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Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie Plantations, Middle Florida, 1828-1868. Part I

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO EL DESTINO AND
CHEMONIE PLANTATIONS, MIDDLE
FLORIDA, 1828-1868. Part I

INTRODUCTION

Probably no other section of the United States has passed through such far-reaching social and economic changes in the last seventy years as the Southern States. In the midst of a land where cotton was king and agriculture the predominant source of wealth, there have arisen new and flourishing industries and extensive development of natural resources. And that is not all; in agriculture itself new methods, new products, and last but by no means least, a new labor system have caused the old days to vanish forever.

(Note—This series of plantation documents will be continued through several numbers of the QUARTERLY. Taken singly, some of these may seem to be of slight interest and of no value to the recording of Florida's history; but they have been selected to give a view of plantation life and conditions and practice from as many different directions as possible, and it is believed that together they picture at least an outline of what a typical Middle Florida plantation was before the War. Portions of the journals of the overseers, their letters to the owner, and extracts *literatim* from the other records of the plantation and its mill will follow: day after day the numbers, and frequently the names, of the hands in the field and at each of numerous and widely different tasks—births and deaths of the slaves, sickness, weather, crops, disasters.

Dr. Abbey (she is professor of history at Florida State College for Women, Tallahassee), in arranging the documents for publication, has added much to their value by a general introduction and full notes throughout. Plantation days, now so long gone in the Tallahassee region, are about to fade from recollection with the passing of their last survivors; so it is well that Professor Abbey has undertaken this work there and now—adding to our appreciation of the documents by outside gleanings. To all of the work she brings a keen interest and historical training.

There is much advantage in publishing each document complete, instead of a narrative based on the whole. Accuracy and atmosphere are secured, but of even more importance—opportunity is given abundantly for reading between the lines. —Ed.)

The ante-bellum plantation lives only in memory; but with the hope of recapturing and preserving some bit of the flavor of that earlier time, the *Florida Historical Society Quarterly* is beginning the publication of a series of plantation manuscripts.

The plantations in question were called El Destino and Chemonie, and were located a short distance from Tallahassee, Florida. The former was one of the well-known pioneer estates of the territory, the latter was acquired by the owner of El Destino in 1839 or 1840. The section of country of which these two plantations formed a part was what was known as Middle Florida and comprised, roughly speaking, the district between the Suwannee and Apalachicola rivers. This land was discovered to be exceptionally fertile and, after the removal of the Seminoles, was the scene of rather extensive settlement. St. Augustine with its vicinity was already becoming known for its orange groves while Pensacola was beginning to compete with Mobile for commerce; thus, it was left to the lot of Middle Florida to become the agricultural center of the new state. The prosperity of the region was not without its darker side, however, for Florida soil was thin as well as fertile, and the problems arising from erosion were never absent.

The extant El Destino and Chemonie records have had an interesting and involved history. In his search for early Floridiana, Dr. James O. Knauss, formerly Professor of History at Florida State College for Women, visited El Destino and there unearthed a mass of material consisting of plantation and mill journals, reports of overseers, legal papers of various kinds, contracts, letters, etc. By a somewhat circuitous route, a large part of these came into the possession of the Missouri Historical Society; the major part of those has been printed in the excellent volume, *Flor-*

ida Plantation Records, edited by Ulrich B. Phillips and James D. Glunt. The remaining documents, which have not been published, were divided by their owner, George Noble Jones, between the Florida Historical Society and the Georgia Historical Society according to the content of the material in question. It is selections from these manuscripts which will, in successive instalments; appear in the QUARTERLY.

The QUARTERLY proposes to publish the records just mentioned according to a definite plan. The present instalment contains a somewhat detailed account of the plantations in question, their origin, extent, growth, and the many and varied aspects of their life. The purpose of this narrative is not merely to make intelligible a series of records which are from fifty to a hundred years old but to restore the outlines and atmosphere of plantation activity as one would attempt to clarify the delineation of the figures in an old masterpiece. Following this introduction, there will appear, in this and subsequent issues, edited selections from the manuscripts themselves. By far the greater number of those selections will be from unpublished records but, now and then, it has been thought wise to reprint extracts from *Florida Plantation Records* to fill in some gap or round out the picture by adding a significant detail.

The establishment of El Destino seems to have been the result of an attempt at land speculation in Middle Florida undertaken by John Nuttall, a Virginia planter, and his sons James and William B. Nuttall. The tract of land which was to prove the nucleus of the estate was obtained from the United States government on January 3, 1828.¹ Two months later, according to the papers of the Nuttall family, a corps of negroes

¹ This tract consisted of the E 1/2, SW 1/4, section 5, township 1 south, range 3 east, Department of the Interior, General Land Office.

was started from Virginia to Florida,² presumably to provide the labor for the new venture. By May of that year, William B. Nuttall, the son in charge of the business, had procured a tract of land consisting of 480 acres which, in the articles of agreement drawn up by the father and two sons, was definitely named El Destino. The tract thus amassed was composed of two grants of government land³ and 320 acres purchased from one, John Moor. Of the latter little can be discovered. He was not a real estate dealer on any large scale for there are few records of property acquisition or sales to his credit; on the other hand his transaction with Nuttall was a rather clever speculation. The land had been originally the possession of William M. McCarty who had received it from the government in 1826.⁴ On June 4, 1828, Moor bought the property for \$1100 and before the sun had set, sold it to Nuttall for \$2350.⁵

In the fall of 1828 the three Nuttalls drew up a plan whereby El Destino was to be cultivated on a profit sharing basis. The arrangement was to last three years. John Nuttall was the heaviest stockholder for not only was he supposed to have purchased the land but he agreed to put up most of the slaves. These laborers were naturally the group already in Florida. James Nuttall contributed sixteen negroes, while William B. put up neither negroes nor money but was

² See III. of appended documents. The original of this list is in the handwriting of John Nuttall.

³ A second grant of land was taken from the United States by Nuttall in May, 1828. This consisted of the E 1/2, NE 1/4, section 6, township 1 south, range 3 east.

⁴ The land was actually taken from the government in August, 1826.

⁵ The record of the sale of the property by McCarty to Moor is to be found in the records of the Clerk of the County Court, Leon County-Records of County Court, Tallahassee, A433. The terms of the sale by Moor to Nuttall is printed as I. of the appended documents

to work out his share as plantation manager. The profits were to be divided into thirty-two parts, ten of which fell to the share of James. The remaining twenty-two parts were divided between John and William B., two-thirds going to John and one-third to his son. By the terms of the contract, James was at liberty to withdraw his negroes at any time during the three years, provided he did not endanger a crop thereby. ⁶

The next four years saw many changes in the plantation. Additional land was acquired by new grants from the government and also by the purchase of the northwest quarter of section six from James M. C. and Ann Eliza Baker. ⁷ All this land was deeded to William B. Nuttall. In fact the original purchase from John Moor was also deeded to him, a situation which occasioned a protest at a later date. This procedure was justified by Mrs. Nuttall in the litigation which arose at the time of the settlement of the Nuttall estate on the ground that John Nuttall never paid any of the \$2350 but that all the expenditures made in connection with the plantation were met by William B. Nuttall. ⁸

A further charge was made against the management of the plantation during this period of joint ownership, namely, that Nuttall neither rendered an account of the earnings of El Destino nor shared the profits according to the terms of the agreement men-

⁶ See II. of the appended documents.

⁷ Deed of sale of land from James M. C. and Ann Eliza Baker to William B. Nuttall-Records of the Clerk of County Court, Tallahassee, D 611. The sale is recorded as taking place on February 8, 1836, but Nuttall entered the land at the State Land Office in November, 1830.

⁸ Reply of Mary Wallace Nuttall, Administratrix of William B. Nuttall deceased, to a bill in Chancery exhibited against her and the Union Bank of Florida by James Patton, Executor of John Nuttall deceased, May 11, 1839.

tioned above.⁹ Here again, Mrs. Nuttall justified her husband's action on the ground that the cost of the establishment of the plantation had used up the entire earnings of those early years. In fact, the estate of William B. Nuttall brought a counter-claim against the estate of John Nuttall for a share of the amount thus spent. The money had been used for many purposes : forests had to be cleared, the land prepared for cultivation, equipment and stock supplied, and dwellings erected for both owner and laborers. It was maintained in this counter-claim that at least \$11,500 had come out of the private funds of William B. Nuttall.¹⁰

In 1832 several events of importance affected the Nuttall fortunes. On June 20, William B. Nuttall married Mary Wallace Savage, a Savannah heiress who had, among other things, a half interest in fifty-four slaves. Some of the negroes were brought to El Destino,¹¹ and sizable sums from the Savage fortune were employed by Nuttall in his many real estate speculations. The same year witnessed the death of John Nuttall and the end of the joint control of El Destino. In December William B. Nuttall purchased the entire plantation for \$17,000 from the executor of his father's estate, James Patton.¹² Shortly thereafter James and Alexander, brothers of William B.,

⁹ Bill in Chancery exhibited by James Patton, Executor of John Nuttall deceased, against William B. Nuttall deceased and the Union Bank of Florida, November 15, 1838. Patton held that "with reasonable industry and attention" William B. Nuttall could have made \$12,000 for each of the three years. This sum was exclusive of repairs.

¹⁰ *Supra* 8. Mrs. Nuttall claimed that not only had her husband received no compensation for the amount spent out of his own funds but that no arrangement for such compensation had ever been suggested.

¹¹ William B. Nuttall to Mary S. Nuttall, Dec. 7, 1833. The letter discusses, among other things, the sale of Hannah, one of the Savage negroes.

¹² See IV. of the appended documents.

left El Destino for Louisiana and North Carolina respectively. Each carried with him a group of John Nuttall's negroes without making any-payment to their new owner. Alexander, it is true, did give his brother two notes for \$3640 payable "on demand," and there is also evidence that he expected to buy others of his father's slaves as he wished. In a later letter written as a protest against disposing of the negroes, he asserted that he would not have consented to the sale of the property to Nuttall on any other basis.¹³

The settlement arranged between Nuttall and James Patton was not satisfactory as Nuttall became heavily involved in real estate speculation. His most ambitious scheme was the attempted purchase of a whole township which was the tract presented by the United States government to General Lafayette.¹⁴ Out of this venture, Nuttall expected to realize some \$60,000 profit but his hopes had no foundation and, as a result, he embarked on a highly intricate system of borrowing. The payments on El Destino could not be, or, at least, were not made, the slaves on the place were mortgaged to the Union Bank and, finally, resort was made to his New York factors who gave him a loan of \$3000 on his 1836 cotton crop, an unusual proceeding for that date.¹⁵ In the midst of this mystic

¹³ See V. of the appended documents.

¹⁴ The grant of township 1 north, range 1 east was made to General Lafayette in accordance with an act of Congress by John Quincy Adams on July 4, 1825. In May, 1833, the General's Florida friends received his permission to put the land on the market, as he hoped to use the proceeds of the sales as a nucleus of a "modest fortune" for himself and heirs. At this time, he wished to keep a section and a half of land for each of his children. The speculation of Nuttall was never actually completed for he did not succeed in purchasing the entire township. The records for the sale of the land of the Lafayette grant, together with the letter of Lafayette, may be found in the records of the Clerk of the County Court, Leon County, Tallahassee.

¹⁵ See VI. of the appended documents.

financial maze, the gentleman died of apoplexy on April 20, 1836.¹⁶

At the time of Nuttall's death, his wife and child were visiting in Newport, Rhode Island. The management of the estate was, therefore, assumed by Hector W. Braden, a Tallahassee lawyer, who was for some time president of the Union Bank and a participant in many of Nuttall's speculations.

As there was no will which could be found, Mary Savage Nuttall was made administratrix of the estate and, with the assistance of the aforementioned Braden, sought to untangle her husband's affairs. That optimistic gentleman had placed the amount of Nuttall's indebtedness at \$40,000 but the accounts doubled the sum; furthermore all the property and growing crop had been heavily mortgaged.¹⁷ Finding the estate nearly or quite insolvent, Braden prudently developed the habit of paying off those obligations which bore his own endorsement.

During the four years of Mrs. Nuttall's widowhood Braden remained her chief adviser, but from later charges made against him, the advice consisted of everything but specific information regarding the state of her properties. In the suit of Braden vs. Jones and wife, Jones made the assertion that his wife knew little of the condition of her affairs and less of her impending bankruptcy.¹⁸ It is probably true that Bra-

¹⁶ See VII. of the appended documents.

¹⁷ The letter from Hector W. Braden to Mrs. Savage announcing the death of William B. Nuttall contains numerous notes in the handwriting of George Noble Jones, who now comes into the narrative. One of these notes is to the effect that all the property and growing crop were mortgaged by Nuttall before his death. This letter is VII. of the documents herein printed.

¹⁸ In a letter to William H. Brockenborough, who was the lawyer for George Noble Jones in the litigation with Braden, Jones declared that "Braden always deluded her [Mrs. Jones] with the belief that her affairs were most prosperous-at the time of her marriage, she did not believe she had debts of consequence."

den was somewhat impractical and visionary, he impressed Mrs. Savage thus at least, but another reason for his reticence on the mundane topic of finance may have been the budding friendship which sprang up between himself and his friend's widow. Indications are not lacking that Braden entertained a few hopes of possessing the property and hand of his fair client.

The fates, assisted by Mary Savage Nuttall, decreed a far different future, however, for in May, 1840, she married George Noble Jones, a member of a wealthy and illustrious Savannah family. When El Destino was put upon the block a short time later in a foreclosure sale, Jones bought the property and all but one of the negroes.¹⁹ A short time before her marriage, the bride had been the recipient of a bequest from an uncle which she decided to take in the form of eighty negroes. To give employment to this corps, she had purchased on credit from Braden, a plantation called Chemonie, located about six miles north of El Destino. Thus El Destino and Chemonie become merged into one property in our narrative, and, under the guidance of George Noble Jones and his heirs commence their long and interesting history in Middle Florida.

EL DESTINO AND CHEMONIE, THEIR HISTORY FROM 1840

When George Noble Jones, or G. Noble Jones as he came to be called, undertook to pilot the fortunes of El Destino and Chemonie he was already well versed in the problems of plantation management through ex-

¹⁹ *Florida Plantation Records*, pp. 541-544. The list of property given here does not coincide exactly with the land taken up or purchased by Nuttall. The reason for this may be that the rest of the land was not mortgaged, or the deed may have been faulty as so many of those early deeds were. Jones not only bought the El Destino lands but a large part of Nuttall's property in other parts of Middle Florida.

perience with a third estate in Jefferson County, Georgia, which was larger than either of the other two. As the family interests were thus divided, Jones never lived in Florida, except for certain portions of the year, until after 1865. During these periodic visits, moreover, the family always resided at El Destino rather than Chemonie; in fact, there was no dwelling at the latter place where they could stay. As a result El Destino interests and especially, El Destino negroes were supposed to have been unusually close to the members of the family, particularly Mrs. Jones. Certain it is that El Destino was the plantation which, in the eyes of other planters of the neighborhood, was more closely identified with Jones.

The actual management of the plantation was intrusted to overseers, one for each place, while the owner himself was represented for a time by R. W. White of Tallahassee.²⁰ The agent appears so seldom that he is little more than a name. Much the same may be said for Jones himself. As the recipient of the various reports, journals, etc., he is talked to rather than talked about. From other sources, however, one learns that he was of a genial and engaging nature, kind to his kinsmen and devoted to his family. He was by no means indifferent to plantation improvement, and at one time even considered establishing a cotton factory at El Destino. On the other hand, he was an enthusiastic sportsman, travelled extensively, and displayed a sufficiently literary turn of mind to be invited to ad-

²⁰ White ended his connection with Jones in 1850. There is nothing in any of the documents which gives a clue to his resignation from his position save the fact that in September 1850, Roberson, the overseer at the El Destino mill became involved in a plantation scandal. White expected him to withdraw and was planning on undertaking the completion of his work, namely, the construction of the mill. A few months later, White was no longer Jones's agent but Roberson was still in command at the mill. There may, or may not, be some connection between these events.

dress the Savannah Library Society. Like most planters, Jones had the failing of investing too heavily in land, so during most of his life in Florida, he was heavily in debt.²¹ The personalities of the overseers must be reached by reading between the lines. Frequently, they discussed or criticised each other; sometimes they gave some personal opinion, but ordinarily their reports and journals dealt purely with business. All the overseers had one characteristic about which there can be no doubt, namely their free use of the King's English and utter disregard for authority in the matter of spelling.

The managers were employed under contracts of varying duration but the arrangements therein were usually made on the basis of a year's work. Salaries averaged \$400 a year with "certain customary perquisites." Job Freeman, who was in charge at El Destino during the Braden regime, received \$500, but his successors were less fortunate. John Evans, who came to Chemonie from Jones's Georgia plantation in 1847, received \$400. This had increased to \$500 by 1858 and a year later we find him asking for a further increase to \$600, probably due to the fact that he was planning to marry. How these amounts compare with others which were being paid in Florida is not known. Six hundred dollars was evidently a maximum amount to Evans inasmuch as he promised that, "if you will give me this I never shall ask you to Raise my wages any more," but he justified his plea on the ground that eight years in the service of one planter entitled him "to have as good wages as some of the Rest of the overseers in Fa that dont manage any more hands than I doe."²² From all available records, the El Des-

²¹ *Florida Plantation Records*, pp. 21-23

²² John Evans to George Noble Jones, Sept. 9, 1854, *Florida Plantations Records*, p. 98.

tino overseers fared in much the same fashion. The "customary perquisites" or, as Evans called them, "priviledgs" included the usual dwelling, a servant to cook and wash, corn and fodder for one horse and an adequate supply of bread and meat.²³ Roberson, the overseer of El Destino mill, had the right to plant a certain plot of land for his own use,²⁴ a favor which was probably shared by the others.

The role of overseer on the Jones plantations, as on most of their kind, was a varied and many-sided occupation. Not only was it necessary to be a capable farmer but problems arose which demanded a doctor, preacher, judge, jury, and executioner.

Cotton was, as might be expected, the chief product, but sufficient produce had to be grown to make the plantation as nearly self-sustaining as possible. At Chemonie in 1851, for example, only 451 acres out of 771 were planted in cotton; the rest having been used for corn, oats, sugar cane, potatoes, and rice.²⁵ The thinness of the soil required constant building up; frequent reference was made in the journals to teams whose work had been interrupted to "hall leaves." The Florida storms were always a disturbing possibility if not a devastating reality and when all else failed the "Cattapillar" could ruin a year's crop in short order. Throughout the vicissitudes of the planting season the overseers maintained a superb tranquility, for they reported all the evils to which planting was a prey with a kind of bland indifference. In this struggle with nature, the owners were destined to wage a

²³ Contract between Jones and Jesse W. Whatley, 1849. *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 577. This document is to be reprinted from the above reference as part of the records of El Destino.

²⁴ For conditions regarding the mill, see the letters of Roberson to Jones. These will be printed in a later number of the **QUARTERLY**.

²⁵ *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 771

losing fight; the prosperity of both El Destino and Chemonie decreased steadily after 1865 and eventually El Destino was ruined as a plantation by the rapid spread of the bollweevil.²⁶

As far as possible articles used on the estates were home-made. The baskets for carrying cotton to the gin were woven by the hands from white oak splits; home sewed corn husks made the mule collars, and the plough lines were home twisted cotton rope. Even the cloth, both wool and cotton, which was used for negro clothing and the large plantation sacks was manufactured on the place until 1856 when the Southern Rights Manufacturing Company opened a textile mill at Monticello.²⁷ The clothing was given to the negroes in the form of cloth. Six yards was the average length for pants and jackets or frocks but occasionally some portly negress needed the saving grace of an extra yard. The amounts thus supplied reached generous proportions. In 1851 at Chemonie 729 yards of cloth were parcelled out as summer and winter clothing for 85 negroes.²⁸ At El Destino, about the same time, 624 yards were used for "winter clothes, blankets and shirts."²⁹ The recipients of this donation numbered 101 and, judging from the allowances granted, were most of them adults, unless the pickaninnies made up in blankets what they did not need as clothes.

Likewise, most of the food produced on the place was rationed. In favorable years, an adequate crop of cowpeas, corn, hay, fodder, etc., could be harvested for the year's needs. Some meat was always available

²⁶ *Ibid.* p. 8

²⁷ *Ibid.* pp. 39-40. In 1856 Jones sent 207 pounds of wool to be washed and carded by this company.

²⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 430-434. Of the 85 negroes, 83 received both summer and winter clothing.

²⁹ *Ibid.* pp. 555-557.

from the plantation stock but this was never sufficient and, each year, the overseers had to purchase bacon and other varieties of meat. Each week the hands received their allowances, usually, a peck of corn and three and a half pounds of meat. On Chemonie, a half pound of meat was sometimes deducted for every pint of syrup.³⁰ Other foodstuffs were frequently substituted and some of the negroes may have had their own plots which they were allowed to cultivate.

Imported articles consisted mostly of farm supplies, tools and food. Some of these were obtained from Mr. White at Tallahassee but, after he ceased to be the agent of Jones in Florida, the commonest procedure was to write to the owner himself at Savannah or Newport. Shipments were usually made through McNaught and Ormond, merchants at Newport, Florida. In like manner, the outgoing products of the plantations were sent through a definite channel. During the lifetime of William B. Nuttall and the Braden regime, the disposal of the cotton crop was put in the hands of James Hamilton & Son of New York. The sale of the plantation had ended this arrangement, for Jones merged the output of his Georgia and Florida properties and sold it through Robert Habersham & Son of Savannah.³¹

The relations between master and slaves on the Jones plantations was usually excellent. Very little change occurred in the personnel of the estates; the same names appear again and again in the tabulations and reports for some twenty or thirty years. Even the War brought only a slight dislocation of the hands, due, no doubt, to the fact that Middle Florida was never occupied by Federal troops. Many of the ex-

³⁰ *Ibid.* p. 588. Tabulations of food rations for Chemonie are given for the years 1851 and 1856. There are no such tabulations available for El Destino.

³¹ *Ibid.* p. 514

slaves remained to work the old fields on a crop-sharing basis. In fact, several of these folk are still living on both places.

The nucleus of the corps on El Destino was the slaves purchased by George Noble Jones at the foreclosure sale in 1844.³² There had been sixty-seven of these at the time but their increase had been so rapid that the number came to exceed the needs of El Destino. In 1865, the tax list gives the number as one hundred and forty-three.³³

Chemonie, it will be remembered, was peopled by the "Savage negroes," about eighty in all, whom Mrs. Jones had inherited from an uncle. Jones rarely sold his negroes but in 1860 he disposed of a group of the Chemonie hands due to his straightened circumstances. According to a letter of one of his children, he was confirmed in his decision by the fact that these slaves had displayed no increase for some time while, on the other hand, there were more laborers at El Destino than could be profitably employed. Twenty-nine of the Savage group were given to Mary Wallace Nuttall, the child of Mrs. Jones by her first husband, the remaining fifty-three were sold for \$44,200. At the same time, Jones sold himself, as trustee for his wife, sixty-three of his-own slaves for about \$33,000 thus netting a profit of \$13,000.³⁴

The care of the negroes naturally devolved upon the overseers who not only supervised their labor and kept them fed, clothed, and housed but set himself up as general apothecary and physician. Illnesses of various kinds and degree were prevalent. The explanation doubtless lay in the lack of economic incentive rather than in poor sanitation or lack of care. Slaves fre-

³² *Ibid.* pp. 541-43. The cost of these slaves was \$20,238.

³³ *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 561. Jones's tax list was made out April 18, 1865, nine days after Lee's surrender.

³⁴ *Ibid.* p. 560.

quently magnified their petty ailments to get leisure. Disorders of digestion and fever made up the most common causes of sickness; frequent reference is also made to cases of "dropsy." In 1852, Evans reported an epidemic of measles among the plantations of Middle Florida. The death rate was very high, and, as Evans had never had the measles himself, he was much alarmed. No cases appeared at Chemonie but the place was virtually quarantined for a time. As Evans expressed it, "I dont allow one of the young hands to Leave the Plantation Not Even to Visit El Destino." ³⁵ Much of the illness was the result of peculiar habits among the negroes. Evans complained of one, Mungins, who was fatally ill of the so-called dropsy and added, "If I could keep him from Eating and drinking so much water I probably Might Cure him but he will keep his old trade stealing Chickings of Nights and Eating Large baits of them about half Cooked." ³⁶ Another practise, to quote Evans, was dirt eating. As he wrote Jones in one report, "the rest of the Black People is well except Juner and Little Joe, they Eat dirt and are bloted up I think I have got Joe broken off from Eating dirt now and I think I will have Juner cured by a Nother week." ³⁷

Most of the ailments were cured by the overseer but occasionally the seriousness of the sickness or the lack of response to home remedies necessitated the calling of a physician. Visits from physicians were surprisingly few. During 1855, a doctor was called to Chemonie only 18 times at a cost of only \$43. ³⁸ Each plantation was equipped with its medical stores and dental kit, so to speak, and requisitions from Jones

³⁵ *Ibid.* p. 71. Evans to Jones, June 15, 1852

³⁶ *Ibid.* p. 81. Evans to Jones, Sept. 1852.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 63. Evans to Jones, April 2, 1852

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 574. The physician was William F. Robertson.

contained "vermifuge," castor oil, and nippers for pulling teeth.³⁹

The forces of each plantation were divided into a plough gang and hoe gang under its respective negro foreman or "driver," and a standard of labor set for the force. Under this standard, all the negroes were rated as a full hand, half hand, etc., according to their various abilities. The weaker members of the group were usually placed in the hoe gang, most of the women were classified as hoe hand until disabled when they were set to spinning, nursing and cooking. Old men and boys had the regular task of tending cattle, while several pickaninnies kept themselves out of mischief toting drinking water to the gangs in the fields.⁴⁰ At El Destino, there was an additional gang of mill hands who lived at the quarters but were under a separate overseer.

The discipline among the hands was usually fairly good, for although none of the overseers kept systematic records of punishments they rarely mentioned serious problems of insubordination. Slaves frequently ran away, usually because they were being hard pressed during the harvest time. Moxley, an overseer, reported during one season that two negroes ran away because he had had them whipped for not picking over

³⁹ The medicine desired at El Destino in January, 1847, was listed as follows:

"Medison wantin on Eldistina

Blistering ointment

Ipacak

Quinine

Sallaratus

Camphire

Casteroil

Flaxceede

nippers for pulling teeth and gum lancet" In

Florida Plantation Records, p. 573.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.* pp. 33ff.

eighty-five to ninety-five pounds of cotton per day.⁴¹ The only real crisis regarding discipline which was recorded arose at El Destino under Moxley's regime. Four women ran away to Tallahassee where they tried to take refuge at the home of "Lawyer Davis" whose servant was the husband of one of them. The escapade was apparently the result of an agreement to leave should they be whipped again for short cotton. The negroes were arrested and put in jail where they stayed until Moxley secured their release. When the women returned to the plantation the overseer attempted to administer a further chastisement at which Aberdeen, the brother of one, seized an axe and would have used it on Moxley had not the driver intervened. Aberdeen received all due punishment in the presence of Evans who was asked to come over from Chemonie as a witness.⁴² The whole episode occasioned marked attention, one might almost say notoriety, in the neighborhood because it called forth the charge that Moxley was subjecting his negroes to cruel and inhuman treatment. Several Tallahassee gentlemen investigated the condition of the women before they left the city and one of them, W. G. Davis, undertook to protest to Jones himself. Moxley's regime was investigated at the request of the owner and he was finally exonerated. Evans discussed the affair in several of his reports and, while he stood by Moxley, was forced to admit that the latter was inclined to administer punishment "in too Large doses." Evans himself believed in tempering the chastisement to fit the repentance of the sinner and the amount of work he had to perform.⁴³ The blame for the situation on El Destino

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 97. D. N. Moxley to Jones, Sept. 8, 1854. Moxley was aiming to make an average of 110 pounds per day. The negroes frequently picked as much as 130 pounds per day apiece.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 110. Evans to Jones, October 18, 1854.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 117. Evans to Jones, Nov. 16, 1854.

he placed not so much on Moxley as on his predecessors, whose laxity made his regulations seem unusually severe, and on the loose discipline of the mill hands who were always a disturbing element in the quarters.⁴⁴

Other aspects of plantation life are revealed in an extremely isolated and fragmentary fashion. Births and deaths were usually recorded, but little mention was made of marriage. Enough was said, however, to indicate that it was customary to ask the overseer for permission to marry, and once he was called upon to grant a divorce.⁴⁵ Religious teaching was not wholly disregarded, for El Destino had its own church and at least once during its ministry, there was a thoroughgoing revival of sinners.⁴⁶ Little concerning the amusements or pleasures of the negroes was reported in the communications of the overseers, but as their chief interests were details of business, this is not surprising.

In addition to his agricultural interests, Jones undertook several industrial projects. He erected a grist-mill and saw-mill on El Destino and had some thought of establishing a textile mill in connection therewith. The construction of a canal, as a tail-race to the mill, which was large enough to permit the installation of machinery was probably completed with this end in view. The two mills just mentioned were well under way by 1852 through the efforts of "Judge" Jonathan Roberson.

In many ways, a better picture may be reconstructed of Roberson than of any of the other over-

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* pp. 62 and 140. Evans to Jones, April 2, 1852; Evans to Jones, July 16, 1854.

⁴⁵ This does not necessarily mean that there were no records kept on various questions but merely that they are not now in existence.

⁴⁶ Roberson to Jones, May 1, 1852. These letters will appear in a later number of the **QUARTERLY**.

seers. True, the picture was hardly a pleasing one, for the "Judge" was neither an efficient overseer nor a strict adherent of the straight and narrow path. He came from Savannah to construct and manage the El Destino mills. He must have been in middle life for he had at least one grown son whom Jones occasionally took the trouble to visit. What he had ever done to earn the title of "judge" is unknown but it is certain that it had nothing to do with education or learning in any form. Less is known about the contract under which he worked than about his private life. From his letters one may gather that he had, in addition to his salary, the "customary perquisites" that is, a house, servant, and certain allowances of food stuffs. He, also, had some stock and land which he farmed.⁴⁷

The mill construction was carried on by a corps of laborers drawn from El Destino. One infers also that separate teams and wagons were provided. Progress was aggravatingly slow at all times. This may have been due to the difficulties of the task and the unreliable labor but the overseers of El Destino and Chemonie thought otherwise. Indeed, Evans bluntly declared that Roberson was purposely holding up the work in order to prolong his own job.⁴⁸ The mills were eventually finished, however, and continued to be operated by Roberson until after the War for Southern Independence.

The immediate end of the mills was naturally to meet the demands of the Jones plantations, but here again there were many conflicts. The work sent Roberson was usually delayed and, once done, seldom

⁴⁷ These facts have to be gleaned from the correspondence between Roberson and Jones which will appear later. There is no record of the contract between Roberson and his employer.

⁴⁸ *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 110. Evans to Jones, July 16, 1855

satisfactory. A wagon wheel which Evans sent to El Destino for repairs was unduly held up at a time when he was "Verry Much in Need of it about hawling Leaves."⁴⁹ At another time Roberson ignored the specifications for some timber which he was to saw for Chemonie, with the result that none of it could be used. After this episode Evans "quit him" saying that he "would have liked verry much to of got the Lumber sawed at El Destino Mills as it would of bin a great saving I waited on the judge as Long as I could."⁵⁰

Moxley came to grief with the "Judge" over the repair of the El Destino gin. Roberson wrote Jones that the machine was in good working condition, a report which aroused the overseer. As the latter told his employer, "I am sorry he has maid such a mistake. it is true that he sharpened the gin very well there is something else to do to a gin besides Sharping."⁵¹

The most serious question which came up concerning the relations of the plantation and the mill was the matter of discipline. The mill crew lived at the quarters but worked under their own regulations. For example, they did not have to be at work as early as the other hands, a circumstance which corrupted the dusky brethren denied the luxury of this extra time. As Evans put it, "negroes is this disposition, if they see negroes around them Ideling why they want to doe so two."⁵² The laxity of Roberson's hold over the hands created further trouble. Shortly after he came to El Destino, he became involved in a sordid intrigue with one of his own negroes. Contrary to expectations, he was not discharged and the difficulties continued. Moxley claimed that at one time the "Judge" had not been on the canal for two weeks when the hands were at

⁴⁹ *Ibid.* p. 76. Evans to Jones, July 16, 1852

⁵⁰ *Ibid.* p. 143. Evans to Jones, Aug. 15, 1855

⁵¹ *Ibid.* p. 103. Moxley to Jones, Sept. 21, 1854

⁵² *Ibid.* p. 111. Evans to Jones, October 18, 1854

work.⁵³ This, of course, afforded ample opportunity for loafing and mischief on the part of the negroes. Roberson wanted a post office at the mill but the overseer opposed the move on the ground that it would merely give one more opportunity for the neglect of the mill business.

Nothing of these questions found their way into the reports which Roberson sent to Savannah. Therefore, no chance is afforded of learning both sides to the story. On the other hand, in spite of the claims of slowness, laxity, and moral iniquity brought against him, Roberson remained at El Destino until late in the 60's and during the War was not only in charge of the mill but also overseer of the plantation. Of course this latter circumstance may have been due to the lack of man power in the South during those trying years rather than to any personal quality of Roberson.

The period of prosperity for both El Destino and Chemonie ended in 1865, even though neither place had been disturbed by the military events of that day. The war losses of the Jones fortune were heavy. The Georgia plantation was in Sherman's path and its contribution to his destruction was 500 bales of cotton worth \$225 a bale.⁵⁴ Most of the negroes left the place as a result of the devastations in the region.

Reports and journals for the plantations during the period of reconstruction are more than meager. Jones took up his permanent residence at El Destino shortly after the end of the struggle and, as either he or his son was on the ground for the next twenty years, the need for detailed records was eliminated.

Arrangements were made with most of the ex-slaves to work the land on a crop-sharing basis. Tracts

⁵³ *Ibid.* p. 131. Evans to Jones, June 15, 1855

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* p. 204. Robert H. Gardiner to Wallace S. Jones, Nov. 7, 1879. Gardiner married Sarah Fenwick Jones. The Gardiners lived in Maine.

of land, comprising about one hundred and fifty to two hundred acres, were let to companies or squads, each squad containing about eight or ten negroes under a "head man." The planter furnished all the necessities for cultivation in return for two-thirds of the cotton crop and a percentage of the corn.⁵⁵ This system broke down after a few years and was followed by a variety of individual arrangements.

The actual work of managing the plantations was done not by Jones but by his son, Wallace S. Jones. Wallace Jones had been educated abroad, was in fact, a graduate of Saint Cyr. His tastes were not those of a planter as one of his uncles took occasion to remind him, but nevertheless, he toiled on contending with the senseless and unreasonable regulations of the reconstruction regime and struggling to keep his labor against the enticements of neighboring planters.

As early as 1876, Jones Senior agreed to sell the property for \$20,000 and his Yankee brother-in-law undertook to advertise it to that group of Northerners who had already developed "a great rage" for Florida.⁵⁶ The estates were still on the market at his death two years later, in 1878.

In 1885, Grover Cleveland became President, thus restoring that office to the Democratic party for the first time in twenty-five years. The event brought a momentous change to El Destino, for Wallace Jones applied for a foreign appointment. The same year he was made United States consul at Messina and ten years later, Consul General at Rome. During his absence the estates became even less profitable than formerly, due to poor management and the general depression of the times. The owners were tired of their

⁵⁵ *Ibid.* p. 37. Types of contracts for tenant farmers, etc., will be reprinted from **Florida Plantation Records** in a later number of the **QUARTERLY**.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* p. 204. Gardiner to Jones, Nov. 7, 1879

properties and kept them constantly on the market. It was not until 1919, however, that George Noble Jones II, a grandson of the George Noble Jones of the records, sold El Destino for \$70,000. The low price was due to the ravages of the bollweevil which since 1914 had infested the plantation. The second estate, Chemonie, is still in the possession of the Jones family.

KATHRYN T. ABBEY

* * *

THE DOCUMENTS

*Deed of the Sale of the El Destino Property by
John Moore to William B. Nuttall*¹

John Moore & Wife This Indenture made this fourth
 to day of June in the year of Our
William B. Nuttall Lord one thousand eight hun-
 dred and Twenty eight. Between
John Moore and Matilda his wife of the County of Leon
and Territory of Florida of the one part and William
B. Nuttall² of the aforesaid County and Territory of
the other part, Witnefseth that the said John Moore
and Matilda his wife for and in consideration of the
sum of two thousand three hundred and fifty dollars

¹ The deed for this sale was recorded by the clerk of the County Court, Leon County, on July 31, 1829 - Records of the Clerk of the County Court, Tallahassee, B 465.

² The deed was made out to William B. Nuttall although, according to the agreement drawn up between the members of the Nuttall family (see II), John Nuttall, father of William B., was supposed to pay for the property. In the litigation started later by the executor of the estate of John Nuttall, James Patton, this point was raised. Mary Savage Nuttall, widow of William B. and the administratrix of his property, claimed that John Nuttall had never paid any of the amount agreed upon, hence the titles had not been recorded in his name. See Bill and Charge brought against William B. Nuttall by James Patton, 1838, and Reply of Mary Savage Nuttall to a bill in Chancery exhibited against her by James Patton, May 11, 1839.

lawful money of the United States to them the said John Moore and Matilda his Wife in hand paid the receipt whereof is hereby Acknowledged he the said John Moor and Matilda his wife have granted bargained and sold and by these presents do grant bargain and sell unto the said William B. Nuttall his heirs etc the following tracts of land, ³ to wit, the West half of the North West quarter of Section five Township one South of Range three East in the District of lands offered for sale at Tallahassee in the Territory of Florida Containing Eighty Acres and three hundredths of an Acre according to the Official plot of the Survey of the said lands returned to the General land office by the surveyor General. The West half of the North East quarter of Section Six in Township one South of Range three East in the District of lands offered for Sale at Tallahassee in the Territory of Florida Containing Eighty Acres and three hundredths of an Acre according to the Official plot of the Surveyor of the Said lands returned to the General land office by the Surveyor General the East half ⁴ of the South East quarter of Section five in Township One South of Range 3 East in the District of lands offered

³ The land sold had been obtained from the United States government in August, 1826, by William M. McCarty. They were sold to John Moor on June 4, 1828 (the day of their sale to Nuttall) for \$1100 - Records of the Clerk of the County Court. Tallahassee. A 433 and Records of General Land Office of United States, Gainesville.

⁴ There may be a mistake in the listing of this half quarter. According to the record of the foreclosure sale at the time when George Noble Jones acquired El Destino this half quarter is not the east half but the west half of the southeast quarter of Section 5. (Fla. Plant. Rcds., p. 543.) Furthermore, the official map of El Destino does not include the east half of the southeast quarter of section 5 as part of the estate. A third reason for thinking that the listing given above is a mistake is the fact that if the land purchased was the east half of the southeast quarter, it would have been an isolated strip of land unconnected with the rest of the property.

for Sale at Tallahassee in the Territory of Florida Containing Eighty Acres and three hundredths of an acre according to the Official plot of the Survey of the Said land returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General. The West half of the South West quarter of Section five in Township South of Range three East in the District of lands offered for sale at Tallahassee in the Territory of Florida Containing eighty Acres and three hundredths of an Acre according to the Official plot of the Survey of the Said land returned to the General Land Office by the Surveyor General. All of Which will more fully appear by reference to Certificates Nos. Seven hundred and thirty five. Seven hundred and thirty Six. Seven hundred and forty One and Seven hundred and forty two deposited in the General Land Office and upon which patents issued Conveying the Said lands to Wm M. McCarty and signed by John Q Adams President of the United States and by George Graham Commissioner of the General Land Office and bearing date the first day of November in the year of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and Twenty Six and of the Independence of the United States the fifty first. To have and to hold the Said lands and every part and parcel thereof with the appurtinances unto the Said William B. Nuttall his heirs and assigns forever. In Testimony Whereof the said John Moor and Matilda his Wife have hereunto subscribed their names the day and year first written-

Signed Sealed and

JOHN MOORE (Seal)

delivered in presence of

MATILDA L. MOORE (Seal)

TURBUTT R. BETTON, J.P.

THOMAS I. WALSH

ABRAHAM RAPLEY

* * *

II.

Articles of Agreement concerning the Establishment of El Destino.

Articles of agreement entered into, this 18th day of September 1828, between John Nuttall, James Nuttall and William B. Nuttall, in reference to the settlement of a plantation, in Leon County Florida, (called El Destino) purchased by the said John Nuttall from John Moor,⁵ which is to take place, and go into operation, the 25th December next, and to continue in operation for the space of three years (until the 25th December 1831) - The said John Nuttall is to have placed on the said plantation, at the above mentioned time, thirty six⁶ negroes, which are at this time not in Florida, and of which thirty two are to be considered laborers; and the said James Nuttall, on the same plantation, and at the same time, is to have placed sixteen negroes which are now not there, and of which ten are to be considered laborers.-The said William Nuttall is to take charge of the said plantation and to cultivate the same with the said negroes-belonging to the said John and James Nuttall-for the period of three years-the time above mentioned-And the said William B. Nuttall, after defraying all expenses accruing on the said plantation, and incident thereto, is to divide the net profits thereto into thirty two parts, and pay over to the said James Nuttall ten parts-according to the proportion of his negroes-and two thirds of the remaining twenty two parts to the said John Nuttall, and the remaining third, of the

⁵ See note 1. There is a discrepancy in the statements regarding the purchase price. In the bill and charge brought against William B. Nuttall by James Patton, executor for the estate of John Nuttall, the assertion was made that the property cost \$2,680. The recorded deed of the purchase gives the amount as \$2,350.

⁶ He actually sent 40 negroes. See III.

twenty two parts, the said William B. Nuttall is to retain for and have himself. ⁷ The said James Nuttall may withdraw his negroes within three years if he thinks proper-provided, that he do not, by so doing, interfere with a crop arranged. The said John Nuttall may add hands at pleasure and the division of the profits continue to be governed by the rules above applied;- vis, 2/3 of J. N.'s proportion to W. B. N.

JOHN NUTTALL

JAS. NUTTALL

WM. B. NUTTALL

* * *

III.

List of Negroes sent to Florida March 1st 1828. ⁸

Isham & Mary Chesly, Demps, Stephen,	
Emily & Little Pleasant	-----11
Minna Melia Nancy Mary John	
Pleasant, Betsy (his wife) Charles,	
Iverson, Young, Susan, Elisa, Jane	----- 8
Kate, Nutty, Easter, Hannah, & Colman	----- 5
Phillis, her son Frank, Reubin, Hay-	
wood & Sam	----- 5
Sold sold sold	
Muriah, Betsy, Rachel, & Sim	----- 4
Willie, Frank, Peter, Tom, Moses,	
& Currie	----- 6

	39
Temp -----	1

	40

⁷ William B. Nuttall made no account or statement of conditions on El Destino to the other two partners during the period designated. In the bill and charge brought against him

⁸ This list is in the handwriting of John Nuttall.

[Verso :]

List things started with

200 lbs Bacon - 11 Bus Corn - 72 Bus Meal, Fodder etc.

8 Chit axes - 5 Grub Hoes - 1 H Saw⁹ - 1 D Knife¹⁰

Auger & Chisel - 2 Degan Plough Hoes¹¹

* * *

IV.

*Articles of Agreement concerning the Sale of
El Destino to William B. Nuttall*

Decr - 24th 1832.

Articles of agreement entered into this day between William C. Patton,¹² agent of James Patton, Executor of John Nuttall, die-of the first part and William B. Nuttall of the second part.

The said Patton does hereby agree and bind himself to convey unto the said Nuttall all of the property of any description belonging to the late John Nuttall in the territory of Florida and at the plantation called El Destino; and the said Nuttall agrees and binds himself to give for the said property seventeen thousand

in 1838 by James Patton, it was claimed that "with reasonable industry and attention" he might have cleared \$12,000 annually. In her reply to this bill, Mary Savage Nuttall testified that not only were there no profits made on El Destino during this time but that Nuttall spent out of his private funds at least \$11,500. When the Union Bank replied to the same bill in Chancery, it claimed that it knew nothing of this agreement, as it had never been given legal form nor made public, and that it had supposed that the land had always been owned outright by William B. Nuttall.

⁹"H Saw" is hand saw

¹⁰"D Knife" is probably ditch knife.

¹¹ The difference between "grub hoes" and "plough hoes" is that the former is a small hand hoe while the latter is horse drawn and may hoe several rows at once.

¹² At John Nuttall's death in 1832, James Patton was made executor of his estate. Due to differences with William B. Nuttall over the El Destino property, William Patton was given power of attorney by James Patton to "settle, adjust, and close" the business. Bill and Charge brought against William B. Nuttall, 1838, by James Patton.

dollars 13 - six thousand to be paid in a draft on New York, and the other, eleven thousand dollars, to be paid in two equal annual instalments in New York, the last instalment for five thousand live hundred dollars to bear interest at the rate of six per cent fur one year.¹⁴ And it is hereby understood between both parties that an undefeasible title is not to be made to the said Nuttall for said property untill all the said amounts are paid-that is to say until the first draft in N. York is paid and the two equal instalments of five thousand five hundred each are paid - all of which they both bind themselves to-

WILLIAM C. PATTON

WM. B. NUTTALL

[Verso, in Nuttall's writing :]

It is understood that the executor or executors of John Nuttall, die, are not to be made liable on account of the cond mentioned or included in the foregoing contract.

WM. B. NUTTALL

* * *

V.

*Letter of A. H. Nuttall to William B. Nuttall
concerning El Destino*

Level Green¹⁵ - July the 25th 1834

Dear Sir

I received your letter of the last mail the content

¹³ From the charges later made by James Patton, Nuttall had set the value of the El Destino property at \$10,000.

¹⁴ On December 30, 1832, William B. Nuttall gave James Patton two notes for \$5500 each, one payable January 1, 1833, and the other January 1, 1834. By October 1836, \$2740 had been paid on these notes. The remainder of the \$17,000 was never paid-Bill and charge brought against William B. Nuttall by James Patton, 1828.

¹⁵ The letter is marked Pattonville in the handwriting. of A. H. Nuttall. It is possible that "Level Green" is the name of an estate rather than the town Levelgreen, Virginia. Nuttall was supposed to live in North Carolina.

of which I read with utter astonishment. You certainly have not forgotten that I hold a letter from you while at the north in which you agreed to let me have the property¹⁶ at what it cost you and give me my time to pay for it in - provided I would sign the permit for the sale of said property, which I should certainly not have done, had it not been for that stipulation on your part; and my reason for not signing the permit would have been, this, I know if Father had known the discontent of the negroes he certainly would have had them brought back for he had promised to do so.

To be candid I must say your treatment toward me in this matter does not savour much of the fraternal love and friendship you professed for me when you influenced me to go to the south almost to my ruin; and I must say still more if you are determined in the face of our contract, which I shall prove by your letter and brother James evidence to try to effect my injury, I shall forthwith take council and be prepared to defend myself against the worst.

I assure you it is a source of great grief to me to have such impressions made on my mind relative to a brother as your letter has made.

We are all well
Yours
A. H. NUTTALL

S

P I will deliver to brother James your message.

* * *

¹⁶ When A. H. Nuttall left Florida after the death of his father, he took with him to North Carolina a number of his father's slaves. He gave his brother two notes for the sum of \$3640 and agreed to pay them "on demand." The "property" mentioned here is probably the rest of the John Nuttall slaves. The event which caused him such irritation might well have been the mortgage of some of these negroes to the Union Bank of Florida, March 1, 1834.

VI.

*Mortgage on the Cotton Crop of 1836 to James
Hamilton & Son*¹⁷

I Wm B. Nuttall have rec' this day of James Hamilton and Wm. F. Hamilton - trading as James Hamilton & Son Three thousand and seven 80/100 Dollars on my Cotton crop for the year 1836¹⁸ -And I promise and agree to ship and consign at my own risk to said James Hamilton & Son at new York from St. Marks or Magnolia the whole of my said cotton crop that I grow during the said year as soon as the same is got out and baled which I do promise and agree shall be done as soon as possible-and said Jas Hamilton and son on the receipt of said Cotton are to sell the same and upon such sale after payments of this and all other advances with Interest at Eight per Cent and also all Costs Charges freight Expenses and Commissions are to pay me the balance of the proceeds when due and for the fulfilment of Said Contract my said Cotton crop is hereby pledged mortgaged and hypothecated to said Jas Hamilton & Son or assigne.

In testimony whereof I have signed this instrument this 22nd Dec' 1835.

WM. B. NUTTALL (Seal)

Witness

WM. H. BRODIE

* * *

¹⁷ James Hamilton and Son were the cotton factors, whom Nuttall had for several years. There are numerous records of his transactions with them.

¹⁸ Crop liens were not very common at this early date but the one in question was not the only loan which was made to Nuttall. From the very meager record of his accounts with Hamilton and Son, one must conclude that he was heavily in debt to them most of the time.

VII.

*Letter of Hector W. Braden to Mrs. Mary Savage
announcing the death of William B. Nuttall.*¹⁹

Tallahassee April 22 nd 1836

Dear Madam

I have painful intelligence to communicate to you, which from the bad state of health of Col Nuttall for several months, I hope may not be altogether unexpected. My poor friend is no more For several weeks his health had been very delicate, but he had recovered sufficiently to be able to commence his journey northward which he would have undertaken in a few days,²⁰ he had an attack of apoplexy about a week ago, immediately after which I saw him. My brother remained with him several days and thought he had entirely recovered. Doctor Waddel was very attentive to him, and thought he was in no danger, the day before yesterday, he awoke in the morning, seemingly in good health directed breakfast to be prepared and observed that he intended after breakfast to ride up to Mr. Footman's to dinner, immediately after in the act of rising from his bed, he had an attack of apoplexy which in a few seconds terminated his existence-A young man from Virginia a Mr Godwin, an acquaintance of Col Nuttall's and who accompanied Col. Nuttall from Charleston and had been with him since and had been very attentive to him was in the room with him at the time - He was buried yesterday by the side of his daughter with every mark of respect by his friends and neighbors - It was a matter of great regret to me that I could not have been with my excellent friend

¹⁹ Efforts have been made to find the age of Nuttall at the time of his death but with no success. None of the documents give the slightest clue and there are no records of deaths occurring as early as 1836.

²⁰ Mrs. Nuttall and her small daughter were at Newport, Rhode Island, when her husband died.

in his last moments and I have written to you that you might communicate this great affliction to Mrs. Nuttall in such way as your affection and descretion may dictate - Mr. Footman ²¹ told me he would write to Mr. Anderson and some other of your friends in Savannah. Mr. Footman and myself made a partial examination of such papers as we could find, that those of importance might be preserved. there was no will found amongst them. we shall return on monday next and lock up every thing of value - We will attend to the Interests of this estate until you give some direction concerning it. The Boy Wm. ²² says Col Nuttall made a will he thought before he left New York. I have thought if he did so he might have left it with yourself or Mrs. Nuttall - You will pardon me my dear madam for speaking of business in a letter intending to convey such sad intelligence, but as it is of much importance to yourself & Mrs. Nuttall I hope you will do so. If there is no will ²³ it will be necessary that some of your friends should come here and administer as the estate is somewhat involved, but I think can be easily extricated, if it is not [MS. torn] involved than I apprehend - I think the estate is indebted about Forty thousand dollars, ²⁴ most of which will have to be paid within a year or two, there will be sufficient however from the present coming crop to pay 12 or 15 thousand

²¹ There are sufficient references among the documents to indicate that Mr. Footman was at times a participant in Nuttall's real estate speculations.

²² This was doubtless the mulatto later referred to as William Nuttall. He was never a hand on the plantation but occupied the position of butler or body servant.

²³ No will was ever found. There is no record in the Probate Court files of any such document, also subsequent litigation mentions the efforts of Mrs. Nuttall to preserve her "dower rights" in her husband's estate which would indicate that there was no will.

²⁴ The indebtedness of the Nuttall estate was discovered to be not \$40,000 but nearly \$87,000.

dollars ²⁵ & eventually the profits on the LaFayette lands will pay most of the balance if it could be made available which however cannot probably for some years-in the meantime some other arrangement must be made. I shall leave the Territory by the 5th of June, and should before that time be glad to hear from you-
with great Respect

H. W. BRADEN ²⁶

²⁵ This opinion of Braden was unfounded as all the property and the growing crop were heavily mortgaged.

²⁶ Hector W. Braden was a Tallahassee lawyer. He was the partner of Nuttall in many of his enterprises and endorsed his notes to the amount of \$11,000. In 1835, he was made Director of the Union Bank which held most of Nuttall's mortgages. In fact, his indebtedness to the Bank was estimated as \$52,700.

(This series of documents will be continued in the next number of the QUARTERLY.)