

On the 7th (April, 1862) preparations for withdrawing were begun by embarking the public stores, and on the 8th, at 12 noon, the troops were marched on board and the embarkation was completed by 2 p. m. the same day. Owing to the heavy wind which had sprung up during the morning, it was impossible to get all the transports clear of the wharf until near sunset—too late to move safely very far down the intricate channel of the river that night—and it was therefore determined to lay off the town until morning. This I was more willing to do, as it took from our movement all appearance of a hasty retreat. At 6 a. m. of the 9th, the transports, convoyed by the gunboats, proceeded down the river.

It is said that General Wright notified the Confederates of the intended evacuation and requested them to resume their occupation of the town, whereupon a detachment of the First Florida calvary rode in and stood on the wharf watching the gunboats sail away.

The evacuation of Jacksonville by the Federal forces was unfortunate for "loyal" citizens, the bona-fide ones as well as for those who, supposing the occupation would be permanent, sought to further their personal interests by disclaiming all connection with the Southern cause and remained within the Federal lines. When it became known that the town was to be evacuated, the greatest excitement prevailed among the people; their principal desire now was to get out of Jacksonville, for fear of vengeance. The morning of April 8th was very hot. There was the greatest confusion, as the loyal citizens hurriedly tried to get their goods, furniture, and valuables on board of the transports.^h They embarked with the Federal fleet and were carried to Fernandina and Brunswick and quartered in the vacant buildings there. Most of them had to rely on rations issued from the United States stores.

Just before the evacuation, General Wright was directed by the general commanding the department, T. W. Sherman, to issue the following notice:

HEADQUARTERS THIRD BRIGADE

Jacksonville, Fla., April 7, 1862.

(NOTICE). In accordance with an order issued by the general commanding the Department of the South the troops will be withdrawn from this place, and I am directed by him to notify the people of Jacksonville that it is his intention to have all the aid and protection afforded the loyal inhabitants of the interior of Florida that is practicable for the security of their persons and property, and for the punishment of