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THE FIRST AMERICAN ROAD IN FLORIDA

PAPERS RELATING TO THE SURVEY AND CON-
STRUCTION OF THE PENSACOLA ST.
AUGUSTINE HIGHWAY*

PART II

To Jesup from Burch

Pensacola, November 6, 1824

I had the honor to receive on the 4th inst. your letter of the 7th ulto. authorizing me to issue proposals for certain portions of the road to St. Augustine to be opened by contract.

It would take a long period of time to open this road with the very small force that can now be placed on duty in the Quartermaster's department and I see no probability of its being materially increased. It is very important that the completion of the road should not be deferred, hence it is decidedly my opinion that the interests of the territory and of the government will be advanced by opening that part designated, and even more if the appropriation will justify it by contract. Negroes will be employed by contractors on this work, and as they do not require a tenth part of the transportation necessary for troops, I am of opinion that it will cost less actual money to the government by opening that part from the seat of government to St. Augustine by contract than if soldiers were employed on it. The stores for the troops while at work between that place and the St. John's river would have to be carted from St. Marks, and it is

*An Introduction by Mark F. Boyd, with a map of the western section of the highway, was published in the last (October) issue of the Quarterly.

twenty miles from that post to the intersection of the road for which distance a road would have to be opened before these stores could be carted out. There would be one way of obviating a part of this difficulty; after the troops had arrived at the St. Fe, 136 miles from St. Marks, they could be transported around to the St. Johns, and work westwardly from thence—from the St. Johns to the St. Fe is 69 miles.—The road crosses the Suwannee river 90 miles from St. Marks and 44 west of the St. Fe but this river cannot be depended on for transportation, because, on account of the shoals at its mouth, vessels must lay off outside the bar and discharge their cargoes into barges. From the mouth of the river to the crossing of the road, I suppose it to be upward to 200 miles and besides I should have to build barges on the river expressly for the purpose, there being none on the river, no settlement having as yet been formed on it.—The cost of transportation on this part of the road will be great and attended with difficulty, whether entirely by land or by navigating this river :-

I lost no time in issuing the proposals, a copy* of which is enclosed and which I earnestly hope may be conformable to your views and meet your approbation. I divided the route into two sections, believing that contracts could be obtained on better terms in that way. The route from the St. John's to St. Augustine is short but it is very low and wet ground, and will require a great deal of labor in making causeways. The chief difficulty however is the bridge over the St. Sebastian's river. This creek is fordable at low water, but at high tide spreads to a great extent over the flats and is impassable for horses or carriages. It is two miles from the town, and is about three miles from the

*See enclosure with Rodman's letter of 4-4-26.

junction of this road with the "King's Road" leading from the St. Mary's, Ga. - consequently the bridge will be common to both roads, and is absolutely necessary even if the road from Pensacola was not about to be opened. There is another ford, a few miles higher up, but it is so far out of the way, that persons usually await the favorable time of tide for crossing at the lower ford. A ferry could not well be established here because it would not support itself over a creek fordable for near half of each day. A certain passage without regard to time or tide can only be secured by a bridge. Thinking it more than probable that after making the first contract, the funds would not allow of opening the road and building the bridge too, I have called for two sets of proposals for this part of the route, as you will see by reference to the advertisements. In case the bid for the road with a bridge should be reasonable, but added to the other contract exceeds the appropriation, will I be authorized to close the contract and have it built? I consider the bridge so absolutely necessary that I think nothing ought to prevent it being built and I shall have no mechanics who could construct it properly, for owing to the worm, arches of timber will not answer under the water.

I have also called for proposals for two other sections of the road, which when received if the terms are reasonable and there should be any funds applicable to the object, I think it will be to the interest of the Government to accept-at least the second, from the Appalachicola to the Ockolockony river. On, this subject allow me to request your instructions.-

That section of the road upon which the troops are now at work requires the most labor to open

properly, but on account of the facilities of water transportation is more favorable for them to work than any other part of the whole route. And when it is opened as far as to the Choctawhatchie river and a ferry established there, a direct communication can be had from Pensacola to almost every part of the territory by tolerable cart roads or Indian trails. My arrangements are now all made to work upon this end of the road, the detachment is advanced forty miles on it and could not now change the troops to work at the seat of Government, without losing nearly the whole winter's work and incurring very considerable extra expense, besides before I could commence on the leading road, I should have to open a road from St. Marks to the seat of Government, a distance of twenty miles, to cart out our supplies, moreover when the road is advanced as far as the Choctawhatchie the work can be continued during the summer months as the remainder of the route as far as the seat of Government is high pine barrens or oak land.-It is with diffidence that I venture to act contrary to even a suggestion of yours, but in this case I am convinced from my local knowledge of the country, that I am consulting the true interests of the territory and of the Government, and also practising economy in the expenditure of labor, time, and money. I beg leave respectfully to remark that there can be no object in having the troops near to the seat of Government on account of the Indians, for excepting the few who have reserves on the Appalachicola river, they will be by the end of this month on their lands, at least 200 miles distant. The numbers, spirit and property of the Florida Indians are so much depressed and reduced by their wars with the whites, that they now only desire to

cultivate friendship with them, and they require only the presence of an agent, firm and uniform in his conduct towards them, to restrain all their war-like propensities or evil excesses. The knowledge that troops are in their vicinity is sufficient to ensure lasting peace with them.-

I have advertised to receive the proposals in person at Tallahassee and at St. Augustine, that being on the spot I may be a better judge of the ability of persons offering to fulfill a contract, and also in case of the contracts being taken and the bids accepted, I may be at hand to execute the necessary bonds and give such directions as will enable the contractor's to commence and continue the work without delay. I have given myself sufficient time to return to this place from Tallahassee and be at St. Augustine by the 10th of Feby-traveling from this to Fort Hawkins on horseback and thence to St. Mary's by stage.-The detachment at work on the road will be during my absence under the command of Lieut. Mountz an active and efficient officer, and all my other arrangements then will be such that the work will continue to go on properly and without interruption. My office here will be left in charge of the clerk, in whose attention to business and to the interests of the Govt I can implicitly confide.-

Permit me to request the favor of you when replying to this letter to address the original to me here, and a duplicate of the same to me at St. Augustine.-

It is perhaps not strictly within the province of a subordinate officer to obtrude information upon his chief unasked, but as the road about to be laid out from Tampa Bay to intersect the one I am now at work upon is in some measure connected with it,

there being no road of any kind to Cant. Brooks and the survey not likely to take place in time for you to notice it in your report, I have relied upon your friendly feelings towards me to mention the subject to you and to offer some remarks relative to it. While surveying the road to St. Augustine, aware that a military post would shortly be established at Tampa Bay, consequently a road to it become necessary, I took especial care to ascertain precisely where such road ought to intersect the one I was marking out, and also to obtain a general knowledge of the entire route. The law provides that it shall intersect at the Suwannee, but this owing to the natural course of the river and of the road after crossing it, is impossible. The road should be laid off on the best route possible from Cant. Brooke to Wanton's, or near to it, which you will find noted on the map, in Alachua. Here it ought to fork, the right in a north-easterly direction to intersect the road towards St. Augustine, and the left in a northwest course to intersect it towards Pensacola, which it will do at a point about six miles east of the St. Fe, being fifty miles east of the place where the road crosses the Suwannee. It is said to be about 140 or 150 miles from Cant. Brooke to Wanton's, and it is 30 miles from Wanton's at the proposed fork of the road to each point of intersection, and about the same distance between those two points - hence it is evident that if the intention is to open a communication generally with the east and west and with the south, the road must necessarily fork at Wanton's and I think its utility and necessity will be apparent to all. There is a cart road now travelled from Wanton's to St. Augustine, crossing the St. John's river many miles higher up than Picolata, but I am informed from

the best authority that it is through a country extremely low and marshy, moreover it is no nearer than by the one I propose from Alachua to St. Augustine. The chief advantages of this road however will be lost unless the right hand fork from Wanton's be extended after the intersection directly towards Georgia, to intersect the "King's road" leading to St. Augustine, at or near where it crosses the St. Mary's river. This will open a communication from the state of Georgia direct into the center of Florida. From information and my general knowledge of the country, I suppose this distance to be about 85 or 90 miles. All of these routes of which I speak are Indian trails, and as they have been always travelled by people on horseback there can be no doubt but that they may be easily made good carriage roads. The only possible obstruction will be savannahs or low-grounds-and the trails avoid these as much as possible-for being in a direction from north to south, no streams of consequence intervene on any part of the route. Indeed I am informed that since I was along there last winter, several carts and wagons have travelled from the St. Mary's along this very trail into the Alachua. I beg leave therefore most respectfully to propose for your consideration the following mode of opening this road-that the troops at Cantonment Brooke be employed to open it as far as Wanton's only, that the distance from Wanton's to each point of intersection be opened by citizens under special contracts, and that the right hand fork be extended to the St. Marys river, and also be opened by contract. My duties, with the other contracts and road will necessarily carry me into that section of country, and if my views in relation to the other are approved, it would be but very little

additional trouble to me to superintend the making of these contracts, and their execution also.-The Quartermaster at Can. Brooke would of course have charge of opening that part done by the troops. I do not think that any survey north of Tampa Bay is at all necessary to have the appropriation made and the work: commenced, because the country itself and the general route are sufficiently known and ascertained already-the selection of ground for the road to pass over could be made as it advanced. If I was about to make the contracts however, I should myself ride over the whole. route so as to be a competent judge of the reasonableness of the bids. In ease such appropriation is now made and the work actively commenced these roads would be completed by the 1st of June 1826, probably earlier, and the territory of Florida opened to travellers and settlers, and to the operations of the Government. It cannot at the present moment be so much an object to the Government or the territory to extend the road southwardly from Tampa Bay, although the survey ought doubtless to be made with a view to the future. I have no map of Florida at hand, or I should have accompanied letter with one having these routes marked out on it. But at the request of Gen'l Call I wrote to him on this subject, giving him such information as I possessed and enclosed to him a map of Florida, on which I traced the route from Pensacola to St. Augustine in connection with these routes, which map I request you will be pleased to obtain from him and examine, it will serve to make you better acquainted with my views and meaning than I can by description alone.

I estimate the expense of opening these roads as follows, viz: From Cant. Brooke, to Wanton's \$10800.-from Wanton's to the west point of inter-

section \$4000.-from Wanton's to the east point of intersection \$4000.-and from this last point of intersection to the St. Mary's river \$7000. Total \$25800.-

* * *

To Jesup from Burch

Tallahassee, December 21, 1824

I have the honor to report that I have this day received and accepted proposals for opening the road from Appalachicola to the St. John's river. I have also an offer for that part lying between the St. John's and St. Augustine, so reasonable, including the building of a bridge over the St. Sebastian's river, that I shall accept it unless a lower bid be made at St. Augustine. These three contracts* (Nos. 1 & 2 and "second" as in my proposals, a copy of which was forwarded to you from Pensacola) will amount to \$18000.-the distance contracted for 243 miles-leaving a balance of \$2000.-on account of the appropriation. From this statement it will be perceived that an additional appropriation will be necessary to meet the expense of opening the road unless it be the intention of the department to charge the expenses attending the labor of the troops on the Quartermasters department, in which case no appropriation will be necessary. The contracts have been taken by men of standing, wealth and efficiency of character. Copies of their proposals and bonds will be forwarded to you as soon as possible. I have an offer for that part between the Choctawhatchie and Appalachicola ("first" in my proposals) for four thousand dollars, which I could not accept because it exceeded the balance of the appropriation, and also it was higher in pro-

*See enclosures with Burch's letter of 3-14-25.

portion than the other offers made and accepted. Consequently the troops will open it as far as the Appalachicola and will I think have it finished by the first of August next. From that river to the Suwannee River will be opened by the first of May under the contracts. My arrangements are made with a view to have the road opened through the lands now surveying before the sale actually takes place and while the land is public property. I am fully satisfied that if any roads are to be opened in Florida under the superintendence of the Quartermaster's department contracts can be had at the present moment so as to cost less money that would be expended in the extra pay and other expenses attending--the employment of troops excepting a hundred miles north of Tampa Bay and also south of that post (should it be extended southwardly) on which section the troops can be employed to most advantage. Experience has taught me that troops cannot be employed to advantage on public works except within a reasonable distance of their regular stations. I should have experienced great difficulty in opening the road east of the Appalachicola, and more especially east of the Ockolockny with the troops. Extensive means of transportation would have been necessary. Corn is very scarce and selling now in some parts of the settlements for \$1.50 per bushel--it sells for \$1. at Pensacola. It would have cost me at least \$1.75 per bushel by the time I had got it from thence, via St. Marks (the nearest port) on to the section of the road towards the Suwannee and \$2.50 between that and the St. Johns, not counting in the charge for transportation from Pensacola to St. Marks in the public transport. I mention these circumstances so much in detail to demonstrate the propriety of my having

made these contracts and to strengthen my reason for recommending that contracts be made for the other roads, if they are to be opened at all.-

The order I received relative to contracts for the road having limited me to the sum appropriated, I conceived that it gave me authority to come up to that amount in my contracts, and if I have unfortunately mistaken the meaning and intention of the order, I trust it will be taken into view that I have acted in. this duty under the impression that the Government considered it important to open the road at all events, and at as early a date as practicable, and in such a manner as would be least expensive. Therefore I earnestly hope that the necessary funds to close my Quarter-master's accounts and defray all expenses chargeable on the road will not be withheld from me. I have expended \$5000. on the, road, there is \$2000. remaining of the appropriation after deducting the existing contracts. To enable me to meet these contracts with good faith, and to defray promptly all other expenses of. the road occasioned by the labor of the troops, it will require an additional appropriation of eight thousand dollars, if that mode of providing for the deficiency is adopted, and which, if given by Congress, will be amply sufficient to meet all contracts and expenditures chargeable on the road. As it regards the width of the road I consider that it will be an useless waste of time and money to increase it beyond the sixteen feet. It is chiefly through an open pine barren and cannot be populated thickly, and it will be travelled for the most part by people on horseback-almost the only mode of travelling known in the south. In this opinion I am supported by the most intelligent men of the country.-

In the whole extent of road from Pensacola to

St. Augustine there will be no communication from it to the sea coast. Fort St. Marks is a central and prominent point, both as it regards the coast and the intersection of the road itself between its extremes. Hence I deem the subject of opening a road from St. Marks to intersect this at the town of Tallahassee, which lies in a direct line nearly due north, to the deserving of your attention in reference to a time of war, as a measure of indispensable necessity. I beg leave therefore most respectfully to suggest the propriety of employing a part of the troops now under my direction so soon as they shall have finished the other road, and the expenses to be charged on the Quartermaster's department. If confided to me (and my duties on this section of country will enable me to superintend it without difficulty) I should select 50 men, five non. com. officers, and two or more officers, and in less than one month after their arrival at St. Marks a good and permanent road twenty feet wide would be completed. The whole distance is twenty-two miles, the first three miles is marshy and will require to be causewayed, the remainder is high, dry pine barren. I should put the detachment with the whole of their baggage, provisions, and other supplies on board the public schooner at Pensacola and transport them to St. Marks without one cent extra expense attending their transportation from and to Pensacola.. Teams sufficient for the purpose will be on hand without resorting to new purchases and will also be transported on board the Transport. The extra pay of the men during the time they are at work & some little hired land transportation, in all say \$1000. will embrace the whole expense. If it be determined to open the proposed road, I request you will be pleased to notify me at as early

as date as convenient in order that I may make my arrangements accordingly.-

* * *

To Jesup from Burch

St. John's River, February 12, 1825

I regret to have to state that my journey to St. Augustine has proved fruitless in its object inasmuch as I was unable to close the contract for that part of the road, owing to some communications made to me by the citizens of St. Augustine. They want the road to enter the city by a particular route, and a bridge to be built over the St. Sebastian's river at a point which I had not contemplated, and for which I knew there was neither funds, nor had I sufficient authority, for so doing even if funds had been at my disposal. On my arrival there, Mr. Mitchell (a member of the last legislative council for Florida and resident of St. Augustine) called upon me with a communication from the Mayor of the City covering sundry documents, all which I transmit herewith, numbered from 1 to 3. At his request I accompanied him to the city council and informed them that I had neither funds nor authority to build a bridge where it would be so expensive, that the most I could do was to bring the road into the city by the way of Pepinos' ferry establishing it as such and leaving the building of a bridge for future instructions from you, with which I then thought were perfectly satisfied. They however mentioned that they had it in contemplation to extend a street from the public square in that direction about three or four hundred yards above Pepinos' at which they would prefer the bridge to be built. But on the evening of the 9th I received the letter which I enclose, together with my reply, numbered 4 and 5. - It seems that in this

they have misunderstood me, for the idea I intended to convey to them was, that the road being the intended general channel of communication for all travellers as well as the inhabitants of the interior of Florida, it must be considered of primary importance to be completed to the exclusion of building bridges, where ferries would answer the purpose and there was not funds sufficient to build the bridges, and upon which principle I should govern myself in opening the road. As Mr. Mitchell has handed me the first communication, I made it a point to speak to him respecting the letter of the 9th and he stated to me that the City Council were of opinion it was my duty to expend the funds on the bridge in any event and if any part of the work was neglected or delayed it ought to be the road.- Confirming the impression I had received from the letter in question. I however had no further communication with the city authorities, for having understood that they were to address the department themselves, I determined, rather than close a contract and commence a work which might possibly be countermanded, to request your instructions on the subject. It followed that I released Mr. Bellamy from all obligation to continue his proposal, at which I am rejoiced as he is a worthy citizen and must have lost money largely by an honorable adherence to his word. In truth I am much afraid he will find the contract he has already taken to prove a very hard one, nothing but the best possible management and extreme economy, added to the employment of his own hands will enable him to save himself on the contract. I had myself no conception of the situation of the country over which the road passes until now that I have examined it in the wet season. It is literally under water for miles through the

low country between St. Fe and St. John's rivers. The Suwannee has its course through a high pine woods country without swamps on its margin, yet it is now overflowing in places for two or three miles back, and the Ausilee, in common times only a small fordable stream, now presents the appearance of a large river, being full half a mile wide over the low grounds. Copies of the proposals and of my answers thereto are enclosed herewith, numbered from 6 to 11.-

As neither of the communications by the citizens contain a clear and full view of the subject, and moreover state facts in such a manner as would lead perhaps to wrong conclusions, I have sketched a rough map of the immediate vicinity of St. Augustine comprising an extent of about five miles from north to south and four miles from east to west. The principal facts set forth in that of the 1st of Jan'y (No. 3) as it regards the communications to the city from the country, are correct, but as it regards the expense of labor of building a bridge either at Pepinos' ferry or at the Estacada (stockades) it is not. The St. Sebastian's river is more properly speaking an arm of the sound or inlet, upon which St. Augustine is built extending but a short distance, say six or seven miles. At Pepinos' (called also Viel's ferry) the main river is about 250 yards wide and fifteen feet deep at low water, (being full 300 yards wide at high water) over to a small marshy Island which is separated from the main land or rather marsh, by a lagoon or branch of the river, shoal at low water and about sixty yards wide. The Island is about 150 yds wide and the marsh bordering on the shore about 300 yards wide. There is a fine open street leading to this ferry, in fact it is the only street leading back

from the city, and it is either here or at the new street which they propose to open just above, that the bridge is wanted by the citizens.-The expense of building the bridge and causeway will be much the same at either place. The small creek spoken of, is an arm of the main river lying between it and the city, is about 250 yds wide and is dry at low water. In the street leading to Pepinos' there is a causeway through it about four feet high with a bridge in the centre, but all in a dilapidated condition, the one requiring to be repaired and the other to be built anew. On the new street, if opened, an entire new causeway and bridge will have to be made. It is requisite however for me to mention that the incorporated limits of the city extend to three miles, having jurisdiction over the road &c and including the place where the bridge is required, and it is possible that if it was built within those limits it might become necessary for me to consult with the city authorities before I should be suffered to proceed with it unless placed where they might see proper to have it located. The marshes on the St. Sebastian's are very low and require a causeway to be raised at least three feet on an average to be above spring tides. Two miles north of Pepinos' is the stockade, where the river becomes very shoal, being nearly dry at low water, with a good ford. The extent of causeway would be about the same here as at Pepinos' but it must be obvious on the smallest consideration of the subject, that there would be a great difference in the expense and labor of building a bridge at a place over a wide channel where the water is fifteen feet deep at low tide, and at another where the channel is narrow and shoal, and the foundations could be laid almost as conveniently when the tide is out as if upon the

main land. A bridge at Pepinos' must be built upon piles, for the expense of sinking piers of stone in such deep water would be enormous. Within less than 400 yards wide above the stockade, the river and marsh are both contracted to a comparative small extent and it was here that I intended to have bridged the river when I surveyed the road. About a mile and a quarter above this the "red house branch" trail from Picolata crosses, where neither the stream nor marsh are of any consequence, but as this route increases the distance near four miles into town, it would not answer at all for the road. Half a mile further up the road to the Cowford on St. John's crosses where it is nothing more than a small spring branch. Reference to Mr. Bellame's letters of 9th and 10th Feby (Nos. 8, 9, & 11) will give you the best idea of the difficulties and expenses attending each route, as they contain specific offers for each. I deem it to be of considerable importance that the road from the south, now surveying by Colonel Gadsden, and the road from Picolata should cross the St. Sebastian's at the same point, and this could be best effected at Pepinos' ferry, because the inducements offered by the travelling on both roads would be sufficient to cause a good ferry to be kept up, which would not probably be the case with either separately. It would be somewhat more convenient for travellers from the southern road to cross at Solanas, on the English ferry, on account of a small creek between those and Pepinos' ferry, but it is not of sufficient consequence to render it any object to them to cross below it. Those who travel from the north would cross the St. Sebastian's where they now do, unless a bridge was to be built at or near the stockade, or at Pepinos' ferry in which case the "Kings Road"

from the Cowford would be extended down the west side of the river to such bridge and there cross. To Travellers from, or to, the south or west, entering or leaving the city, the only inconvenience attending a ferry would be the trifling expense of ferriage. Yet I am decidedly of opinion (the expression of which opinion I trust will not be deemed indecorous in me when referring the subject to you) that as the bridge will be common to and used for all public roads leading into the city, north, south, and west-and at the same time be a great accommodation and of real utility to the citizens of the place, that it ought to be built, provided the funds will admit. It is my determination-to have this road completed under my personal inspection and direction, without regard to the fatigue and private expense I shall be exposed to, in the best manner the means and funds at my disposal will admit, and in making it I wish not only to give satisfaction to you, but to the citizens also, hence another reason why I am particularly desirous to build the bridge in conformity with the wish of the citizens of St. Augustine. I will however require an additional appropriation to my previous estimates of \$8000.00 to carry the road into the city of St. Augustine by this route as it should be done, and build the bridge. It is however to be considered that this bridge, if built, will constitute a part of the expense of completing the southern road whenever an appropriation is made for the object, and will also be used for the northern or "Kings Road". If however the bridge is not built I think it most advisable that, the road should be completed into the city by the way of Pepinos' and a ferry established there, as being common to both the southern and western roads, leaving the route by the stockade out of the

question altogether. I mentioned Pepinos' particularly for the ferry, because I am of the opinion that unless a bridge be built, the city authorities will not extend the new street back, and even if they do, from a full knowledge of the ground, I consider Pepinos' as being the most suitable & convenient place for the ferry, indeed I think it is the best place for the bridge in any event. The difference of expense between opening the road into town by the way of the stockades and building a bridge there (which would be absolutely necessary since no ferry could be established there, as I have mentioned in one of my former communications, because of its being fordable at low water) and at Pepinos, is as you will observe by the bids made, but \$2000.-hardly, an object as it regards expense. You may perhaps be surprised that the road from Picolata to St. Augustine should cost so much when compared with other sections of the road. The country between the St. Johns and St. Sebastian is very low and poney. There is between Picolata and the city five miles of the seventeen to ditch and throw up, besides causewaying with timber a great portion of that distance, and there are also four creeks to be bridged, one of them of considerable size. In addition to which are the bridges over the lagoon at the river and the small creek described in the foregoing part of this letter. I have myself made a close calculation of the expense of opening the road according to the value of labor in the country and find it to be \$4300. though it might perhaps be done for less by the labor of the troops-the bridges at the lagoon and at the small creek however could not be built by them without the assistance of other mechanics. But if the expense and inconvenience of marching them over from Pensacola

be considered it will be seen that money would be saved to the U. States by accepting Mr. Bellame's offers for the contract. Besides I have no wish if it can be avoided, to employ soldiers so near to a town where they would have every facility of getting liquor, and whatever irregularities they might be guilty of in consequence, our military code admits of no punishment being inflicted adequate to restrain them. I have also made a calculation. founded upon the cost of materials and hire of workmen for building a bridge at Pepinos and estimate it at \$7500.-The gentlemen however who offer for the contract would employ their slaves and thus be enabled to build it much cheaper than by hired laborers. The mayor and aldermen are mistaken in their statements respecting the facilities of obtaining materials for the bridge. There is no saw mill at which to obtain sawed lumber, nor is there any timber in the low country between St. Johns and the sea coast that would answer at all for the bridge. being altogether low, scrubby sap pine of stunted growth, hence the navigation of the St. Sebastians, limited as it is, would be of but little or no advantage in floating the timber to the spot. The plank and scantling for the bridge must be obtained from sawmills on the St. Mary's or St. Johns and the heavy long stocks of timber from the cypress swamps of the St. Johns or of the heart pine on the high lands north and east of that river.-

I have been informed and it is evident from their letter to me of the 9th Feby (No. 4) that the citizens of St. Augustine retain an opinion that I had the power to make contracts in anticipation of appropriations and that they would be paid for, if made, although I had in conversation assured them of the contrary.-In case however you deem it ad-

visible to have the bridge built, no delay need occur on account of there not being funds enough appropriated this session of Congress for the road, to meet the whole cost, as Mr. Bellame has stated to me that he will undertake to build it, on my assurance that an effort will be made to get the appropriation hereafter, -the road however to be paid for, that is, to receive \$5400. when it shall be finished, and the balance of \$5500. for the bridge to be paid when the money shall have been appropriated. I request you will be pleased to address me your orders on this subject at Pensacola. I am exceedingly desirous to have the whole road completed this year, and if it is laid out into St. Augustine by the way of Pepinos' ferry, with or without a bridge, it will be necessary for me to visit St. Augustine again to close the contract and to lay it out within their incorporated limits in conjunction with the city authorities, which I wish to have done at as early a date as practicable.

I have written in great haste and also very prolix, but I trust you will attribute that to the true cause-my anxiety. to make you as perfectly acquainted as I am able to do by description, with the subject submitted to your decision, although I am aware that it is very difficult to convey an adequate description of any particular section of country by writing. In fact I had it for a moment in consideration to continue my route from Savannah to Washington and explain these and other matters touching the road to you personally, as it would not have caused me to be absent from Pensacola more than twenty days longer than I shall now be, but I feared I might incur your displeasure by so doing without previously obtaining permission. I had also some private business at the north than requires my atten-

tion sooner or later for a day or two which would have been one inducement for me to have made the journey, for I do not want to ask for a furlough for so small an object.* * *

To Jesup from Burch

Pensacola, March 14th, 1825.

Enclosed are the original contracts for opening parts of the military road with the offers made, also the original contract with Captain Baker for sailing the Transport, *Florida*.

(Enclosure)

To Burch from Bellame, John,

Tallahasse, 18th Dec., 1824

I will undertake to open the road from Ocklockony to the St. Johns river as noted in your proposals (No. 1) for thirteen thousand five hundred dollars according to the terms and manner therein specified.

* * *

(Enclosure)

To Burch from Robinson, John

Tallahasse, 18th Dec., 1824

I will complete the road from the Appalachicola river to the Ocklockony river agreeable to the requisitions in your advertisement by the first day of May next for three thousand dollars. Should my proposal be accepted I will give you such security as will be satisfactory.* * *

(Enclosure)

To Burch from Bright, Jas.

Tallahassee, 20th December, 1824

I am willing to contract for that part of the road from the east bank of the Choctawhatchie river to

the west bank of the Appalachian river for the sum of four thousand five hundred dollars. - I shall be able to give such security as may be required, but it is probable I may have to apply in Jackson county for that purpose, I should be desirous to have as early information as to the acceptance or non acceptance of this proposition* as possible.

(Enclosure)

To Bright from Burch

Tallahassee; Dec. 20, 1824

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this date and believing it to be more for the interest of the U. States to open that part of the road by the labor of the troops than to accept the proposal made I think it proper to decline acceding to your proposition*.

(Notation on copy of foregoing)

On the 21st Dec. Mr. Bright reduced his proposition to \$4000. having understood from me that there was no bridge to be built over the Chippoola river -the troops are now at work upon and will complete that section of the road.

*(Signed) Dan'l E. Burch.

To Jesup from R. K. Call

Pensacola 28th April, 1825

On my arrival at this place I was pleased to find that the progress made by Capt. Burch in opening the road from this place to St. Augustine had greatly surpassed my most sanguine expectations. The road is not nearly completed by the troops as far as the Appalachian, and I am told by those who have travelled it that the work is admirably executed. In the performance of this duty he has

encountered many embarrassments but they have been always overcome with the promptness and decision of a soldier. His economy and indefatigable exertions in the discharge of every duty, merits the highest approbation of the Department. While at Washington you mentioned a proposition from Capt Burch to open a road from St. Marks to Tallahassee. If you will approve of the plan you would confer an obligation on that section of the county by giving the necessary orders for its accomplishments. I can add nothing to what has been said by Capt. Burch relative to the importance of this object and the ease with which it may be effected, as he has examined both with great attention. Please present me most respectfully to Mrs. Jesup and accept for yourself sir the best wishes of your friend,

* * *

To Jesup from Burch

Pensacola, June 17, 1825

I have the honor to report that on my arrival at the Appalachian river in May last I found that Mr. Robinson had not completed his contract nor was likely to do so in any reasonable time--the continued high waters in the winter and spring he assigned as the cause of the delay--a cause which I knew myself to have existed. As the troops had arrived at the Appalachian more than a month earlier than I had calculated upon, I deemed it to be indispensable to the convenience of the public that the road should be opened forthwith through the swamp of that river by them, to enable travelers to use the road. In consequence of which I made an agreement with Mr. Robinson by which he relinquished the contract into my hands, and I paid him for the work actually done--having regard to the work remaining to do and the amount of the

contract. I paid him \$1000. and he relinquishes the remaining \$2000. The troops then opened the road through the swamp and ten miles east of it to a point where it intersects a cart road leading from the Appalachicola river towards Tallahassee,-The remainder of the road specified in the contract having been opened by Robinson with the exception of not having bridged the creeks on his part of the route. The opening of this part of the road by the troops did not cause an additional expense of one hundred dollars to the U. States, as they were upon the spot with their supplies. The bridges however on the part of the road opened by Robinson are only temporary such as will answer the purpose for the summer, but in the fall I expect to complete this part of the road by erecting new and permanent bridges which will probably cause an expense of \$1000. or more. From this statement you will perceive that by the arrangement with Robinson, the road was not only opened for the accommodation of travellers at once, but that near \$1000. will be gained to the U. States on the contract.-this saving however was altogether accidental and arose solely from the circumstance of the troops having been upon the ground with their supplies ready to commence without loss of time or extra transportation. I consider that Mr. Robinson has lost in the payment made to him for the work he had done, although he was allowed all that could have been equitably given under his contract. He was unfortunate too in having had a bridge swept away at Little River by a heavy freshet, which had been built by him on the road, and which must have cost him from four to five hundred dollars, but which was not taken into consideration, of course, in the settlement made. I hope that you will approve of the course I pursued

in relation to him and his contract, though I myself felt doubtful how far I had authority to release him from the penalty contained in it. I am conscious that in this affair I did only what common justice required towards him and at the same time consulted the pecuniary interests of the U. States.-

I have deemed it advisable not to continue the troops at work on the road during the heat of the summer and they are now on their return march to Pensacola. On their return they are making some improvements in their former work and will be here in about ten days.-If nothing should occur to prevent, I shall recommence the work by the first of October next and after completing the bridges and causeways on the route opened by Mr. Robinson, march the detachment to the St. John's river and open the road from thence into the city of St. Augustine. The whole of this will be accomplished by the first of December if the season is favorable and the troops being in that part of the country will commence without delay on the road to Tampa Bay. This arrangement will have economy of time and expenditures in regard to both roads for its primary object, and will have that effect.-

The contractor for that part of the road from Ockolockony to St. John's is progressing well with his work and calculates to be ready to deliver it over to me by the first of December next. I have made him a payment of near \$8000. on his contract. This sum is not in proportion to the work actually done and for which I was held bound to pay from time to time according to the terms of the advertisement, but I knew that in a short time he would have work done equal to the sum paid him, and moreover I am myself perfectly and fully secured against eventual loss from any difference that ex-

isted at the time between the work done and the sum paid.-

I beg leave respectfully to represent that in consequence of my not having received the sum \$5000. -estimated for on the 8th February last on account of the military road, I find myself greatly embarrassed in my money arrangements Believing it would arrive so that I could meet my private engagements I have greatly exceeded the sum I had on hand in my payments on account of the military road, as will appear on my monthly statement for June when it is forwarded. I have therefore earnestly to solicit that if it is not already remitted, it may be soon sent on, and also that the second appropriation of \$8000. may be remitted to me immediately after.

* * *

*From Rodman, John to Barbour, James, Sec. of War
St. Augustine, 4th April, 1826*

Feeling a deep interest in the welfare and prosperity of this territory, I hope you will excuse the liberty I take in addressing you on the subject, of the public road which was to be laid out and opened between this city and Pensacola, in virtue of the acts of Congress of the 28th Feb'y 1824 and 3rd March, 1825.

I find that a notice for proposals for making a part of this road, to-wit, from the Ocklockny river to this city, was published by Capt. Burch in the East Florida Herald in January and February 1825, a copy of which publication I beg leave to send you enclosed.

In consequence of this advertisement, a contract was made with Mr. John Bellamy, of Tallahassee for the construction of this part of the road. It appeared from the publication for the contract that

the road was to be made only sixteen feet wide, where by the above mentioned act of Congress of 28 Feb'y, 1824, it is expressly required to be made twenty five feet wide. I am ignorant of the cause of this discrepancy. Sixteen feet is certainly much too narrow for any public road in this country.

The advertisement for the contract states, that. it is required that the road, causeways, and bridges must be made in substantial manner; and the stumps cut down as even to the ground as possible.

Under this contract Mr. Bellamy has indeed opened the road as far as the St. John river, and I understand that he pretends it is thus far complete. But sir, I am sorry to inform you that it is in no respect made according to the terms of the publication for the contract.

All travellers agree in stating that the work is done in the slightest manner possible; that the road cannot possibly last a twelve month: that even in its present state, travelling in any kind of wheel carriage is extremely difficult. The stumps of the trees on the road are left standing to a great height, instead of being "cut down as low to the ground as possible". An ordinary rain must make the road absolutely impassable. No part of the road from the St. John river to this city had yet been opened. The causeways and bridges constructed on this road, from the Ocklockny to the St. John, are absolutely good for nothing.

I sincerely hope that, the sum stipulated in the contract for this road has not yet been paid to the contractor; for if the contract was made in conformity with the advertisement for proposals, it certainly has not been faithfully performed.

* * *

(Clipping enclosed with Rodman's letter of 4-4-26)

THE SUBSCRIBER,

Will receive proposals to open by contract the following named parts of the road laid out from Pensacola to St. Augustine, under the orders of the Department of War, during the winter of 1823-'24, viz: No. 1.-From the landing at "Murray's Ferry" on the east bank of the Ocklockny river, to the landing on the West bank of the St. John's river, opposite to Picolata.

No. 2.-From the landing on the east bank of the St. John's river at Picolata to the city of St. Augustine.

The proposals for No. 1 will be received by me in person at the seat of government for Florida between the 15th and 20th of December next; and opened and replied to on the last day.

The proposals for No. 2 will be received by me in St. Augustine between the 5th and 10th of February next; and opened and replied to on the last day; but in the case of any accident preventing my being there at that date through the medium of the Post Office, addressed to me at St. Augustine, when no avoidable delay in acting on them shall occur.

The lowest responsible bid in each case will be accepted, reserving to myself the privilege of rejecting the whole if the terms do not appear to me to be such as are reasonable. Bond with penalty, and with satisfactory security, will be required of contractors for the faithful and correct performance of each and every part of the contract.

Contractors are to be entirely under my direction, and subject to my orders in everything relating to the road.

Both of these contracts if taken must be completed by the 31st of December 1825.

The first, that is from the Ocklockny to the St. John's river, must be commenced on the first day of January next, or sooner if practicable. But if either of the contracts shall be completed before the stipulated time, such part of the road as it calls for will be received by me and promptly paid for.

No advances can be made, but if it desired, certain payments will be made by me from time to time, having special regard to the work actually done and remaining to be done, according to the contract.

Persons proposing for that part of the road comprised in No. 2 are requested to make two sets of proposals, one for the road independently of a bridge over St. Sebastian's river and the other to include the bridge. This bridge must be 18 feet in the clear and if the worm is known to destroy timber in that river, to be built on stone columns—the shellstone of the country such as is procured near St. Augustine. It is expected that plan of the bridge will accompany the proposal.

The road is to be opened, sixteen feet wide throughout, and all timber, brushwood and other rubbish to be removed from it. The stumps are to be cut down as low on the ground as possible. All marshy, miry swampy ground must be causewayed with poles from 5 to eight inches in diameter, at the smallest end, laid down close and permanent. The causeways are to be fifteen feet wide, and secured at each end with heavy riders, firmly staked down. Ditches four feet wide, and three feet deep are to be dug on each side of the causeways and the dirt thrown up on them, leaving the highest in the centre. At proper intervals, in long causeways, or through very wet ground, open log bridges must be constructed in them, to let the water pass

through. Where any one causeway shall exceed one hundred yards in length, it will be opened in the centre, or at each distance of 100 yards as the case may be, to the width of 20 feet for a distance of at least 40 feet. When the swamps or other ground causewayed shall be of such a nature as not to afford dirt sufficient to cover the causeways, it must be carted on to them.

It is contemplated to establish a ferry to the Suwannee river as it will be required to build a flat there 45 feet long and 11 feet wide according to a plan which shall be furnished to the contractor. All the other branches, streams, creeks, lagoons or rivers are to be bridged. If such stream shall be less than ten feet wide, with staunch frame bridges built upon the trestles or arches none of which are to be more than 14 feet apart. None of the main timbers of the bridge are to be less than 12 by 12 inches square and hewed excepting the mud sills which must be of logs hewn on the upper and lower side the bark taken off of the other sides, and the log itself not less than two feet in diameter and to extend at least four feet at each end beyond the exterior sides of the uprights at the cap sill. The flooring of the frame bridges is to be of sawed plank three inches thick. The other bridges may be covered with puncheons hewed to the three inches in thickness, the whole to be pinned firmly to the beams at each end. No other timber will be admitted in the construction of bridges except "light wood" or heart of pine, or some other wood known to be equally hard durable and lasting. The bridges must be built so high as that no part thereof from bank to bank shall ever be exposed to danger from the effect of the highest freshets. Good and staunch hand rails will be required to the bridges. Such

small branches as are never deep enough in freshets to obstruct carriages in passing, and halve firm sandy bottoms, with firm banks, may be cut down and left as fords, but in this I reserve to myself the right, when reviewing the road to decide whether they ought to be bridged or not. Special instructions to the manner of opening the road &c and more particularly plans and descriptions of the bridges will be furnished to contractor, no deviations from which will be allowed. Any information respecting the country that I can give, will be communicated by me to any person wishing to make proposals, while I am at the seat of government and before the last day of receiving said proposals. The distance from the Ocklockny to St. John's river, is about 185 miles, and from the St. John's river to St. Augustine is seventeen miles.

When either of these parts of the road is reported ready for delivery and is about to be received by me, should any difficulty respecting it arise between the contractor and myself, such difference shall be decided by some disinterested third person chosen by us jointly; and all expenses attending such references shall be at the cost of the contractors.

The privilege likewise to examine the road as it progresses will be reserved by me at all times before its completion; when, in my judgment the contractor is not proceeding in his work according to my instructions and his contract, and shall refuse to obey or disregard my directions, I shall then be empowered to annul the contract forthwith he forfeiting all claims for compensation for work done.

I will also receive at the same time with the others, at the seat of government for Florida, proposals for opening the following named parts of the same road; but as such proposals cannot be definitely acted

upon by me at this time, it will only be necessary to forward them to me by letter: via:

1st. From the East Bank of the Choctawhatchie river to the West Bank of the Appalachian river.

2nd. From the East Bank of the Appalachian river to the West Bank of the Ocklockony river.

The same directions as to opening this part of the route will govern, as are prescribed for the others.

D. E. Burch, Asst. Qr. Master

To Jesup from Smith, H., Lieut. and A. Q. M.

Savannah, Ga. May 15, 1826

I had the honor to receive your communication of the 21st of April, at St. Augustine-and the evening before our departure from that place.

In obedience to its tenor, I called on Maj. Pierce and examined Mr. Rodman's letter. As the time would not admit of my personal inspection of the road in question, I proceeded to obtain such information in relation to the manner of its completion as could be procured. After consulting Mr. Rodman, as to his authority, I made many and minute inquiries of several of the most respectable inhabitants of St. Augustine and officers of the Army, who had travelled over the whole or a portion of the road from Tallahassee to St. Augustine. The result of this investigation leaves little doubt of the general correctness of Mr. Rodman's letter. All concur in representing the road as a very indifferent one, and at seasons nearly (if not quite) impassable. Its faults are said to be-that it is, most of the way much too narrow, often not exceeding in width from 12 to 15 feet: that, the causeway is very insufficiently made, and is in some places omitted, even where the ground is, in wet seasons,

under water, that this evil is increased by the want of proper depth and width of the ditches; that, the stumps of trees are left much too long, in very many cases being nearly a foot above the ground, instead of being cut very close or (which would be better) dug out; it appears that, tho' a portion of the road is thrown up in the middle the residue has had little other labour bestowed on it, than in imperfectly cutting away the trees to mark the course. It also appears to have been much better made in the vicinity of Tallahassee, than within 60 or 70 miles from St. Augustine, and particularly between the latter place and St. (blank) river. The prevailing opinion is that a sufficient road could not be made by any individual, agreeably to the terms of the contract, but that the present one will not be found, by any means to have fulfilled these terms.

I regret, sir, that I had not received your instructions a day or two sooner, that I might have examined the above work myself: Major Pierce has, however, promised me that. he will on his first leisure, personally inspect that portion of it, nearest his command and make, to you, a more particular report thereupon.

I cannot close my letter without tendering you my sincere thanks for the interest you have taken in procuring my appointment in your department, and I need not add that I shall accept it with very great pleasure.

Gen. Scott desires to be warmly commended to you. We sail. today for ~~New~~ ~~York~~.

To Jesup from Bellame

St. Augustine, May 19, 1826

As contractor for opening a road, from the east bank of the Ocklockony river, beginning at Mur-

ray's landing on said river, to the west bank of St. Johns river, and also for the opening of a road from the east bank of St. John river to St. Augustine, which contracts were entered into by me, with Daniel E. Burch, Asst. Qr. Mr. U. S. Army, and agent for the United States of America: and as I am informed, acting under your superior orders, I have thought both prudence, and my interest required I should address a letter to you, which Major Pierce, stationed at this place, has had the politeness to offer to enclose-

It may be necessary, to apprise you, that very lately Capt. Burch, has married in my family, and now assumes to me, the relationship of son-in-law-

By the contracts between him and myself, of which I presume you have been furnished with copies; it will be seen he has stipulated, when the road is reported ready for inspection, and delivery, that he (Capt. Burch) shall immediately thereafter inspect and receive it.

It is true sir, the unparalleled wetness of the season, last year, prevented me from being able to tender the road as soon as I supposed I should have been able to do. But I now conceive it completed, and ready to deliver-I even think I have done much labour upon it, not required by my contract-Capt. Burch who a few days ago, passed over the road with me, had however pointed out some amendments which he thinks are required by the contract: altho we differ in opinion, I shall not hesitate, but with all convenient dispatch, shall do what he considers necessary to be done, or what any authorized agent of Government can reasonably require.

But sir, the captious, the idle, the profligate, and besides those possibly, some well disposed people in

this Territory, who really are entirely unacquainted with the road, or the contract, undertake to decry the one, and decide the other not complied with and even pronounce against me, an unqualified decision without any better testimony than mere rumor: from such a tribunal under any circumstances, but particularly as I did not contract to submit to it, I must appeal and beg to be shielded-

Under these circumstances should Capt. Burch inspect, and receive the road it may be the subject matter of insidious remarks against him, as well as against me.-I should therefore prefer- greatly prefer, your releasing him from this responsibility and imposing it upon any other intelligent, and impartial man whom you may think proper to appoint for that purpose, who together with a man selected by me, and in case of disagreement an umpire chosen by them, shall inspect and receive the road, or point out to me, what is further necessary to be done, which I will forthwith do; and when done that they, or a majority of them be authorized to receive the road.-

Already one of my important bridges has within a few days past been destroyed by fire from an Indian encampment adjoining it, which because the road is not received (to save controversy) I am about to rebuild.

I will only trouble you further to remark, the season is now remarkably fine, should it be decided, any additional ditching, or causewaying, is necessary to complete my contracts, it would be most desirable to me to do it whilst the country is not inundated, and. when my negroes would not be immersed in water-besides it is important to me, to be at liberty to appropriate my force to other permanent objects as speedily as possible.-These mo-

tives make me anxious to deliver the roads, and be discharged from my engagements to the Government; and must be my apology for begging you to attend to, and answer this communication as early as your convenience will permit.

Please address me at Tallahassee.

To Clark, Capt. Isaac, Ass't Qrmr, U. S. Army, Tallahassee from Burch

Tallahassee, July 21, 1826

I enclose herewith the contracts made with Mr. Bellamy for opening certain roads in Florida. By the contract of 21 December 1824, you will perceive that he was expressly required to work under my direction; I therefore enclose herewith a copy of such as were given at various times to govern him in particular places as to the manner of opening the road.-The contract is itself I believe sufficiently clear in most things else, but as the stumps have been complained of as to height I have to remark in relation to them, that my directions were to cut them where the level of the roots joint on to the trunk of the tree. This is not in the *strictest* sense of the word "as low as possible", yet such was the explanation I gave to that part of the contract; intending by it that the stumps should in all cases be cut so low as to offer no obstruction to the passage of the lowest constructed description of carriages in use. Before the signing of the contract much conversation took place relative to the meaning of the "marshy, miry, swampy, ground to be causewayed with timber", whether it included low flat piny woods, to which I expressly stated that it did not. The question was also put whether the ditches were to be in all cases of the required dimensions, and the causeways laid down with timber.

-To this I referred in explanation to the stipulation contained in the latter part of the second provision in Article 2d of the contract stating that in lands or places covered with water I knew it was impracticable to ditch to any extent; that the object of ditching at all was to drain the water from off the road so much as it was to obtain dirt sufficient to cover the poles of which the causeways were to be made, as I knew well that in all ordinary cases of wet weather the ditches as well as the surface of the ground itself would be wholly under water. These two last particulars have never been made a subject of complaint or notice in any way whatever; and yet they were the very points upon which in my opinion the completion of the work rested-after the inspection of the road shall have been made I request you will return to me the contracts.

* * *

To Jesup from Burch

Pensacola, August 31, 1826

I enclose herewith a copy of an agreement between Mr. Bellamy and myself according to your order of the 10 June last. It was impracticable for me to have it made with the securities also, as they now reside widely separated from each other, most all of them having removed from the St. John's since the original bond was signed, and one of them into the state of Alabama. But I considered himself alone responsible enough for the amount of damage; especially as he had declared at once his intention not to leave anything whatever to an umpire, but rather to abide by the decision of Capt. Clark and to perform any additional work he might require. His hands were not taken off the road until the 17th July having worked until that time under my direction, when it was in such a situation

that I deemed it ready for inspection. Capt. Clark arrived at Tallahassee and relieved me in the duty of receiving it on the 21 July when I delivered to him the contracts as per the enclosed copy of my letter to him. I did not accompany him in the inspection of the road throughout to St. Augustine, finding that it was unnecessary for me to do so; and delaying my time when I felt great anxiety about my accounts & business at Pensacola for which place I set out without a moment's delay after I separated from Capt. Clark. During the present month I have had a party of 21 men employed under the direction of Lt. Shannon in building a bridge over a creek on the road about 65 miles from here, which had been taken out of the stream entire, floated up like a raft and lodged a hundred yards off in the pine woods. This was caused by an extraordinary freshet and which the inhabitants say rose three or four feet higher in the creeks than had ever been known to them before. It happened after the Editor of the Pensacola Gazette travelled the road and made the observations which produced the paragraph, in his paper, and was the only real deficiency in the road after being subjected near two years to the effects of freshets. It appeared that at the time he travelled it there were two small bridges (made over inconsiderable branches that did not require to be bridged at all) deranged by the freshets, and these two I have repaired and raised higher. The Editor has again noticed the road in an expository note. which I enclose herewith. This was done by him at the representation of some persons who did not altogether agree with him in the statement first made. It was not my intention to have asked him to contradict, nor to reply myself in a newspaper to anything he might choose

to state in his paper, whether false or true. If such had been my practice I should long since have made the Editor of the St. Augustine Herald contradict, or have done it myself, his first false statement; that "Major Pierce and Lt. Smith had been appointed to inspect the road" and his second paragraph headed the "Clipping system" which I enclosed to you on the 9th. July last. These statements injured me in a much greater degree than that of the Pensacola Gazette. For from the first it was inferred that either my neglect of duty or misconduct had rendered it necessary for an inspection to be made, and from the second that my views were to keep the proposals secret to favor friends in the contract, but so far from that I would have advised them against such a measure, for if I really wished an enemy injury I would advise him to engage in contracts with the Government. For my own part, I perfectly understand the paragraph, the paper it is well known is managed, in fact edited by Mr. Rodman, and the meaning intended to be conveyed to public was, that by my management the contract was to be thrown into Mr. Bellamy's hands as he was my father-in-law. But if such had been my views should have met but indifferent support from him in carrying the measure into effect. For long before the contract was offered at all (the evidence of which is contained in one of my enclosures to you on the 10th of Feby last) I have heard him declare that he would not again engage in a contract of the kind under the Government if he was to receive five dollars per day for each one of his hands, so much had he suffered in mind from the idle clamors of persons who had nothing to do with his contract or the work done under it. And when he was first informed of the measures taken in con-

sequence of the complaint of Mr. Rodman he resolved to abandon the road as it was, to the Government, without further effort-although so nearly completed, but was prevented from doing so by the persuasion of friends who induced him to continue to work on it. When he did publish the proposals he honored me with a second notice which I enclose. It would be a matter of great pleasure and relief to him if his paper have the same circulation in the country that my hand-bills had and I will venture to say that if I put it into his paper only, not twenty persons in the county of Duval and Alachua of Florida and Camden in Georgia, would have had it at all, and it was from Duval county only that bidders likely to get the contract were to be expected as the route of the road lay directly through it, meeting the lines of the adjoining counties of Camden, in Ga. and Alachua in Florida, the one on the north, and the other on the south. I have enclosed one of these advertisements to a gentlemen having experience in work of this kind, residing in Camden county of my acquaintance, who had a large force of negroes, who I thought possibly might wish from its being in his vicinity to engage on the road; but in a private letter to me, after declining it altogether on any terms whatever, he adds "I most candidly declare to you that I have never yet seen any appropriation made by Congress which would enable a contractor to make twenty-five cents per day for each of his laborers."-The contracts taken by men residing in Duval County directly on the line of the road and the very great difference between their bids and those of persons more or less remote can be seen by reference to the copies of the proposals forwarded to you on the 9th day of July last with the contracts. When I first issued pro-

posals for opening roads in Florida the contract was like to be of very considerable amount and I availed myself of all neighboring papers as well as those of Florida. And in the second instance of one of the papers of Florida in addition to the hand bills, but these publications did not produce the least beneficial effect nor in fact attract the least attention. In the last case I did not think it worth while in making so small contracts to incur the extra expense of publishing in the papers, and the not getting some thirty or forty dollars for the same was one of the sore points with the Editor of the Herald. When I am assailed by men, either Editors of newspapers or other, whom I deem worthy of notice at all, I know how to resent insults, or punish the authors of falsehoods affecting my character, in a personal and I believe in an effectual manner.-

Yesterday I received a letter from Capt. Clark informing me that he had passed Mr. Bellamy's road, and as I have made such repairs as were wanting on this end of it I consider all my duties in relation to roads in Florida with the exception of receiving the two contracts for the Colerain road, nearly brought to a close:-And I hope that I may never again have similar duties to perform. Not that I am at all averse to employment, and I would with pleasure undertake the performance of any work of the kind that was strictly military, done by the troops with the proper funds of the Qr. Masters Department, such as the military communication between this place and Mobile point, thence to Blakely in Alabama and from this place to Blakely, should such roads be deemed necessary. But where special appropriations are made for roads passing anywhere at all, having relation to the settlements,

the people of the country deem it a matter exclusively their own and no military officer can expect either to give satisfaction or be free from open censure. Moreover, both officers and soldiers, and more especially the former are decidedly averse to working upon roads where military movements are not immediately concerned, deeming it to be a degrading and unmilitary employment. And if my duties had never been directed in that way, I should have escaped many mutually bitter feelings with my brother officer, caused by this very working upon roads; with men too who were my intimate friends, much to my regret.

The following extract of an unofficial letter to me from Capt. Clark gives a clear idea of the country in which both him and myself have been engaged :- "I arrived here (Cant. Brooke) last evening (23 May) from St. Augustine after swimming near half the way. My bridges have had a severe trial, I swam my horse over many of them, they are all safe but one seven miles from here over a creek; the country is so much under water I cannot tell whether the bridge is there or not, I am in hopes it is still standing." This very same country last spring and early in the summer would have scarcely afforded water for the traveller and his horse to drink, so that persons unused to such a country or bred in towns would take their ideas of any road in it according to the season when they happened to be travelling.

So much has been said and written about the duties I have discharged in relation to these roads, that I am procuring some testimonies from some intelligent gentlemen of respect and character which I shall lay before you in another communication, and shall take the same occasion to correct some er-

ronious impressions I had entertained respecting the opening of roads in this country resulting from a better knowledge of it and from my own experience and reflection.

My reports and returns up to this date, and my amounts and vouchers for the last quarter, will be forwarded by the next mail, they are now made out but not in complete readiness to be mailed by this mail.

(Enclosure)

Article of agreement made and entered into this 21st day of July 1826 between John Bellamy of the county of Leon in the Territory of Florida, and Capt. Danl. E. Burch, Asst Q. M. U. S. Army, agent for the United States of America of the other part, witnesseth : --

That the said John Bellamy agrees with the said Dan'l E. Burch for himself and others associated with him in said contracts, that Capt. Isaac Clark, Asst. Q. M., U. S. Army shall be and is said hereby substituted, having been appointed by the government of the United States for the purpose, to inspect and receive certain roads opened by him in Florida under contracts made with said Burch dated the 21st day of December, 1824 and 28th day of September, 1825, hereby binding himself to accept and receive, and abide by such decisions as may be made by the said Clark in the course of his inspection, in the same manner as if made by the said Burch, having reference always to said contracts and instructions given thereon by said Burch during the progress of said work.-

In testimony whereof we have hereunto signed our

names and affixed our seals the day of year above written.-

(signed triplicate)

Dan'l E. Burch
Asst. Q. M.
John Bellame.
* * *

Pens. Gazette, Aug. 18 (Clipping enclosed with Burch's letter of 8-31-26)

St. Augustine Road. - We are informed that a detachment is soon to be sent from Cantonement Clinch, under the direction of the Quarter Master's Department, to make the necessary repairs on the St. Augustine road between this place and Tallahassee. We take pleasure in noticing this fact and in so doing we embrace the opportunity to observe that we have been informed, by those well acquainted with the subject, that the part of the military road over which we travelled in January and February * * * contained in our paper of 17th * * is worse than any other portion of the road and we are also informed that most of the bridges and causeways are made in the best manner that the materials would permit and that no pains were spared to make the road safe, convenient and permanent. It is true that we travelled the road at a most unfavorable season and it would appear were peculiarly unfortunate in seeing only the worst parts of it, where the country is low and flat, but our former remarks were not predicated on our own observation alone, and while we make the foregoing statement, in justice to the officer under whose superintendence the road was cut, we once more express our satisfaction that the road is shortly to be put in proper repair and hope that no complaints will in future be considered necessary, as it is only a conviction

of their necessity which prompts us ever to make remarks calculated to reflect in the slightest degree on the conduct of any one.

A copy of a letter from, the Quarter master general has been put into our hands, by which it would appear, that Maj. Pierce was only required to ascertain the correctness of statements made, in relation to a part of the road, and contained in a letter from St. Augustine addressed to that officer, whether they were founded on the writer's personal knowledge of the facts or upon representations of others and if the latter who his informants were, and that Maj. P. - was not directed to inspect the road, as we had been led to suppose from the notice in the East Florida Herald of 9th May.

* * *

To Jesup from Burch

Washington City, December 23rd, 1826

Conforming to your instructions I have the honour to make the following report respecting the roads which have been surveyed and opened in Florida under my superintendence. -

My appointment in your department was made in the fall of 1822, with orders to repair to Pensacola, where I arrived in January following. The acting Governor, Colo. Walton, called upon me by direction of the Secretary of War, for a report and estimate for opening a road from Pensacola to St. Augustine. I accordingly made one on the general information which I had respecting the interior of Florida, derived from others, but more from having been through it myself in the Seminole War. Shortly, afterwards, I received your instructions to report upon and furnish estimates for several military communications to be opened through Florida, viz :-From Pensacola to St. Augustine ; -to Bar-

rancas ;to Mobile and Mobile Point ;and in a direction north into Alabama. Reports with estimates were accordingly made, and in addition I recommended that a road should be opened, or rather extended, as there was a road part of the way from Pensacola to Fort Mitchell. - I was immediately instructed to open the road to Barrancas, which was done, excepting the bridge across the "Big Bayou" (a fordable inlet in general, though too broad for convenience) which I have not been able to construct as yet by reason of having been called upon to perform other duties with such workmen as were to be drawn from among the soldiers of more immediate consequence. Under my orders, in the fall of 1823, to make an actual survey and furnish estimates for the road from Pensacola to St. Augustine, and from Pensacola to Fort Mitchell, I accomplished the former; and recommended that the latter should be opened at once without any special survey or appropriation. This plan was approved, and the road opened at an expense of a fraction over one thousand dollars by the labor of the troops, and now constitutes one of the most useful communications in that part of the country; independent, of having been of essential importance in a military point of view for the movement of the troops into the Creek country in the summer of 1825. The survey of the road from Pensacola to St. Augustine was agreeable to your orders commenced at Deer Point opposite to Pensacola and continued thence in the most direct line that the localities of the country would permit. - The interior of Florida was at that time a wilderness, its particular localities unknown to the whites, and with but a few families settled in it, only one of them being on the line of road; hence the necessary information was derived

from Indians and Indian guides. From a full knowledge of the country obtained by personal travel and observation since that period, it is known to me that the road is carried over as good ground from Deer Point to the Apalachicola river, on a much nearer route too, as can be selected in that part of Florida; but it passes over the poor and unsettled lands, the rich lands of that district being north of the route on the head branches of the small streams with which that country abounds. From the Apalachicola to St. Augustine the road passes over not only the nearest route, but by far the best that can possibly be selected. Of this road that part from Deer Point to the Apalachicola has been opened by the labor of the troops stationed at Pensacola, and from thence to St. Augustine, by contracts. It may be recollected that the troops were ordered from Pensacola to the Creek country about the time they had completed the road to the Apalachicola, after which period their services were no longer available in opening roads. The law contemplated that this road should be opened twenty-five feet wide and it has been opened sixteen feet wide. This width is amply sufficient for all the purposes of a military communication between these two points, which appears to have been the primary object in making the road, and it is certainly so for the travelling and other purposes of the country when used by the inhabitants of Florida. Moreover the experience of the southern country shows that wide roads are not necessary, for if opened to the influence of the air and sun an almost impenetrable growth of oak bushes springs up in the first season afterwards. Width in a road in a country, chiefly a pine forest, as is the case in Florida, can be of but little consequence because of the facility

with which wagons can turn out at any place whatever to pass each other, hence throughout the southern country, the roads are all narrow, being mostly confined to a single track, excepting in the vicinity of cities and the larger commercial towns. The general practice of opening roads in the new southern states is to trace out a road by blazing the trees, on the most eligible ground, and clear away the immediate track for the road, without cutting away any of the largest timber. Whereas in opening the road from Pensacola to St. Augustine it has been staked out in straight reaches, each one extending as far in a direct line as the country would permit, of sixteen feet wide, and all timber &c cut down and removed therefrom. Although this road does not pass through the settlements of the country generally (settlements which have been formed since the road was surveyed and laid out, and mostly since it was actually commenced) yet their proximity to it enables them all to use it, or such portions of it as suits their convenience, by intersecting roads, all of which can be so laid off as not to cause them to travel out of their way in doing so, in any perceptible degree. When this road was surveyed, the country was remarkably dry, and the streams low, and I had not then anticipated it possible that so much difficulty could occur in opening the road by reason of the water, which I subsequently found flooded the flat pine woods, & swelled the creeks into rivers. My estimates was therefore one-fourth lower than I should otherwise have made it. Indeed I do not know that but under different circumstances I should not have reported it to be an impracticable undertaking. -And during the whole time the road was making, unprecedented rains and wet weather

opposed every difficulty to its proper construction and retarded its progress.-Yet notwithstanding these difficulties, a road of more than four hundred miles has been constructed in a wilderness country, where supplies of forage &c were very scarce and excessively dear, the numerous small creeks and streams bridged, swamps causewayed with timber and many miles of low pine woods ditched and thrown up for a cost not exceeding one-half of my original estimate, underrated as it was in comparison with the actual situation of the country and the extent of road to open.-If with the sum given to me I had only blazed out and opened a road in the usual manner of the country, provided footways across the creeks, and rendered passable the boggy ground only, by causewaying it, I should have thought my duty to the Government would have been fulfilled by my exertions in completing the work assigned to me.-

Believing it to be essential to the interests of the Government that a military communication should be opened by a road across from the St. Mary's river in Georgia to Tampa Bay, I reported on the measure in the fall of 1824, and which was subsequently authorized by law. The south end of this road (from Wanton's to Tampa Bay) being assigned to Capt. Clark to open with the labor of the troops, left me the north end, that is from Wanton's to Colerain to open.-My estimate for this road was very low and the appropriation having been made only to one half of the estimate, it followed that the north end could not be opened by contract as soon as was proposed, the bids having in the first instance exceeded the means at my disposal-But in the last summer new arrangements having been made by which Capt. Clark was to extend the road

by the labor of the troops from Wanton's, north to Black Creek; and thence to the St. Mary's being put under contract by me, the whole is now in progress and it is to be presumed is by this time, completed. The route that this road pursues embraces a large part, and by far the most difficult to repair, of the "King's Road" from the St. Mary's to St. Augustine. It intersects that road six miles north of the St. John's river from whence it is forty-six miles to St. Augustine. The whole distance from the St. Mary's to St. Augustine is eighty miles and the work now done on this road not quite half the distance, embraces much more than half the labor necessary in completing the repair of this road. South from St. Augustine, the want of proper communication having been reported on fully by Col. Gadsden shews the necessity of continuing the military communication by reopening the King's Road to New Smyrna as therein recommended. The road from Tampa Bay to Coleraine has been opened twenty feet wide until it intersects the "King's Road", and thence twenty-five feet wide. -In making this road that width I did not deem it to be at all necessary, but only in order that it might not hereafter be objected to on account of its width and additional appropriations required to increase it. -

I beg leave to submit for your consideration whether it would not be expedient so so& as convenient to connect Pensacola with Mobile Point and Blakely, and the latter places with each other, by roads, which in a state of war will become very important, and even in the present state of peace will be very useful. Between Pensacola and Blakely there is already a good natural road, formed entirely by the travelling of carriages on an Indian

trail without any labor whatever. This route might be much improved and shortened, but a personal examination of the country would be necessary for me to determine the most proper direction on which these roads should be opened if ordered to be done. The whole of these routes is open pine woods and the expense of opening the roads would be inconsiderable.-

It is also submitted whether the bridge over the "Big Bayou" on the road between Pensacola and Barrancas ought not yet to be built. The navy yard being below it, and having necessarily much more communication over it than the military would have, it is probable they would aid by sending a detachment of workmen to assist in constructing it.-

At the cession of Florida to the United States the population was confined to the cities of Pensacola and St. Augustine, and a scattering population along the seaboard between the St. Mary's and the St. John's Rivers, and on the banks of the said rivers. The interior being a wilderness in the occupancy of the Indians. But few settlements were made before the beginning of 1824, and at the same time improvements by roads were commenced, until which there was but one regularly laid out road, the "King's Road" from the St. Mary's to St. Augustine which was greatly in want of repair. The approach to Pensacola was by a road which had been formed only by wagons following along on the Indian trail which communicated with it from the State of Alabama. Since that period the interior of the country has measurably filled with population, the roads spoken of above laid out, and either in part or entirely completed, and besides the individual necessities and enterprize of the inhabitants has caused them to open numerous roads for the con-

venience of particular neighborhoods, and also to communicate with the sea coast at St. Marks, and at St. Andrews Bay. The soil of Florida being sandy, and the peculiarly open nature of the pine woods, present great facilities for opening roads, and in a direction from north to south where the ridges universally extend to the coast parallel to the course of the large water-courses, no obstacle is interposed. It is only such directions (from east to west) as cross the streams and rivers that difficulty in opening roads is to be found. In other cases but little is required than to blaze the trees and by a little use the road is improved into a good road. A military force with a few pioneers in advance, in ordinary seasons would effect a common day's march through Florida on any of its roads, and even through the forest itself, pursuing only an Indian Trail merely as a guide for the direction.

There is one remark to be made respecting roads in Florida, that owing to the general poverty of the soil, and the scattered and detached situation of its settlements, it cannot be expected that the inhabitants will apply much of their labor to keeping these roads in repair.-The roads used altogether for the business of the country are in a direction towards the sea coast and along the ridges where neither labor or repair are hardly ever wanting on them.-The road from Pensacola to St. Augustine is opened in a direction necessarily crossing all the streams and their swamps in the country. It is of consequence more liable than any other to receive injury in the bridges and causeways from constant freshets, and will require more attention to keep *it* up and in repair, in its bridges more particularly, as timber in that climate is sub-

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ject to a speedy decay when exposed, and as it is not in the route to be used for the business transactions of the country, it will be more neglected than any other road.-

Circumstances of my duties have rendered it necessary for me to communicate so frequently and fully on the subject of roads in Florida and of the general face of the country itself, that I beg leave respectfully to request that they may be referred to in conjunction with this report when reviewing what has been done and what remains yet to do, and also in comparing the present situation of that country in regard to its means of military communication, to what it was when I was assigned to the duty of Quarter Master at Pensacola in 1823. And if I have not done all that I was ordered to do, or all that was expected of me, I trust that the failures will not be attributed to any wilful neglect of mine, or want of zeal on my part.