

Some Florida Incidents.

History of the "Florida," the Gunboat of the Confederacy.

BY
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WHO SERVED ON THE
VESSEL.
IN
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Nothing would please Stephen R. Mallory more than to present the petitions from the several boards of trade asking that one of the authorized battleships soon to be built be named "Florida." Here is what his honored father wrote when secretary of the Confederate States Navy, July 14, 1862, to Lieut. Commander J. N. Maffitt:

"I feel very great anxiety about the Florida and earnestly trust that you may be able to get her to sea safely, and make a dash with her against the enemy. The difficulties in your way are serious I know. Exercise a sound discretion, and do not hesitate to assume responsibility."

Maffitt was then at Nassau. The Florida referred to by the secretary was a screw steamer of 250 horse power with a tonnage of 560, bark rigged, built at Liverpool, England, and carried at Nassau April 23, 1861. The U. S. minister, Adams, reported her to the British government, she was seized and held, also examined and it being found that she had none of the characteristics of a vessel of war she was released in August.

Maffitt now took her to "Green Key" 90 miles south of Nassau with a tender in tow, the Bahama which transferred her guns and ammunition of war, hoisted the Confederate flag, christened her the Florida, and regularly and lawfully commissioned her a man of war. Maffitt writes from Cardenas, August 20, saying: "I took on board at sea my battery but forgot in haste rammers, sponges, etc.; had but two firemen and 11 men, run the gauntlet splendidly, my coast survey experience being of great service; have had seven cases of yellow fever, but only three now."

The writer was with Captain Maffitt on the crusader in Pensacola in 1859, being then in the survey of the Florida coast.

ARRIVAL AT CARDENAS.

The Confederate agent at Havana, Helm, writes of the arrival in Cardenas of the Confederate gun boat Florida on the 18th of August, anchoring 12 miles from town. The captain-general, Serrano, fearing the Federal gunboats might attempt to cut the Florida out from her exposed position proposed to get her around to Havana. I telegraphed Maffitt to come to this port. At this time Maffitt and several of his officers and eight of his crew were down with yellow fever and it was not possible to move. General Serrano then sent two Spanish war vessels to Cardenas, one of which anchored close alongside the Florida and rendered her every possible assistance. Knowing the anxiety of General Serrano and his wish that the Florida should be here, I wired Maffitt.

He arrived in Havana on September 1st. The Federal consular agent at Cardenas objected to the sailing of the Florida without 24 hours notice, when Capt. Maffitt assured the captain of the port that he would not interfere with any vessel until after he sailed from Havana. The port captain, not feeling satisfied, telegraphed for instructions. The reply was, "Let her sail; the word of a southern gentleman must be taken." Maffitt finding a great difficulty in obtaining men in Havana concluded to run across the gulf for Mobile.

RUN THE BLOCKADE.

Captain Bullock formerly running on the steamer "Black Warrior" from pier No. 2, north river, New York to Savannah, says of this incident: "The Florida stood steadily on for the bar, receiving broadside after broadside from the three U. S. ships. She did not even cast a gun loose because there were no men to fight them, it is marvelous they did not literally blow her to pieces."

Admiral Farragut from his flagship, the Hartford, writing to Commander Preble on September 5, 1862, from Pensacola bay, said: "I am very much pained to hear of the passage into Mobile bay of the Florida. You should have fired one blank cartridge or shot to heave the vessel to; the

others should have been fired into her."

Gideon Welles, secretary of the United States navy, wrote to Commander Preble of the United States steamer Oneida: "Upon submitting your letter to Rear Admiral Farragut to the president I received from him prompt directions to announce to you your dismissal from the service. You will from this date cease to be regarded as an officer of the navy of the United States." Preble had been in service 27 years. During this unparalleled chase and escape Captain Maffitt sat most of the time on the quarter rail and steered the Florida straight for the bar.

J. M. Stribling, a lieutenant transferred from the Sumter, was sick below with yellow fever. A shell entered the port quarter, also several expended Parrott shells struck the masts and fell on board. The boats were much injured and much of the standing rigging was shot away.

As we approached the bar an eleven inch shell entered on our port beam nine inches above the water line, passing through the coal bunker, grazing the boiler and entering among the men on the berth deck, wounding four and took Duncan's head off.

At dark we were under the guns of Ft. Morgan; on the 5th we landed in Mobile and buried our dead. Lieut. Stribling died of yellow fever.

GOT AWAY SAFELY.

On January 12, 1863, after refitting and recruiting the Florida, taking advantage of darkness and a howling norther, we ran out past Ft. Morgan and the blockading fleet without being struck. During some months the Florida captured some scores of prizes. Captain Maffitt in the meantime on account of ill health had retired from active duty and was succeeded by Lieut. C. M. Morris, who was in command when she put into the port of Bahia, Brazil, for coal, on October 4, 1864.

It was after dark, but next morning we discovered the presence of the United States steam corvette "Wachusett" lying very near. After coaling the ship, Morris and many of his officers and two-thirds of the crew went ashore for the night. About 1 o'clock in the morning the "Wachusett" got under way and her commander ran into the Florida striking her on her starboard quarter, crushing the bulwarks, jammed the wheel, stove in the quarter boat, broke the mizzen mast in three pieces, carried away the main yard and started the seams for about thirty feet. At the same time the Wachusett fired two shots from her broadside. The guns of the Florida were unloaded, her fires were out and half the crew ashore. After striking the Florida the Wachusett backed off and demanded immediate surrender. Lieut. Stone, the second officer, after a hurried conference, acceded to the demand. A hawser was made fast and the Florida immediately towed to sea, arriving at Hampton Roads, November 12, 1864.

Brazil immediately demanded that the Florida be returned to the port of Bahia but diplomacy placed her in charge of an engineer with positive orders to open her sea cock at midnight, so the gallant little Florida was sunk at Hampton Roads. On their trip north the officers were paroled but the crew were kept in double irons and taken to Fort Warren, Boston Harbor.

Returned to Ocala to Reside.

Mr. Clifford L. Anderson, who has been living at Roanoke, Va., for the past nine months arrived home Saturday and has joined his wife at the home of her parents, Major and Mrs. L. T. Izlar on Carolina Heights. It will be good news to the many friends of this popular young couple to know that they will make Ocala their permanent home, Mr. Anderson having accepted a position here.

Diplomacy is doing disagreeable things agreeably.

Geo. W. Wilson and the Governorship.

Hon. George W. Wilson, editor of the Jacksonville Times-Union, replying to the solicitation of a friend that he be a candidate for governor, states with emphasis not to be misunderstood that he will have none of it and will stick to journalism. And this reminds us to ask why Clark Howell, who has made an enviable national reputation as editor of the Atlanta Constitution, and thereby achieved a position of commanding influence, wants to lose the larger part of both that reputation and influence and go into comparative obscurity for some years as governor of Georgia. Henry Watterson, most famous of American journalists of the old school, would have lost greatly in fame, contentment and power, as everybody knows, had he achieved his ambition a few years ago and been elected governor of Kentucky. William Randolph Hearst is known to the world as a newspaper man of phenomenal enterprise and success, who, through his newspaper's wielded very considerable influence in all parts of the country; but who knows or cares anything about William Randolph Hearst, the congressman? Horace Greeley was the most influential of Americans out of office, but when he left the New York Tribune to seek the presidency his influence fell away with fearful rapidity, and ere he died a few months later he had been completely beggared of the vast power he had exercised over the minds and hearts of many thousands of people while he was editor of the New York Tribune. It is a great thing to be governor of one of the states of the American Union, but it is a greater thing, as a rule, to be editor-in-chief of the leading newspaper in that state.—Live Oak Democrat.

It Hits Many.

The vagrancy law passed by the recent state legislature designates all and singular the following described individuals as "vagrants," to be arrested and punished in the courts:

- Rogues and vagabonds.
- Idle and dissolute persons who go about begging.
- Persons who use juggling or unlawful games or plays.
- Common pipers or fiddlers.
- Common drunkards.
- Common night-walkers.
- Theives.
- Pilferers.
- Traders in stolen property.
- Lewd, wanton or lascivious persons in speech or behavior.
- Keepers of gambling places.
- Common railers or brawlers.
- Persons who neglect their calling or employment.
- Persons who misspend what they earn.
- Persons who do not provide for themselves or for the support of their families.
- Persons wandering from place to place.
- Persons able to work and without means.
- Persons who neglect to earn their support.
- Idle and disorderly persons.
- Persons who mis-spend their time by frequenting houses of ill-fame, gaming houses or tippling shops.
- Persons who live upon the earnings of their wives or minor children.
- All able bodied male persons above 15 years of age who are without means of support.

Miss Byrd Wartmann left Monday for her home at Citra to spend the summer. She will return to Ocala in the fall to continue her music classes.

Dr. W. H. Powers and Mr. C. H. Dame were at Silver Springs Friday night examining a number of applicants for membership to the Woodmen lodge which will be organized at that place.

Mrs. H. C. Jernigan returned to her home at Martel Saturday after a short visit here. She was accompanied home by her sister, Miss Mary Bull, who will be her guest for a few days.

Governor N. B. Broward is going right ahead with his everglades draining project. If the scheme proves feasible he will have reclaimed 7,063,808 acres of land, of which 2,813,808 acres are vacant state land subject to sale and entry.

Kansas Hard Luck Stories Beat Florida

When Kansas was born she butted right into hard luck. The war cyclone had its center here, and then there came the grasshoppers and the years of crop failures.

Then there was a dearth of corn in the nation, and Kansas took the contract for supplying the demand. So well was the job done that the corn could not be sold, and had to be used for fuel. From a dollar a bushel it went down to eight cents, and Kansas fields were covered with unsalable piles of it.

Then wheat got way up, and Kansas again took the contract to furnish wheat for all men. She broke the record of the world with her crops, but instead of getting a dollar a bushel the price went down to 30 cents, which did not pay the cost of production.

Then Kansas changed her tactics and went into "practical politics." The populist wave buried the state and immediately political stock went down until the commonwealth went broke on that commodity.

Then all at once something new happened. Oil from the earth was worth millions to the people who had it. Kansas dug down and found unlimited quantities. The wealth of Ophir was at her feet. Thousands of wells went down and millions of barrels came bubbling up. At once the price of oil went down until a barrel of it was worth less than a barrel of water at harvest time. The gas, too, which cost millions to the people of other states and communities was found only to be turned loose to poison the atmosphere and wreck the hopes of those who found it.

As a discoverer Kansas is a hoo-doo. If we should find gold in virgin purity that could be mined by the ton, gold would at once be demonetized and sold as lead on the market. If a cave of diamonds should be discovered diamonds would be used for paving stones and be sold by the ton. Kansas is original, very original, but her originality has never bought anything for her save advertising space.—Topeka (Kan.) Gazette.

Tow Lawson is to orate 4th of July in Kansas. He will make the canons roar, the eagles scream and the hyenas yell. As a 4th of July orator Tom Lawson will prove hot stuff.

An examination of the records of the cantaloupe and watermelon season just closed will show a higher freight rate than ever before known and we have state and inter-state railroad commissions, too!

Among other learned utterances a correspondent of the Star, anent the court house, says: "The writer said the present quarters were too small. Well, why not build a vault and make some changes in the present house, and there would be more room. * * * That's easy, no doubt, but a little explanation as to how it will be accomplished would be interesting to quite a few dull citizens."

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