

Excerpts from
“Jonathan Dickinson’s Journal”

The people aboard the Reformation

Joseph Kirle, the captain
Richard Lipenney, the mate
Solomon Cresson, a sailor
Joseph Buckley, same
Thomas Fownes, same
Thomas Jemmet, same
Nathanial Randal, same
John Hilliard, the master’s boy
Ben, Joseph Kirle’s slave

Robert Barrow, a Quaker preacher
Jonathan Dickinson
Mary Dickinson
Jonathan Dickinson, the younger, their child, six months old
Benjamin Allen

Peter, one of Jonathan Dickinson’s slaves
London, same
Jack, same
Cesar, same
Cajoe, same, a young boy

Hagar, one of the woman slaves
Sarah, same
Bella, same
Susanna, same
Quensa, same

Venus, an Indian girl

The wreck of the Reformation on September 23-24, 1696

SEPTEMBER 23, 1696. About one o'clock in the morning we felt our vessel strike some few strokes, and then she floated again for five or six minutes, before she ran fast aground where she beat vehemently at first. The wind was violent, and it was so very dark that our mariners could see no land, and the seas broke over us, so that we were in a quarter of an hour floating in the cabin. We then endeavored to get a candle lighted, which in a little time was accomplished.

By this time we felt the vessel not to strike so often. But several of her timbers were broken, and some planks started, and the seas continued breaking over us, and no land to be seen. We concluded to keep in the vessel as long as she would hold together, and about the third hour of the morning we supposed we saw land at some considerable distance. At which time we found the water began to run out of her, and at daylight perceived we were upon the shore, on a beach lying on the breach of the sea, which, at times, as the surges reversed, was dry. In taking a view of our vessel, we found that the violence of the weather had forced many sorts of sea birds on board of her, some of which were by the force of the wind blown into and under our hen coops, and many remained alive. Our hogs and sheep were washed away, and swam on shore, except one of the hogs, which remained in the vessel.

We rejoiced at this our preservation from the raging seas, but at the same instant feared the sad consequences that followed. Yet, having hopes still, we got our sick and lame on shore, also our provisions, with spars and sails to make a tent. I went with one negro to view the land, and seek the most convenient place for that purpose. But the wildness of the country looked very dismal, having no trees, but only sand hills covered with shrubby palmetto, the stalks of which were so prickly there was no walking amongst them. I at last espied a place almost a furlough from the beach to which I with my negro soon cut a passage, but the storm and rain continued. There I got my wife and sick child, who was but six months and twelve days old, and also Robert Barrow, an aged man, who had been sick about five or six months; [also] our master, who some days before had broke his leg, and my kinsman Benjamin Allen who had been very ill with a violent fever most part of the voyage. These, with others, we got to the place, under the shelter of some few bushes, which broke off the wind but kept none of the rain from them. But I got a fire made, and the rest of our people were getting the provisions ashore. But our chests, trunks, and clothing were all very wet and cold . . .

Meeting a leader of the Jobe Indians (near today's Jupiter Inlet)

About the eighth or ninth hour came two Indian men running from the southward fiercely (being naked, except for a small piece of plaited work of straws, which just hid their private parts, and fastened behind like a horse tail in likeness, made of a sort of silk grass). [They] violently seized the first two of our men they met with, who were carrying corn from the vessel to the top of the bank, where I stood to receive it and put it in a cask. They did not use them ill, as the men resisted not, but taking them under the arm brought them towards me. Their countenances were very furious and bloody. They had their hair tied in a roll behind, in which stuck two bones, one shaped like an arrow, the other a spear head. And the rest of the men coming from the ship asked me, "What should they do? Whether they should get their guns to kill these two?" But I persuaded them otherwise and desired them to be quiet, showing their inability to defend us from what would follow, but to put our trust in the Lord, who was able to defend to the uttermost.

Their cacique, for so they call their king, with about thirty more came down to us in a furious manner . . . They rushed in among us and cried "Nickaleer! Nickaleer!" We understood them not at first, but they repeating it to us often, at last they cried "Espania" or "Spaniard." [One of our sailors, Solomon Cresson] answered in Spanish, "Yes." To which they replied, "No Espania, no" but all cried "Nickaleer! Nickaleer!"

We then began to inquire after Saint Augustine. Also we would talk of Santa Lucia, which was a town that lay about a degree to the northward. But they cunningly would persuade us that they both lay to the southward . . . At length the cacique told us how long it was to Santa Lucia by days travel but cared not to hear us mention Saint Augustine. They would signify by signs we should go to the southward. We answered that we must go to the northward for Augustine . . .

SEPTEMBER 27, 1696. This morning we again used our endeavors with the cacique that we might go to the northward for Augustine. But his answer was "You should all be killed." At length we prevailed and he said "On the morrow you should go." He took three negro men (one of Joseph Kirle's and two of mine) and with a canoe went up the sound.

This day the Indians were busy with what they had taken out of our vessel, and would have employed all of us to do some one thing, some another for them. Whatever they thought was amiss they would be putting upon us to mend. At which time I heard a saying that came from one of the chief Indians, thus, "English son of a bitch." These words startled me, for I did believe they had some of our nation in their possession, of whom they had heard such an expression . . .

The cacique having been gone the most part of the day, he at last came over the bar into the inlet with three negroes in our boat [from the *Reformation*], and we rejoiced to see our boat again, for we thought she had been burnt. Our negroes told us "They went up the sound and landed near the place where our tent had

been.” They went to the place where our vessel was burnt. They launched our boat, in which the cacique put all his chiefs, wherein was our linen, and other of our trade. He told us “On the morrow we should go with our boat” which was cheerful news to us.

SEPTEMBER 28, 1696. We waited an opportunity to get leave to depart, which was granted us . . . The cacique and some other Indians went with our people towards our wreck, we rowing along the shore, and our boat very leaky, for that one person had employ enough to heave out the water . . . It was high noon when we left our wreck and set forward, some in the boat and the rest traveling on shore . . .

Ordeal after ordeal (the journey from today’s Stuart towards Ft. Pierce)

SEPTEMBER 30, 1696. This morning by break of the day we saw a small canoe with two Indians in her going up the river or sound for fishing. We hailed them in Spanish, and as soon as they heard and saw us, they made to the shore with all speed and away to their town they run . . . About sunrise we saw the Indians coming, running in a very great number, with their bows and arrows, to the inlet, where, having five or six canoes, they got into them, as many as those canoes could hold, and others took the water and swam over to us. Solomon began to speak in Spanish to them, but they answered not until they came on shore, some distance from us, and then coming running upon us, they cried out “Nickaleer? Nickaleer?” We all sat still expecting death. They rushed violently on us, rending and tearing those few clothes we had. Those that wore breeches had so many Indians about them that they hardly touched the ground until they were shaken out of them. They tore all from my wife, and espying her hair lace, some were going to cut the hair away to get it . . .

After they had taken all from us but our lives they began to talk one to another vehemently, and taking their bows and arrows, with other weapons, cried out “Nickaleer! Nickaleer!” Solomon spoke in Spanish to them and said “We are Spaniards.” But they would not hear him and continued crying out “Nickaleer!”

We were to walk along the seashore to their town and in this passage we most of us felt the rage of some of them, either by striking or stoning, and diverse arrows were shot. But those that were preserving us would watch those that were for destroying and when some of them would go to shoot, others of them would catch hold of their bows or arm. None of us was touched with their arrows but several of us were knocked down, and some tumbled into the sea. We dared not help one another, but help we had by some of them. My wife received several blows and an Indian came and took hold of her hair and was going either to cut her throat or something like it, having his knife nigh her throat. But I looked at him, making a sign that he should not, so he desisted. At which time another Indian came with a handful of sand and filled our poor child’s mouth.

By this time the cacique's wife came to my wife, seeing her oppressed, and pulled the sand out of our child's mouth, and kept by my wife until we got to the cacique's house. It was about forty feet long and twenty five feet wide, covered with palmetto leaves, both top and sides . . . A kind of debate was held among them for an hour's time, after which Solomon and some others were called to the cacique, where the cacique talked to Solomon in the Spanish language.

OCTOBER 1, 1696. This day the cacique, looking on us pleasantly, made presents to some of us, especially to my wife. He gave her a parcel of shellfish, which are known by the name 'clams.' One or two he roasted and gave her, showing that she must serve the rest so, and eat them. The Indian women would take our child and suckle it, for its mother's milk was almost gone, that it could not get a meal. And our child, which had been at death's door from the time of its birth until we were cast away, began now to be cheerful and have an appetite to food. It had no covering but a small piece of raw deerskin, not a shred of linen or woolen to put on it . . .

They having satisfied themselves that most of us were Spaniards, they told us that we should be sent to the next town and also said that "there was a group of Nickaleers there to the number of six men and a woman and that they were to be put to death before we should get there." We were silent, although much concerned to hear this report. They also told us that "a messenger would come for us, to direct us to the next town, and from there to Augustine" . . .

We had not traveled above five miles before our guide caused us to stop. At some small distance there was an Indian town, which I supposed our guide belonged to. Here we stayed nigh two hours. The flies were very thick and the night very cold, so that our naked bodies were not able to endure it but with grief. At length we left this place, but the whole night following we were troubled with two young Indians, who at times would be abusing one or other of us, singling them out, and asking if they were not "Nickaleer" or English. If they said, "Nay," then they would hit them a blow or more with a truncheon which they had, and say "They were." We traveled all night without stopping.

OCTOBER 2, 1696. After sunrise we came up with the wreck of the vessel that we heard was cast away and she was staved all to pieces, for her keelson was driven on the shore. We saw sugar hogsheads, ginger, logwood, which gave us to suppose it was of our convoy, and we thought it to be either Burrough's or Smith's, out of Bristol . . .

Our guide was for forcing us forward so we traveled about four or five miles further and met with the cacique of the town, who was commander of the northern part of this coast. He was an ancient man, his beard and hair gray, and he inquired for the captain, so our people pointed to Joseph Kirle. Then he asked for our mate and pilot. This man could speak Spanish better than any we had met with yet, but not so well as to discourse, only to ask some questions, and we had three or four among us could make a shift to answer him. This old cacique seemed to have compassion on us, and said, "That those people who

had served us thus, in stripping us, were rogues, but we were his comrades, or friends." He said "In a few days he would carry us to Augustine." And then he told us of six Englishmen and one woman being at his town. We inquired if he intended them for Augustine. He shook his head, and pointed to the southward, saying "Nickaleer, no comrade."

A month later, near today's Marineland, two days from St. Augustine

NOVEMBER 13, 1696. This morning we were loth to part with our fires, but to stay here it could not be. So we went to our boats, wading in the water till it was ready to benumb us, and we put forward, rowing about two leagues, then came to an old house, where the Spaniard told us we must leave the boats, and travel by land. We had a boggy marsh to wade through for a mile to get to the seashore, and had about five or six leagues along the bay or strand to the Spanish sentinel's house. The northwest wind was violent and the cold such that the strongest of us thought we should not outlive that day. Having got through the boggy marsh and on the seashore, our people, black and white, made all speed, none keeping together but I, with my wife and child, Robert Barrow, and my kinsman Benjamin Allen, and my negro London, whom I kept to help carry my child. The rest of our company had left us, not expecting to see some of us again, especially Robert Barrow, my wife and child. But we traveled after them as we could, and having gone about two miles, the cold so seized on my kinsman Benjamin Allen that he began to be stiff in his limbs, staggered and fell, grievously complaining that the cold would kill him. Our negro having the young child, I and my wife took our kinsman under each arm, and helped him along. But at length his limbs were quite stiff, his speech almost gone, and he began to foam at the mouth. In this strait we knew not what to do. If we stayed with him, we must perish also. But we were willing to strive as long as we could. Therefore we carried our kinsman and laid him under the bank, he not being yet dead, and I resolved to run after our people, some of them not being out of sight. I run about two miles, making signs to them, thinking if they should look behind and see me running, they would stop until I got up to them. But they stopped not and I ran until the wind pierced me so that my limbs failed me, and I fell. And yet I strove, and getting up, walked backward to meet my wife. As I was returning I met with the Spaniard coming out of the sand hills, and Joseph Kirle's negro Ben. I made my complaint to the Spaniard, but he not being able to understand me well, went forward. I then applied myself to Ben, making large promises if he would fetch my kinsman. He offered to go back and use his endeavor, which we did. At length my wife and child came up with me. She was almost overcome with grief, expressing in what manner we were forced to part with our kinsman, and expecting that she and the child should go next.

Poor Robert Barrow was a great way behind us, and I feared we should never see him again.

About two o'clock in the afternoon we came up with our negro woman, Hagar, with her child at her back almost dead, and a little further we came up with our negro girl, Quenza, being dead, as we thought, for she was as stiff as a dead body could be, and her eyes set. But at length we perceived her to breath. But she had no sense nor motion and we carried her from the waterside under the bank. This increased my wife's sorrow and she began to doubt she should not be able to travel much further. But I endeavored to encourage her not to leave her striving as long as any ability was left.

We had lost sight of Robert Barrow by this time.

The sun was nigh setting and we began to look out for the sentinel's post, and my negro at times got upon several of the highest sand hills to look out, but could not see any house nor the smoke of any fire. This was terrible to us all, the day being so cold, the night much more, and we not able to travel without rest, being a starved people. And if we ceased from traveling we should instantly be benumbed and move no further.

So we betook to the hills again to look out yet we could not see the house from there. But on the next hill we saw it. This was joy to us, though we began to have a sense of tiredness . . .

When we got to the house we found four sentinels, and the Spaniards our guides, with three other men, Joseph Buckley, Nathaniel Randal, and John Shears, and the Spaniards bid us welcome, making room for us to sit down by the fire. The chief man of the sentinels took a kersey coat and gave it to my wife to cover her, and gave each of us a piece of bread made of Indian corn, which was pleasant to us, and afterwards we have plenty of hot cacina drink. It was dark but we endeavored to prevail with the Spaniards to go and seek for Robert Barrow and my kinsman. But they seemed not fully to understand me. They made me to understand that the weather was not fit to go out, but they would watch if Robert passed by.

About an hour or two after, one of the Spaniards being walking nigh the bay, met with Robert, and brought him into the house. We rejoiced to see him and inquired concerning our kinsman and the negro Ben. He said, our kinsman was striving to get up, but could not. He came to him and spoke to him and he could not answer, but cried, and he could not help him. But coming along he met negro Ben, who said he was going for Benjamin Allen. So he passed him and some miles further he saw negro Jack drawing himself down the bank, for his lower parts being dead, and crying out for some fire, that he might save his life. But he did not see the negro girl whom we hauled out of the way . . .

The Spaniards would have had most of us to have gone to the next sentinel's house, which was a league further, but we all begged hard of them to let us lie at their house, in any place on the ground, for we were not able to travel farther. Besides the cold would kill us, for we were all in such a trembling shaking condition, and so full of pain from head to foot, that it was not to be expressed.

At length the Spaniards consented that Robert Barrow, I, my wife, and child, and John Smith should lie in the house. But to Joseph Buckley, Nathaniel Randal, and John Shears, and my negro London, they would not grant that favor. So one of the Spaniards, taking a fire brand, bid these four go with him, and he directed them to a small thicket of trees, and ordered them to gather wood, and make large fires and sleep there . . .

The night proved extreme cold. Though we were in the house, and by the fire, we could not be warm, for the one side did scorch while the other was ready to freeze. And thus we passed the night.

Arrival at St. Augustine

NOVEMBER 15, 1696. We got to Saint Augustine about two hours before night, and being put on shore, we were directed to the governor's house, where we were had up a pair of stairs. At the head stood the governor who ordered my wife to be conducted to his wife's apartment. I and John Smith went into a room, where the governor asked us a few questions. But seeing how extreme cold we were, he gave us a cup of Spanish wine, and sent us into his kitchen to warm ourselves at the fire. About half an hour later the governor sent for us and gave each of us a shirt and sliders, a hat, and a pair of silk stockings, telling us he had no woolen clothes yet but would have some made. We put on the linen and made all haste into the kitchen to the fire.

Robert Barrow was quartered in another house. Several persons came to the governor's house and took such as they were minded to quarter in their houses. But Joseph Kirle, John Smith, I, my wife, and child lodged at the governor's house.

All our people that came up with Joseph Kirle came to see us, and we perceived the people's great kindness, for they were all well clothed from head to foot, with the best the people had.

Description of the town of St. Augustine

NOVEMBER 16, 1696. This morning we had ice half an inch thick, and it had been so for some mornings past, but as the sun rose it dissolved.

The governor came in this morning to our apartment, inquiring how we did. And we having had chocolate for breakfast, he asked if we would have anything else his house could afford. If we would but ask, it should be brought to us. But we modestly answered that this was sufficient although our appetites were not to be satisfied. The governor then stated the poverty of the country to us.

This place is a garrison maintained half by the King of Spain, the other half by the Church of Rome. The male inhabitants are all soldiers, every one receiving

pay according to his post. A sentinel's pay is 150 pieces of eight a year. And all their supply of bread, clothing, and money comes from Havana and Portabella. It was going on of three years since they had a vessel from any place whatsoever, which made their wants very great, all things being expended except ammunition and salt, of which they said they had enough. But the governor offered us the freedom of what his house afforded . . . and we promised to be ruled and submit to the governor's pleasure for our liberty . . .

The town we saw from one end to the other. It is about three quarters of a mile in length, not regularly built, nor the houses very thick, they having large orchards in which are plenty of oranges, lemons, limes, figs, and peaches. The houses are most of them old buildings, the number of men being about three hundred, who belong to the government, and many of them are kept as sentinels at their look-outs. At the north end of the town stands a large fortification, being a quadrangle with bastions, and each bastion will contain thirteen guns. But here was not past two thirds of the fifty-two mounted. In the curtain they cannot mount any guns being only for small arms. The wall of the fortification is about thirty feet high, built of sawed stone, such as they get out of the sand between the sea and the sound. The stone is only sand and small shells connected together, being not very hard until exposed to the sun. The fort is moated round. They would not admit us to come near the fort but Joseph Kirle took an opportunity and walked round about it.

Source:

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