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PIONEER FLORIDA *

by T. FREDERICK DAVIS

INDIAN KEY AND WRECKING, 1833.

Indian Key, one of the upper keys off its southeast coast, crept into the history of Florida during the Seminole war when on August 7, 1840, it was attacked by Indians who killed the noted horticulturist and botanist Dr. Henry Perrine, resident of the island since December 1838. This event has been well covered by historical writers, but little is known of the situation at Indian Key prior to that time.

An interesting account of conditions at Indian Key was published by the Charleston Mercury in 1833. The writer seems to have been a keen observer and it is believed that what he wrote is a fair picture. The account follows in his own words.

Indian Key is a place of rendezvous for Wreckers, while engaged in their vocation. Here they procure their supplies of provisions, stores, &c. They are stationed at various places of lookout along the coast. Indian Key, however, possessing as it does, a good harbor, and being in a central situation, is much resorted to, several vessels making it their headquarters. These get under weigh every morning about 3 or 4 o'clock, run out to the reef, and cruise up and down all day, in search of vessels which may have gone ashore in the night. They

*NOTE-This is the first of a series of brief articles on happenings and conditions in the Florida of territorial days and early statehood. As the source in each case is contemporaneous material, the reader may in a measure feel that he is carried back to those times. Mr. Davis, whose knowledge of the period was already extensive, has recently made exhaustive research into two of the most important sources: the Florida newspapers of the period, and *Niles' Register*, which doubtless have never before been thoroughly combed for Florida historical material.-Ed.

return towards night, and anchor near the shore. Indian Key is not over eight or ten acres in extent. It contains twenty, or thirty small houses, and one large building. The large building is used as a kind of hotel, and is well provided and furnished for the accommodation of transient persons. This establishment has in connection a billiard table, nine pin alley, &c. The Wreckers amuse themselves, when ashore, in playing these various games. The Island itself is nothing but rock ; but, by great labor, a quantity of earth has been collected and a fine garden made. Cocoa nuts, limes, bananas, and other West India fruits, are successfully cultivated. It is, upon the whole, a delightful residence, reminding me forcibly of the lines of Moore-

> "Oh had we some bright little Isle of our own,
> In a blue summer ocean far off and alone."

It is inhabited by the families of the Wreckers and Turtlers, and contains 30 or 40 inhabitants. The waters in the neighborhood abound with the finest fish in the world. I apprehend that many nefarious transactions are effected here. There is an individual resident here, who is entirely engaged in the wrecking business. He keeps a large store, which is well stocked with assorted goods, such as may be required by the Wreckers & others.

There are many poor persons, and some of them not noted for honesty, settled on the Florida Keys, who are compelled to deal with this man. He, by allowing them credit and indulgence in his store, gains an ascendency which he turns to some account. These people are his agents, or spies, who give him the earliest intelligence of wrecks, in whatsoever part of the reef they may occur. It is always understood that, in the event of their procuring a wreck, they are to receive a share. When occasion

requires they are brought in as *disinterested* witnesses to prove a meritorious claim for salvage. Circumstances which have come to my notice, induce me to think that, in some cases, they have, while engaged as pilots, materially aided in getting vessels ashore [*i. e.*, beaching them].

I am aware of instances where vessels have been wrecked, when boats have been started to convey the intelligence 30 or 40 miles, other wrecking vessels being passed by in the mean while, which were much nearer the wreck. The notions which these people entertain of morals, may be judged of by this single fact. That they will leave a vessel on the reef and go 40, 50, or 60 miles, to give intelligence to this man passing perhaps in the meantime several wrecking vessels, whose assistance could be procured much earlier. The captains of these vessels., should they board the boat, will be deceived by some tale of parties on board: that they are going for provisions or something else. In the meantime, in all probability, a valuable cargo is endangered: and what is still more censurable, the lives of 20 or 30 individuals left entirely at the mercy of the winds, waves, and rocks. On receiving the intelligence of the wreck the vessels will not immediately get under way and run down to her assistance.

From apprehension that the other wreckers may discover their object and join in pursuit of the game, they frequently wait until night before they start -when the captains and crews of other vessels lying at Indian Key, being ashore engaged at some amusement, they push off and reach the wreck sometimes before morning, and frequently not until late in the day. Many hours and sometimes even several days elapse before relief is afforded to the wrecked vessel. I would by no means convey the idea, that all of the wreckers are concerned in this traffic, nor

would I insinuate against the honesty of all. It is a very hard matter for men to be honest wreckers; yet, hard as it is, I have seen some that were honest and even liberal. This kind of management has a tendency, however, to take business from the hands of those who deal fairly, and to offer them the alternative of coming into similar arrangements or of starving. I propose, at some future day, to publish a complete account of wrecks and wrecking. In doing so I feel that I shall be performing a solemn duty. I have seen the management of many wrecks, and know how things have been conducted. Although 'a mere looker on in Venice', at least so far as wrecking was concerned, I have not neglected the opportunity of collecting such information as I thought likely to be beneficial to society. Where the wrecking business is fairly conducted, those who pursue it, so far from being censured, are entitled to great credit. There is nothing in the business itself discreditable. Vast amounts of property have been saved by the Florida Wreckers, and many lives, which otherwise would have been lost. It will, therefore, be my object to commend when they are entitled to praise, and where they deserve it, to censure.

We do not know whether the writer of the foregoing ever published the account he referred to; but he has preserved in this article a good picture of the wildcat phase of the wrecking business. There was another class of wreckers, as he mentioned, and of them we get a glance from a letter written from Key West to the New York *Enquirer* in 1827:

"This place [Key West] exhibits a constant scene of business; vessels are continuously passing. A

number of vessels of different denominations are brought in here by the wreckers, in a state of distress. I was taught to believe that this class of men were an unprincipled set of beings, who foraged on the misfortunes of others by plunder and depredation. On the contrary, I find them to be decent men of good common sense. Their usual custom is, when they fall in with a vessel in distress, to bargain with the unfortunate master of the vessel, who has strayed from his course and has been stranded, to pilot him off the reef or shoals for a certain sum. Is this course of conduct more reprehensible than that of our Atlantic pilots? In fact, they are indispensably necessary, for there are a number of lives as well as a vast deal of property saved which would otherwise be swallowed up in the ocean."

Thus we get a first-hand view of both sides of a business that thrived for a generation from Indian Key to Key West. Though an attempt was made to regulate it, by the establishment of a Court of Admiralty at Key West in 1828, which reputable wreckers advocated and for the inauguration of which they were partly responsible, the business continued in much the old way for many years thereafter. The establishment of lighthouses and the issuance of more accurate charts tended to reduce the number of navigational wrecks; then steam navigation appeared, with its better chance of maneuver. Gradually, from one cause and another, the business of wrecking declined until it finally died as a specific occupation.

PRIVATEERING IN FLORIDA WATERS AND NORTHWARDS IN THE REVOLUTION

by WILBUR H. SIEBERT

With the outbreak of the Revolution East Florida, remaining loyal to the British crown, was cut off from intercourse and trade with the rebellious colonies to the north and was victimized by privateers. The province could no longer import its food supplies from its neighbors, and cargoes of munitions, ordnance stores, and domestic goods from England were subject to capture at sea. By the same method St. Augustine sought to avenge and reimburse herself for her losses.

She was suddenly awakened to a privateering hazard on August 7, 1775, by the audacious feat of the South Carolina sloop-of-war *Commerce,* Clement Lempriere master, in boarding the brigantine Betsy, Captain Alvara Lofthouse, as she lay at anchor off the bar. The provincial vessel had come out two days before and carried in shore four brass field-pieces and two hundred ninety-three barrels of gunpowder. News of the Betsy's expected arrival from England with her valuable cargo, had reached Henry Laurens, president of the council of safety at Charleston, who thereupon ordered Lempriere to waylay her and take off what gunpowder and other warlike stores he could lay hands on. He came alongside of the *Betsy* on the seventh,, boarded her with twenty-five of his men carrying muskets fitted with bayonets or supplied with swords and pistols; he set guards over her captain and crew, had her hatches lifted, and shifted to his sloop one hundred and eleven barrels of the king's powder and about four hundred pounds weight belonging to Robert Payne, a merchant of St. Augustine. Ten unarmed soldiers from the town were on the Betsy

as helpers and were constrained to assist the crew of the *Commerce*, for which they were paid ten guineas. Before returning to their own vessel the high-handed visitors spiked the guns of Captain Lofthouse, and dropped on his deck their order from Henry Laurens and a draft on a Charleston merchant for 1,000 sterling, signed by Lempriere, in pretended payment for the powder. [1]

When Governor Tonyn was informed of this "villany," or "piracy" as he called it, he ordered out the provincial vessel, which took on an officer and thirty privates and eight pieces of small ordnance. Its start was thus so delayed that it did not reach the bar at Savannah until the day after the Commerce had crossed it and gone up the inland passage toward Beaufort, whence she had sailed. The council of safety at Charleston acted defensively by sending fifteen grenadiers and fifteen artillerymen towards St. Augustine by water and a company of provincials to Beaufort.

On complaint of Captain Lofthouse against the raiders, Governor Tonyn issued a proclamation on August 21 stating the facts and offering a reward of 200 sterling for the apprehension and prosecution of the officers and crew of the Commerce. He also promised the king's pardon to any of her seamen who would testify against their fellows. [2]

Soon after this boarding episode it was reported that two armed schooners were cruising off the Florida coast. Tory refugees were now resorting to the province in increasing numbers and the food supply was beginning to run low, therefore the governor took the risk of sending open boats into southern Georgia for supplies of rice and corn. He hoped to establish this route of "private trade"

1. *American Archives*, 4th Ser., Vol. III, 180, 703, 834.
2. *Ibid.*, 705.

for provisions because the Florida planters were cultivating "more valuable produce," namely indigo and naval stores. [3]

The schooner *St. John* was supposed to be stationed on the Florida coast at this time, and the sloop *Savage* was on duty at the island of New Providence. Actually both of these vessels anchored at the island, "out of the way of action, in perfect quiet," instead of rendering needed assistance in Florida seas. The *St. John* had been at St. Augustine only once, which was before the Commerce-Betsy affair. Already Tonyn had received intelligence that armed cruisers were out from South Carolina to seize merchant ships bound in with ordnance stores for the garrison and powder for the merchants. His idea was that at their appearance the *St. John* should go out to protect them until the wind permitted them to enter the harbor. However, Lieutenant Grant, commander of the *St. John*, had answered the summons of Governor Wright, of Georgia, who was in a desperate situation politically. Tonyn also had information that the warship Prosper of ten guns was being equipped in South Carolina to cruise under the command of Lempriere. In fact, it was offered to him only to be declined, and then handed over to his former mate, Captain Simon Tufts. The report was that the *Prosper* would take its station off the mouth of St. Marys river in order to intercept such vessels as were steering for St. Augustine. Tonyn feared to send his provincial vessel up to Charleston for the Florida mail lest it be captured by the rebel cruisers. These items he communicated in a letter of September 14, 1775, to Admiral Graves, at Boston. He closed with the remark that he should heartily

3. *Ibid.,* 704.

rejoice to have the Florida coast "cleared of such petty, insignificant cruisers" which were nevertheless "able to do great mischief to defenceless merchant ships." [4]

At that time or soon after, captains Doran and Wallace were at St. Augustine with their vessels, for which, according to Captain Mulcaster, they had no employment. Wallace was contemplating a voyage to the West Indies. They had recently sounded the water over the bars of St. Marys and Nassau rivers. They declared that St. Marys had a better depth than Charleston and that Nassau's was as good as St. Augustine's. Mulcaster's sounding at the mouth of St. Johns showed a depth of nine feet at low water. [5]

On October 1, 1775, the man-of-war schooner *St. Lawrence* arrived off the bar of St. Augustine, with Lieutenant Graves in command. The pilots went out and were taken on board. The wind freshened and the schooner stood off and on for the rest of the day and night. The next day she sailed in without touching the bar. Her draft was nine feet, but the tide was at three-quarters flood. The sounding here two months before had shown a depth of seven feet at low water. The tide ran five feet, giving twelve at high water. Governor Tonyn promptly wrote to Admiral Graves thanking him for this mark of his attention to the royal service in Florida, to which she would be of great use. [6] All the towns-people were thankful that St. Augustine was to be the station of the *St. Lawrence.* Captain Mulcaster wrote to General James Grant, former governor of the province, that she would be "infinitely necessary here, for neither provisions, cor-

4. *American. Archives,* 706; Vol. IV, 63, 64.
5. *Ibid.,* 836; Vol. IV, 333.
6. *Ibid.,* 316, 317; Vol. IV, 329.

respondence, or anything whatever is to be obtained at this place without such assistance." Both Mulcaster and his fellow-officers knew from a reliable source that East Florida was indebted to Grant for this addition to its small flotilla at the capital, namely: a decked schooner of about fourteen tons, the province's launch of sixteen oars, a stout, open boat, and Mulcaster's own decked boat, which was always available for public use. Mulcaster referred to an armed schooner at St. Marys as effectively stopping the inland passage by water and suggested that another at the St. Johns would prevent the enemy's passing that river. Of course, the civil and military officers in St. Augustine heard with uneasiness that the Carolinians had fitted out three armed vessels, besides the Prosper, to cruise off their coast and in Florida waters. [7]

Late in September 1775, Captain Lofthouse had laden his brigantine Betsy with lumber at St. Marys and was expected off the bar of St. Augustine in a few days, before sailing for England. [8]

Lieutenant governor John Moultrie wrote to Grant his hearty thanks for the "essential service" he had rendered his former government by sending the *St. Lawrence.* He told that Georgia and South Carolina had done their utmost to starve the Floridians who had been alarmed at first by their neighbors' threats. Moultrie reproved his fellow-planters for expecting to get their subsistence from outsiders when they could grow their own food. He practiced what he preached and, at the time of writing, had a surplus of eight hundred bushels of corn at his Bella Vista plantation ; he also had a fine crop of rice garnered at his Mosquito place and a second growth of it nearly ripe. Almost every planter

7. *Ibid.,* Vol. IV, 330, 331.
8. *Ibid.,* Vol. IV, 329.

was raising his own provisions, and many of them had a great deal to spare. [9]

About mid-July 1776 while Mr. John Berwick was helping to defend Charleston, South Carolina, against a British force, an armed vessel, supposed to be commanded by Captain Osborne and commissioned by Governor Tonyn, landed some of its crew at Berwick's plantation. They compelled the wife of the overseer to lead them to the huts where the most valuable slaves lived and carried off eight of them. This loss and the consequent impairment of Mr. Berwick's crop, he estimated at 7,000 in currency.

Somewhat over two months later Mr. Berwick stated his case in a petition to the South Carolina assembly and asked to be allowed to indemnify himself by seizing property within the state belonging to the Honorable John Moultrie, lieutenant governor of East Florida, and to John Stuart, Esq., the late superintendent of Indian Affairs in the Southern District, or to other owners of Carolina property who lived south of St. Marys river. [10]

The petition was at once referred to a committee of the assembly which promptly concluded that many other citizens would probably suffer losses of property through enemy depredations, and in order to indemnify them all under a general rule a law should be enacted for the purpose of creating a fund out of the estates of absentees from the state who were known to be inimical to the liberties of America. Such estates would thus be kept from alienation, embezzlement, or diminution. The assembly agreed to this report. [11]

At the end of July 1776, when General Charles

9. *Ibid.*, 336.
10. *Am. Archives*, Fifth Ser., Vol. III, 23.
11. *Ibid.*, 29.

Lee was at Savannah arranging for an expedition against East Florida, the committee of safety told Lee that one of the benefits of such an enterprise would be in stopping the attacks upon the Georgia coast by the Florida privateers. [12] This suggests that Governor Tonyn had been issuing letters of marque and reprisal to navigators of armed sloops and schooners who hoped to bring in prizes. We know that he issued one of these letters to Captain George Osborne in August 1776, and another to Lieutenant John Mowbray, commander of the sloop *Rebecca* of ten guns in the following month. [13] It may have been about this time that Captain Adam Bachop of St. Augustine was commissioned to go privateering. He was mentioned at the end of December 1777, by Joseph Clay, a leading Whig merchant of Savannah, as being in command of a large sloop of fourteen guns and likely to prey upon the coast and trade of Georgia. [14]

Late in the summer of 1776 there was an armed schooner guarding St. Marys river, which was supplemented by a very few poorly manned outposts. Settlers fled down to the St. Johns river on account of the constant alarms of the northern border. To restore confidence, the tender *Otter,* Captain Squires, and an armed shallop were sent up there with a reinforcement of East Florida Rangers, Indians, and regulars. These vessels evidently returned. In view of the news of Lee's expedition brought by the royal ship *Raven*, Captain Stanhope, in September, Governor Tonyn felt safer with the *Otter* lying off the bar. Although the River St. Johns was protected by the sloop *Rebecca* and the

12. W. H. Siebert, *Loyalists in East Florida, 1774-1785,* I, 42.
13. *Ibid.,* 43.
14. *Letters of Joseph Clay* (1776-1793), pp. 70-71.

St. John, the sloop *Tuncastle* was sent to join them. [15]

On the morning of October 4, 1776, the ship-of-war *Defence*, out of Annapolis, commanded by Captain George Cooke, seized a sloop from St. Augustine and bound to Liverpool. She had only a little indigo on board, and a large packet of papers belonging to the sloop. Her two passengers informed Captain Cooke that the British sloop-of-war *Otter* and her tender, the schooner *Kinderhook*, and three small schooners of four and six guns were stationed off St. Augustine, while off of Cockspur, on the coast of Georgia, were the *Sphywx* of twenty 9-pounders, the *Raven* of sixteen 6-pounders, and the *Cherokee* of six 4-pounders. The captured sloop was placed under a prize-master and sent into Annapolis. [16]

In the opening days of February 1777, Robert Morris, vice-president of the Marine Committee of the United Colonies, revealed his plan to try to neutralize privateering in Southern waters by an incursion from the North, which, he hoped, might give British warships something else to do than operating along the coast against the little American fleet. He chose John Paul Jones as the bold sea-rover to execute his project. Jones was first to take from the almost defenseless island of St. Kitts, in the West Indies, its cannon, stores, and merchandise. He was next to defeat the two or three sloops-of-war at Pensacola and loot the town of its artillery and munitions of war. He would then send a brigantine and sloop to the mouth of the Mississippi to seize British cargoes of indigo, rice, tobacco, and pelts. His own cruisers would circumnavigate Florida and terrorize St. Augustine.

15. Siebert, *op. cit.*, 38, 43, 44.
16. *Am. Archives*, Fifth Ser., Vol. II, 863.

His force of marines was to be ample enough for his several tasks on shore, and he would refit at Savannah or Charleston. [17] But this ambitious plan was not even attempted.

However, another wide-ranging mariner from the North made a capture in February 1777, at the expense of St. Augustine. This was Captain Samuel Champlain, Jr., of New London, Connecticut, who utilized his armed sloop *American Revenue* in capturing a double-deck brig filled with king's stores and dry goods from London for St. Augustine. The prize was taken into a North Carolina port for condemnation. The Florida capital suffered a similar but smaller loss five months later, when the brig *Judith*, with a cargo of dry goods, was seized by the cruiser *Notre Dame* and carried into a South Carolina port. [18]

In April and May 1777, Colonel Samuel Elbert led an expedition from Sunbury, Georgia, to St. Marys river, Commodore Bowen being in charge of the "fleet." We are interested here only in the naval arrangements in northern Florida disclosed by the expedition. From the northern part of Jekyl island one of Elbert's officers saw two sailing vessels standing off and on. A woman from Amelia island came on board the *Congress* galley and told that the local people had been advised of the approach of the Georgians, whom they were preparing to receive. She reported that cannon had been placed on Hesters (St. Johns) Bluff, at the base of which was a large ship with guns. Several days later Daniel McGirth, a leader of Indians and East Florida Rangers, assured the invaders that their

17. C. O. Paullin, *The Navy of the American Revolution*, 173, 174-176.
18. Louis F. Middlebrook, *Maritime Connecticut during the American Revolution*, II, 51, 429.

strength, both by land and water, was known to the Floridians, and that a frigate and several other armed vessels were lying in wait for them at the mouth of the St. Johns. In Nassau sound two enemy vessels were seen. The little fleet from Georgia was now so short of meat that Elbert sent an urgent note to Commodore Bowen for the opinions of the galley and transport captains as to the time it would take to pass through Amelia narrows. The answers must have been discouraging, and the inland passage was now guarded by two armed vessels. By the end of May the fleet and army were on the way back to Sunbury. [19]

About a year later there was much cruising off the Florida coast by several privateers out of St. Augustine. Success in capturing prizes fell to the *Daphne, Galatea,* and *Perseus.* French merchant ships which they took, had on board seventeen military officers and two hundred soldiers who were kept from joining the Americans by being held as prisoners of war. At about the same time East Florida lost a brigantine, the ship *Hinchenbrook,* and the sloop *Rebecca* at Frederica to three galleys from Georgia, which carried three hundred of Colonel Elbert's men and two fieldpieces. [20]

In June 1778, Florida privateers were cruising off Charleston harbor, where the Connecticut ship *Defence,* Captain Samuel Smedley, was just completing its quarantine for smallpox. Smedley was appealed to by the governor to go in quest of the privateers. Mariners of the town helped him to fit out, and the French armed sloop *Volant (Flyer),* Captain Daniel, volunteered to accompany him. They crossed the bar and before night fell in with

19. Siebert, *op. cit.,* 45, 46; *Collections,* Georgia Historical Society, Vol. V, Pt. 2, pp. 25-27.
20. Siebert, *op. cit.* 56.

three enemy sloops. They captured two of them, namely: *Tonyn's Revenge* of seventy-two men and twelve carriage guns and swivels, commanded by Captain Adam Bachop ; the other was the *Ranger* of thirty-five men and eight guns, commanded by Captain George Osborne. The third privateer escaped in the heavy weather and the dark, while Smedley was securing the prisoners. Next day the captors took their prizes into port and libeled them in the court of admiralty. A few weeks later the captured vessels were sold for more than 80,000 in Carolina currency. Of this amount the *Volant* was awarded one-third, and the balance was divided between Captain Smedley and the state of South Carolina. [21]

The southernmost part of the Florida coast to be invaded by a privateer was Mosquito (now Ponce de Leon) inlet. That was on August 30, 1778, when the intruder's crew did considerable damage on shore and abducted thirty of Dr. Andrew Turnbull's negroes. The vessel was pursued by the tender *Otter,* which was wrecked by a gale on Cape Canaveral. At this period Colonel James Mark Prevost sought to strengthen the coast defense of the province by appealing to General Clinton to send down men-of-war, fieldpieces, arms, and ammunition. [22] The convexity of the coast of southern Georgia and northern Florida afforded a favorable cruising ground to privateers trailing richly laden vessels converging to St. Augustine. Privateers were still frequenting that stretch of water in the spring of 1779. About the first of May three of them did team work in seizing the *Jason* and its convoy. [23]

In the following August the sloop *Revenge* of

21. Middlebrook, *op. cit.,* 311, 312. 315-316.
22. Siebert, *op. cit.,* 60.
23. *Ibid.,* 76.

eighty men and twelve guns, commanded by Captain Nathan Post of Saybrook, Connecticut, captured the privateer sloop *Mosquito* of fourteen guns from St. Augustine. Her late master was Neil McNeil. [24]

The *Rosebud* privateer from St. Augustine arrived at New York on November 19, 1779, with letters from Governor Tryon and Lieutenant Colonel Fraser, containing news of the blockade of Savannah by D'Estaing's fleet and a rebel force which had begun early in the preceding September. [25]

Our incidents of privateering in which East Florida was involved on one side or the other, stop at this point, but there must have been more of them.

So far as West Florida was concerned Middlebrook gives but one instance. It occurred in July 1781, when the brigantine *Favorite* of seventy-five men and fourteen guns, Captain Jonathan Buddington, carried into New London, Connecticut, some prisoners he had taken from a transport that had part of the Pensacola garrison on board. [26]

24. Middlebrook, *op. cit.* 268.
25. *Collections*, New York Historical Society, 1883, p. 189.
26. Middlebrook, *op. cit.* 87.

ALLEGED SPANISH GRANTS IN BRITISH WEST FLORIDA

by CLINTON N. HOWARD

One of the lesser but puzzling questions in British policy following the Seven Years' War has always been why Lord Bute's ministry gave up the strategic citadel of Havana in return for what the opponents of the treaty in England called the barren swamp of Florida.[1] There are a number of reasonably logical explanations for the action, but thus far no certainty has emerged from the study of the maze of diplomatic correspondence which preceded the Treaty of Paris; and there still remains unproven the very important explanation that the action was more the result of internal politics in Britain than of consideration of British foreign policy.[2] In terms of control of the Caribbean, Jamaica may have been a possible counterpoise to Cuba ; Florida undoubtedly could have been made into a base for the control of the straits through which the Spanish fleets passed on their way home-these are possible lines of reasoning.

With the cession of the peninsula of Florida naturally went the panhandle which extended westward to include the settlement of Pensacola. This small western territory could be of little use to Spain if it were isolated from the peninsula. Even had the administrators of Spain been more sea-minded than they were, an isolated Pensacola could have been but little use to them, for it lacked the natural fortifications which Gibraltar or Malta or Singapore possess. The town was built upon a

1. *The North Briton,* No. 45. This publication, edited by John Wilkes, was a focal point of opposition to Lord Bute's ministry.
2. For an account of the Havana question see the writer's forthcoming study of the British siege and capture of that city.

sand bar, immediately surrounded by a swamp, and beyond were miles of sterile pine barrens. [3] To the British, however, the town was useful primarily because it gave them a port on the Gulf of Mexico which could be protected by the superior British seapower; and it was proximate to Georgia and the other British colonies. It was the cession of the Ohio country and the eastern slope of the Mississippi valley which forced upon Britain the novel problems of land settlement which were more pertinent to a land power. Furthermore this western part of Florida could be joined to the French grant east of the Mississippi and give the British a frontage which covered almost half of the Gulf of Mexico. The concept of the Caribbean as "an American Mediterranean" is by no means a false analogy.

The Spanish seem to have left little mark of their settlement in this western part of Florida which was incorporated in the British province of West Florida. For one thing the Spanish settlement there had been comparatively recent. The push had been made westward during the early part of the eighteenth century to meet the growth of the expanding French settlements along the Gulf coast. Pensacola and its neighbor, Mobile, were outpost towns of rival empires. Compared to Havana, Pensacola was of but little importance in the Spanish scheme of things, and its passing from the dominion of the Spanish crown probably provoked little notice in the mother country. The settlement had been little more than a border post to guard, as has been said, against French encroachments from New Or-

3. All of the material discussed in this article, unless otherwise indicated, is drawn from the Minutes of the Council of West Florida or other documents in the colony's archives. These are now deposited in the Public Record Office of Great Britain, Colonial Office Division, Class Five. Copies of most of these are in the Library of Congress, Manuscript Division.

leans and Mobile;. and more recently British incursions from Georgia, the Carolinas and Virginia. At one time it had been used by the Spanish government as a penal station for exiles from New Spain, and it appears that some sort of a penal settlement had been maintained on Santa Rosa island on the south side of the harbor. The order from the court of Spain for the surrender of the territory directed the governor of Pensacola to "... . deliver up the Province of Florida . . . . and the exile place of Ft. Miguel de Pensacola" to the British occupying forces. [4]

A study of the early history of Pensacola, as it is probably recorded in the Spanish archives, would doubtless repay the labor. [5] There is little of record in the British archives of what Pensacola and its people were like before the British occupation, but such references as there are tease the interest of the student. There seems to have been no mission at Pensacola, at least at the time of the British occupation, and, possibly because of this fact, little seems to have been accomplished in Europeanizing the Indians. A conclusion derived from a study of the record during the British period of control seems to be that the major Indian tribes of the south and the Gulf coast were virtually unacquainted with Christianity. At least this is true in the sense that Christianity was not practiced by any considerable number of them. This is, of course, not to deny that they had been subject to missionary endeavors by the Spaniards, French, and British. The Jesuits, Franciscans, and Society for the Propagation of

4. Wilbur H. Siebert, "How the Spanish Evacuated Pensacola in 1763", *Florida Historical Quarterly,* XI, 48-57. A contemporaneous map of the bay with the site of San Miguel de Panzacola is reproduced in XX, 165 (October 1941).
5. See, however, Richard L. Campbell, "Historical Sketches of Colonial Florida", Cleveland, 1892.

the Gospel in Foreign Parts, Wesleyan and other missionaries all attempted to strike into the heart of the southern country. One small group of Indians, the Yamasee, seem, however, to have been devotedly Catholic and loyal friends of the Spaniards. Their number is given as one hundred and two persons. [6] Possibly this count enumerated only the braves and omitted the women and children. These Yamasee Indians are an interesting group ;[7] the romance of their career as a nation rivals that of the Natchez Indians, who were immortalized by Chateaubriand. In earlier times they had apparently lived in the Carolinas, and the English had made frequent and bloody slave raids upon them. One writer, William Gilmore Sims, has incorporated this material in a historical novel, bearing their name.

Apparently because of those raids and because of the encroaching white settlement, the Yamasee moved south into the peninsula of Florida and on to the Gulf coast. They seem to have lost their unity as a nation and to have broken into several groups. One of these groups appears to have been this one which the British record finding at Pensacola. They sold their lands, or so it was claimed, and retired with the Spanish troops to New Spain when the British troops occupied Pensacola. [8] Presumably, their descendants live in Mexico today.

A petition presented to the British governor and Council on the twenty-fourth of January 1765, in the name of a group of English investors who were said to be forming a company, stated that this land

6. Siebert, *loc. cit.*
7. Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, Ed. Frederick Webb Hodge, Smithsonian Institution, "Bureau of American Ethnology", Bulletin 30, Washington, Part II, 1910, 986-987.
8. Siebert, *loc. cit.*

had been sold to representatives of the English group by the Indians for "the said Sum of One Hundred Thousand Mexican Pesos of eight Ryals, and they thereupon making use of the faculty allowed them by the King of Spain Did by These of Sale . . . ." transfer the land. This transaction appears to have taken place before the arrival of the British troops of occupation. The petitioners stated that the sale had been confirmed by the Spanish governor. There appears to have been some confusion or chicanery in the transaction. Among the eminent investors in the English group, in whose name the purchase was made, were said to have been their royal highnesses Edward, Duke of York, and William, Duke of Cumberland ; the Right Honorable John, Earl of Bute; William, Lord of Mansfield; the Honorable Augustus Keppel, John Kinnion Esquire, Marriot Arbuthnot Esquire, Samuel Touchet Esquire, John Lindsay Esquire, Thomas Horsefall and James Noble. Noble's petition to the Council stated that the said lands were purchased on account of the said John Kinnion, Samuel Touchet and of him, the said James Noble, Thomas Horsefall and Joseph Page and his partner; that one-half was to be the property of John Kinnion, and the other half the property of James Noble, Thomas Horsefall and Joseph Page; and that their royal highnesses and the other honorable personages were not interested in such purchases. The governor and Council disallowed the claim on the grounds that the "Plan exhibited did not carry the slightest representation of the actual face of the country which was pretended to be Described; That the Several Claims of Mr. James Noble were not sufficiently supported either by external or Internal Evidence. . . .". This decision, however, left the

party, or parties, at liberty to sustain their claim in England.

The emphasis of British policy in the new province was upon crown ownership of the land. In this case of the Yamasee Indians the governor and Council agreed that the sale was invalid, and as for the confirmation of the sale by the Spanish governor, that official had no authority to do any such thing. The Council, on the grounds that Spanish titles were invalid, disallowed practically all of the pretended Spanish sales around Pensacola to British land speculators. Most of the speculators declined to sustain their claims, but availed themselves of an adjustment of grace, granted them by the Council. In all such cases it was promised that they would be granted such of their lands as did not interfere with the laying out of the colony. Of the Yamasee sale Governor Johnston later wrote "Every means by proffers and threats have been used to induce me to be of opinion that Mr. James Noble actually purchased an Estate of . . . . Nine naked Indians, for Edward Duke of York, William Duke of Cumberland & that for the said premises, to the said Naked Indians, he had paid 120,000 Mexican Dollars, of the money of Mr. Kinnion, Touchet and others; but even this is not the most absurd Article in his Transactions."

In spite, however, of the opinion of the Council, it might be well that the description of the Yamasee purchase be published for its intrinsic interest. The lands were described as running "from the Entrance of the River Escambe, from the East, side and N : W : point called the Mehipasaqua, 15 leagues up the Course of the River to the Entrance of the River called Escape from which 15 Leagues North to the village named Nichilisuilgase from which 20

Leagues N: E : to the Village named Tatisalague, from where the Course is nearest E: N: E to the River called Suitujatse, by the Spaniards Rio Colerado, to the Village called Pachan Pacha & from thence the course of the River Downward to the Village known by the Name of Fachcatipacha & from thence by the Course of the River to the Hay of Sancta Rosa coasting to the Right Hand to the point called Chuliguide & from there coasting along to the point in the Bay of Panzacola called point Benado from there coasting along the Bay Side to the point of Saint Antonio de Punta Raza & from thence coasting along to the place of their Departure Mchapasacua which is the Lands that is expressed to belong to their Ancestors together with the Mountains Plains & other appurtenances possessed by them."

Of the other inhabitants of Pensacola and the country thereabout under Spanish rule, we know practically nothing. The story of the Spanish evacuation of Pensacola has been told by W. H. Siebert.[9] He has drawn upon materials from the archives of the Indies. He records Prevost's departure from Havana as July the tenth ; that he was supplied with three thousand livres; that he arrived on August fifth. There appear to be discrepancies between these records and the British records. The number of men under Prevost's command is recorded as three hundred and fifty. The frigate *"Richmond"* convoyed the fleet of four transports. The number of inhabitants under Spanish rule is given as seven hundred seventy-two, including one hundred and two Catholic Indians who left with the Spaniards. These are the Yamasee. Prevost recorded the population as one thousand

9. See Note 4.

two hundred, but Professor Siebert surmises that he was including his own forces in this count. All of the Spanish subjects left Pensacola upon its occupation by the British, save one, who was detained for a short time as custodian of the cargo of a wrecked fluke.

One of the most interesting records of the former Spanish occupation appears in the Minutes of the provincial Council of West Florida under the date January 24th, 1765. On that day 16 petitions were presented to the Council asking confirmation of title in purchases made from departing Spaniards. An elaboration of detail in this matter is well worth the labor. John Kinnion, Esquire, of London, petitioned for an estate called Sanado Mayor which was said to be at the mouth of the river Escambe. The estate was described as being one league square, and the house and outhouses and possibly the entire estate, were said to be in the present possession of Messrs. Bruce and Mease. [10] Zachary Bayly, a merchant of Jamaica, petitioned for an estate called Punta de Silio or, alternatively, Arroyo de La Garzona. William Bond, a merchant of London, petitioned for an estate called Jamas Vicjos. Thomas Hossfall (Thomas Horsefall) petitioned for an estate called Punta del Ingles. The Honorable Augustus Keppel (later Viscount Keppel) of England petitioned for an estate called Nostra Senora de La Luz. Marriott Arbuthnot, Esquire, of Weymouth, England, petitioned for an estate called St. Antonio. Samuel Touchet, a merchant of London, petitioned for an estate called El Estero de La Luz. William Michie of Charleston, South Carolina, pe-

10. From the description of Pensacola on the arrival of the British in 1763 as but a stockade and village of thatched huts, it is apparent that these estates were little more than a medium for acquiring land for speculation. Ed.

titioned for an estate called St. Joseph. George Rogers, Esquire, of London, and John Peddar, Esquire, of Lancaster, England, petitioned for an estate called Chicasa de St. Martin. Sir John Lindsay of England petitioned for an estate called El Paso de Arroyo Ingles. William Lance, Esquire, and James Noble of Sandwich in Kent, England, petitioned for an estate called El Estero de la Vighia. Barnard Noble petitioned for an estate called Sta. Clara. George Stothart of Stockton, in the county of Durham, England, together with two other merchants, Richard Maitland and John Elliot, of London, petitioned for an estate called Santiago el Grande. Messrs. Bolton and Horslar (or Horselor) petitioned for an estate called Pensacola le Vieja. Colonel Augustine Prevost petitioned for an estate, which was unnamed in the record of the Council, and also in company with some others, he petitioned for a second estate, which was likewise unnamed in the records of the Council.

All of these petitions were refused by the governor and Council. The Council was, however, not as arbitrary in its actions as it may appear to have been at a first glance. The undoubted object of the Council was to prevent the buying up of huge tracts of land from the departing Spaniards, for purposes of speculation. To have allowed large tracts of land in the province to fall into the hands of speculators would, perhaps, have been to deter settlement in the province. One of the aims most consistently followed by the provincial government and the imperial government seems to have been the settlement of small farmers and artisans in the province as speedily as possible. For this and other reasons the Council on instructions from the home government held that titles granted under Spanish or French jurisdiction did not automatically become

valid under British dominion. At Mobile, Major Farmar, commandant of the occupying forces, issued a proclamation requiring that all sales or transfers of land be registered with him. [11] One of the principle objections of the Council to these sales of Spanish land, aside from the fact that they clearly regarded all of the transactions as an altogether unjustified speculative venture, was that these sales had taken place before the arrival of the British troops of occupation. After the establishment of the civil government in November of 1764 the governor and Council clearly tried to make what adjustments they could for the convenience of individuals. They insisted, however, on the crown ownership of the land on the policy that grants of land made under Spanish and French jurisdictions were not *ipso facto* valid under British dominion, that new British titles must be granted, and that any adjustment that might be made was made by the grace of the Council and not by the right of the individual.

The policy of the home and the provincial government seems to have been to put the quit-rent system upon a working and paying basis. They seem, wherever possible, to have avoided making large grants, apparently on the theory that the quit-rent system would operate more effectively and the welfare of the colony would be better served by the encouragement of numerous settlers of the small farmer and artisan class, who held their lands directly of the crown. It was the industrial revolution in Britain and the introduction of cotton growing on a large scale in response to demand from

11. "The Military Papers of Major Robert Farmar," *P. R. O., W. O.*, I : 49; Mississippi Provincial Archives, English Dominion, I, Ed. Dunbar Rowland, Nashville, 1911, 61. This volume also contains some of the documents cited above from the Colonial Office.

the factories in the north of England which produced almost a century later an agricultural revolution in the land of former West Florida, and it produced the plantation system and slavery on a large scale. From the government's point of view then it would be undesirable to create a class of large land owners who would be, in most cases, absentees. To have followed the latter policy would have been to create in the new colony a quasi-feudal class which might well have impeded the smooth working of the royal colonial system. Indeed, the whole policy of the imperial government appears to have been directed toward the destruction of any charters and immunities which remained in the colonies after the Seven Years' War. To have set up a class of large landholders in the new colonies would have been to reproduce on the frontier of North America the economic conditions which existed in Ireland ; and aside from considerations of government policy, it is extremely doubtful whether such a system could have been imposed even by force upon the often highly individualistic frontier population.

To return, however, to the Spaniards who sold these properties in West Florida and sailed with the Spanish troops for Vera Cruz, the student who is working in the English archives finds himself curious concerning them. Taking the estimate of seven hundred seventy-two persons who sailed from Pensacola for Vera Cruz and subtracting one hundred two Yamasee Indians, there are left six hundred seventy persons, presumably Spaniards, who were the inhabitants of the province under Spanish rule. Colonel Prevost, the English commandant of Pensacola, recorded the number as one thousand two hundred, but as had been said, Professor Siebert surmises that Prevost was including his own

British forces in this count. There is, however, the possibility that Prevost was including not the English forces but the Spanish garrison force.

Without the aid of the Spanish archives little more can be done here than to surmise. There is obviously the possibility that there were three classes in the Spanish colony: the "inhabitants", the garrison troop and prisoners in the penal colony. The more it is thought about, the more it becomes apparent that it would be interesting to know more about the life in this Spanish outpost. Who were the "inhabitants" of the colony? Were they prisoners who had served their time? Who were the owners of these plantations which were sold to the English speculators? Were they former- prisoners, political exiles and officers of the garrison?

Altogether one concludes as he looks through the scanty references to the Spanish colony in the English records, that one has here another fragment of the story of the Spanish borderland, which is as fascinating in its story of those who lived and worked and fought there as is that of all frontier countries.

THE ANTILLEAN PROBLEM IN FLORIDA ARCHEOLOGY

by JOHN W. GRIFFIN

Almost since the beginning of archeological studies in Florida the problem of aboriginal relations between Florida and the Antilles has concerned investigators. Many similarities, both archeological and ethnological, between the two areas have been noted. It shall be the purpose of this paper to discuss several aspects of the problem.

There seems to be little doubt that the islands of the Antillean chain were populated from the south -from mainland South America. At the time of discovery by Columbus the Island Arawak inhabited, roughly, the Greater Antilles, while the warlike Island Carib inhabited, roughly, the Lesser Antilles. The Carib represented a later push from the mainland, which at the time of discovery was still expanding at the expense of the Arawak.

These are the basic facts, but how are we to explain the similarities of aboriginal culture in the Antilles and the southeastern United States? (The problem of relations between Florida and the Antilles is merely a part of the larger problem of Antillean-Southeastern relations, and will be so considered in this paper.) The most obvious explanation is that there was cultural contact between the areas, and this has frequently been claimed. That some contact did occur we cannot deny, but that it was of the magnitude necessary to explain all of the similarities is not so certain.

Pottery was one of the traits first used to show Antillean-Southeastern relations, but subsequent research has thrown some interesting light on the sub-

ject. Goggin (1939 and 1940) [1] has recently given us several papers on the ceramics of the southern part of Florida. He finds two pottery wares: one is generally unornamented but occasionally has an incised feathered design, the other is either plain surfaced or ornamented with the check stamp so familiar in Florida. In the area closest to the Antilles we do not find examples of the more or less elaborate Antillean wares. On the other hand the check stamp treatment is found nowhere in the Antilles. This type of ornamentation, which begins very early in the Southeast and continues into historic times, is particularly prevalent in Florida. In two shell heaps in Volusia county the present author found that approximately sixty-five percent of the sherds were check-stamped; the remainder were plain. The absence of the technique of cheek stamped ornamentation in the Antilles forms a rather impressive bit of negative evidence, whatever negative evidence may be worth.

Approaching the problem now from the Antillean side, we find that *Rouse* (1940) has formulated four pottery types for the Antilles. While he feels that there are similarities between two of these types and wares in the Southeast he admits that the major drawback lies in the fact that examples of these types, as defined, are not forthcoming from the Southeast. Thus we see no truly Antillean types in the Southeast.

Looking at the pottery from both sides of the Straits of Florida we find nothing more than vague similarities upon which to claim relationship. Such data cannot be considered as conclusive of cultural contact.

Are these vague similarities due, then, to inde-

1. Dates in parentheses refer to publications listed in the selected bibliography at the end of this paper.

pendent invention in the two regions? Not necessarily. If we assume that culture spread from a Middle American, or even South American, source around the Caribbean sea and the Gulf of Mexico we may find an alternative hypothesis to that of direct relations between the Antilles and the Southeast. In this case the cultures of both areas might be basically derived from the same region, but have reached the areas by widely divergent routes. This is fundamentally what Stirling says :

> Similarities which exist seem more likely to be due to an early common Middle American impulse which spread in opposite directions around the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean, the extremities of which are to be found in Florida and the Greater Antilles. [2]

Certain other evidences tend to support this thesis. Urn burial has frequently been adduced as a trait indicative of relationship between the Antilles and the Southeast. Even were we to break up the Southeast by states the distribution would seem continuous throughout the Southeast, Florida, the Antilles, and northeastern South America. Significantly enough however, so far as I am aware, no urn burials have ever been found in the long tongue of peninsular Florida, and thus the continuous distribution on paper is more apparent than real. Again taking the circum-Caribbean view, we find urn burial in Middle America. Future research may disclose a continuous circum-Caribbean distribution, with the exception of peninsular Florida.

The blowgun appears both in the Southeast and in northern South America, and is frequently assumed to be indicative of relationship. It is speci-

2. Stirling, 1936, p. 357.

fically denied for the Antilles (Krieger, 1935), and is confined to the extreme northwest of Florida. It stretches in a continuous distribution from the Amazon-Orinoco region, through Central America, and up to about twenty-three degrees in Mexico. Thus while there is a discontinuity of perhaps 700 miles between the Southeastern and Mexican areas in which it is found, there is a discontinuity of roughly 2400 miles between the Southeast and South America, via the Antilles. Here we may have another trait which spread in both directions, but penetrated neither the Antilles nor peninsular Florida.

Head deformation has an essentially circum-Caribbean distribution, and this may be significant, although it would be more satisfactory if the specific type of head deformation was studied. In Florida, the Southeast, and Middle America the head deformation was of the fronto-occipital type, whereas in the Antilles only the forehead was flattened.

Although maize was present in the Antilles, it was subsidiary to manioc in the economy. The presence of maize in the islands does not prove northern affiliations for it could have as readily been derived from South America, from whence the manioc was most certainly derived. The absence of manioc in Florida is more significant than the presence of maize in the Antilles. We might have expected this crop to spread northward had Antillean contacts been of any intensity. It is true that the techniques used by the extinct Calusa in the preparation of coonti root are similar to techniques used in the preparation of manioc. If this is evidence of Antillean contact its impact did not reach very far north.

Assuming the path of diffusion which has been outlined, many other traits which have caused comment in some quarters absolve themselves readily.

Labrets, fish-poisoning, the dugout canoe, human sacrifice, clans and matrilineal descent, burial mounds, and others fall nicely into a circum-Caribbean theory. That this theory is correct will not be claimed here; it is merely a suggested alternative to the more immediately discernable thesis of direct contact between the Antilles and the Southeast via Florida. A highly detailed study is necessary before any such far-reaching conclusions can be drawn.

A comparative study of the type deemed necessary must consider more than the sheer geographical distribution of traits. The time element must be kept constantly in mind. Insofar as possible cultures must be considered in their entirety in their time, space, and functional contexts. This is to say that while the comparisons of isolated traits torn out of context may be suggestive they can never be conclusive.

Neither must we forget the possibility of independent invention. No one today is such an arch diffusionist as to deny outright the possibility of similar objects and institutions being developed without actual cultural contact. Of course the more simple the invention, and the greater the similarity of need and environment, the stronger is the possibility of an invention being twice made. Such simple traits as the shell bowl, the palisaded village, shell beads, thatched houses, and the like need not necessarily indicate cultural connections.

Thus, to my mind, Stone (1939) could have adduced stronger evidences of Middle American-Floridian relations than shell celts, conch shell trumpets, and busycon perversa shell cups. Although shell celts are replaced by those of stone farther north, conch shell trumpets and busycon perversa shell cups are found practically throughout the Mississippi valley. Shell trumpets occur in

the Southwest. I see no need for explaining the presence of these types in Florida by means of contacts with Middle America via the Antilles, as Stone does. Even should we admit that there is a relationship between these Floridian objects and those from Central America, which I do not believe is necessarily true, we might still derive them from around the Gulf rather than over it by way of the islands.

It is the opinion of the present author that the burden of proof still rests with those who would advocate close and significant relationships between the aboriginal cultures of the Antilles and those of Florida.

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AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF SAMUEL ARNOLD, A LINCOLN CONSPIRATOR *

by ALBERT C. MANUCY

Here is exciting reading. Charles F. Heartman, well-known to bibliophiles, has in this volume edited and published two little-known manuscripts which throw additional light on the conspiracy to assassinate President Lincoln, the trial of the conspirators, and prison life at Florida's historic Fort Jefferson as well.

One of the manuscripts is Samuel Arnold's statement of his part in the conspiracy, written at Fort Jefferson in December 1867. The other, written in 1904, is an "autobiographical defense", detailing Arnold's relations with Booth and the other conspirators and his prison experiences and observations.

After the murder of the President by John Wilkes Booth in Ford's Theatre, April 15, 1865, Sam Arnold and seven other alleged confederates of Booth were arrested. Four of them were hanged. Arnold, Dr. Samuel A. Mudd and Michael O'Laughlin were committed to life imprisonment at hard labor. The eighth man, Edward Spangler, received a six-year labor term. The penitentiary selected to hold these "state prisoners" was the already notorious fort in the Dry Tortugas islands off the gulf coast of Florida. There O'Laughlin died in a yellow fever epidemic; Mudd and Arnold were pardoned after four years of imprisonment; Spangler served

*Samuel Bland Arnold, *Defense and Prison Experiences of a Lincoln Conspirator. Statements and Autobiographical Notes.* (The Book Farm. Hattiesburg, Mississippi, 1943). Heartman's Historical Series, Number 66. 133pp. $12.00.

Charles F. Heartman, editor and publisher of the volume, is a member of the Florida Historical Society and has presented a copy of the volume to our library.

his term, then lived out the rest of his life on Dr. Mudd's Maryland farm.

Arnold had been one of Booth's earliest recruits. It is not generally known that the conspiracy at first involved, not the assassination of the President, but his abduction and removal to Richmond as a hostage in order to force an exchange of prisoners of war. Confederate military ranks were seriously depleted, and Booth easily convinced Arnold, who had fought for the Confederacy, that patriotism was inherent in the venture. But before the original plans could be carried out, the situation changed. Another plan developed in Booth's fertile mind. The President would be kidnapped from Ford's Theatre. To Arnold, this was a harebrained scheme. He wrote Booth urging him to abandon it. That fateful letter fell into the hands of the authorities and proved to be one of the strongest bits of evidence against Sam Arnold.

Arnold claimed that his association with the conspiracy ended several weeks before the crime was committed, and that he had no knowledge whatsoever of the plan to kill Lincoln. The claim is fairly well supported by the evidence set forth. His further insistence that imprisonment was unjust, however, is open to question. In a like situation today, an admitted conspirator against established government would probably receive a similarly heavy penalty.

The book is written in remarkable detail. It begins with a diatribe on the membership and qualifications of the military body before whom the conspirators were arraigned-a military commission which in Arnold's typical phraseology becomes a "Military Inquisition". There is a short summary of Arnold's early life. Then, after his fateful meeting with Booth in Baltimore, September 1864,

Arnold sets down the story of his activities until the final release from prison in 1869. He pens an illuminating description of the accomplished Booth, and his account of the meeting of seven conspirators -when Booth threatened to shoot him unless he fell in with the plan to abduct the President-is dramatic material, which, incidentally, might well have been used to advantage by a crusading Carrie Nation.

The nearest Arnold came to action was on March 17, 1865. The President was to attend a theatrical at a soldiers' hospital on 7th Street. Several of the conspirators, including Arnold, made their way to the affair, professedly with the object of seizing Lincoln. Lincoln was not there.

When the assassination occurred, Arnold was working at his clerk's profession in a store at Old Point Comfort. There on April 17 he was arrested. From here on Arnold's story is testimony of remarkable treatment as a federal prisoner. Hands and feet heavily ironed, his face often covered with a hood that had the "same effect upon the head and brain as if it had been encased in a poultice", taken from one loathsome prison cell to another, Arnold lived in an agony of uncertainty during the trial. Finally on July 24, 1865, along with Mudd, O'Laughlin and Spangler, he reached Fort Jefferson-"a haven of rest, altho in a Government Bastille".

There, "beneath the burning rays of a tropical sun", the prisoners were allowed freedom of the small island whereon was erected "a huge and massive structure hexagon shaped, of brick and mortar in an unfinished condition . . . On the outer side of the fort there exists a wide and deep moat, to prevent the surging of the sea from washing against the main structure itself, intended at the same time as a defense against assaulting columns.

It is ocean girt on either side, strongly protected by coral reefs and intricate channels of approach. On our arrival the island was entirely destitute of vegetable matter, with exception of some few bushes of small growth, natural to the soil and about a dozen Cocoa nut trees, which had been planted many years back by the hand of man, beyond this there was naught to gaze upon inside but the white, glittering coral sand which had a very injurious effect upon the eyes, in many cases causing men to become totally blind after dark, a disease known there of frequent occurrance *[sic]* and termed *Moon Blind*. There were upward of six hundred Federal prisoners confined there for various offences, against military rules and laws, who were compelled to labor daily from morn to night upon limited and loathsome subsistence.

"Without exception," Arnold continued, "it was the most horrible place, the eye of man ever rested upon . . . Subsistence issued was horrible in the extreme. Many were suffering dreadfully from scurvy and chronic diarrohea. The bread was disgusting to look upon, being a mixture of flour, bugs, sticks and dirt. Meat whose taint could be traced by its smell from one part of the fort to the other, in fact, rotten and to such an extent that dogs ran from coming in contact with it. No vegetable diet, issued of any description and the coffee which should have been good, as good quality was issued, was made into a slop by those who had charge of the cook house . . ."

Upon their arrival at Tortugas, the commandant had impressed them with the reminder that there was a "dark and gloomy dungeon within the Fort

. . . over whose Entrance* were inscribed these classic words "Whoso Entereth here leaveth all hopes behind." A "dungeon" was soon "fitted out" for Arnold and his companions.

The arrival of the 82 U. S. Colored Infantry was the signal for an attempted escape on the part of Dr. Mudd, who, said Arnold, "afterward informed me, he was fearful his life would be sacrificed under their rule." When Mudd was recaptured, he and his companions were shackled in a dungeon along with Col. George St. Leger Grenfel, an English soldier of fortune who was convicted of conspiracy to liberate Confederate prisoners of war. Even harsher treatment was in store, for the War Department's "Chief Detective", Gen. L. C. Baker, soon got wind of what was said to be a conspiracy to rescue the "State Prisoners" at Tortugas. Arnold was removed from his comparatively easy job as clerk in the office of the provost marshal and for weeks, wrote he, "my person and the others were dragged here and there from morn until night, working in degrading chains, made in every instance that presented itself, to perform the filthiest jobs the Provost Marshal could hunt up." Finally Arnold was made a clerk in the adjutant's office, and there the clanking chains so annoyed the commanding officer that they were struck off.

The worst was yet to come. With the advent of another garrison, "cruelty became the order of the day", and it affected both prisoner and enlisted man. Hardly a day passed but what ten to fifteen of the newer recruits could be seen paying the penalty for their inexperience in Army ways, plodding about

*National Park Service files contain a photograph of this celebrated door. There is a story that on one occasion the self-same legend was imprinted over the mess hall door of the fort. Incidentally, Fort Jefferson contains no dungeons as such, though several rooms can be said to partake of dungeon character.

from morning until night with heavy cannon balls upon their shoulders.

Early in 1866 the quarters of the alleged conspirators were again changed. The "malarious dungeon", always damp, had finally become flooded, so they were removed to a second tier casemate above the fort entrance, overlooking the guardhouse. Here the unfortunates hoped to enjoy the benefits of the cooling sea breezes that swept through the fort, but again they were disappointed. Their quarters were boarded up. They could see nothing but the parade of the fort and a glimpse of the sky above. Evidently, Arnold bitterly recorded, the military "determined . . . that we should become learned in Astronomy . . ." The new quarters leaked so badly that the occupants had to dig deep holes and gutters to drain the water and prevent the flooding of their abode. The walls were "a mass of slime". Arnold said they had "as companions in our misery every insect known to abound on the island, in the shape of mosquitoes, bed-bugs, roaches and scorpions . . . But at least the irons were soon removed for good.

From the vantage of his quarters, Arnold had opportunity to watch treatment of garrison soldier and prisoner alike. Certain commandants and their attending officers he branded as barbarians, "reveling in intoxicating beverages and frequently to such an extent; that they dwelt on earth as in a dream . . . The prisoners and soldiers received the full benefit of their wandering minds. The emaciated prisoner could be seen performing his daily labor weighed down in chains with heavy balls attached. Another for some supposed dereliction of duty, could be seen marching around a ring, under the torrid heat of the sun weighed down by monster cannon balls upon his shoulder. I have seen them fall

within their tracks, unable to perform the inhuman duty exacted, from sheer exhaustion, thence thrust within the dungeon to remain until strength was sufficiently restored to resume their barbourous task .... There was a soldier by name of Wheeler, Company 'M' 5th Arty. who was required to carry a ball for a month both day and night, 2 hours on and 2 hours off, because he altered his pantaloons furnished by the Government, instead of giving them to the tailor to have it done he preferring to do it himself to save the cost of same, he being a poor man and having a family depending upon him. During the first year and a half, the Dry Tortugas was anything but a paradise. There did not pass a day but men could be seen tied up by their thumbs, between the sky and the earth until the joints of their thumbs were nearly pulled from their sockets, some bound in cords and carried to the Gulf Stream and nearly drowned others tied up in the guard house and lashed upon their naked flesh. Many of these cruelties were inflicted because they followed the example set by some of the Officers in charge of them, and dared like them to become intoxicated."

Page after page is devoted to graphic description of the cruelties practiced at Tortugas. Arnold indicts man after man, officer, doctor and noncommissioned officer. To them he assigned the responsibility for "Every kind of cruelty the mind could conceive", and with but few exceptions, condemned them all. Most of the enlisted men, he said, were sympathetic toward the prisoners. But not all. One of the soldiers made himself so obnoxious to a prisoner named James Orr, that Orr attacked him with a pen-knife. As a result of the incident, the commandant promulgated Special Order No. 78: "if a prisoner refuses to obey orders, the sentinel must shoot him and then use his bayonet, at the same

time calling for the guard." It meant that the life of every prisoner was held within the hands of the guard, and it actually brought death for one of the prisoners-a fellow described by Arnold as a "harmless man", but at the time drunk enough to be boisterous and too drunk to obey orders.

Then came the yellow fever epidemic of 1867. One of the first men to die was Dr. Joseph Smith, the post surgeon. Smith was one of the few officers for whom Arnold had words of praise. Into the gap left by the surgeon's death, stepped Dr. Mudd, the prisoner. One of his first acts was to abolish a hospital on distant Sand Key: "Sick patients," wrote Arnold, "seated in a small boat were conveyed over [to Sand Key], confronted by coffins which were piled up in the bow of the boat. This of itself, was sufficient to cause alarm and even to kill the faint hearted . . . With but few exceptions those who were conveyed to Sand Key in the small boat fell victims to the disease and are entombed beneath its sandy soil."

For a while after discontinuance of the Sand Key hospital, things progressed favorably, with no more deaths. But soon after the arrival of Dr. D. W. Whitehurst from Key West, the epidemic became more virulent.

Arnold's account gives additional clarity to the already known facts about that awful summer at Tortugas. "No sooner had the breath left the body, but that it was coffined and hurried over to its last resting place, there being a boat, with a crew detailed as the burrying party, always awaiting in attendance. In many instances coffins were brought into the hospital, and placed along side of the bed to receive the body of some one expected to die, and had to be removed again, the patient still tenaciously clinging to life. . . . The island which before was

more like a place peopled by fiends, than anything else it could be compared with, suddenly became calm quiet and peaceful. Fear stood out in bold releif *[sic]* upon the face of Every human soul. Some attempted to assume the tone of gayiety and indifference . . . We felt from the first, we had been transported to the Dry Tortugas, to fall victims to the many deadly poisons of maleria generating in that climate. Happily we lived through it all and I am permitted to give to the world at large some inkling of the many wrongs, tortures and sufferings inflicted upon us . . ."

The epidemic lasted from August to November. When it was over, the "State Prisoners" found themselves with more freedom than they had ever had theretofore. But not for long. Back to the island as commandant came Maj. C. C. McConnell. Between McConnell and Grenfel, the English prisoner, there was extremely bitter feeling. The commandant and his provost marshal, according to Arnold, "studied out the most cruel measures to adopt, in persecuting prisoners and what the one could not devise, the other would." Grenfel decided that they were determined to kill him "inch by inch", so on the night of March 6, 1868, together with some other prisoners and an enlisted man, he stole a small boat and sailed out into the stormy night. The *escape* was completely successful-but Arnold does not divulge whether Grenfel and his fellows ever reached land.

On March 1, 1869, President Johnson signed Arnold's pardon: "it is apparent that the said Arnold rendered no active assistance whatever to the said Booth and his confederates in the actual execution of said abominable crime; And whereas the pardon of said Arnold is strongly recommended by the City

Council and more than two hundred other citizens of Baltimore and vicinity;

"Now, therefore be it known, that I, Andrew Johnson . . . do hereby grant to the said, Samuel B. Arnold, a full and unconditional pardon. . . ."

"I was at last," wrote Sam Arnold, "a free man."

He left Fort Jefferson on March 29 to meet his father in Key West.

Arnold's manuscripts are published with a minimum of editing. "The first printing of this *Document Humaine,*" writes editor Heartman, "should not be defiled by footnotes, etc. Only a barbarian would do so."

The Arnold accounts can probably be called reasonably reliable. Most of the narrative, Arnold indicated, was compiled from his diary. Furthermore, there are numerous corroborations in other unimpeachable sources. It seems almost unnecessarily obvious, however, to point out that many of the events Arnold recorded were seen through the naturally jaundiced eye of a prisoner-a man inclined to believe that the entire world was against him, and who perhaps saw intended injury in every move by his jailers. And after a lapse of so many years between the imprisonment at Fort Jefferson and the writing of this last version of his experiences, it is likely that certain of his earlier "opinions" crystallized into dogma.

Setting aside those portions of the book which do not relate directly to Florida history, we are confronted with one major question. Is the narrative an accurate portrayal of post-war life at the Florida prison? Arnold has painted a picture of a veritable Devil's Island. Yet he hints that his clerical abilities made him somewhat of a favorite among the officers at the fort, and did, in fact, relieve him from chains when others of his companions remained shackled.

Too, in numerous instances he mentions certain normal conditions and quite human activities. But they are mentioned so casually as to go unperceived by the average reader.

It is difficult to accept the premise that officers at Fort Jefferson spent many of their waking hours devising schemes for tormenting the island inhabitants. Arnold has made many of the military overseers into Machiavellian characters comparable to the sergeant who dogged Mudd's footsteps in the motion picture *The Prisoner of Shark Island*. And the sergeant is a character from Victor Hugo, as fictitious as the "man-eating" sharks which supposedly infested the moat around the fort. All in all, it seems reasonable to conclude that while the accuracy of most incidents in Arnold's narrative can be accepted, as a whole this picture of Tortugas life and customs is distorted. A comparison with other sources such as the letters of Dr. Mudd, the contemporary articles by Dr. J. B. Holder and others will prove the point. *

Nevertheless, Arnold tells a story to which people will listen, even if they shudder at the gruesome details. And because such stories are so seldom recorded in sufficient detail to lend them authenticity, editor Heartman's publication becomes the more valuable.

As an atrocity story, the narrative compares favorably with many current books. The bitterness, the sarcasm and the irony are there. Written in less verbose style, and with less repetition, Sam Arnold might have had a best seller.

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* N. Mudd (ed.), *The life of Dr. Samuel A. Mudd* (N. Y., 1906); J. B. Holder, "The Dry Tortugas", *Harper's Magazine* (July 1868); "Thirty Months at the Dry Tortugas", *The Galaxy Miscellany* [Magazine] (Feb. 1869).

FLORIDA MATERIAL IN THE W. L. CLEMENTS LIBRARY

There has been published a *Guide to the Manuscript Collections in the William L. Clements Library,* compiled by Howard H. Peckham, curator of manuscripts. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1942) 403 p. $5.

The most important source of historical material relating to British East and West Florida is, of course, the Public Record Office in London. Most of the Florida documents there have been copied for the Library of Congress where they are available. Next in importance are the documents in the William L. Clements library of the University of Michigan, which contains the papers of General Sir Henry Clinton (15,000 pieces), General Thomas Gage (12,000), the Earl of Shelburne (11,000), Lord George Germain (2,000), William Knox, under secretary of state for America (650), Sir Jeffery Amherst (700), and Viscount Sydney, colonial secretary, (1,100) ; all of which contain Florida material.

In research for his work on British East Florida, now in press, Dr. Charles L. Mowat made a study of all of these collections; and in an article written for this *Quarterly* (XVIII 46-60 : July 1939) he gave us a brief description of their contents. The present volume contains none of that detail, but its value to the student of Florida's history is that it contains a list of the names of the writers or signers of all of the documents.

There are letters and other documents of course relating to West Florida also, with which Dr. Mowat had no especial concern. These are mostly in the same collections, but there are one or two others. For example there are 461 papers of General Freiherr von Jungkenn, to whom all the comman-

ders of the Hessians and other German troops in the British army in America reported. A regiment of these (Waldecks) was at Pensacola during its seige and capture by Bernardo de Galvez in 1781.

There is a small amount of Florida material other than in these collections. For example, among the papers of Dr. John W. Monette, author of the well-known *History of the Discovery and Settlement of the Mississippi Valley* (which itself contains some Florida material) there is the draft of an essay on *The Indians of Florida 300 Years Ago.* But such odd pieces would be difficult to locate unless the name of the writer were known.

Of almost as great interest as the documents, are the manuscript maps in the same collections, especially those in the Clinton papers. Their high historical value is recognized when it is recalled that the Gage, the Clinton, and the Amherst papers are the files of the commanders-in-chief of the British armies in America, The Clinton maps are listed and described in Randolph G. Adams, *British Headquarters Maps and Sketches* (Ann Arbor 1928).

THE ST. JOHNS

A new volume in the "Rivers of America" series is *The St. Johns, A Parade of Diversities,* by Branch Cabell and A. J. Hanna.

Portions of the narrative are new, authentic, and interesting ; and Floridians who feel that the river is 'an inseparable part of our past, and those with any affection for it, might well wish there were more of that' and less of smart, irrelevant and inconsequential writing, and imaginary and garbled history. Such, often, is the result of collaboration ; but in this case there might be a remedy.

GOVERNOR CHESTER'S BOUNDARY OBSERVATIONS, AND ROBERT FARMAR'S JOURNAL

The *Louisiana Historical Quarterly* includes in its issue of January last "Governor Peter Chester's Observations on the Boundaries of British West Florida" (c. 1775, 7 p.) This is printed from a photostat copy in the Library of Congress of a report by Governor Chester to Lord Dartmouth.

In the following issue (April, 1943) is printed from the same source (Library of Congress Manuscript Division, Florida Papers, Miscellaneous 1535-1821) the important "Journal" of Robert Farmar (15 p.) relating to the seige and capture of Pensacola by Bernardo de Galvez in 1781.

It will be recalled that a translation of Galvea's own "Diary" of these operations was published in the first issue of the same periodical (v. I, no. 1, 1917).

THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY

A scrapbook donated by W. A. Pratt of Lake Worth, begun by his mother in Tallahassee in 1841. Contains poems, obituaries, and newspaper clippings, some on Florida; with a few biographical sketches of Floridians: Call, Downing, Brockenbrough, Broom, Walker, Forward and several others; and a sketch of Manatee, published in 1880.

MS. map of Titusville, 14" x 70" 1881, from a survey of J. F. LeBaron. Donated by A. J. Hanna.

"Defense of a Lincoln Conspirator" by S. B. Arnold. Donated by Charles F. Heartman.

Annual Report of American Historical Association 1936. Vol III contains "Instructions to the British Ministers to the United States, 1791-1812", with various notes on East and West Florida.

Typescript copies donated by Dr. Louise B. Hill through courtesy of Miss Emily Wilson:

Clavreul, "Notes on the Catholic Church in Florida, 1565-1876."
Inventories, assessments, and sales at auction of houses and lots of the king, Florida, 1790.
Will of George J. F. Clarke.

"The Barefoot Mailman" by Theodore Pratt, donated by the author. This is a tale of the mail which was carried by foot along the shore to Miami in the 1880's.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

T. Frederick Davis is the author of *"History* of Jacksonville." His numerous contributions to this *Quarterly* include our special "Ponce de Leon Number."

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