender" - she was captured not long since by the "Sagamore" trying to run the blockade, there is scarcely room enough in her Cabin to turn round in, just imagin yourself turning into a berth that is not large enough to turn over in, for I have to turn out on the same side I go in on, tack ship and go back again, for to go about while in the berth is impossible. When I turn in, it reminds me of a Billy Goat in Steegs [?], don't know which way to turn to make himself comfortable. When it rains numerous waterfalls in might can be seen in all directions, and further more there is to much combustible matter, no less than five boxes of Powder Shot & Shell piled up in one end of the Cabin, the table I am writing on is no more or less than some boxes of Powder here we sleep, eat, smoke our bryerwoods, & toss off our Brandy Smashes (alias H.C.W.P)(for we have opened a case for madicial purposes since these fellows absconded) in a powder magazine, as it were, for such is the appartment I reside in at present. I can't help but thinking sometimes that we stand a very good chance to take a flying visite to the unknown regions. As my sheet is full I must close. By the way Chum don't you think a "Brandy toddy" would do me good now after writing this long letter, I will drink your health on the strength of your good sence for I know you would say yes. I wish you was here to imbibe with me. Remember me to all the family & c I shall expect a letter from you on our arrival at Tampa Bay for the mail has arrived since we have been out. Very Respectfully your old Chum.

H.C.W. Punch. Esq.
U.S. Navy

P.S. On the 13th inst. arrived at Tampa Bay. I regret to write thus I received no letters nor paper’s. We sail tomorrow, for our old Cruising grounds. The Tahoma_____[?] Key West in a day or two, hope she will bring letters and papers-

Your Old Chum
H.C.W.P.'s

On board Sloop "Julia"
_____to the U.S. Stm'r "Tahoma"
Feby 26th 1863. "Tampa Bay"

Friend "Chum"

I received your letter of Jany 27th on the 22nd inst. Also one dated Feby 9th with dockuments enclosed today ... nothing of importance has transpired since my last. We have made our third cruise and captured another Prize. She is Schooner of some Sixty tons burden named the "Stonewall."67 We captured her on the 20th inst about four miles up a creek some ninety odd miles to the Sº & Eº of "Tampa Bay" She was layin to an anchor under the cover of a group of trees with bushes lashed to her Mastheads as
a disguise, She had no cargo on board nor no person there to molest us in our proceedings. took possession of her, warped her out of the creek and proceded to "Tampa Bay" which place we arrived at 2 P.M. on Sunday the 22nd inst, delivered prize over to the "Tahoma" and at 4 P.M. She took prizes in tow and sailed for "Key West" leaving the "Tender" to Blockade in her place untill she returns. Capt Jackson has charge of the "Tender" now, and we are bound to take things easy untill the "Tahoma" returns. Yesterday I was ashore on one of the Key's hunting and brought off quite a variety of game, two Raccoon, two Alligators one box Turtle and some snipe, so you see we manage to enjoy ourselves after a fashion. When we get tired of laying in one place we get the Sloop underway and go to an other and tie up where night over takes u. … "Tell your Aunty Greene that I have not had a chance to put any blows into "Sescia" yet, but we have captured three prizes and taken four prisoner's, perhaps that will do as well. Give my lo- best respects to Miss "Flora." While I have been writing Mr Jackson has been amusing himself by making "Spit Devils" out of Powder and firing them off on the table. He wishes to be remembered and wants you to be a good "girl" untill he gets back. As it is most 12 0 clock and my ideas about played out, I will close for the night and take a comfortable whif on the Bryerwood provided you have no objections. Hoping to hear from you soon.

I Remain Your Sincere Chum
H.C.W.P.
U.S. Navy

U.S. Steamer Tahoma
March 16th 1863

On the 11th inst. the "Tahoma" arrived from Key West, she brought but few letters and no news of any account. Our last Prize the "Stonewall" was prised at $2500, The Govenment took her and transfered her to the "Tahoma" for a "Tender." Mr Jackson & myself have been transfered to the Steamer, and the Sloop Julia transferred to the U.S. Barque "Persuit." I am glad to get out of her and so is Mr Jackson. John thinks you have forgotten him as he has not received a letter for some time. While the Stm'r was in "Key West" the Pay Master went home sick and the Chief Engineer went north in a furlough - and Ensign Hamlin left to take Command of Sch "Beauregaurd" The Capt is acting as Chief Engineer. Pay Master Executive Officer and in fact has an eye to every thing that is going on. As the Stm'r Circussion is expected every day I shall expect to hear from you soon - As my sheet is full I must close. So long for the Present. Remember me to all the family "Chum."

U.S. Stm'r "Tahoma"
Sunday April 5th 1863
Tampa Bay "Florida"

Friend Jennie

As it is some three or four weeks since I have sent you a letter, and Sunday being a dull day on board of a "Man 0 War," I can't improve my time better than if writing you a few lines. Yesterday the U.S. Stm'r "Magnolia" arrived from "Key West," She brought up a small mail, but navy letter did I get, not even a paper.... On the arrival of the "Tahoma" from "Key West" Mr Jackson and myself were transfered from the "Tender" to the Steamer and the "Tender was transfered to the U.S. Barque "Persuit." I don't regret the change as it was very uncomfortable on board the Sloop. The prize Schooner "Stonewall" that we captured while in the
"Sloop" was fitted out in "Key West" and the Commodore transferred her to the "Tahoma as a "Tender." She has been out on a cruise for the past threee weeks. The U.s. Schooner "Beaureguard" spoke [to] her off Charlotte Harbour about a week ago. She had captured nothing up to that time. On the 24th of March, we towed the U.S. Barque "Persuit" about twenty five miles up the Bay and left her to blockade the main Ship channel off Gadsdens point about ten miles from the "Town of Tampa." On the 25th inst we went to Sea on a cruise, It came on to blow while we were out and a very disaEreable time we had. We returned on the 30th inst and glad we were to get in smooth water again, for the "Tahoma" is a miserable sea boat, especially in rough weather. On the day of our arrival at "Tampa" we steamed up to where the Barque "Persuit" was blockading in company with the U.S. Schooner "Beaureguard." The Capt of the Barque "Persuit" informed us that the day previous a party of Rebels came down on the beach disguised as "niggers" and displayed a "Flag of Truce," The "Persuit" immediately sent a boat ashore in charge of an Officer to see what was up. As soon as they touched the beach the supposed Contraband's threw up their hands and sang out "Saved by God" than a party of some fourty or fifty Rebels jumped out from the bushes and commenced firing on the boats crew, and demanded them to surrender, the Officer and crew returned the fire nobly wounding three of the Rebels, then pulled off out of range of there gun's. The Officer and five of the boats crew were wounded but none of the wounds will prove fatal, the Officer has had his left Arm Amputated.69 We relived the Barque "Persuit" and sent her to "Key West" for provisions. The day following we got under way in company with Schooner "Beaureguard" and steamed up to the town of "Tampa" and came to an anchor about three miles off the town there not being water enough to get any nearer. On the 2nd inst the Capt took his gig and pulled up within a quarter of a mile of the Town to reconnoitre, The Rebels opened fire on him from a masked Battery where they had three thirty two pounders mounted, they fired three shots at the Boats crew, which struck within a few feet of her. The Captain took it very calmly, kept altering the possition of the Boat and pulled on board the Steamer, got her underway and ploughed her through the soft mud for three quarters of a mile. I was detailed with a full boats crew to go on board the Schooner "Beaureguard" to make her Crew more efficient. We got her underway and took a different course from the Steamer so as to give them a raking fire, we anchored about one and a half miles off the town. The Rebels fired one shot at us from the Battery but it fell short about three hundred yards and fell harmless into the water. Both vessels fired Seventy five rounds of shot and shell right square into the town driving the Rebels from their Battery, the damage done to the town is unknown, but I think it must be considerable, for with the glass I could see that many of the houses were knocked higher than a burnt boot. At 3 P.M. the tide commenced to fall so we hauled off in deeper water and anchored about three miles off the Town. At day light the day following we got under way in company with Schooner "Beaureguard" and proceeded down the Bay.70 Last Friday afternoon I took one of the Ship's boats [and] sailed about fifteen miles up the Bay and went ashore on one of the Key's Egging, by sundown we gathered about twenty dos Egg's. I suppose you will say that is pretty doings for a "Naval Officer", however there is nothing like it, for we don't get Egg's every day on the blockade, They were pretty dearly _[?] for at 9 P.M. it came on to blow as heavy that it was impossible to carry sail on the boat - So I landed on one of the Key's built a fire and camped out untill one A.M.
when it moderated some and we proceeded down the Bay again. I arrived on board the Steamer at 7 A.M. cold, wet, hungry and very dry, if I could have imbibed a "H.C.W.P. I should have been all right, but I had to contend my self with Allums [?] Ale.

April 6th 1863

At day light this morning we commenced taking in coal from the U.S. Stm' "Magnolia." Chum! I think there is every prospect of our staying here all Summer, It makes me vexed to think of it, but I suppose we will have to make the best of it. Uncle Sam will never catch me in a Navy vessel after I can get clear of this one. John is as sick of it as my self and declares this is the last cruise for him. I see by the last papers that the government were about to issue "letters of Marque" I think that a cruise in a "privateer" would suit us better for we would have more to do. You have no idea how dull it is laying on the Blockade. When we left Philadelphia it was only for three months, but it is the longest three months I ever experienced, and there is every prospect of staying here untill the War is ended for naught I know... As my sheet is about full I will close hoping to hear from you soon. Remember me to your Mother and all the family.

I remain Your Sincere Chum
U.S.N.

U. States Stm'r "Tahoma"
Tampa Bay "Florida"
Sunday April 19. 1863
Friend Jennie

I received your nice long letter dated March 31st day before Yesterday, and I assure you it decididly a great treat to hear from the North once more. Yes! it was equal to a "Brandy Smash." How are you Smash? I began to think you had deserted your "Old Chum" for neither John nor myself have received any letters for some weeks past, but I see it's the neglect of the Post Master. On the Sixth inst we coaled Ship from the U.S. Stm'r "Magnolia," So you see we are "chock a block" with coal once more and I presume we are destined to spend the summer months at "Tampa." A fine watering place I'm told, but I don't see it. Suppose you give us a call, but you must not depend on me to fill that Scotch Ale bottle of your's for the Capt and Myself are not on the best of terms at present, nor has he been since Mr Jackson and my self left the "Old Tender," but he can't do us Ashes. I suppose you know what that means, so I will not explain. Some one informed him that Mr Jackson and Myself tried out pork to fry doughnuts with while on board the Tender, of course the pork ran short a few pounds, but as there was more truth than poetry in it one couldn't go back on him, he remarked that such extravagence would ruin the richest Government in existance. pretty good Joke! Aint it! It is provided you don't have to Stand the brunt of it, he has looked black in the face ever since. On the morning of the 7th inst. Simmes came on deck half Shot (you know what that means!) I was Officer of the deck at the time. I could tell by the look of his eyes that he was in a humor for growling. Well! he did growl! Nothing was done satisfactory to him. We had some words together at which I got very indignant and when my watch was up I went below, wrote off my "Resignation" and sent it to him. Mr Jackson sent his in at the same time, he looked somewhat surprised to see two Resignation tendered in one day. There is not an Officer on board that would not like to be transfered to some other vessel. he forwarded them to the Admiral, whether he sanctioned it or not I can't say, but I hope he did for then it will be accepted by the
department. I am disgusted with the Navy or rather what I have experienced for the last eighteen months. I came into the Navy for other purposes than to be bullied about by these Gold banded Gentleman. I shall be very much pleased when I can call myself fee once more, and than_______[?] Navy for me here-after. John is very much dissatisfied and intends to wait to see how Mr Jackson and Myself make out. If successful he will give it a trial. I will say one thing in favor of Captain Semmes, he keeps up a very stringent blockade and has an eye for business as I said once before, but as a Man his good qualities are few and far between. I Suppose you are tired of this so I will change the Subject. I suppose you are aware that in order to fill a sheet of fools cap a body must have more or less unnecessary writing, especially us blockader’s.. Excuse me if I get in an extra quantity for I fell uncommonly dull today. We have been up to "Tampa" once since the bombardment, merely for madisinal purposes, that is we were in want of a few Oyster’s, (don’t laugh) but it’s a fact. On the 16th inst. the U.S. Steamer "Henry Hudson" captured a prize within a few miles off the Light-House. She was an English Schooner loaded with a general cargo and was bound into "Tampa." 72 Yesterday the Tender "Stonewall" arrived. She has been on a three weeks cruise, but has captured nothing, she brought up four refugees from "Charlotte Harbour," the Capt gave them quarters on "Egmont Key." They will remain there until an opportunity offers to send them to "Key West." I see by your letter that John expected to return North by the 1st of June, he probably meant June of 1864. As the Cap’tn has made a requisition for a new Battery (eleven inch Pivot Gun in the place of our ten inch) I hardly think it probable that we will go North this year. What has become of Mr De Rousse I have not heard from him in a long time, has he obtained his posish in the Navy yet, if he has not I will sell out to him cheap. How does the draft effect the young men of the Quaker City or I should have said the late consrip act passed by Congress which goes into force on the 1st of May. 73 I see that you are having quite a spirited time in Philadelphia amongst the rising generation (alias Niggers). Well! I will agree with you there for its the best way to get rid of them. I would like very much to be in Philadelphia on the day the Nigger regiments pass through, for I expect there will be considerable sport. The last news we received from the north was any thing but encouraging, the defeat of the Expedition at Charleston and the loss of those five vessels on the Mississippi will go hard with Uncle Sam, but I hope they will be more successful next time 74 .... As my sheet is full I must close for the present. Remember me to all the Family - Hoping to hear from you soon I Remain,

Your Sincere friend
C.H.T
U.S.N.

Pretty good joke.

April 20th The Tender "Stone Wall" went to sea this morning on a cruise. At 10 A.M. The Cap’t tried one of the Contrabands by a Summary Court Martial the sentence was read on the quarter deck, he is required to do three months extra duty and the loss of three months pay -Semmes is no nigger lover and don’t allow them to put on any airs as our former Captain did-

C.H.T

P.S. I hearby acknowledge the receipt concerning the great Euechre game. I presume in course of time we’ll be able to challenge the World. What do you think it
"Chum." We received a Paymaster and a Paymasters Clerk from the U.S. Stm'r Union, a very important man on shipboard for he handles the rocks.  

Key West May 4. 1863  

Friend "Chum"  

As news are scarce and paper expensive I can't afford more than one sheet at a time. On the 27th of April I was transferred to the Tender "Stonewall" so you see I am rowing (?) once more. At P.M. we got underway and proceeded to "Key West" with dispatches to the Commodore which place we arrived on Sunday May 2nd. We will probably lay here five or six days and then proceed to Tampa again Mr Harr's (Act'g Master) has been transferred to the Tahoma. he will act as executive Officer, and is to take passage with us. We brough six refugees from Tampa and sent them ashore in Key West. There are quite a number of shipping laying in Key West, and the City if it may be called such has quite a lively appearance in mind (?) It is quite healthy here at present, but it is thought that the Yellow Jack will make its appearance before the summer is over.

May 6: 1863  

Yesterday the Admiral transferred his flag to the U.S. Stm'r Magnolia and the former flag ship (St. Laurence) will proceed North in a day or two. Your letter dated Apl 15 came to hand this morning. Excuse me if I take the advantage of your once by killing the bird with the stone, for I shall never have a better opportunity, Chum? it would be impossible for me to fill another sheet to answer to your last, for I have wrote about all the news of the day in this section of the Globe, and my quill is getting poor. Well in fact it is about played out. How are you Quill? Well Chum! it is singular enough as regards to Miss Emma's "Gallant and Protector" for when I read your letter the name "Lawson" was the very man that the Sprints predicetes on the____[?] said occasion "May the Union florish in peace and happiness for ever and ages." How are you Union. I see you are having fine times, playing Euchere I wish I was there with you, but as my Spirit play's a pretty good nd I think I can.

ENDNOTES

1 Stanley Itkin, Operations of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron (master's thesis, Florida State University, 1962) provides the best overview of the Squadron I s activities; while George E. Buker, Blockaders, Refugees, & Contrabands: Civil War on Florida's Gulf Coast, 1861-1865 (Tuscaloosa, t993), details the Squadron's assistance to Unionist refugees and guerrillas along the gulf coast.


4 Tillinghast to Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles, April 7, 1863, Resignation Letters, record group 24, National Archives.

6 Key West remained in Union hands throughout the war, and served as the headquarters of the EGBS. See Rodney E. Dillon, Jr., "The Civil War in South Florida" (master's thesis, University of Florida, 1980); Donald Lester, "Key West During the Civil War" (master's thesis, University of Miami, 1949); and Jefferson B. Brown, Key West, the Old and the New (St. Augustine, 1912; reprint ed., Gainesville, 1973), 90-95.

7 Built in Philadelphia and launched in October 1861, The Itasca was a 507 ton, 4th rate screw steamer with a battery of four guns. It was sold at New York in November 1865. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 110. Union-occupied Ship Island is located off the Mississippi coast.


9 Lieutenant John C. Howell initially commanded the Tahoma. He was appointed midshipman in 1836 and had risen to lieutenant by 1849. Howell became commander in 1862 and ultimately rose to the rank of rear admiral before retiring in 1877. He died September 12, 1892. Callahan, List of Officers, 279. Lieutenant Alexander Crosman was the Tahoma's executive officer. Coles, "Unpretending Service," 56.

10 Probably the U.S.S. Santiago de Cuba, a 2nd rate side-wheel steamer with a battery of ten guns that was purchased in 1861 and sold at auction in 1865. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 200.

11 John Green Koehler is believed to have been Jennie Koehler's brother. He was commissioned an acting master's mate on December 17, 1861 and died on September 17, 1862. Callahan, List of Officers, 287.

12 The U.S.S. Rhode Island served frequently as supply ship for the EGBS. A 2nd rate, side-wheel steamer, it weighed 1,517 tons and early 1862 had a battery of seven guns. The ship was purchased in 1861 and sold at auction in 1867. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 192.

13 At this time the U.S.S. Niagara served as flagship of the EGBS. A 4,582 ton, screw steamer frigate, the Niagara was commissioned in 1860 and decommissioned in 1865. In early 1862 it carried a battery of twelve guns. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 160.

14 Tillinghast is probably referring to the Union expedition to capture New Orleans, which successfully took place in April 1862. Patricia L. Faust, ed., Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War (New York, 1986), 281-282.


16 Depot Key was one of several small islands that comprised the Cedar Keys, significant because it was the western terminus of the Florida Railroad. The Tahoma bombarded Depot Key on February 13, 1862. ORN, ser. 1, XVII, 134-136; Charles C. Fishburne, Jr., The Cedar Keys in the Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861-1876 (Cedar Key, 1982), 1-10.

17 Henry Hurley was commissioned an acting master's mate on December 17, 1861 and died on September 17, 1862. Callahan, List of Officers, 287.

18 On February 23-24, 1862 Lieutenant Alexander Crosman commanded an expedition to capture a small sailboat operating between Depot Key and the mainland. The Federals captured the prize but while in the process of returning to the Tahoma the Federals were fired upon by a group of about thirty Confederates. Scaman John B. Patterson was shot through the eye during the skirmish and "Instantly killed." ORN, ser. 1, XVII, 180-181; Tahoma logbook, February 1862, record group 24, National Archives, Washington, DC.

19 The U.S.S. State of Georgia was a 3rd rate, side-wheel steamer of 1,187 tons. Purchased at Philadelphia in 1861 and sold in 1865, it carried a battery of nine guns. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 214.


21 Confederate troops abandoned the town of Apalachicola in early 1862 without a fight, and the
town remained a no man’s land for the rest of the war. Union ships blockaded the region and conducted several small expeditions up the Apalachicola River. William Warren Rogers, *Outposts on the Guff: Saint George Island and Apalachicola from Early Exploration to World War II* (Pensacola, 1986), 50-89.

22 Evidently a Confederate blockade runner, however the name Fauckner or Faulkner does not appear in the relevant volume of the published ORN.

23 The *Polly Hopkins* evidently was the unofficial name given to the *Tahoma’s* tender. It is referred to as the *Ezilda* in official reports. ORN, ser. 1, XVII, 222.

24 The U.S.S. *National Guard* was a 4th rate sailing ship of 1,049 tons with a battery of four guns. Purchased in 1861, the ship was converted into a coaling vessel in 1862, and sold in 1865. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 156.

25 The pursuit, destruction, and salvaging of the ship, described as a “fore-and-aft schooner with topsmasts down, a French flag flying at the forecastle ”can be found in ORN, ser. 1, XVII, 222-226. The action took place in the vicinity of the St. Martin’s Keys.

26 The U.S.S. *Beauregard* was purchased in February 1862 at a Key West prize court. A 4th rate wood Schooner of 101 tons, it carried a battery of three guns. The ship sold at auction in 1865. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 43.

27 Probably David W. Jackson, who was appointed acting master’s mate in October 1861 and acting ensign in October 1862, and who resigned on April 27, 1863 Callahan, *List of Officers*, 292.

28 The identity of Mr. Hughes is unknown. Union forces occupied Port Royal in November 1861 and used it as a headquarters for blockading and land operations against the lower Atlantic Coast. Faust, *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 597. See also Robert Carse, *Department of the South: Hilton Head Island in the Civil War* (Columbia, 1961).

29 The Suwannee River and Anclote Keys, in the gulf above Tampa Bay.

30 U.S.S. *Somerset* was a 4th rate, side-wheel steamer ferryboat of 521 tons purchased in 1862 and sold in 1865. It carried a battery of six guns. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 210.

31 The expedition is detailed in ORN, ser. 1, XVII, 242-244. The Federals shelled a small group of Confederates on Way Key and then landed a party of about 100 sailors. They also examined Depot Key, finding both islands virtually deserted.

32 Captain William W. McKean commanded the EGBS during the first half of 1862. A naval officer for nearly half a century, McKean was placed on the retired list as commodore in July 1862. He died on April 22, 1865. Callahan, *List of Officers*, 369; Coles, “Unpretending Service,” 43.


35 On June 15, 1862 the *Tahoma* bombarded a small Confederate fort located near the St. Marks Lighthouse. A landing party then burned the fort and several nearby buildings. ORN, ser. t, XVII, 264-265.

36 On April 7, 1862 the *Tahoma*, while steaming between the Tortugas and Cape San Antonio, captured the Confederate Schooner *Uncle Mose*. The ship was enroute from Texas to Honduras and carried a cargo valued at more than $30,000. ORN, ser. 1, XVII, 287-288; Itkin, “operations,” 245.

37 Tillinghast is again describing the capture of the *Uncle Mose*. The three seamen who deserted were E Garland, Robert Weston, and James W. Dimon, Ibid.

38 The U.S.S. *Connecticut* was a 2nd rate side-wheel steamer of 1,725 tons purchased in 1861 and sold at auction in 1865. It carried an initial battery of five guns. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 66.

39 The U.S.S. *Sagamore* was a 4th rate screw steamer of 507 tons launched in 1861 and sold in 1865. It carried a battery of five guns. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 197.

40 Yellow Fever threatened the operations of the EGBS several times during the war. The most serious
outbreak occurred in the summer of 1864. Itkin, "operations," 156-166.

41 James L. Lardner commanded the EGBS from June-November 1862. Appointed midshipman in 1820, he became captain in 1861 and commodore in 1862. Lardner went on the retired list as rear admiral in 1866. He died in 1881. Callahan, *List of Officers*, 322; Coles, "Unpretending Service," 43.

42 A 556 ton, 4th rate wooden bark, the U.S.S. *Ethan Allen* was purchased in 1861 and sold at auction in 1865. It carried a battery of seven guns in 1862. *ORN*, ser. 2, 1, 80.

43 The U.S.S. *St. Lawrence* was a 4th rate wooden sailing frigate of 1,708 tons built in 1844 and sold in 1875. It initially carried fifty-two guns, and served as flagship of the EGBS for part of the war. *ORN*, ser. 2, 1, 198.

44 In February 1862 the families of Unionists John Whitehurst, Frank R. Girard, and David Griner were moved to Egmont Key in Tampa Bay to protect them from Confederate retaliation. By April of the same year twenty-five refugees inhabited the island receiving supplies from the EGBS. Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, & Contrabands*, 33; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 132-134, 218-219.

45 On August 26, 1862 while on a trip to the mainland for provisions, John and Scott Whitehurst were attacked by Confederate guerrillas. The latter died immediately and the former was mortally wounded. Another man named Arnold was missing and believed dead. John Whitehurst's "dying request was that his three little sons should be received into the United States naval service," and Lieutenant Howell of the *Tahoma* granted this request. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 309.

46 DeRusse's name does not appear in Callahan's *List of Officers*, so he evidently never received a naval commission.

47 On October 4, 1862 sailors from U.S.S. *Somerset* raided Confederate salt works in the vicinity of Station Number 4 near Cedar Keys. During this raid they were fired on by Confederate troops who wounded eight men. The *Tahoma* arrived off Cedar Keys the same day, and on October 6, a larger expedition, with boats from both the *Somerset* and *Tahoma* and commanded by Lieutenant Alexander Crosman, again landed in the same vicinity to complete the saltwork's destruction. The Federals skirmished with a small Confederate force and destroyed twenty-eight boilers and a number of buildings. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 316-319; *Tahoma* Logbook, October 1862.

48 Jonas S. Higbee was appointed acting master's mate on October 22, 1861 and resigned April 23, 1864. Callahan, *List of Officers*, 264.

49 William H. Harrison was appointed acting master's mate in May 1862. After having his appointment revoked as a result of illness, he was appointed acting ensign in October 1862, and acting master's mate June 1863. His appointment was again revoked in November 1864. John C. Hamlin became an acting master's mate in October 1861 and acting ensign in October 1862. After being appointed acting master in November 1863, his appointment was revoked in December 1865. Callahan, *List of Officers*, 242, 250.

50 Alexander A. Semmes served as the Tahoma's commander from December 1862 until early 1864. A midshipman since 1841, he had risen to lieutenant commander by 1862. Semmes had attained the rank of commodore at the time of his death in 1885. Callahan, *List of Officers*, 490; Coles, "Unpretending Service," 57.

51 The naval battle of Mobile Bay did not take place until August 1864, when Admiral David Farragut forced his Union fleet past Confederate Forts Gaines and Morgan. Boatner, *Civil War Dictionary*, 558-559.

52 President Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation in September 1862 after the Battle of Antietam. The decree, which took effect January 1, 1863, proclaimed as free those slaves living in the rebelling states. It was unpopular in many areas of the north and among numbers of northern soldiers and sailors, who opposed this expansion of the Union war aims. Ibid., 265; James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (Oxford, 1988), 502-505, 545, 55 7-563, 594-595.


54 Ibid.
55 The U.S.S. Circassian was a 1,750 ton, 4th rate screw steamer purchased at the Key West prize court in November 1862 and sold at auction in 1865. The ship had been captured in May 1862 off Cuba by the U.S.S. Somerset and later pressed into service in the EGBS. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 59.

56 The Federals salvaged fifty damaged bales of cotton were salvaged from the Silas Henry, and theTahoma towed the hulk to Key West. The capture earned $2,155.12 in prize money. ORN, ser. 1, XVII, 351; Itkin, "Operations," 245.

57 The U.S.S. Magnolia was a 4th rate, side-wheel steamer of 843 tons purchased at the Key West prize court in 1862, having been captured in February of that year off the mouth of the Mississippi River. It was sold at auction in 1865. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 131.

58 TheTahoma suffered from serious leaks throughout its service in the EGBS. Coles, "Unpretending Service," 55, 58.

59 Vessel number 290 was contracted in 1861 by the Confederate navy and built at Laird's Shipyard in Great Britain. After its construction the ship received ordnance and equipment in the Azores and was renamed the Alabama. The ship became the Confederacy's most famous commerce raider until sunk by the U.S.S. Kearsarge in June 1864. Richard N. Current, ed., Encyclopedia of the Confederacy, 4 vols. (New York, 1993), 1, 19-20.


61 The U.S.S. Julia was a 10 ton sloop previously used as a blockade runner until captured and purchased from the Key West prize court in July 1863. It served as a tender with the EGBS and was ultimately sold at Key West in 1865. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 116.

62 The identity of Mr. Clay is unknown, although two men with that surname are listed on the 1860 census for Hillsborough County. They are W.S. Clay, age 29, with a wife and one child; and Adam Clay, age 67, with a wife and one son. Population Schedule of the Eighth Census of the United States Florida, Volume 1, Hamilton-LaFayette Counties. National Archives Microfilm Publication M653, roll 107.

63 Sanibel Island.

64 The U.S.S. Wanderer was a 300 ton schooner purchased in 1863 from the Philadelphia prize court and sold at auction in 1865. It initially carried a three gun battery. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 236.

65 Evidently Tillinghast is referring to the Caloosahatchee River, and to the abandoned supply buildings at Punta Rassa at the river's mouth. Punta Rassa and Ft. Myers, though abandoned in 1863, would be occupied by Union forces in 1864-1865. See Irvin D. Solomon, "Southern Extremities: The Significance of Fort Myers in the Civil War," Florida Historical Quarterly 72 (October 1993), 129-152; and Dillon, "The Civil War in South Florida."

66 Details of this ship's capture is not recorded in the ORN.

67 A thirty ton schooner, the Stonewall was captured and then sold to the navy at the Key West prize court in July 1863. It then served in the EGBS until being sold at auction at Key West in June 1865. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 215 and ser. 1, XVII, 375.

68 The U.S.S. Pursuit was a 4th rate wooden sailing vessel of 603 tons purchased in t 861. In the spring of 1863 it carried a battery of seven guns. The Pursuit captured seven ships while serving in the EGBS. ORN, ser. 2, 1, 186; Itkin, "Operations," 242.

69 The attack described by Tillinghast took place on March 27, 1863, when a Confederate force under Captain John W. Pearson, some of whom were disguised in dresses and blackface, and waving a flag of truce, lured ashore at Gadsden's Point a launch from the Pursuit. When the launch reached shore Pearson's men threw off their disguises and demanded the Federals surrender. When they refused the Rebels fired a volley into the boat, seriously wounding four men. The commander of the Pursuit called it "an act of shameful treachery." ORN, series 1, XVII, 397-399; Zack C. Waters, "Tampa's Forgotten Defenders: The Confederate Commanders of Fort Brooke," Sunland Tribune 17 (November 1991), 9, and Zack C. Waters, "Florida's Confederate Guerrillas: John W. Pearson and the Oklawaha Rangers," Florida Historical Quarterly 70 (October 1991), 141-142.

70 Ibid.

71 Tillinghast to Welles, April 7, 1863, Resignation Letters.
The ship captured off Egmont Key by the *Hendrick Hudson* was the British schooner *Teresa*. It yielded prize money of $2,363.8 1. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 415; Itkin, *operations,* 240.


On April 7, 1863 a Union ironclad attack on Fort Sumter, South Carolina failed miserably. In late March, Union army and naval forces began a second campaign against the Confederate stronghold of Vicksburg, Mississippi, a campaign that ended with the surrender of the Confederate garrison on July 4, 1863. Faust, *Historical Times Illustrated Encyclopedia of the Civil War*, 131, 781-784.

The U.S.S. *Union* was a 4th rate screw steamer of 1,114 tons commissioned in 1861 and sold at auction in 1865. It carried a one gun battery. *ORN*, ser. 2, 1, 229.

The leadership of the EGBS and the army’s District of Key West provided assistance to Unionist refugees, many of whom later joined the second Florida Union Cavalry, which operated in south Florida during 1864-1865. Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 136-175; and Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees, & Contrabands*, 115-133.