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THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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* * * To explore the field of Florida history, to seek and gather up the ancient chronicles in which its annals are contained, to retain the legendary lore which may yet throw light upon the past, to trace its monuments and remains, to elucidate what has been written, to disprove the false and support the true, to do justice to the men who have figured in the olden time, to keep and preserve all that is known in trust for those who are to come after us, to increase and extend the knowledge of our history, and to teach our children that first essential knowledge, the history of our State, are objects well worthy of our best efforts. To accomplish these ends we have organized the Historical Society of Florida.

Saint Augustine, April, 1857

GEORGE R. FAIRBANKS.





JOHN C. MCGEHEE,
President of the Florida
Secession Convention

ADDRESS OF JOHN C. McGEHEE BEFORE THE
SOUTHERN RIGHTS ASSOCIATION OF
MADISON COUNTY, JUNE 7, 1851 ¹

[The high historical importance of this address lies in that ten years later John C. McGehee was elected (by a vote of five to one over several worthy opponents) president of the convention of the people of Florida, convened January 3, 1861, which passed the ordinance of secession. At such a time of stress and strong feeling it would seem that a man must be elected to that position at least as much because of his known opinions and long-held beliefs as for his ability and all other reasons. ²]

MR. PRESIDENT,

We are met as a Southern Rights Association. Why, it may be asked, do we associate ourselves together under such a title and what are our objects in doing so. The answers to these questions involve matters of the gravest import and claim the most profound attention of every individual of this great nation. And as I am justly chargeable with as much of the responsibility of its organization as any other individual I will say a few words in reference to it.

For a number of years past the action of the Federal Government of the United States has been characterized by abuses and usurpations of power, having for their tendency and object the destruction and overthrow of the institutions and rights of the Southern States. The Congress of the United States has recently denied us our equal rights with citizens of

¹ From the original manuscript preserved by the family of Judge McGehee, and now in the possession of a niece, Rosa Galphin, of Fernandina. A biographical sketch of her distinguished kinsman by Miss Galphin appeared in a late number of the **QUARTERLY**.

² The address is further considered on page 116 of this number.

the other States, and by unjust and partial legislation degraded us beneath our equals. Many of the Northern States of this Confederacy speaking through their Legislatures and otherwise declare their utter detestation and abhorrence of us and our institutions and their fixed and unalterable determination to destroy us. And to this end they have instituted and organized parties, associations and societies without number. They denounce us unworthy to associate with freemen, and deny us the rights and privileges of Christian Communion. The title by which we hold our property has become precarious and insecure by their interference in enticing away our slaves and their refusing us the means of recovering them, thus impairing or destroying the value of our property. All of which we consider inconsistent with our relations with them as confederates and equals, and utterly violative of the provisions of the Constitution of the United States. Under solemn conviction that acquiescence on the part of the people of the Southern States in this system of wrongs deliberately organized against them is impossible, we have united in every species of opposition to them consistent with the integrity of the Constitution and the Union. And we have hoped that as we believe the States in their sovereign capacities have the power, they would interpose for the protection of the rights of the citizens. We have hoped that our fellow citizens of the Southern States and of our own State especially would unite in repelling wrongs and maintaining their own rights. But we lament to see, and to say, that so far we have been disappointed in a hope so just and so reasonable, and the attitude of this country at this time exhibits a spectacle at once the most amazing and anomalous that the history of the world has ever recorded. While one section has assumed a position of undisguised opposition and hostility to the other

and is waging and carrying on with madness and fury a war of extermination against her guaranteed rights and institutions, the other quietly submits and tamely acquiesces. The people of the Southern States under a delusion utterly unaccountable and blindness of mind fatal to their liberties refuse to do, or permit anything done, having for its object the redress of their wrongs or the restoration of their rights. This I affirm to be our position now. And as the State as a sovereign refuses to exert her power as such for the protection of our rights and a large majority of our fellow citizens refuse to take ground with us in our own, and their defence, a few of us, citizens of Madison County, in view of the universal and inevitable ruin and infamy that menaces the whole Southern country, have banded ourselves together and we have solemnly pledged ourselves to one another that we will not remain silent longer under indignity and insult. We here separate ourselves from all such as are willing to endure oppression and declare our determined and uncompromising hostility to all principles and measures of the General Government which do not recognize and secure the equal rights of the citizens of all the States as guaranteed in the Constitution.

We will countenance and support and sympathize with one another in our trials and sufferings and in our efforts to relieve ourselves from wrongs and oppression. As opportunity offers and as far as possible we will disseminate light and truth among our fellow citizens that they may understand and appreciate their rights and be convinced of their wrongs. We do not know that we can accomplish anything. But it will be a comfort, it is a comfort to us to know and be known by one another, to give and receive mutual sympathy and support in our distress, and particularly to have it known in future times that in the uni-

versal torpor and lethargy that stupifies our people there were a few names, a little band that were prepared under any circumstances and at any sacrifice to claim our rights and strike for freedom.

This is the substance of our pledge. It is the meaning and object of our constitutional organization.

I hope to be pardoned in introducing a subject in which I am peculiarly related, to-wit - the late Southern Convention held in Nashville. That measure, it will be admitted by all, grew out of a conviction almost universal at the time, that the destruction of the institutions of the slave-holding States was deliberately resolved upon by the people of the hiring States, and that the Federal Government was to be used as the instrument by which they were to be destroyed. The Legislatures of almost every slave-holding State declared it in their resolutions. The Southern delegations in Congress adopted addresses and sent home to their constituents proclaiming it as a fact, and our own delegation joined in a strong letter to our Governor exhorting him to take steps to have Florida represented in the proposed Southern Convention. He refused-and upon his refusal the people in their primary assemblies appointed their delegates themselves. Madison County, it is known to you all, joined in this, and upon the return of their delegates from the first meeting of the Southern Convention, they were invited here on the third of August last, and received with the greatest enthusiasm, and their course most unequivocally approved, by resolutions unanimously adopted on that occasion.

The first meeting of the Convention did not, finish their business and adjourned to reassemble after the adjournment of Congress. So great was the enthusiasm of the people of Madison County in the cause of Southern Rights that they proposed to send delegates of their own to the second meeting of the

Southern Convention, and before their adjournment selected two of their number for that purpose, of which I was one. It certainly was known that I concurred in the sentiments expressed and measures proposed on that occasion. No one could have mistaken my remarks that day. Indeed there was an entire unanimity among all the speakers. The resolutions were strong and decided and were adopted unanimously. I supposed that I was by universal consent requested to act as delegate from Madison County in the Southern Convention. I accepted the appointment and in good faith fulfilled it to the best of judgment and ability, and while I was engaged in the performance of this duty and before it could be known what was the action of the Convention, to my utter amazement a portion of the people who sent me to devise measures for their safety denounced the Convention and its objects, repudiated the principles they had a short time before advocated and for a time at least defeated every attempt to organize an association devoted to the cause of Southern Rights: While I was actually engaged in their service at their request at a great distance from home and at great individual and personal sacrifice, my name was used as a watchword of clamor and tumult to carry the crowd in opposition to principles I was known to entertain and advocate and they themselves had sanctioned and endorsed by appointing me a delegate to represent them in the Convention.

This inconsistency, this disregard of all respect for themselves betrays a depravity in political morals at least, if I may be allowed the expression, that is well calculated to awaken alarm as to our destiny as a country. It shews that those who hold the sovereign power in their hands can be led at will by demagogues or designing men who may or may not be emissaries of their enemies and who may or may not be the min-

ions of power paid to cheat and deceive them into a sacrifice of their own dearest rights. As to myself personally it is a matter of no consequence apart from the deplorable prospect it develops. It is an admonition to those who are true to their interests, the rights of the South, the Constitution and the Country, to stand firm in their integrity and look well to those to whom they entrust with power.

Why was the Southern Convention called? It is a fact known to all that there exists in the Southern portion of the United States two races of men, so different in color and physical and moral organization that it is impossible that they can ever amalgamate and become one people, and that they sustain to each other, and have done so since long before this government or nation had an existence as such, the relations of master and slave. At the organization of the present government nearly every State was a slave State. I have seen myself advertisements in the public newspapers in Massachusetts where the citizens of that State offered their slaves for sale. The climate of the Northern States is unfavorable to the African, and slave labour is not profitable, hence they have abolished their African slavery-not by emancipation, whereby the African obtained his freedom, but by bringing them South and selling them. The climate is congenial to the black man at the South and there his labour is profitable. Having thus ceased to have any personal pecuniary interest in African slavery they immediately commenced a clamorous agitation against it - and from the earliest history of this nation as a government down to the present moment they have not ceased, and from a very small and contemptible faction who were regarded for many years as beneath the respect of any decent man they have grown until now they control the whole of the North, East, and North-west, and through them the whole

political power of the United States. No man can offer for any office of honor or trust or profit at the North with any hope of success who dares to support the Constitution of the United States so far as it guarantees the right of property in slaves. No man North or South will dare to advocate Southern Rights who entertains any just expectation of appointment to office by the President of the United States. The President requires of his minions abject submission to his will. Any man of Southern feelings or principles must make an entire surrender of them before he can receive or retain office. The whole power and patronage of the Government in its departments is made to direct its whole force and energy against our institutions and this, too in direct violation of the plighted faith of those who entered the compact as brethren for mutual protection.

From this plain statement of naked facts you will perceive, Mr. President, that there was cause of alarm and discontent on the part of the Southern States. Under the lead of Virginia they spoke out as sovereigns and declared their determination to resist such aggressions on the part of their Northern confederates. And for the purpose of adopting some measure of redress which should meet the concurrence of all, they agreed at the suggestion of Mississippi to consult together in a Southern Convention. Now are these circumstances and objects sufficient to justify the Southern people in assembling in the Southern Convention, I let *Southern* men, opposed to it and clamoring against it - answer.

What was its action. Let the Convention speak for itself. It declares that the States of this Confederacy acceded to the compact - as sovereigns - each one for itself. That they were as such equal in dignity and sovereignty, each having equal rights with the rest to a participation in the benefits, and are

equally bound to share the burthens of the common government which was created conjointly by them all for the protection and benefit of all alike. That the institution of slavery is coeval with the government and forms an essential element of its existence and support and is expressly protected in the Constitution -that the non-slave-holding or hireling States avow their uncompromising hostility to institutions of the slave-holding States and declare their determination to overthrow and destroy them-that to embarrass *and* oppress the slave-holding States by restrictions and prohibitions is now the settled policy of those who control the government-that the Union instead of being a fraternal bond as it was with our fathers is now as the instrument with which they strike at our vitals-that they have seized one portion of the Public Domain purchased with our blood and treasure and refuse us the privilege of going visit with our property, at the same time they invite and welcome vagabonds from every nation on earth besides to come and enjoy it-that as a people we are doomed, doomed to degradation and infamy, and nothing can save us from a destiny the most revolting and loathsome but the spirit of freemen-this is the chief remedy prescribed by the Southern Convention for the long list of our oppressions and grievances.

No people were ever enslaved or oppressed who enjoyed that spirit. Tyranny never triumphed over the spirit of freedom, It is invincible. History does not record, never will record, an instance in which a people were subdued however few in number who were united and determined to be free. Accordingly the Southern Convention recommended to the people of the Southern States to unite in one great effort for their mutual safety, and as a means of securing joint action, concurrence and union they propose the assembling of a Southern Congress which shall have

power to devise and concert measures for their safety. In this course we are following in the footsteps of our ancestors while suffering under wrongs and oppressions similar to, but not a tythe of, our own, who animated by the spirit of freemen achieved an independence which it is to be awfully feared we their degenerate ignoble sons will basely surrender without a struggle.

The action of the Southern Convention contemplated concord among the aggrieved States in redressing the wrongs under which they are suffering, and animated by the spirit of freemen and prompted by the energies of a people resolved on their rights, who can question the efficacy of the measure. But it appears that a fatal stupor blinds their minds and blunts their sensibilities, and instead of meeting in consultation on the remedies for their wrongs and means of restoring their lost rights they have taken the glittering bribe, or shrunk with fear under the threat of power.

Every Southern Rights man cherishes an ardent attachment to the institutions of his fathers. This Union and these institutions were ordained by our fathers for the protection of their lives, liberties and property, and while administered by them how admirably did they answer the ends for which they were designed. The progress, the prosperity, the happiness of the people of the United States is without a parallel in the history of the world. The political organization composing the government of this Confederacy and the separate States is the most beautiful, perfect and sublime work of human wisdom, and administered in justice and purity is the most fruitful source of human happiness short of divinity the world has ever known. And it is capable of being the source of the greatest happiness properly administered, so it may be perverted to become the most fruitful source

of human misery. A despot who is known and seen and tangible may be made responsible for his acts of cruelty and tyranny, and a sense of that responsibility will impose restraint upon him. But an unseen, intangible irresponsible multitude of tyrants entirely removed from the creatures of their power may *satiare* unchecked their cravings for plunder and spoils. Power must be made responsible, or it will overwhelm its subjects. This is the condition to which our beautiful system is fast approaching, if indeed it has not already attained to it. As to us at the South we have no interest in anything claimed by the Federal Government. The people of the hireling States make our laws and execute them. They tax our labour to raise money to disburse among themselves, and through the patronage of the government to seduce and bribe our people to *betray* us. It is preposterous humbuggery to say that we are represented in Congress. That is mere form without any substance. Our representatives may enjoy the privilege of going through the formality of delivering a speech or casting a vote. But all candid minds will confess that questions involving the rights of the South as a section are all decided before they are made - independent and despite of anything that the whole South combined could do or say. The majority *is* fixed and permanent. The South *can* claim no right with any hope of success. And who are they that thus govern us? They are the people of the hireling States, the abolitionists, the same who have waged a war of extermination against the institution of slavery-the basis of all our prosperity. We have not the privilege of voting for our lawmakers. They are foreigners to us, who will never see or be seen by us, who are in no possible manner responsible to us and who declare their fixed determination to destroy us. Mr. President, this is the relation we bear to the hireling

States through the government. These are the fruits of the Union. Can these relations be continued? or can this Union be preserved?

In the act of adopting the Constitution there were conditions and principles which were vital and fundamental, without the acceptance and recognition of which the Constitution and Union could never have been formed, and upon the faithful fulfillment of which its continuance must depend. The Constitution is a treaty. Each of the parties are by its terms equal. Each are bound by the obligations of good faith to keep the terms of the treaty. If one violate, the others cannot coerce performance, because each is sovereign and there is no power superior to herself, and her sense of obligation to perform her engagements in good faith is all the power that can control a sovereign. One sovereign cannot control another, for that would be inconsistent with and destroy her sovereignty. Therefore if one of the sovereign States of this Union violate her plighted faith on entering it no power on earth can rightfully employ force to compel her to it. She is, though, responsible for her breach of faith by way of indemnity. Further, if one of the sovereign parties violate the compact, by that act she absolves the other contracting parties from obligation to perform their stipulations' in the contract. One cannot hold another bound in a mutual contract and exempt himself. These are plain propositions that the simplest mind can comprehend. Let us apply these principles to the case before us. The hireling States who entered the compact as equals with the slave States and pledged their faith as sovereigns to observe, fulfill and respect their stipulations so solemnly entered into, almost immediately upon the organization of the government violated their pledge and violated most grossly the rights of the slave States specifically entered into for the pro-

tection of their property and immediately commenced a course of aggression upon their rights.

The slave States have kept the treaty, they have honestly and with fidelity fulfilled all their treaty stipulations. The hireling States not only violate without scruple their treaty stipulations in the mutual compact absolving themselves from all obligation on their part, but they hold the slave States bound and require fulfillment rigidly as though they had not violated the compact. And still further-they refuse them the exercise of the right of sovereignty, threatening coercion and force upon a supposed act of sovereignty.

Under these circumstances can the slave States remain in the present Union with the hireling States? I say it is impossible. What can be done? I answer they can relieve themselves from the odious tyranny under which they suffer by reason of the political connection with them-by dissolving that connection as sovereigns. According to what we have seen they have a perfect right to do so by virtue of their sovereignty. They are absolved from all obligations under the compact by reason of the repeated violations of the other parties. They are bound as sovereigns to their citizens by a paramount obligation to protect them in the enjoyment of their rights, which obligation it would not be possible to perform in the Union.

The right of secession I think not only clear beyond the possibility of a doubt, but the duty absolute and unavoidable.

But there are amongst us those who are opposed to secession and there are various classes of such. Some deny that. our rights have been violated-to such I have nothing to say. The deep and universal agitation all over the northern portion of the Union, the triumphs of our enemies, the admission of the

greatest and wisest men at the North, the excitement prevailing all over the South, and the calm declarations in Europe that we are a doomed people-are all weak nonsense to such.

Some concur in the statement of our wrongs and still wish to suffer more before they resist. To such I would ask - Did a tyrant ever voluntarily relax his grasp? Did despotism ever reform its own abuses? Did fanaticism ever stop short of its object? Was liberty ever achieved without an effort? Was freedom ever retained without jealous vigilance? Do they hope that our enemies under a returning sense of justice will of their own accord restore our rights and make amends for the wrongs they have done us? If they indulge in such a hope they discredit the bold, deep determined declarations of our enemies a thousand times made and now growing louder, deeper and more threatening-that they are determined never to cease their war upon our institutions until the relation of master and slave shall be destroyed throughout the United States. They shut their eyes to all that is done in relation to the slavery agitation at the North. No candid mind can indulge a hope so fatally delusive. Do they wait for other and greater wrongs to arouse them to defend their rights. Other wrongs they may and certainly will have inflicted upon them - greater cannot be. It is impossible that they can degrade us more, or inflict a deeper wound upon the spirit of freemen than they have done. They have taken from us our country won by our own blood and treasure and appropriated it to themselves. They have purchased our own territory with our money and given it to our enemies. They refuse us the privilege of exercising acts of ownership over our property on our own soil. They tax us against our will.

Some admit the wrongs we suffer and oppose any action in asserting our rights from fear of conse-

quences. They fear that if we make any resistance to the usurpations and aggressions of the government and attempt to protect ourselves great troubles and difficulties might arise, such as - revolution-civil war-bloodshed, and we might lose our property and our lives. To such I would say-this is true. No one can tell what is to be the end of a struggle for freedom. But it *is* also true that liberty cannot be won without an effort or without risk. It is attested by all history that fear is an unsafe counsellor in a crisis where freedom is involved. Fear is a traitor and will surrender to the enemy. No people who are not prepared to sacrifice their lives and fortunes for liberty ever achieved it or retained it and as soon as a people begin to entertain questions of policy or expediency in reference to maintaining liberty or begin to calculate its value - they are already slaves.

Mr. President, there is another subject upon which I desire to say something. It is a practical one, of exceeding importance to us all. It is the opinion of a number of our fellow citizens that there is a numerous class amongst us who entertain feelings of prejudice and hostility against a portion of their fellow citizens very similar to those of the Northern people. They are hostile to the slave holder. They hate a man because he owns slaves. I have heard no man express feelings such as these. I would fain hope that there are none such. But in case there should be I ask to be indulged in a few plain, calm remarks upon the subject of our circumstances and relations.

In the first place, if there was need for it, I could shew beyond the shadow of a doubt that slavery as it exists here is not only right and proper but a merciful interposition of the Providence of God in favour of the slave. That in the relation of master and slave the blessing is to the slave. It has been practiced as far back as history gives any account of the human

race. It is recognized and sanctioned by God in His word both in the old and new testaments. It was expressly recognized by Jesus Christ, and He gave lessons of instruction to both master and servants. And further, if neither the practice of mankind nor the Bible had sanctioned it, we have it expressly recognized and guaranteed by treaty stipulation in the constitution of the United States. We have therefore a perfect right to claim it and to be protected in the enjoyment of it.

Florida is a slave state. By her constitution and laws the right of property in slaves is guaranteed and protected. We are all fellow citizens of the same state. The State as our sovereign is bound to protect every citizen equally and alike in the enjoyment of his life, liberty and property. For this protection we are all under a reciprocal obligation of allegiance and support. This is inseparable from the relation of sovereign and citizen. When the state gives protection the citizen is bound to render support as an indispensable duty. Now all the citizens enjoy equal privileges and have a perfect right to employ their labor or lay out their money according to their judgment or inclination, and the State is bound to protect them in whatever they may lawfully do and in the enjoyment of their property of whatever description it may be, and the citizens are equally bound to support the State in the fulfillment of all her duties and obligations.

Now suppose three of her citizens for example having made money by their industry and care, each chose to purchase property. One purchased a tract of land, another a stock of cattle, and another a negro. They all have a perfect right to buy these things and the State would be bound to give them equal protection. Suppose a trespasser come and take away the land, would not the State through her courts be bound

to punish the trespasser and restore the land to its owner? and if the trespasser should resist the process of law would not all the citizens be bound to aid and assist the officers of the State to execute the law. Certainly no good citizen could or would refuse his aid in such a ease. The State has a right to require of them and compel them to render it.

But suppose in the case of the citizen who bought the negro that the emissaries of our Northern enemies should have instigated the slaves in the country to rebellion and insurrection and that man's slave should join, would those citizens who purchased the land and the cattle join in putting down the rebellion? This is the point I have desired to make in the discussion. From what I have understood there are some-nay, many in our State and indeed in our county who declare that in such a ease they would *not* join in putting down rebellion and insurrection. They would not assist their fellow citizens in maintaining their rights or in defending their lives and the lives of their wives and children although bound by every obligation of duty to their State to do so-because they were slave-holders, because they chose to lay out their money in slaves instead of in land and cattle. They say they have no slaves, and therefore they have no interest in the matter. Let us see. It is the duty of the State to protect all her citizens. It is equally the duty of the citizens to support the State. If a citizen refuses support he forfeits protection-and more, he exposes himself to the penalty of a very great and infamous crime. The sovereign has a right to the allegiance of the citizen and can command it and in the ease supposed if the citizen refuses to aid his State in the fulfillment of her duty in protecting the lives and property of other citizens in suppressing a rebellion instigated by her enemies he commits the same crime that *he* does who refuses his aid in repelling in-

vasion by a foreign enemy. In both cases he not only refuses his aid to his State that has given him protection but he cripples and weakens her strength and resources and by this means gives aid and comfort and strength to her enemies. Can such a man claim to be a good citizen? Can any one deny that he is an enemy to his country, is guilty of treason and merits a traitor's fate?

We have enemies. There are those in the hireling States who boldly declare themselves our implacable enemies and who declare to us and the world that their hostility shall never cease-until our destruction is accomplished. We can face them, a million of them, undismayed and with defiance. They are bold and open enemies from without and we can prepare to meet them in open and honorable combat. But our secret foes-our brethren at home, our own fellow citizens whom we have cherished, succored and protected, if they are false to their duty, to their country and to themselves, and join the enemy, of course our destiny is sealed, our doom is fixed. In vain may the friends of truth and justice, right and liberty, contend and strive and struggle if there are those among them ready to betray them,.

I do not - I cannot believe that there are any who of their own accord would deliberately determine on such a course. Certainly we all claim and wish to deserve the character of good citizens and friends to our country. And certainly none of us would do so shameful an act as to desert her in her time of need either by joining her enemies or which is the same thing standing by with folded arms, refusing allegiance and support, indifferently witnessing the overthrow of our country. If there are such I am sure they have been deceived and deluded. Their minds have been blinded to truth and duty. Their feelings of patriotism, their love of country, have been swal-

lowed up in some mighty whirlpool of prejudice, and they know not what they do.

That there are those who for their own selfish purposes would take advantage of the ignorance and credulity of well meaning and confiding citizens and by falsehood and fraud mislead them. as to the true situation of the country and their duty in relation to it, I believe-office men and demagogues will attain their ends by any means and at any sacrifice to their country.

If it indeed be true that there is a distinction of classes among us, if there be a distinction between the slave-holder and non-slave-holder, and it is to be kept up and continued, what must be the inevitable result -utter degradation and ruin to both, to all. Division will deliver us an easy prey to our enemies.

If such is to be our doom, it will in all probability come quickly. Our enemies will strike the moment they dare. Let them know that their friends here are in strong force and they will be upon us. Let us now like men, prepared for any event, look the monster in the face. Suppose our enemies, encouraged by their friends here, the non-slave-holders who refuse their aid to the State in protecting the rights of the slave-holders, abolish slavery or instigate insurrection or rebellion, what will be the result? First a general massacre and slaughter of the slave-holders with wives and children, except such as can make their escape out of the country- leaving the country in possession of the black race and their friends the non-slave-holders who refused to join in suppressing the rebellion. As the negroes by their successful rebellion triumphed over their owners they would at least have placed themselves on an equality with whites who remained in the country with them, and having the majority and the physical power they would aspire to rule and would take the government in their own

hands. They as a matter of course would require their white neighbors to associate with them on terms of equality and intimacy and if any objection were made it would produce insult, anger and resentment. Now I ask what would they gain in the exchange? Would they prefer for their friends the black to the white man. Would they prefer to be subject to the laws made by negroes and be under control and dominion in every respect, to the present system. Would they be willing to see their daughters led away in marriage by negro men.

The black race is naturally lazy, indolent, improvident and unscrupulous, and if the white man should by industry and economy provide something for the comfort and support of his family, the negro would take it from him. I ask for earnest and solemn reflection upon this subject. It may appear to some improbable that these things will come to pass. They have happened, and if it be true that there are those amongst us who will take sides with the slaves against their masters, or will stand neutral and permit our Northern enemies to do their fatal work, as sure as time runs it will come to pass. The causes that will bring it about are now actively engaged and unless we take steps to counteract them, it is inevitable. All history proves that when the white race has been subject to the negro they are- the most degraded, oppressed, and abject of creatures, and unless we unite in defense of our institutions we may read our destiny in the history of St. Domingo.

Are there any who suppose that because they have not as much property as others that they are not as much interested, as *they* are, in maintaining their rights. To such let me say it is impossible that all should have the same amount of property. No two ever had the same amount. But we all have rights. Our rights are equally dear and valuable to us all. It

is not the amount we hold but the right to hold it we value. It is the principle we contend for. Let no man therefore suppose that he is not equally interested with every other man in maintaining his rights.

Our fathers secured for us equal rights in the Constitution and we are now entitled to them and claim them. All agree that we have suffered and now suffer wrong. All know that every wrong should be redressed. If all, or a large majority, could unite on any remedy, that union itself would restore all our rights, redress all our wrongs, and make us what our fathers were—a free and happy people. We now make our appeal to our fellow citizens, we are fellow citizens of the same country—state—county. We have equal rights, equal privileges, and identity of interests. We are equally entitled to enjoy equal rights with our fellow citizens of the other states and with one another under a common government made for us by our fathers, through which government other states have wronged us and threatened to destroy us. Can any man who claims to be the son of a freeman, who has a wife, a son, or a daughter to whom he would transmit the legacy of freedom, pause or reflect or make questions of policy when right or liberty is involved. Does he struggle to amass property or did he inherit it from ancestors, and would he suffer an avowed enemy without color of right to wrest it from him without an effort to retain it? Every feeling of human nature revolts at such an idea. He would resist on the instant and to the death. Then, let me ask, is not your liberty of more value than property. What gives value to wealth but freedom of enjoyment.

Let us then turn away from arguments founded upon a calculation of the value of the Union, secession, or revolution as unworthy of freemen, and keep our minds and hearts immovably fixed upon our

rights and our liberty - to the assertion and the maintenance of these, direct our constant and united efforts: Watch them with jealous vigilance, contend for them with a perseverance which never tires and an energy that never relaxes and a resolution that never fails - with a determination to spend our lives or meet our deaths in her cause.

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS AND FLORIDA

It has been said that the defiant patriotism of John Quincy Adams secured to the United States possession of Florida. It settled, after years of controversy, the long standing differences between Spain and this country. The student of history who takes the trouble to search for details of the many transactions and negotiations that resulted in the Florida provinces coming under the American flag will find that the skillful diplomacy of Adams resulted in settling for all time the sovereignty of Spain on the North American Continent.

Early in the history of the United States the leading statesmen of the day were of the opinion that Florida would have to become a part of the Union. Many of the projects for the attainment of this purpose came to naught, and others of them were not to the credit of the administration which proposed them.

As early as 1811 Congress had, in secret session, authorized the President to seize the Florida provinces and had appropriated one hundred thousand dollars for this purpose. East Florida was invaded by an alleged patriot army, Fernandina seized, and invasion carried to the walls of St. Augustine. Spain protested with such vigor that President Madison sacrificed his confidential agent by disavowing his acts and withdrawing the, support of the army.

In the year 1812 the United States had forcibly seized that part of West Florida lying west of the Perdido, and extending westward into what is now the present state of Louisiana. At this time there was on the present site of Mobile a Spanish fort, and the Spanish Government had exclusive jurisdiction over the country. The act of the United States upon this

occasion was upon the supposition that this territory was a part of the Louisiana Purchase, but Spain at all times vigorously contended that by her cession of New Orleans and Louisiana to France, this territory was not transferred, and that she had never surrendered possession to France or to any other nation.

In the year 1818, General Andrew Jackson, without specific instructions, invaded the Spanish dominions of Florida, made war upon the Indian inhabitants, seized the forts and public property of Spain and captured Pensacola, the capital of West Florida. In addition to his invasion and seizure of the forts, Jackson had, by court martial, condemned to death and caused the execution of two British subjects at Fort St. Marks. When the news of Jackson's Florida adventures reached Washington, there was great excitement among officials and the public. Not only were the long-standing differences with Spain now aggravated by the conduct of an American general, but the public mind was excited over the prospect that Great Britain would resent the execution of Ambrister and Arbuthnot, even to the extent of going to war. Monroe was President, John Quincy Adams Secretary of State, Calhoun Secretary of War and Crawford Secretary of the Treasury. The administration was plainly worried, and Adams records in his diary the many discussions of the cabinet on the Florida situation. On one occasion there was a cabinet meeting lasting from noon until near five o'clock. The President and all members of the cabinet except Adams were of the opinion that Jackson should be disavowed and suitable reparation made. Calhoun, the Secretary of War, insisted that Jackson should be censured and, with Crawford, feared that war would follow and that our ships and commerce would become the prey of privateers from all parts of the world sailing under the Spanish flag.

It was said that while Jackson had to face the Indians, the administration was compelled to face Spain, England, Congress, a hostile press, the people, and, not least, Jackson himself. In all cabinet meetings and conferences, Jackson's sole friend and only defender was Adams, the Secretary of State - the man upon whom would fall the responsibility of the diplomatic negotiations, should the administration decide to assume responsibility. There were many days of argument in the cabinet, but finally the counsel of Adams prevailed, and he set himself to the task of meeting the protests and threats of De Onis, the Spanish Minister, and Bagot, the British Minister.

By August, 1818, all negotiations with the United States were suspended by order of the King of Spain "Until satisfaction should be made by the American Government" for the proceedings of Jackson, which were considered "acts of unequivocal hostility against him, and outrages upon his honor and dignity, the only acceptable atonement of which would consist of a disavowal of the American general, and infliction upon him of a suitable punishment, for his conduct," and this was coupled with a demand for indemnity for damages, public and private, sustained in consequence of Jackson's acts. Shortly afterwards negotiations were renewed, and Adams sent to Erving, our representative at Madrid, one of the most wonderful State papers ever written, and containing a full statement of the American case.¹ It began with a narrative of the violation of Spanish neutrality by the English forces in the War of 1814, and recounted each and every instance of Spanish duplicity. The conduct of Arbuthnot, Ambrister, Nicholls and the Spanish

¹ Letter of John Q. Adams to George W. Erving, U. S. Minister to Spain, Nov. 28, 1818, contained in *Instructions to Ministers*, Vol. VIII, p. 257. This letter is reprinted as Appendix C in Fuller, *The Purchase of Florida*, Cleveland, 1906.

governors were fully described, and suitable punishment was demanded to be inflicted upon the Spanish governor of Pensacola and other Spanish officials. Adams closed his communication with an open threat. He stated that if the necessities of self-defense should again compel the United States to take possession of the Spanish forts, that another unconditional restoration of them must not be expected. That even the President's confidence in the good faith and ultimate justice of the Spanish government would have to yield to the painful experience of continual disappointment.

This celebrated document is described by Parton, the historian, as the most flagrant piece of special pleading to be found in the diplomatic records of the United States ; but nevertheless it is also true that no diplomatic paper ever met with greater success. It silenced the English government; it convinced the people of the United States ; it also persuaded the Spanish Council of State that their demands were unfounded.

Diplomatic relations with Spain were resumed and a treaty was entered into by which the United States acquired the Florida provinces. And it was John Quincy Adams that, almost single handed and alone, conducted these negotiations. Crawford, the Secretary of the Treasury, was opposed to Jackson and desired to make him an impossibility for the presidency. Influential members of Congress openly opposed the action of the President; Henry Clay stood ready to fight any treaty that did not satisfy his peculiar ideas, and other members of the administration, all playing for the presidential state, were lukewarm toward Adams's efforts. Adams records in his diary that as they were approaching an agreement, the President was inclined to give up all that remained in the contest; but at last an agreement was reached, and on

February 22, 1819, Adams and De Onis signed and sealed the treaty.

No doubt Adams felt that he had performed a service for his country. It may be interesting to those who read this article to know how he expressed himself when his labors had been completed, so we quote from his famous diary under date of February 22, 1819.

“It was near morning when I closed the day with ejaculations of fervent gratitude to the Giver of all good. It was perhaps, the most important day of my life. What the consequences may be of the compact this day signed with Spain is known only to the all-wise and all-beneficent Disposer of events, who has brought it about in a manner utterly unexpected and by means the most extraordinary and unforeseen. Its prospects are propitious and flattering in an eminent degree. May they be realized by the same superintending bounty that produced them. May no disappointment embitter the hope which this event warrants us in cherishing, and may its future influence on the destinies of my country be as extensive and as favorable as our warmest anticipations can paint. Let no idle unfounded exultation take possession of my mind, as if I could ascribe to my own foresight or exertions any portion of the event, It is the work of an intelligent and all-embracing cause. May it speed as it has begun, for without a continuation of the blessings already showered down upon it, all that has been done will be worse than useless and vain.

“The acquisition of the Floridas has long been an object of earnest desire to this country. The acknowledgment of a definite line of boundary to the South Sea forms a great epoch in our history. The first proposal of it in this negotiation was my own and I trust it is now secured beyond the reach of revocation. It was not even among our claims by the treaty of independence with Great Britain. It was not among our pretensions under the purchase of Louisiana - for that gave us only the range of the Mississippi and its waters. I first introduced it in the written proposal of 31st October last, after having discussed it verbally both with De Onis and DeNeuville. It is the only peculiar and appropriate right acquired by this treaty in the event of its ratification.”

The name of Adams is not commemorated in the State of Florida, although the names of Jackson, Madison, Monroe, and other illustrious statesmen of the early history of the United States may be found perpetuated in the roll of counties. It is, therefore, suggested that when the Legislature shall create another county within the limits of this growing commonwealth, it be honored with the name of Adams—a name it should be proud to bear.

FRED. CUBBERLY

FRANCIS EPPES (1801-1881),
PIONEER OF FLORIDA

In the White House, in Washington, in the year 1801, Thomas Jefferson waited anxiously for tidings from Monticello ; for there his beloved daughter, the beautiful Maria Jefferson Eppes, was waging the world-old battle for life. For hours the great statesman had been walking the floor, too miserable for sleep. Then came a knock at the door and Peter handed him a scrap of paper on which was hurriedly scrawled these words, "Mother and boy doing well—a fine hearty youngster, with hazel eyes and to his mother's delight he has hair like your own. She sends dear love to the Father she is longing to see." The night was almost over and Thomas Jefferson, after a prayer of thanksgiving, slept soundly. Two happy years passed for this devoted family and then Mrs. Eppes faded like some delicate blossom and they laid her to rest in the graveyard at Monticello.

Little Francis, her son, lived in the White House with his grandfather after this, for his father was in Congress, and the three were often there together. A few years later Mr. Jefferson wrote from Monticello, to his son-in-law John Wayles Eppes, asking that he might be allowed to select a school for Francis, and also that he might have the privilege of directing the course of study.

In the month of April, 1811, we find the boy at school in Columbia, South Carolina, and his grandfather was evidently pleased with the progress he made.' Each vacation was spent at Monticello, where

¹ These letters to John Wayles Eppes and to Francis Eppes, all in Thomas Jefferson's own hand, are in the possession of their descendants.

a part of every day was passed in the library studying subjects selected by Mr. Jefferson, and in the evening they would talk over the work of the day, and plan for the morrow.

Mr. Jefferson had high hopes for Francis - the best schools, further study under his own eyes, a profession which he must choose for himself, two years of travel in foreign lands, and then, a career such as he had a right to look forward to. But at the early age of twenty Francis married his third cousin, Mary Elizabeth Cleland Randolph. No objection could be found to the young lady, and Mr. Jefferson installed the youthful couple at Poplar Forest. This was close at hand and the agreement was that Francis should pass the greater part of every day in his grandfather's library where he was surrounded by the wisdom of past ages.

In 1823 John Wayles Eppes passed away ; for years he had represented Virginia in the Congress of the United States, and he died "in the harness". Francis was deeply grieved at this loss, but three years later came the greatest grief of all, on the 4th of July 1826, Thomas Jefferson laid down the heavy burdens he had carried for so long and "entered into rest". These two men were the only intimate friends Francis had ever had. Life had lost its savor without them and in Florida he sought new scenes and fresh interests.

Through a Commissioner of Deeds he entered land on Black Creek, in Leon County. Not a tree had ever been felled on this land, not one trace of civilization could be seen. Francis Eppes, with his wife and three children left Virginia in company with relatives, who like themselves, sought a new home. Travel was difficult in those days, and it was safer to go in numbers. First in the caravan came carriages in which the families rode, that is, the women and children, for

the men almost invariably rode on horseback beside these carriages to protect the occupants. Wagons piled high with household belongings came next, while here and there, wherever a comfortable seat could be found, old or feeble negroes could be seen, and a dusky throng numbering hundreds brought up the rear. Pioneer days were hard days.

Arriving in Florida, this family whose fortunes we follow was one of the first to drop out of line, for Black Creek was not far from the Georgia boundary. Every one who could fell a tree or clear up brush went to work, and soon a rude house of logs took the place of the tent in which they had slept for many long weeks. Then negro cabins, like spots of sunshine amid the dense green of the forest, gave a more cheerful look to the surroundings. This was in 1827. To this man from the Old Dominion, the lands of Leon County seemed marvellous in their fertility, for crops grew and were harvested almost past belief. He called his home *L'eau Noir*, and here came to them three more children. When the sixth child was born, in 1835, the gentle, delicate mother closed her eyes on the wilderness to open them upon that "land of pure delight" she had sung of so often. Unable to endure the loneliness without her, he sold his plantation and bought another on the Lafayette Grant, five miles from Tallahassee. He also bought a city block and built a house in the town where they would be safer, for Indian troubles had come upon the settlers.

From earliest childhood Francis Eppes had been taught the highest reverence for religion; he was also taught that every man's religion was sacred to him and it behooved other men to carefully observe the golden rule when speaking on such subjects. So broad-minded and liberal was Thomas Jefferson that he has often been accused of having no religion, but

we have only to read his book, *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*,² to realize the depth of his religious feeling. Anyway, he had sown good seed in the heart of his grandson, and the home of Francis Eppes was always open to the clergy of every denomination; while he worked with devoted zeal to establish an Episcopal church in Tallahassee, and in the records of that church his name is among the first and most liberal of the members.³

In 1837 Francis Eppes was married a second time, to the daughter of U. S. Senator Nicholas Ware, of Augusta, Georgia. She was beautiful, refined and gracious in manner, and their home was a favorite meeting place for the elite of the town; and most particularly was it sought by scientific men of many sections who found in Mr. Eppes a delightful companion.

² This is usually spoken of as "Jefferson's Bible". It was his habit to spend the last half hour before his bedtime in the study of the Scriptures; sometimes this half hour was greatly prolonged. When he was President he spent this, which he considered sacredly his own, in reading and comparing the Greek and Latin, the French, and the English versions of the New Testament. From this study he evolved what he called "The Morals of Jesus". In a blank book of fine paper and bound in red morocco, with hand tooling of gilt, he wrote the title. He then selected from each of the Testaments what he considered the most important points brought forth by Our Saviour.

Cutting these paragraphs from the pages he carefully pasted them in the blank book. I suppose he wanted to render it easy for every nation to read this, which was to him the most beautiful and important selections of literature on earth. When Congress purchased Jefferson's library for such a pitiful sum, this book was among the others, and yet it should never have left Monticello. Impressed with the value of the work a bill was introduced in Congress to have some copies of the original made. The bill passed at the second session of the Fifty-eighth Congress, and a facsimile edition was ordered. It was most interesting—the choice of texts show forth his own belief; and yet this *man* has been called "an infidel". Could anything be more preposterous!

³ Francis Eppes was a lay-delegate in the convention, held in Tallahassee, Jan. 17, 1838, which organized the Diocese of Florida, Protestant Episcopal Church. He was a member of the first Standing Committee of the diocese. See *Journal of the Primary Convention of the Diocese of Florida*, Tallahassee, 1838.

We have said that in Virginia he had only two intimate companions ; in Florida he found another. This one was young, talented and handsome as a Greek god, and with a like romantic history. Early one morning a child of about three years was found asleep on a sidewalk in Charleston. The news spread rapidly and a crowd collected. The little boy had no look of a lost or neglected child, his clothes were tumbled but not soiled and they were of the finest material. His tiny bronze gaiters and silken hose, and the chain of gold which was clasped around his neck, bespoke wealth and tender care. Two passenger vessels had sailed in the night; could it be that he had strayed off without discovery? The authorities placed him with a kind family where he would have every attention and a vigorous search was begun, but it was of no avail. The only clue was the news that one of the vessels went down with all on board. The baby was often asked his name, always the same sounds answered and after a while his hearers decided that he was trying to say, John K. Campbell, so that was decided on for a name and some kind ladies of Charleston obtained permission to take the lovely baby and rear and educate him. He proved to be as talented as he was beautiful. Choosing the law for his profession he married into one of the best families of the aristocratic old city. A few years later he moved to Tallahassee, where both he and his wife were universally admired.

Duelling was beginning to be looked upon with disfavor in the Territory and threats of punishment if it should be persisted in came from the government. In the year 1832 George Hamlin challenged John K. Campbell. Doubtless it was some trivial or imaginary insult, but the duel was fought and Campbell lost his life, a life so full of promise, the almost perfect work

of The Creator. Hamlin was indicted for this, but died before he could be brought to trial.

Francis Eppes in packing his friend's books and papers found on his desk a sheet of paper with the following words in his own clear handwriting, "John K. Campbell ; he came from, he knows not where - he is going, he knows not where." It was heartbreaking to this man who had already lost so much, and day after day his mind was at work to find some way to stop this wave of lawlessness which was sweeping the land.

The Eppes family came from England, on the borders of Epping Forest, which we are told was named for them, where they owned a vast estate and had many retainers. We know the family is an old one, for the Eppeses fought at Agincourt.

A Francis Eppes came to Virginia in 1620 and in the year 1624 we find his name among the members of the House of Burgesses. From that time until the body ceased to be there was always an Eppes among its members ; and now, for full three hundred years, there has never been a time when an Eppes did not hold some position of trust and responsibility at the hands of his fellow-citizens.

With this record behind him it seems strange that Francis Eppes, seventh of that name, had no liking for political life. He was a devoted churchman and was lay-reader when, as often happened in those early days, there was no rector, but he would fill no public position save this. Sorely grieved that his beloved friend should have fallen a victim to the crime of duelling, he reviewed the years of his stay in Florida and was shocked to find how frequent such murders had become. While he was still pondering on this awful state of affairs the famous Read-Alston duel was fought, and this was followed by a worse condition than had yet prevailed in the Territory. The streets

of Tallahassee were often stained with blood and the culmination was the assassination of General Read by Willis Alston.

Mr. Eppes had often been asked to take political office and now, feeling that he must stand back no longer he accepted the position of mayor of that riotous town. The result is shown by the admiration and esteem of his fellow-citizens, evidenced by the inscription on a very handsome silver pitcher presented to him after the close of his term of office:

*F. Eppes Esq., Intendent of Tallahassee, 1841-42.
A Token of Regard From His Fellow-Citizens
For His Untiring and Successful Services
In the Promotion of Virtue and Good Order.*

But his services to Tallahassee and to the State did not end here ; for many years he was a member of the Board of Education of the State Seminary West of the Suwannee River.⁴ He served again and again as mayor,⁵ always to the satisfaction of all save the evil-doers. He was mayor in the year 1866 when the Army of Occupation under General Foster was in control.

The district was fortunate then, for General Foster was far more reasonable and kind than most of our conquerors. He mingled with our people socially and "a game of chance" was often indulged in. One Sunday morning as the mayor was hastening down Monroe Street, intent on trying to get through with his duties before the hour for church services, he passed a certain point where a half-sash gave a par-

⁴ The members of this board; appointed Jan. 15, 1859, were T. W. Brevard, Sen., Francis Eppes, and D. P. Hogue. (Senate jour. 1858, p. 405)

⁵ He was mayor again in 1843 when "the great fire", as it was commonly called, destroyed the entire business portion and a part of the residence section of Tallahassee. As Mayor and Chairman of the General Meeting of the Citizens he sent out *An Address to the People of the United States*. This address, containing a description of Tallahassee and of the calamity, will appear in a future issue of the QUARTERLY.

tial view of the basement below, and his sharp eyes spied the commanding officer of the post and the "merchant prince" of Tallahassee busily engaged in a game of poker. Down the stairs went the mayor. The door was locked and silence reigned within when he knocked; a hearty push with his broad shoulders forced the door and the game was at once at an end. The mayor's family were terribly alarmed when this became known, but their fears were groundless. Monday morning there was a knock at the Eppes' door and the servant brought in cards, General and Mrs. Foster. Poor Mrs. Eppes trembled with apprehension, but summoning her courage she received her guests in her usual gracious manner. What was her surprise when General Foster told her that he and his wife had come to congratulate her on having such a husband; and they both praised his courage, his sense of justice, and his fair-minded execution of the laws.

Just before the War Between the States came to an end, Mr. Eppes, who believed firmly in the ultimate success of the South, sold his magnificent plantation on Lake Lafayette for Confederate money, which in a few weeks was worthless; his negroes were freed and he found himself penniless. He sold all his personal belongings and even his precious library, that his debts might be paid, and with clean hands and a clear conscience, faced the world once more to make a living. His friends, knowing how splendidly equipped he was for such a position, urged him to accept the presidency of the Seminary West of the Suwannee, but he declined the offer.

It was his custom to read the Scriptures each day in Latin and Greek, he never allowed himself to become rusty in French, Spanish, Italian, or German; and his acquaintance with the literature of his own and other lands was broad and deep. It seemed a shame for a man so gifted to lay all aside and become

a laborer, planting and hoeing and harvesting; but in 1867 Francis Eppes, now sixty-six years old, with his young son Frank, left Tallahassee and located in Orange County, where they planted an orange grove, and where his family soon joined him. Once more he bent every energy to the building up of an Episcopal church and for years services were held in his home where, as in Tallahassee, he was often lay-reader.

During these first years after the War the South went through hard, grinding poverty and want. In these days it is almost unbelievable that such suffering should have overtaken a hitherto prosperous people, yet some still live who drank of that bitter cup. Francis Eppes in his little log cabin in the wilds of Orange County drained it to the dregs-patient always, never losing faith in the God he served so faithfully, and dying May 30, 1881, the death of the righteous.

MRS. NICHOLAS WARE EPPES.

THE SECOND SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR

*[In the January number last there appeared an article by A. H. Phinney relating to the attempted seizure of St. Augustine in the year 1812 by United States troops and gunboats. The article was entitled **THE FIRST SPANISH-AMERICAN WAR**. The following paper is a resume by the same author of an analogous incident in Florida history - the raid into Florida in the year 1818 by General Andrew Jackson.]*

Andrew Jackson's Presbyterian parents emigrated to the United States from the north of Ireland two years previous to his birth. To the courage, honesty, and industry of his forbears he added a hatred of the British fostered by the occurrences of his boyhood, and as Spain was an ally of England and had allowed a British force to land in Florida, that country was to him also an enemy.

Spain in its weakness had remained quiescent while a nest of outlaws possessed themselves of Amelia Island upon which the town of Fernandina is located. The people of that vicinity appealed to the United States for assistance in driving out the usurpers and on December 13th, 1817, the forces of the United States entered the town, lowered the Mexican flag which had replaced the green cross of Gregor MacGregor and raised the United States ensign.¹ In October, a boatload of people and supplies going up the Apalachicola, river was ambushed by Indians and thirty-three Americans slain. The War Department ordered General Gaines, who had built Fort Scott at the junction of the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers about fifteen miles above the Florida line and who was at that time using Fernandina as one of his supply bases, to see that the guilty parties were punished.

¹ *American State Papers*. Vol. XII, p. 397.

General Gaines, acting upon the peremptory command, sent word to the chief of the Indian tribe inhabiting Fowletown, a settlement five or ten miles from Fort Scott, to report to him immediately. Upon the chief's refusal to do so, a force of two hundred and fifty troops was sent to the town, the Indians driven out with the loss of several Indian lives, and in November of 1817 the town itself was reduced to ashes by order of General Gaines. The War Department, determined that justice should be meted out to the Indians responsible for the molestation of American lives and property, authorized Gaines to cross, if necessary, the Florida line in pursuit.²

General Gaines, besieged in Fort Scott, was obliged to call for assistance, and on December 26 orders were sent to General Andrew Jackson to raise a force of volunteers and to take charge of Fort Scott. On January 6, 1818, before leaving his home in Tennessee, General Jackson wrote President Monroe, saying "Let it be signified to me in some way (as by Johnny Rhea) that possession of Florida is desired and it shall be accomplished in sixty days."³ No reply was received to this letter but when only a day's march from Fort Scott, Jackson received word of the President's approval of his suggestion.

On March 9, with a force of a thousand Tennesseans and eight hundred Georgia militia, General Jackson reached Fort Scott; on the 16th he reached the site of the negro fort on Florida soil which had been destroyed some months previously while flying a British flag. As this site was a strategic point on the river he rebuilt the fort and named it Fort Gadsden in honor of one of his captains. Here he was joined by fifteen hundred friendly Creeks from northern

² *General Jackson's Conduct in the Seminole War*, by Samuel Parkins. Brooklyn, 1828.

³ Rhea was a Louisiana Congressman.

Georgia under the leadership of their chief, McIntosh, who was a half-breed. But little resistance was encountered as this large force moved southward to St. Marks although it was estimated that there were twenty-five hundred Indians under arms.

In an Indian village at Lake Miccasuckie, fifty scalps were discovered hanging from poles in flaunting and ghastly display, and a large number of cattle, stolen from Georgia, were found secreted within the confines of the village. Upon the arrival of Jackson's forces, the Indians fled from the town and the entire village with its three hundred huts was burned to the ground. The pursuit of the fleeing Indians was given over to McIntosh, the half-breed Creek.

At St. Marks, Alexander Arbuthnot, a Scotchman of about seventy years of age, was captured as he attempted to flee from the avenging troops. Arbuthnot was lucratively engaged in selling British goods to the Indians and, as their agent by power of attorney signed by fourteen hostile chiefs, he had requested the British Government to aid the Indians in their warfare upon the United States. When in St. Marks he basked in the lime-light of authority as a member of the Spanish commander's family. At Swaneytown, a settlement of Indians and negroes on the Suwannee river, he conducted a thriving but questionable business in the form of a supply store which he placed in charge of his son. The supplies with which this store was plentifully stocked were conveyed from Nassau to Swaneytown and St. Marks by a sloop of Arbuthnot's ownership.

In view of the above discovery, General Jackson was satisfied that the Spanish commander was friendly to the hostiles and he, therefore, demanded possession of the fort. Protesting innocence of the charge, the commander asked for time, but when General Jackson made preparations to assault the fort it was

surrendered without resistance and the commander and his troops were sent to Pensacola.

On April 9, the American troops started for Swaneytown and reaching there on the 16th engaged the inhabitants in a skirmish in which eleven Indians and three negroes were killed. Many others were drowned in swimming the river in a futile effort to escape. It was during this skirmish that Robert C. Ambrister, an ex-lieutenant in the British service, was captured. Ambrister had broken into Arbuthnot's store at Swaneytown, furnished the Indians and negroes with ammunition and had attempted to lead his well equipped force in opposition to the American troops.

On the 26th, Jackson returned to St. Marks and convened a court-martial to try Arbuthnot and Ambrister. General Gaines presided over the court which was composed of fourteen officers.⁴ On April 27, Arbuthnot was found guilty of having incited the Creeks to war against the United States and of aiding the enemy. He was sentenced to be hung. Ambrister plead guilty to having led a force of Indians and negroes with the purpose of attacking American troops. He was sentenced to be shot. Both sentences were executed the following day.

Jackson now prepared to return home. On May 5, he wrote from Fort Gadsden to the Secretary of War, saying "I shall leave strong garrisons at Fort St. Marks, at Fort Gadsden, at Fort Scott, and at Pensacola if it shall be necessary to possess it." Learning that some of the hostiles had fled to Pensacola, he turned aside from his course to investigate the rumour. The Spanish commander met him with a message, the defiant language of which determined

⁴ The proceedings of the court-martial with the testimony in full is given in Waldo's *Memoir of Jackson*, Hartford, Conn., 1818.

Jackson to take possession of the city. Upon his arrival the commander and his troops fled to Fort Barrancas. On May 25, an artillery duel commenced, and on the 27th the fort was surrendered, whereupon the Spanish commander and his troops were sent to Havana. General King was placed in charge of the civil and military activities of the city of Pensacola, Captain Gadsden was appointed as collector of customs, and United States laws were put in force.⁵

On June 2, Jackson wrote the War Department giving a final report of his military operations in Florida and added, as a conclusion; "As long as a cordon of military posts is maintained along the Gulf of Mexico, America has nothing to fear from foreigners or hostile Indians. Indeed, Sir, to attempt to fortify or protect an imaginary line or to suppose that the frontier can be secured by a cordon of military posts is visionary in the extreme if the Floridas remain open to the enemy. The immutable principles of self defense justified the occupation of Florida and the same principles warrant the American government in holding it until such time as Spain can guarantee, by maintaining an adequate force, the preservation of her authority in the country."

Jackson's acts produced amazement in the United States and anger in Great Britain and Spain. The British press demanded that the execution of two of Great Britain's subjects be avenged ; however, when the British Secretary received a full report of the testimony recorded during the court-martial, he declared that the conduct of the two condemned was unjustifiable and that no action by the British government was deemed necessary.⁶ A parliamentary inquiry followed, but the ministry sustained the Secretary and no action was taken.

⁵ *Niles Register*, July 11, 1818, p. 344.

⁶ Parton's *Life of Jackson*, Vol. II, p. 486.

On January 24, 1817, the Spanish king pronounced himself in favor of ceding Florida to the United States, but when Jackson's actions were reported to him, all negotiations were immediately broken off. The Court of Madrid addressed a communication to President Monroe asking if he were responsible for the violation of Spanish sovereignty and, if not, requesting him to punish the offending person, or persons, without delay. An indemnity to be paid to Spain in compensation for the loss of her citizens was also requested. Secretary of State Adams replied in a vigorous letter, condemning Spain for failure to restrain her Indian inhabitants and, in turn, requesting payment for the cost, to the United States, of the war.⁷

President Monroe wrote Jackson on July 19, saying, "Should we hold these posts it is impossible to calculate all the consequences. It is not improbable that war would immediately follow." He referred to Jackson's letter of June 2, saying that there ought to be some changes made therein which would lay the blame more distinctly upon the Spanish officers, adding, "If you authorize the Secretary or myself to correct these passages it will be done with care." On August 19, General Jackson replied, making no mention of any corrections and stating that he had followed the instructions given to General Gaines and himself and denying that he had acted on his own responsibility, adding fearlessly, however, "Allow me to repeat that responsibility is not feared by me if the general good requires its assumption."⁸

The President replied on October 20: "The best course to be pursued seems to me for you to write a letter to the Department in which you will state that

⁷ See *John Quincy Adams and Florida* in this number.

⁸ *Correspondence between Andrew Jackson and John C. Calhoun*, Washington, 1831, p. 52.

a difference of opinion exists relative to the extent of your powers." Further correspondence followed, but Jackson would not admit that he had exceeded his orders.

The administration was in a quandary and the course of General Jackson was considered in a cabinet meeting. It was reported that the questions to be decided were as follows: First—May Pensacola be retained, risking all consequences at home and abroad? Second—Shall the captured posts be returned and General Jackson be put on trial for a breach of orders and unofficerlike conduct? Third—Shall the posts be surrendered and the acts of General Jackson be disavowed, at the same time approving his motives? Answer to the first question: No, it would be an act of war. To the second: It does not appear that General Jackson violated his instructions nor will it be proved that his conduct was unofficerlike. To the third: Yes, and require the Spanish government to fulfill their treaty obligations.⁹

In 1831, twelve years subsequent to this cabinet meeting, when Jackson was President and Calhoun, Vice-President, Jackson heard that Calhoun, who had been Secretary of War in Monroe's cabinet, had been in favor of a vote of censure. This knowledge aroused Jackson's ire and a number of letters passed between the two, Jackson's short and bitter, Calhoun's long and evasive?¹⁰ They were never again friends. In all probability, this quarrel had its effect upon South Carolina which threatened to secede during Jackson's second term.

Jackson had ordered Gaines to seize St. Augustine if any of the hostiles were harbored therein, but the

⁹ *Niles Register*. Vol. XIV, p. 416.

¹⁰ Correspondence. Note 8, ante.

President countermanded this order and the captured posts were restored to Spain.¹¹ Appeased, Spain again took up the matter of ceding Florida, and on October 24, 1818, the *New York Gazette* contained the following announcement: "We have it from authority which we deem next to official that our differences with the Court of Madrid have been settled, that the Floridas are ours and that our Government is to pay the Spanish claims."

On November 17, with President Monroe's annual message to Congress, all letters and documents were turned over to that body and ordered to be printed. The Military Committee, to whom was referred such portions of the message as concerned the acts of General Jackson, made a divided report January 11, 1819. By a majority of one, the following resolution was presented: "Resolved, that the House of Representatives disapproves of the proceedings in the trial and execution of Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert C. Ambrister." The minority report opposed the resolution and stated "that General Jackson, his officers and his men, are entitled to the thanks of the country."

This resolution launched one of the most vigorous debates in the history of the nation. Thirty-two members of the House, in fiery eloquence, voiced their opinions. The verbatim report of the speeches fills six hundred and fifty closely printed pages of the *Annals of Congress* (15th Congress, Second Session).¹² The vote in the Committee of the Whole for adopting the resolution was as follows: Ayes 54, Noes 90. On February 8th, when the Committee of the Whole was discharged, the official report was sustained by a vote of 108 to 62. Congressman Cobb of Georgia, the state Jackson had delivered from savage

¹¹ *Niles Register*. Vol. XVI, p. 55.

¹² This was published as *Debate on the Seminole War*, Washington, 1819, p. 591.

warfare, had introduced the following resolution :
“Resolved, that the late seizure of the Spanish posts of Pensacola and Fort Barrancas was contrary to the constitution of the United States.” The vote, taken on February 8, was Ayes 70, Noes 100.

Thus was General Jackson vindicated in the House. In the Senate he was not so fortunate. On February 24, a committee to which the matter had been referred moved a vote of censure. Congress adjourned on March 4 and the resolution never came to vote, but the *fact* that General Jackson was made the first governor of the Territory of Florida proves that the administration fully approved his acts.

After many years, weighing our knowledge of the circumstances which provoked these rigorous measures, and viewing with just pride the courageous figure of Andrew Jackson as it stands out in bold relief from the pages of history as a citizen, as a soldier and as President of the United States, perhaps one may be permitted to sit in judgment upon his attempt to seize and hold the Floridas ; if so, the decision must be that in view of the man’s resolute and intrepid character he would not have been true to himself had he acted otherwise.

A. H. PHINNEY .

HENRY PERRINE, PIONEER BOTANIST AND HORTICULTURIST

(In the July issue last, there appeared a hitherto unpublished diary, of Mrs. Hester Perrine Walker, a survivor of the Indian massacre at Indian Key, on August 7, 1840, in which her father, the noted pioneer and botanist, lost his life. This volume of reminiscences, so intensely interesting in its depiction of the daily vicissitudes of pioneer life, graphically climaxed by the tragic occurrence of the massacre, has aroused among its readers a desire for further knowledge of the life-work of this pioneer horticulturist of Florida. Mrs. Sarah R. W. Palmer, of Miami, a grand-daughter of Dr. Perrine, tells of the achievements of Henry Perrine's nine years of experimentation in plant introduction.)

In the archives at Washington are records which show that Dr. Perrine's experiments (How he hated that word "experiment", insisting that the township of land in Florida be granted him for "demonstration" work) were begun nine years before his death and were by no means unfruitful.

In 1835, when Richard Rush, then acting Secretary of State, issued his circular letter to all foreign consuls to gather and transmit to Washington all seeds and plants indigenous to their posts, Dr. Perrine was the only consul who obeyed in spirit and in truth. This awakening of governmental interest in the economic value of plant introduction was the beginning of our great Agricultural Department.

Dr. Perrine has frequently been termed a visionary, yet so little did great men regard him as such, that Richard Rush, when sent to England for renewal efforts to secure the John Smithson Legacy then in Chancery for years, requested Henry Perrine to accompany him, not as an official from Washington, but as an able scientist to convince England that John Smithson's legacy would be ably handled for the pur-

pose and intention of introducing foreign plants and trees. By their intelligent and persuasive presentation of the subject, the litigation was settled and Richard Rush and Henry Perrine returned with the Smithsonian Foundation. If, as a diplomat, Henry Perrine's intelligent representation of this country as Consul to Yucatan was erased from the roll of his achievements; if, as a physician, his valiant fights against the scourge of the dread yellow fever in Campeachy, Yucatan, and in Natchez, Mississippi, were disregarded; if, as a botanist, his awakening of governmental interest in experimental agriculture had not been of permanent productiveness, his fruitful mission to England which resulted in the foundation of the great Smithsonian Institute should entitle him to more recognition than he has received at the hands of historians.

As for his botanical demonstrations, the work in which he was most interested, he was years in advance of other botanists in recognizing the fact that agriculture, and horticulture more especially, should be called aëriculture, so much more do plants and trees rely on the air than on the soil for their sustenance; hence Dr. Perrine's comment about the climate of Florida being of more account than the soil. His well conceived plan was to introduce into Florida the plants he knew nature could so well care for in this God endowed state that his grandchildren's generation would think them wild. As evidence, our so-called "Florida's Wild Lime Belt" is not wild at all, Dr. Perrine having brought the first handful of lime seeds from Yucatan in 1827.

From the seven plants of the *Agave Sisalana*, introduced by Dr. Perrine from Yucatan in 1834 (possibly as early as 1827), three on the grant and four at Cape Florida, sprang the thousands now growing "wild" as far north as Jupiter. The reason for

Dr. Perrine's great interest in the *Agave Sisalana* (not *Agave Rigida*) was the fact that his demonstration proved its fibre superior to all fibers. Our Navy today uses no other, unless unscrupulous manufacturers palm off *Agave Rigida*, henequen, or manilla fibre (*Musa Abaca*, banana plants) on unsuspecting agents. Dr. Perrine demonstrated to the satisfaction of the great Humboldt himself that this *Agave* was a genus unto itself and must have a name, which he gave it from its indigenous port-Sisal, *Agave Sisalana*.

The Arabian coffee now growing "wild" in our woods is attributable to Dr. Perrine's demonstrations; to him, also, is accredited the introduction of quinine into this country for medicinal purposes.

The foregoing recital of successful experimentations is but a brief summary of the life work of Dr. Perrine, a work which bequeathed to posterity a richer heritage. In the present age, when Florida is known far and wide as the "garden spot of America", it is well to pause and pay homage to one who helped to enrich and beautify her soil with the multitudinous growth for which she is famous. His faith in his adopted state was sublime: he gave his life in a demonstration of her productiveness. His prophetic vision of her future greatness is evidenced in the following paragraphs from a letter written October 23, 1834, to the Hon. Louis McLane, Secretary of State, a letter which was the means of securing the first governmental survey of the southern end of the peninsular of Florida.

This unimproved territory will sustain the most productive plants for food, medicine, domestic economy, and the social arts, which grow in air or water, on rocks or trees, in miry marshes or moving sands, in the brightest sun or darkest shades, and yield the greatest amount of the comforts and luxuries of physical life, with the least possible labor, and at the least possible price; moreover, this tropical district is eas-

ily susceptible of great improvement for all forms of vegetation and all classes of population, inasmuch as the same canals which may drain the inundated swamps (the Everglades) of their elevated interior, will irrigate the arid rocks and sands of its lower seacoasts and furnish water carriage and water power to the cultivators of both; its geographical position and political government are superadded motive to divert the emigration of our tropical agriculturists from Texas and Cuba, and the voyages of our invalids from France and Italy to tropical Florida; and, finally, all valuable tropical plants may thence and thus be extended and acclimated throughout our states at least as far as our improved tropical staples of tobacco, cotton, rice, and sugar.

Both the government and people of the United States have, heretofore, considered tropical Florida to be a sickly and sterile territory on account of the swamps of its interior and the sands of its coasts, and hence unworthy of the expense and trouble of surveying, drainage, and sale; but the writer has shown that it enjoys extraordinary climate, by which it becomes at once both healthy and productive in even its rudest natural state; that it possesses a peculiar formation, by which it may speedily acquire all additional advantages of a highly improved condition; and that it is hence, alone, extremely worthy of immediate surveying, drainage and sale, planting and population.

SARAH R. W. PALMER.

NOTES AND COMMENT

To some, the address of John C. McGehee, published in this number of the *QUARTERLY*, will seem radical; but the conditions and circumstances under which it was written (apparently it was prepared with some care), the state of the country, of Florida, and the recent happenings in Madison County to which he refers should be considered. A comparison might be made also with the address (reprinted in the April number last) to the secession convention upon his taking the chair.

Each address may be held to represent in large measure the opinions and state of mind of the leaders of the secession movement in Florida in 1851, and at secession. There is a question whether these beliefs were those of a majority of the people of Florida in 1851; but the actions of the convention-whose members had recently been elected by the people with a general understanding of the momentous question to be decided and a knowledge of the beliefs of their own delegates-make it clear that secession was the will of a large majority in 1861. But it is doubtful that the vote for and against the passage of the ordinance (sixty-two to seven) justly measures that majority, or even that it accurately divides the delegates themselves according to their beliefs in the wisdom of or necessity for secession.

A page from the journal of the convention might be of interest here.

SIXTH DAY ¹

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10TH, 1861

The Convention met pursuant to adjournment - a quorum present.

¹ *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the People of Florida, begun and held at the Capitol in the City of Tallahassee [!], on Thursday, January 3, A.D. 1861.* Tallahassee, 1861, p. 31.

The Rev. Mr. Ellis officiated as Chaplin.

On motion, the reading of the journal of yesterday's proceedings was dispensed with.

Mr. Daniel, from the Committee on Enrolled Bills, *made the following report:*

The Committee on Enrolled Bills beg leave to report as correctly enrolled the following:

Resolution on Federal Relations.

Respectfully submitted,

J. M. DANIEL, CHAIRMAN.

Which was received and adopted.

Mr. Davis moved a call of the Convention;

Which was agreed to.

Every member was found to ~~be~~ present.

The following Ordinance of Secession, being the special order of the day was taken up, viz:

ORDINANCE OF SECESSION

We, the People of the State of Florida, in Convention assembled, do solemnly ordain, publish and declare,

That the State of Florida hereby withdraws herself from the Confederacy of States existing under the name of the United States of America, and from the existing government of said States; and that all political connection between her and the government of said States ought to be and the same is hereby totally annulled and said Union of States dissolved and the State of Florida is hereby declared a sovereign and independent Nation; and that all ordinances heretofore adopted, in so far as they create or recognize said Union, are rescinded, and all laws or parts of laws in force in this State, in so far as they recognize or assent to said Union, be and they are hereby repealed.

Upon the question of its passage, the yeas and nays being called for by Messrs. Dawkins and Finegan, the vote was:

Yeas—Mr. President [John C. McGehee], Messrs. Alderman [S. S., of Jackson], Allison [A. K., of Gadsden], Anderson [J. Patton, of Jefferson], Baker of Calhoun [Simmons J.], Barrington [E. P., of Madison, Taylor and Lafayette], Beard [John, of Leon], Bethel [Winer, of Monroe and Dade], Chandler [James H., of Volusia], Collier [Joseph A., of Jackson], Coon [Isaac S., of New River County], Cooper [James G., of Nassau], Daniel [J. M., of Duval], Davis [William G. M., of Nassau], Dawkins [J. B., of Alachua], Devall [James O., of Putnam], Dilworth [William S., of Jefferson], Finegan [Joseph, of Nassau], Folsom [Lewis A., of Hamilton], Gary [S. M. G.,

of Marion], Gettis [James, of 20th Sen. Dist.], Glazier [Ekekiel, of Manatee], Golden [R. R., of Holmes], Helvenston [George, of Levy], Henry [Thomas Y., of Gadsden], Hunter [Green H., of Columbia and Sevannee], Irwin. [Freeman B., of Washington], Kirksey [James, of Leon], Ladd [Daniel, of Wakulla], Lamar [Thompson B., of Jefferson], Lamb [John J., of 13th Sen. Dist.], Lea of Madison [A. J.], Leigh of Sumter [David G.], Lewis [David, of Wakulla], Love [E. C., of Gadsden], McGahagin [W., of Marion], McLean [Daniel D., of 4th Sen. Dist.], McIntosh [McQueen, of 5th Sen. Dist.], McNealey [Adam, of Jackson], Mays [Rhydon G., of 17th Sen. Dist.], Morton [Jackson, of Santa Rosa], Newmans [James A., of Columbia and Sevannee], Nicholson [A. William, of Escambia], Owens [James B., of Marion], Palmer [Thomas M., of Jefferson], Parkhill [G. W., of Leon], Pelot [John C., of Alachua], Pinckney [William, of Monroe and Dade], Sanderson [John P., 16th Sen. Dist.], Saxon [Benjamin W., of Hernando], Sever [W. H., of Madison, Taylor and Lafayette], Spencer [S. W., of Franklin], Simpson [E. E., of Santa Rosa], Solana [Matthew, of St. Johns], Stephens [Sam'l B., 7th Sen. Dist.], Thomas [Joseph, of Hamilton], Tift [Asa F., Monroe and Dade], Turman [Simon, of Hillsborough], Ward [G. T., of Leon], Wright of Escambia [Benj. D.], Wright of Columbia [A. J. T.], and Yates [William B., of Brevard], - 62.

Nays-Messrs. Baker of Jackson [James L. G.], Gregory [W. S., of Liberty], Hendricks (T. J., of Clay), McCaskill [A. L., of Walton], Morrison [Jno., of Walton], Rutland [Isaac N., 19th Sen. Dist.], Woodruff [William W., of Orange] - 7.

The ordinance was declared adopted at 22 minutes past twelve o'clock.

The Society's historical collection has been enriched by the gift from Mrs. Annie Averette, of St. Augustine, of a copy of the last proclamation of Governor Jose Coppinger, the last Spanish governor of East Florida (broadside, 7 1/2" x 13"), dated *San Agustin de la Florida 7 de Julio 1821*. This broadside is a choice piece outside of its historical interest, for imprints of the Spanish colonial period in Florida are exceedingly rare and doubtless this was the last issued. It might well be that this copy is the only one which has survived and it is probably unique in

other respects. This proclamation to the inhabitants of East Florida will be published in an early number.

Mrs. Averette is a granddaughter of Bernardo Segui, a name often met with in the history of St. Augustine during the first half of the last century.

The Society wishes to secure a number of copies of the **QUARTERLY**, the issue of July, 1924, and would be glad to pay seventy-five cents each for them. We have recently given files of our periodical to many of the public libraries of the State. Until the stock is exhausted we should be pleased to donate a file to any public library in Florida which may be interested. These files are complete with the exception of the issue mentioned above. Hence, any member who is not preserving a file may render a service by selling or giving that issue to the Society. Sets have been sold to many of the larger libraries outside the State; **so** the **QUARTERLY** is now on file in a number of 'the public and university libraries of the *country*.

The annual Irving Bacheller essay contest in Florida history will be held at Rollins College, Winter Park, on February 17 next. Students of any accredited high school in Florida may enter. Four prizes are given by Mr. Bacheller and **THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**. Professor A. J. Hanna, of Rollins College, will be pleased to send a list of subjects and other details to those who may be interested. Members of the Society are asked to urge their own high schools to enter the contest.

Since the list of new members was published in the July issue last, the following have become members of the Society:

Contributing Member

Mrs. Sarah R. W. Palmer Miami

Members

Dame, H. J.	Fort Pierce
Kean, Jefferson Randolph	Washington, D. C.
Bancroft Library, University of California	Berkeley, California
Kemper, Charles G.	Coral Gables, Miami
The Library of Columbia University	New York, N. Y.
Martens, Eva E.	Vero Beach
Daytona Public Library	Daytona
MacIntyre, W. Irwin	Thomasville, Ga.
Owen, Ruth Bryan	Coral Gables, Miami
Palmer, Perrine	Dania
Patterson, C. S.	Inverness
John H. Cross	Pensacola
George D. Cross	Bernardsville, N. J.
Thomas P. Howes	Lake Wales

Donations,

From C. Seton Fleming,
Map of the battlefield of Olustee.
From Mrs. Nicholas Ware Eppes,
Portrait of Governor John Branch.
From Mrs. Annie Averette,
Proclamation of Governor Coppinger, July
7, 1821.