As Far as Our Eyes Will Let Us See: The "Peas Creek Expedition" of 1860

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“AS FAR AS OUR EYES WILL LET US SEE”:
THE “PEAS CREEK EXPEDITION” OF 1860
Introduction, Notes and Afterword by Canter Brown, Jr.*

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 than 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, bad died. 

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.”

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 bad 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.

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.

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.

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.\textsuperscript{20}

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.\textsuperscript{21}

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.”\textsuperscript{22} 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.\textsuperscript{23} 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-a-headativeness 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-demi-jon. 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 demi-jon, 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 be 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

Florida Peninsula, June 16, 1860.
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, shoaly and crooked, with high banks. 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 ford - 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 smelt 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.

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 make 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 bank 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 gaitorship 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 assailents 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 ungraceously 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. They are now about 2 to 3 miles from John Parker’s, and 25 to 27 miles from Ft. Meade.

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. 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

Florida 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.

Mullots 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 bad 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. 0! 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.”42 Sure enough, on our return, we learned that it was one of his cattle fords. Capt. H. makes his mark wherever be 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.43

At 9 o’clock we met three boatmen with two cypress skiffs-large and small one-laden with groceries from Ft. Augden, for the upper settlement.44 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.45

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! \(^{46}\); I guess the folks, if there be any, in these parts are honest.
Every man to his tent or bar.

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 disembouged 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.
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 accidentally 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 fatiguing 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. 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 bad 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. 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 had 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. We, thereupon, raised and discussed at length, our right to name a water course or river. 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.

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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. 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 had 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 expained 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. 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 he engaged in blockade running, and in its aftermath he reopened his mercantile business. In 1866 he was elected mayor of Tampa. He continued to serve the community in one capacity or another until his death in November 1886. 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. 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. 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 acquaintance.” 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.”

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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.
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 Peninsula, January 1, 1859.

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

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, 1989.

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.

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.

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

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.

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.

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.

“Brannon’s ford” was named after David Brannon who had settled nearby with his wife, a niece of Willoughby Whidden. Brannon died in 1862 while serving in the Confederate Army. His widow remarried Willoughby Whidden's son, Jesse. “David Brannon 1831-1862,” South Florida Pioneers, 8 (April 1976): 19-20; “Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting, in obedience to law, a report made upon an examination of Charlotte Harbor and Peas Creek, Florida,” Senate Executive Document No. 128, 46th Congress, 2d Sess., 4-5.
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 had 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 Peninsula, 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. Eighth U.S. Census, Manatee County, schedule I: “Francis Burdette Hagan 1827-1914,” South Florida Pioneers, 9 (July 1976): 22-24; “John Platt 17931874,” South Florida Pioneers, 29/30 (July/October 1981): 19-21.

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.” Manatee County, County Commission Minute Book 1856-1869, 5, Manatee County Historical Records Library, Bradenton; Florida Peninsular, October 27, 1860.

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. T.S. Everett to Secretary of War, June 5, 1852, Consolidated Corr. File, 1794-1915, Office of the Quartermaster General, Box No. 784, “Pease Creek,” record group 92, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; John Darling to Thomas Brown, February 14 and March 4, 1852, record group 101, ser. 755, Florida State Archives.

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. “Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey Showing the Progress of the Survey During the Year 1860,” House Executive Document No. 14, 36th Congress, 2d Sess., 66-67.

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).” “Statistical Report on the Sickness and Mortality in the Army of the United States,” Senate Executive Document No. 96, 34th Congress, 1st Sess., 333.

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. Mahon, History of the Second Seminole War, 36; “Message from the President of the United States Transmitting a Letter of the Secretary of the Interior relative to land upon which to Locate Seminole Indians,” Senate Executive Document No. 139, 50th Congress, 1st Sess., 15.

In south Florida cowmen were known as “cow hunters,” rather than as “cowboys.” Joe A. Akerman, Jr., Florida Cowman: A History of Florida Cattle Raising (Kissimmee, Florida: Florida Cattlemen’s Association, 1976), 160.

William J. “Jockey Bill” Whidden, 50 years of age in 1860, had arrived on the Hillsborough County frontier at least as early as 1847. Hillsborough County, 1847 Tax Book, available on microfilm at Florida State Archives.

The reference to Mr. “Tyce” apparently was a typographical error. Likely the homestead visited was that of Jacob H. Tyre. Eighth U.S. Census, Manatee County, schedule I.

Edward A. Clarke was married on May 31, 1860, to Sarah L. Wall, daughter of Perry G. and Nancy Hunter Wall. Grismer, Tampa, 142-43.

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 coinage. 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.

69 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.


71 *Tallahassee Sentinel*, August 19, 1867.