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THEATRICAL ENTERTAINMENT IN EARLY FLORIDA ¹

by WILLIAM G. DODD

Theatrical entertainment in early Florida was greatly facilitated by water transportation. The Florida towns with which this story is concerned were all within easy distance, by sea or river, of cities which had well-established professional theatres. They therefore provided actors in those theatres with favorable opportunities to supplement their regular season by a preceding or subsequent engagement; or, sometimes, to fill up part of an otherwise vacant summer.

The most important theatrical centers in the South were Charleston and New Orleans. As there was no direct connection between dramatic activities in Florida and those in Charleston, we may note simply that the Charleston theatre had its beginnings far back in the eighteenth century; and that, after, 1800, it had a brilliant history which ended only with the coming of war in 1861. ²

On the other hand, the relation of Florida theatricals to the theatre in New Orleans was immediate and continued. This theatre, too, had its period of excellence, not so long as that of its companion in Charleston, but quite as brilliant while it lasted. Its resident companies included, first and last, a large number of excellent stock actors, many of them recruited in the Northern and Eastern theatres. And nearly all the important stars, native or foreign, who appeared elsewhere on the American stage,

1. In preparing this paper, the writer had the invaluable help of Dr. Dorothy Dodd, State Archivist. She read the territorial newspapers and excerpted the pertinent advertisements and comments. She also kept the writer straight on the details of territorial history. Her assistance was indispensable.

2. W. Stanley Hoole, *The Ante-bellum Charleston Theatre* (Tuscaloosa, 1946), pp. 3-64.

filled one or more special engagements in New Orleans. From this city "went out actors and stars to further the establishment of the professional theatre in places which hitherto had known only amateur organizations and 'strolling players.'" ³ And some of these actors and lesser stars found their way into the Florida towns.

Other cities and towns whose theatres contributed to dramatic activities in Florida were Mobile and Montgomery in Alabama, and Columbus and Savannah in Georgia.

The theatrical companies of the period were, in the important essentials, very unlike those of our contemporary professional theatre. In the theatrical organization of today the star is a member, or rather *the* member of the company, and the actors who support him in the specific play under production are engaged only for the "run" of that play. ⁴ This kind of "star system" was unknown in the first half of the nineteenth century. The earlier companies were stock companies; that is, organizations without stars whose members were engaged by the Manager for a specified season to present a repertory of plays. Nightly change of bill was customary, but pieces that were favorites with the public were repeated through the season as often as receipts justified. Stars regularly performed in connection with stock companies; but the word "star" meant a visiting actor who appeared in a limited number of plays chosen by himself, under specific financial arrangements with the Manager.

Salaries of company actors were far from

3. Nellie Smithers, "A History of the English Theatre at New Orleans, 1806-1842," *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, XXVIII (1945), 85.

4. The statement is true, speaking generally. The repertory theatre has never ceased entirely to exist. A new one, The American Repertory Theatre, is announced for the New York season of 1946-47.

princely. But by means of the benefit performance, actors could augment their season's earnings ; or, at any rate, the more important ones could. And the Manager, also, as an actor, availed himself of the privilege of "taking a benefit." If an actor was to have a benefit, it was so stipulated in the season's contract. This usually provided that, after a certain amount of the evening's receipts had been set aside for expenses or overhead, the beneficiary was to receive a portion, customarily fifty percent, of the remainder. A "good" benefit, therefore, meant a well-filled house: in theatrical jargon, "a bumper." As this depended on the popularity of the beneficiary with the public, the benefits usually came near the close of the season.

The typical theatre bill, from New York to New Orleans, comprised a longer mainpiece of some dramatic pretensions and a short afterpiece. The interval between the two was given to the orchestra; but often an "Interlude" was substituted - a song, a dance, a recitation, a brief skit. And sometimes, as *entr' actés* in the mainpiece, songs, dances, or other novelties were given. These early players liked to give their audiences their money's worth. Occasionally, but comparatively seldom, the farce was used as a curtain-raiser, while the mainpiece closed the program.

The mainpiece might be a comedy, a melodrama, or a tragedy; the afterpiece was, almost without exception, a farce. The public of the time had a robust appetite for sensational drama and low comedy, and the actors very generally gave them what they wanted. This taste, however, in no way hindered their keen enjoyment of Shakspearean drama. On the New Orleans stage of the period, for example, Shakspeare was by far the most popular of all the dramatists represented. And of his plays,

the tragedies, especially *Richard III*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth* and *Othello*, were the favorites.⁵

The dramatic performances in early Florida of which we have any knowledge all took place within the period of twenty-five years from 1821 to 1845 inclusive. The places mentioned in the theatrical records of these years as enjoying this entertainment were Pensacola, Apalachicola, Tallahassee, St. Augustine, Tampa Bay and Key West; but the last two are mentioned only incidentally. Occasionally a theatrical company from North Florida visited Key West. But for the most part it was, as was Tampa Bay, a "stopping-off" place for entertainers on their way from New Orleans to the West Indies or to the eastern ports of the United States; or, for those making the trip in the reverse direction with New Orleans as their destination.

This story is concerned in the main, then, with theatrical activities in Pensacola, Apalachicola, Tallahassee and St. Augustine. But passing notice is given to such other entertainments as engaged the interest of dwellers in those towns.

I

Pensacola

In prospecting for places to take his theatrical corps, a manager would be concerned first of all with the outlook for patronage. Pensacola, in 1821, had much to offer in this respect. Early in 1820, the pioneer theatrical manager, N. M. Ludlow, had decided to pursue his profession of actor-manager in this Florida town; but he was later dissuaded from this venture. Ludlow gave as his reason for his first decision the fact that "Pensacola was supposed to be the El Dorado of the United States, a point at which fortunes could be picked up in two or three

5. Smithers, *op cit.*, p. 86.

years. . . . The description that was sent abroad of its grand bay, its unrivalled harbor, and its beautiful site for a city, was imbuing people with the most extravagant notions of its sudden importance."⁶

Conditions in Pensacola in the summer of 1821 bore out Ludlow's statement. The normal population of substantial citizens was swollen to three times its size by the influx from all over the United States of land speculators and gentlemen of fortune, with the usual complement, no doubt, of gamblers and swindlers: all intent on getting in on the big money, some by fair means, some by foul. The population of the town rose to 4000.⁷ Among the transients of that summer were a company of actors headed by the Manager Andrew J. Allen.

The theatre opened the evening of July 17, the day on which the Spanish and American flags were exchanged. This was spoken of as "a happy coincidence,"⁸ as indeed it was. But it is more than likely that it was carefully arranged. Allen, the Manager, with his keen sense of the theatrical would hardly overlook the spectacular value of Pensacola's big day as an opening date.

The new playhouse was given the timely and imposing name of "The Jacksonian Commonwealth Theatre." Aside from the name, we know almost nothing about it. The scale of admission prices indicates that there were Boxes, so-called. But of the capacity of the house, the size and appointments of the stage, we know nothing.

The fact that the proprietor in the summer of

6. N. M. Ludlow, *Dramatic Life as I found It* (St. Louis, 1880), pp. 199-200.

7. *Pensacola Gazette*, December 4, 1824, "Sketches of West Florida, No. VII, Towns." Unsigned article by John Lee Williams.

8. James Parton, *Life of Andrew Jackson* (New York, 1861, 3 vols.), II. 603, quoting a letter from Pensacola in the *National Intelligencer*, August 17, 1821.

1822 was a certain Mr. Cazenave gives a clue to its location. Since 1805, D. Juan Cazenave, along with various partners, had owned and operated a ball-room and place of general entertainment called "The Tivoli." This was located on the south side of Tivoli, now East Zarragossa Street,⁹ on a site opposite the rear of the former Episcopal Church. It is possible, and not at all unlikely, that in 1821, Cazenave fitted up "The Tivoli" for dramatic entertainments and rechristened it with the high-sounding name of The Jacksonian Commonwealth Theatre.

The delay in getting the *Pensacola Floridian* started leaves us without an item of entertainment news for a full month after July 17.¹⁰ But the first issue on August 18 contained two pertinent advertisements. In the first, "Mr. Pepin Manager of the Equestrian Company, recently from Havana" informed the public of Pensacola that the opening performance of his Circus would be given on Wednesday, August 22, when a variety of astonishing feats of horsemanship would be exhibited worthy of their attention.

If Victor Pepin was living up to his past reputation, the advertisement did not overstate the merits of his performance. Every year from 1808 to

9. *Floridian*, August 10, 1822; Proceedings of the Board of Commissioners . . . West Florida, July 17, 1822 to July 24, 1824, p. 47, MS. in Florida Commissioner of Agriculture's office; House Doc. 111, 18th Cong., 2d sess. [120], pp. 164-166.

10. It would be rash to assume, however, that news would be plentiful had the paper started early in the summer. The proprietors of the Pensacola papers never did attach much value to theatre news. Their main interest seems to have been in printing theatre handbills and advertisements, for which, we may guess, they were well paid. As no handbills have been preserved, our knowledge of public entertainments, so far as the papers are concerned, comes from the advertisements, from an occasional brief comment of the Editor, or from "communications" by subscribers.

1813, except 1812, Pepin and Breschard's Circus, and in 1818 and 1819, Pepin's Circus, had been among the most popular summer attractions in New York. Here were exhibited equestrian feats that were truly astonishing and worthy of anybody's attention.

Unless there was another Circus in the vicinity about the same time as Pepin's he must have run into financial difficulties in Pensacola. An advertisement in the *Floridian* of September 8, headed "Circus for Sale," notified the public: "The Circus will be sold Thursday at 10 o'clock, if not previously sold at private sale."

The second advertisement was headed "Theatre" and announced, with its quaint and redundant courtesy: "The Manager is happy in having the honor of informing the public that he will have the pleasure of introducing for their approbation this evening, Mr. Hanna, late of the Orleans and Western Theatres ¹¹ in the character of *Baron Steinfort*, being his first appearance. . . . Tickets to be had at the Theatre, or at Mr. Kenners. Admittance, Box \$1, Pit 75 cents, Children 50 cents."

The company before Hanna joined them had included Messrs. Allen, Legg, Lewis, J. M. Scott, Taylor, John Vaughan, Mrs. Legg, Mrs. Vaughan, and apparently a Mrs. Price. A melancholy note in connection with this personnel is the news item "communicated" to the *Floridian* of September 15 that Mrs. Eliza Vaughan, daughter of Dr. William H. Newberry of Frankfort, Kentucky, and consort of Mr. John Vaughan, "of the Theatre in this

11. Writers on theatrical affairs divided the Northern theatres into two groups; those east of the Allegheny mountains they called the Eastern Theatres; those west, the Western. Most of the latter were situated in the towns and cities of the Ohio river valley, beginning with Pittsburgh. But the St. Louis Theatre was also included in the western group.

place," had died on Wednesday, "the 13th ult.," in the twenty-third year of her age. She left three small children.

After the company went to New Orleans early in November, the *Louisiana Gazette* reported that "the managers were looking for actresses to fill the places recently left vacant by the deaths of Mrs. Price and Mrs. Vaughan, two of their number."¹²

In introducing Hanna August 18, Allen presented as the mainpiece Kotzebue's *The Stranger*¹³ and the farce, *Fortune's Frolic*. The cast of the mainpiece was: *The Stranger* - Scott; *Baron Steinfort* - Hanna; *Count Wintersen* - An Amateur; *Solomon-Taylor*; *Peter* - Allen; *Francis* - Lewis; *Tobias* - not named; *Mrs. Haller* - Mrs. Legg. The full cast calls for a number of other female characters, and in happier days, we may suppose, Mrs. Vaughan and Mrs. Price would have had two of these parts.

The cast for the farce was: *Old Snacks* - Allen; *Robin Roughhead* - Hanna; *Rattle* - Legg; *Banks-Taylor*; *Countryman* - Lewis; *Clown* - Shot (Scott?); *Dolly Duckling* - Mrs. Legg; *Nancy* - "A Young Lady-first appearance on any stage." In theatrical annals first appearances on any stage are frequent. This may have been another Pensacola amateur.

The bill for September 8 was "Shakspeare's admired comedy of *Catherine and Petruchio*"¹⁴ and Mrs. Inchbald's farce *Animal Magnetism*.¹⁵ In the mainpiece Mrs. Legg no doubt played *Catherine* to either Scott's or Hanna's *Petruchio*.

Toward the end of the season, Allen requested

12. Smithers, *op. cit.*, p. 113, quoting the *Louisiana Gazette*, November 6, 1821.

13. This was an English version of Kotzebue's *Misanthropy and Repentance*.

14. This was Garrick's adaptation of Shakspeare's *Taming of the Shrew*.

15. *Floridian*, September 8, 1821.

all those who had any demands against him as Manager of The Jacksonian Commonwealth Theatre to send them in for adjustment, as he was planning to leave for New Orleans for the purpose of opening the St. Philip Street Theatre for the winter.¹⁶

There must have been a number of benefit performances, but we know of only two. The evening of October 9, a benefit was given for "Mr. *alias* Miss Barremore." This mildly jocose appellation leaves us completely in the dark as to who the beneficiary was. The bill for this performance was M. G. Lewis's romantic drama, *The Castle Spectre* and the farce, *The Spoiled Child*. In the drama, *Earl Osmond* was played by Vaughan; *Hassan* by Scott; *Angela*, by Mrs. Legg.

As a part of the company's repertoire must be listed also Dunlap's *Abaellino*, *The Great Bandit* and the farce *The Review* or *The Wags of Windsor*. In these Allen himself played "with great success" the parts *Abaellino* and *Caleb Quotem* respectively.¹⁷

The season closed on October 22 with a benefit for the Band. The Editor of the *Floridian* must have liked music, for he expressed the hope that as "the Musicians receive no other compensation for their long and faithful services" . . . "the lovers of Music will fill the Boxes."¹⁸

In this summer of 1821, Allen and his company gave Pensacola fourteen weeks of "legitimate" drama, or as some writers liked to call it, "rational amusement." And if, as is practically certain, the company followed the usual plan of giving three performances a week, there were in all forty or more entertainments, a number of which certainly were repetitions "by desire" or by necessity.

16. *Ibid.*, October 8, 1821.

17. Sol Smith, *Theatrical Management in the West and South for Thirty Years* (New York, 1868), p. 138.

18. *Floridian*, October 22, 1821.

The company's advertisements give us the merest intimation of the size of the repertory. But they indicate its quality very well. These dramas and farces as, no doubt, were those whose names we do not have, were standard in every theatre in the country and had been received by the public with enthusiasm hundreds of times. That, of course, was the reason they were being given in Pensacola.

The members of the company, too, were typical stock actors. At least two of them were excellent in their kind, and afterward became well known. The best male actor in the group was J. M. Scott. His theatre friends gave him three nick-names: "Big" Scott for his stature of over six feet; "Tragedy" Scott for his skillful acting in "heavy" parts; and Long Tom Coffin, for that rôle in Wallack's play *Paul Jones*, a rôle which Scott created in the New York premiere of the play in 1827, and which brought him fame in the theatre. He spent most of his career in the Western and Southern theatres. But between 1825 and 1830 he was well-known in New York as "an excellent actor who became a mainstay of Chatham Garden and other leading theatres."¹⁹

The Legg who played *Rattle* in the farce August 18, was presumably the husband of Mrs. Legg. But in the fall or late summer of 1822, Mrs. Legg became Mrs. Stone, wife of the actor-playwright John Augustus Stone. From 1822 to 1835, as Mrs. Stone, she played successfully in both comedy and tragedy in the leading New York and Philadelphia theatres. After 1835, as Mrs. Bannister, the wife of another actor-playwright, N. H. Bannister, she continued her career in New Orleans and New York. She was an accomplished and popular actress.

19. George C. D. Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage* (New York, 1927-1945, 14 vols.), III, 160.

In many ways, the most interesting member of the group was the eccentric Manager, Andrew J. Allen. Immediately before coming to Pensacola, his activities in New York theatres had netted him more debts than gains, and his trip to the South was hastened as much by the attentions of his creditors in New York as by the lure of easy money in Pensacola.²⁰ His confreres called him "Dummy" Allen, probably from his physical defects. He was partially deaf and had an adenoidal difficulty which turned his m's and n's into b's and d's. Strange and, one would think, fatal flaws in an actor! But they were not. In his time, he played many parts—mostly secondary ones. He was an ardent admirer of General Andrew Jackson, and showed it by adopting as his own middle name the surname of the Great Soldier. If General Andrew Jackson occupied a box at the theatre on the evening of July 17, it must have been a proud moment for the other Andrew Jackson when they faced each other across the footlights of The Jacksonian Commonwealth Theatre.²¹

The entertainment season of 1822 was in progress early in May. For the evening of May 6, Messrs. Scherer and Garner announced a concert and ball, the last of a series, in the Spanish Lodge Room on Water Street. The program included a number of songs; a "Symphony" by Mozart, Haydn, and Dussek; and concluded, "by particular

20. O. S. Coad and Edwin Mims, Jr., *The American Stage* (The Pageant of America, Vol. 14, New Haven, 1929), p. 175.

21. Mrs. Jackson attended the theatre in Pensacola, as she wrote her friend, "once, and then with much reluctance." Her disdain was religious rather than aesthetic. Rachel Jackson was stickily pious, and to her Pensacola was a vile place. Being marooned there in the summer of 1821 was like being in "a vast and howling wilderness, far from [her] friends in the Lord." Parton, *op. cit.*, II, 597 ff. Letters of Rachel Jackson, written from Pensacola, to Eliza Kingsley.

desire," with the "celebrated Cantata of *William Tell, The Swiss Patriot.*"²²

At The Jacksonian Commonwealth Theatre on June 1, appeared Mr. Potter, Ventriloquist and Emperor of all the Conjurers, who had performed in most of the principal cities in Europe and America and who had just arrived in Pensacola.²³ The program in three parts was a melange of legerdemain, ventriloquism and impersonations, interspersed with comic songs and professional patter, to say nothing of a Dissertation on Noses-all by Mr. Potter. Appraised by quantity the show was worth many times the seventy-five cents Mr. Potter asked for it.

Late in June a company of actors began a twenty-night engagement at the theatre, playing three nights a week. The season opened June 22 and closed August 6.

The company included Messrs. Carr, Frethey, Scholes, Vaughan, Vos, Wells, Mrs. DeGrushe and Mrs. Vos. Carr, Frethey, Scholes and the Vos's were announced as making their first appearance in Pensacola. John Vaughan who had been in Allen's company the preceding summer seems to have been the Manager.

For the opening night, Vaughan presented "the much admired Tragedy in five acts, called *Douglas, or The Noble Kinsman.*" The afterpiece was the farce *Miss in Her Teens.* Between the play and the farce, Mr. Carr sang the comic song *Nothing at All.*²⁴

A hiatus in the files of the *Floridian* from June 22 to July 20, leaves us with only a few details of the news of the rest of the season. At Vaughan's benefit on August 2, Master J. Twible, aged thir-

22. *Floridian*, May 4, 1822.

23. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1822.

24. *Ibid.*, June 22, 1822.

teen, volunteered a song. One who heard him was "unaffectedly delighted and surprised at his powers."²⁵ As a result of this favorable impression, Master Twible, assisted by his father "Mr. T. sen'r," who had "sung in many eastern cities," gave a concert the following Monday evening, August 5.

Mrs. DeGrushe's benefit was set for Friday, August 9. But the following day she found it necessary to inform her friends and the public generally that the performance had been unavoidably postponed, "in consequence of Mr. Cazenaves refusing the Theatre after having promised the same."²⁶ Someone had been reckless with the truth, and it wasn't Mrs. DeGrushe.

The members of the company need not detain us long. With the exception of Vaughan, Mr. Vos, and Mrs. DeGrushe, they were "second and third string" stock actors. J. H. Vos had acted in New Orleans as early as 1817. He had a fair native talent, and by 1822 was a competent actor in heavy rôles, "rough and crude, yet attended with some signs of genius."²⁷

Mrs. DeGrushe, originally from the Cincinnati theatre, was the former wife of Thomas Morgan, who, in the spring of 1818, along with Ludlow and John Vaughan, had "managed" the company at the St. Philip Street Theatre in New Orleans. Mrs. Morgan's acting in that company received favorable notice.²⁸ Thomas Morgan died in July 1818, in Natchez, while he and Mrs. Morgan were filling a summer engagement at the Natchez Theatre.²⁹

25. "Communicated," *ibid.*, August 3, 1822.

26. Mrs. DeGrushe's "Card," *ibid.*, August 10, 1822.

27. Ludlow, *op. cit.*, p. 270.

28. Smithers, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

29. William B. Hamilton, "The Theatre in the Old Southwest: The First Decade at Natchez," *American Literature*, XII (1940-41), 481.

Sometime after the fall of 1820, she married Mr. DeGrushe, a comedian and singer in the Natchez company. Early in 1822 she had come from Cincinnati to New Orleans hoping to get an engagement in J. H. Caldwell's company but was disappointed. Her theatre friends came to her help by giving her a benefit on April 24.³⁰ It is pleasant to think that her old friend John Vaughan was lending her a hand by bringing her to Pensacola.

The *Floridian* of August 17, 1822, carried the news that yellow fever had appeared in Pensacola and that there were seven or eight deaths in the previous week. In *Niles' Register*, October 19, 1822, among those listed as dying in the yellow fever epidemic in Pensacola was "a Mr. Car, comedian."³¹

With the collapse of the boom of 1821, Pensacola fell upon evil times. A contemporary writer paints a sombre picture of conditions: of the devastations by the yellow fever in 1822; of the total lack of commerce and industry; of the community's sole reliance for currency on the pay of a few companies of troops. The city which in 1821 boasted 4000 inhabitants, in 1824 could muster hardly 1400.³²

Through these lean years, Pensacola was no place for a theatre; and it is not surprising that we have no entertainment news until the spring of 1828. In its issue of April 18, 1828, the *Gazette* announced: "The citizens of Pensacola are now favored with the presence of a small company of Theatrical Performers, which has not been the case for several years past."

The members of the company were Messrs. Hartwig, Lear, Jones, Myers, Mrs. Hartwig and Mrs. DeGrushe. On the opening night, they pre-

30. Smithers, *op. cit.*, p. 114. 31. Vol. XXIII. p. 78.

32. *Pensacola Gazette*, December 14, 1824, John Lee Williams, article cited.

sented as the mainpiece the tragedy of *Douglas*, with Marie Kemble's comedy *The Day After the Wedding* as the afterpiece. The evening of April 18, the bill was the comedy *Simpson and Co.*, followed by the farce *Fortune's Frolic*. On April 25, "The Theatrical Corps of Pensacola" announced that, "being desirous to produce every novelty that may be deemed attractive," they had made arrangements with Mr. Myers to sing a few evenings, and they requested the approbation and support of their "hitherto liberal Patrons."³³

The only other news of the season was that the benefit of Mr. Jones, announced for May 2, had to be postponed till the 12th because of the "unfavorable aspect of the weather."³⁴

The company left Pensacola for Philadelphia on May 26.³⁵

On June 10, "Othello Jackson Begged leave to remind the citizens of Pensacola that, in the midst of the general good feeling which prevailed there, and in the bosom of a society whose proudest boast was its devotion to social order and its subserviency to Laws, he had had the misfortune, in two instances, to be greatly abused. Othello's latest grievance was that someone had entered his house, removed his trunk, and made way with its contents consisting of all his clothes and sixty-five or seventy dollars in cash. He now asked law-abiding Pensacolians to help him recoup his losses by attending his last performance in the city, to be given at the Theatre "by particular request." The tickets would be 50 cents each, and on his part Othello promised to present his usual feats of Agility, performances on the Violin &c &c.³⁶

In February of 1829, the Hartwigs returned to

33. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1828. 34. *Ibid.*, May 9, 1828.

35. Ship News, *ibid.*, May 30, 1828. 36. *Ibid.*, June 10, 1828.

Pensacola with a small company of actors new to the city. The group apparently were *en route* to the Theatre in Mobile.³⁷ The new members were Rice, Saunders, one other unnamed actor, Mrs. Rice, and Mary Vos. Their season seems to have been about twenty nights, opening probably February 3, and closing with Miss Vos's benefit, March 20.

The only complete bill we have is the one of Tuesday, February 17. It comprised three pieces. The first was the farce *A Day After the Fair*, in which Mr. Rice appeared in six, and Mrs. Hartwig in three, different characters. In the course of the play, Mrs. Rice and Mrs. Hartwig each sang a number of "celebrated songs." The second was the short farce *The Irish Tutor*, Mr. Rice playing *Teddy O'Rourke* and Mrs. Hartwig *Mary*.

The closing piece was the "laughable Ballette," *The Cobbler's Daughter* or *Old Hunks Outwitted*. Mr. Hartwig played *Old Hunks*, Mr. Rice, *Crispin the Cobbler*, and Mrs. Hartwig, *Fanny*. In the course of the Ballette, there was a comic dance by Mr. Rice, a *pas seul* by Mrs. Hartwig, and a Figure Dance by the Characters of the play.³⁸ The company's "heavy man" was sitting the evening out.

Saunders took his benefit on Friday, March 13. In addition to the play, not named, there was a "Theatrical Lottery," the prizes including two gold seals, a key and ring, a set of *The Casket* for 1828, twelve barege handkerchiefs, one dozen elegant half-hose, and a dissected Puzzle Map. After the show a balloon 18 feet high and 52 feet in circumference ascended from back of the Theatre. A well-filled evening!³⁹

For her benefit March 20, Miss Vos announced as the mainpiece, *Pizarro*, or *The Spaniards in Peru*,

37. Ship News, *ibid.*, February 3, 1829.

38. *Ibid.*, February 17, 1829. 39. *Ibid.*, March 10, 1829.

to be followed by the farce *All the World's a Stage*, "with other entertainment."⁴⁰ No casts were announced, but in the tragedy Mrs. Hartwig probably played *Elvira* and Miss Vos, *Cora*.

This small company had three members who afterward were widely known in American theatres. T. D. Rice was at this time a theatrical novice; but later his "Jim Crow" songs and impersonations not only gave him the nick-name "Jim Crow" Rice but also brought him riches and fame, at home and abroad.

Mary Vos was the daughter of the Vos's who were in Pensacola in the summer of 1822. At this time she was about fifteen years old and was just beginning her stage career. For the following twenty-five years or so, she was known in the Western theatres as a capable and useful actress, tho lacking polish and refinement. Her New York experience was limited to a short engagement in the fall of 1835. After 1838 she was known on the stage by her married name, Mrs. Stuart.

This season Mrs. Hartwig must have felt the need of making a little money on the side. For she let it be known that during her stay in Pensacola she would offer the ladies of the city private lessons in dancing at their residences ; and that she would start a "school" as soon as she had obtained a class of ten "scholars." Terms to be made known on application to her.⁴¹

This rôle, tho somewhat different from Mrs. Hartwig's usual ones, need not surprise us. This gifted English actress became almost a celebrity for her versatility. She was equally at home in equestrian drama, in tragedy and in comedy. She made her debut in the United States as an equestrienne,

40. *Ibid.*, March 17, 1829.

41. Mrs. Hartwig's "Card," *ibid.*, February 10, 1829.

appearing with her husband, the equestrian Samuel Tatnall, first in Philadelphia and later in the circuses and theatres in New York. She spent a large portion of her professional life in Southern theatres, principally at New Orleans. In private life she showed a remarkable adeptness at getting herself married, - five times in all. Until about 1827, she was known in the theatre as Mrs. Tatnall; between 1827 and 1834, as Mrs. Hartwig. After 1834 she appeared on the stage under her maiden name of Fanny Pritchard, with "Mrs." prefixed.

If the people of Pensacola, between 1829 and 1837 were offered entertainment of any kind, no record of it has been left to us. From 1835 to 1837 the city was going thro the boom in real estate incident to the projected Florida, Alabama and Georgia Railroad, and the visions of "a new city of Pensacola." Visitors were plentiful and so was money. We should expect those years to be good ones for the theatre. But actors apparently thought otherwise. Only in the spring of 1837 do we find a few signs of life in the entertainment field.

The Jacksonian Commonwealth Theatre had long since expired, no doubt from inanition. Only makeshift facilities for public entertainments were available. The "lower apartment" of Wilkins' New Hotel, and afterward the dining-room of the Florida House, the new name of Wilkins' Hotel, were utilized when needed.

At length, early in August, the *Pensacola Gazette* reported, "A theatre has been very prettily fitted up at The Florida House, and in the course of the past week, our citizens have been entertained with the scenic representations of a dramatic corps made up from the Theatre of New Orleans and Mobile."⁴² And, as this was the first entertainment of the kind

42. *Ibid.*, August 5, 1837.

that had marked "the growing prosperity of Pensacola," the Editor hoped it might be encouraged. If it was, it was not newsworthy. Nor do we have the least inkling of who made up the dramatic corps the Editor mentions, or of the names of their "scenic representations."

However, before the new theatre was opened, there had been two short seasons of entertainment that are of interest, not because they were dramatic representations but because they were offered by theatrical people. Early in March, the famous Barnes family, on their way from New Orleans to Mobile, stopped in Pensacola for a week or ten days.⁴³ And on July 3, Little Miss Meadows, assisted by Mrs. Frederick Brown and Vincent DeCamp, of the Mobile Theatre, gave the last of a series of "concerts."⁴⁴ Between these entertainments by representatives of the theatre, the claims of "science" were asserted by Dr. Powell, who delivered two lectures on Phrenology the evenings of May 22 and 23.⁴⁵

The Barnes family consisted of the actors J. H. Barnes, his wife, and his daughter Charlotte, at this time lacking one month of being nineteen years old. No details of their entertainments in Pensacola have been preserved. But one may, with a good deal of certainty, conjecture that their programs comprised scenes for one, two, or three speakers. In these Charlotte could take either a young woman's or a young man's part, as the case might demand. The serious and comic would be nicely balanced, and there would be songs by Mr. Barnes, and by his daughter, and possibly, piano selections and dancing by Charlotte alone.

The New Orleans *True American* congratulated Pensacolians on the coming visit of the Barnes trio,

43. *Ibid.*, March 11, 1837.

44. *Ibid.*, June 3, 1837. 45. *Ibid.*, May 27, 1837.

and warned "the gallant sons of the Navy Yard" to look well to their hearts when "the beautiful Charlotte Barnes with her finished acting and skill at the piano" appeared before them.⁴⁶ To which the Editor of the *Gazette* replied, "Thank you Mr. *True American* - we have, it is believed, given the Barneses a warm reception, and we have taken care of our hearts-as well as we could."⁴⁷

The Editor, who usually attached no exaggerated news value to the theatre, was capable of a large eloquence when it came to some of its personnel. "The tragedy of *LaFitte* by Miss Charlotte Barnes," he wrote, after the family had reached Mobile, "is winning golden opinions for its fair and gifted authoress. . . . Tho but 'sweet seventeen,' she has written much that is worthy of being read and admired. A few more such 'bright particular stars' as Fanny Kemble and Charlotte Barnes, and it will come to be thought that the stage is the peculiar nursery of Dramatic literature, that it exerts a kind of moral alchemy, and where the ingredients of mind and character are properly mixed and proportioned, turns everything to gold."⁴⁸

It is permissible to wonder if the writer would have indulged in this journalistic effusion if Charlotte Barnes at the time had been homely and twenty-seven years old instead of (as he thought) seventeen. The Barneses were certainly a gifted family; but their talents, arranged in the rising order of excellence, would read, the daughter's, the father's, the mother's. In New York, for many years following their debut in 1816, "Jack" Barnes was extremely popular as a low comedian, and Mrs. Barnes was even more a favorite for her finished

46. Copied, *ibid.*, March 11, 1838.

47. *Ibid.*

48. *Ibid.*, April 1, 1837.

acting both in comedy and tragedy. Ludlow's opinion, a little sour, perhaps, that in New Orleans Charlotte "was greatly applauded on account of her parents more than for her talent"⁴⁹ is not at all implausible.

On her concert program June 3, Miss Meadows sang, in addition to two solos, a duet with Mrs. Brown and one with Mr. DeCamp. She also recited, "by desire," "Advice to Husbands and Wives." DeCamp contributed two comic songs. The evening closed with a cotillion party, for which "a band had been engaged."⁵⁰

Miss Meadows was one of the juvenile prodigies who every once in a while astonished and delighted theatre audiences. She was about eight years old and an extremely beautiful child. Mrs. Brown was her guardian and teacher. At this early age she was a clever dancer and singer as well as an excellent actress in child characters. She continued on the stage until she was eighteen or nineteen years old and then passed out of public notice.

Vincent DeCamp, "a very talented comedian,"⁵¹ was the brother of Mrs. Brown and also of Mrs. Charles Kemble, the wife of the famous actor and Manager of Covent Garden. DeCamp was well-known in the theatres of London, New York, Charleston, and New Orleans, and was by now an old "stager," past sixty years of age. A later writer refers to him when he was still in his forties as an "elderly representative of airy youths."⁵² If DeCamp had a penchant for the incongruous, it did not grow less as he grew older. At sixty-plus, he was singing duets in public with an eight year old girl.

On two occasions, in September, the Editor of the *Pensacola Gazette* was invited to attend amateur

49. Ludlow, *op. cit.*, p. 541.

50. *Pensacola Gazette*, June 3, 1837.

51. Sol Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 136. 52. Odell, *op. cit.*, II, 98.

dramatic performances, presented by the crew of the sloop *Concord* of the U. S. Navy on board their ship. The offering the first evening was Fitzball's melodrama *The Floating Beacon*. The second evening the "corps dramatique" presented the tragedy of Douglas, "together with songs &c.," followed by the farce *The Lying Valet*. Between the pieces "all hands were piped to grog."

The first evening "the audience was of both sexes and numerous, more numerous, we venture to say, than any audience that ever before honored the drama here."⁵³ The second night, the spectators, some 400 or 500, consisted entirely of the crews invited from other ships of the squadron. It was a hilarious evening and for once the Editor made a good story of his visit to the "Theatre."⁵⁴

In April, 1838, the Barnes family, accompanied by Mr. Harrison of the New Orleans Theatre, stopped at Pensacola on their way to St. Joseph. During their stay of about two weeks, their little theatre at the Florida House was "crowded every night to suffocation;" and, as usual, these popular actors were "winning golden opinions" by their artistry.⁵⁵

Between March 15 and April 12, 1842, Pensacola was entertained by an excellent dramatic company from New Orleans, under the management of Dan McCartney. They were travelling in their own conveyance, the brig *Good Hope*, Captain Sullivan, with Nassau, St. Thomas and adjacent islands, and ultimately Jamaica, as their destinations.⁵⁶

The company included Messrs. C. L. Green, Gilbert, Sankey, the singer Pacaud, a dancer Lavette, Miss Randolph, Miss E. Randolph, and Miss Green.

53. *Pensacola Gazette*, September 2, 1837.

54. *Ibid.*, September 16, 1837. 55. *Ibid.*, April 14 and 28, 1838

56. *Ibid.*, March 19, 1842, and article from the New Orleans *Crescent City* copied, *ibid.*, March 26, 1842.

Of the bills of the season we have only two, those of March 18 and 19. On the former evening, the company presented as the mainpiece Bulwer Lytton's *The Lady of Lyons* and on the latter, Mrs. Gore's *The Maid of Croissey*. Both of these dramas were comparatively new and very popular. We do not have the name of the afterpiece on the 18th, but on the 19th it was the farce *The Dead Shot*. Between the drama and the farce were offered *Description of a Debating Society* by Mr. Green; a comic song, *Billie Barlow*, by Pacaud; and a dance *El Jaleo de Jeres*, by Miss E. Randolph.

This young lady, another child wonder, was fourteen years old. Three years before she had been in great demand in various New York theatres for her graceful dancing and her personal charm.⁵⁷ She was in care of her elder sister, Miss Randolph, who in New York, played secondary characters in mainpieces⁵⁸ but was accounted a good actress.⁵⁹

Sankey was an actor of old men's parts and of this type gave promise of being one of the best on the American stage. On his return voyage from this engagement in the West Indies he was shipwrecked and drowned.⁶⁰

One final note will conclude the story of entertainment in Pensacola. The Apalachicola *Watchman of the Gulf* reported in September, 1843, under the heading "Theatre": "Hart and company are again at summer quarters at St. Joseph, after having made a short but we trust brilliant opening at Pensacola."⁶¹ Hart, as we shall see, was the Manager of the Apalachicola Theatre from 1840 to 1844. This last item, then, leads naturally to the story of theatrical entertainment in Apalachicola.

57. Odell, *op. cit.*, IV, 463. 58. *Ibid.*, p. 376.

59. Sol Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 184. 60. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

61. *Watchman of the Gulf*, September 9, 1843.

comedy *The Two Friends*, followed by the farce, *Crossing the Line*. Mrs. Judah was well liked in Tallahassee and the Editor of the *Floridian*, in announcing her benefit, "bespoke" for her a bumper.⁶⁷ Mr. Judah presented as his mainpiece *William Tell*, *The Swiss Patriot*. The afterpiece was the farce *The Spectre Bridegroom*; and for good measure, the evening, and the season, closed with the musical comedy, *The Swiss Cottage*, or *Why Don't She Marry?*⁶⁸

Before leaving for Apalachicola, Judah announced his plans for establishing a permanent theatre in Tallahassee. These included the erection of a suitable building, if subscriptions of money were sufficient, and if other encouragements were offered. His further steps in carrying out these plans will be noted later.

In June of 1839, Tallahassee enjoyed a series of concerts by Miss Meadows. An advance notice announced that she would give her first entertainment Monday evening, June 24, "if she arrives in time;"⁶⁹ but we know only of the performances on the 26th and 29th. Miss Meadows was advertised as the "juvenile prodigy," and those who attended her concert on the 26th "spoke in the most enthusiastic terms of her abilities." One of these, in a communication to the *Floridian*, wrote: "I have never witnessed any exhibition of the kind where sweetness of voice, accuracy of musical expression, and pure simplicity of manner was more happily displayed. Added to this, the sylph-like form and extreme youth and beauty of the performer, produced an effect altogether irresistible."⁷⁰

Entertainers had appeared in Apalachicola before 1839. For example, just before Christmas of

67. *Ibid.*

68. *Ibid.*, March 16, 1839. 69. *Ibid.*, June 22, 1839.

70. *Ibid.*, June 29, 1839.

1837, the Keppells, "decidedly a musical trio," gave a farewell concert before leaving for New Orleans.⁷¹ As early as March 1837, the City Fathers were giving the matter their attention. In raising revenues for that year, they levied, for the first time, a tax of ten dollars on "each and every theatrical performance, concert, or public exhibition."⁷² But so far as we know, no real theatrical activities took place until the performances of the Judah family from March 23 to March 30, 1839, immediately following their short season in Tallahassee. We are told nothing of the Apalachicola engagement except that it opened with *The Swiss Cottage*, and that some time within the week Judah portrayed the character of *Bertram* in Maturin's tragedy of that name.⁷³

Judah's visits to the two towns may have been intended by him as trial balloons. If so, he was encouraged; for the following fall he returned to Apalachicola with well-defined plans for establishing a theatre there, and for carrying out his theatrical project in Tallahassee.

He reached Apalachicola early in November and immediately set to work to procure a suitable building and get it ready for his performances.⁷⁴ Before his return, he had engaged a number of actors to complete his company for the winter season. On November 16, he opened the new theatre. It had been fitted up in "a very neat and tasteful style," but neither the building nor the company was complete. The low river, perhaps, had delayed the arrival of the scene painters and of some of the actors. But they were on their way, and the new

71. *Apalachicola Gazette*, December 23, 1837.

72. *Ibid.*, March 25, 1837. The following year the levy was raised to twenty dollars; but in 1839, it was again placed at ten dollars.

73. *Ibid.*, March 30, 1839. 74. *Ibid.*, November 6, 1839.

theatre needed only a finishing touch with the painters' brushes "to make it quite an ornament to the city."⁷⁵ As for the performances, Judah could start with the actors who had already arrived, or even with his family alone, as he had in the preceding spring.

Whatever expedient he adopted, it was not satisfactory. The public showed it little favor, and Judah suspended the performances. But on December 7 he reopened, and the friendly Editor of the *Gazette* hoped the neglect of the citizens would not compel him again to close the theatre before the season was over.⁷⁶

Finally the actors arrived and the company was complete. We have no hint of who they were, except that a Mr. Lopez was one of the number. It is practically certain that Mrs. Brown and her protégée, Miss Meadows, who played with the company the night of December 21, were appearing as stars.

Late in September of that year, about one-third of the city of Mobile had been destroyed; and Judah's performance the night of December 21 was a benefit for the "sufferers by the late fires." The mainpiece was *Richard III*, with Judah as *Richard* and Mrs. Brown as *Duchess of York*. The afterpiece was the favorite farce *The Spoiled Child*, which gave Miss Meadows the opportunity to play *Little Pickle*, one of her most attractive parts. Between the pieces, she sang "Good Night, Good Night" accompanying herself on the guitar, and one other solo, "The Gypsy's Wild Chaunt." She also gave two solo dances, "Tambourine Dance" and "Bavarian Broom Dance." Masters Jack and Charles Judah each contributed a comic song.

The bill for January 1, 1840 was the melodrama *The Seven Clerks*, followed by the popular farce

75. *Ibid.*, November 23, 1839. 76. *Ibid.*, December 7, 1839.

Monsieur Tonson. The first evening of the New Year was a gala occasion and the city's "beauty and fashion" were in full attendance. Boxes were "reserved for the Ladies and the Gentlemen accompanying them."⁷⁷ After the melodrama, Mrs. Judah delivered an "Address" to the Franklin Guards, which she had prepared for the occasion, and presented to them a "splendid standard." This graceful performance elicited a good deal of lyricism from the Editor of the *Gazette* three days later when he announced the benefit of this charming lady.⁷⁸

At her benefit on January 4, Mrs. Judah offered as the mainpiece *The Warlock of the Glen*, "a new Melodrama of deep and thrilling interest." The farce was *The Dead Shot*; and there was an interlude of songs and duets by Mrs. Judah and Masters Charles and Jackie. Judah took his benefit on January 25 in the tragedy *Pizarro* and the farce *A Pleasant Neighbor*.

This performance seems to have been the last of the season. In advertising his benefit, Judah served notice that "all persons are forewarned against trusting anyone on account of the theatre without a written order from the subscriber, E. Judah."⁷⁹ Two months later, the Editorial Convention provided that "the names of showmen and other travelling professional characters who go off without paying their printing bills be placed on the black list."⁸⁰ It seems that some of Judah's actors were a little less than reliable.

From the frequent proddings of the public which appeared in the *Gazette*, it appears that Judah's theatre was not too enthusiastically attended. This was due to no shortcoming on the part of the Editor. He had gone all out for the theatre as an enterprise

77. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1840. 78. *Ibid.*, January 4, 1840.

79. *Ibid.*, January 25, 1840. 80. *Ibid.*, April 4, 1840.

which, if successful, would do much for the credit and reputation of the city. He extolled Judah not only as a good actor, but as a business man whose reputation was of the utmost integrity.⁸¹ He asserted that Mrs. Judah would be counted a star on any boards,⁸² and that she acted with a judgment true to nature and to life.⁸³ He was lyrical over her character in private life as of the greatest purity; and he declared that as a private lady she was entitled to "the homage of beauty, modesty, and talent from everyone who feels the least touch of chivalry in his bosom."⁸⁴

In the preceding spring, on Judah's first visit to the town, the Editor had admonished "his honor the Mayor and the honorable Council" that if they did not "wish to be deemed Goths and Vandals by the balance of the civilized world," they would do well to rescind the tax on theatrical exhibitions.⁸⁵ The warning apparently had its effect. For an ordinance of November 12, 1839 so amended a previous ordinance that the Clerk of the Council was permitted to issue to Mr. Judah a license for one year from date for the sum of One Hundred Dollars.⁸⁶ Judah was getting his business in good shape for the season of 1840-41.

Early in December, 1839, in furtherance of his Tallahassee plans, Judah addressed a statement "To the Literati of Florida." In it he announced that he had arranged to erect a new theatre in Tallahassee, to be opened February 1, 1840. For the purpose of encouraging writers and "placing the drama on a respectable and permanent basis in this section," he was offering a prize for the best three-act drama, based on the history of Florida, preferably with two or three principal characters. Only

81. *Ibid.*, November 23, 1839.82. *Ibid.*, March 30, 1839.83. *Ibid.*, November 23, 1839.84. *Ibid.*, January 4, 1840.85. *Ibid.*, March 30, 1839.86. *Ibid.*, January 18, 1840.

citizens of Florida were eligible to compete, and their offerings were to be in the hands of the judges before March 1, 1840.

The prize, which was to be awarded by a committee of "literary gentlemen," was two hundred dollars in cash and one-half the proceeds of the third performance of the new play. Communications were to be addressed to Judah at Apalachicola till February 1, 1840, and after that date, at Tallahassee.⁸⁷

If Judah had any response to this announcement, there is no record of it. Nor do we know anything of his activities in Tallahassee that winter. But between February 1, when he was due there, and the middle of March, when he was back in Apalachicola, there was ample time, not only to give a season of drama, but also to make all necessary arrangements for completing his new theatre.⁸⁸ It may be, then, that by early March his plans for the season of 1840-41 in Tallahassee were well under way, as they already were in Apalachicola. But all of Judah's hopes for theatres in Tallahassee and Apalachicola were destined not to be fulfilled. Accompanied by Mr. Lopez, the Judah family left Apalachicola March 20, 1840, on the schooner *Emblem*. Five days later, the *Emblem* capsized off the Tortugas and the entire party perished.⁸⁹

87. *Ibid.*, December 7, 1839. The advertisement was repeated in the *Gazette* as late as January 25, 1840.

88. It evidently was not ready to open February 1, as Judah had announced. P. W. Gautier, after a visit to Tallahassee the following May, wrote, "the building is yet unfinished." This ought to mean that it had been begun. *St. Joseph Times*, May 26, 1840.

89. This was the account of the disaster published in the *Apalachicola Gazette*, April 18, 1840, and, no doubt, generally accepted as true in North Florida. The report, however, does not take into account the possibility that some of the party might have been rescued. There are some indications that that is what happened. To mention one, T. A. Brown, in his *History of the American Stage* (New York, 1870), p. 199, writing of Emanuel Judah, tells of his being drowned. In the same context, he speaks of Sophia Judah as Emanuel Judah's wife, and gives her date of death as November 9, 1865.

An amusing afternote - a little pathetic, too - will conclude the account of Judah's hapless ventures. In establishing a new theatre, it was the custom of managers to offer a prize for an "Address" in verse, to be spoken on the opening night. Our knowledge that Judah offered such a prize in connection with the Tallahassee Theatre, we owe to P. W. Gautier of the *St. Joseph Times*.

The flavor of Gautier's journalism justifies our letting him tell his own story: "On a late visit to Tallahassee, the following *address* was *pirated* from the *escritoire* of a young friend who has been occasionally known to flirt with the Nine, and at times with more than *the* Nine. . . . The lines were written upon the offer of a prize by the late Mr. Judah, for an address to be spoken at the opening of the Tallahassee Theatre. The building is yet unfinished, and Mr. Judah is drowned; but as the address is smooth in verse and of classic vein, we thought the writer and the public would excuse the *piracy* which gives it a place in our columns."⁹⁰

The address comprises sixty-six pentameter lines rhyming in couplets. In conventional style, the writer begins with the drama in ancient Greece; pays tribute to Shakspeare and Garrick; and glorifies the drama of all time as a gift to humanity which elevates the mind, exalts the morals, and guides the taste. He felicitates the Tallahassee audience on its being their privilege to greet its coming "in the land of flowers," and ends in the same key with a dozen lines of local complacence:

Patrons, to you the sons of Thespis bend,
 In you they see the censor and the friend;
 O! let your just approval cheer their toil,
 And give the Drama welcome to your soil.
 Ausonian land! with gifts profusive strewn,

90. *St. Joseph Times*, May 26, 1840.

Where sempiternal Spring has made her throne,
 Where the "sweet South!" that woos, e'en now
 is pure
 As the glad waves that murmuring kiss thy
 shore;
 Here where the clime, the sky, the air are fraught
 With incense to the Nine, and fire to thought,
 The grateful Muse shall proudly rear her dome;
 Greece gave her birth-fair Florida a home.

W. R. Hart became the Manager of the Apalachicola Theatre in December, 1840. This favorite comedian came originally from New York state. Like so many others, he was attracted to the South and came finally to Charleston. He was an actor in the company at the Old Charleston Theatre from 1831 to 1833, under Vincent DeCamp's management; and, with W. Hardy as partner, had charge of the Queen Street Theatre from 1833 to the spring of 1836.⁹¹

When, in June 1835, Sol Smith disposed of his theatres in Columbus and Montgomery, Hart succeeded him as Manager.⁹² In consequence of some trouble between Hart and Hardy and a number of their actors in February 1836,⁹³ Hart seems to have left Charleston for good and to have given all his attention to his Columbus-Montgomery enterprise.

Except for the erection of a new building in Tallahassee, the plans initiated by E. Judah fitted very well with his own. His location in Columbus, at the head of navigation on the Chattahoochee river, made it easy and advantageous to extend his Georgia-Alabama circuit to include Apalachicola and Tallahassee. But we shall also see him operating as far away as Key West and Nassau, and at least once in Pensacola.

In Hart and Hardy's company at the Charleston

91. Hoole, *op. cit.*, pp. 34-37.

92. Sol Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

93. Hoole, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

Queen Street Theatre from 1833 to 1836, were the Carter family, consisting of John Carter, his wife, and daughter. They were thoroughly seasoned actors, who since the middle twenties had been playing in southern stock companies, first in Ludlow's and later in Sol Smith's. Sometime before the opening of the season of 1834-35 Miss Carter became Mrs. Hart. The Carter and Hart families thus became the nucleus of Hart's permanent company in Columbus and Montgomery. In addition to them, in the season of 1840-41, the company included Messrs. Field, Finch, Germon, and Miss Williams. With this group, Hart opened in Apalachicola about December 14 and played till December 28.

The theatre advertisements and "communications" to the papers give us a very good idea of the company's repertoire. On December 16 was presented Knowles' drama *The Hunchback*, with the farce *The Reformed Rake*. The bill for the 17th was Payne's melodrama *Therèse*. For her benefit on the 21st, Mrs. Hart chose the musical comedy *The Deep, Deep Sea*. On December 23 the mainpiece was Bulwer Lytton's drama *The Lady of Lyons*, the after-piece, *The Pleasant Neighbor*. *Bluebeard* was the next mainpiece, and Mrs. Carter's benefit on the 26th brought the nautical drama *Black-ey'd Susan*, followed by *The Turn Out*. On December 28, Miss Williams took her benefit with the comedy *Simpson and Co.* and the farce *The Rival Pages*. Hart was balancing time-honored favorites with more recent popular successes, such as *The Hunchback* and *The Lady of Lyons*. This was good drama and richly deserved the generous patronage it received.⁹⁴

The successful entertainments called forth some interesting comments from attendants at the performances. Mr. Gautier came over from St. Joseph

94. *Apalachicolian*, December 26, 1840.

for the evening of the 16th, not "as a critic, but for relaxation and pleasure." His humorous account reveals that he was charmed with Mrs. Hart; and that he enjoyed himself immensely, and "laughed as heartily [at the farce] as a man can laugh these hard times."⁹⁵

Two "communications," one to the *Florida Journal* of December 23 by "Talma," the other to the *Apalachicola* of December 26 by "A. L. W.," represented the judicious dramatic criticism which was often latent in these early Florida audiences. "A. L. W." was A. L. Woodward, of Jackson county, who two years before had taken a conspicuous part in the Constitutional Convention at St. Joseph.

Both "Talma" and "A. L. W." saw much that was good in the performances and in the actors; but they did not hesitate to offer some friendly suggestions for improvement. Finch was too passive and monotonous in his speech; Germon spoke too loudly and needed to reduce his "tonations;" Miss Williams should cultivate simplicity and grace, and get rid of small affectations like stammering, and tossing her head; Field, the company's tragedian, had a good voice for tragedy but measured his words too much, instead of letting them flow with the sentiment.

Of Mr. Hart there was little that could be said. In farce, which was his *forte*, he was inimitable, and in any situation he could "disturb the risibility of the most sedate." But of Mrs. Hart both critics had much to say. As *Julia* in some scenes of *The Hunchback*, "Talma" thought she was, if not superior, equal to any he had ever seen, except Fanny Kemble. To "A. L. W.," her voice was clear and soft and in lighter scenes sweet and pleasant; but in tragic scenes, it needed more volume. He was a little more guarded in speaking of her personal appearance,

95. *St. Joseph Times*, December 23, 1840.

describing it as "entertaining." But he was delighted with the beauty and luxuriance of her hair. As *Pauline* in *The Lady of Lyons*, he thought she acquitted herself "very well," especially in the difficult parting scene between *Pauline* and *Claude*. And he felt sure he would dream of her in that scene that night on board the steamboat which was to carry him away from Apalachicola.

Christmas seems to have been an open night on Hart's theatrical calendar. That evening, an "Oratorio" of sacred music was given in the Episcopal Church by Baron de Fleur, "a finished performer on the Organ and Piano Forte." The admission was \$1.00; the proceeds to be "appropriated for the benefit of the church." The audience was large and fashionable, and all were highly pleased.⁹⁶

Near the middle of January 1841, Hart took his company to Tallahassee, and remained there till February 14. This is to be inferred from the statement that the steamer *Caroline*, Captain Pettes, on February 14, was on its way from St. Marks to Apalachicola "with a company of players;" and that Captain Pettes was under contract to land Mr. Hart's Theatrical Corps at Apalachicola during that day.⁹⁷

The plays presented in Tallahassee, no doubt, were the same as had been offered in Apalachicola in December. An article signed "M" in the *Floridian* of January 23, gives us our only news of the company's performances. "M" tells of his seeing *The Hunchback* on January 19, and of a ludicrous contretemps in the performance. In a tragic scene between Field and Mrs. Hart, the audience caught sight of Mr. Hart's conscious or unconscious

96. *Apalachicolian*, December 26, 1840.

97. *Florida Journal*, March 17, 1841.

grimaces, and burst into a roar of laughter. At which, very understandably, Field was somewhat abashed. A curtain lecture in the Hart family that night was indicated.

Hart's return to Apalachicola almost coincided with the arrival there of W. C. Forbes, the tragedian. During the week of February 18 to 23 Forbes was delivering "Satiric and Dramatic Lectures upon Heads."⁹⁸ His subject sounds as if he had been dividing his time between Tragedy and Phrenology.

Before he began the spring season of 1841 Hart reorganized his company. He first engaged as new members Mr. Parker, Madame Tielman, and Miss Nelson. He then divided the whole company into two smaller ones, the first including Carter, Finch, Hart, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Hart, and Miss Williams; the second, Field, Germon, Parker, Madame Tielman, and Miss Nelson. With the first group, Hart went to Key West where he remained till sometime in May. The second company played a spring engagement in Apalachicola, closing April 26. They then went to "Irwinton, Columbus, etc." where they continued their performances.⁹⁹

We do not have the name of any play offered by the second group in Apalachicola. Of the new members, Madame Tielman was a German singer and actress who had been playing in the New Orleans theatres since 1836. Miss Nelson was Mrs. Charles Hodges, an English actress, who played under her maiden name, and who had appeared frequently on the London, New York and New Orleans stages. As an actress, her gifts were not marked, but she was good-looking. Her admirers spoke of her as "The pretty Miss Nelson;" and, possibly her

98. New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, February 23, 1841. News from Apalachicola.

99. *Florida Journal*, May 1, 1841.

“prettiness” did as much to make her popular as her acting.

Altho we know the sequence of Hart’s engagements in the season of 1841-42, the scantiness of our information makes it impossible to determine their length. He began the season in the northern theatres of the circuit. By Christmas, he was in Tallahassee,¹⁰⁰ and two weeks later, on January 8, he was still there.¹⁰¹ The company played in Apalachicola from March 1 till April 2, 1842. This is all we know for certain.

The period from January 8 to March 1, almost two months, was much too long for an expensive organization to be idle; but it is more than likely that the gap is in our information rather than in the company’s activities. A good guess would be that he remained in Tallahassee longer than two weeks, as he “was playing to crowded houses”¹⁰² and as, apparently, he had already planned a five-weeks season for Apalachicola.

Since the previous season, some changes had been made in the company. To the group consisting of Carter, Finch, Hart, Mrs. Carter, Mrs. Hart, and Miss Williams were now added Mercer, Rogers, Stone (or Stein), and Sullivan.

Hart probably preceded the company to Tallahassee long enough to get his new theatre ready for business. The playhouse, which adjoined the Planter’s Hotel, “was fitted up in a very respectable style” and “was comfortable, spacious, and commodious.”¹⁰³ There was a performance on Christmas night, 1841,¹⁰⁴ but the name of the play is not known. A communication to the *Floridian* of January 8 tells of the writer’s attendance, the night before, at the presentation of the tragedy *Pizarro*. He compliments

100. *Floridian*, December 25, 1841. 101. *Ibid.*, January 8, 1842.

102. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1842. 103. *Ibid.*, January 1 and 8, 1842.

104. *Ibid.*, December 25, 1841.

the improvement in the acting of the company since its last appearance in Tallahassee, and discerns talent in the new members. He offers some suggestions for improvement to some of the actors, specifically to poor Mr. Finch; and he notes especially the "just and happy style" of Mrs. Hart in the difficult rôle of *Elvira*. "The repeated and hearty applause of an intelligent and crowded house" testified that the piece was well played and well received. In closing, the writer mentions the play selected for the evening of January 8, "the much admired drama of *The Dumb Belle of Genoa*," for the first time in Tallahassee.

In Apalachicola, the Editor of the *Florida Journal* had some nice things to say about the opening performance of Hart's spring season. The entertainments of the week March 1 to 5 "went off to good houses." The ladies attended well and, of course, where the ladies go the gentlemen follow. Of the variety of excellent pieces presented he selected as the best of the week *The Hunchback*. Mrs. Hart played the rôle of *Julia* with really surprising effect, and Miss Williams' "happy deportment put everybody in a good humor." Mr. Finch was mildly "ribbed" for forgetting some of his lines right at the *dénouement* of the play; but Mr. Mercer was admired for his dancing and drollery which excited uproarious applause.¹⁰⁵

The bill for March 5 was the melodrama *The Vampire* followed by the farce *The Secret*. Between the pieces, Mr. Mercer offered a song and dance. The only other bills we have are those of the closing week March 28 to April 2. In this week, Boucicault's *London Assurance*, new in Apalachicola, was played on four successive nights.¹⁰⁶ On Thursday night,

105. *Florida Journal*, March 5, 1842.

106. *Ibid.*, April 2, 1842. It is difficult to see how this could have been unless the company played on Sunday night—certainly out of the question.

March 31, Mr. Stone took his benefit and enacted the part of "the treacherous and bloody Duke of Glos-ter" in the tragedy *Jane Shore*. Mrs. Hart and Miss Williams appeared as *Jane Shore* and *Alecia* respectively and "sustained their established reputations." The season closed on April 2, with Payne's melodrama *Adelime* or *The Victim of Treachery* and the farce *Monsieur Tonson*.

In his season of 1842-43, Hart attained the apex of his success as a manager. Before opening in Apalachicola in December, he had leased the building on Commerce street, formerly occupied by Farrior's store, and converted it into a theatre. The new playhouse, which was spoken of as "neat and commodious," was "furnished with an entire set of new and beautiful scenery and decorations."¹⁰⁷

The company he assembled was the largest and strongest he had yet brought to Apalachicola. Of the group of the preceding spring, there remained Carter, Finch, Hart, Rogers, Sullivan, Mrs. Hart and Miss Williams. Mrs. Carter, apparently, was not acting. The new members were Messrs. Allen, Caulfield, Hayne, Monroe, and Mrs. Caulfield. With the Caulfields were the two talented child-actresses, Clara Caulfield, aged ten, and Fanny Hubbard, aged eight.

As usual, Hart began in the northern part of his circuit and planned the rest of the season so as to be in Tallahassee during the session of the Legislative Council. But before going to Tallahassee, he played a short engagement from December 12 to 26 in Apalachicola. He opened on the 12th with *London Assurance*, popular in Apalachicola the year before. The afterpiece of the evening was *The Four Mowbrays*, in which Fanny Hubbard "sustained" four characters. As an interlude, Misses Caulfield and

107. *Ibid*, December 10, 1842.

Hubbard gave "Brigand Waltz." We are not told whether this was a dance or a piano duet.

The favorite play of the week, December 19 to 24, was the musical comedy *Robert Macaire*. In this, Sullivan and Hart carried off the honors. For her benefit on December 26, Mrs. Hart chose *Romeo and Juliet* and played *Juliet* to Mr. Sullivan's *Romeo*. The afterpiece was *The Mad Politician*, and in the course of the evening there was "a great variety of singing and dancing."¹⁰⁸

For some reason this fall engagement was not well patronized. The entertainment was excellent, but the houses were unusually small. The Editor of the *Journal* could explain this only as due to a scarcity of funds, or a lack of theatrical taste, - presumably the former. Notwithstanding the poor attendance, the actors acquitted themselves with credit, and the Editor was generous in his praise, especially of Mrs. Hart.¹⁰⁹

The season in Tallahassee lasted about two weeks, from January 9 to 20. The *Star of Florida*, of January 12, announced Sullivan's benefit for the 13th, and Mrs. Hart's "in a few days," but did not name the plays. Mr. Hart's benefit was advertised for the 20th "under the immediate patronage of the Jockey Club" - evidently a stylish occasion. The bill was *London Assurance*, with the farce *The Rival Soldiers*. Between the pieces there was a song by Mrs. Hart and a dance by Fanny Hubbard. In the farce, Hart took the part of *Nipperkin*, one of his funniest portrayals.¹¹⁰

The *Star*, or, perhaps, one of the junior partners of that press, was far more interested in the audiences than in the plays. "The beauty and fashion of Tallahassee" attended liberally. "Many fragrant buds of beauty, just blushing into woman-

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, December 24, 1842.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* ¹¹⁰ *Star of Florida*, January 19, 1843.

hood, astonished the eyes" of those who had been away from the city for a while. Any one who wished to see the variety of Tallahassee's female loveliness, would be satisfied by visiting Hart's theatre, and taking his seat near the front boxes, &c. ¹¹¹

The spring season in Apalachicola was an unusually long one, almost seven weeks. After the discouragingly small attendance in December, Hart naturally did his best to attract the public to his Theatre. The style of his performances, the Editor of the *Journal* thought, was perhaps too liberal for profit. But the response was gratifying, and the company played "to full houses and fashionable audiences." ¹¹²

In the December engagement the two little girls, Clara Caulfield and Fanny Hubbard, had been very popular, and in the week January 30 to February 4, they gave two independent "theatrical representations." ¹¹³ But the season proper opened February 27 and lasted till April 12. The bill for March 4 was Noah's melodrama *The Wandering Boys* followed by one of Hart's favorite farces, *The Rival Soldiers*, and between the pieces a song by Mrs. Hart.

The big occasion of the season was the benefit for the Fire Engine Company, the evening of March 13. Hart chose as the play, the always popular *The Honeymoon*, and the equally popular farce, *Fortune's Frolic*. "The house was full and fashionable, and the most perfect order and decorum preserved. The performers were greeted by the smiles of beauty and the plaudits of the numerous gentlemen assembled. Everything passed off harmoniously and to the utmost satisfaction of the audience." So the enthusiastic Editor of the *Journal*. Fanny Hubbard in two dances was warmly applauded, Mr. Hart in the farce was incessantly funny, and even Mr. Finch,

111. *Ibid.*,

112. *Florida Journal*, March 4, 1843 113. *Ibid.*, February 4, 1843.

as the *Duke of Aranza*, came in for some flattering words. But of course the brilliant star in the galaxy was Mrs. Hart. As *Juliana* in *The Honeymoon*, she "was most enthusiastically cheered."¹¹⁴

On March 21 Mrs. Caulfield took her benefit. The play was the musical comedy *Tom Thumb*, new in Apalachicola, in which Clara Caulfield, aged ten, took the name part. The piece was received with great applause and was repeated in Fanny Hubbard's benefit on April 1. This evening the after-piece was *The Maid and the Magpie*, and between the pieces there were songs by Mrs. Hart, Mr. Caulfield, and Mr. Monroe.

For her benefit on April 5 Mrs. Hart chose *London Assurance* and the farce *Loan of a Lover*. There was also the usual song by Mrs. Hart and the dance by Fanny Hubbard. The season closed with Hart's benefit on April 12. The play was Payne's melodrama *Ali Pacha*, or *The Greek Struggle for Liberty*. For the farce Hart repeated *The Rival Soldiers* and once more delighted the audience with the part of *Nipperken*. Between the pieces there were songs and dances, and a scene from the comedy *The Hypocrite*.

The company remained in Apalachicola until about May 15. In the week ending May 13 the town enjoyed a visit from a real star, the well-known tragedian, Augustus A. Addams, who was on his way "to the West by way of Mobile."¹¹⁵ On the evening of May 12 a complimentary benefit was given for Mr. Hart, the play being Payne's tragedy of *Brutus*. In this Addams played the title role.

So far as we have any record, Addams was the first metropolitan star to visit Apalachicola. In reporting this, the *Commercial Advertiser* says that

114. *Ibid.*, March 18, 1843.

115. *Commercial Advertiser*, May 17, 1843.

Addams "made his last appearance on our boards" on May 12. It is not clear whether "last" means "most recent" or "final one of a series." If it means either, it would probably be the latter, and would indicate that Addams gave one or more entertainments before the evening of May 12.

The Harts, with at least part of their company, spent the summer of 1843 at St. Joseph. They entertained the summer guests at that resort with "excerpts from the drama and concert combined."¹¹⁶ It was in August of this summer that Hart took a company to Pensacola and played a short engagement there, as has been noted in the story of the Pensacola theatre.¹¹⁷

Hart's season of 1843-44 was his final one as Manager. He omitted the customary engagement in Tallahassee and later in the year gave up his Theatres in Montgomery and Columbus. Our information about his season in Apalachicola is meager, but what we have indicates that he was not having an easy time financially.

This may have been due in part to the overexpansion of his company and their activities in the previous season. But the real reason was the general financial depression which had been deepening since 1837, and which reached its nadir in North Florida about this time. Very naturally, amusement enterprises were among those that were hit the hardest. And taxes, levied on theatrical exhibitions both by the Legislative Council of the Territory and by the towns of Hart's circuit, did not help any.

Notwithstanding the discouraging outlook, Hart was in Apalachicola early in November preparing for the winter season.¹¹⁸ At least once he had to

116. *Watchman of the Gulf*, August 12, 1843. Letter from St. Joseph, August 11, 1843, signed "Manton."

117. *Ibid.*, September 9, 1843.

118. *Commercial Advertiser*, November 4, 1843.

postpone his announced opening because of the late arrival of part of his company.¹¹⁹ But by November 15 they were all assembled, and the company played till December 1. Of the new members the only one whose name is left to us was Mrs. Shea, formerly Blanche Kemble, a first cousin of Fanny Kemble.

Of the performances offered by the company we know only of the one on November 30. That evening the bill was the tragedy *Fazio* or *The Italian Wife*, followed by the farce *The Secret*. The admission was fifty cents. This small item tells its part of the story of hard times. Mrs. Shea's benefit was announced for December 1 but no further details are known.

Instead of going to Tallahassee as usual Hart took his company to Key West where they played "with considerable success."¹²⁰ "Considerable" is an elastic word. A correspondent from Key West to the *St. Augustine News* wrote on January 16, "the theatrical company are playing here to thin houses."¹²¹

In the interim Tallahassee and Apalachicola had the opportunity of seeing another important American star. On his way to New Orleans J. H. Hackett, the celebrated comedian, stopped at Tallahassee and on January 9 gave "an amusing entertainment . . . at the City Hotel, consisting of selected readings from Shakspeare &c."¹²² In Apalachicola Hackett gave two similar entertainments at the Mansion House the evenings of January 15 and 19. The admission to these performances was \$1.00.

In the week February 5 to 10 the Four Herren Arnold, fresh from successes in Charleston and Savannah, gave three "grand vocal and instrumen-

119. *Ibid.*, November 11, 1843. 120. *Ibid.*, January 29, 1844

121. *News*, January 27, 1844.

122. *Florida Sentinel*, January 9, 1844.

tal concerts " in the Council Chamber of Apalachicola.¹²³

One who signed himself "B" in a communication of February 12, reported that the music of the Arnolds "was good and was given with exceeding good taste and without any affectation or 'trickery.'" But he was pained to see so little encouragement given to entertainments of this kind. The authorities had charged the Arnolds \$7.00 for a license; and "B" noted with indignation, "we can assuredly expect no favors from those who find they are obliged to pay a tax for the privilege of singing to empty benches."¹²⁴

On his return from Key West early in February, Hart played a short season of a week in Apalachicola. Mrs. Hart's benefit was announced for the evening of February 14. With this announcement, the names of Mr. and Mrs. Hart disappear from the Apalachicola news. On the 16th of May, they arrived with their company at Nassau, N. P.¹²⁵ After this Nassau engagement, the company must have disbanded, for in the fall of 1844, the Harts, as well as the Carters, were stock actors in the company of Ludlow and Smith at the St. Charles Theatre in New Orleans.

In the spring of 1845, a Mr. Lovell took a small theatrical company to Apalachicola and played there from April 7 to April 21. In the company were Messrs. George Chapman, Lindon, Lovell, Proctor, Master Alonzo (Chapman?), Mrs. Chapman, Miss Chapman, Mrs. Emmett.

At Mr. Proctor's benefit on April 12, they presented Knowles' tragedy *Virginius* and the farce *The Whims of Splash*. Between the pieces "a choice selection" from Scott's *Lady of the Lake* was re-

123. *Commercial Advertiser*, February 5, 1844. 124. *Ibid.*

125. *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, June 6, 1844.

cited. Mr. Lindon's benefit came on April 21. The bill was the tragedy *The Apostate* with the farce *Does Your Mother Know You're Out?* As an interlude, "the adventures of Tam O'Shanter" was recited. The price of admission to Lovell's entertainments was 75 cents.¹²⁶

George Chapman of this company was a member of the famous Chapman family who in 1833 established at Cincinnati the "Floating Theatre" - probably the original "Show Boat." As actors, this family were all "extraordinary for their versatility and remarkable ability."¹²⁷

The Lovell entertainments were the last "rational amusement" in Apalachicola of which we have any record. Of the "irrational" we may note that Rich and Row's Mammoth Pavilion Circus had given its third performance, February 26, 1844. Tallahassee was more favored with circuses and menageries than Apalachicola. This was no doubt due to the fact that the circus companies, travelling by wagon, came into Florida from Dothan, Alabama and left through Thomasville, Georgia, or in the reverse direction. Tallahassee, therefore, lay directly in their line of travel. The years 1832, 1833, 1835, 1838, 1839 and 1846 each brought its show to town. The circuses played in Tallahassee in the winter months from December to March, and usually remained for three or four days.

III

St. Augustine

St. Augustine, it seems, did not attract the attention of actors to any great extent. This may have been due in part to its being somewhat difficult of access; and in part also to the large reduction,

126. *Commercial Advertiser*, April 12 and 19, 1845.

127. Ludlow, *op. cit.*, p. 568.

after 1835, of its English-speaking white population. Whatever the reason, the only information we have of theatrical activities in the town is of a short season in 1840, and another in 1843.

In May 1840, the tragedian W. C. Forbes, "of the Savannah Theatre,"¹²⁸ took a company of actors to St. Augustine and remained for two weeks from May 25 to June 8. The group was composed of Messrs. Forbes, Germon, Isherwood, Lyne, Mehan, Vose, Wegher, Mrs. Cleve, Mrs. Isherwood, and a dancer Miss Rosalie. They planned to play every night except Sunday. The performances were given in "Mr. Wharton's building," which "was hastily arranged" but "fitted up with taste."¹²⁹

In the town, the pleasure over Forbes' coming was darkly overshadowed by a serious misfortune which occurred Saturday forenoon, May 23, when some of the company were attacked by a party of Indians led by the chief Coacoochee. Two of the company and two other people were killed. Besides the *St. Augustine News*, various papers, including the *Savannah Georgian*, the *Charleston Courier*, the *Apalachicola Gazette*, and *Niles' Register* gave accounts of the disaster. In the aftermath of the attack, there was great confusion and much uncertainty as to just what had happened and as to the identity of the ones killed; and this uncertainty is seen in the newspaper accounts. The facts, as finally determined, were nearly as follows: Mr. Forbes brought the company from Savannah by steamer, at first by sea, and then up the St. Johns river to Picolata, arriving there Friday afternoon, May 22. He immediately proceeded to St. Augustine

128. *Apalachicola Gazette*, June 23, 1840, copying a "communication" from the Office of the *St. Augustine News* to the *Charleston Courier*.

129. *News*, May 29 and June 5, 1840.

where he hired a carriage and a wagon and sent them to Picolata for the rest of the company.

The players started for St. Augustine early Saturday morning, the carriage going first with the ladies, the wagon following with the company's paraphernalia of costumes, scenery &c. In the party, but not connected with the theatrical corps, were a Mr. Burnet of Savannah and a Mr. Miller of Brunswick, Georgia. The carriage reached St. Augustine safely. But between 9:00 and 10:00 A. M., when about eight miles from its destination, the wagon was attacked by the Indians who, it was supposed, mistook it for a military escort. Mr. Burnet, Mr. Miller, Mr. Vose, and a company musician Mr. Wegher, were all killed. Germon, after running three miles, reached Fort Searle, pursued all the way and fired at repeatedly by two Indians. Immediately after the attack, about thirty Indians went to Fort Searle, decked out in the actor's costumes, and "danced all around the place, challenging the soldiers to fight; but they were too weak to sally out." ¹³⁰

In spite of his bad fortune and the handicaps which resulted, Forbes opened his engagement on the scheduled date, Monday, May 25. The play for the evening was that perennial "opener," *The Honeymoon*. Unfortunately, it rained so hard, both on Monday and Tuesday nights, that the performances had to be postponed. But on Wednesday and Thursday evenings the "house was filled." ¹³¹ We are told nothing of the plays those evenings; but Miss Rosalie delighted, the audience with her grace, and Mr. Germon with his voice.

130. *Niles' Register*, LVIII (June 20, 1840), 243.

Not long afterwards a stone marker, called a monument, was placed on the site of this attack, erected through subscriptions of the profession. It still survives, and is perhaps all that remains today relating to the theatre in territorial Florida.

131. *News*, May 29, 1840.

The bill for Friday, May 29, was *Othello*, with the farce *The Secret*. In the tragedy, Forbes played *Othello*, Mr. Isherwood, *Iago*, Lyne, *Cassio*, Germon, *Roderigo*, Mehan, *Montano*, Mrs. Cleve, *Desdemona*, and Mrs. Isherwood, *Emilia*.

On the closing night, June 8, Forbes took his benefit. The mainpiece was Otway's *Venice Preserved*, the afterpiece, *The Review*. The Editor of the *News*, writing of this performance, reported that "the house was crowded at an early hour, over two-thirds of whom were ladies. Several amateurs volunteered on the occasion and sustained with admirable effect their respective parts."¹³²

The five pieces whose names have been preserved were not, of course, the entire repertory of the company. Forbes' personal interest was in tragedy, and he would naturally be prepared to present more than *Othello* and *Venice Preserved*. That he did go to St. Augustine equipped to offer *Hamlet* and *Richard III*, is seen in the story of the meeting of Coacoochee and his retinue with Colonel W. J. Worth at Fort Cummings on March 5, 1841: "Having recently attacked a theatrical troupe near St. Augustine and appropriated their wardrobe, the Indian delegation was enabled to appear *en grande tenue*. Coacoochee had donned the nodding plumes of the prince of Denmark. At his elbow appeared, with an evident sense of the fitness of things, Horatio; and close behind came another proud monarch of the forest, wrapped in King Richard's robes, which were not unbecoming to the wearer."¹³³

At the close of the season, the company went to Charleston - all except Lyne and Germon. On Thursday, June 11, these two gave a "Musical and

132. *Ibid.*, June 12, 1840.

133. Theophilus F. Rodenbough, *Front Everglade to Cañon with the Second Dragoons* (New York, 1875), p. 55.

Dramatic Soiree.”¹³⁴ It was part of their further plans to give similar entertainments in Jacksonville and at Black Creek; and on Saturday, June 13, they left, with the mail, for the former place. Near Augers, they were again chased by Indians for about three miles. This time there were no casualties, except that “the horse of the private conveyance shortly after died.”¹³⁵

In commending these players to the public, the *Herald* remarked: “They are no ordinary performers. They have acquired much celebrity at the North and West where they have performed.”¹³⁶ The Isherwoods had been successful actors at the Park Theatre in New York from 1836 to 1839.¹³⁷ Mrs. Isherwood, before her marriage, was Fanny Clarke, the eldest of the three talented daughters of the favorite actor J. H. Clarke, who died August 8, 1838.

Forbes, the Manager, had starred in Southern theatres as early as 1832. Since then, he had at various times filled engagements in New York. On August 24, 1838, he appeared at the Franklin Theatre in the benefit for the orphan daughters of J. H. Clarke, Rosetta and Constantia, sisters of Mrs. Isherwood. As Manager of the New Charleston Theatre from 1842 to 1847 he was highly regarded by his patrons, not only for his acting but also for his successful direction of the affairs of the Theatre.¹³⁸

134. *News*, June 12, 1840.

135. *Niles' Register*, LVIII (July 4, 1840), 279, from *St. Augustine News*, June 16, 1840.

136. *Florida Herald*, May 29, 1840.

137. It is here assumed, with little evidence, that these actors were Mr. and Mrs. William Isherwood, and not Mr. and Mrs. H. Isherwood. Forbes had known the former intimately in New York, and may have engaged them as members of his Savannah company for the season 1839-40. Furthermore, William Isherwood was an actor of some note, whereas H. Isherwood was known in the theatre mostly as a scenist, or scene-painter.

138. Hoole, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-50.

Miss Rosalie, "the charming singer from New Orleans,"¹³⁹ was popular in New York in 1841-42, both as a singer and as a dancer.

Germon was a singing actor who, as we have seen, was a member of Hart's Apalachicola company thru the winter following his season in St. Augustine. He later was a regular actor at the American Theatre in New Orleans.

Thomas A. Lyne was a performer of "heavy" parts who had been acting in Western and Southern theatres since before 1833. Not long after his engagement in St. Augustine he was in Nauvoo, Illinois, a member of the dramatic company formed by the Mormon leader Joseph Smith. When the Mormon community went on their long trek westward, Lyne went with them.¹⁴⁰ Toward the end of his life, he became "a celebrated Mormon preacher."¹⁴¹ It is interesting, and maybe important, to note that his progress from stage to pulpit was by way of an Indian massacre.

The small company which played in St. Augustine in May 1843 was apparently under the management of Mr. Heild of the Savannah Theatre.¹⁴² The company included Messrs. Collins, Henry, Hield, Mrs. Henry and possibly others. They opened the night of May 19 and remained till about June 1.

The only bill we have is the one of their second night. The mainpiece was the comic opera *The Soldier's Return*; the afterpiece was the burlesque tragedy *Bombastes Furioso*. Between the pieces there were songs, and Mr. Hield recited "The Seven Ages of Man" from *As You Like It*. The evening ended (by desire) with "the famous negro extravaganza, song and chorus by the whole company, *The*

139. Odell, *op. cit.*, IV, 584.

140. Coad and Mims, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

141. Sol Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

142. *News*, July 22, 1843.

Carolina Crow. Admittance, 50 cents. Entrance opposite the front of the Florida House.”¹⁴³

Conclusion

The story of theatrical activities in early Florida, fragmentary as it must be, gives us a glimpse of an all but forgotten phase of territorial culture. The extent of these activities is not the least surprising part of the story. The meagre records available give the names of forty separate plays used as mainpieces, and of twenty-seven farces. If we estimate the total number of pieces in the combined repertoires of the various companies to have been two to three times the number of those whose names have been preserved - certainly, a conservative estimate - in twenty-five years, some one hundred mainpieces and seventy farces were offered the people of the four towns for their pleasure. That was a great deal more than they had the opportunity to enjoy in the following one hundred years.

The audiences who attended these performances were not different, supposedly, from theatre audiences in general. Then, as now, there was no doubt “some quantity of barren spectators” who were incapable of interest in the nicer points of the play. But there was another element, too : men and women of refinement, of good taste, and of good judgement. And there must have been many more of these than the theatre records mention. They thought of the drama as a means of implanting virtue, of dignifying truth, and of elevating the taste. They not only enjoyed the theatre, but they saw in it a salutary social instrument and gave it their encouragement and support.

As to the quality of the performances, these

143. *Ibid.*, May 20, 1843.

sensible critics were under no illusions. They knew well enough that the entertainments of the Florida companies lacked practically all the attractive features of metropolitan productions. But they also knew what we often forget. We tend to see only the star, forgetting that the play is the thing. Intelligent attendants at these earlier theatres knew from observation that an ensemble without a star, under reasonably adequate direction, can give a creditable total performance, even tho it lacks here and there the refinements which finished artists would lend it.

Of the players themselves, a respectable number were good actors by any standard. And some of them made names for themselves on more important stages. But the names of most of them were written in water. They sought the opportunity to earn a living by their talents; beyond that, they desired most of all the plaudits of those they tried to please. And it is agreeable to note that they received them. In their day, they honestly endeavored to bring to their fellow-citizens the pleasure and delight of wholesome amusement; and to this worthy purpose, the public gave, in fairly liberal measure, their favor and applause.

THE ALAGON, PUNON ROSTRO, AND
VARGAS LAND GRANTS

by T. FREDERICK DAVIS

In the year 1803, when public attention was directed to the question of our right of deposit at New Orleans, the United States House of Representatives appointed a committee to report upon certain matters, including the advisability of annexing Spanish East and West Florida to the United States. The report of this committee concluded: "If we look forward to the free use of the Mississippi, the Mobile, the Apalachicola, and the other rivers of the west, by ourselves and our posterity, New-Orleans and the Floridas must become a part of the U. States, either by purchase or by conquest." This was notice to Spain of our future policy towards her -and this policy never varied until the accomplishment of the desired end through a series of events that were sometimes tainted with injustice to Spain.

The Patriot War or rebellion in East Florida (1812-13), Andrew Jackson's occupation of Pensacola (1814), MacGregor's invasion of East Florida (1817), followed by the occupation of Amelia Island on the northeast border of East Florida by United States troops in December 1817, were steps in the design of the United States to obtain possession of the Floridas. Spain could do little more than view these military activities with alarm. Her South American colonies were in revolt. Conditions at

Note - This is one of the *Pioneer Florida* series of historical sketches from contemporaneous sources, beginning in the October 1943 issue of this Quarterly. Except where noted the source of this article is the current issues of *Niles' Weekly Register*, published at Baltimore, and sometimes called the semi-official organ of the United States government in that period. Hezekiah Niles, historian and author, published all of the official documents of the time, and many more; and in carefully prepared editorials presented, as we might say, the "human side" of affairs.

home were far from good. She was fully aware that should the United States decide to move in openly and seize the Floridas by force, she was too weak to successfully combat it.

Luis de Onis, Spanish representative at Washington, had for some time bombarded our State Department with protests against illegal armaments organized in the United States for attack upon Spanish possessions. These protests were either ignored or sidestepped. Onis filed a vigorous protest against the United States occupation of Amelia Island in December 1817. In answer, John Quincy Adams, our Secretary of State, in a long letter to Onis, dated January 16, 1818, touched upon the previous protests of Onis and went fully into the matter in hand. He explained that MacGregor's government had been succeeded by a piratical establishment dangerous alike to the interests of Spain and the United States, and since Spain was unable to break it up, the United States had decided to do so. The letter was carefully and adroitly worded, but carried a dictatorial tone. Adams suggested that Spain cede Florida to the United States and thereby rid herself of all of the troubles it was causing her; he enclosed a draft of a treaty that would be acceptable to the United States.

Onis replied to Adams on January 24, likewise -with a lengthy recital, setting forth the impossibility of any such thing as a cession upon any such terms as proposed by Adams, and offered a counter proposal. There followed an exchange of notes between the two, each parrying, until an agreement on broad principles was in sight. At this stage, Andrew Jackson again swept into Florida (March 1818), and these preliminary negotiations came to an abrupt end. Rather shady explanations of Jackson's purpose and conduct were communicated to Onis to be

forwarded to Spain, where they were considered acceptable; and the negotiations for the cession of the Floridas were resumed in earnest in October 1818. After more than four months of tedious bickering, Adams and Onís concluded a treaty of "Amity, Settlement and Limits", by which the United States eventually acquired Florida east of the Perdido river, without paying Spain a dollar for it.¹ The treaty was dated February 22, 1819, but it was exactly two years later that it became effective. The title of this article indicates one of the most important factors contributing to the two years' delay. In order to trace it out we must begin with the Amelia Island occupation by the United States in December, 1817.

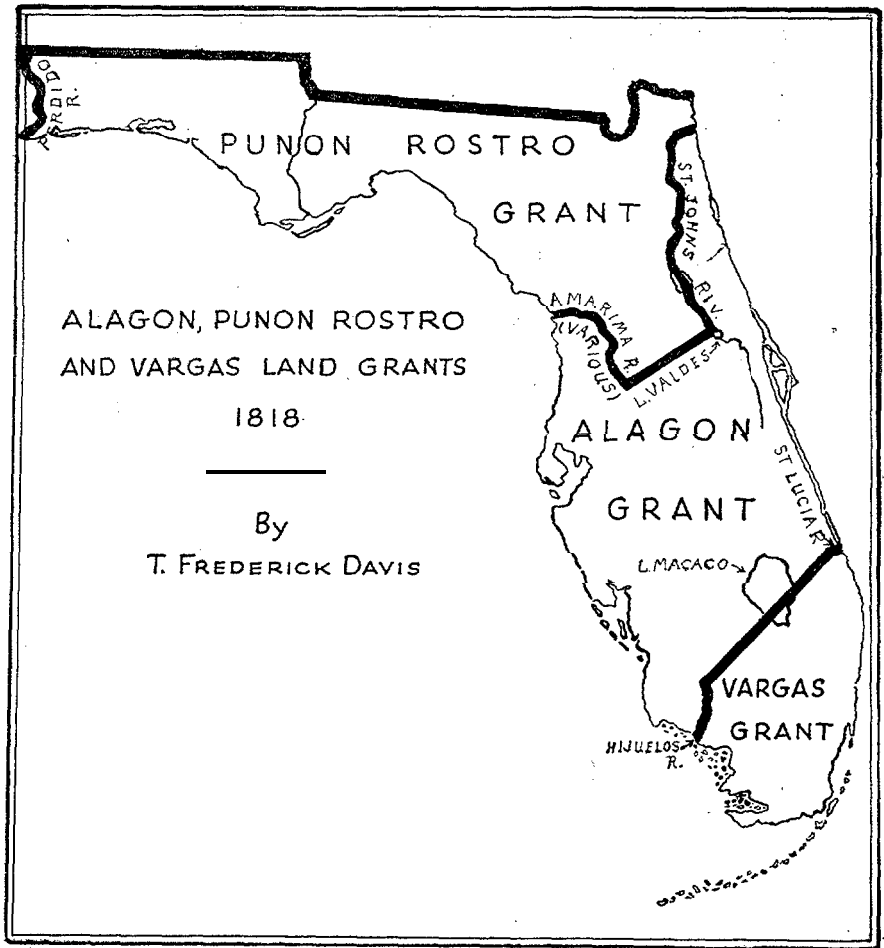
It *could* have been a coincidence, but the chances are that Ferdinand VII, King of Spain, had received intelligence of the occupation of Amelia Island by the United States and jumped to the conclusion that this was the beginning of a purposed conquest of Florida - and he had many reasons for thinking so. To complicate the situation and embarrass the United States, and at the same time erect a face-saving shield for himself, Ferdinand forthwith made vast grants of land in both Floridas to three of his favorites, the Duke of Alagon, the Count of Punon

1. The treaty provided that all *national* claims, one country against the other, should be cancelled flat. The United States guaranteed the payment of certain private claims of its citizens against Spain, to an amount not exceeding \$5,000,000; these were largely commercial claims or contracts, and in the final awards three-fourths of the total amount went to merchants and underwriters in Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore. By August, 1824, all claims under the treaty had been liquidated or provided for, amounting to \$5,000,000, less some \$200,000 deducted by the government for delinquent customs bonds and fees. Though they were not Floridian, Florida herself indirectly paid these claims through the sale of her lands. This was the only monetary provision of the treaty. Strictly speaking, the United States did not *purchase* Florida, they *acquired* it.

Rostro, and Don Pedro de Vargas, with the evident intention and perhaps belief that these grants, together with those made previously throughout the years, would establish the whole of Florida in private title. It seems to have been a spontaneous act of revenge, the aftermath of which caused the United States a great deal of uncertainty and worry, and doubtless furnished Ferdinand an opportunity to rub his hands and chuckle with glee.

Under date of February 10, 1818, our minister to Spain, George W. Erving, reported that the King of Spain had lately made large grants of land in Florida to several of his favorites, and took the occasion to remark, "This is perhaps his mode of preparing for a cheap cession of the territory to the United States". On February 26 Erving forwarded to Washington extracts of the Alagon and Punon Rostro grants, and on April 5 forwarded what was purported to be a full copy of the Vargas grant, dated March 10, 1818. This information was not official, and apparently was derived from "silent" sources. Secretary Adams ordered Erving to make every effort to bring about the cancellation of these grants. In this Erving was unsuccessful, but he secured a restriction upon the grants that the lands should not be sold. When news of the Jackson invasion reached the King, he rescinded these restrictions, leaving the situation as it was in the beginning.

With the resumption of the negotiations for the cession of the Floridas in October 1818, the question of the large land grants entered the discussions immediately. It was agreed that they should be cancelled by an article in the pending treaty. The matter of their dates now became involved. Adams was not satisfied with the information forwarded by Erving, considering its source unofficial and possibly un-



trustworthy. Onis did not possess certified copies of the grants, but said he was sure they were made subsequently to January 24, 1818. To send to Spain and get back certified copies of the grants would require the better part of two months, and as all other points had been settled, Adams accepted the date January 24, 1818² as the voiding date of land grants in Florida; that is, all grants of land made by Spain after January 24, 1818, were to be null and void. The treaty was signed February 22, approved by Congress February 24, and ratified by President Monroe February 25, 1819.

Figuratively, the ink of President Monroe's signature had hardly become dry when someone started a rumor that the three large land grants were actually made January 23, 1818, and therefore were not voided by the treaty. Adams, plainly nervous and worried, took the matter up at once. The story can be satisfactorily told in a brief of the communications on the subject,³ written by:

John Quincy Adams, U. S. Secretary of State

John Forsyth, U. S. Minister to Spain (successor to Erving)

Luis de Onis, Spanish Minister at Washington

G. Hyde de Neuville, French Minister to U. S. (proxy for Onis at times)

Casa Yrujo, Spanish Secretary of State

Manuel Gonzales Salmon, Spanish Act'g. Secretary of State

San Fernando y Quiroga, Spanish Secretary of State

2. Article 8 of the treaty provided: ". . . . All grants [of land] made since the said 24th of January, 1818, when the first proposal, on the part of His Catholic Majesty, for the cession of the Floridas was made, are hereby declared and agreed to be null and void." This note will explain why January 24th was selected as the date.

3. See also: Onis, *Memoir upon the Negotiations between Spain and the United States Which Led to the Treaty of 1819*. Washington, 1821.

Francisco Dionisio Vives, Special Spanish Envoy to Washington (successor to Onis)

Adams to Onis, March 10, 1819. Wishes to verify specifically the stipulation in Article 8 of the treaty as to the voiding of the large land grants; states that the date of the Alagon grant is not definitely known, but was supposed in the negotiations to be subsequent to January 24, 1818; asks Onis to certify his agreement on the point. Onis replied the same day expressing the same opinion as Adams. (Some time afterwards Onis returned to Spain "on account of ill health.")

Adams to Forsyth, March 10, 1819. Encloses a copy of Onis's note of even date, regarding the date of the Alagon grant, to be delivered to the Spanish Secretary of State should any question arise on this point.

Adams to Neuville, March 17, 1819. Asks for his impression concerning the 8th article of the treaty, whether all parties concerned with its preparation understood and believed that the three large grants of land were made subsequently to January 24, 1818; states that there are current rumors that these grants were actually made January 23, 1818. Neuville answered the next day, agreeing with Adams that all parties understood and agreed that the 8th Article would void the three large land grants.

Forsyth to Yrujo, May 19, 1819. Has the treaty in hand and is ready for the exchange of ratifications.

Forsyth to Yrujo, June 4, 1819. Urges promptness in the exchange of ratifications.

Salmon to Forsyth, June 19, 1819. Replies to notes of May 19 and June 4. States that the King . . . on reflecting on the great importance and interest of the treaty in question, he is under the

indispensable necessity of examining it with the greatest caution and deliberation before he proceeds to ratify it."

Forsyth to Salmon, June 21, 1819. In straight, business-like American fashion, replies to Salmon's note, with expressions as to why the King should ratify the treaty.

Salmon to Forsyth, August 10, 1819. The King is greatly offended by the undiplomatic approach of Forsyth in his letter of June 21, and is considering the dispatch to Washington of a special envoy to discuss several subjects that have been created requiring explanation by the United States.

Forsyth to Salmon, August 12, 1819. Apologizes for giving offense in his letter of June 21, and says it was not intentional.

Salmon to Forsyth, August 19, 1819. The King will dispatch a special envoy to Washington to discuss certain questions that have arisen in the course of the recent exchanges, and from other sources; does not specify the questions. (It is patent that the King was stalling.)

Article 16 of the treaty provided: "The present treaty shall be ratified in due form by the contracting parties, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in six months from this time, or sooner if possible." President Monroe ratified it February 25, 1819. In any construction of the limiting clause, Spain's ratification was required not later than August 25th, to make it valid. The limit expired without Spain's ratification and therefore the treaty became null and void. It cannot be supposed that Ferdinand did not realize this. He used the disturbance over the land grants as a pretext for the delay that voided the treaty, in the hope that Spain might yet derive some advantage from the discussions that were sure to follow, notwithstanding the danger that the

United States might seize Florida without further ado.

Forsyth to Quiroga, October 2, 1819. States that although the time provision for the ratification of the treaty had expired, the United States will agree to accept the treaty, provided it be ratified by Spain at once, along with a specific annulment of the land grants to Alagon, Punon Rostro, and Vargas.

Quiroga to Forsyth, October 8, 1819. Replies to Forsyth's letter of the 2nd; evades a definite answer as to the land grants.

Forsyth to Quiroga, October 18, 1819. Strong note, which Quiroga returned to Forsyth November 12, as ". . . repugnant to the delicacy and attention which are peculiar to, and invariably observed in diplomatic communications." Authentic copies of the large land grants in Florida, requested by Forsyth, were refused.

In the President's message to Congress, December 7, 1819: Spain's present objections to ratifying the treaty are the required nullification of the three large land grants; and the sponsoring by the United States of an expedition against Texas, which he explains.

Adams to William Lowndes (chairman of H. R. committee on foreign relations) *December 16, 1819.* Further information on the subject of Spain's failure to ratify the Florida treaty: apprehension of the Spanish cabinet that if the treaty were ratified, the United States would immediately recognize the independence of one or more of the revolting South American republics.

Quiroga to Forsyth, December 16, 1819. The King has appointed the Marechal de Camp, Don Francisco Dionisio Vives, envoy to proceed to Washington with full authority to settle the disputed points con-

cerning the Florida treaty. (Vives arrived in Washington April 9, 1820.)

Congress-H. R. March 8, 1820. A bill was introduced to authorize and require the President to take possession of and occupy East and West Florida, because of the long delay of Spain to do justice to the United States, and the want of hope of an amicable negotiation. (On March 27th, the President sent a special message to Congress advising postponement of action on the bill until next session.)

Vives presented his credentials, and opened correspondence with Adams, April 14, 1820. The sum and substance of the exchange of notes is indicated in Adams's letter to Vives, May 3, 1820: The United States are in no wise responsible for the hostile expeditions against Spanish dominions in America; the United States can contract no engagement not to form relations with the South American colonies; repeats what has already been fully explained concerning the interpretation of Article 8, voiding the land grants of Alagon, Punon Rostro, and Vargas.

Vives to Adams, May 5, 1820. Considers all points satisfactorily explained, except as to the recognition of the revolting colonies of Spain; will submit this question to the King, and asks the indulgence of the United States until a reply is received.

Message of the President to Congress, November 14, 1820. States that the Spanish Cortes has decided the question of the Florida treaty and its decision is daily expected.

Upon the advice of the Cortes, Ferdinand ratified the treaty without change, October 24, 1820. The precise date of its arrival in Washington is not known with certainty, but is presumed to have been received sometime in February, 1821. By and with the advice and consent of the Senate, President

Monroe again ratified the treaty February 22, 1821, two years to the day after its date, both dates being the anniversary of George Washington's birth.⁴

Adams's two years of worry as to the dates of the large land grants was now ended, doubtless much to his satisfaction and relief. With the treaty Ferdinand sent certified copies of the three grants, which carried the dates: Alagon, February 6; Punon Rostro, February 6; Vargas, April 9, 1818. The certified copies of these famous Florida land grants follow in full, in translation.⁵

THE ALAGON GRANT

[To] My governor and captain general of the island of Cuba and its dependencies: the duke of Alagon baron de Espes, has manifested to me, on the twelfth of July last as follows: "Sire: The duke of Alagon baron de Espes, captain of your majesty's royal body guards, with the greatest respect, exposes - that, it being the interest of the crown that the uncultivated lands should be given to great capitalists, in order that they may be peopled and cultivated, from which flow the advantages pointed out and advised by all politicians, and by means of which much or nearly the most of the fertile soil of the Floridas has been discovered, and it being a right of your majesty, as absolute lord, to distribute them for the benefit of agriculture, and in reward and recompence of the eminent services which have been rendered to your majesty and your whole kingdom; being desirous of deserving those marks of the value of his magnanimous courage, and of contributing as far as possible to fulfill the designs of population, so interesting to the commonweal, he humbly requests your majesty, that you would deign to grant him *all the uncultivated land not ceded in East Florida, which lies between the rivers St. Lucia and Saint John, as far as the mouths by which they empty themselves into the sea and the coast of the Gulf of Florida, and the adjacent islands, with the mouth of the river Hijuelos, in the twenty-sixth degree of latitude, following the left bank up to its source, drawing a line from lake Macaco, then descending by the way of the river Saint John to the lake Valdes, crossing by another line from the extreme north of said lake to the source of the river Amarima,*

4. The date was selected by Onis (in 1819) as he says (*op. cit.*, p. 141) "... making choice of that day as being most sacred to the Anglo-Americans, on account of its being the birth day of the founder of their Republick, Washington."
5. An unabridged copy of the treaty, together with the three land grants and the accompanying papers and certificates, will be found in *Niles' Weekly Register*, XX, March 17, 1821, pp. 39-44.

*following its right bank as far as its mouth, in the twenty-eighth or twenty-fifth [sic.] degree of latitude, and running along the sea coast, with all the adjacent islands, up to the mouth of the river Hijuelos,*⁶ in full property to himself and his heirs; allowing them also to import negroes, for the labor and cultivation of the lands free of duties: a gift which I hope to obtain from your majesty's innate goodness.

Having taken the premises into consideration, and bearing in mind the distinguished merit of the memorialist, and his signal zeal for my royal service, as well as the benefits to be derived by the state from an increase in population in the countries the cession whereof he has solicited, I have judged fit to grant him the same, in so far as is conformable to the laws of these my kingdoms; and to make it known to my council of the Indies, for its due execution, by a royal order of the seventeenth of December in the year aforementioned. Wherefore, I charge and command you, by this my royal cedula, with due observance of the laws to such cases pertaining, to give full and effectual aid to the execution of the said cession, taking all requisite measures for its accomplishment, without injury to a third party; and in order that the said duke of Alagon may forthwith carry his plans into execution, in conformity with my beneficent desires in favor of the agriculture and commerce of the said territories, which require a population proportioned to the fertility of the soil and the defence and security of the coasts, he giving regular accounts of his proceedings, it being understood that the introduction of negroes, which the same cession comprehends, ought as far as relates to the traffic in them, to be subject to the regulations prescribed, by my royal cedula of the nineteenth of December last, for such is my will; and that due note be taken of the present cedula in the office of accountant general of the Indies.

Dated at the Palace, the 6th of February, one thousand eight hundred and eighteen.

I, The King

Early United States maps and other sources indicate variously the river Amarima, Amanima, Amaxura, Amaruja, all easily identified as the present Withlacoochee. River Hijuelos was Yonge's River, below Cape Romano. Lake Macaco was Lake Okeechobee. Lake Valdes was Lake Monroe. Gulf of Florida was the sea between Florida and the upper Bahamas.

It appears that Alagon actually made an attempt to claim his property. In the summer of 1818, two of his agents, Nicolas Garrido and Antonio Cuartero, arrived in St. Augustine from Spain, opened an

⁶. *Italic for emphasis. Not in original.*

office, and proceeded to examine all grants for the purpose of making a register. Governor Coppinger gave them free access to the papers. The agents were in St. Augustine several months.⁷

THE PUNON ROSTRO GRANT

[To] My governor and captain general of the island of Cuba and its dependencies: The brigadier the count of Punon Rostro submitted to me on the third of November last, what follows: "Sire-The brigadier the count of Punon Rostro, grandee of Spain of the first class, and your gentleman of the bed chamber in actual attendance &c, &c, throws himself at your majesty's royal feet with the most profound respect, and submits to your majesty: That, prompted by the desire of promoting, by all possible means, the improvement of the extensive waste and unsettled lands possessed by your majesty in the Americas, which, by their fertility offer the greatest advantages, not only to your memorialist, but to the state, provided due effect, as is hoped, be given to the noble project formed by your majesty's memorialist of concerting a small portion of those deserts into the abode of peaceable christians and industrious inhabitants, who will increase the population of your kingdom, promote agriculture and commerce, and thereby add immensely to your royal revenues. This enterprise should be conducted by a person, who, with a knowledge of the country, would combine the intelligence necessary for comparing the progress by other nations in similar institutions, and particularly by the United States, which within a very recent period, have advanced their power to an extraordinary height, and especially in the instance of the Mobile country, adjoining Florida, which, in the last six years, has received such an influx of emigrants as to be converted from a desert waste into a rich commercial province, and peopled with more than three hundred thousand souls [*sic.*]. A similar change would be effected in Florida within eighteen or twenty years, by the adoption of judicious arrangements, and by those exertions which your majesty's memorialist proposes to employ for the promotion of his personal interest, and consequently that of the state. Relying on the merits of the case, and the lively interest felt by your majesty in the national prosperity, and in the services and sacrifices of your majesty's memorialist, he humbly requests your majesty that, taking them into consideration, you would be graciously pleased to grant and cede to him in full right and property, and the mode and manner required by law, *all the waste lands not heretofore ceded in Florida, lying between the river Perdido, westward of the Gulf of Mexico,*⁸ *and the rivers Amaruja and St. Johns, from Popa to the point where it empties into the ocean, for the eastern limit; and for the northern, the boundary line of the United States; and, to the*

7. *Spanish Land Grants in Florida*, Historical Records Survey, III, p. 16; *Niles' Weekly Register*, Aug. 15, 1818.

8. Probably meaning "lying between the river Perdido and the Gulf of Mexico, to the westward."

south, by the Gulf of Mexico, including the desert islands on the coast. He therefore, humbly prays, in consideration of the premises, and the unquestionable advantages to be derived by the nation, your majesty will be pleased to grant this petition; and, thereupon, direct the necessary orders to be given to the local authorities to afford him all due aid and protection, as well in designating the territory referred to, as in giving full effect to the whole enterprise. All which he hopes from the munificence of your majesty."

Having taken the premises into consideration, and bearing in mind the distinguished merits of the memorialist, and his signal zeal for my royal service, as well as the benefits to be derived by the state from an increase of population in the countries, the cession whereof he has solicited, I have judged fit to grant him the same, in so far as is conformable to the laws of these my kingdoms, and to make it known to my council of the Indies, for its due execution, by a royal order of the seventeenth of December in the year aforementioned. Whereof, I charge and command you, by this, my royal cedula, with due observance of the laws to such cases pertaining, to give full and due effect to the said cession, taking all requisite measures for its accomplishment, without injury to any third party, and to the end, that the said count of Punon Rostro may forthwith carry his plans into execution, in conformity with my beneficent desires in favor of the agriculture and commerce of the said territories, which require a population proportioned to the fertility of the soil, and the defence and security of the coasts, he giving regular accounts of his proceedings, for such is my will; and that due note be taken of the present cedula in the office of the accountant general of the Indies.

Dated at the Palace, the sixth day of February, one thousand eight hundred and eighteen.

I, The King

This vast grant covered the whole of West Florida and extended eastward north of the Withlacoochee to the St. Johns river, and north of the St. Johns to the ocean. From the records and other sources examined, it does not appear that Punon Rostro ever made a serious attempt to claim his property. Perhaps "the gentleman of the bed chamber" saw the handwriting on the wall.

THE VARGAS GRANT

[To] My governor and captain general of the island of Cuba, and its dependencies: under date of 25th January last, don Pedro de Vargas, manifested to me as follows: "Sire: don Pedro de Vargas, knight of the royal order of Alcantara, treasurer general of the royal house and patrimony of your majesty, with the most profound respect, at your royal feet, exposes that there is a quantity of vacant land in the territory of the

Floridas, and desiring that, if your majesty shall deign to reward his passable services, and the proofs he has given of his loyalty, it may be without the least burthen on the public treasury, or in prejudice of any third person, as may be done at present by some lands of the country, he beseeches your majesty, that, by an effect of your sovereign goodness, you would deign to him the property of the land which lies comprised within the following limits, that is to say: From the mouth of the river Perdido, and its bay in the Gulf of Mexico, following the sea coast to ascend by the bay of Buen Socorro and of Mobile in its lower part, and the bay of that name, returns by the sea coast towards the west; comprehending all the creeks, entries and islands adjacent, which may belong to Spain at the present time, till it reached the west line of the United States, then returning by their northern line, comprehending all the waste lands which belong, or may belong to Spain, and are in dispute or reclamation with the United States, according to the tenor of the treaties, and, *also all the waste land not ceded to any other individual, which is between the river Hijuelos, in East Florida, and the river St. Lucia, drawing a line from the source of one river to the source of the other, and following by the coast of the Gulf of Mexico, from the mouth of the Hijuelos to the point of Tancha⁹ and doubling this, by the coast of the Gulf of Florida to the mouth of the river St. Lucia, with the islands and keys adjacent.*"

Considering the contents of this exposition, and attending to the merits of the individual, and his accredited zeal for my royal service; as also to advantages to result to the state from peopling the said countries, I have thought proper to accede to the favor which he solicits, in as far as it be not opposed to the laws of these my kingdoms, and communicated it to my council of the Indies, for its accomplishment, in a royal order of the second of February last. Consequently, I recommend and charge you, by this my royal cedula, that, conforming to the laws which regulate in these affairs, and without prejudice to third persons, that you efficaciously aid the execution of the said grant, taking all the measures which may conduce to its due effect, as also to the augmentation of the population, agriculture and commerce, of the aforesaid possessions, giving account from time to time, of the progress made; for this is my will, and that due notice shall be taken of this cedula in the office of the accountant general of the Indies.

Dated at the Palace the ninth of April, one thousand eight hundred and eighteen.

I, The King

Vargas, like Punon Rostro, seems to have abandoned the idea of promoting population, agriculture and commerce, as his name does not appear in subsequent records.

9. Tancha is now Cape Sable.

THE CHART

In the accompanying chart the boundary lines are taken literally from the descriptions; that is, as they would be surveyed now. Some of the points mentioned in the grants were unknown to the Spaniards of that day; for instance, the source of the Withlacoochee river, which they thought was northeast of its mouth. But one thing seems certain—that the grants were intended to cover the whole of Florida, and that the boundary line of one was the abutting line of the other.

“THE CITY OF WRECKERS”

TWO KEY WEST LETTERS OF 1838

by KENNETH SCOTT

At the time of the war with the Seminoles a northern attorney, Charles Walker, spent some time at Key West. While there he sent two detailed letters to an uncle and aunt, Timothy Walker and his wife, Lydia, in his native Concord, New Hampshire. The pleasing style and keen observation of the writer afford a vivid picture of Key West shortly before 1840.

Charles was born on March 31, 1798, the son of Charles and Hannah Pickering Walker and grandson of the Honorable Timothy Walker, a leading citizen of Concord. He was educated at Philips Exeter Academy and Harvard, from which he was graduated in 1818. The next two years he was tutor and librarian at Transylvania University at Lexington, Kentucky, but then removed to New York City, where he studied law in the office of Thomas Addis Emmet, was admitted to the bar, and practised law for a number of years.

His only literary endeavor was the revision of a life of Thomas Emmet, written by Charles G. Haines. To this Walker added a memorial sketch of Haines, and the work was published in one volume by Carvell's in New York in 1829.

Charles Walker never married. He fell in love with the daughter of his friend, Thomas Emmet, and was greatly saddened by her untimely death. His ties with his relatives in New Hampshire were close, and among the Walker papers in the library of the New Hampshire Historical Society in Concord are preserved twelve of his letters, the earliest written from New York in 1832 and the latest from Key West in 1838. Three are from New York City, one was written on a steamer in Lake Champlain after a

summer's trip to Canada, two are from Key West, and six are from Porto Rico with St. John's, Ponce, or Guayama as addresses.

About 1835 Charles began to suffer from tuberculosis and was compelled to avoid the rigorous cold of northern winters. In Porto Rico he took a keen interest in the customs of the people and wrote to his uncle and aunt particularly of the religious observances and of the system of slavery which then existed on the island. In one letter, dated Guayama, P. R., December 28, 1836, he writes: "I came here on business & had my expenses paid. I soon accomplished it, but as the climate is dry and my health perfectly good, here I remain-I never enjoyed better health or lived more to my mind. Here are a number of excellent American families. . . . The lands are very fertile & plantations large & the gangs of slaves numerous, yet with all, did I own one & free from debt, I could not be happy to reside here. No one can appreciate the blessings of American liberty-till he goes abroad. . . . My health is now so restored that I hope this is the last season that I shall be compelled to go abroad. Next summer I hope to meet my relatives in Concord. . . . It is a wise formation of our being that attached us to the country of our birth."

Next winter, indeed, he planned to remain in his own country, for on October 1, 1837, he wrote from New York to Timothy and Lydia Walker that he would "shortly leave for Florida." "I have made up my mind," he says, "to take part of my law Books & embark in a day or two for Key West, Florida, the most Southern Point of the United States, about Latitude 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, & sixty miles from Havana. There is, I am told, a good law business done there, so I hope not to be idle, & if it pleases me, I shall settle in Florida - I cannot endure

the cold, & I wish not to leave our own country-
From there I will write you in the winter. . . .

True to his word, Charles dispatched that winter a letter from Key West which bears no date save a postmark, "February 1," but the year was definitely 1838. The letter follows:

¹ Key West, Florida

Dear Uncle & Aunt-

At the end of a little coral island, on a sandbar, a few feet above the level of the Ocean, stands the city of the wreckers. There are some eighty dwelling houses, principally small, eight or ten grogeries, three provision & grocery stores, with a few dry goods, three large ware houses & as many merchants, a physician, five lawyers, an Episcopal clergyman, & about three or four hundred inhabitants, including all colours. The island itself contains two thousand acres, in a state of nature, for the rock lies so near the surface, that nothing is grown upon it, not even the common vegetables. There is no back country to support the place, or settlements for hundreds of miles, except a few Bahama families of poor fishermen at Key Vaccas, and some wreckers at Indian Key. Yet the place has improved considerably this winter-a very expensive new ware house is being built, and four large buildings, two of which are dwelling houses & the others are stores.-At the salt pond, the Company are extending their works also, believing from late experiments, that the business is to be profitable. You will naturally enquire how we live, and the reply is very simple, in, by and through wrecks-If we are not directly interested in the business our support wholly comes from it. Stop that and we cease to live. It is true the priest is not

1. The letters of Charles Walker are published by the kind permission of Mr. Elmer Munson Hunt, Director of the New Hampshire Historical Society.

a wrecker, but if others were not, he would preach to the bare walls. Neither is the Judge, ² who is a man of great energy, integrity & legal attainments, yet but for the business of wrecking, his services would no more be required here than in the Rocky Mountains - Our collector is no wrecker, yet were no duty paid on goods subject to salvage, his whole business would be to enter and clear a few fishing smacks.

Annually \$100:000, and upwards, are decreed in salvages at Key West - To raise this sum, goods & vessels are sold to a much larger amount, for this is a very expensive place. The principal purchases are made, and, indeed, I may add, the whole mercantile business is done, by three houses, & two of these own vessels engaged in wrecking, and the other is the friend, merchant & banker of a person, who owns a great interest in such vessels. Between these establishments, and the different societies engaged in wrecking, there is great competition. They watch each other with unsleeping eyes. Their charges are all the same. Each has a good wharff and warehouse, and, in this little secluded place, each knows the other's business, & if anything unfair should be done, it would soon be proclaimed. Others too are here, in the winter particularly, who are watching every movement of the residents, and who are ready to purchase on speculation, whenever an opportunity offers. There are three distinct interests and so great is the competition & watchfulness, that there is no fear that the business entrusted to either will not be fairly transacted. Although all three are men of capital, and can command it to any amount, in forty eight hours, from Cuba, yet their business is irregular. There is no business but what the wreck-

2. James Webb, Judge of the Superior Court, Territory of Florida, Southern District, 1828-1839.

ers bring. If a merchant and wrecker are connected, the vessel and cargo saved from the reef is consigned to the merchant. There is necessarily an intimate connection between the two. At Rodrigues & Tavernier, near the Florida Reef, lay at anchor from ten o'clock in the morning till the next at daybreak some twenty well built, fast sailing, sloops & schooners, each manned with from ten to fourteen men. Each vessel has a diver, who will go into the cabin of a ship, or to the bottom of the sea, if not over six fathoms deep and bring up goods sunk, & each has also spare anchors & cables, and boats of different kinds. The masters of these vessels are part owners & most of them men of honesty, & citizens of the northern & middle states. A number of these vessels consort, as they term it, or go into partnership, for one is frequently not sufficient to relieve a vessel that has run on shore.

Just at day-light, from Key Tavernier & Rodrigues, at the same moment (for no one permits another to have the start)-the white cotton sails of some twenty beautiful sloops & schooners are hoisted, and each to its utmost presses ahead. It is every morning a beautiful sailing match - up & down the reef they cruise, & if nothing is found, by ten o'clock, all again are returned & moored - If any ship is on the reef, the first that boards her has the right by courtesy first to take into his employ, to assist him, those he has consorted with, - & as superabundant force is at hand, a tide can seldom pass before the wreck is off, & on her way to Key West- There the merchant who is interested with the first boarder generally receives the consignment of the vessel & cargo, which are regularly libelled, salvage decreed, sales made & the money divided among the salvors & the vessels. Many of the sailors spend their portions at the grogeries, & others carry it to

the north. The Captains, with very few exceptions, have families at the North or here to support, & are frugal, industrious men - In the division of salvage, (the vessel first receiving one half) the Captain has three shares, the mate two & each man one, but the vessel is provisioned at the owners expence. I do not think that the amount of salvage is generally so great here as in the Atlantic States, yet the other expences are much greater. - Salvage is such a per cent & the interest of the wrecker & his merchant is to obtain high prices. From the above I believe you will see that we all live by wrecking, directly or indirectly.

The general opinion entertained of Key West is, that it is a sickly & very immoral place, the former abode of pirates & the present residence of wreckers, who are but little better. It was sickly before the ponds were drained, & dissolute & immoral before the Judge, Collector and the merchants with their families came to reside in the place. At present for a small place in the south, it is more moral than any other of its size that I can recollect. The society of the place is, of course, small, but there are many families from the Atlantic States now our residents, that would be very desirable acquisitions were they to return to the places of their nativity. In their dinner and evening parties, there is the same taste & I am sorry to add the same luxury & display that you find in large cities. More good books, reviews & late publications are found here than you have the most distant idea of. Indeed we require them, for we have not the different ways to pass our time that those have who can ride and journey at pleasure. It is true that at any time we can catch fish and kill deer & birds, but soon we prefer to buy those animals to the labor of killing them. On the Island we can only ride in carriages two or three miles,

& this is frequently by those who keep vehicles; but, on the saddle, you may ride, by the sea side, for many miles, on a hard beach, occasionally turning off on account of large rocks. About once a week in the winter we have a party in the evening & the ladies dress, dance and waltz with great skill & taste, especially the descendants of the Spaniards-We can easily form three cotillions, or two Spanish dances, & so passionately fond of this amusement are the ladies, & I suppose I may add gentlemen, that the music ceases not near the first grey of the morning. This season there has been some very pleasant additions to our society from the North & South West. We have six ladies, & five gentlemen like myself, passing the winter here, all of whom are very agreeable and well educated - The former are four single ladies & a widow & young bride - the latter are three lawyers & two doctors-The climate we find very like the climate in the vicinity of Havana - Of course we are beyond reach of frost, and the thermometer is rarely as low as 60° - In the house in which I lodge is a small chimney, a curiosity, & in a cold rain, we make up a little fire, the doors & windows remaining open, & the room, a dining hall, the whole lower story of a large house.- If you place yourself directly in front of the fire you may feel it - But fires are not required here. - The winter has thus far been very mild in Florida. We are only one days sail from the seat of the Indian war & from our friends the officers, at Tampa Bay and others who are visiting the army, we do not think the war will close this year - The swamps & thick woods protect the Indians and on the cape & peninsula of Florida, the squaws & the runaway negroes raise crops unmolested while the warriors go further north and now & then fight the troops & generally the Indians have the best of it. While they

are fighting I am practising law a little here partly living in, by & through wrecks. - A letter of mine to Mr. Pickering got into the newspapers & came back here. Do not let this go from your house.

Yr affe
Nephew

C. WALKER

At the close of the same year Charles learned that his aunt Lydia had died and from Key West on December 6th he addressed the following letter to his bereaved uncle in Concord:

Key West, Florida, Decr. 6, 1838

Dear Uncle,

The death of aunt Lydia was to me entirely unexpected, for I had never heard of her illness. To you this is an unusually severe affliction, and a loss you can never repair. Perhaps no one ever came into a family, whose connection was more conducive to its harmony & happiness. While we mourn her loss, we must recollect that in a short time we must follow her, & happy shall we be, if our lives be as pure & correct as our departed friend.

In this most southern part of the country, I am by myself, at a long distance from any relative. But I have ever found kind friends, & many sources of enjoyment, arising from the circumstances under which I was educated - A taste for reading, even law books, has given me occupation, and a full share of business in my profession affords me little excitement - coming from the intricate and varied practice in New York, I find less labour and greater profit for my services here; yet the place is so small that our receipts do not pay all expences. I find it necessary for exercise to keep a good horse,

that I brought on from New York, & hay costs \$30 per ton & oats sixty five to seventy five cents per bushel. When the Indian War is over, supplies will be cheaper. When this war will end, I know not-very few Indians are killed or captured. In the last year, perhaps three hundred have come in to go West, & now the new annual campaign has commenced, but with much fewer troops than last year, during which, some thirteen families of whites were murdered by the Seminoles. In some parts of the Territory crops were made under a guard of U. S. Dragoons. It has been a distressing war to the agriculturists of Florida. At present, we have a convention sitting to form a State Constitution. In it, I had the offer of a seat, but I feared the changeable climate of the northern part of the Territory, where the Convention assembles, would be very prejudicial to my health. Here I am well, & it is a wise saying-Let well alone-

The weather is in this region, latitude $24\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ -always as warm as our summer. In winter the hot days are frequently moderated by the north wind coming from even the White Mountains. Then our thin clothing is changed for thick, & I am reminded, by chilling blast, of my own native hills. Even on such occasions the mercury is seldom below 70° -very rarely 68° - & that in the morning.

My present plan is to settle at Cape Florida, on the mainland, four hundred miles south of St. Augustine & Georgia, as soon as the Indian War is over. It was settled there & found very healthy. It is facing the sea, & a climate that will grow rice, oranges, corn & arrow root, & all vegetables & West India fruit. An orchard of ten acres of orange trees, in five years, will give you a handsome income. Five years is, to be sure, a long time to wait for a crop, but in the mean time you can raise your annual crop,

& that even in these ten acres. There are fish & turtle & game in abundance, & the immense wet meadows, called the Everglades, or by the Indians Pay-hai-o-Kee or grass water, will enable you to raise immense herds of cattle & horses. There is no winter, & in the spring you pen your cows, & brand your calves.-Arrow root grows wild all about, so you cannot starve, having fish, turtle, oysters, game & arrow root, in abundance. If the war ends this winter, a steam saw mill is to come out, & our houses are made with rough boards [*sic.*] capped clap-board fashion, with large piazzas. When these are completed how happy should I be, if you, or any of my relatives, would pass a winter with me. The Countess³ said, I must put up a small house for her, & she would come to Florida, where health & perpetual spring reign. - On this Island, we grow nothing. There are many islands in this vicinity formed by the sands of the Ocean & the soil is miserable - Our supplies come from the North & Cuba. I wish to be kindly remembered to Aunt Fiske & family & to Capt Fowle & family & Mr. Georges. It is probable I may visit you next summer, but in the mean time I should be pleased to hear from those who have leisure to write-

From New York to this place the mail comes twice a month & a letter or paper sent to me at "Key West" "*via New York City*" will reach me. With sincere wishes for your health & happiness, I am
your affe Nephew

CHARLES WALKER

The Seminole War did not end until August, 1842, and the protracted course of the conflict may have discouraged Charles Walker from settling at

3. Countess Sarah Rumford, daughter of Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford, and Sarah Walker Rolfe.

Cape Florida. In any event, he secured sometime before the end of September 1839, an appointment as Federal District Attorney of the Southern judicial district, of which the seat of justice was Key West and whose business was concerned with salvage.⁶ But he does not seem to have held that post for long, since his name no longer appears in the *Biennial Register of the Officers and Agents, Civil, Military, and Naval, in the Service of the United States* which appeared in 1841, while he is first mentioned in the edition of 1839.⁷

In 1836, as has been seen, Charles Walker wrote of the idea of owning a plantation in Porto Rico but only to reject it. Yet when he gave up his position at Key West he purchased a sugar plantation called "The Concordia" a few miles from Guayama in Porto Rico and this he made his winter residence. Early in the summer of 1843, however, he returned to Concord, New Hampshire, where he died of consumption at the Eagle Coffee House at the age of 45.⁸

6. Cf. Rowland G. Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida* II (1902), 72 and 74.

7. p. 169.

8. The biographical material relating to Charles Walker is found in Nathaniel Bouton, *The History of Concord* (1856) 456; and in Joseph B. Walker, *Life and Genealogy of Rev. T. Walker* (MS) II, 77 and 134-136.

SOME MILITARY AFFAIRS IN TERRITORIAL FLORIDA

by ALBERT C. MANUCY

When the red and gold banner of Spain was unfurled over the Castillo at St. Augustine on Tuesday morning, July 10, 1821, the Castillo guns roared a salute. Later in the day the cannon fired again, and the 23-star flag of the United States was hoisted above the ramparts beside the Spanish banner. U. S. troops formed near the Castillo. Again the guns thundered, and as the echoes died away, Spain's flag came slowly down. A detachment from the American force marched over the drawbridge into the Castillo, where the drums beat the change of guard.

Out from the sally-port marched the Spanish garrison, past the ranks of the Americans. Both saluted. Then the American soldiers marched into the fort, and the military ceremony that officially placed East Florida in United States hands was complete.

This pomp and circumstance was a token of the key part which the military played in Florida during territorial days. And at St. Augustine the empty places of the Spanish evacuees were soon filled by the military forces of the United States, by American civil officials, and "a crowd of adventurers and prospectors from all parts of the Union. . . ." ¹

Castillo de San Marcos, the name of St. Augustine's great fort, was apparently a jawbreaker for Americans. In fact, the Castillo had almost become nameless. When it had to be called something other than "the Fort", it was usually "Fort St. Augustine." Furthermore, it was not customary for U. S.

Note. This paper was read at the joint meeting of the Florida Historical Society and the Florida Academy of Sciences at St. Augustine on December 7, 1945.

1. Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida*, II, 145.

soldiers to name their forts after saints, as the Spanish had done. So in January 1825, the War Department changed the 150-year-old name of the Castillo to Fort Marion, forgetful of the ironical fact that Francis Marion was a son of the very colony against which Castillo de San Marcos had been built!

Perhaps it was just as well, however, for the old fortification was now obsolete. It had a high-sounding title—"Arsenal of East Florida," but there was really nothing of importance in it. It had become only a jail and a magazine, whereas it should have been regarded (in the rather lurid language of the past century) at least as a safeguard "in a slave holding country," affording "a safe asylum to women and children" in the event of a "servile insurrection."²

But the most poetic observation on the condition of the wonderful old structure was made by - of all things! - the Grand Jury:

"The Grand Jury recommend . . . to the general government . . . the national importance of . . . repairs on the fort at St. Augustine . . . The watch towers at Fort Marion are broken, every day brings the fissures of its terraces more asunder; its out-works are leaning and tottering to the sea, while the night bird as she sits in the cranny of its ruins, alone seems happy in the desolation.

" (Signed) George Gibbs, *Clerk.* "³

The decades of the 1820's and 1830's might almost be regarded as a period of experimentation and exploration by American soldiers in Florida. The experimentation came when Congress benevolently allotted the round sum of \$20,000 for repairs to the

2. *Am. State Papers, Military Affairs*, (Gales & Seaton, 1860) V. 132-133.

3. *Ibid.*

Castillo in 1833, and sent Lt. Stephen Tuttle of the U. S. Engineer Corps to St. Augustine to spend it.

Tuttle's work on the fort, and his efforts to build a new seawall for St. Augustine were, for him, at least, an unsatisfactory experiment. Though Tuttle became no favorite with St. Augustinians, yet his name ranks today with those of other famous explorers like Léon, Narvaez, and Soto, for Lt. Tuttle discovered the "dungeon" at the Castillo.

"Some of the arches [in the Fort]," Tuttle reported, "have never been opened or examined by the troops of the United States."⁴ Then, on July 21, 1833, Lt. Tuttle wrote laconically to the Chief Engineer in Washington: "I have caused three [rooms] to be opened which had been closed, in one of which human bones were found . . ." With disappointing matter-of-factness he added: "[The rooms were] apparently closed on account of their inutility."⁵

So the story of the "human" bones necessarily remains obscure, and from our 20th century vantage, we may be sure of only two things: 1) the bone story, like Topsy, just naturally "grewed" in later years; and 2) if Steve Tuttle had realized how many thousands of people were going to bump their heads scrambling into the dungeon he found, he would forthwith have closed it up again and kept his mouth shut.

The War Department had other Florida matters to think about that were considerably more serious, even though the solution to these other problems seemed to be equally as mystifying as the blackness of the Fort dungeon. The big problem was this: the Seminole Indians were obstructing the white man's program of expansion.

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4. Lt. Stephen Tuttle to Gen. Charles Gratiot, St. Augustine, July 3, 1833. (Castillo de San Marcos microfilm.)
 5. *Id.* July 21, 1833.

Steps were taken to move the Indians out. It was a job that took strong stomachs on the part of the negotiators. At the 1823 Treaty of Moultrie, for instance, Govr. DuVal went home ill-after smoking the Indian ceremonial pipe.⁶

Following the Treaty of Payne's Landing (1832), a Seminole inspection party traveled to Arkansas to look over land where the Government proposed to move the Seminoles. The Indians did not like the looks of the Arkansas country. According to one story, when the white agents asked them why, the reply was "Ugh! No lightwood." The Seminoles had become used to Florida's pitch pine, which will start a fire in the rain.

The first frankly hostile step of the Seminoles was the massacre on December 28, 1835, of Major Dade and practically his entire command, two companies enroute from Fort Brooke (Tampa) to Fort King (Ocala). The longest, most expensive, most irritating and bloodiest Indian War the United States was ever to experience was under way.

Today nothing remains of the frontier "Indian" forts of Florida - except possibly a few markers beginning "Here stood-" and some slight evidence of century-old earthworks. Yet these forts served their purpose well, both as citadels and as supply bases in hostile territory.

To build such a fort, you simply obtained a few hundred trees, cut them in 18-foot lengths, and split them up the middle. Then you set them in the ground side by side like a fence, fastened them together with timbers, cut loopholes eight feet from the ground and built firing steps under the loopholes for the riflemen. Outside you dug a ditch that

6. Diary of Joshua Nichols Glen. *Florida Historical Quarterly* XXIV, 149.

served as a kind of moat. You hung a strong gate, and your fort was practically finished.

It was shaped like a triangle, a quadrangle, or whatever polygonal shape best suited the ground.

Inside the enclosure there were blockhouses to house troops and supplies.

"Fancy then," writes a contemporary, "such a stockade fort. People it with a few hundred soldiers in jacket uniforms of faded sky-color with white facings, sadly dimmed with dirt (infantry), some in darker blue, bestriped with red (artillery); a few adorned with the more showy yellow (Dragoons); and still another few in the somber green of the rifles. Fancy these men lounging about or standing in groups, in slouched attitudes and slouchingly attired-a few of tidy aspect with pipe-clayed belts and bayonets by their sides, on sentry, or forming the daily guard-some half-score of slattern women, their laundress-wives, mingling here and there an officer hurrying along, distinguished by his dark-blue undress frock (an American officer is rarely to be seen in full uniform-still more rarely when on campaigning service, as in Florida) - half-a-dozen gentlemen in civilian garb - visitors or non-military attaches of the fort - a score of less gentle-looking - sutlers, beef contractors, drovers, butchers, guides, hunters, gamblers, and idlers - some negro servants and friendly Indians-perhaps the pompous commissioner himself. Fancy all these before you with the star-spangled flag waving above your head, and you have the coup d'oeil that presented itself as I rode into the gateway of Fort King."⁷

Before long, Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott came personally to Florida to assume command of operations. The arrival of Gen. Scott shifted the movements of war far to the south. Scott planned to converge on

7. Mayne Reid, *Osceola* (London, 1859).

the Indians with three wings of the army-left, right, and center. But his plan failed. The Indians refused to attack, the climate was hard on the soldiers, and it was not easy to fight Indians in Indian country.

Gen. Scott, weary and discouraged, returned to St. Augustine in May with a sizeable problem. The enlistment term of his militia was up, and he was left with only a skeleton force. To St. Augustine citizens, the blackness of each night seemed to be filled with threatening Indian forms, and they urged the General to provide protection. How could he do it without men? Nobody would enlist.

Just one hundred years earlier, Spanish Governor Montiano had come up against the same trouble. Nobody would enlist for Florida service, complained Montiano, on account of "the horror they feel whelp they even hear the name of Florida."⁸ Even today, Florida does not always strike a responsive chord in the breasts of soldiers who are perforce stationed in Florida camps.

But to get back to Gen. Scott: Even though they would not enlist in his army, Florida citizens became more and more critical of this general whose campaign had just failed. Finally, angry over the reduction of his forces, sick in body, disgruntled over his own impending removal, Scott issued famous "Order No. 48," which reflected rather severely on the courage and character of the East Florida citizens. "Old Fuss and Feathers," Scott was called, and in the turmoil that followed Order No. 48, he found relief only by relinquishing his command to Gen. Eustis, and leaving St. Augustine on May 30, 1836.

The men who succeeded Scott did little better. In the fall of 1837, fighting was still going on.

⁸ Manuel de Montiano to Diego de Penalosa, St. Augustine, Jan. 19, 1747. (AI 86-6-71, Castillo microfilm.)

Gen. Hernandez, commanding the East Florida militia, captured King Philip, the most important of the East Florida chiefs. Philip was brought to Fort Marion, and Philip's son Wildcat came to St. Augustine to talk his father out of jail. Gen. Hernandez sent Wildcat back to Osceola to arrange for a parley.

The Indians assembled about six miles south of St. Augustine, and there, on October 21, 1837, American forces surrounded the whole band, including Osceola, Wildcat, and some seventy-one warriors, women, and Negroes, who were all brought to prison cells in Fort Marion.

St. Augustinians were rather uneasy over the presence of so many of the Seminole leaders within the city. An Army officer told a friend that "A few nights ago, the Indians had a dance in the fort; the whoops and yells alarmed the city-the Mayor ran to General Jesup and hoped that he would send for more troops, for Osceola would take the city before daylight. The Indians," said the officer confidently, "are secure and do not dream of escape."⁹

But the mayor was the closer to right, for on the night of November 29, 1837, twenty Indian prisoners led by Wildcat did escape from Fort Marion. The war was not to end until Wildcat was recaptured.

Army men learned wholesome respect for Indian tactics. As one gentleman told Congress, "One thing is certain, [the Seminoles] . . . were like the Irishman's flea . . ." ¹⁰ Do you know the story about the Irishman's flea? - whenever you put your finger upon him, he is no longer there.

In spite of insects and Indians, Florida during

9. Dr. Samuel Forry to Lt. Phelps, Oct. 31, 1837 in *Florida Historical Quarterly*, VII, no. 1, p. 95.

10. Statement of Territorial Delegate Charles Downing of St. Augustine as reported in the *National Intelligencer*, Jan. 25, 1838.

the 1830's held fascination for both its visitors and inhabitants. The same preacher who complained of the peculiar scent of the Florida *cucaracha* rhapsodized over Negro plantation singing in Florida moonlight. As for the soldiers, here is a description of an 1836 Christmas in camp at the Haulover on Indian River, written by a military man:

"We revelled upon Gopher soup and whiskey toddy, which were the chief luxuries that graced our board. By the bye; as regards Gopher Soup, no epicure in the world but would smack his lips could he only get a taste of this rare dish, known only in Florida; and the whiskey toddy was highly relished also, to judge by the quantity that we stowed away; though its chief recommendation was, the fact of its being the only liquor that was fashionable at Camp Haulover. . . . Though unable to boast any very great variety of viands yet we had in abundance what was even better—a 'feast of reason and flow of soul'. Music too lent its charm to enliven the day . . ."

One officer was appropriately labeled the "nightingale in the wilderness", and the men sang to guitar accompaniment; and "when 'Cigars and Cognac' was sung every man in camp disclosed the development of tune in his cranium in a most stentorian manner; much to the dismay of all the sedate owls within hearing, who manifested a strong disapprobation by the most approved manner of hooting."¹¹

The war gradually dragged on to a close. Some 2,000 Indians were rounded up and sent west by 1838, and thereafter, as small parties could be captured or prevailed upon, they were likewise transported to Arkansas. The Seminoles remaining, few

11. J. R.. Mott. MS diary in St. Augustine Historical Society Library.

in number, were thus able to strike and run with greater ease. In 1839 and 1840 there were several Indian raids almost within shouting distance of St. Augustine.

Finally, Wildcat again fell prisoner-this time in irons. Within forty days, he was told, his people must surrender themselves, or on that fortieth day, he would hang from a yardarm.

This time there was no escape for Wildcat. As his transport moved away from a west coast port, with the women and children weeping, the men in sullen silence, Wildcat (according to historian Reynolds) was standing in the stern, gazing at the receding shore. "I am looking," he said, "at the last pine tree on my land."¹²

This was a war that had cost the United States well over twenty million dollars and close to 2,000 fatalities. Some 4,000 Indians had been moved to Arkansas-or killed. About 300 Seminoles were left in Florida.

But, with the shadow of the Indian gone, the way was clear for Florida development as part of the United States. That national development was symbolized by the outlines of Florida's strong, new seacoast forts.

There was a new nationalism sweeping the country, and to defend these American shores a vast system of seacoast fortifications from Maine to Louisiana was planned and by 1845 was well under way. For the capture of Washington City in the War of 1812 was a bitter memory, and Jackson's brave victory at New Orleans only pointed the need for adequate defense. Problems arose to the south of Florida. Texas was a question. The U. S. was

12. C. B. Reynolds, *Old St. Augustine*. (St. Augustine, 1885) p. 117.

beginning to realize that she had a part to play in world affairs.

So Fort Clinch at Fernandina, Forts McRee, Pickens and Barrancas at Pensacola, Fort Taylor at Key West - all were partial answers to the problems. And exactly 99 years ago this month, work began on the greatest fortification of all-giant Fort Jefferson, guardian of the Tortugas islands in the Gulf of Mexico. Past the Tortugas every year went 325 million dollars in U. S. trade; 60 million in California gold was shipped annually through the Gulf to the East less than a decade after Florida entered the Union.

At St. Augustine, even ancient Castillo de San Marcos was modernized, fitted with a new set of guns. So once more the Castillo was made ready, and it was indeed fitting that the old landmark should again be prepared for service on the eve of Florida's entry into the Union as the twenty-seventh State.

Bibliographical note: This paper, though representing no profound research, is nevertheless in large part based upon primary sources. The list of materials used: K. T. Abbey, *Florida, Land of Change* (Chapel Hill, 1941); J. N. Glenn, "A Memorandum or Journal of the First Part of My Life" (St. Augustine, 1823); A. C. Manucy, "Great Men and Great Events" (St. Augustine, 1939); Letter, Montiano to Penalosa (St. Augustine, Jan. 19, 1747); J. R. Motte, MS. Diary of (St. Augustine Historical Society); *National Intelligencer*, Feb. 5 and 23, 1838; K. W. Porter, "Seminole Flight from Fort Marion," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, v. XXII, no. 3; Mayne Reid, *Osceola* (London, 1859); Letter, Tuttle to Gratiot (St. Augustine, July 21, 1833); R. W. Young, "Fort Marion, St. Augustine, Florida, 1821-1842" (St. Augustine, 1934).

PONCE DE LEON

We in Florida have a niche in our history which Ponce de León shares with no one. It might be that other Europeans saw our shore before he did, but for us it was he who discovered Florida and certainly he gave us our name. We believe that our land is a fountain of youth, but we will always hope against odds that in the vast store of records of his period preserved in Spain some hint from Ponce may yet come to light that when he set out on his quest of new lands and gold, there was, too, in the back of his head, as was imputed, a hope that he might find and bathe in a certain fountain.

So a new book on *The Discovery of Florida and its Discoverer Juan Ponce de Leon*, by Edward W. Lawson of St. Augustine, stirs much interest. The writer brings to light and translates for us numerous references from many sources on his and our hero which tell us more of his life; but there is no more on his discovery of Florida. On that we are still limited to a single fragment. Herrera, writing many years after Ponce's death, and without giving us his source, writes:

“*They set out from here, [San Salvador] running Northwest, and on Sunday, the 27th [March 1513], which was the day of the feast of the Resurrection, which commonly they call 'of flowers,' they saw an island but did not examine it. And Monday, the 28th, they ran fifteen leagues in the same direction, and Wednesday went on in the same manner, and afterwards, with bad weather, until the 2nd of April, running West-Northwest, the water diminishing to nine fathoms, at one league from land, which was in thirty degrees and eight minutes, they ran along beside the coast seeking harbor, and at night anchored near the land in eight fathoms of water. And believing that this land was an island, they*

named it La Florida, because it had a very beautiful view of many and cool woodlands, and it was level and uniform; and because, moreover, they discovered it in the time of the Feast of Flowers, Juan Ponce wished to conform in the name to these two reasons. He went ashore to get information and take possession. On Friday, the 8th, they set sail, running in the same direction: and Saturday they sailed to the South a quarter by Southeast; and keeping the same course until the 20th of April, they discovered some huts of Indians, where they anchored: the day following, all three vessels following the sea-coast, they saw such a current that, although they had a strong wind, they could not go forward, but rather backward. . . .

That is all-all we have of the momentous week in which Florida was discovered and named and set foot on.

So it seems probable that all we shall ever know is that Ponce discovered Florida on April 2, 1513; that he named it; and that he anchored and landed somewhere on our shore not a very great distance from thirty degrees, eight minutes north latitude, which is midway between the St. Johns river and St. Augustine inlet.

Human nature is such, that the careful judge after a lifetime of effort at training himself to see every question without prejudice, disqualifies himself when a case comes before him in which he feels an interest. Doubtless it would be as difficult for this Editor to believe that DeLuna made his attempt at settlement anywhere else than on the shores of Pensacola bay, as for a St. Augustinian to land Ponce anywhere else than at St. Augustine.

THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY, HELD IN THE LIBRARY OF THE SOCIETY AT ST. AUGUSTINE, JULY 27, 1946

President Mark F. Boyd called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m. Present were Dr. Boyd of Tallahassee, Dr. Webster Merritt of Jacksonville, Mrs. M. A. Johnson and Messrs. X. L. Pellicer, W. J. Winter and A. C. Manucy of St. Augustine.

Appointment of New Board Member

The president pointed out that Dr. Merritt's election as vice president at the annual meeting had caused a vacancy on the board of directors, he now being an *ex-officio* member. The chairman of the nominations committee, Mr. Richard P. Daniel of Jacksonville, had canvassed his committee and now submitted the name of Miss Dena Snodgrass of Jacksonville for director from the second congressional district.

Mr. Pellicer moved the acceptance of the committee recommendation and that Miss Snodgrass be appointed to fill the unexpired term of director from the second congressional district. Mr. Winter seconded, the motion passed unanimously, and the secretary was instructed to notify Miss Snodgrass and Mr. Daniel of the action.

Dr. Boyd also called attention to the vacancy on the nominations committee caused by the death of William H. Jackson of Tampa. Mrs. Johnson nominated Mr. Walter Fuller of St. Petersburg.

By motion duly seconded and passed, Mr. Fuller was appointed to fill the vacancy on the nominations committee and the secretary was instructed to notify Mr. Fuller and Mr. Daniel of the action.

The Florida Historical Quarterly

Dr. Boyd presented a letter from Mr. Julien C. Yonge, editor of the QUARTERLY, which called attention to the expiration of Mr. Yonge's term as editor, and suggested a budget for the coming year.

Dr. Merritt moved the re-election of Mr. Yonge as editor of the QUARTERLY. Mr. Pellicer seconded, and the motion passed unanimously. The secretary was instructed to notify Mr. Yonge of the action.

Dr. Boyd pointed out that the suggested budget for the QUARTERLY amounted to \$1685, and in discussion of this item it was felt that mounting costs of publication should be further anticipated by provision of a slightly higher amount.

Mr. Pellicer moved that \$2,000 be allocated from Society funds for publishing the current volume of the QUARTERLY, and that expenditure of the fund be left to the discretion of the editor of the QUARTERLY and his associates. Dr. Merritt seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Reactivation of Standing Committees

Dr. Boyd explained that his study of the organization and purpose of certain standing committees revealed certain overlapping functions, and suggested that consolidations be effected.

Mr. Pellicer moved that the committee for archeology and the committee for the preservation and restoration of Florida antiquities be consolidated. Mr. Winter seconded, and the motion passed. The secretary was instructed to notify Mr. Lewis G. Scoggin, chairman of the archeology committee, of the action.

Mr. Pellicer moved consolidation of the legislative committee and the committee for

negotiation with the State Library Board. Dr. Merritt seconded, the motion passed, and the secretary was instructed to notify Mr. George Couper Gibbs, chairman of the legislative committee, of the action.

Regulations for Use of the Library

Dr. Boyd indicated the need for regulations governing use of materials in the library of the Society, pointing out that such rules will strengthen the position of the librarian.

The consensus of the board was that the matter be referred to the library committee, with the request that the situation be studied and a suitable list of regulations be drawn up, governing the use of materials in the library of the Florida Historical Society. The secretary was instructed to notify the Chairman of the action.

Finances

In planning for the future of the Society, Dr. Boyd said that he had discovered no plan more practicable than that of attempting to establish an endowment. Potential increase in membership, he emphasized, would have no substantial effect on the present financial condition of the Society. Activities planned by the various subcommittees must depend greatly on whether a larger income is available. "We need," said Dr. Boyd, "an endowment to enable the Society to live up to its obligations."

An endowment might be handled through trustees, an enduring body to administer investment and act in cooperation with the board of directors in releasing to the board the funds accruing from investments. Funds might be used for erection of a permanent building for the Society, employment of an executive secretary and his staff, for providing

fellowships, the publication of monographs, and increase of the historical collections of the Society.

There was discussion of Dr. Boyd's suggestion that it might be feasible to procure the services of an organization which undertakes professionally to raise funds for worthy causes.

Dr. Merritt moved that the president and Mr. Pellicer, chairman of the finance committee, be authorized to ascertain terms under which fund-raising services could be secured by the Society to raise an endowment fund; and that a report be submitted to the board of directors for consideration and decision. Mr. Winter seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Boyd suggested that final decision of the board on such an important matter should be ratified in general business meeting of the Society.

Survey of Floridiana

Dr. Merritt, chairman of the subcommittee to determine the extent and locations of collections of Floridiana in the State, reported that he had conferred with Mr. Joseph Marron of the Florida Library Association. The Association was in favor of making such a survey, but agreed that library staffs are too small to make an adequate survey in the near future.

State Archeologist

Dr. Merritt moved that the president write to Governor Millard Caldwell, tendering the appreciation of the Society for the appointment of a State archeologist, and that a copy of the letter be sent to John W. Griffin, State Archeologist, and to Mr. Scoggin, chairman of the archeology committee. Mr. Winter seconded, and the motion passed.

After brief discussion of a proposed regional meeting in or near Jacksonville, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

Respectfully submitted,

Approved:

MARK F. BOYD
President

ALBERT C. MANUCY
Recording Secretary

ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY

Gift from Jacksonville Historical Society:

Pension Records of Soldiers of the Revolution who removed to Florida. Compiled by Jessie Robinson Fritot.

Birds of the Lower Florida Keys, Earle R. Green. *Quarterly Journal of the Florida Academy of Sciences.* Sept., 1945.

Gift of W. A. Pratt:

From *Miami Herald*: Homasassa Springs, Class Room in the Middle of a River, Old Homasassa, site of the Yulee plantation.

Gift of the author: *Hurricane Between,* Frank A. Levering. Story of the 1935 hurricane and the Overseas Highway.

Gift of George W. Pettingill: Photostats of Tallahassee Railroad Co. bank notes.

Matrimonial papers. Photostats from Library of Congress typed copy in St. John's county courthouse. 4p. (1785-1803).

Suwannee River, Strange Green Land. Rivers of America Series. By Cecile Hulse Matschat, N. Y. 1938.

Gift of Mrs. Langdon Pearse:

Twenty-four photographs and prints, including, Gov. Albert W. Gilchrist; Seminole Indians in Miami, 1903; Fort Dallas, 1903; Indian mound, Mound Key; Cyrus Teed, 1897; Church on Senibel island; Pine island; Barracks at Punta Rassa built during Seminole War; sponges drying at Key West; etc.

Gift of Cornell University:

Our Georgia-Florida Frontiers, The Okefinokee Swamp. its History and Cartography. vol. 1. By Albert Hazen Wright. 1945

World War II Honor List of Dead and Missing, State of Florida State Summary of War Casualties, U. S. Navy, 1946

Handbook of South American Indians, Smithsonian Institution Bulletin 143. 2 vols. 1946

Gift of Spessard L. Holland and Clerk Ct. Ct., Bartow:

Claim of Elias Wallen. 1833. Photostat. 25th Cong. H. Rep. 223

Florida Centennial at the Library of Congress.

Gift of W. J. Winter:

National Geographic Magazine 1939-1945

Gift of Miss Katherine Boyles:

Sunrise (periodical) July 1925

Various issues newspapers, 1925

Clippings on cross state canal

Gift of W. A. Pratt

Newspaper articles on Tampa history by D. B. McKay

NEW MEMBERS

Mrs. J. P. Coombs, Apalachicola

C. H. Burke Floyd, Apalachicola

Mrs. Morita Clark, Orlando

Jean Grosvenor Parker, New York & St. Augustine

James Benson O'Connor, Chattahoochee

Thomas Edward Yandre, contributing, Orlando

Mrs. Lillian B. McCall, Bartow

Adrien W. LeVasseur, Jacksonville

Stephen C. Singleton, Key West

Mary Yule Young, Miami

Rev. James Hamilton, Key West

Mrs. E. C. McEvoy, Gainesville

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER

William George Dodd is Dean Emeritus, College of Arts and Sciences, Florida State College for Women.

T. Frederick Davis, historian of Jacksonville, has contributed numerous articles to this QUARTERLY, including our Ponce de León number.

Albert C. Manucy is Secretary and Treasurer of the Florida Historical Society, and Historical Technician, Castillo de San Marcos, St. Augustine.

Kenneth Scott is a member of the staff of St. Paul's School, Concord, New Hampshire.