

# *Tequesta*: THE JOURNAL OF THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

*Editor*: Leonard R. Muller

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# Tequesta

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## Flagler Before Florida

by SIDNEY WALTER MARTIN

IN 1883 Henry Morrison Flagler made his first visit to Florida. Other visits followed and he soon realized that great possibilities lay in the State. He saw Florida as a virtual wilderness and determined to do something about it. Flagler made no vain boasts about what he would do, but soon he began to channel money into the State, and before his death in 1913 he had spent nearly \$50,000,000 building hotels and railroads along the Florida East Coast.<sup>1</sup> His money had been made when he began to invest in Florida at the age of fifty-five, and though his enterprises there were based partially on a business basis, the greatest motive behind his new venture was the desire to satisfy a personal ambition. It might well be said that Flagler made two blades of grass grow where only one had grown before.<sup>2</sup> The power to accomplish such feats was accumulated in his early years; years that were filled with adverse circumstances. His money did not come to him as easily as it was spent; he had learned to swim by being pitched overboard and left to kick his way ashore.

Flagler was born in the little village of Hammondsport, New York, on January 2, 1830. His parents were very pious people, the father being a Presbyterian minister who made the sum of \$400.00 a year for his labor. Henry had only one sister, but the father's earnings were hardly sufficient to sustain the family.

The boy received very little formal training in school. His education was picked up in his spare time, and from the friction that comes from direct dealings with life. Young Flagler was the type of boy to make the most of his opportunities. Realizing his responsibility, he left home

1. *The Outlook*, CIV (May 31, 1913), 232.

2. Samuel E. Moffett, "Henry Morrison Flagler," *The Cosmopolitan*, XXXIII (August 1902), 419.

in 1844, at the age of fourteen, to help support his mother and sister.<sup>3</sup> The first part of his journey was made on foot to Medina, New York, only nine miles from his home. Dressed in home spun clothes and carrying a carpetbag in his hand the youth boarded a freight boat on the Erie Canal at Medina, and traveled westward to Buffalo.<sup>4</sup> Little did he realize at that time the meaning of his departure from the drowsy rural village in the New York hills. In front of him lay a career later valued at many millions of dollars.

He did not tarry in Buffalo, but took a lake boat for Sandusky, Ohio. He was on Lake Erie for three days in a bad storm before reaching his destination. He later remarked, "I was seasick, lonely, and very wretched. My mother had put some lunch in my carpetbag and of that I ate, when I ate at all, during my gloomy journey over canal and lake."<sup>5</sup> The dreadful journey ended in the early morning, and the boy, weak and dizzy from the seasickness, staggered along the wharf among piles of cordwood which had been placed there in readiness for shipping. After a hot breakfast, costing twenty five cents, the lad felt better, so he proceeded to push on to Republic, Ohio, which was not far distant. He arrived there with a five franc piece, a French coin which passed in this country for a dollar, a five cent piece, and four coppers.<sup>6</sup>

The hungry lad had to find work, so without much trouble he got a job in a country store which paid him \$5.00 a month, plus his room and board. He was a hard worker, and he did so well carrying bundles, selling candles, soap and shoes that in ten months his pay had been increased to \$12.00 a month. There were many business lessons he learned while storekeeping in Republic—lessons concerning the vanities of human nature which served him well in later years. All kinds of merchandise was stocked in the store, and as Flagler later reminisced, "We sold everything from a pint of molasses to a corn plaster."<sup>7</sup> The brandy offered for sale in the store came from a lone barrel at the bottom of the cellar steps. In the community there were three separate groups of people—English, German, and Pennsylvania Dutch. It was the custom of the store's owner to sell one "kind" of brandy to the English for \$4.00 a gallon, another "kind" of brandy to the Germans for \$1.50 a gallon,

3. Edwin Lefevre, "Flagler and Florida," *Everybody's Magazine*, XXII, No. 2 (February, 1910), 181.

4. *New York Tribune*, December 23, 1906.

5. *Ibid.*

6. *New York Times*, May 21, 1913.

7. *Ibid.*

and a third "kind" to the Pennsylvania Dutch for what the clerk could get for it. Thinking of the three "kinds" of brandy from the same barrel, Flagler later remarked, "That keg taught me to inquire into the merits of everything offered for sale."<sup>8</sup> And that became a rule of his life. If he purchased a thing, he always knew it was worth the price he paid for it.

A valuable lesson was learned at the expense of a poorly informed lot of people. In his job Flagler learned to be methodical and economical, and within a short time he had saved enough money to feel financially secure until he could find another business which would be more profitable. He left Republic, and went to Fostoria, Ohio, but he was not satisfied there.<sup>9</sup> For a while he worked with a friend, Charley Foster, in the latter's store. Charley Foster and Henry Flagler became known as the two best salesmen in the county, but soon the two youths were separated. Foster made a fortune, got into politics, became governor of Ohio, and later served as President Benjamin Harrison's secretary of the treasury.<sup>10</sup> Politics never appealed to Flagler.

Bellevue, Ohio, was a fast growing town in the 1850's, and offered much promise to enterprising fellows like Flagler. Taking his savings there, he set up a grain commission business. Before many months had passed he had become the principal grain shipper in the town, and it was in this connection that he made the acquaintance of John D. Rockefeller, who was at that time a commission merchant in Cleveland. Young Flagler shipped grain to Rockefeller to be sold, but little did each of these men realize that some day they would be associated in as great an organization as the Standard Oil Company. The acquaintance developed into a mutual admiration, and when Rockefeller learned the value of Flagler's business ability he determined to hold fast to the friendship.<sup>11</sup>

Flagler had not been in Bellevue long before he fell in love with Mary Harkness, the daughter of a wealthy Michigan lumberman and the niece of Stephen V. Harkness, a prominent citizen of the town. On November 9, 1853, Flagler and Miss Harkness were married.<sup>12</sup> The marriage was a turning point in the career of Henry Flagler. He became extremely interested in the distillery business at Monroeville in which Stephen V. Harkness had made a considerable fortune, and after a short time he became associated with his uncle in that work. Harkness remained in

8. "He Made Florida," *Literary Digest*, XLVI (May 31, 1913) 1241.

9. Allan Nevins, *John D. Rockefeller* (New York, 1940), I, 250.

10. *New York Tribune*, December 23, 1906.

11. *The Outlook*, CIV (May 31, 1913), 232.

12. Nevins, *op. cit.*, I, 250.

the liquor business until 1866, when he moved to Cleveland, a wealthy man, and pursued the line of real estate. It was not long until Flagler gave up his interest in the distillery business for he had certain religious scruples that conflicted with the principle of selling liquor, though the business was considered respectable at that time. His action may also have been influenced by the presence of his father and mother, who joined him in Bellevue about this time to make their home. Flagler began to look around for other fields he might enter, and discovered that in Saginaw, Michigan, the salt-mining industry was on a boom. Taking the \$50,000 that he had made in Bellevue, in the early 1860's he went to Saginaw and became a member of the partnership of Flagler and York, salt dealers.<sup>13</sup> Several fabulous fortunes had been made in the salt business, but it was a fickle trade with many ups and downs which the average man did not understand. Though Flagler did not learn the salt business well the first few years were successful. He and his partner made money, but at the close of the Civil War in 1865 salt prices crashed due to overproduction and cut-throat competition. Flagler emerged from the crash without his savings. He was in debt \$50,000, whereas he had gone to Saginaw earlier in the sixties with \$50,000 in his pocket.<sup>14</sup> The failure of his business was itself a lesson, for he learned that though some people might make fortunes in some particular industry others might fail. He was determined never to make the same mistake again!

The Michigan failure discouraged Flagler, but not to the point of giving up. He borrowed money to pay back his debts, and went to Cleveland where he was given further financial aid by his wife's relatives. He spent a year working at various projects, among them being a machine for making horseshoes. His creative brain conceived the idea, but it was never perfected. He then sold barrels for a time, and finally drifted back into the grain commission business. Again he ran into John D. Rockefeller, who by this time was keeping books along with his grain business. Their friendship was renewed from the old Bellevue days. All in all it was a period of despondency and near poverty for Flagler. He took little help from his relatives other than the amount he accepted to pay back debts, insisting that he must make his way alone.<sup>15</sup>

At the age of thirty-six he was still trying to make a start. By this time he had accumulated valuable experience, but as for money, he had only

13. "He Made Florida," *loc. cit.*, 1242.

14. Nevins, *op. cit.*, I, 250.

15. Lefevre, "Flagler and Florida," *loc. cit.*, 183.

a little more than in 1844 when he boarded the freight boat at Medina, New York for Buffalo and Sandusky. To Flagler these adverse circumstances presented a challenge. His next move proved a success; he became associated with Clark and Sanford, commission merchants in Cleveland. The firm prospered and Flagler soon bought out the whole business. His lean years were over; the next few years ushered in prosperity and business association with John D. Rockefeller.<sup>16</sup>

It was in 1867 that the Rockefeller-Flagler combination was created. For some time John D. Rockefeller had been interested in the newly developed oil business, and in 1865 had become part owner of a small refining business in Cleveland. He was in the produce business just prior to, and during, the Civil War, and he and his partner, M. B. Clark, an Englishman, profited financially from the war. In 1862 Samuel Andrews invited Rockefeller to invest some of his money in an oil refinery. Rockefeller put \$4,000 in the venture, while Andrews devised several new processes whereby a better quality of oil was produced. Rockefeller realized the opportunity before him and poured more money into the newly created partnership of Rockefeller and Andrews.<sup>17</sup>

Rockefeller's brother, William, was taken into the business, and a new refinery was built. In 1866 the brother was sent to New York, and there a third company was formed.<sup>18</sup> All of this time Rockefeller had his eye on Flagler, because he valued his business ability very highly. Having offices in the same building in Cleveland gave them many opportunities to renew the association which was begun in Bellevue some years before. Flagler, who was remaking the small fortune he lost in the salt business in Michigan, was encouraged by the advice and counsel of Rockefeller. In 1867 he was asked to join the partnership of Rockefeller and Andrews. A new firm was organized under the name of Rockefeller, Andrews, and Flagler.<sup>19</sup> The exact amount of Flagler's investments in the firm is not known, but he had the backing of his wealthy uncle, Stephen V. Harkness to the amount of \$100,000.00. Harkness himself became a silent partner in the organization, investing in it some \$60,000.00.<sup>20</sup> The new firm was based on a strong friendship between Rockefeller and Flagler. For years following the two men occupied desks in the same

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16. Nevins, *op. cit.*, I, 251.

17. Ida M. Tarbell, *The History of the Standard Oil Company* (New York, 1904), I, 44.

18. Nevins, *op. cit.*, I, 247.

19. *Cleveland Leader*, March 4, 1867.

20. "He Made Florida," *loc. cit.*, 1242.

office, numbers four and five, Case Block, Cleveland, and worked shoulder to shoulder in the making of their fortunes. They both lived on Euclid Avenue, only a short distance apart. They were usually seen together on all occasions, and it was when they were together that they did their thinking and planning.<sup>21</sup>

Flagler added power and aggressiveness to the new organization. His actions were always an inspiration to Rockefeller, because he always possessed a driving force which invariably placed him ahead in anything he undertook to do. To him and his never-failing energy is due much of the success of the Standard Oil Company in the early years of its existence. Flagler seemed never to give out of energy. He undertook to develop Florida in the later years of his life when other men of his financial standing would have been enjoying the fruits of their earlier success in leisure and retirement.<sup>22</sup>

The firm of Rockefeller, Andrews and Flagler grew rapidly. It consisted of two refineries and a business house in New York for the selling of oil. John D. Rockefeller was at the head of all these concerns, but the driving force was Flagler. He handled the transportation for the company; it was his duty to negotiate all of the freight rates for oil shipped from the oil regions in Pennsylvania to Cleveland where it was refined and from Cleveland to New York where it was sold. Realizing that in order to make money one must save money, he undertook to negotiate as cheaply as he could for freight rates. The Lake Shore Railroad had as its head an ambitious young veteran, James H. Devereux, who wanted to expand his business and make a record for himself and the railroad. The Lake Shore had just completed a branch into the oil regions, so it was not long before Devereux and Flagler got together.<sup>23</sup> The rates that Flagler bargained for gave his firm the edge on all other shippers.

The business prospered, and several other would-be oil men were anxious to join the firm but Rockefeller and Flagler wanted to keep it under their control. Soon it was decided to reorganize the business as a joint stock company, despite the fact that at this time such corporations were held under some suspicion by the general public. In the new organization it was not intended to sell shares to the general public, but only to other oil refiners. Such an organization would make it easy for Rockefeller

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21. John D. Rockefeller, "Random Reminiscences of Men and Events," *The World's Work*, XVII (November, 1908), 10881.

22. *Ibid.*, 10880.

23. Nevins, *op. cit.*, I, 254, 256.

and Flagler to bring new capital into the business and at the same time kept the controlling interest.<sup>24</sup>

The organization of the Standard Oil Company kindled keen interest in Cleveland. Its leading newspaper voiced on January 19, 1870, that:

Among the numerous indications of the growth and prosperity of Cleveland are to be considered the proportions which the oil interests of our city are beginning to take.

On the 11th inst., one of the most flourishing oil companies of this city, commencing business with a full paid capital of one million dollars, was incorporated under the name of the 'Standard Oil Company.' The corporations are John D. Rockefeller, Henry M. Flagler, Samuel Andrews, Stephen V. Harkness and William Rockefeller. The company has purchased of Rockefeller, Andrews and Flagler all their real estate, factories, offices, etc., in Cleveland, Oil City [Pa.], and New York. Their real estate in Cleveland amounts to about fifty acres in the heart of the city. The offices and factories possess all the requisites found in business establishments of the highest order.

A meeting of the directors of the Company was held on the 13th inst. and the following officers were elected: President, J. D. Rockefeller; vice president, William Rockefeller; secretary and treasurer, H. M. Flagler; superintendent, Samuel Andrews.

The general offices are in the Cushing block, and are connected with the refinery by telegraph. The branch office is at 181 Pear Street [N. Y.], and the warehouse is at Hunter's Point, New York.<sup>25</sup>

There can be but little doubt that Henry M. Flagler was largely responsible for the formation of the Standard Oil Company. His foresight and ingenuity was at the bottom of the move. He realized that the Rockefeller, Andrews, and Flagler business was too profitable to be dependent on the life of either of the three partners, hence he urged that the business be made into a corporation. Some years later John D. Rockefeller was asked if he were the person who had conceived the idea for the corporation. He answered, "No, sir. I wish I'd had the brains to think of it. It was Henry M. Flagler."<sup>26</sup>

Ida M. Tarbell in her *History of the Standard Oil Company* says that Flagler was, next to John D. Rockefeller, the strongest man in the new firm. He was young enough to have vision and insight and a passion for making money, yet old enough to have maturity of thought and judgment. His efforts to increase the business were untiring, and as soon as he saw an opportunity he always took advantage of it. The longer he was away from the influence of his preacher father the less he reasoned on

24. *Ibid.*, 288, 289.

25. *Cleveland Leader*, January 19, 1870.

26. Lefevre, "Flagler and Florida," *loc. cit.*, 183.

the science of morals. Miss Tarbell believed that "He had no scruples to make him hesitate over the ethical quality of a contract which was advantageous." To make money seemed to be his only justification. "He was not a secretive man, like John D. Rockefeller, not a dreamer, but he could keep his mouth shut when necessary and he knew the worth of a financial dream when it was laid before him."<sup>27</sup> It was evident that the Standard Oil Company would go far with such leaders as this at the helm.

The first objective of the new organization was to single out a group of principal refineries in Cleveland and ask them to combine with Standard Oil. After having banded together they could then get the rates from the railroads they wished. By controlling the major oil interests in the city they could produce more oil, and could sell it cheaper by having concessions from the railroads. In this way they could drive out competitors, and thus force consumers to buy their products from them at their own terms. "They could finally dictate market prices on crude oil, stabilize the margin of profit at their own process, and do away at last with the dangerously speculative character of their business."<sup>28</sup>

The Standard Oil Company was capitalized at first at \$1,000,000.00, but more capital was brought in as other refineries were "invited" to join the newly created corporation. The first that Standard purchased was Lockhart, the second was Charles Pratt and Company of New York. The stockholders in these firms were paid in Standard Oil Company shares at \$450.00 each. The capital stock was thus increased to \$3,500,000.00<sup>29</sup> There were some refiners, especially in Cleveland, who did not wish to merge into the Standard Oil Company, but they were soon convinced that it was the only thing to do. The movement was like a tidal wave throughout the oil sections, especially in Cleveland, engulfing every refinery in its path. A few firms balked but were later forced to give in, usually being made to accept smaller sums for their properties because of their procrastination. Criticism of the methods of the Standard Oil Company began to mount. The little refiners claimed they were being "frozen out" of the oil business, especially if they were paid cash for their property. If they were given stock in the Standard Oil Company in lieu of cash they considered they were being "rooted out." Flagler

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27. Tarbell, *op. cit.*, 50.

28. Matthew Josephson, *The Robber Barons* (New York, 1934), 116.

29. *New York Tribune*, December 23, 1906.

called this idea a ridiculous one, and used the following story to back up his contention:

When I was selling flour and grain in Cleveland, I had a certain German for a customer. He owned a bakery in the suburbs, and I often trusted him for a barrel of flour when collections were slow and money was scarce. One day I met him on the street, and he surprised me by saying that he had sold his bakery and was running a little oil refinery. Usually Mr. Rockefeller and I walked downtown in the morning to talk over private matters. Next day I told him about the little German baker who had gone into the oil business without my knowledge. We bought the refinery for \$5,200. The German owed \$5,000. At my suggestion he took \$2,700 in money, with which he pacified his creditors for the time being, and \$2,500 in Standard stock. We made him superintendent of our stove department and sent him into the woods, where he arose to a salary of \$8,000 a year. I was pleased later to ask him for his \$2,500 in stock and to issue in its stead \$50,000 of stock in the larger corporation. Still later he received \$10,000 more in a stock dividend.<sup>30</sup>

This was an example of a cheerful killing of a competitor, but there were many examples not so cheerful. A number of those who took money, rather than Standard stock for their property, were not particularly friendly to Flagler and Rockefeller later on. The annual dividend was limited to fifteen per cent. The surplus was kept in the treasury, and helped to eventually raise the capital of the Standard Oil Company from \$3,500,000.00 to \$70,000,000.00.<sup>31</sup>

In the field of rebates, Henry M. Flagler was most successful. To him it was just a good business practice, and since he was out in charge of transportation of Standard Oil, he worked diligently to out-do all the other refineries in the matter of rebates. Flagler declared that Thomas A. Scott, president of the Pennsylvania Railroad, introduced the practice of giving rebates. At first Scott was successful because he made every refiner believe that he alone enjoyed this courtesy from the Pennsylvania Railroad. Even Flagler was caught in the trap. When he received his first rebate from the Pennsylvania, he went home a happy man because he had won a great victory. A year later he found out that other refiners had received the same favor.<sup>32</sup>

But Flagler did get better treatment from the Lake Shore Railroad, treatment that was not accorded the twenty-four other refiners in Cleveland. James H. Devereux, Lake Shore's president, began negotiations with Flagler soon after the partnership of Rockefeller, Andrews, and

30. *Ibid.*

31. *Ibid.*

32. *Ibid.*

Flagler was formed in 1867. In 1870 Flagler guaranteed year round shipments of sixty carloads of oil every day and assured Devereux that the company was willing to do all their summer shipping via railroad. This had not always been the case, as Lake Erie and Canal had been used to some extent for shipping during the warm months of the year. The Standard Oil Company in turn asked for a heavy rebate. The two-way rate which Flagler asked for was \$1.65 instead of the \$2.40 charge. Devereux, realizing that he must cater to the Standard Oil, accepted Flagler's offer. No other refinery could produce the same volume of oil that Standard could produce, therefore no other refinery was granted the same favors by the Lake Shore Railroad.<sup>33</sup> The city of Cleveland profited by this transaction because it secured for the city much of the export traffic. Cleveland was anxious to keep the Standard Oil Company on home soil because of the large volume of business done by that company. And with the railroad rebates that Flagler was securing for the company, it was rather certain that Standard would remain in Cleveland. The Lake Shore Railroad was interested in the Standard business remaining in Cleveland, and for that reason did not lower rates or give rebates to the twenty-four other refiners in Cleveland.<sup>34</sup>

Throughout the 1870's refiners struggled for better transportation facilities, each one trying to obtain better rates than his competitors from the railroad companies. Standard Oil Company always profited by the services of Henry M. Flagler in this particular phase of its work.

Standard Oil was not satisfied with the best set of associates in the business and the advantage which she had in transportation. There were always new horizons to explore, and the Rockefeller-Flagler combination was always ready to undertake the job if it meant an increase in the volume of their business. They seized upon the idea of a combination of enough of the refiners and shippers to control the entire business throughout the United States. The new combination or business would compel all the railroads to give rebates on oil shipped by it, and at the same time force the railroads to be especially hard on all other refiners not connected with the new combination.<sup>35</sup> Those refiners outside of the combination would not be able to compete very long with the new scheme that virtually put the oil business in the hands of John D. Rockefeller and Henry M. Flagler. On May 1, 1871, the Pennsylvania Legislature

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33. Nevins, *op. cit.*, I, 296, 297.

34. Tarbell, *op. cit.*, 49.

35. Ida M. Tarbell, "The Rise of the Standard Oil Company." *McClure's Magazine*, XX (December, 1902), 121.

chartered the new organization as the South Improvement Company, a name which meant absolutely nothing. The powers of the company were wide and vague. It included authority "to construct and operate any work, or works, public or private, designed to include, increase, facilitate, or develop trade, travel, or the transportation of freight, livestock, passengers, or any traffic by land or water, from or to any part of the United States."<sup>36</sup>

It was not too certain just who originated the scheme resulting in the South Improvement Company, but it goes without saying that Rockefeller and Flagler both were responsible to some extent. There were 2,000 shares in the company, and 900 of that number were held by Rockefeller, Flagler, O. H. Payne, H. Bostwick and William Rockefeller of the Standard Oil Company.<sup>37</sup> The Standard Oil had been successful in bringing about successful combinations in the city of Cleveland, and now the South Improvement Company wanted to do the same thing throughout the whole country. But such efforts were opposed vigorously by many individual refiners. The thing that troubled the individual refiners most was the secrecy which cloaked the whole scheme. The little refiner would sometime be virtually strangled out, before he realized that the strong arms of the monster were about his neck. Some of the refiners had suffered financial reverses in the past few years, and in such instances were willing to succumb to the South Improvement Company.

After the combining process had gotten under way, the railroads were won over. They included the Central, the Lake Shore, the Erie, the Atlantic and Great Western, and the Pennsylvania. Very little trouble was encountered with the presidents of these various roads, for they all entered into the scheme readily, despite the fact it was a violation of the charter of a railroad to give rebates. This practice, however, had been common for about four years. The railroads had been fighting among themselves for the oil business, and they had often had to cut their rates so low to get consignments that their profits were practically nothing. In view of these conditions, the railroads were willing to make any sort of agreement that would insure them their share of the oil traffic and at the same time give them a profit on it.<sup>38</sup>

Within a short time after the announcement was made on February 26, 1872 that freight rates for all oil concerns would be increased (the

36. *Ibid.*

37. Gilbert H. Montague, *The Rise and Progress of the Standard Oil Company* (London, 1903), 23.

38. Tarbell, "Rise of the Standard Oil Company," *loc. cit.*, 123.

South Improvement Company being excepted), great excitement was created in the oil regions around Titusville, Pennsylvania. A mass meeting was held in the opera house at Titusville with 3000 producers, brokers, refiners, drillers and pumpers of oil present. There was much excitement, and before the meeting had closed the Petroleum Producers Union was organized for the purpose of fighting the South Improvement Company. They agreed to sell no oil to any one connected with the South Improvement Company, and at the same time selected a committee to go to the Legislature and ask for the repeal of the charter of the South Improvement Company.<sup>39</sup> The oil war was on.

The oil war lasted for several months, during which time much violence was hurled at the South Improvement Company and its leaders. Throughout February and March, 1872, the *Cleveland Leader* defended the Company, mainly because of its warm feelings for the Standard Oil and Rockefeller and Flagler,<sup>40</sup> whereas individuals criticized the questionable practices of the new concern.<sup>41</sup> Soon Congress investigated the great scheme, and in the end the charter of the South Improvement was revoked.<sup>42</sup>

Flagler and Rockefeller soon conceived another combination plan, the "Pittsburgh Plan," as it was called, and went to Titusville in May, 1873, to talk the matter over with the producers. They declared that it had none of the objectionable features of the defunct South Improvement Company, though in the end it would obtain the same results. The two men were not received too enthusiastically by the producers, whom they had fought so hard just a few months prior to this time. "You misunderstood us," said Rockefeller and Flagler. "Let us see what combination will do."<sup>43</sup> Public meetings were held on May 15 and 16 to create enthusiasm, but the meetings, as well as the Pittsburgh Plan, were a failure. The brunt of the explanation and defense of the new plan was made by Flagler, giving rise to the belief that it was an outgrowth of his mind. The main difference in the new plan and the old South Improvement Company was that the former plan was an open concern—a company that would run the refining business of the whole country, whereas the latter plan was clothed in secrecy and uncertainty.<sup>44</sup>

39. Ida M. Tarbell, "The Oil War of 1872." *McClure's Magazine*, XX (January, 1903), 248.

40. *Cleveland Leader*, February 24, 26, 27, 1872; March 5, 1872.

41. *Ibid.*, March 25, 1872.

42. Harold U. Faulkner, *American Economic History* (New York, 1943), 5 ed., 441.

43. Josephson, *op. cit.*, 265.

44. Tarbell, *op. cit.*, 106, 107.

During the coming years, the Standard Oil Company continued to expand its operations under the leadership of Rockefeller and Flagler. By 1879, the critics of the company declared that this concern was nothing more than a revival of the South Improvement Company itself.<sup>45</sup> To prove their point they cited the fact that Standard Oil produced ninety-five percent of the refined oil of the country, and at the same time controlled the transportation of oil by pipe-line and railroad. There was an "alliance" of many companies which was nothing more than a trust. The alliance included the following companies: Standard Oil of Cleveland, Standard Company of Pittsburgh, the Acme Oil Company of New York (located at Titusville, Pennsylvania), the Imperial Oil Company at Oil City, the Atlantic Refining Company of Philadelphia, the Camden Company of Maryland, the Charles Pratt and Company of New York, J. A. Bostwick and Company, Fleming Manufacturing Company, Warden, Frew and Company of Philadelphia, and the Baltimore United Oil Company of Baltimore.<sup>46</sup>

Several local investigations of the Standard Oil Company began in 1879. The grand jury of Clarion County, Pennsylvania, brought indictment against Rockefeller, Flagler, and their associates on April 29, 1879, but there was so much delay in the matter that the suits were finally withdrawn. This represented a great victory for Flagler and Rockefeller.<sup>47</sup> In the summer of 1879 the Hepburn Investigation took place in New York, but very little information was gathered from Flagler or any of the other Standard Oil officials.<sup>48</sup> The Standard Oil Company had weathered the first storm of official protest by the government.

Apparently Flagler realized the mounting opposition to big business; however, he was one of the nine trustees of the Standard Oil Trust when it was organized in 1882.<sup>49</sup> The very next year, 1883, he visited Florida, going as far south as St. Augustine, and never again after that trip was his participation in the Standard Oil Company as vigorous as before. Henry M. Flagler no doubt started dreaming of the things that he might accomplish in Florida. It was the first of his many trips to Florida; it was the beginning of a period of development and expansion which was unparalleled in the long history of the state.

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45. *Ibid.*, 228.

46. Montague, *op. cit.*, 66.

47. Tarbell, *op. cit.*, 239.

48. Nevins, *op. cit.*, II, 42, 43.

49. Josephson, *op. cit.*, 277.

# Blockade-Running in the Bahamas During the Civil War\*

by THELMA PETERS

THE OPENING of the American Civil War in 1861 had the same electrifying effect on the Bahama Islands as the prince's kiss had on the Sleeping Beauty. The islands suddenly shook off their lethargy of centuries and became the clearing house for trade, intrigue, and high adventure. Nassau, long the obscurest of British colonial capitals, and with an ordinarily poor and indifferent population, became overnight the host to a reckless, wealthy and extravagant crowd of men from many nations and many ranks. There were newspaper correspondents, English navy officers on leave with half pay, underwriters, entertainers, adventurers, spies, crooks and bums. Out-islanders flocked to the little city to grab a share of the gold which flowed like water. One visitor reported that there were traders of so many nationalities in Nassau that the languages on the streets reminded one of the tongues of Babel.<sup>1</sup>

All of this transformation of a sleepy little island city of eleven thousand people grew out of its geographical location for it was near enough to the Confederate coast to serve as a depot to receive Southern cotton and to supply Southern war needs.

England tried to maintain neutrality during the War. It is not within the scope of this paper to pass judgment on the success of her effort. Certain it is that the Bahamians made their own interpretation of British neutrality. They construed the laws of neutrality vigorously against the United States and as laxly as possible toward the South. In other words, the Bahamians were pro-Confederate.

There were many bonds of friendship and business between the Bahamians and the Confederates. At one time the six proprietors to whom the Carolinas were granted also controlled the Bahamas. At the conclu-

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\*A paper read before the Historical Association of Southern Florida at its meeting of May 5th, 1943.

1. Frank I. Wilson, *Sketches of Nassau* (Raleigh, 1864), 13.

sion of the American Revolutionary War the population of the Bahamas was doubled by the immigration to the islands of the Loyalists most of whom came from southern states bringing their slaves with them. When the Declaration of Independence caused the removal of the Earl of Dunmore as governor of Virginia he was appointed to the Bahamas. The similarity between the arrangement and style of the public buildings of Nassau and those of the colonial capital at Williamsburg, Virginia, is probably due to the influence of Dunmore.

Most of the trade between the Bahamas and the United States had been through Southern ports. Both the Bahamians and the Confederates had had the same attitude toward slavery. Slave owners in the Bahamas had violently protested Britain's freeing of the slaves in 1834.

Bahamian sympathy for the South increased as the war progressed. The gallantry and courage of the Southerners won friends for their cause. The haughty and offensive tone often assumed by representatives of the United States turned public feeling even farther away from the Union. Men refused to see why the Confederates should be branded as "rebels" or "pirates." The "stone" blockade of the Federals, the harsh treatment of captured crews, and, most of all, the high-handedness displayed in the *Trent* Affair all served to intensify the feeling against the North. The Bahamians saw in blockade-running not only business opportunities but a way of getting back at the Federals for actions which they considered nothing less than piratical.

The pro-Confederate activities of the Bahamians were concealed beneath an apparent effort at the stern enforcement of neutrality. Upon the approach of United States warships the Queen's proclamations were upheld to the letter.<sup>2</sup> To give substance to their claim of strict neutrality they occasionally seized a Confederate warship and held a mock trial. These cases were usually dismissed for lack of evidence. No one was fooled. The double-dealing of the Bahamians enraged the Americans, who complained about it long and loudly to Earl Russell.

In 1863, the representatives of the United States government in Nassau, W. G. Thompson, acting-consul, actually refused to hoist the Stars and Stripes on the consular flagstaff on the Fourth of July because the national emblem was so little respected in Nassau.<sup>3</sup>

In December, 1861, Lewis Heyliger of New Orleans was appointed

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2. James M. Wright, "History of the Bahama Islands," in George Burbank Shattuck, ed., *The Bahama Islands* (New York, 1915), 574.

3. *The Nassau Guardian*, September 2, 1863.

by the Treasury of the Confederacy as head of the "depository" of Confederate funds in Nassau. His duties were to forward shipments of cotton to England, and to make purchases of return cargoes.

One of the most difficult problems of the Confederate agents was to get sufficient coal to keep the blockade-runners supplied, for each steamer required from 160 to 180 tons for a round trip to Charleston or to Wilmington. The coal business was almost as profitable to the merchants of Nassau as cotton trading. The coal yards of Henry Adderly and Company, Johnson and Brothers, and the Navy Yard reached mammoth proportions. Across the harbor on Hog Island was a mountain of coal, the yard of Saunders and Son. All the coal dealers were local merchants. The bulk of the coal came from England but some, anthracite, came from Pennsylvania. If a ship could get coal of both kinds the anthracite was saved for the critical run through the blockade.

Coaling was done efficiently by Negroes, a double line passing to and fro from the yard, located on or near the wharves, to the ship, some with hand carts and iron barrows, and others with huge lumps on their heads.

Sometimes cotton soaked in turpentine was used as fuel as it gave intense heat with little smoke. On one trip back to Nassau the captain had to burn all the coal, the mainmasts, bulwarks, deck cabin, all other available wood, and all the cotton and turpentine on board in order to get back to the islands.<sup>4</sup> Sometimes there would only be enough fuel to reach the nearest of the Bahamas, for the archipelago reaches out a hundred miles north of New Providence. Then, if there were no Union ships lurking about, coal could be obtained by sending to Nassau.

The two Confederate ports with which blockade-runners did the most business were Charleston, 560 miles from Nassau, and Wilmington, S. C., 640 miles. Some runners operated out of Havana and Bermuda but Nassau held the place of importance since it was nearer and less coal was required. Then, too, there was no great depth of water in Nassau harbor and navigation in the Bahamas was treacherous. This was an advantage to the light-draft, speedy blockade-runners, which always had skilled Bahamian pilots aboard, and a disadvantage to the heavier Union boats which were often unable to hire Bahamian pilots.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Bunch, who was the British consul in Charleston, wrote to Lord

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4. Thomas E. Taylor, *Running the Blockade* (New York, 1896), 82.

5. James Russell Soley, "The Blockade and the Cruisers," *The Navy in the Civil War*, III, 36.

Lyons in Washington in April, 1862, as follows:

"The blockade-runners are doing a great business . . . Everything is brought in in abundance. Not a day passes without an arrival or a departure. The Richmond Government sent about a month ago an order to Nassau for Medicines, Quinine, etc. It went from Nassau to New York, was executed there, came back to Nassau, thence here, and was on its way to Richmond in 21 days from the date of the order. Nearly all the trade is under the British flag. The vessels are all changed in Nassau and Havana. Passengers come and go freely and no one seems to think that there is the slightest risk -- which, indeed there is not!"<sup>6</sup>

With cotton selling for sixty cents a pound in England and one dollar in New York<sup>7</sup> it was not surprising that Bahamians should have attempted to revive what had once been a thriving agricultural staple sixty years earlier.<sup>8</sup> Seed was distributed by the government to all those desiring to plant cotton, cotton gins were purchased and a bounty offered for island-grown cotton. For the most part this effort resulted in failure. The soil was rocky, cultivation slow, and labor difficult to get since many of the out-islanders had temporarily moved to Nassau where jobs were easy to get and wages high. Moreover, forty-eight hours across the water cotton could be had for eight cents a pound. Tilling the soil had never had much appeal for these maritime sons of pirates and wreckers. Taking cotton from under the prows of Yankee blockaders was a much more attractive way of getting it.

Nassau's wharves were piled high with the mammoth bales. Stores and warehouses and open porches were crammed with cotton. In a place where there were no facilities for handling or storing such quantities a new problem presented itself. Merchants lived in constant dread of fire. Volunteer firemen were organized. The local Police Inspector was placed in charge of fires and empowered to pull down or blow up any house necessary to prevent the spread of fire, the houseowner to be compensated from the public treasury.<sup>9</sup> If cotton caught fire while it was piled on the docks or along the water front, the rule was to throw it overboard as quickly as possible. Smoking was strictly forbidden among the bales and close watch was kept. Yet in spite of all these precautions fires did occur occasionally to add their spectacle to the general excitement of the day.

6. E. D. Adams, *Great Britain and the American Civil War* (New York, 1925), I, 266, n. 2.

7. Horatio L. Wait, "The Blockade of the Confederacy," *Century Magazine*, LVI (1898), 914-928.

8. *The Bahama Herald*, February 18, 1862.

9. *The Nassau Guardian*, November 2, 1864.

Besides cotton other articles in Nassau awaiting shipment were Confederate uniforms, ammunition, guns, medicines, salt and various luxuries, these to be run through the blockade into the Confederacy.

Between 1861 and 1865 about 400 vessels entered Nassau from Confederate ports, 156 of these coming from Charleston and 164 from Wilmington.<sup>10</sup> During the period of the War 588 ships left Nassau for Southern ports, though 432 of these ostensibly cleared for New Brunswick or ports in the West Indies.<sup>11</sup>

Nassau harbor, ordinarily quiet enough, was teeming with activity during these war years. *The Bahama Herald*, May 14, 1862, listed all the craft in the harbor on that particular date, conclusive evidence that the world had at last discovered the Bahamas. These craft included eight steamers, H.M.S.S. *Bull Dog*, the *Thomas L. Wagg* (also known as the *Nashville*, a famous Confederate privateer), the *Stellin*, the *Kate*, the *Cecile*, the *Nelly*, the *Elizabeth*, the *Nassau*; one British ship; two barques, one British and one French; six brigs, four American, one British, and one Spanish; six schooners, American; one Brazillian barque; five topsail schooners, British; with innumerable smaller craft from schooner downward, and the steamers, *Minnow* and *Oreto*, lying at Cochrane's Anchorage nearby.

The *Oreto* was at the point of making an interesting metamorphosis. She had been built in England where she had been called a merchant ship although she had the unmistakable build of a man-of-war. When the *Oreto* arrived in Nassau, where she was to take on her armament, the American consul evinced so much interest in her that it was thought expedient to move her to Cochrane's Anchorage, fifteen miles away. The consul finally succeeded in bribing an ex-boatswain of the *Oreto* into declaring that the *Oreto* was a Confederate gunboat. The consul's protests that neutrality had been violated forced the British commander of the H.M.S. *Greyhound*, then in Bahamian waters, to seize the *Oreto* and the case was brought before a local admiralty court.

The case was heard August 2 before Judge Lees. The courtroom was crowded and electric with excitement. Henry Adderly, prominent merchant of Nassau, testified that the ship had been consigned to him by Fraser, Trenholm and Company of Liverpool as a merchant vessel and that they considered her as such.<sup>12</sup> The trial lasted half an hour. The

10. Rawson W. Rawson, *Report on the Bahamas for the Year 1864* (London, 1866), 54.

11. Anonymous, "The Bahamas," *Harper's*, XLIX (1874), 761-772.

12. *The Alabama Claims* (London, 1872), I, 64.

judge ordered the vessel released, declaring that there was not sufficient evidence that an attempt had been made to fit her out as a warship. One writer insists that it is a well-established fact that \$80,000 was brought from England and divided between Chief Justice Lees, who received \$20,000, and other parties in Nassau engaged in the transaction, a legal luxury for which England later paid several millions (i.e., in the settlement of the Alabama Claims Case).<sup>13</sup> The *Oreto* became the Confederate warship, *Florida*, second in importance only to the *Alabama*. Both ships figured in the Alabama Claims Case by which England paid the United States \$15,000,000 for having been so indiscreet as to have permitted them to be built in England.

After the *Oreto* was released by the admiralty court in Nassau she was moved to Green Cay, about sixty miles south of Nassau, and there her transformation into a full-fledged warship took place, a task that required about ten days.

Lieutenant J. N. Maffitt of the Confederate Navy was commissioned to outfit the *Oreto*. In his journal he tells of some of the hardships experienced at Green Cay:

"Now commenced one of the most physically exhausting jobs ever undertaken by naval officers. All hands undressed to the buff, and, with the few men we had, commenced taking in one 6 and 7 ¼ inch guns, powder, circles, shell and shot, etc. An August sun in the tropics is no small matter to work in. On the 15th C. Worrell, wardroom steward, died and we buried him on Green Cay. At first I thought it but ordinary cases, originating from hard work and exposure to the sun, but in twenty hours the unpalatable fact was impressed upon me that yellow fever was added to our annoyances. Having no physician on board, that duty devolved upon me, and nearly my whole time, day and night, was devoted to the sick. On the 16th of August all the armament and stores were on board; took the tender in tow and ran to Blossom Channel, in which we anchored at sunset."<sup>14</sup>

There the Confederate flag was hoisted and the *Oreto* was christened by her new name, *Florida*. It was not, however, a day of rejoicing, for the yellow fever was spreading. Maffitt became very ill and his stepson, Captain Read died. When he had recovered Maffitt was put in command of the *Florida* and the ship sailed away to commence her career of depredation. She gained a piratical reputation for herself and proved entirely elusive so far as Federal warships were concerned until she was

13. "The Bahamas," *Harper's, op. cit.*, 766.

14. *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of Rebellion* (Washington, 1894-1922). (Hereinafter referred to as the *Naval War Records*) I, 764.

finally tracked down and captured by the U. S. *Wachusett* in the Bay of San Salvador, Brazil, October 17, 1864.<sup>15</sup>

In January, 1863, the *Florida* paid a visit to Nassau harbor to obtain coal. If we believe Samuel Whiting, the United States consul, the Fort Adjutant boarded the *Florida* to welcome Maffitt and to escort him and the other officers to a breakfast at the Royal Victoria Hotel, where he was enthusiastically greeted by the secession sympathizers under a display of secession bunting.<sup>16</sup> Maffitt wrote in his journal of this visit ashore as follows: "On shore the demonstration was most friendly and congratulatory. Nassau is decidedly a Confederate stronghold."<sup>17</sup> Of Maffitt's visit to Nassau Whiting wrote, "Pretty neutrality this, I must say."<sup>18</sup>

In the beginning blockade-running was amateurish. During the first year much of the trade was carried in sailing vessels, chiefly schooners and sloops, and many of these were unseaworthy and incautiously handled. Even two open boats of one or two tons ran the blockade from the coast of Florida in 1862.<sup>19</sup> Later, as the blockade was drawn more tightly, larger and swifter boats became a necessity. Work was suspended on all wooden ships in England as early as May, 1862, and all hands were engaged in building iron ships. One of the first of these to be used in blockade-running was the *Banshee*, described as a "magnificent vessel of 440 tons." Her first three voyages from Nassau to Wilmington and back were made within a space of six weeks, with heavy cargoes each way. On her first trip out of Wilmington she brought tobacco valued at £7000 and cotton valued at £25,000. On the fourth trip the *Banshee* was captured but nevertheless she had already done enough to make her shareholders 700 percent on their investment.<sup>20</sup>

The ships used during the last two years of the blockade were long, slim and cut down to the level of the rails so that nothing but masts arose above the deck. They were painted a dull white or lead grey, colors found to be best for dark nights. They were side-wheelers of light draft and a capacity of 400 to 600 tons. The speediest steamers, such as the *Coquette* and the *Vulture*, could make the trip from Wilmington to Nas-

15. *Ibid.*, III, 255.

16. *Naval War Records*, *op. cit.* II, 59.

17. *Ibid.*, II, 660.

18. *Ibid.*, II, 59.

19. Rawson, *op. cit.*, 54.

20. Taylor, *op. cit.*, 85.

sau in forty-eight hours. Usually three days were allowed for loading and unloading. It was necessary to work fast while conditions were right, for the dark of the moon and high tide were favored for running the blockade. Steamers left Nassau at an hour to insure their arrival off Charleston or Wilmington at night. Slipping in through the ever-watchful Union fleet required the nicest precision. If seen, the runner put out to sea, piled on the coal, and made a get-away if possible.

One of the best-known and most successful of the blockade-runners was Thomas E. Taylor. He was only twenty-one in 1862 when he was sent out to Nassau by a firm of Liverpool merchants which was striving to offset the losses due to the War by engaging in the illegitimate and highly lucrative business of blockade-running. He had general supervision of the *Banshee*, already mentioned. With his level-headed captain, Steele, and his dependable engineer, Erskine, he made many daring runs through the enemy's squadron. After the *Banshee* was lost Taylor got, in succession, the *Will o' the Wisp*, the *Wild Dayrell*, lost on her second trip, the *Stormy Petrel*, and the *Wild Rover*. The latter made five runs and survived the war.

It was on one of Taylor's ships that an incident occurred which brought a good laugh from the blockade-runners in Nassau. A very valuable horse had been secured by the Southern agent in Egypt and sent to Nassau to be taken through the blockade to become a gift for Jefferson Davis. Louis Heyliger, the Confederate agent in Nassau, entrusted the horse to Taylor. In the thickness of a black night Taylor was about to ease into Wilmington through the network of vigilant Yankee ships, when the horse began to neigh. Several coats were hurriedly thrown over the horse's head in an effort to smother the sound but it was too late. The Union ships had been aroused and they opened fire. There was nothing for Taylor to do but make a run for it. Lucky for him, and the horse, he made it.<sup>21</sup>

On one of his trips back from Wilmington Taylor discovered a Negro stowaway among the cotton bales. When they landed the Negro was given quite an ovation by the sympathetic blacks of Nassau. He was allowed to keep his freedom but this generosity cost Taylor dearly, for on his next trip to Wilmington he had to pay \$4,000, the price of the Negro.<sup>22</sup> After this the ship captains before leaving Wilmington had the holds

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21. Taylor, *op. cit.*, 97-99.

22. *Ibid.*, 80.

and all spaces between cotton bales thoroughly smoked, a process which, if continued long enough, was sure to force out the stowaways.

On one trip out Taylor had as passengers General George W. Randolph, ex-secretary of war, who was an invalid, and his wife, on their way to Europe. There were no accommodations for women on board but a safe place, a kind of room, was made for Mrs. Randolph among the cotton bales on deck and the voyage was made very comfortably. On that particular round-trip, requiring twenty days, Taylor cleared for his firm a profit of £ 85,000.<sup>23</sup>

Blockade-runners never surrendered to the enemy when they could avoid it. If attacked they would try to get away, taking to the open sea on the hope of out-distancing their pursuers. If they could not escape they scuttled their ship and took to small boats which had been supplied with rations for ten days and could be lowered at a moment's notice. If off Wilmington when attacked, ships were sometimes run ashore under the protection of the guns of Fort Fisher, where the cargo, at least, could later be saved.

For all its thrills and high adventure blockade-running was not attended by any great amount of physical danger. It was never the purpose of Yankees to destroy a ship. They wanted to make a capture so the cargo could be sold. Then each man on the Union ship would share in the prize and the ship itself would be turned over to the Union navy. Officers and crew of captured boats were punished by imprisonment, the length of time being greater for Southerners than for Bahamians or English. More often than not the crew got safely to shore in life boats.

The amount of prize money received by the officers and crew of a Union vessel was immense. In 1862 when the U. S. *Magnolia* captured the blockade-runner *Memphis*, which carried a cargo of cotton and resin, and there was no other vessel in sight so that the prize money did not have to be shared, more than a half million dollars was divided among the officers and crew of the *Magnolia*. The officers received \$38,318.55 each for their day's work, while the share for an ordinary seaman was \$1,700. When the *Eolus* captured the *Lady Stirling*, another blockade-runner, the cargo and vessel sold for \$200,354.64 and each of the acting ensigns of the *Eolus* received \$9,569.67 and each seaman received \$2,000.<sup>24</sup>

Most of the meat supplying Lee's army in 1864 was run through the blockade. It came originally from New York, was received in Nassau

23. Taylor, *op. cit.*, 142-144.

24. James H. Stark, *History and Guide to the Bahama Islands*, (Boston, 1891), 99-100.

and re-shipped. Since the meat was sometimes spoiled, it was facetiously suggested at the Confederate capital in Richmond that the South needed to keep a meat inspector in New York.<sup>25</sup> Shiploads of pistols packed in lard were brought to Nassau from Boston and run through the blockade.<sup>26</sup>

Occasionally a ship would be wrecked within the waters of the Bahamas, where hidden rocks and strong currents have always given an element of peril to navigation. One such wreck occurred when a ship was driven ashore on Hog Island, a small island across the harbor from Nassau. The cargo was composed of shoes and boots, and the residents of the island were well supplied with these for some time. Some claimed the officers of the ship were drunk, others that the whole thing was a put up job.<sup>27</sup> The latter is entirely likely in view of the fact that Bahamians had been guilty of unethical wrecking practices for two centuries.

Most of those who belonged to the inner circle of that gay society of blockade-runners which centered in the Victoria Hotel in Nassau made private financial ventures of their own. Ladies had their favorite captains and ships and there was always suspense when these were out on a run and rejoicing when they came safely into harbor. Some sent money with captains to purchase cotton on which to speculate, others sent in articles that could expect to be sold at a large profit. It was possible for the ladies to pick up a nice amount of pin money in this way. One sent in a large quantity of yellow soap and realized an enormous profit.<sup>28</sup>

Captain A. Roberts, one of the most dashing and romantic figures in Nassau during the war, never failed to do some private trading on his own account. It was his theory that every blockade-runner had to look out for himself. On his first trip, which was directly from England, he took in, as his private venture, 1,000 women's corsets, 500 boxes of Cockle's pills, and a quantity of toothbrushes. The corsets he sold easily in Wilmington at a profit of 1100 percent, and the toothbrushes found a sale in Richmond at seven times their cost, but no one seemed to want Cockle's pills. He decided to take them to Nassau which was, to quote him, "a place where every one was bilious from overeating and drinking on the strength of the fortunes they were making by blockade-running."<sup>29</sup>

25 Francis B. C. Bradlee, *Blockade-Running During the Civil War* (Salem, 1925), 64.

26. Stark, *op. cit.*, 69.

27. Charles Ives, *The Isles of Summer or Nassau and the Bahamas*, (New Haven, 1880), 161.

28. Captain A. Roberts (pseud. for A. C. Hobart-Hampden), *Never Caught* (London, 1867), 67.

29. *Ibid.*, 22-26.

He could not sell them for cash in Nassau but he was able to trade them to an enterprising pharmacist for two chests of lucifer matches upon which he made a fair profit in the Confederacy.

So immense were the profits made in the blockade-running business that it was said that if a steamer had the good fortune to run into Charleston twice with merchandise, and out twice with cotton, the Yankees were welcome to her after that. Some claimed if one cargo in three could be run in safely it paid; and that they would still be out nothing if only one cargo in four made it. An old captain who made sixteen successful trips said that profits were about 800 percent. A clear profit of \$300,000 for a round-trip was not uncommon and one ship carried out 7,000 bales of cotton worth \$2,000,000 before it was captured.<sup>30</sup>

Bounties paid to officers and crew of a first class steamer for a round trip were as follows: captain, £1000; chief officer, £250; second and third officers, £150; chief engineer, £500; pilots, £750; crew and firemen, £50.<sup>31</sup> There were usually two pilots—one a Bahamian who took the ship out of and into Nassau harbor, and one a Charleston or Wilmington pilot. Half the bounty was paid before leaving Nassau and after it was paid no one was allowed ashore. The other half was paid when the round-trip had been completed.

In addition to their bounties the officers were allowed to stow away little cargoes of their own. The captain was given the privilege of carrying ten bales of cotton on his own account, the pilots five bales each. It was said a captain could retire with his nest well-feathered after six months of employment.

Seamen also did a little trading on the side. In one instance some seamen tried to smuggle tobacco into Nassau. Their method was to cover their bodies with the unfolded leaves as smoothly as possible. They soon became extremely ill—pulse feeble, nausea, and cold sweats. They were found to be suffering from severe cases of nicotine poisoning.<sup>32</sup>

In Nassau so plentiful was money that dollars were tossed around like pennies. Living expenses mounted. A newspaper notice of September, 1864, laments the high prices of foodstuffs, remarking that fish was 400 percent higher than before the war.<sup>33</sup> Frank I. Wilson, a visitor from North Carolina who spent several weeks in Nassau during the war,

30. Wait, *op. cit.*, 914-928.

31. Roberts, *op. cit.*, 41.

32. *The Nassau Guardian*, November 2, 1864.

33. *Ibid.*, September 17, 1864.

reported that persons were pointed out to him who were poor before the war and were at the time of his visit worth from a half million to three million dollars in hard cash or its equivalent in inflated real estate. He compared Nassau's boom with the California gold fever.<sup>34</sup> Henry Ad-derly, Nassau's most prominent merchant, was given the title of King Conch by the runners and was reported to be as wealthy as the "Roths' children."<sup>35</sup>

Blockade-running had its humorous aspects, as no one knew better than the runners themselves. This was evidenced by the appearance of a spicy paper, *Young Punch*, edited in Nassau by a witty Confederate for the amusement of his friends. One of these papers told of a rather grim joke played at the expense of the rebels. A large order of prayer books brought from England was sent to Charleston to supply the devo-tional wants of the Confederacy. Imagine the surprise of the Charles-tonians when they discovered that the books contained prayers for the Congress and the President of the United States!<sup>36</sup>

The gay social life of Nassau centered in the Royal Victoria Hotel which is still one of the show places of Nassau. The hotel had been started in 1859 as a government project calling for an expenditure of £ 6000. However, the tide of wealth which came as a consequence of the war caused the government to decide to finish and furnish the hotel much more elaborately than at first planned. No expense was spared in the purchase of elegant plate, china and glassware. Every detail of fur-nishings and service was planned to suit the most fastidious. Beautiful furniture and lamps were imported. There was a wonderful grand piano, the most amazing thing the islanders had ever seen. By turning a crank the piano could be made to "perform any overture, waltz or quadrille with surpassing brilliancy of execution."<sup>37</sup> The hotel was crowded with blockade-runners, their wives, Confederate agents, and war corre-spondents.

The safe return of a "runner" was always occasion enough for a dance. Teas, maroons (as they called their picnics), boating parties and balls kept the town lively and warded off boredom for persons whose schedules alternated fitful activity with periods of waiting. The Civilian Cricket Club was reorganized and society turned out to watch the matches

34. Frank I. Wilson, *Sketches of Nassau* (Raleigh, 1864), 7.

35. John Wilkinson, *Narrative of a Blockade-Runner* (New York, 1877), 141.

36. "The Bahamas," *Harper's*, *op. cit.*, 767.

37. *The Nassau Guardian*, February 25, 1863.

played on the grounds below Fort Charlotte,<sup>38</sup> a cricket field that is much the same today as it was then. The bi-weekly band concerts (seats were provided for the ladies!) and the dress parades of the Second West India Regiment provided popular entertainment. Wilson described the regiment as a "parcel of fine looking darkies in bright uniforms who made very respectable holiday soldiers."<sup>39</sup> Today the imposing British Colonial Hotel covers the old parade grounds and the barracks have been moved to the "black" side of the ridge.

Actors, singers, fortune-tellers, magicians and other entertainers began to include Nassau in their tours. Even a small equestrian show, the first for the Bahamas, came to delight the natives and amuse the visitors. Horse racing, interspersed with mule racing and other comic features, was popular.

Not everyone could enjoy the comfortable living that the Royal Victoria offered. There were many who wanted less pretentious and expensive accommodations. For them housing was a real problem. Out-islanders, lured to Nassau by so much activity, doubled up in houses with relatives or friends and, since most of the houses had not more than three or four rooms, often less, overcrowding was inevitable. If the Negroes from the out-islands had been willing to camp out, some of the evils of overcrowding could have been mitigated. The weather in Nassau is mild and delightful during most of the year, making camping ideal, but Bahamian Negroes are superstitious and become such cowards at night that they are unhappy unless inside a cabin with all the doors and windows tightly closed. If forced to remain outside at night a favorite refuge was among the cotton bales, where they increased the fire hazard by their carelessness.

Ordinarily the Bahamians are a law-abiding people but prosperity was more than they could stand. The result was a wave of lawlessness and immorality. Of this Editor Moseley of *The Nassau Guardian* wrote, December 24, 1864: "There is scarcely a night but adds sorrow to the dawn, by disclosing the fatal consequences of the orgies which are unblushingly engaged in at the dens of iniquity skirting our otherwise fair city."

Doubtless the city was none too clean. J. Wilkinson described it as "that haven of blockade-runners, El Dorado of adventurers, and paradise of wreckers and darkies—filthy Nassau."<sup>40</sup> At any rate there were two

38. *Ibid.*, February 20, 1864.

39. Wilson, *op. cit.*, 9.

40. J. Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, 120.

epidemics of yellow fever during the war period. There were about 250 deaths from the fever, quite a toll considering that the population of Nassau didn't exceed 15,000 during this time.

How did it all end? The Union took Charleston, then Fort Fisher which guarded the entrance to Wilmington. Blockade-running came abruptly to an end and Nassau's visitors disappeared as mist before the sun.

"What good came of it all at last?" asked one writer. "The Americans, at any rate, those who won the day, owed us no thanks, and threatened, indeed, to come down and shovel the pestiferous little sandbank (so they dared to call the Fernandina of Columbus) into the sea."<sup>41</sup> He went on to say a few undertakers had profited on account of the deaths from yellow fever, the government had managed to clear away a small debt, and a few gained enough capital to put them in a position to continue business after the war. The majority, particularly the Negroes, emerged from the period indolent and dissatisfied, spoiled by three years of high pay and gay life.

Wilson, whom we have already mentioned as having visited the Bahamas in 1863, said that he asked a Negro what he thought would happen when the war ended. The negro replied: "Whar you suppose Nassau will go when dis war is over? Well, de war make Nassau, and when de war's over it go right straight to de debbel whar it came from!"<sup>42</sup>

Certainly there was a dreadful fate in store for Nassau. In 1866 the worst hurricane of a century hit the Bahamas. The ocean rolled completely over Hog Island and into the harbor with the crests of waves sixty feet high. Boats were dashed to pieces, houses and forests went down like reeds. Nassau was like a city that had been sacked and burned by the enemy. Many of the new buildings and other improvements acquired during the war disappeared. So great and so complete was the tragedy that many saw in it the hand of providence punishing a wicked people for their over-indulgence and recklessness. Orchards, farms and sponge beds were damaged. Repeated drouths followed the hurricane and most of the Bahamians were reduced to poverty.

A period of stagnation set in. The Bahamians returned to their former isolation which lasted for fifty years. Then the United States passed the Prohibition Amendment and the Bahamians, ever opportunists, went skyrocketing to prosperity on a new venture of running the blockade. But that is another story.

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41. J. T. W. Bacot, *The Bahamas: A Sketch* (London, 1869), 51.

42. Wilson, *op. cit.*, 12.

# A Canoe Expedition Into the Everglades in 1842\*

by GEORGE HENRY PREBLE

Rear Admiral USN, 1816-1885.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES are a verbatim transcript of a penciled memorandum of events made by me from day to day while on an expedition across the Everglades, around Lake Okeechobee, and up and down the connecting rivers and lakes, in 1842. Now that it is proposed to drain the Everglades and open them to cultivation, and a dredge-boat is actually at work excavating a navigable outlet into Lake Okeechobee, this diary, which preserves some of the features of the country forty years ago, may have more or less historical interest. A New Orleans newspaper (*The Times Democrat*) describing the route of a party of surveyors, who had recently gone over very much the same routes as this expedition of 1842, only in reverse, states that it is the first time these regions have been traversed by white men, evidently a mistake, as even this expedition of forty years previous was not the first that had visited Lake Okeechobee. General Taylor's battle was fought on the shores of that lake in 1837, and the Everglades had been traversed and retraversed by the expeditions of the army and navy before that.

Sprague's "History of the Florida War," published in 1848, is the only work that mentions the services of the navy in that connection, and in its appendix there are tables exhibiting the casualties of the officers, seamen, and marines of the United States navy operating against the Indians in Florida, and of the officers and marines who were brevetted. Cooper, in the continuation of his "History of the United States Navy" to 1856, makes no mention whatever of the Florida war, though the navy constantly shared in its hardships from 1836 to 1842, and its losses were proportionate to those of the army. Later writers of our naval history, taking Cooper's work as a standard authority, have been

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\*Reprinted from *United Service, A Quarterly Review of Military and Naval Affairs*, April 1883, pp. 358-376.

equally remiss. The naval history of the Florida war has yet to be written.

The expedition, my diary of which follows, was commanded by Lieutenant John Rodgers, who died only last May, a rear-admiral. The second officer in seniority, Lieutenant William L. Herndon, the father-in-law of President Arthur, as is well known, went down in the steamer "Central America," preferring "certain death to the abandonment of his post," and of the remaining officers, only myself and Passed Midshipman Samuel Chase Barney (who is no longer in the service) are living. It is to be presumed that all, or nearly all of the seamen, and rank and file of marines, have passed away.

The "dug-out" canoes which formed *our homes* for the sixty days the expedition lasted were hollowed cypress logs, about thirty feet long and four feet wide, propelled by paddles, and steered by a broad rudder. At the stern was a locker about six feet long, which held our stores and ammunition, the latter sealed in glass bottles for preservation from dampness. On the top of this locker the officer spread his blankets, and it formed his bed at night; the men sleeping on their paddles and thwarts,—a hard life at the best. Each canoe was provided with a tent, a small square-sail made of ordinary cotton sheeting, and an awning.

The following is Lieutenant John Rodger's official report of the expedition, which this diary records and supplements:

"United States Brig 'Jefferson,' Indian Key, April 12, 1842.

"Sir,—In obedience to your orders to proceed to the Oke-cho-bee and thoroughly examine the country adjacent, I have the honor to report that on the 15th of February I left Key Biscayne with a detachment of men from the 'Madison,' under Lieutenant Commanding Herndon; from the 'Jefferson,' under Passed Midshipman Preble; and of the marines, under Second Lieutenant Taylor. The examination was made, but, unfortunately, without any success. The Indian towns deserted, camps abandoned, and fields uncultivated, but only once did we get near the Indians. This was on Lake Tohopkeliga; but no sooner had the first canoe emerged from its outlet than a large fire sprung up on the opposite side of the lake. Thinking it impossible that we could have been discovered, the boats were carefully concealed, and at night we made the circuit of the lake, hoping to find the fires of the Indians. Failing in this, I went around by daylight, closely examining every nook upon the lake; but we had been seen.

"The Thlo-thlo-pop-ka, or Fish-Eating Creek, runs through an open prairie, to which it serves as a drain. As might be expected, it gives evi-

dence of being in the wet season a large stream, but when I examined it the volume of water it discharged was very small. This stream is very tortuous, and sometimes swells into a river, and then dwindles into a brook. Its head is in a marshy prairie, where a number of streamlets run together about twenty miles in a straight line, due east to the Oke-cho-bee, but following the course of the creek about twice that distance. The banks of Fish-Eating Creek are covered with game, and its waters filled with fish.

"The Kissimmee is a deep, rapid stream, generally running through a marshy plain, but sometimes the pine land approaches its borders, and sometimes beautiful live-oak hummocks fringe its banks. The In-to-keetah, or Deer-Driving Place, is a pretty little lake, with an island of perhaps one hundred acres of very fine land. 'There,' said the guide, 'the Indians once lived in very great numbers, and many may yet remain;' so our boats were concealed, and we waited for night to make an examination, when the fires would point out the exact position of any party; but though appearances proved the first part of our guide's assertion, we found the town had been long deserted.

"The Kissimmee is, I think, the natural drain of the immense plains which form this part of the country; but though deep and rapid it is quite narrow. It is something strange that very often the surface of the river is covered by floating grass and weeds so strongly matted together that the men stood upon the mass and hauled the boats over it as over shoals. The Kissimmee runs into the Oke-cho-bee, which filters its spongy sides into the Everglades, whose waters finally, by many streams, empty into the ocean.

"On the 11th of April, we returned to Key Biscayne, having been living in our canoes fifty-eight days, with less rest, fewer luxuries, and harder work than fall to the lot of that estimable class of citizens who dig our canals. At Key Biscayne, the various detachments were disbanded, and returned to their several commands.

*"Very respectfully,*

*"Your obedient servant,*

(Signed) "JOHN RODGERS,

"LIEUTENANT COMMANDING

"Lieutenant J. T. McLaughlin,

"Commanding Florida Expedition."

## The Diary of a Canoe Expedition into the Everglades of Florida in 1842

Feb. 4, 1842.—At Indian Key, preparing for an Expedition into the Everglades; also rigging and fitting ship, having stepped a new foremast.

Feb. 12.—Left the Brig "Jefferson" at Key Biscayne at 4 P.M., in command of five canoes and twenty-two men; arrived at Fort Dallas at 7 P.M., and camped for the night on the left-hand bank of the river opposite. At 8 P.M. a detachment of canoes from the "Madison" came up, and camped on our right.

Feb. 13, Sunday.—Capt. Rodgers came up at daylight and assumed command of the scout, arranged as follows: Staff, Lieut. John Rodgers Com'dg the Scout; Rob. Tansall, 2d Lt. of marines, Adjutant; Negro John, wife, and child, and John Tigertail, Indian Guide. 3 Canoes, 4 Sailors, 7 Marines.

1st Division, U. S. Sch. "Madison": Lieut. Wm. L. Herndon Com'dg; Passed Mid S. C. Barney, Asst. Surgeon A. A. Henderson. 6 Canoes, 29 Men.

2nd Division, U. S. Brigantine "Jefferson": Passed Mid. Geo. H. Preble Com'dg; Midshipman C. Benham. 4 Canoes, 18 Men.

3rd Division, Marines: 2d Lieut. R. D. Taylor Com'dg. 3 Canoes, 17 Men.

Recapitulation: 16 Canoes, 2 Lieuts., 2 Passed Mid., 1 Midn. 1 Asst. Surgeon, 2 Lts of Marines, 51 Sailors, 24 Marines, 1 Indian, 1 Negro, 1 Squaw, 1 Papoose. Total, 87 Souls.

At 8 A.M. The Expedition started up the Bay to the Nd; at noon entered the Rio Ratonos, and followed its very winding course to the Everglades. Both banks of the river lined with mangroves. At 2 P.M. came to in the grass and dined. At sundown camped in the canoes under the lee of some bushes.

Monday, Feb. 14.—Valentine's day; under way at daylight. At 8 A.M. entered New River at its source; followed it down, and reached Fort Lauderdale at 11 A.M., in season to see it abandoned by the army. Procured an Indian Guide, and at 1 P.M. started up river. At 4:30, Came to on the Lefthand bank, and pitched our tents in an open pine barren with palmetto undergrowth.

Tuesday, Feb. 15.—Enroute again at daylight. At 8 A.M. entered the Everglades and stood to the Nd & Wd, through a generally broad

and open trail. At 2 P.M. hauled into the grass and dined. The guide lost the trail several times, and put back to find it. At 7:30 P.M. Hauled into the grass and camped in the canoes for the night. Observed the light of a fire in the S.E., and supposed it at our last night's camp.

Wednesday, Feb. 16—Under way at 6:30 A.M.; traversed an open trail; saw only two islets. Examined the first, and found that it had been cultivated. Dined under the shade of the second island. Weather disagreeable and rainy. At 5 P.M. Came to under the lee of a small clump of bushes, where we procured a quantity of Crane's eggs, and camped in the canoes for the night. Course during the day to the Nd & Wd. The night silence broken by the screaming of Everglade Hens and Cranes, the bellowings of frogs, and the hooting of owls.

Thursday, Feb. 17—A cold morning, wind N.E. The word passed to follow on at sunrise. Course to the Nd & Ed through a bad trail, most of which we broke for ourselves through the saw-grass. At 10 A.M., saw high trees bearing per compass N.E. by E. Probably a part of the Al-patioka, or Cypress Swamp, bordering the pine barrens along the coast. Very few bushes in sight during the day. Lat. obs'd at noon 26 degrees 16' N. At sundown camped in the canoes around a small clump of bushes, and posted sentry as usual.

Friday, Feb. 18—Warm and pleasant. Light airs from the S.E. At 7 A.M. got the canoes underway, and followed a northerly course during the day, but very winding. Our guides caught five Terrapins, and the men obtained several hats full of Crane's eggs. Had to break our trail most of the day, the men walking the canoes along. Our route through a portion of the glades plentifully besprinkled with bushes. Camped at sundown in the canoes under the shelter of some bushes, and made my supper off of some trout which had jumped into my canoe as we pushed along.

Saturday, Feb. 19—Warm and pleasant. Started at sunrise, course N.N.W., through an open and generally deep trail, the plain covered with short grass, fields of water-lilies, and low bushes. The Cypress in sight to the right N.E. Came to at sundown at a small island showing traces of an old Indian encampment; pitched my tent under a tall cabbage-tree, and had a tall sleep. Lat. at noon 26 degrees 38' N.

Sunday, Feb. 20—Warm and pleasant; wind S.S.E. Passed through open Everglades, no bushes. Cypress to the right. Tracked the canoes

all day, and at times forced them through the mud and grass with the assistance of the crews of four canoes to each one. Lat. 26.27; course N.W. Our guides say the water in the Everglades is unusually low. Camped in the canoes in the grass; no fires allowed, and night rainy. Today officers as well as men have been compelled to wade in the mud, saw-grass, and water, and assist the sailors in dragging the canoes. Saw large flocks of white curlew.

Monday, Feb. 21—Morning thick and misty; underway with canoes at 7:30 A.M. Course generally N.W. to W. Thick, cloudy weather, with heavy showers of rain. Country an open prairie, with the Cypress on our right. Killed a black moccasin-snake and saw others; they are very numerous. Passed the remains of an old clinker-built canoe, probably an army-boat; broke it up for firewood. At sundown nearly surrounded by woods on the horizon, our course taking us along those to the N.E. The woods bordering Lake Okeechobee in sight in the N.W. Wind during the day N.E., but shifted about sundown to the N.W., bringing clear and cool weather. Camped in our canoes in the open grass. Saw during the day numerous flocks of wild birds,—curlew, cranes, blue-winged teal, crow blackbirds, swallows, &c.

Tuesday, Feb. 22—Washington's birthday. Morning air clear, and cold enough to show our breath. Wind N. N.W. At 4:30 P.M. left the Everglades, passed through a narrow belt of cypress swamp, hauled over a sandy ridge, and launched our canoes in the waters of Lake Okeechobee, or the "Bigwater." Camped under what was once Fort Dulray, a cabbage-tree log fortress. The lake spread out before us, and to the Wd when the sun went down no land visible.

Wednesday, Feb. 23—Launched our canoes upon the lake through a rough surf and heavy swell. One of my canoes was swamped, and capsized, losing everything,—provisions, arms, clothing, and ammunition. Turned back and assisted the canoe to land, bailed her out, and started with her again; the other commands ahead; followed them along the coast of the Lake, and landed with them about two miles to the Sd & Ed. Was ordered by Capt. Rodgers to remain in charge of the provisions with the boats of my command, and twelve men and one canoe and five marines, while the remainder of the Expedition, taking provisions for six days, continued their cruise along shore. At 9 A.M. the Expedition departed with twelve boats and fifty-eight men, leaving me Midm Ben-

ham and four boats, with seventeen men. Commenced securing the provisions from the weather and devising means for our defence.

Thursday, Feb. 24—Organized our camp, inspected the arms, and exercised the men. Commenced building a log fort of cabbage-trees, and had it three logs high when the Expedition unexpectedly hove in sight and suspended our labors. Before sundown it arrived at our camp, when I restored the marines to their proper commander and took my own division again. Benham shot a crow blackbird and a wood-pecker, and with their assistance we made a sumptuous dinner.

Friday, Feb. 25—My birthday. The canoes underway at daylight. Stood to the Nd & Wd, coasting the Lake under sail. The guide's boat swamped; hauled into the grass and dined while waiting for the guide's boat to come up. At 4 P.M. discovered eight hogs on the beach; sent the guide in to shoot one. Heard a noise like wood-chopping (probably a hog rooting); sent the boats in, landed and armed the men, and dispatched each command on a scout. The "Madison's" men going across the country, the marines along the shore interiorly, and my command up the beach to the N.W. in search of Indian canoes. Discovered an old Indian encampment, apparently many months deserted. The guide shot one large hog and wounded another, a sow, which our officers ran down afterwards and captured. On the return of the scouts, Tansall, with twelve marines, was sent out again with orders to scour the country to the Everglades. He returned at 7 P.M., after a fatiguing march through mud and water, but without having effected his object. He reported the Everglades as approaching this portion of the Lake, and his discovery of a stream or river about a mile and a half north of us, and leading apparently into the Everglades. We are to explore it to-morrow. Camped for the night, and pitched our tents under a grove of cypress, maple, bay, and cabbage-trees. The beautiful moonlight contrasting with the dark recesses of the forest, and our camp-fires' glare upon the gray mossy beards which draped the trees, and our rough and rugged men in their careless costumes and still more careless attitudes, combined to make our bivouac a scene which Salvator Rosa would have been glad to have copied. Regaled on fried pork. Our men went the whole hog, and dispatched both animals to the skin and hoof. Punished one of my men, John Bath, with eighteen lashes for drunkenness and insubordination, and for endangering the safety of the whole command by his noise.

Saturday, Feb. 26—Underway at 6:30 A.M. After refreshing with a "pot of coffee," stood along the Lake to the Nd & Wd. About a mile up entered "Tansall's River," bordered on both sides with large cypress and a young growth of maple—and bay-trees; about one-quarter of a mile up reached its head. The Madisons and Jeffersons were ordered to march; and we waded through cypress and willows up to our waists in water and mud about 200 yards, and came to a belt of saw-grass which was at least fifteen feet high; waded fifty yards farther and reached the dry land,—a wide plain dotted with cabbage-tree and pine hummocks and a palmetto scrub; dense woods surrounding the entire horizon. Saw ten parroquets. On emerging from the grass the Madisons went off in a S. Easterly direction; the Jeffersons with me to the N.W. Marched six or eight miles over the plain. Examined several hummocks, discovered two long-abandoned encampments; found numerous trails of Horse-tracks and footprints,—none of which, our guide said, were newer than three weeks. On our march started four deer; they stood at gaze and looked at us. How tantalizing not to be allowed to shoot them! Returned to our canoes about one P.M. Turned down river and resumed our course along the coast of the Lake. The Madisons on their march discovered an old encampment. During the afternoon explored five creeks in search of canoes and Indians; discovered nothing to repay our trouble. Passed six or eight large Indian encampments, of old-standing, like those we visited in the forenoon. Our guides are of opinion they were all abandoned at the time the Indians entered the Everglades in 1837. Found the coast this afternoon gradually bending to the Sd & Wd. Crossed a deep bay in the Lake, making to the Nd & Wd. At dark came to in the bulrushes and camped in our canoes; night rainy, coast low and swampy, mosquitoes plenty. Oh Lord!

Sunday, Feb. 27—Warm and pleasant, with light airs from the N.W. Underway at sunrise to Sd & S.W. Saw many alligators basking on the water, and immense flocks of white curlew and other birds. The coast of the Lake low and marshy, and bordered with sedges. Lat. at noon 27.02 N. Camped in our canoes around some small lumps of floating land, just enough to swear by and make a fire on. During the night saw the reflection of a large fire N.N.W. of us; supposed it the prairie fired by army scouts in that direction.

Monday, Feb. 28—Pleasant and warm, wind S.E. to E. Coasted the Lake to the Sd & Ed between isolated patches of marsh-grass. Land low

and fringed with bulrushes. Lieut. Taylor, in the afternoon, discovered an old Indian canoe in shore, and broke it up. Made sail at sundown and stood E.N.E. about three miles; hauled well into the grass, and camped in the canoes. Killed a moccasin-snake. Made our supper on a "stewzee" of young cranes, water-turkeys, and fried eggs. Lat. at noon 26 degrees 50' N.

Tuesday, March 1—Warm and pleasant, wind E.S.E.; underway at sunrise; paddled until 10 A.M. to the E.S.E., and landed on a small sand beach. At 10 A.M. made sail and stood to the Nd & Wd on a return trail. Lat. at noon 26.55 N. At 4:30 P.M. reached our camp of night before last, passed it, and entered a creek to the Nd & Wd. Were soon stopped by floating weeds similar to heads of lettuce, and came to with the canoes. The Madisons were sent on a march to the Sd & Wd in search of Fish-Eating Creek, and the marines in pursuit of a fire seen to the N.N.W. Sent five of my men to build a fire to guide their return. After a fatiguing march through saw-grass and water, both parties returned to camp about 9, entirely unsuccessful. At 9:30 heard the report of three muskets west of us; supposed them fired by the guides, who have not yet come up.

Wednesday, March 2—Marines ordered to prepare for a three days' march to the Nd & Wd in search of a fire seen in that direction. Myself, with six men, ordered to trace out a supposed creek. Capt. Rodgers accompanied me. Started, middle-deep, in mud and water, and commenced our wade through the saw-grass towards an island about quarter of a mile distant. Reached it, puffing and blowing with our exertions. Climbed a tree and looked about for the creek; could discover none, though a line of bushes S.E. of us seemed to point one out. Heard the report of one musket, then another, and soon a third. Was ordered by Capt. R. to return and prepare for a push along the coast in the direction of the firing. Glad to escape a damp and tiresome march, turned about and reached the canoes about 9 A.M., and started down the creek, and to the Sd & Ed picked up our guide about three miles down, and turned back, pushing into all the bays and inlets to discover the creek. Capt. R. ordered me to follow up an inlet and examine it; followed it out, pushing through fields of broad-leaved lilies and spatter-docks, and came into the Lake again about a mile to the Sd. Made sail to return. Met Capt. Herndon with the Madisons near an "old cypress," and was informed by him of the discovery of the creek, and that I was to go to

the rendezvous and take charge of the marines' canoes, the marines being off on their march. Joined my boats about 5 P.M.

Thursday, M'ch 3—Still camping in our canoes in the grass and weeds, no dry land neighborly. Read, smoked, and slept. At 11:30 received orders to join the remainder of the scout, and bring the marines' boats along, men being sent me to man them. Got underway and stood up the Fish-Eating Creek to Fort Centre. The creek winding and deep. Arrived at 1 P.M. and found all the canoes there. The large fire still to be seen N.N.W. of us. Sent a canoe and four men to the Island to wait the return of the marines.

Friday, M'ch 4—Pleasant, fresh breezes from S.E. Appointed Supt. of repairs, and ordered to fill up gaps and put the Fort (a cabbage-tree stockade) in a state of defence. Cut trees and stuck them up like the others. Went to the mouth of the creek, 6 miles west, and observed the Lat., 27 degrees 04' N. On my return found the marines at the Fort, they having marched there. Sent for my boat. The coxswain on his return reported having found on the island several old houses, some pumpkins, and parts of half a dozen saddles, but no sign of recent habitation.

Saturday, M'ch 5—Warm and pleasant. Left the Fort at daylight. Doct. Henderson with fifteen men and marines, and John Tigertail, sick, remaining behind. Proceeded up the creek with great difficulty, pushing the canoes through the weeds, the creek for a space spreading out into a wide swamp. Saturday night remembered absent friends.

Sunday, M'ch 6—After hauling the canoes over two troublesome places re-entered the creek,—a beautiful stream, clear, with a beautiful white sandy bottom. Pulled against the current to the Sd & Wd. Saw immense flocks of cranes, pink spoonbills, curlew, and wild turkeys in plenty. Also, a large number of alligators killed; killed two small ones and cut off their tails for eating; caught a soft-shelled and a hard-shelled turtle and had them cooked for supper, with a fry of some little fish that foolishly jumped into one of the canoes. Our camping-ground the prettiest by far that we have had. Two veteran cypress stretched their scraggy arms over our camp, draped in moss to the very ground. The day was rendered harmonious by the warblings of multitudes of feathered choristers, and the night hideous with the splash of alligators, hooting of owls, and screamings of a variety of unquiet night-birds.

Monday, M'ch 7—Warm and pleasant. Left our beautiful camp at sunrise, pursuing the windings of the creek, which occasionally spread out to the appearance of quite a large river, but soon returns to narrow bounds. At 11 A.M. reached the head of the stream, which loses itself in a swamp. Dined and turned back. Permission to shoot was granted, and bang, bang, bang went the guns and pistols in every direction. At sundown landed and pitched our tents under a cypress grove, and feasted sumptuously on wild turkey, broiled and fried curlew, plover, and teal, stewed crane, grecian ladies and fried fish, our spoils of the day. The Astor House could not have supplied such a dinner or such appetites. Invited Cpts. Rodgers and Herndon to our feast, and illuminated our camp with three halves of spermaceti candles. Lat. 27.05 N.

Tuesday, M'ch 8—Warm and pleasant; wind S.E. Breakfasted off the remains of our "Tarkey," as my coxswain called it, and underway at daylight. Passed both haulovers with little trouble, leaving one to the left and the other to the right. Dined in the canoes in the grass. Passed an extent of prairie which had been burnt over since we passed up, and in places yet burning, which accounts for the dense smoke seen yesterday. After dining hauled the canoes through a narrow streamlet into a lily swamp; tracked them across it, and bothered about until after dark searching for the creek; finally struck it and reached Fort Center, where only three boats had as yet arrived. Garrison well.

Wednesday, M'ch 9—Pleasant and warm. The marines, canoes, and adjutants did not come in until this morning. Served out thirty days' provisions to the men, and exercised them at Target-shooting. Discovered all hands were plaguey poor shots.

Thursday, M'ch 10—Warm and pleasant. At morning muster and inspection discovered that Silas Soule and Jas. Gamble had deserted during the night, taking with them a musket, twelve cartridges, a quantity of provisions, and a bag of clothing. At 9 A.M. left the Fort in the canoes and stood down the creek. Passed Mid. S. C. Barney was left at the Fort with a garrison of twenty men, comprising all the sick, lame, and lazy. As we left the creek made sail and stood to the Nd & Ed. At 4:30 P.M. entered the Kissimmee River, and stood up it. At 5:30 camped on the left bank in our canoes. The ground swampy. Transferred Mid. Benham to Capt. Herndon's division temporarily. At night very much annoyed by the mosquitoes. Benham's canoe swamped dur-

ing the night and set him afloat in his bed, besides damaging all his provender.

Friday, M'ch 11—Weather good. Started sun half an hour high up river. Saw large flocks of green parroquets, and the prairie to the Wd on fire. The river rapid and deep, with banks or "levees" thrown up by floods on each side, and crowned with willow and mangrove bushes. Marshy fields beyond this narrow belt of banking. Paddled along until sundown, and camped on the left-hand bank. Supper, a "grecian lady" stewed; horrible cannibal that I am, found the "lady" a very good morsel. Mem. Grecian Lady, a water-fowl, sometimes called "a water-turkey."

Saturday, M'ch 12—Pleasant. Pulled up-stream against a strong current; the banks continue marshy, with here and there a live-oak hummock. Passed beautiful magnolia-trees in full blossom. The pine barrens to-day approach both banks to within a quarter of a mile, and every minute the winding of the stream would appear to be leading us into them. At 11 stopped at a live-oak hummock, formerly full of Indians. We landed the marines about a quarter of a mile downstream to attack it in the rear, and pulled up cautiously with the remainder of the force; found it deserted, with no recent signs of habitation. Waited for the marines to come up; dined, and continued on up river. At 2 P.M. came to a pine-lot stockade, one of the numerous posts held by the army in times gone by. The enclosure was choked with weeds, logs had fallen out, and those yet standing were partially burnt down. Continued our route until sundown, and camped in a beautiful live-oak hummock. Supper, catfish and mollasses candy.

Sunday, M'ch 13—During the morning a dense fog settled over the country and debarred progress. At 10 A.M., cleared off pleasant. Paddled all day against an increasing rapid current. The banks of the river lined with marshy weeds and tall canebrakes, with here and there a live-oak hummock draped with moss. Passed several old encampments. At 8 P.M. camped in the tall and rank grass under venerable live-oaks and maples. Supper, a stew made of three fledgling herons, purloined by our doctor from a nest.

Monday, M'ch 14—Warm and pleasant. Commenced our route with the sun. Country much the same as yesterday, but the mangrove and willows seen more abundant. Saw immense flocks of curlew flying in two irregular columns, each apparently miles in length. Evening a

heavy rain, which continued at intervals all night. Camped in a maple grove. Hauled over several places during the day where the bottom had fallen out, or, as one of our men remarked, where the grass was made before the land. Our men dragged the canoes of the whole command over grass and roots that choked the river in places where a fifteen-foot pole (the canoe's sprit) failed to touch bottom.

Tuesday, M'ch 15—Cool and cloudy, wind N.E.; at 9 A.M. landed and examined a live-oak hummock where Indians had been dressing deer-skins not more than two weeks back. At 9:30 landed at another hummock where was a large mound, out of which Fanny, the Indian wife of our Guide, assured us she had seen money, breastplates, and beads dug. Set the men to work with their paddles, promising them good current money for all they found in the mound; excavated quite a trench, but found nothing but a few bones and blue glass beads. At 10:30 landed on another hummock at the end of a pine barren, and found recent traces of a large encampment, with horse—and cow-tracks, &c. The guide killed a large raccoon. Halted half an hour and continued on up the river, which is bounded chiefly by willows and tall rushes; tide and wind in our teeth and hard to combat. At 8 P.M. halted the canoes in the grass and camped in them, there being no solid camping-place to be found. The river coquetted with us all the afternoon, leading nearly up to the hummock and then branching off again. No fires allowed, consequently no coffee.

Wednesday, M'ch 16—A cool morning, but clear and pleasant. Up and away with the sun. At 10 A.M. camped in a live-oak hummock, where was once an Indian village; feasted on blackberries. One of our men killed a large rattlesnake with eight rattles; he was skinned, cooked, and eaten; I partook of a bit, just to be able to say I had eaten rattlesnake; found the meat very good indeed, and would have enjoyed a larger portion, but as it was the men's tidbit, did not like to deprive them of it. At midnight we got underway and proceeded to an island on a lake, hoping to discover something to repay us for our night's work, as it once was a famous resort for the Indians. We reached the island at 2 A.M., and sent off two scouting-parties to surprise the enemy. At 3 A.M. the scouts returned without making any wonderful discovery. They found old encampments abundant. Punished Wm. Harding with twenty-four lashes by Capt. Rodgers's order for quarrelling, and Antonio Cruize with six for laziness on my own responsibility.

Thursday, M'ch 17—Pleasant. At daylight discovered on the opposite shore of the Lake something resembling two canoes; shoved out our canoes and gave chase. The canoes proved phantoms, the erection of the lively imagination of a boatswain's mate of the "Madison." Returned to the island, and camped for the day on the shore of the Lake neighboring it. Lt. Tansall with twenty-four men explored the island, and returned at 8 P.M. with an Indian's knife and skull, which he had found in a grave. The island is called by the Indians In-to-ke-tala, or Deer-Driving.

Friday, M'ch 18—Easterly wind and foggy morning. At 8 A.M. crossed the Lake to its eastern shore. At 10 A.M. reached the marsh bordering the edge of the Lake and hauled the canoes into the grass. Started on a march with six of my own command and twelve marines. Marched across a fine grass prairie for a couple of miles as we judged, and examined four live-oak hummocks. On all four discovered traces of old encampments, and through one the appearance of a wagon-trail; no recent signs. Started a bear and gave him chase, but Mr. Bruin ran too fast for us (not being permitted to fire at him) and lodged in a palmetto scrub three or four hundred yards off. Surrounded and closed in upon it with the men and endeavored to beat him up, but our shaggy-coated gent managed to elope unseen. Got back to the canoes about one P.M. Camped in the grass at sundown. Punished Meade by Capt. R.'s order for making a fire without permission. Lat., noon, 27 degrees 51' N.

Saturday, M'ch 19—Pleasant; underway at sunrise; pulled or paddled around the bend in the Lake, and entered the Kissimmee on its N.W. shore at 9 A.M. Paddled two hours more. The pine barrens shaking hands with the banks of the river. Came up with the remains of a large stockade (Fort Gardner) in a live-oak hummock and mostly burnt down. At noon the creek spread out into another Lake, surrounded by piney woods and live-oak hummocks; dined under the shadow of one of the latter, and resumed our route across the river. At 4:30 hauled up the canoes and camped in the pine barren. Went with ten men to the Wd on a scout in search of the stream. Benham sent on a similar scout to the East. Returned to our camp at sundown, having marched about four miles, over pine barrens and through swamps up to our waists in water, but no stream. Benham was fortunate enough to find the object of our search. During the evening a lone "chuck-a-will's widow" informed

me many times and very distinctly whose relict she was, and a saucy owl was very impertinent with his "who-who-who are you?" Started two beautiful spotted fawns on my march. Read for light reading and to pass the hours the Books of Ezra, Nehemish, and Job!

Sunday, M'ch 20—Thirty-six days out. Started at 6 A.M. through the grass in search of Benham's stream; entered, pulled a few miles, crossed another small lake, and entered the stream once more from its N.E. extremity. The stream winding, narrow, and rapid. Dined under a moss-drooping cypress. Afternoon: Stream winding through tangled bushes, interlaced from either bank; outlet of Lake Tohopeteliga; found there fresh moccasin tracks and roots newly dug, the ground still freshly turned as if hastily abandoned; pieces of orange-peel were strewed about. A short distance down-stream we passed an Indian hut and pumpkin-field. The moccasin tracks appeared those of a man, wife, and child,—a little child had evidently been playing with the sand. Saw horse-tracks up the beach, and found several old houses. Hauled into the shore by advice of our guide in the outlet, and maintained perfect silence. At 4:30 saw a fire kindled on the opposite shore of the lake, took its bearings, and after dark put out upon the Lake and stole cautiously up towards the fire, in the vain hope of capturing Indians. Landed the marines and marched them through the prairies to the fire; pulled ahead with the canoes and waited for their coming up, prepared to assist them on hearing any firing. At 12 midnight reembarked the marines and continued our course around the Lake until 3 A.M., when we hauled in shore and camped in the canoes, tired out with our night's work and bound to sleep sound for the few hours allowed us to.

Monday, M'ch 21—Warm and pleasant. At 10 A.M. got underway and pulled to an island in the centre of the Lake and camped. The Madisons separated and camped at an island two miles distant. Our camping-place was quite a sizeable island, having the ribs and remains of two Indian villages, with cornfields and watermelon-patches, and tobacco growing, and a number of bitter and sour orange-trees in full fruit; filled our boats with the latter. At sundown the Madisons joined us, and at 10 P.M. we got underway and stood over to the shore, and finished the circumnavigation of the Lake at 2 P.M. Camped again at the outlet.

Tuesday, M'ch 22—In camp all day at the outlet of Lake Tohopeteliga. Did up a quantity of sleep to make amends for last night's unrest.

Caught a quantity of catfish, and had them served up both fried and stewed. Allowed the men to bathe.

Wednesday, M'ch 23—Cloudy morning, afternoon clear and pleasant. At sunrise started to circumnavigate the Lake. Capt. R. and my division with the marines going around the right. Capt. Herndon with the Madisons to the left. Lat. at noon 28.11 N., one hundred and fifty-one miles north of Fort Dallas, at the mouth of the Miami, whence we started. At 4 P.M. our divisions were reunited opposite the island where we camped two days back, and we made sail in company to cross the Lake. Reached the outlet a few minutes after dark and camped. Dined at a live-oak hummock, where we found an old saddle (probably the saddle of some express-rider) and the remains of two oxen. Robbed the birds' nests as we paddled along of sixteen young cranes. Each of the canoes equally well supplied. Capt. Herndon in his journey saw the remains of another Indian village. Our supper, a stew, broil, and fry as usual of late.

Thursday, M'ch 24—Left the outlet of Lake Tohopeeliga to return down the Kissimmee. Morning overcast with premonitory symptoms of rain. Noon pleasant and hot; dined where we dined on the 19th. Camped on the S.W. shore of Lake Intokeetalah, near Fanny's island; a fine, dry sand beach. Killed a small rattlesnake which crawled up to our fire. Our supper, fried fish and fried hard-tack. The sunset very beautiful, dark-purple clouds piled up and tinged with gold. The sun's lower disk, just before it reached the horizon, appeared below the lower edge of a large cloud, and shot up its brilliant rays far above it; the ruddy sky beneath, and the dark pines reflected in the placid Lake, and a light fleecy cloud soaring above all, invested by our fancies with the shape of our eagle emblem, completed a beautiful scene.

Friday, M'ch 25—Underway at sunrise. The morning air deliciously fragrant; camped at early sundown in one of the live-oak hummocks which we passed on the 14th. All hands permitted to bathe. Supper, bird-stew as usual. Killed a rattlesnake with four rattles.

Saturday, M'ch 26—Pleasant. Started sun half an hour high. Passed most of the bad places going up. The current takes us along full two days' journey in one. Robbed the nests of over thirty young birds, and had a famous stew of cranes' livers. Camped under bushes on the right-hand bank. Our camp surrounded by beautiful and fragrant flowers. Found a snake-cast on top of a tree; it was over six feet in length.

Landed at the Indian mound, and resumed our diggings. Found a few glass beads and abundance of human bones, but none of the needful.

Sunday, M'ch 27—Morning slightly overcast. Underway, sun an hour high. Dined at the old Fort, where we killed a rattlesnake as large around as my arm and five feet long; it had twelve rattles. The guide said, "big enough to kill a deer instantly." My division captured forty cranes and water-turkeys, and three young alligators. Supper as usual. Camped under moss-hung maples.

Monday, M'ch 28—Pleasant. Underway at sunrise. At 1 P.M. entered Lake Okeechobee, having been eighteen days on the river and lakes. Dined in the grass along shore. Made sail to a stiff breeze, and from being the rearmost boat passed ahead and reached Fort Center before sun-down, where but four of the canoes arrived before me. The others had to camp on the Lake. All well at the garrison, with plenty to eat. Supped on venison-steak and salmon "kipper."

Tuesday, M'ch 29—Pleasant. The rest of the canoes arrived about 9 A.M. Exercised the men at Target-shooting; no good shots. Benham went with the guide on a shooting excursion, and set fire to the prairie with flint and steel. To-night it is burning for miles around; a grand spectacle. During our absence from the Fort, the guide's Indian wife, Fanny, went into the woods and gave birth to a still-born infant; buried it herself and returned to camp, and resumed her usual duties.

Wednesday, M'ch 30—Pleasant; evening cool. Benham and Taylor are to remain at Fort Center with the provisions until sent for, and keep garrison with twenty men. Glad it is not me,—want my letters. The prairie still on fire. Was much edified with Fanny's Indian method of preparing deer-skins for moccasins with a stick.

Thursday, M'ch 31—Left Fort Center at sunrise to return, leaving behind Taylor, Benham, twelve marines, and eight sailors. Provisioned our canoes for twenty days. Made sail on the Lake; explored a bay at its N.W. angle, and Live-Oak Creek, so called. Camped under the cypress. Mosquitoes thick, and no sleeping for them. Willis, one of my men, very sick; had my tent pitched for his accommodation and did without. The Lake very rough.

Friday, Ap'l 1—Underway at sunrise. Heavy showers of rain and wind, and S. Easterly weather. Examined four creeks, and reached Fort Dulany

at 4 P.M. Hauled up the canoes high and dry and camped in them. To-morrow we are to try the Everglades again. Bathed in the Okeechobee for the last time I hope. One of my men made me a cigar of some chewing tobacco, which I smoked with a gusto.

Saturday, April 2—Thick and cloudy morning. Heavy rain during the day. Launched our canoes through the cypress, and commenced dragging them along. At 4 hauled in to a pine barren and camped. A wet night. Killed another rattlesnake.

Sunday, Ap'l 3—Morning cloudy; day April-like. Dragged our canoes the whole day through mud, water, and saw-grass. John Tigertail, the guide, off shooting. Lost the trail about noon, and frittered away the whole afternoon finding it. Camped in the grass, about four miles from our last night's camp, and near the northern part of the Alpatioka Swamp, the favorite resort of Sam Jones and Bill Bowlegs.

Monday, Ap'l 4—Pleasant. Killed two moccasin snakes. Our guide shot two Everglade hens. Saw two deer. They stood gazing at us some time, and then loped off, stopping to gaze and wonder who we were. My Division captured twenty blue cranes, almost full grown, one hard-shell turtle, one terrapin, and a small alligator. Lots of grub for all hands. Lat. at noon 26 degrees 52' N. Our course about S.E. Saw a large smoke in the cypress bearing East. Dragged the canoes along by main force all day. Camped in the canoes at sundown.

Tuesday, Ap'l 5—Pleasant. Underway at sunrise. Dragged the canoes, and in several places with fifteen men to each canoe, officers assisting. Captured a boat-load of cranes and other young birds. Lat. obsd 26.46. Camped in the canoes in the grass. Killed a large black moccasin snake. Supper, turtle-stew.

Wednesday, Ap'l 6—Pleasant morning. Underway at 6:30 A.M. to S.E., dragging the boats. Clumps of bushes abundant in place of the naked prairie. At noon shipped my rudder, and we commenced paddling for the first time since leaving the Okeechobee, pushing, dragging, and paddling by turns all day. At sundown camped with Tansall's two boats around a small clump of bushes and dry land. Madisons and Capt. H. camping around a similar one. Supper, fried bread, fish, and crane's eggs, and stewed crane.

Thursday, Ap'l 7—Underway with the sun. Course S. Easterly all day. Country plentifully sprinkled with bushes. Passed several large "Keys," crowded with white cranes, their nests and eggs. Pushed or paddled ahead as occasion required. Several trout jumped into our canoes, and were transferred to our frying-pans,—foolish fish. Speared several large alligator-gars. Camped in our canoes around bushes at sundown. Night showery; anything but pleasant; wet blankets and their surroundings.

Friday, Ap'l 8—Paddled all day; course about S.E. Captured forty white cranes, and might have taken a thousand had I wanted, and hats full of eggs; also a dozen water-turkeys and some fish. The Cypress in sight, extending from N.E. to S.W. Camped in the Cypress; sun an hour high; slept in my canoe.

Saturday, Ap'l 9—Pleasant. Pulling and dragging alternately the canoes along the edge of the cypress swamp. Water extremely low. At 10 A.M. lost Tansall and his division, and at early sundown camped in the young cypress. Saw a smoke about four miles west of us; probably our lost boats.

Sunday, Ap'l 10—Pleasant. Underway at sunrise, dragging the canoes over dry land and saw-grass, at times using "all hands" to a single canoe. Tansall's canoes came up about 8 A.M., after being lost all night. At 12 entered the creek which forms the source of "New River." Dined. Passed down the north branch, and at 4 P.M. camped at Fort Lauderdale for the night.

Monday, Ap'l 11—Left Fort Lauderdale at 8. Passed over the bar at the entrance of New River without damage, and stood along the coast under sail twenty-five miles. Passed outside Bear's Cut and inside Key Biscayne, arrived on board the Brig early in the afternoon. Glad to get back and to receive letters and news from home. My boat the first to get alongside; most of the canoes grounded and had to wait the rising of the waters. Thus ended our expedition of fifty-eight days in canoes after Sam Jones, during which Lt. Rodgers says in his official report we had "less rest, fewer luxuries, and harder work than fall to the lot of that estimable class of citizens who dig our canals."

Tuesday, Ap'l 12—Got underway, ran down the reef, and anchored at Indian Key. Lat. Key Biscayne 25.41 N.

On the 16th of April I find noted in my diary, "On the sick-list, foot

badly inflamed and legs ulcerated; poisoned by the saw-grass of the Everglades and exposure to the mud, through which we dragged our canoes, and the effects of the sun." "April 20, moved on shore at Indian Key to the officers' quarters for medical attendance." I will here state that the doctors at one time thought that the amputation of both limbs would become necessary, and it was more than two years before all the sores were healed, and for years after I felt the effects of these sixty days in a dug-out canoe in Florida.

This expedition into the Everglades was the last in which I participated. I had been on others of shorter duration previously. On the 11th of May Captain Rodgers left on another scout, taking his first lieutenant, Johnston Blakely Carter, with him, leaving me in command of the brig during his absence. The expedition returned on the 17th. On the 4th of June the schooners "Wave" and "Flirt" arrived from Havana, bringing us news that the President of the United States had proclaimed the "Florida War" at an end. On the 9th of July McLaughlin's "Mosquito Fleet," consisting of the "Flirt" (flag), "Madison," "Jefferson," and "Van Buren," sailed for Norfolk, Virginia, leaving the schooners "Phenix," Acting Lieutenant Commanding C. R. P. Rodgers, and "Wave," Acting Lieutenant Commanding J. C. Henry, to follow, after settling all outstanding matters.

Previous to the departure of the squadron the following General Order was read to the officers and crews:

#### "GENERAL ORDER"

"The commendation and appreciation of the services of the Florida Squadron embodied in the annexed extract from the official communication of Col. Worth to the adjutant-general of the Army is of so exalted a character, when the source in which it emanated is considered, that the commanding officer cannot withhold it from the officers he has commanded.

"Cedar Keys, June 20, 1842.

"I trust I may be permitted on this occasion to express my respectful and grateful sense of the cordial and efficient co-operation rendered on all occasions and under all circumstances from Captain McLaughlin and the gallant and accomplished officers, who have ever aimed at rivaling the zeal and devotion of their admirable commander, and I feel assured that the general-in-chief will learn with gratification that the utmost cordiality and confidence has prevailed between both branches

of the common service, whether united on land or on the water. I am most happy on this occasion to express my personal obligations.

“*Very Respectfully,*  
 “*Your obedient Serv't,*  
 (Signed) “W. J. WORTH,  
 “COL. COMMANDING.

“To the adjutant-general U. S. Army, Washington, D. C.’

“To Lt.-Com'dg John Rodgers,  
 “Com'g U. S. Brig 'Jefferson,'  
 “Indian Key.

“July 2, 1842.

“Sir,—In compliance with the request of Col. Worth, I have the pleasure to communicate to you, for your information and that of your officers and men, the annexed extract from his letter of June 21, 1842.

“*Respectfully,*  
 “JOHN T. McLAUGHLIN.

“Headquarters Army of Florida,  
 “Cedar Keys, June 21, 1842.

“On parting with your young and accomplished comrades, I beg you to convey and make acceptable to them the high professional and personal respect I have the honor to entertain for each. The commendation of an old soldier can do no harm, and it is for me only to regret the humbleness which gives no warrant for a more decided expression of all that is due to their gallant and uncalculating devotion in a service as painful as thankless. May God protect you and your country promote you is the sincere prayer of

“*Most Truly Your Friend,*  
 “WM. J. WORTH.

“Capt. McLaughlin,  
 “Com'dg, &c.,  
 “Naval Forces, Coast of Florida.’”

The night after leaving for the North, when off Cape Canaveral the “Jefferson” was struck by a heavy squall from the westward, which carried away the foretop-mast in the cap, and also under the eyes of

the topmast rigging, the maintopmast at the same moment going with it a few feet above the lower cap. All hands were at once called to "clear wreck." The "Madison," Lieutenant Commanding Herndon, seeing our disabled condition and thinking we had been struck by lightning, bore down within hail to our assistance. Being nearsighted, he misjudged the distance, and ran into our starboard waist, carrying away the main-chains, waist-boat, hammock-rail, and wheel, and crushing in our bulwarks down to the water-ways, and, as afterwards ascertained at Norfolk, breaking twelve frame timbers. The "Madison's" bowsprit was carried away by the collision. We fired a gun as a signal of distress to the "Flirt," and employed the remainder of the night in clearing away the wreck and getting sail on the ship. The night was Egyptian in its darkness, which was enlivened with sheets of ragged pink lightning. The squall must have been limited in extent, as none of the other vessels in company were at all injured by it. Without further mishap or adventure the squadron anchored in Hampton Roads on the 18th of July, 1842.

When we were dismasted off Cape Canaveral I was below and on the sick-list from the effects of my recent canoe expedition, but when I heard the collision with the "Madison" I scrambled on deck, but was immediately sent into the cabin by Lieutenant Rodgers, who told me I could only be injured and of no use where I was. Very soon he came down into the cabin, bringing with him the deck time-piece, which had been knocked into a cocked hat, so to speak, by the collision. Cool as he ever was in time of danger, and without the least sign of excitement, he commenced putting the clock together, and, turning to me, said, humorously, "Preble, I don't mind being dismasted, for that may happen to every one who goes to sea, but to be kicked in the stern by my friend afterwards is too bad." No doubt the collision was caused by Lieutenant Herndon being near-sighted, and thinking the vessel had way on when she had not. His intent was good, but the result was disastrous to both vessels.

# Three Floridian Episodes\*

by JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

The following are extracts from the Journal of J. J. Audubon, the great observer and painter of birds. It occurred to us that perhaps they were not as well known to the public as they are to those who make ornithology their avocation, and that it might be worth-while reprinting them for the benefit of our members. The reader will not find in these passages details on bird-life such as he might expect to discover in the field-book of a modern scientist, but he will be rewarded by the quaint atmosphere of these essays.

Audubon came to spend the winter in Florida after his return, in August 1831, from London, England, where he had spent a rather unhappy time trying to obtain subscriptions to his great work on the *Birds of America*.

Provided with "letters from the secretaries of the Navy and Treasury of the United States, to the commanding officers of vessels of war in the revenue service, directing them to afford . . . any assistance in their power," he set out for Florida, then only a territory of the United States.

After wending his way slowly down the peninsula, on foot, on horseback, and by boat, he reached the southern end by mid-winter and must have stayed until spring, collecting specimens and making sketches.

Upon his return north, Audubon wove all the most interesting incidents of his trip into a series of "Episodes," factual in content and amusing to the modern reader because of their extremely gradiloquent style.

Three of these "Episodes" pertaining more particularly to our part of the state, are reproduced here, for the enjoyment of the reader, by permission of G. P. Putnam's Sons, Publishers.

## Sandy Island

I LEFT YOU ABRUPTLY, perhaps uncivilly, reader, at the dawn of day on Sandy Island, which lies just six miles from the extreme point of South Florida. I did so because I was amazed at the appearance of things around me, which, in fact, looked so different from what they seemed at night, that it took some minutes' reflection to account for the change.

When we laid ourselves down on the sand to sleep, the waters almost bathed our feet; when we opened our eyes in the morning, they were at an immense distance. Our boat lay on her side, looking not unlike a

\**The Life of J. J. Audubon, The Naturalist*. Edited by His Widow. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1879. Chapters XIX, XX, XXI.

whale reposing on a mud bank; the birds in myriads were probing their pasture-ground. There great flocks of ibises fed apart from equally large collections of "godwits," and thousands of herons gracefully paced along, ever and anon thrusting their javelin bills into the body of some unfortunate fish confined in a small pool of water. Of fish-crows I could not estimate the number, but from the havoc they made among the crabs, I conjecture that these animals must have been scarce by the time of the next ebb. Frigate pelicans chased the jager, which himself had just robbed a poor gull of its prize; and all the gallinules ran with spread wings from the mud-banks to the thickets of the island, so timorous had they become when they perceived us. Surrounded as we were by so many objects that allured us, not one could we yet attain, so dangerous would it have been to venture on the mud; and our pilot having assured us that nothing could be lost by waiting, spoke of our eating, and on this hint told that he would take us to a part of the island where "our breakfast would be abundant, although uncooked." Off we went, some of the sailors carrying baskets, others large tin pans and wooden vessels such as they use for eating their meals in. Entering a thicket of about an acre in extent, we found on every bush several nests of the ibis, each containing three large and beautiful eggs, and all hands fell to gathering. The birds gave way to us, and ere long we had a heap of eggs, that promised delicious food. Nor did we stand long in expectation; for, kindling a fire, we soon prepared, in one way or other, enough to satisfy the cravings of our hungry maws. Breakfast ended, the pilot, looking at the gorgeous sunrise, said, "Gentlemen, prepare yourselves for fun; the tide is a-coming." Over these mud-flats a foot or two of water is quite sufficient to drive all the birds ashore, even the tallest heron or flamingo; and the tide seems to flow at once over the whole expanse. Each of us, provided with a gun, posted himself behind a bush, and no sooner had the water forced the winged creatures to approach the shore, than the work of destruction commenced. When it at length ceased, the collected mass of birds of different kinds looked not unlike a small haycock. Who could not with a little industry have helped himself to a few of their skins? Why, reader, surely no one is as fond of these things as I am. Everyone assisted in this, and even the sailors themselves tried their hand at the work. Our pilot, good man, told us he was no hand at such occupations, and would go after something else. So taking "Long Tom" and his fishing-tackle, he marched off quietly along the shores. About an hour afterwards we saw him returning, when he looked quite ex-

hausted; and on our inquiring the cause, said, "There is a dew-fish (sic) yonder, and a few balacoudas (sic), but I am not able to bring them, or even to haul them here; please send the sailors after them." The fishes were accordingly brought, and as I had never seen a "dew-fish," I examined it closely, and took an outline of its form, which some day hence you may perhaps see. It exceeded one hundred pounds in weight, and afforded excellent eating. The balacouda is also a good fish, but at times a dangerous one, for, according to the pilot, on more than one occasion "some of these gentry" had followed him, when waist-deep in the water in pursuit of a more valuable prize, until in self-defence he had to spear them, fearing that the "gentlemen" might at one dart cut off his legs, or some other nice bit with which he was unwilling to part. Having filled our cask from a fine well, long since dug in the sand of Cape Sable, either by Seminole Indians or pirates, no matter which, we left Sandy Isle about full tide, and proceeded homewards, giving a call here and there at different keys, with the view of procuring rare birds, and also their nests and eggs. We had twenty miles to go "as the birds fly," but the tortuosity of the channels rendered our course fully a third longer.

The sun was descending fast, when a black cloud suddenly obscured the majestic orb. Our sails swelled by a breeze that was scarcely felt by us, and the pilot requesting us to sit on the weather gunwale, told us that we were "going to get it." One sail was hauled in and secured, and the other was reefed, although the wind had not increased. A low murmuring noise was heard, and across the cloud that now rolled along in tumultuous masses shot vivid flashes of lightning. Our experienced guide steered directly across a flat towards the nearest land. The sailors passed their quids from one cheek to the other, and our pilot having covered himself with his oil jacket, we followed his example. "Blow, sweet breeze," cried he at the tiller, "and we'll reach land before the blast overtakes us; for, gentlemen, it is a furious cloud yon." A furious cloud indeed was the one which now, like an eagle on outstretched wings, approached so swiftly, that one might have deemed it in haste to destroy us. We were not more than a cable's length from the shore, when with imperative voice the pilot calmly said to us, "Sit quite still, gentlemen, for I should not like to lose you overboard just now; the boat can't upset, my word for that, if you will but sit still; here we have it!" Reader, persons who have never witnessed a hurricane, such as not unfrequently desolates the sultry climates of the south, can scarcely form an idea of their terrific grandeur. One would think that, not content

with laying waste all on land, it must needs sweep the waters of the shallows quite dry to quench its thirst. No respite for a moment does it afford to the objects within the reach of its furious current. Like the scythe of the destroying angel, it cuts everything by the roots, as it were, with the careless ease of the experienced mower. Each of its revolving sweeps collects a heap that might be likened to the full sheaf which the husbandman flings by his side. On it goes, with a wildness and fury that are indescribable; and when at last its frightful blasts have ceased, nature, weeping and disconsolate, is left bereaved of her beautiful offspring. In instances, even a full century is required before, with all her powerful energies, she can repair her loss. The planter has not only lost his mansion, his crops and his flocks, but he has to clear his land anew, covered and entangled as they are with the trunks and branches of the trees, that are everywhere strewn. The bark overtaken by the storm is cast on the lee-shore, and if any are left to witness the fatal results they are the "wreckers" alone, who, with inward delight, gaze upon the melancholy spectacle.

Our light bark shivered like a leaf the instant the blast reached her sides. We thought she had gone over; but the next instant she was on the shore, and now, in contemplation of the sublime and awful storm, I gazed around me.

The waters drifted like snow, the tough mangroves hid their tops amid their roots, and the loud roaring of the waves driven among them blended with the howl of the tempest. It was not rain that fell; the masses of water flew in a horizontal direction, and where a part of my body was exposed, I felt as if a smart blow had been given me on it.

But enough: in half an hour it was over. The pure blue sky once more embellished the heavens, and although it was now quite night, we considered our situation a good one. The crew and some of the party spent the night on board; the pilot, myself, and one of my assistants took to the heart of the mangroves, and having found high land, we made a fire as well as we could, spread a tarpaulin, and fixing our insect-bars over us, soon forgot in sleep the horrors that had surrounded us.

Next day the *Marion* proceeded on her cruise, and in a few more days, having anchored in another safe harbor, we visited other keys, of which I will, with your leave, give you a short account.

The deputy collector of Indian Isle gave me the use of his pilot for a few weeks, and I was the more gratified by this, that besides knowing him to be a good man and a perfect sailor, I was now convinced that he

possessed a great knowledge of the habits of birds, and could without loss of time lead me to their haunts. We were a hundred miles or so farther to the south. Gay May, like a playful babe, gambolled on the bosom of his mother nature, and everything was replete with life and joy.

The pilot had spoken to me of some birds which I was very desirous of obtaining. One morning, therefore, we went in two boats to some distant isle, where they were said to breed. Our difficulties in reaching that key might to some seem more imaginary than real, were I faithfully to describe them. Suffice it for me to tell you that, after hauling our boats and pushing them with our hands for upward of nine miles over the flats, we at last reached the deep channel that usually surrounds each of the mangrove isles. We were much exhausted by the labor and excessive heat, but we were now floating on deep water, and by resting under the shade of some mangroves, we were soon refreshed by the breeze that gently blew from the gulf.

The heron which I have named *Ardea occidentalis* was seen moving majestically in great numbers, the tide rose and drove them away, and as they came towards us, to alight and rest for a while on the tallest trees, we shot as many as I wished. I also took under my charge several of their young alive. At another time we visited the Mule Keys; there the prospect was in many respects dismal enough. As I followed their shores, I saw bales of cotton floating in all the coves, while spars of every description lay on the beach, and far off on the reefs I could see the last remains of a lost ship, her dismantled hulk. Several schooners were around her; they were "wreckers." I turned me from the sight with a heavy heart. Indeed, as I slowly proceeded, I dreaded to meet the floating or cast-ashore bodies of some of the unfortunate crew. Our visit to the Mule Keys was in no way profitable, for besides meeting with but a few birds, in two or three instances I was, while swimming in the deep channel of a mangrove isle, much nearer a large shark than I wish ever to be again.

### The Wreckers

LONG BEFORE I reached the lovely islets that border the south-eastern shores of the Floridas, the accounts I had heard of "The Wreckers" had deeply prejudiced me against them. Often had I been informed of the cruel and cowardly methods which it was alleged they employ to allure vessels of all nations to the dreaded reefs, that they might plunder their

cargoes, and rob their crews and passengers of their effects. I therefore could have little desire to meet with such men under any circumstances, much less to become liable to receive their aid; and with the name of "wrecker" there were associated in my mind ideas of piratical depredation, barbarous usage, and even murder. One fair afternoon, while I was standing on the polished deck of the United States revenue cutter, the *Marion*, a sail hove in sight, bearing in an opposite course, close-hauled to the wind. The gentle sway of her masts, as she rocked to and fro in the breeze, brought to my mind the wavings of the reeds on the fertile banks of the Mississippi. By and by the vessel, altering her course, approached us. The *Marion*, like a seabird with extended wings, swept through the waters, gently inclining to either side, while the unknown vessel leaped as it were from wave to wave, like the dolphin in eager pursuit of his prey. In a short time we were gliding side by side, and the commander of the strange schooner saluted our captain, who promptly returned the compliment. What a beautiful vessel, we all thought, how trim, how clean rigged, and how well manned. She swims like a duck, and now, with a broad sheer, off she makes for the reefs, a few miles under our lee. There in that narrow passage, well known to her commander, she rolls, tumbles, and dances like a giddy thing, her copper sheathing now gleaming, and again disappearing under the waves. But the passage is made, and now, hauling on the wind, she resumes her former course, and gradually recedes from the view. Reader, it was a Florida wrecker. When at the Tortugas, I paid a visit to several vessels of this kind, in company with my friend Robert Day, Esq. We had observed the regularity and quickness of the men then employed at their arduous tasks, and as we approached the largest schooner, I admired her form, so well adapted to her occupation, her great breadth of beam, her light draught, the correctness of her water-line, the neatness of her painted sides, the smoothness of her well-greased masts, and the beauty of her rigging. We were welcomed on board with all the frankness of our native tars. Silence and order prevailed on her decks. The commander and the second officer let us into a spacious cabin, well lighted, and furnished with every convenience for fifteen or more passengers. The former brought me his collection of marine shells, and whenever I pointed to one that I had not seen before, offered it with so much kindness, that I found it necessary to be careful in expressing my admiration of any particular shell. He had also many eggs of rare birds, which were all handed over to me, with an assurance that before the month should

expire a new set could easily be procured; for, said he, "We have much idle time on the reefs at this season." Dinner was served, and we partook of their fare, which consisted of fish, fowl and other materials. These rovers were both from down east, were stout active men, cleanly and smart in their attire. In a short time we were all extremely social and merry. They thought my visit to the Tortugas in quest of birds was rather a curious fancy, but notwithstanding, they expressed their pleasure while looking at some of my drawings, and offered their services in procuring specimens. Expeditions far and near were proposed, and on settling that one of them was to take place on the morrow, we parted friends. Early next morning several of these kind men accompanied me to a small key called Booby Island, about ten miles distant from the lighthouse. Their boats were well manned, and rowed with long and steady strokes, such as whalers and men-of-war's men are wont to draw. The captain sang, and at times, by way of frolic, ran a race with our own beautiful bark. The Booby Isle was soon reached, and our sport there was equal to any we had elsewhere. They were capital shots, had excellent guns, and knew more about boobies and noddies than nine tenths of the best naturalists in the world.

But what will you say when I tell you that the "Florida wreckers" are excellent at a deer hunt, and that at certain seasons, "when business is slack," they are wont to land on some extensive key, and in a few hours procure a supply of delicious venison. Some days after the same party took me on an expedition in quest of sea-shells. There we were all in the water at times to the waist, and now and then much deeper. Now they would dip like ducks, and on emerging would hold up a beautiful shell. This occupation they seemed to enjoy above all others. The duties of the *Marion* having been performed, intimation of our intended departure reached the wreckers. An invitation was sent me to go and see them on board their vessel, which I accepted. Their object on this occasion was to present me with some superb corals, shells, live turtles of the hawk-bill species, and a great quantity of eggs. Not a picayune would they receive in return, but putting some letters in my hands, requested me to be so good as to put them in the mail at Charleston, adding that they were for their wives down east. So anxious did they appear to be to do all they could for me, that they proposed to sail before the *Marion*, and meet her under weigh, to give me some birds that were rare on the coast, and of which they knew the haunts. Circumstances connected with the service prevented this, however, and with sincere regret, and a good

portion of friendship, I bade these excellent fellows adieu. How different, thought I, is often the knowledge of things acquired from personal observation, from that obtained by report. I had never before seen Florida wreckers, nor has it since been my fortune to fall in with any; but my good friend, Dr. Benjamin Strobel, having furnished me with a graphic account of a few days he spent with them, I shall present you with it in his own words:

“On the 12th day of September, while lying in harbour at Indian Key, we were joined by five wrecking vessels. Their licenses having expired, it was necessary to go to Key West to renew them. We determined to accompany them the next morning, and here it will not be amiss for me to say a few words respecting these far famed wreckers, their captains and crews. From all that I had heard, I expected to see a parcel of dirty, pirate-looking vessels, officered and manned by a set of black-whiskered fellows, who carried murder in their very looks. I was agreeably surprised on discovering that the vessels were fine large sloops and schooners, regular clippers, kept in first-rate order. The captains generally were jovial, good-humored sons of Neptune, who manifested a disposition to be polite and hospitable, and to afford every facility to persons passing up and down the reefs. The crews were hearty, well dressed, and honest-looking men. On the 18th, at the appointed hour, we all set sail together, that is, the five wreckers and the schooner *Jane*. As our vessel was not noted for fast sailing, we accepted an invitation to go on board of a wrecker. The fleet got under weigh about eight o'clock in the morning, the wind light but fair, the water smooth, and the day fine. I can scarcely find words to express the pleasure and gratification which I this day experienced. The sea was of a beautiful, soft, pea-green color, smooth as a sheet of glass, and as transparent, its surface agitated only by our vessels as they parted its bosom, or by the pelican in pursuit of his prey, which, rising for a considerable distance in the air, would suddenly plunge down with distended mandibles, and secure his food. The vessels of our little fleet, with every sail set that could catch a breeze, and the white foam curling around the prows glided silently along, like islands of flitting shadows on an immovable sea of light. Several fathoms below the surface of the water, and under us, we saw great quantities of fish diving and sporting amongst the sea-grass, sponges, sea-feathers, and corals, with which the bottom was covered. On our right hand the Florida Keys, as we made them in the distance, looked like specks upon the water, but as we neared them, rose to view as if by enchantment, clad in the

richest livery of spring, each variety of color and hue rendered soft and delicate by a clear sky and brilliant sun overhead. All was like a fairy scene; my heart leaped up in delighted admiration, and I could not but exclaim, in the language of Scott,

Those seas behold,  
Round thrice an hundred islands rolled.

“The trade-winds played around us with balmy and refreshing sweetness; and to give life and animation to the scene, we had a contest for the mastery between all the vessels of the fleet, while a deep interest was excited in this or that vessel, as she shot ahead or fell astern. About three o’clock of the afternoon we arrived off the Bay of Honda. The wind being light, and no prospect of reaching Key West that night, it was agreed we should make a harbor here. We entered a beautiful basin, and came to anchor about four o’clock. Boats were launched, and several hunting parties formed. We landed, and were soon on the scent, some going in search of shells, others of birds. An Indian who had been picked up somewhere along the coast by some wrecker, and who was employed as a hunter, was sent on shore in search of venison. Previous to his leaving the vessel a rifle was loaded with a single ball, and put into his hands. After an absence of several hours he returned with two deer, which he had killed at a single shot. He watched until they were both in range of his gun, side by side, when he fired and brought them down. All hands having returned, and the fruits of our excursion being collected, we had wherewithal to make an abundant supper. Most of the game was sent on board of the largest vessel, where we proposed supping. Our vessels were all lying within hail of each other, and as soon as the moon arose, boats were seen passing from one to the other, and all were busily and happily engaged in exchanging civilities. One would never have supposed that these men were professional rivals, so apparent was the good feeling that prevailed amongst them. About nine o’clock we started for supper. A number of persons had already collected, and as soon as we arrived on board the vessel, a German sailor, who played remarkably well on the violin, was summoned to the quarter-deck, when all hands with a good will cheerily danced to lively airs until supper was ready. The table was laid in the cabin, and groaned under its load of venison, wild ducks, pigeons, curlews and fish. Toasting and singing succeeded the supper, and among other curious matters introduced, the following song was sung by the German fiddler, who accompanied his voice with his

instrument. He was said to be the author of the song. I say nothing of the poetry, but merely give it as it came on my ear. It is certainly very characteristic.

### The Wreckers' Song

Come all ye good people one and all,  
Come listen to my song;  
A few remarks I have to make,  
It won't be very long.  
T'is of our vessel, stout and good,  
As ever yet was built of wood;  
Among the reef where the breakers roar,  
The wreckers on the Florida shore.

Key Tavernier's our rendezvous,  
At anchor there we lie;  
And see the vessels in the Gulf  
Carelessly passing by.  
When night comes on we dance and sing,  
Whilst the current some vessel is floating in;  
When daylight comes, a ship's on shore,  
Among the rocks where the breakers roar.

When daylight dawns we are under weigh,  
And every sail is set;  
And if the wind it should prove light,  
Why then our sails we wet.  
To gain her first each eager strives,  
To save the cargo and the people's lives;  
Amongst the rocks where the breakers roar,  
The wreckers on the Florida shore.

When we get 'longside, we find she's bilged,  
We know well what to do;  
Save the cargo that we can,  
The sails and rigging too.  
Then down to Key West we soon will go  
When quickly our salvage we shall know;  
When every thing it is fairly sold,  
Our money down to us it is told.

Then one week's cruise we'll have on shore,  
 Before we do sail again;  
 And drink success to the sailor lads  
 That are plowing of the main.  
 And when you are passing by this way,  
 On Florida Reef should you chance to stray,  
 Why, we will come to you on the shore,  
 Amongst the rocks where the breakers roar.

“Great emphasis was laid upon particular words by the singer, who had a broad German accent. Between the verses he played a symphony (sic), remarking, ‘Gentlemen, I make dat myself.’ The chorus was trolled by twenty or thirty voices, which in the stillness of the night produced no unpleasant effect.”

### The Turtlers of Florida

THE TORTUGAS are a group of islands lying about eighty miles from Key West, and the last of those that seem to defend the peninsula of the Floridas. They consist of five or six extremely low uninhabitable banks, formed of shelly sand, and are resorted to principally by that class of men called wreckers and turtlers. Between these islands are deep channels, which, although extremely intricate, are well known to those adventurers, as well as to the commanders of the revenue cutters whose duties call them to that dangerous coast. The great coral reef or wall lies about eight miles from these inhospitable isles, in the direction of the Gulf, and on it many an ignorant or careless navigator has suffered shipwreck. The whole ground around them is densely covered with corals, sea-fans, and other productions of the deep, amid which crawl innumerable testaceous animals; while shoals of curious and beautiful fishes fill the limpid waters above them. Turtles of different species resort to these banks, to deposit their eggs in the burning sand, and clouds of sea-fowl arrive every spring for the same purpose. These are followed by persons called “egggers,” who, when their cargoes are completed, sail to distant markets to exchange their ill-gotten ware for a portion of that gold on the acquisition of which all men seem bent.

The *Marion* having occasion to visit the Tortugas, I gladly embraced the opportunity of seeing these celebrated islets. A few hours before sunset the joyful cry of ‘land’ announced our approach to them, but as the breeze was fresh, and the pilot was well acquainted with all the

windings of the channels, we held on, and dropped anchor before twilight. If you have never seen the sun setting in those latitudes, I would recommend you to make a voyage for that purpose, for I much doubt if, in any other portion of the world, the departure of the orb of day is accompanied with such gorgeous appearances. Look at the great red disc, increased to triple its ordinary dimensions. Now it has partially sunk beneath the distant line of waters, and with its still remaining half irradiates the whole heavens with a flood of light, purpling the far-off clouds that hover over the western horizon. A blaze of refulgent glory streams through the portals of the west, and the masses of vapor assume the semblance of mountains of molten gold. But the sun has now disappeared, and from the east slowly advances the gray curtain which night draws over the world. The night-hawk is flapping his noiseless wings in the gentle sea-breeze; the terns, safely landed, have settled on their nests; the frigate pelicans are seen wending their way to distant mangroves; and the brown gannet, in search of a resting place, has perched on the yard of the vessel. Slowly advancing landward, their heads alone above the water, are observed the heavily-laden turtles, anxious to deposit their eggs in the well-known sands. On the surface of the gently rippling stream I dimly see their broad forms as they toil along, while at intervals may be heard their hurried breathings, indicative of suspicion and fear. The moon with her silvery light now illumines the scene, and the turtle having landed, slowly and laboriously drags her heavy body over the sand, her flippers being better adapted for motion in water than on the shore. Up the slope however she works her way, and see how industriously she removes the sand beneath her, casting it out on either side. Layer after layer she deposits her eggs, arranging them in the most careful manner, and with her hind paddles brings the sand over them. The business is accomplished, the spot is covered over, and with a joyful heart the turtle swiftly retires toward the shore and launches into the deep.

But the Tortugas are not the only breeding places of the turtle: these animals, on the contrary, frequent many other keys as well as various parts of the coast of the mainland. There are four different species, which are known by the name of the green turtle, the hawk-billed turtle, the logger-head turtle, and the trunk turtle. The first is considered the best as an article of food, in which capacity it is well known to most epicures. It approaches the shore, and enters the bays, inlets, and rivers, early in the month of April, after having spent the winters in the deep

waters. It deposits its eggs in convenient places, at two different times, in May, and once again in June. The first deposit is the largest, and the last the least, the total quantity being at an average about two hundred and forty. The hawk-billed turtle, whose shell is so valuable as an article of commerce, being used for various purposes in the arts, is the next in respect to the quality of its flesh. It resorts to the outer keys only, where it deposits its eggs in two sets, first in July and again in August, although it "*crawls*" the beaches much earlier in the season, as if to look for a safe place. The average number of its eggs is about three hundred. The logger-head visits the Tortugas in April, and lays from that period until late in June three sets of eggs, each set averaging one hundred and seventy. The trunk turtle, which is sometimes of an enormous size, and which has a pouch like a pelican, reaches the shore latest. The shell and fish are so soft that one may push the finger into them almost as into a lump of butter. This species is therefore considered as the least valuable, and indeed is seldom eaten, unless by the Indians, who, ever alert when the turtle season commences, first carry off the eggs which it lays in the season, and afterwards catch the turtles themselves. The average number of eggs which it lays at two sets may be three hundred and fifty.

The logger-head and the trunk turtles are the least cautious in choosing the places in which to deposit their eggs, whereas the two other species select the wildest and most secluded spots. The green turtle resorts either to the shores of the Main, between Cape Sable and Cape Florida, or enters Indian, Halifax, and other large rivers or inlets, from which it makes its retreat as speedily as possible, and betakes itself to the open sea. Great numbers, however, are killed by the turtlers and Indians, as well as by various species of carnivorous animals, as cougars, lynxes, bears, and wolves. The hawk-billed, which is still more wary, and is always the most difficult to surprise, keeps to the sea-islands. All the species employ nearly the same method in depositing their eggs in the sand, and as I have several times observed them in the act I am enabled to present you with a circumstantial account of them.

On first nearing the shores, and mostly on fine calm moonlight nights, the turtle raises her head above the water, being still distant thirty or forty yards from the beach, looks around her, and attentively examines the objects on the shore. Should she observe nothing likely on the shore to disturb her intended operations, she emits a loud hissing sound, by which such of her enemies as are unaccustomed to it are startled, and so are apt to remove to another place, although unseen by her. Should she

hear any noise, or perceive indications of danger, she instantly sinks and goes off to a considerable distance; but should everything be quiet, she advances slowly towards the beach, crawls over it, her head raised to the full stretch of her neck, and when she has reached a place fitted for her purpose she gazes all round in silence. Finding 'all well,' she proceeds to form a hole in the sand, which she effects by removing it from under her body with her hind flippers, scooping it out with so much dexterity that the sides seldom if ever fall in. The sand is raised alterately with each flipper, as with a large ladle, until it has accumulated behind her, when supporting herself with her head and fore part on the ground fronting her body, she with a spring from each flipper, sends the sand around her, scattering it to the distance of several feet. In this manner the hole is dug to the depth of eighteen inches, or sometimes more than two feet. This labor I have seen performed in the short period of nine minutes. The eggs are then dropped one by one, and disposed in regular layers to the number of a hundred and fifty, or sometimes two hundred. The whole time spent in this part of the operation may be about twenty minutes. She now scrapes the loose sands back over the eggs, and so levels them and smooths the surface, that few persons on seeing the spot could imagine anything had been done to it. This accomplished to her mind, she retreats to the water with all possible despatch, leaving the hatching of the eggs to the heat of the sand. When a turtle, a logger-head for example, is in the act of dropping her egg, she will not move, although one should go up to her, or even seat himself on her back, for it seems that at this moment she finds it necessary to proceed at all events, and is unable to intermit her labor. The moment it is finished, however, off she starts, nor would it then be possible for one, unless he were as strong as Hercules, to turn her over and secure her. To upset a turtle on the shore one is obliged to fall on his knees, and placing his shoulder behind her forearm, gradually raise her up by pushing with great force, and then with a jerk throw her over. Sometimes it requires the united strength of several men to accomplish this, and if the turtle should be of very great size, as often happens on that coast, even hand spikes are employed. Some turtlers are so daring as to swim up to them while lying asleep on the surface of the water, and turn them over in their own element, when, however, a boat must be at hand to enable them to secure their prize. Few turtles can bite beyond the reach of their fore-legs, and few, once they are once turned over, can, without assistance, regain their natural position. But notwithstanding this, their flippers

are generally secured by ropes, so as to render their escape impossible. Persons who search for turtle-eggs are provided with a light stiff cane or gun-rod, with which they go along the shore, probing the sand near the tracks of the animal, which, however, cannot always be seen on account of the winds and heavy rains that often obliterate them. The nests are discovered not only by men but also by beasts of prey, and the eggs are collected or destroyed on the spot in great numbers.

On certain parts of the shore hundreds of turtles are known to deposit their eggs within the space of a mile. They form a new hole each time they lay, and the second is generally dug near the first, as if the animal was quite unconscious of what had befallen it. It will readily be understood that the numerous eggs seen in a turtle on cutting it up could not be all laid the same season. The whole number deposited by an individual in one summer may amount to four hundred; whereas if the animal be caught on or near her nest, as I have witnessed, the remaining eggs, all small, without shells, and as it were threaded like so many beads, exceed three thousand. In an instance where I found that number, the turtle weighed nearly four hundred pounds.

The young, soon after being hatched, and when yet scarcely larger than a dollar, scratch their way through their sandy covering, and immediately betake themselves to the water. The food of the green turtle consist chiefly of marine plants, more especially the grass-wrack (*Zostera marina*), which they cut near the roots, to procure the most tender and succulent parts. Their feeding-grounds, as I have elsewhere said, are easily discovered by floating masses of these plants on the flats or along the shores to which they resort. The hawk-billed species feeds on seaweeds, crabs, and various kinds of shell-fish and fishes; the logger-head mostly on the fish (sic) of conch-shells, of large size, which they are enabled, by means of their powerful beak, to crush to pieces with apparently as much ease as a man cracks a walnut. One which was brought on board the *Marion*, and placed near the fluke of one of our anchors, made a deep indentation in that hammered piece of iron that quite surprised me. The trunk-turtle feeds on mollusca, fish, crustacea, sea-urchins, and various marine plants. All the species move through the water with surprprising speed; but the green and hawk-billed in particular remind you by their celerity, and the ease of their motions, of the progress of a bird in the air. It is therefore no easy matter to strike one with a spear, and yet this is often done by an accomplished turtler. While at Key West and other islands on the coast, where I made the

observations here presented to you, I chanced to have need to purchase some turtles to feed my friends on board the *Lady of the Green Mantle*—not my friends, her gallant officers, or the brave tars who formed her crew, for all of them had already been satiated with turtle soup; but my friends the herons, of which I had a goodly number in coops, intending to carry them to John Bachman of Charleston, and other persons for whom I felt a sincere regard. So I went to a “crawl,” accompanied by Dr. Benjamin Strobel, to inquire about prices, when to my surprise I found the smaller the turtles, “above ten pounds’ weight,” the dearer they were, and that I could have purchased one of the logger-head kind, that weighed more than seven hundred pounds, for little more money than another of only thirty pounds.

While I gazed on the turtle I thought of the soups the contents of its shell would have furnished for a lord-mayor’s dinner, of the numerous eggs which its swollen body contained, and of the curious carriage which might be made of its shell, a car in which Venus herself might sail over the Caribbean Sea, provided her tender doves lent their aid in drawing the divinity, and provided no shark or hurricane came to upset it. The turtler assured me that, although the great monster was in fact better meat than any other of a less size, there was no disposing of it, unless indeed it had been in his power to have sent it to some very distant market. I would willingly have purchased it, but I knew that if killed the flesh could not keep much longer than a day, and on that account I bought eight or ten small ones, which “my friends” really relished exceedingly, and which served to support them for a long time. Turtles such as I have spoken of are caught in various ways on the coasts of the Floridas, or in estuaries or rivers. Some turlers are in the habit of setting great nets across the entrance of streams, so as to answer the purpose either at the flow or at the ebb of the waters. These nets are formed of large meshes, into which the turtles partially get entangled. Others harpoon them in the usual manner; but in my estimation, no method is equal to that employed by Mr. Egan, the pilot of Indian Isle.

That extraordinary turtler had an iron instrument which he called a “peg,” and which at each end had a point, not unlike what nailmakers call a “brad,” it being four-cornered, but flattish, and of a shape somewhat resembling the beak of an ivory-billed woodpecker, together with a neck and shoulder. Between the two shoulders of this instrument a fine tough line, fifty or more fathoms in length, was fastened by one end, being passed through a hole in the center of the peg, and the line

itself was carefully coiled up and placed in a convenient part of the canoe. One extremity of this peg enters a sheath of iron that loosely attaches it to a long wooden spear, until a turtle has been pierced through the shell by the other extremity. He of the canoe paddles away as silently as possible whenever he espies a turtle basking on the water, until he gets within a distance of ten or twelve yards, when he throws the spear so as to hit the animal about the place which an entomologist would choose, were it a large insect, for pinning to a piece of cork. As soon as the turtle is struck, the wooden handle separates from the peg, in consequence of the looseness of its attachment. The smart of the wound urges on the animal as if distracted, and it appears that the longer the peg remains in its shell, the more firmly fastened it is, so great a pressure is exercised upon it by the shell of the turtle, which being suffered to run like a whale, soon becomes fatigued, and is secured by hauling the line with great care. In this manner, as the pilot informed me, eight hundred green turtles were caught by one man in twelve months.

Each turtle has its "crawl," which is a square wooden building or pen, formed of logs, which are so far separated as to allow the tide to pass freely through, and stand erect in the mud. The turtles are placed in this enclosure, fed and kept there till sold. There is, however, a circumstance relating to their habits which I cannot omit, although I have it not from my own ocular evidence, but from report. When I was in Florida several of the turtlers assured me, that any turtle taken from the depositing ground, and carried on the deck of a vessel several hundred miles, would, if then let loose, certainly be met with at the same spot, either immediately after, or in the following breeding season. Should this prove true, and it certainly may, how much will be enhanced the belief of the student in the uniformity and solidity of nature's arrangements, when he finds that the turtle, like a migratory bird, returns to the same locality, with perhaps a delight similar to that experienced by the traveller who, after visiting different countries, once more returns to the bosom of his cherished family.

## Contributors

SIDNEY WALTER MARTIN, author of the article *Flagler before Florida*, was born in Tifton, Georgia, in 1911. He took his A.B. at Furman University in 1932, then taught history for two years at Palatka High School, went from there to the University of Georgia to take his master's degree and remained as instructor in history. Dr. Martin received his Ph.D. from the University of North Carolina in 1942, is now Associate Professor of history at the University of Georgia, Assistant Dean of Administration in Charge of the Coordinate Campus, and, during the war years, was acting head of the History Department. Dr. Martin has contributed articles to the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, the *Journal of Southern History*, and is the author of the book: *Florida During the Territorial Days*, The University of Georgia Press, 1944. He is at present working on the biography of Henry M. Flagler.

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THELMA PETERS has been head of the Social Science Department of Miami Edison High School, Miami, Florida, for a number of years. She took her bachelor's degree at Brenau College, Gainesville, Georgia, and her master's degree at Duke University. Mrs. Peters is vitally interested in South America, and has set herself the task and pleasure of visiting all twenty-one countries of the Southern continent. She has already achieved half of her goal, having visited in recent years eleven of our sister republics. She has put her first hand acquaintance with South America to good use by initiating in the public school system the teaching of South American history, a contribution of incalculable value.

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Frederick M. Hudson

Thelma Peters

Edward C. Romfh

Mrs. Ralph Sartor

Gaines R. Wilson

THE PURPOSES OF THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA ARE

(1) to collect, arrange and preserve all material pertaining to the history of, or in any manner illustrative of Southern Florida and related areas, including books, pamphlets, documents, archives, manuscripts, newspapers, diaries, notes, letters, speeches, maps, plats, surveys, portraits, photographs or other likenesses of men and women prominent in the history of Southern Florida, pictorial illustrations of the scenery of Southern Florida, relics and products; (2) to prepare, edit and publish articles, sketches, biographies, pamphlets, books and documents, descriptive or illustrative of Southern Florida; (3) to promote and stimulate public interest in the history of Southern Florida and such related areas as the Keys, Bahamas, Yucatan, Cuba, and the West Indies generally by (a) the publication of an annual journal and (b) quarterly programs of historical papers; (4) to preserve and perpetuate historic spots and places and to further in every way knowledge of Southern Florida's historic past.









