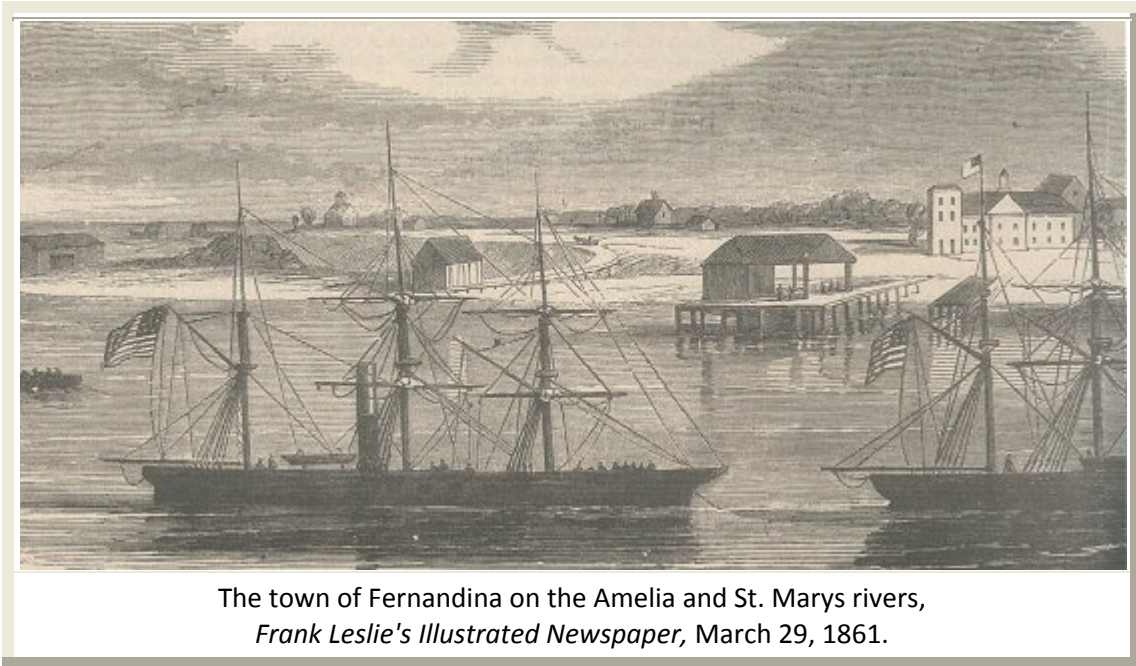


Up the St. Marys by Thomas Wentworth Higginson



The town of Fernandina on the Amelia and St. Marys rivers,
Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, March 29, 1861.

Col. Thomas Wentworth Higginson (1823-1911) was a vehement abolitionist, long-time friend of the poet Emily Dickinson, and Civil War commander of the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, a black infantry unit operating in the Department of the South. In 1863 Higginson and his troops served in numerous engagements in Florida, most notably in an expedition up the St. Marys River to capture lumber and bricks for Ft. Clinch and later in a second expedition to occupy Jacksonville.

Higginson's memoirs about the regiment's experiences first appeared in a series of articles in the *Atlantic Monthly* and were later gathered together and published in 1870 as *Army Life in a Black Regiment*.

At the time of the regiment's service in Florida, the political and military hierarchy of the Union was still debating whether or not to send black troops into battle. The soldiers of the 1st South Carolina Volunteers, most of them former slaves, were eager to see action and to prove their valor and discipline under fire. In "Up the St. Marys" the regiment fights its way through a night skirmish with Confederate cavalry and engages in a water-to-land shooting match with Rebel soldiers during an expedition to the town of St. Marys, Georgia.