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THE CIVIL WAR DIARY OF SAMUEL PASCO

by Charles W. Arnade

Pasco County in central Florida is named for Samuel Pasco (1834-1917), who died in Tampa. There is, to my knowledge, no historical record of any visit to the county of his name.¹

Pasco remains a modest but instrumental figure in Florida history. What historical distinction warranted a county named in his honor? Primarily it was his role as chairman of the 1885 Constitutional Convention, which wrote the basic document that governed Florida until 1968. He was elected to the Florida House of Representatives in 1887 and served briefly as its speaker before going on to the U.S. Senate where he served from 1887 to 1899. In another notable role, he headed the Democratic State Committee of 1876, a pivotal year in southern history, leading to the end of Reconstruction and the re-establishment of the Florida Democratic Party. Pasco was unsuccessful in his 1884 campaign for governor of Florida. His last service came in 1899 when President William McKinley named him to the Isthmian Canal Commission seeking a U.S. controlled canal in Panama.

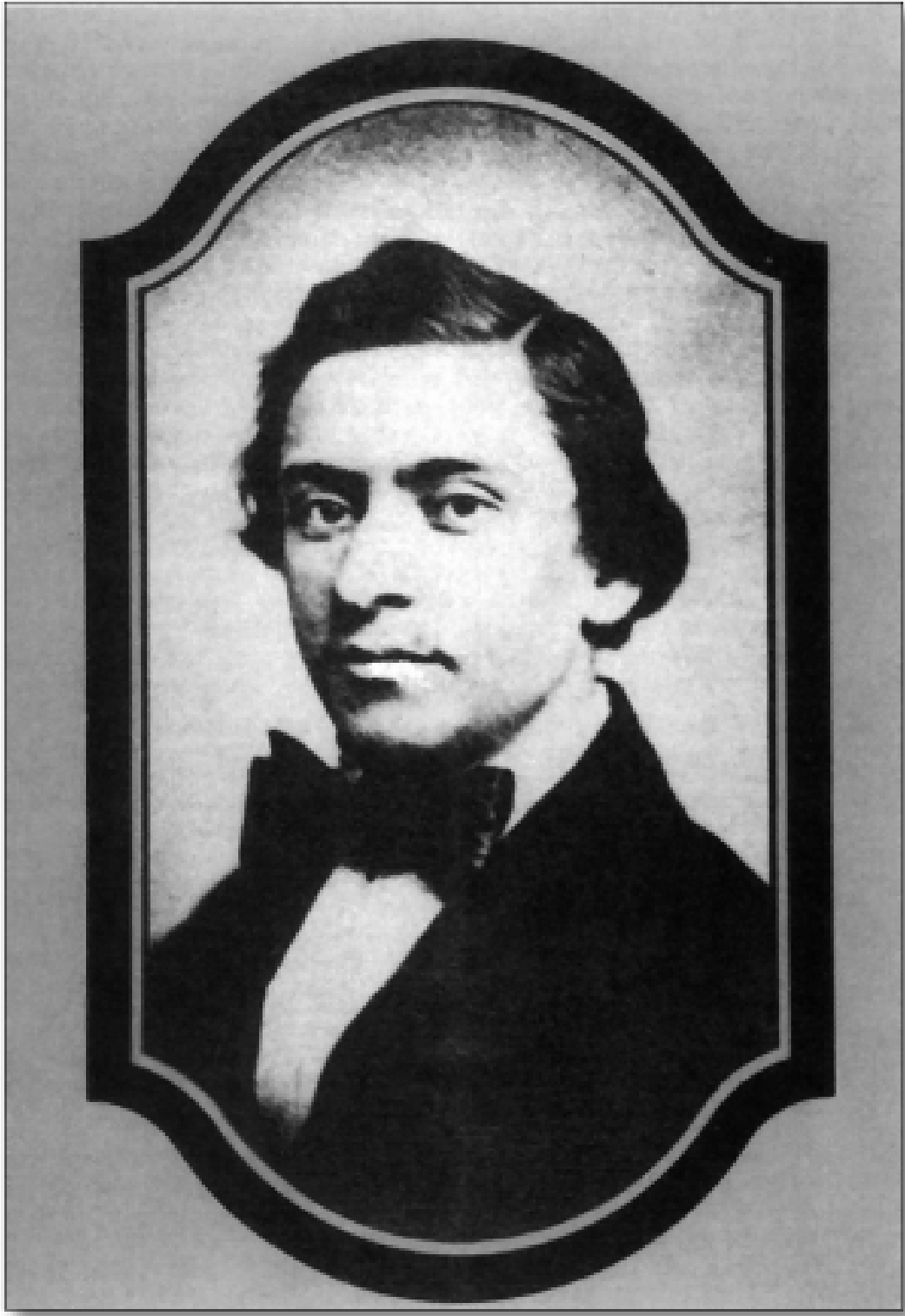
Pasco was born in London, England, and as a child moved with his parents to Prince Edward Island in Canada and then to Massachusetts.² Samuel went to Harvard where he was graduated in 1859. Forthwith he accepted a teaching position in Jefferson County in north Florida. His political career started when he became clerk of the circuit court of the county in 1868.

Samuel Pasco left a Civil War diary, detailing his service in the Confederate forces. Until 1990 the diary was unpublished and abandoned in a dresser drawer of a granddaughter. When she died in 1987, the diary was found by a maternal cousin of the granddaughter. She initiated the process of getting it privately printed after a painful transcription of Pasco's difficult handwriting in a somewhat deteriorated manuscript.³ Various descendants of Samuel Pasco and their spouses worked on the transcription. As far as I can determine, no trained historian or expert on Florida history was connected with this worthy enterprise. While the printed diary was not prepared and edited by professionals, it serves as a valuable document for Florida history and merits an audience in Florida which it has not yet achieved.

Pasco enlisted in the Confederate Army in August 1861 and participated in various campaigns. He was taken prisoner in November 1863 in Tennessee and was paroled and freed in Virginia in February 1865.

His diary is incomplete. The entries from August 10, 1861, to September 3, 1862, are missing, as is the part covering February 3, 1863 to April 11, 1863. The transcribers also had difficulty deciphering some words which are left blank. This does not detract from adequate comprehension, but the diary needs editing and trimming of superfluous material, such as what time Pasco had lunch and how well he was able to sleep.

The diary is a useful addition to the literature of the Civil War, especially as it relates to Florida. Besides, it is the diary of a young man, twenty-nine years old when he enlisted, who later became an important figure in Florida's postwar history.



Samuel Pasco.

Photograph from *Private Pasco: A Civil War Diary*.

Although the beginning of the diary is missing, we know Pasco enlisted “with fifteen of his older students as private in the 3rd Florida Infantry Regiment, Company H, Jefferson Rifles at Fernandina, Florida.” In September 1862, when the printed diary begins, Pasco was in the Cumberland Mountains in Kentucky doing the daily reports of the brigade. In October he became regimental clerk to the brigade headquarters. His army experiences outside Florida were in Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Georgia. Of interest for Florida history is that Pasco was asked to travel back to various parts of Florida “to collect absentees of the Regiment.” This took him as far south as Brooksville. These glimpses and other information in Pasco’s simple style provide us with a clear picture of the doings, hardships, frustrations and moments of joy of life in the Confederate Army, as well as those of a prisoner of war. Pasco’s diary includes interesting observations about the places he visited in Florida and these excerpts are reproduced here in their entirety.

* * * *

1862

Saturday, Dec. 6. We reached Monticello about 4 & we all accepted Mr. Palmer’s invitation to walk over to his store after which I lay down on the sofa and slept until the cars were ready to start of the Junction. [two lines illegible] . . . stopped with him until after dinner & then rode his mare to Waukennah. Called at Mr. Reid’s & Pinck Grantham’s on my way. Met quite a number of my friends at the crossroads and all seemed much pleased to see me.

Sunday, Dec. 7. Heard this morning that Mr. Thomas is very sick and Mrs. C. went off to see him. Went to church, Mr. Gates preached & there was a good congregation of ladies & quite a number of soldiers. Took dinner at Capt. Murphy’s, Mr. & Mrs. Gates were there. About sundown walked to Mr. A. Wethington’s, took tea there and remained until about 9 o’clock. [next sentence illegible]

Monday, Dec. 8. Went up to Capt. Edwards to-day but felt quite unwell & lay down on the sofa most of the time. Daisy is in Monticello at school.

Tuesday, Dec. 9. Felt quite unwell all day but walked down to Capt. Wooten’s with Miss Carpenter to a sugar boiling in the afternoon.

Wednesday, Dec. 10. Rode up to Monticello with Mr. Carpenter. Met Miss Seton as I was going into town. Stopped at Mr. Girardeau’s; Mrs. G. is sick. Called to see Daisy who is at Dr. Myers’ sick. Took tea at Mr. Lingo’s where I called to see Miss Seton.

Thursday, Dec. 11. Was going to a picnic to-day but did not feel well enough so remained all day at Mr. G’s. Walked up town in the evening and found Mr. Arendell’s buggy and rode home with Green & Mount.

Friday, Dec. 12. Was quite sick all day & did not go out of the house all day.

Saturday, Dec. 13. Stayed in the house nearly all day; in the evening Mr. Wethington sent a horse for me and I rode out to his house to spend the night with him.

Sunday, Dec. 14. Rode out to Sunday School & opened School in the absence of Mr. Arendell. Went home with the children & took dinner with Mr. Arendell's family.

Monday, Dec. 15. A message came last night for me to meet Col. Dilworth at the junction this morning. I met him & found [word illegible] there expecting me to go East with him. Mr. Carpenter took me to the junction & Miss Carpenter & Pea rode with me on their way to Georgia. Met Livingstone at Madison and we spent the day there getting up arrangements to collect the absentees.

Tuesday, Dec. 16. We left on the morning train for Lake City and went to Willard's hotel. Here we made the same arrangements as at Madison.

Wednesday, Dec. 17. We remained at Lake City all day & I was introduced to a good many acquaintances of Col. Dilworth.

Thursday, Dec. 18. Got up very early & took the cars at 4 o'clock leaving the Col. in Lake City. Met Lingo on the cars & gave him a few packages to take up to Monticello with him. Rode home on DeCaussey's horse.

Friday, Dec. 19. Rode down to Wm. Thomas' this morning and spent the day there. He is getting much better. Called at Capt. Wooten's on my way home & took tea there.

Saturday, Dec. 20. Attended Lodge this afternoon; the officers for the next year were elected. Guilford Houston is quite sick.

Sunday, Dec. 21. Attended church this morning; Mr. Gates preached his farewell sermon. Took dinner at Capt. Edwards and afterwards called and took tea at Pinck Grantham's who is to start for the army to-morrow.

Monday, Dec. 22. Called to see Guilford; he is still very sick & it is feared he will not recover. Called at Mrs. Ulmer's & Mrs. Bellinger's during the day. Sat up with Guilford at night.

Tuesday, Dec. 23. Left Guilford very low this morning. Mr. May sent me a horse to-day & I rode up to DeCaussey's calling at Mr. Reid's on the way & drank some cane beer. Charlie was not at home but after waiting a while he came in & I spent a very pleasant evening.

Wednesday, Dec. 24. Rode up to Monticello after the cars left in company with Mr. Floyd. Called at Dr. Myers & found Daisy has gone home to-day in a carriage, a little better in health. Took tea at Capt. Girardeau's & afterwards rode down to the Junction & spent the night again with Charlie. Guilford died this morning & will be buried to-morrow.

Thursday, Dec. 25. Rode down to Waukeenah after the cars left and went at once to the Lodge where we made arrangement for the burial this afternoon. We buried Guilford with Mason's honors & I afterwards called at Mr. Johnston's.

Friday, Dec. 26. I was going out with Miss K.B. to Mr. Cooksey's yesterday but owing to the burial we postponed it until to-day. We found them both at home & spent a very pleasant day & returned to W. in time for supper.

Saturday, Dec. 27. Lodge met in the morning it being St. John's day. Went home with Mr. Arendell & took dinner with him. In the evening rode out to Mr. McCall's where I spent the night.

Sunday, Dec. 28. Rode on to Sabbath School in company with John & opened school. Spent the day at home. Capt. Wooten called & we all walked out to the grave yard where a Mr. Douglass was to be buried. But few were there & our assistance was needed.

Monday & Tues. Dec. 29 & 30. Have been too unwell to go out these two days. Have had boils on my back & knee, had to occupy myself with reading chiefly.

Wednesday, Dec. 31. Called at Capt. Edwards this afternoon & found Daisy a little better. Met Miss Emma Cole there & rode out with her to see Asa May. We afterwards walked over to Alvin May's where we spent a pleasant evening and spent all night.

1863

Thursday, Jan. 1, 1863. Went back to Asa May's this morning & spent a most pleasant day. [next few lines illegible]

Friday, Jan. 2. I rose up early & after breakfast rode up to the Junction where I took the cars for Monticello. A negro was hanged for murder & nearly all the male population had to witness the spectacle. I met Col. D. who wishes me to go to South Florida next week.

Took tea at Mr. Girardeau's where I found the young ladies at home & I went with Miss Lizzie to see the Tableaux at the Academy got up by the ladies in behalf of the Soldiers Aid Society. The performance was very creditable to the ladies who got it up.

Saturday, Jan. 3. Took the cars for the Junction & rode down home in company with Willie Cole as for school. Attended Lodge Meeting in the evening.

Sunday, Jan. 4. It has been quite a wet day & I did not go out much until evening when I rode out to Mr. Wethington's & took tea. Returned about 9 o'clock. Attended Lodge in the evening & went to Wm. Johnston's afterwards to borrow a book.

Monday, Jan. 5. Rode out to Gen'1. Whitfield's this morning where I made the acquaintance of his son-in-law Mr. Keyes. From there went to Capt. Edwards, found Daisy improving. About 4 o'clock was obliged to go to Monticello to see Col. D. Took tea with him & then went to the DeCaussey's. Charlie was not at home but I spent the night there.

Tuesday, Jan. 6. Made Mrs. DeCaussey's acquaintance this morning and after breakfast got on the cars for Lake City. McCann loaned me \$20. Marion Clark was on the train & we put up together at the Railroad [?] house when we got to Lake City.

Wednesday, Jan. 7. Clark & his party left at Baldwin & I had to wait a few hours alone until the Gainesville train came along. Reached G. about dark & put up at Addison's hotel where I met several old friends, Mr.....[several words illegible]

Thursday, Jan. 8. Remained in Gainesville all day; it is a pretty little place & they keep it very neat. We left on the stage at 6 o'clock and there were about a dozen passengers & it took us until midnight to cross Paynes prairie to Micanopy.

Friday, Jan. 9. We were delayed two hours at Micanopy changing horses and finding the Post office which a preacher has just taken charge of & removed to the outskirts of town. We stopped at Flemington and got warmed up after which I was able to sleep a little and by that time the stage got nearly empty. We had a very poor breakfast and got to Ocala in time for a late dinner. Here we took another stage and a Catholic Bishop formerly of St. Augustine got in. We now had three white passengers; the Bishop, Dr. Mayo of Brooksville, a very entertaining companion, and myself. We took supper at Long Swamp and it was a very good one. At Sumpterville we stopped long enough to get warm. I had a few good naps in the night by kneeling down and resting my head on the seat.

Saturday, Jan. 10. We had a long dull ride this morning before breakfast & it was about 11 when we reached Monroe's ferry. Mrs. Monroe had died and her friends were collecting for the burial. We had breakfast and a new driver got on the stage who got us to Brooksville by 3 o'clock. I put up at rather a poor looking house and went up to the P.O. where I met Randolph Saxon and other members of Co. C. I went early to bed & rested very well after the fatigues of my journey.

Sunday, Jan. 11. Arose much refreshed and after breakfast walked over to church. There was a very large & attentive congregation present & after the sermon Mr. Breaker the pastor was reelected for another year; he is a very good preacher. Saw a few of Saxon's men and Randolph at church. Dr. Mayo invited me out to his house but I cannot go for a day or two.

Monday, Jan. 12. Have read a good deal to-day. Several of the men have come in to report themselves to-day but I have not be able to see Lt. Lang.

Tuesday, Jan. 13. Read during the morning & in the evening walked out to Dr. Mayo's about 3 miles from B. The country about here is very high and rolling and I enjoyed my walk very much. Dr. M. & his wife received me very kindly and I had a very nice supper. They have a beautiful situation and a very pretty garden.

Wednesday, Jan. 14. Walked out before breakfast to see the garden; there are plenty of orange, lemon & lime trees; the last are very pretty with fruit in every stage of formation from the bud to the ripe fruit. Bananas and pine apples grow here and strawberries are already getting ripe. We had green peas and beets for dinner. We went out turkey hunting in the morning but all the turkeys kept out in the middle of the field. In the afternoon we tried the deer but they us before we did them and our success was bad. In the evening I got a note from Dunham who arrived on the stage to-day.

Thursday, Jan. 15. After breakfast walked back to town and found Dunham at the store and we made up our minds to leave on Saturday in the stage. After dinner I walked out to Lt. Lang's about 7 miles to arrange matters with him in regard to taking on the men. We were rather crowded but I spent the night there and about bed time the rain came down in torrents.

Friday, Jan. 16. Walked back to town this morning & now have everything arranged to leave to-morrow. It is quite cold to-day. McCants came along about dinner time and we had a very sociable time together the rest of the day.

Saturday, Jan. 17. McCants stayed until we left. The stage came up from Tampa with the Bishop & a Priest on board so we had plenty of room and left after a good dinner. The weather continued cold. We travelled fast and took an early supper at Monroe's Ferry. As the night advanced we suffered much from exposure in the open hack and once got out & built a good fire to warm by. We warmed while the mail was being assorted at Sumpterville. There the Priest & Bishop remained and we lay down on the bottom of the hack to sleep but had scarcely gone a mile when we lost a pin out of some part of the concern, then the traces broke and one accident after another delayed us for hours so I lay down to sleep.

Sunday, Jan. 18. After I awoke I found we were still not ready to start but we got off at last and took breakfast where we ought to have been at midnight. We then changed drivers and got along much faster. We feared the Ocala stage would leave us but our new driver put us through in time for dinner. At Ocala I heard of a few of our men wounded at the recent fight at Murfreesboro. From Ocala we had a full stage and a crazy woman as one of our passengers, who did not allow us to sleep very soundly.

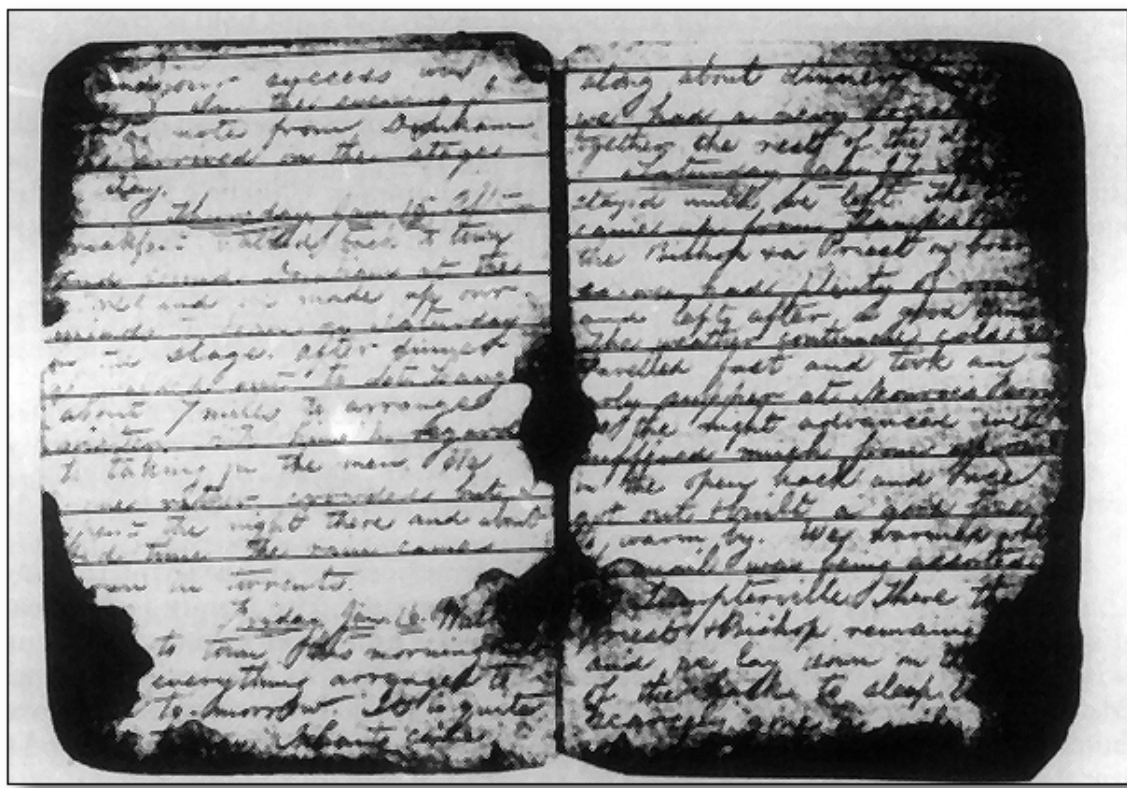
Monday, Jan. 19. We reached Gainesville in time for breakfast and Dunham stayed behind a day. I met Randolph Saxon and family and travelled with them. We left G. early in the morning and reached Baldwin about noon; after remaining a few hours we started again and reached Lake City about dark. It was raining hard and it was with difficulty we could all get up to the Hancock House where we stopped. I met Lt. Ross after supper and Saxon and I got hold of copy of our list casualties at Murfreesboro. Poor Kyle was killed & several wounded.

Tuesday, Jan. 20. We left at 4 o'clock this morning but were up by 3 o'clock. Mr. Saxon's family left at Madison. I met Col Dilworth & Lt. Johnson at the junction so did not go on to Monticello. Rode home on Charlie's horse. After supper went up to Capt. Edwards and found Daisy very low. Received letters from Jane, Fred & Amelia.

Wednesday, Jan. 21. Have not felt well to-day and did not go out much.

Thursday, Jan. 22. Capt. Wooten called this morning and we sat and talked for a long time. In the afternoon I went up to Mr. Edwards and found a good many there, Rev. Mr. Mackara among them. Daisy knew me but is very evidently sinking rapidly. I walked back home in company with some of the ladies.

Friday, Jan. 23. Walked up to Mr. Edwards this morning and heard on the way that Daisy died about [illegible] o'clock this morning. The family is in great distress. In the afternoon I rode up



Pages from Samuel Pasco's diary, showing the entries from January 15-16, 1863.

Photograph from *Private Pasco: A Civil War Diary*.

to Mr. McCalls promising to return to sit up with the body and calling to see Sallie on the way who was sick but improving. Mr. McCall is improving. It was late when I got there so I stayed to tea and rode home about 8 o'clock. Left my horse and walked up to Capt. Edwards. Found a number of ladies there. Poor Daisy looks very natural as she lies laid out in a plain white dress. Mr. Alexander has just arrived from Richmond.

Saturday, Jan. 24. Slept only a little during the night. It is a beautiful morning. Took a short walk with Mr. Alexander after breakfast and remained at Mr. Edwards until near dinner time. Such is the scarcity of the proper materials that the coffin has to be trimmed in [illegible] which the [illegible] has neatly arranged. Dr. Myers came down from Monticello & we walked to the funeral. It was well attended. I was much fatigued and retired early.

Sunday; Jan. 25. Dined at Capt. Murphy's to-day and in the evening went out to Mr. Wethington's where I took tea and spent the evening.

Monday, Jan. 26. This has been a very wet day. Mr. Wade came down from Monticello and upon my advice the Trustees engaged him to take charge of the school for the coming year.

Tuesday, Jan. 27. It was very rainy to-day but Col. D. required me to go up to Monticello and Mr. Wethington sent me up in his buggy. The rain stopped after a while so I did not get very wet. Went home with Col. D. and have been very busy writing up reports &c.

Wednesday, Jan. 28. Have been quite busy again to-day in the office. In the evening went to Capt. G's where I took tea and spent the evening. Found that all had retired when I got back but I easily found the way to my room.

Thursday, Jan 29. Had to hurry through breakfast this morning to get to the cars in time to go to Tallahassee. Some soldiers from the 2nd. Fla. were on the train, fine healthy looking fellows. Met a few friends in T. In the evening called at Mr. Damien's and had a very pleasant time. The young ladies sang some new pieces.

Friday, Jan. 30. Had to start very early on the cars and had a dull ride to the Junction. They had breakfast saved for me and Col. Stephens who came up on the train to see the Col. on business also took breakfast. In the afternoon a party of us went out to ride and we had a very pleasant time. I rode on DeC's horse & after tea walked to [illegible] & stated with him. [Note: At the bottom of the page under the line about riding DeC's horse are the letters "cb/.vov,ua."]

Saturday, Jan. 31. Capt. Edwards sent up a horse for me this morning to ride home. Called at Mrs. Johnson's and found Alice sick but Miss Isabel S. and I arranged to ride up to Gen'l. Whitfield's without her. We had a pleasant ride and enjoyed our call very much.

Sunday, Feb. 1, 1863. [date written but no entry]

Feb. 1. Left for the army and reached the Reg't. in company with Col. D. & Lt. J. on the 9th. Col. Dilworth, Capt. Lewis & I are to mess together and the Colonel's boy will cook and wash for us.

[Note: The diary section from February 3-April 11 has not been located.]

¹ Anyone who knows of any trip Samuel Pasco made to Pasco County, especially while he resided in Tampa, please contact Paul Camp of the Special Collections Department, University of South Florida Library, Tampa, FL 33620.

² The reason for the move of the Pasco family to Prince Edward Island is never mentioned. While at the University of Prince Edward Island in 1990, I located in the provincial archives one document: a promissory note of John Pasco, the father of Samuel, dated March 21, 1843. Also, a wedding announcement by a certain "Mr. Pascoe" about the same time could relate to the Samuel Pasco family. According to one of his descendants, "John Pasco was a printer and publisher in London. He is said to have published a temperance newsletter of some sort. The family moved to Prince Edward Island in 1842 (for reasons unknown), and later that year moved to Boston, where John opened a printing business. One of the documents in our Pasco family collection states that Samuel 'attended the Grammar Schools in Roxbury, Boston and Charlestown, entered the Charlestown High School, where he was fitted for college and was admitted to Harvard in the summer of 1854. His father's means were limited and he partly paid college expense by taking private pupils and engaging in other literary work in term time and by teaching school during the winter months. During his junior year he received the second Bowdoin prize offered for dissertations. He graduated with honors in 1858.' " Letter of William C. Gibbons to *Tampa Bay History* Managing Editor, September 21, 1993.

³ *Private Pasco: A Civil War Diary*, copyrighted by William Pasco and William Gibbons for the Pasco family and printed by McAdams Multigraphics, Oak Brook, Illinois, 1990. A copy of the 188-page book is available in the

Special Collections Department of the University of South Florida Library. Copies can be obtained for \$20 (including postage) from William C. Gibbons, Route 1, Box 139, Monroe, Virginia 24574.