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Documents Relating to El Destino and Chemonie Plantations, Middle Florida, 1828-1874. Part IV

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DOCUMENTS RELATING TO EL DESTINO AND
CHEMONIE PLANTATIONS, MIDDLE
FLORIDA, 1828-1874. PART IV

EL DESTINO AFTER THE WAR

The record of El Destino and Chemonie plantations cannot be brought to a close without some account of the changes wrought there by the ravages of the War for Southern Independence, no matter how meager that account has to be. And meager it is. Beyond a few letters, some broken statistical memoranda jotted down by George Noble Jones, and a score or more bits of paper strewn about the El Destino attic, there is nothing. It is with the fullest realization of this circumstance and the resulting limitation of the picture of the plantations that the following narrative is presented.

Although Florida was by no means free from military events during the war, her lands had not suffered the ruinous effects of prolonged campaigns, nor had her capital fallen into the hands of the Union forces. This circumstance brought a certain amount of stability to the Middle Florida region even amid the chaotic struggles and difficulties of the Reconstruction period. A few changes had taken place at the Jones plantations during the strife. The position of overseer had been given up and in its place was established the negro foreman under the agency of one George King ; Prince Habersham was placed in charge of the El Destino negroes while Chesley Russ, father of the Uncle Demps who is still living, managed the Chemonie folk. Foodstuff largely took the place of cotton as the main crop and the amount of tanning and mill-work increased. Some of the negroes were sent to work on the fortifications ; others were em-

ployed to drive loads of supplies from that region to the nearest supply station.¹ But the labor gangs and the equipment of both estates were still intact in 1865.²

The news of emancipation was apparently received with some calmness. Few of the negroes left the plantation, although the temptation to desert their former master and join the celebrating groups of brethren flocking into the towns and the Federal camps was undoubtedly great.³ Freedom was not without its inspiration, however, for at Chemonie one negress was so overjoyed with her new state that she completely forgot she had been a cripple on crutches, much to the disgust of Jones, who had been saving her from real work for seven years.⁴

The problems of adjustment were many and grievous, nevertheless, in spite of the absence of military devastation. More than 16,000 Floridians had enlisted in the armies; of these probably no less than 5,000 had given their lives for their cause. Some regiments had been decimated. One group lost all but 66 out of an initial number of 1,274.⁵ Equally appalling was the destruction of property within the state. The assessed value of real and personal property declined 47% in the five years from 1860 to 1865. Emancipa-

¹ Uncle Demps declares that he drove wagon loads of supplies gathered from the neighboring countryside to the station at Thomasville, Georgia.

² The Jefferson Plantation (Georgia) belonging to Jones was in the region of Sherman's march and was greatly damaged. A kinsman of Jones wrote him on July 19, 1865 that "the larger part of your Jefferson force left the plantation for Savannah. . . . headed by old Fortune. The crop there must be much injured by the unsettled state of the country." Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 36.

³ Long, *Florida Breezes*, p. 381. The number of negroes in Florida was estimated to be about 70,000.

⁴ Uncle Demps is responsible for this delightful tale.

⁵ These figures are taken from Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, pp. 322-23.

tion alone cost approximately \$22,000,000. ⁶ In addition, roads and bridges were impassable, lands abandoned and uncultivated, and the whole economic situation thrown out of place.

No sooner had peace been made than Florida, in common with the rest of the South, was forced to endure fresh hardships in the shape of illegal confiscations of cotton. Much of the property of the Confederate government in the state was in the form of food and cotton, portions of which had never passed out of private hands. Numerous citizens had Confederate bonds secured by cotton. ⁷ As soon as Lee's surrender ended the strife, there was a movement on the part of the people to either get or keep these supplies which represented the only thing of real value which they possessed. On the other hand, the Federal government took immediate steps to seize all Confederate property. Unfortunately for the planters, most of the agents thus employed were thoroughly unscrupulous and the whole situation became a wholesale theft without regard for proofs of actual ownership. During the first few months of peace, Federal officers confiscated 5,460 bales in Florida, which at the prevailing high prices aggregated \$800,000. ⁸ Only a small part of such amounts ever reached the United States Treasury; most of it made the fortunes and lined the pockets of the agents. ⁹ No record of pilfered goods

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 324.

⁷ The Confederate government had about 150,000 bales in 1865.

⁸ Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, p. 330.

⁹ Secretary McCulloch said of his agents: "I am sure that I sent some honest cotton agents south; but it is sometimes doubtful whether any remained honest." Fleming, *The Sequel to Appomattox*, p. 9. Wholesale fraud was not limited to Florida, but was a curse to the whole South. In some places, the same cotton might be seized two or three times, due to a change in officials. Fleming, *Documentary History of Reconstruction*, I, p. 26. It was later asserted by the Ku Klux Minority Report

exists for El Destino and Chemonie but they were apparently not neglected in this respect. In December 1865, Horger made a trip to St. Marks¹⁰ at a cost of "\$5 (cars and dinner)," to attempt to locate some missing cotton. He reported that much of the stolen cotton was disguised by being repacked into small round bales.¹¹

But a greater question than cotton frauds was the restoration of production and the transformation of the former slaves into dependable free laborers. To further this end, it was necessary to fix certain restraints and regulations for the activities of the freedman not only in order to keep him at the work which had to be done, but to prevent him from becoming a menace to himself and the community at large. Another essential was the evolution of a system whereby the negro could be clothed, housed, and fed while the crop from which he was to be paid was growing.¹² Labor agreements between whites and blacks had been unknown in ante-bellum days, so a method of legal contract was established to protect the one from the unreliable migratory tendencies of the workers which might well, on occasion, prevent the harvesting of the crops, and to safeguard the

that 3,000,000 bales were confiscated, of which the United States received 114,000.

¹⁰ St. Marks, located some twenty-odd miles south of Tallahassee on the St. Marks River, was one of the most important cotton ports of the South prior to the war.

¹¹ See I of appended documents. Horger to Jones, December 12, 1865.

¹² The Freedmen's Bureau, or to (use its full title, the "Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands," had fed hundreds of indigent blacks. In March, 1867, General Howard estimated that 1,000 negroes were dependent for a living for five or six months of the year on the Bureau. Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, p. 384. The Bureau regarded this as a strictly temporary charity and desired to discontinue it as soon as possible. Fleming, *Documentary History of Reconstruction*, I, p. 338.

other from oppression and injustice at the hands of an unscrupulous employer.

Reconstruction conditions were worked out at the plantations under discussion by either Jones or his son, Wallace Savage Jones, one of whom was usually in residence after 1865. There were occasions, nevertheless, when the owner was in France and the son engaged in Savannah. At such times, El Destino was supervised by D. F. Horger, "Dave Horger" as Uncle Demps calls him, who was "manager" of Chemonie.¹³ In the early seventies, Wallace Savage Jones settled at El Destino until his departure for Messina in 1885. Even after this date he was indirectly responsible for the plantation until his death in 1902.

All the work done on the plantation was arranged by written contract between the employer and the hands. The general conditions of such agreements were prescribed by the Florida law of 1865,¹⁴ and sustained by the Freedmen's Bureau which supervised the making of the contract, in return for a fee of some small amount, and kept a filed record of the same.¹⁵ Although there are no contracts of either El Destino or Chemonie prior to 1873 which have survived, one has some idea of the agreements under which the hands worked, for such documents are fairly uniform and the fragmentary reports of the plantation indicate that Jones made no unusual terms with his people. Generally speaking, the wages of the workers of

¹³ Those in charge of plantations were termed "managers." The Bureau refused to allow the freedmen to be placed under "overseers." Fleming, *Documentary History of Reconstruction*, I, *Rules and Regulations for Assistant Commissioners*, VIII, p. 329.

¹⁴ The act regarding Labor Contracts in Florida was passed January 12, 1865. *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of Florida*, 1865-1866, p. 32.

¹⁵ Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, p. 393. Fleming, *Documentary History of Reconstruction*, I, *Circular Instructions sent out by General Howard*, p. 331.

a given amount of land were one-third the crop produced thereon. As the common method of tilling the land was in squads or gangs, this third was divided up among the groups according to a rating very similar to the old rating of the slave hands. From the negroes' share of the crop was deducted certain expenses such as bagging and rope, the poll tax of \$3, and whatever personal credit had been advanced to him before the harvest.¹⁶ In many instances, the items just mentioned consumed most of the wages so that the negro had just what he had always had, a living on the old plantation. Although most of the land was let to groups, there were instances of private enterprise, so to speak. Furthermore, crop sharing was not the only basis of payment. Certain types of workers were paid outright, such as mill hands, stockmen etc. and, according to Uncle Demps, there were also farm laborers who were hired at so much per day.¹⁷

The supplies for the hands: were given out by the planter in much the same manner as in the antebellum days with the great difference that they were sold, not granted free.¹⁸ The commissary serving both plantations was located at El Destino. Besides food stuffs, it undertook to provide articles of clothing, tobacco, whisky, pipes etc. Special articles for individual negroes were also purchased on request. The mer-

¹⁶ See II of the appended documents. Accounts current with the following hands for the year 1866.

¹⁷ Uncle Demps gives the following scale for hired labor: 50 to 75 cents for the men, 30 cents for the women, and 25 cents for the children.

¹⁸ According to Davis, the rations to be provided were a part of the typical contract. Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, p. 393. The accounts of the negroes at El Destino contained quantities of foodstuffs, but these were probably extra supplies. Horger, as early as 1868, mentions the drawing of rations as if it were part of the accepted regime. In the contracts which are themselves available but which are all of a later date, no stipulation regarding food is made. See III of appended documents.

chandise and supplies thus dispensed were procured from Savannah in the main; but also from New York by steamer to Newport. Jones made no effort to profit by these transactions although Horger, in a letter of July 31, 1868, suggested the possibilities of such a course.¹⁹ The building now standing and designated as the commissary is not the commissary of earlier days. The latter was a two-story structure which was removed in 1910.

During the days of adjustment, the supply of labor never adequately met the demands of the state. Davis reports that three planters out of every four wanted more workmen and that one gentleman near Tallahassee offered to pay the fines of all the negroes confined in the county jail if he might employ them on his estate.²⁰ It was illegal for any person to persuade an employee to quit the service of another to whom he was under contract, but the pressure of the moment frequently carried more weight than right. El Destino was by no means free from this situation.²¹ Another problem was the planter who attempted to withdraw neighboring labor at the end of the contract period. One of the chief offenders in this respect was Green H. Chaires,²² the owner of extensive lands adjacent to the Jones property. About 1870, the negroes began to be lured away by prospects of higher wages and

¹⁹ See I of appended documents. Horger to Wallace S. Jones, July 31, 1868. George Noble Jones, the grandson of the original owner, has stated that the commissary was operated not for profit but for the convenience of the two plantations.

²⁰ Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, p. 397.

²¹ Jones to T. B. Simkins, January 19, 1870. Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 182.

²² Green H. Chaires belonged to the well known Chaires family which figured extensively in early Florida history. His lands reached from the eastern limits of Tallahassee many miles eastward and southward. Part of these holdings belonged to the Lafayette grant and were purchased by him from the Lafayette heirs.

greater privileges offered by Chaires.²³ The glowing anticipations were not fulfilled, for in a short time most of the hands attempted to return.²⁴

In the next few years, a variety of contracts were made with the different negro families. The gang system broke down, due partly to the general dissatisfaction with the head men who were accused of being dictatorial and indolent. The new unit of labor consisted of the family, man, wife, and children, all of whom joined in the cultivation of the land obtained.²⁵ There was no uniformity even in this new plan for, after the opening of the seventies, numerous types of agreement existed side by side on the plantation.²⁶

In spite of the difficulties of the period, conditions on both estates were fairly quiet and stable. Possibly this was due to the fact that the members of the Jones family were genuinely liked and trusted by their employees. There was of course some trouble with thieving. Stock disappeared now and then ; special locks for the sugar house and stable were requested but, of the more serious situations which many of the neighboring planters had to face, little mention is made.

²³ Chaires offered his laborers half corn and one-third of cotton. Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 192: W. S. Jones to G. Noble Jones, October 19, 1871. Chaires was also reported to have told one of his employees that, "whenever he wanted to ride, say nothing to nobody, go and get a mule and travel." See I of appended documents, Horger to Jones, January 24, 1870.

²⁴ Demps says that the reason the negroes left Chaires was that they received promises to pay rather than pay. Demps himself was urged by an uncle to leave El Destino but refused. He added that it was a good thing, as he had had to help the uncle when he returned. There is plenty of evidence in the Horger letters and in the communications of Wallace Jones that Chaires' employees were dissatisfied with their situations and were trying to return to the Jones plantations, especially El Destino.

²⁵ Wallace S. Jones to George Noble Jones, November 2, 1871. Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 193.

²⁶ See III of appended documents. Memorandum of tenant contracts, El Destino and Chemonie, 1873.

If either El Destino or Chemonie were endangered by the activities of the negro brotherhoods or the carpet-bag agitators, the details thereof must remain unknown.

Shortly after the war, the location of the mill was changed. The new mill was constructed nearer the dam;²⁷ but the peak of prosperity had passed and, although considerable business was carried on, there was frequent trouble with the management of the water supply. When Wallace Savage Jones received his appointment as United States Consul at Messina in 1885, it was decided to abandon the mill project. Accordingly, the mill was dismantled and the material disposed of. To quote from a statement of the present Mr. George Noble Jones, "it was realized that the mill would not pay in the absence of my uncle."

The departure of Wallace Savage Jones for Italy marks a fitting close for these records of El Destino and Chemonie.

KATHRYN T. ABBEY

LETTERS OF D. F. HORGER TO GEORGE NOBLE JONES AND
WALLACE SAVAGE JONES, 1865-1871

*D. F. Horger to George Noble Jones*¹

Chemonie Dec. 12, 1865.

I went to town yesterday (or St. Marks). I did not find the cotton. You have no idea the little Round Bales, which I have inderstood it is thought to be Cotton Stolen,² and some of it-and repacked in Round Bales. It cost me \$5. (Cars and dinner).

²⁷ The location of the second mill is designated on the map in *Florida Plantation Records*.

¹ Reprint from Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 174.

² The stolen cotton refers to the confiscation frauds perpetrated by Federal agents. Cotton which belonged to the Con-

I want you to send to Town and get me a Locke for the Sugar House. The Negroes have gone into it with a key to fit the Locke on it. I also want 3 Lockes for Stable and Lot. Some of the mules have been rode here again. Have good Ones and all Different. A common Locke they can buy themselves. Let me know if any lumber can be got at ; the Mill. Some people around here want some.

P.S. I ordered David to the Mill and make inquiry abot Lumber.

D. F. Horger to Wallace S. Jones³

Chemonie June 5, 1868

William who worked on the Canal with Jimmy, only worked two days, the week you left and the next week and last Monday left the place with all his things. Before leaving, and ever since you left, he has been trying to get all he could out of me, and did some on the account your father speaking so favorably to me about him. He is in your debt \$7.80. Edward has done nothing since you left but draw his rations⁴ untill now. I refused him any last night.

Amelia has been drawing, syrup since you left. Your father did not mention to me whether she was to draw or not. Prince failed to get meat at the commissary with the certificate your father gave him.

federate government was confiscated by the United States, but so unscrupulous were the agents that large amounts of private goods were seized. It has been estimated that the Confederate government possessed 150,000 bales in 1865. The Ku Klux Minority Report asserted that 3,000,000 bales had been seized in the South.

³ Reprint from Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 175.

⁴ The rations were the food supplies which were given to the negro while the crop out of which he was to be paid was being produced. In the typical contract the rations were stipulated, the minimum being four pounds of bacon, one peck of meal, and one pint of syrup or its equivalent. Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, p. 393.

“They gave as their reason that they in their contract had to obey all the lawful orders of G. N. Jones”. I think myself, according to the orders, they had no right to issue to them but they are doing it elsewhere to almost all cases. My impressions are that if all the Elections ⁵ were over with for this year (?) the poor devils would not have smelled meat from them (the Commissary) . ⁶

It is a little Dry, but the Crops are looking very well, and they are getting along with them so far very well, much better I was fearful that they would. They have struck a fresh breeze, and look like they intended to make something or try for it. The West Gang, ***I fear wont do much.*** Ephreams corn looks very well indeed. The Mill will grind as soon as they can get a Head of water. ⁷ I have let Prince have 31 lbs of meat in all, at different times, since you left, and Demps a few lbs last night. Am I right or not?

Your young Dogs have come to light-but they are off from the House, and I could not find them this morning to give you a description of them. By the time I come down here ⁸ again, Bob will have found

⁵ The elections mentioned were those incidental to the establishment of the Carpetbag government. They were held May 6th, 7th and 8th, 1868. The voting was for governor, lieutenant-governor, congressman, members of the Legislature, and the adoption or rejection of the new constitution. Davis, ***Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida***, p. 526.

⁶ The Commissary was that of the Freedmen's Bureau. The Bureau was officially established in Florida in September, 1865, when Thomas O. Osborn was appointed chief assistant-commissioner for Florida. The Bureau had done an extensive work in giving out rations during the period just after the war. When the Bureau entered politics, it came to realize the political value of free gifts of food to the negro voters.

⁷ Head of water: a mill term denoting the height of water in reserve.

⁸ It is hard to tell when Horger is referring to Chemonie and when to El Destino. During the absence of Jones and his son, both places were under his care. From the mention of Prince, the West gang, and the mill, it is probable that the plantation in question is El Destino.

them, when I. will let you know the particulars. I hope to Hear from you soon.

W. S. Jones

Dr Sir-I noted the Receipt those things sent on Back last letter sent you-5 Gallons Whiskey & 1/4 Keg Tobacco-and those Hands working on Dam have pitched into it pretty Strong-The Syrup is out, those boys working on Dam, buying what they did not draw and anxious for more for Rations, and also for their famlys The Meat on Hand this morning are only 8 Shoulders, outside the Mill Hands, only 100 lbs have been Taken up-they buying what they did not draw-Dave has a family on plantation (or wife) and since the Dam has broken have three Handes picked up-Two of those will only remain til nex thursday-Send some meat, and syrup if You can You will make something on it ⁹ and be paying those fellows up for they dont work, too strong, all the time and they ought to be paid in something else besides Money-if possible.

But for the Rain, the Dam would have been Completed ¹⁰- Ansel Ground Six Bushels Yesterday and wile gring some now I suppose Cotton Crops are pretty good, but if the Rains Continu, we are Having now they will be injured.

We are having a good deal at this time, so much that I fear, they wont be much fodder saved

Very Truly

Your etc

D. F. Horger

⁹ The above suggestion to the contrary, the commissary was never run for profit.

¹⁰ During the early summer or spring, the dam and mill had been damaged by an "accident." Jones to Wallace S. Jones, August 29, 1868. The cause was doubtless the rise of the water of Burnt Mill Creek. Uncle Demps states that there is constant danger of floods from the creek during the heavy rains.

July 31, 1868.

P.S. according to the statement of the meat left here, it ought not to be so near out, but such is the fact. I have been as Careful with it as I possibly could be under all circumstances. Your scales left for me to weigh allowances with I used awhile, and had to have them boiled and cleaned nicely before I could do anything with them, and ought not to have used them as long as I did, when I came to examine them particularly in weighing I could make a piece of meat weigh five lbs or three lbs which I choosed by pushing either way wherever pushed it would stick-Now they are as good as they ever were, or when first bought-I state this as they are undoubtedly some mistak somewhere-and not by me, only in using those scales as long as I did without making an examination-It has been sme 2 or 3 weeks since I had them Cleaned-

Very Truly

D. F. H.

D. F. Horger to Wallace S. Jones¹¹

Chemonie, Augt 14th 1868.

.No depredations among the cattle since, nor do I think there will be. Jerry has left the place since they eat up the one killed. Although I have never Hinted who killed it, yet I told sevel I know who did kill it, and also the Goat. Demps came up here every time I came over until he found out I said I knew who killed the goat. He hasn't been here since.

They have commenced picking Cotton here. I have given them the Corn Sacks left in the Room-was that right? They tell me this morning they have seen a few caterpillars. I ordered them to have the first brood of them killed which I think will save the crop

¹¹ Reprint from Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 179.

3 or 4 weeks longer. Their Cotton Crops are tollerable good. I have been sick the last 2 or 3 times I have been here and have't been out much. I hear of some crops below Town having been eaten out already [i. e. by caterpillars] When that is the case, it is a poor chance for cotton. Mr. Blocksome ¹² [i. e. Mr. Bloxham] told me that on five hundred [acres] of Cotton he did not have more than 30 bales. If the Cotton is destroyed in this. Middle Florida, it will be a serious case.

P.S. From what I learn, Prince are making improper use of the Corn given him to eat and for his mules. His mules looking very badly, and I think also other are doing the same. What shall be done with them? I have been trying to get them [to] attend to their stock, all, Prince particularly. He was feeding freely and doing more than any body else. The biggest Liyars in the world. I have got them so they wont ride a mule without asking me, and I tell you they don't ride much.

Mr. W. S. Jones

Dr. Sir

I suppose you may think I am fond of writing letters by writing so many to you, but it seems I Cant help it fuly & Keep You posted.

The young mare was quite bad off with Staggers last week. I came here on thursday morning and staid with her untill Saturday noon - She is better eats

¹² William D. Bloxham, a veteran of the Confederate army, and later governor of Florida, was at this time a planter near Tallahassee and a leader of the Conservative party in the state. After emancipation; he was one of the first to establish a school for his negro hands. The teacher of this school was John. Wallace, afterward an influential radical politician and the author of *Carpentbag Rule in Florida*. Bloxham assisted Wallace in the preparation of that work.

hearty, and will get strong again The Mill House is all right again Sheeting and all, and the I suppose will be replaced again around the House, probably tomorrow night. When I shall be compelled to do some more work on the Dam before I can leave it. They had at the quarter quite a Funeral preched by Sam S & Crows on Sunday last. And three Sheep has been mising since. I was a little fearful when I left on Saturday they would break in on the sheep-and told Robert to Keep a close look out, thinking that after night they would make the Raid, but it seems the Boys were watched, and the Cows ordered to be caned up earlier, I suppose for the purpose they cut off 3 & had a Dog would run and catch without "saying a word" & run them and had them out after Cleaning them and caned them up after night. Robert about dark or just before went to the pasture and stood untill the Cows past, but hurd nothing of the sheep-In addition to the Sheep-Four Hogs were killed in the quarter, good size -and the largest Cow Henry Bolin had-making about Eight hundred lbs meat-quite a show out, I know who caned the Sheep in quarter, and who Killed them, and the Dog used for thier purpose wont catch any more, if he dont before I go home and return-I dont think the Devil will know what to do with them when he gets them-& they are getting meaner than ever, the Govern, making detectives of them ¹³ - or a great many of them - I have been quite sick but better, and do hope I will be permitted to live to see things change here in this country. All the Magistrates that are appointed in the Country are negroes, pretty much-What will be next-the freight on pk Bacon was \$3,45.

Respectfully Your etc.

Augt 22 nd 1868

D. F. Horger.

¹³ This probably refers to the practice of the radicals of questioning the negroes to get desired evidence concerning conditions, etc.

Mr Wallace S. Jones

Dr Sir-I suppose you begin to want to hear from here again-Well, the Cotton Crop will be short on account Rain and Catapillar the Catapillars most particularly-this whole Country is eaten out in this settlement by the 1st of Sept, and the other places in the County a month sooner-and along Distressing to this Country Certainly, & Cotton falling in price-The Boys began to work here last Monday-and by Saturday diner didt get quite enough boards to Cover the Gin House on the strength of which, I discharged two of them. Negroes wont work in this country, and they do worse than they did before we had Civil Govt ¹⁴ here, take them generally-Meeting at Tallahassee and about in the Settlement near there, and the Devil preached to them by those, **Peaceble, good natured, midnight sneakers,** ¹⁵ and Negro scourers when they are not afraid to go-that Cotton Rope made in the south ought not to be disgraced to hang one of them-

¹⁴ The civil government under the radical Republican regime was officially inaugurated when Governor Reed was sworn into office on June 8, 1868. By July 2, both senators from Florida had been admitted at Washington.

¹⁵ Horger is unquestionably referring to the secret organizations started by the carpetbaggers and used by them as an effective method of political control. There were two in Florida. The Lincoln Brotherhood was started by Thomas W. Osborn through his servant in October, 1865. The negroes were informed that the purpose of the order was to prevent their being returned to slavery. The members were initiated with great form and ceremony a few at a time. Many of them believed that joining the league made them brother of Lincoln himself. Meetings were held every Thursday in the most secret place available. Two years later, William M. Saunders, Daniel Richards and "Liberty" Billings, political rivals of Osborn, resolved to undermine the strength of the Brotherhoods by organizing "The Loyal League of America" in Florida. These lodges spread rapidly and soon no negro was recognized by the founders as a member of the Republican party unless he was a member of the league. The league was a profitable source of revenue, for initiation fees were charged which varied all the way from five to twenty dollars, Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule in Florida*, pp. 42-48.

No more stock killed at Eldestino, since I wrote you, but Two the best Milch cows of Halls killed from their calves-It will take from fifty to 75 lbs nails for the Gin House. Anything you send here for your place, Eldestino, send to no. 2 - the mares are doing well now-but I was afraid at one time the young one would die, and would, but for the best attention. Respects to your Bro & Father

Sept 13th 1868.

Very truly
Yours etc.
D. F. Horger

D. F. Horger to George Noble Jones¹⁵

Chemonie Jan 24, 1870.

Mr Jones:

Yours by Natt was received last night. When you asked me the question when you were here, whether it made any difference about a settle [ment] right off with me. I told you "It did not", for I had some Cotton to Gin and send to Depot, which I did, I also told you that they would be 4 Bales of Rent Cotton,¹⁶ they were, you having about, in all, a corresponding amo[un]t in your Hands. I shipped 4 in my name. 2 Bales had been shipped when you were here. I did not see anything wrong in it and hope they wont be, for I want you to get every dime that is yours and you will get it. The rent of some of my sone Cotton are also arranged. I don't expect to spend a dime of my

¹⁵ Reprinted from Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, pp. 183-84.

¹⁶ Rent cotton was that portion of the cotton due the planter as rent for the land. When such an arrangement was made between the owner and tenant at El Destino, one-third of the crop was usually the price of the rent, after all advances had been deducted and the cotton had been ginned and packed, and the fodder hauled to the crib. In other contracts, the rent was reduced to a fixed number of pounds of cotton.

rent until we have a settlement; It is not sold yet, but will be in a day or two. ***I hope that will be satisfactory***, for I never intended to do any thing wrong about it. Natt[']s statement and mine you say were somewhat Confused. When you get returns from the Bale, you will be the judge who is correct. You know how much Cotton was sent from El Destino.

I never found out until last night that apart of Lewis Crowd had left him. Lewis I expect to get yet, but may not. For Chairs has found out through Sam who worked with Lewis last year, that Lewis thought of leaving and Chairs has declined to have his Cotton ginned,¹⁷ Lewis sent me word last night he wanted to see me; and if he does I will moce him, if it is the first of March. He told Chairs he would not sign a contract with him untill his Cotton was ginned or he gets paid for it.

Sam bargained with me a week or two since, and asked me to save him Baraks House. If Lewis yet comes, he won't bring as many hands as at first. Therefore there will be mules here to spare. I have given Queen, the best (?) of your mules, to Dick. The Balance are here. Send over and get some of them.

The money for the Ducks are all right. You had better get them soon. They have commenced "laying"

Have you any no. 50 plows, cast plows? We would like to get 4 or 5. And what about shop work? We will need some harnes. They were pretty badly broken last year. I am sorry Robert cant come. Two days would do all I want done, I think.

I would have gone to El Destino before now, but have been quite indisposed, and would go today, but

¹⁷ Most contracts required that the cotton be picked, ginned and packed. To prolong the process, therefore, would prolong the contract and keep the labor for, if the worker left before the contract was carried out, he forfeited his wages which were not paid until the crop was in.

have been in bed more or less for the last two or three days. I send Polido today in order he may see Lewis on his return.

Barak and others who came after him, of your old hands, were very bitter against you. Nathan is sorry he left. Says he is coming back next winter. I hope he will. He is all the one I regret leaving, although Ely is a tolerabl good hand. Barak says Chairs told him "Whenever he wanted to ride, say nothing to nobody, go and get a mule and travel." And "sell his Cotton any time after it is packed to whom he pleased." That was no doubt cheering (?) to him, but the chances may be for him to get none.

D. F. Horger to George Noble Jones.¹⁸

El Desteno Sept 14/71

Mr. Jones,

Yours 26th Augt. just Received yesterday, and glad to hear you are getting Stout again. I have written a letter every week to you or son since you left. Yet it seems they are slow going. From what cause I am unable to understand. Lately the Roads have been so badly washed up, not much travelling done. I wrote you in letter a week ago and it has rained every day since, more or less, and some very heavy Rains. The Country is full of water, and every little Creek running over, and large ones too. And Cotton turn about, very much injured and lost. Not much more than half work done, on ac[coun]t wet weather.

I have examined the Cotton that is out. I think they are trying to get their cotton out. It wont rate very high, on account bad weather. No rain today for the first lately. Mules dont get any worse. Still

¹⁸ Reprint from Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, pp. 186-88.

looking very well, not having had corn in some days. They are still fed on "Beggar lice", together with what they get in pasture between meals.

Very little sickness among the hands now. Polido will make a fair crop for the season. Natt[s] corn, all, will be about 1/3 what they land ought to make. Thomas[s] Crop is "tolerable", Old Tom having the honour of making it while Thomas was running about. Dick, pretty fair crop, but getting about slow gathering it. Thomas and Nat, Eve and Pup only want a place to call home. And Scilla, Dick's youngest girl in the field, has run away from home 2 months ago, or nearly so, and he has failed, so far, to get hold of her.

My wife has been quite sick for sevel weeks, and in bed yet, but I hope better now, and will get up.

Cotton buyers¹⁹ begin to stir up the Negroes. I saw quite a pile, bought from the Negroes this season at a certain place (sev'l Bales), and not far from here. On the Miccasuki Lake N. End, they are five "shantys" in 2 square miles, I am told by good authority.

P.S. I have just been able to get some Turnip seed-will be sowed at once. Did not get yours send. None in Tallahassee, had to get them from Miccasuki. Got all they had and am afraid has not got enough yet.

¹⁹ Cotton buyers were those who attempted to purchase the cotton from the negroes before it had been ginned. When this was done, it was impossible for the planters to know how much cotton had been produced or to obtain the amount belonging to them under the various contracts made with the hands. The practice was regarded as thoroughly dishonest and despicable by the law-abiding elements of the community. At the time of the letter, the Ku Klux was making an effort to stop these activities. Wallace S. Jones to George Noble Jones, October 19, 1871, Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 190.

II. TABULATIONS FOR EL DESTINO AND JEFFERSON PLANTATIONS, 1866-1869

Florida Tax Returns ¹ 1868
Jefferson County

60½	Eighths = 4840 acres @ \$3	14570
40	Cattle	400
14	Mules @ \$150	2100
3	Horses	450
1	Buggy	100

Tax Returns 1868 - Leon County

19½	Eighths=1560 acres @ \$2	3140
26	do-2080 acres " \$4	4160

\$7300

4	mules	300
2	oxen	200
	6 Cows & Calves & 1 Bull	140

Expenses of the Florida Plantations in 1868 1770.86
Receipts from Fa Plantations - 1868 3932.77

ACCOUNTS CURRENT WITH THE FOLLOWING HANDS
UNDER CONTRACT FOR THE YEAR 1866 ²

Dr.	Little Sam		
1866			
Jan 24	To 1 Pair Shoes	2.00	acc with G. Noble
Aug 18	1 lb Tobacco	45	Jones, Cr
April 12	1 coat	10.63	wages 1/4 crop 60.00
Dec 1	1 Gallon Whisky	3.50	
	13 1 Pair shoes (Warren)	2.75	

¹ El Destino is located for the most part in Jefferson County. The county line between Leon and Jefferson counties runs through the western part of the plantation. The land taxed in Leon County comprised Chemonie and the western section of El Destino.

² It is very hard to determine to what plantation the three tabulations given here belong. They are written in an old notebook which was found among the El Destino records and yet the book contains several tabulations which are listed as pertaining to Jefferson Plantation, the Georgia estate of the Jones family. None of the tabulations in question are ascribed to any of the plantations. Little can be gained by comparing the names of the negroes mentioned with list of the ex-slaves held by Jones on El Destino and Jefferson immediately after the war. The best settlement seems to be as follows; the accounts for 1866 are those of El Destino, inasmuch as the tax of \$3 listed as part of the debt of each male negro is obviously the Florida poll tax of that amount. The Georgia tax of the

	Lost time 13% days	6.75 ³		
	Advance as per Pass Book in March	12.88 ⁴		
	Tax	3.00 ⁵		
		<hr/>		
		41.96		
Jan 7/67	To Balance Paid	28.04		
1866				
Dr.	Polly		Polly wages	Cr 60.00
April 12	1 Hat	1.50		
"	1 Pair Shoes	2.00		
"	8 yds cloth	3.20		
"	1 Dress	4.50		
"	1 Pair Shoes	2.25		
4	2 lbs spun thread	90		
Dec 8	4 yds cotton Cloth	2.40		
1	9 yds Bed Ticking	7.20		
	Lost time	27.50		
		<hr/>		
		\$51.45		
	Balance Paid	8.55		
		<hr/>		
		\$60.00		
Dr	Prince		Prince wages	Cr
1866	March acc as per Book	10.37		47.50
April 2	one Pipe	50		
	Coat	10.63		
	Boots	5		
	Suspenders	65		
	3 Handkerchiefs	1.20		

same time was only \$1. The accounts of 1867 and 1868 seem to be those of Jefferson. The names of the squads are the same for both years and in the accounts of the last year is included Warr's account. It is certain from the letters that Warr was the manager at Jefferson and that at the same time Horger was in charge of Chemonie and El Destino. There seems to be no way of deciding the issue beyond the realm of probability, however.

³ The rate per day would be 50 cents.

⁴ The Pass Book is the account book in this instance. In the antebellum days the Pass Book was used for the records of passes or permissions granted to the negroes to leave the plantation. It may well be that the old Pass-book was used up as an account book for the new regime.

⁵ In January, 1866, the Florida Legislature laid a poll tax of \$3 on all males between the ages of twenty-one and fifty-five years. If the tax was not paid the delinquent might be seized and hired out to anyone who would pay the tax. *Laws of Florida, Fourteenth Assembly*, chap. 1501.

	Collars	25		
June 5	Meal	1.50		
22	Tobacco	45	wages	47.50
	Whisky	1.20	advances	31.75
	Tax	3		
	Lost Time	7		\$15.75
		<hr/>		
		31.75		
1866	Abram Fleming	Dr		Cr
Jany 24	2 Pairs shoes	4.00	wages self	60.00
April 16	6 yds white Cloth	2.40	do Phoebe	\$45.00
	March acc	3.93		
June 11	1 Bu meal	1.50		\$105.00
22	2 lbs Tobacco	⁹⁰		56.26
July 2	1 Bu Meal	1.50		
Aug 2	2 lbs Tobacco	90		<hr/>
Sept 28	Whiskey	1.20		\$48.74
Oct 5	Whiskey	2.40		
27	1 lb Tobacco	45		
Nov 17	1 lb "	45		
25	cash Mr J	2.00		
Dec 1	2 Gallons whiskey	7.00		
Dec. 4	1 Pr coarse Shoes	2.75		
	2 childrens	4		
	1 Bootees	2.50		
9	1 lb Tobacco	45		
24	12 lbs Flour	1.00		
Nov 23	cash	2.00		
Jany 19	12 lbs Flour	1.00		
	Lost time	6.00		
	Lost time Phoebe ⁶	11.00		
	Tax	3		
	Advance in March	3.93		
		<hr/>		
		\$56.26		
1866	Big Sam			
Jany 24	1 Pair Shoes	2.00		
April 12	2 Pocket Hands	50		
"	2 Hd Handkerchiefs	1.70		
"	1 Hat	2.00		
June 22	1 lb Tobacco	45		
July 8	6 lbs wool	1.80		
29	1 lb Tobacco	45		
Aug 4	1/2 Kid	50		
"	4 lbs Flour	40		
19	1 lb Tobacco	45		
Sep 17	whiskey	60		
20	1 lb Tobacco	45		
"	whiskey	60		
28	" "	60		

⁶ Phoebe was probably the wife of Abram. It was common for a negro to contract for the labor of his wife and children as well as himself.

Oct 6	Whiskey	60
13	do	60
24	1 lb Tobacco	45
Dec 1	2 Gallons whiskey	7.00
6	1 Blk cloth cape	14.00
	1 Hoop	2.
13	1 Pair shoes	2.75
15	1 charly	2.00
26	1 qt. whiskey	1.00
Sep 6	6 yds cotton Cloth	2.40
Dec 6	Shugar & Coffee	5
15	1 Pair shoes	2.25
	Lost time	5
	Lost time Julia	21.00

77.85

Davy Tallieferro Dr. Sundry advances 56.00

Jany 1867

Davy Tallieferro Cr
By one Bale Cotton 105.00
Deduct advances 56.00

49.00

12 1/2 Bu Potatoes 9
100 lbs meat 10.00
cash 17.75

By cash 19.00
Hay & fodder 17.75

1867 Big Abram
Jany by advances 30.00
9

Bale cotton 105.00
Hay & fodder 13.
cash 9

Cash for fod-
der & Hay 13.00
cash 75

127

127.00

*Jefferson Plantation
Cotton Receipts 1868 for 1867*

Billy's Squad	42 Bales
net sales	2888.67
one third	962.89
number of shares 10 1/4	
each share	93.94
Billy & Dick	187.88
Debt	76.14
	<u>111.74</u>

103

Venus 3/4 ⁷	70.47
Debt	67.81
	<hr/>
	2.66
Nanny 1/2 share	46.97
	20.24
	<hr/>
	26.73
Jeffrey	93.94
	72.52
	<hr/>
	21.42
Sylvia	93.94
Debt	88.67
	<hr/>
	5.27
owe 27/c	
Taughter	93.94
Debt	77.91
	<hr/>
	16.03
Ben & Rachel 1 1/2	140.91
Debt	194.37
	<hr/>
	53.46
Cato, Caesar & Katie 2 1/2	234.85
Debt	199.07
	<hr/>
owe 15/c	35.78
returned 1/3 Lost time	11.75
	<hr/>
Sam's Squad	31 Bales
net sales	\$1786.76
one third	598.58
8 1/4 hands, each share	72.20
Sam 1 share	72.20
Debt	13.30
	<hr/>
	58.90
Abram & Phoebe 1 3/4	126.35
	132.84
	<hr/>
	paid \$6.49

⁷ The fractions after the names of the various negroes indicate their share in the wages of the squad. A share was the return of a laborer who was considered able to do an average amount of work. This is practically the same as the rating of the old slave hands called by a new name.

Suky	72.20
Lost time	2.00
owe 20/c	<u>70.20</u>
Martha	72.20
Debt	16.81
owe 39/c	<u>55.39</u>
Will	72.20
Debt	27.75
	<u>44.45</u>
Doll 3/4	54.15
Debt	20.60
owe 5/c	<u>33.55</u>
Isaac 2 sons 1 3/4	126.35
	121.75
	<u>4.60</u>
returned 1/3 of Lost time	11.58
<hr/>	
Jack's Squad	30 Bales
	8 1/2 shares
net sales	1798.07
one third	599.35
Jack, William & Joe share	211.53
Debt	209.86
	<u>1.67</u>
notice 17 cents	
Jacob & Juliet 2 shares	141.02
Debt	126.75
	<u>14.27</u>
Jim 1 share	70.51
Debt	95.96
	<u>25.45</u>
	owes
Abbey 3/4 share	53.30
Debt	84.81
	<u>15.51</u>
	owes
Flora 1 share	70.51
Debt	86.02
	<u>15.51</u>
	owes

Lizzie 3/4 share	53.30
Debt	79.08
	<hr/>
owes	25.78
<hr/>	
Davy's Squad	31 Bales
net sales \$1631,70/100	
Davy's proportion of Crop	271.98
Debt	113.52
	<hr/>
	\$158.46
Abram Crop	271.98
Debt	\$ 96.76
	<hr/>
	\$175.22
George's Squad	40 Bales
net sales	\$266.16
one third	888.72
9 hands, each share	98.74
George & Nina 2 shares	197.48
Debt	138.65
	<hr/>
owes 33 cts	\$58.83
Prince Burton	98.74
Debt	72.08
	<hr/>
owes 10 cts	\$26.69
L. Tenny	98.74
Debt	90.63
	<hr/>
owes 11 cts	\$ 8.11
Maria Fox	98.74
Debt	59.80
	<hr/>
owes 24 cts	\$39.24
Bet	98.74
Debt	70.64
	<hr/>
owes 10 cts	\$28.10
Katie	98.74
Debt	60.24
	<hr/>
	\$38.50
William (Bess)	98.74
Debt	87.21
	<hr/>
	\$11.53

III. NEGRO CONTRACTS, RECORDS OF WORK,
1873-1874, JEFFERSON COUNTY, FLA.

I, G. Noble Jones hereby agree to rent to John Pride for one year from 1st Jany 1873 to 1 Jany 1874 Thirty one Acres of land on Monticello ¹ road in consideration for which John Pride hereby agrees on or before the 1st Jany next to pay Mr. Jones or his representative nine hundred Pounds of Middling ² Cotton in lint and gin the Cotton at Mr Jones' gin. John also pledges his Crops of Corn and Cotton for the faithful performance of this contract and to secure the payment of all advances made or to be made by Mr Jones to him ; In witness whereof the parties to this contract have hereto set their hands and seals this 15th Jany 1873.³

Witness

G. Noble Jones (SS)
his
John Pride X
mark (SS)

This agreement between G. Noble Jones of the first part & John Pride of the second, witnesseth, that John Pride agrees to cultivate as much land on G. N. Jones' Plantation as can be properly tended with his team, in Corn & Cotton. To pick, gather, cure, house said Crops.-to hawl the Corn & fodder to G. N. Jones' crib.-To gin and pack his Cotton at G. N. Jones' gin

¹ The Monticello road runs across the northwest section of the plantation.

² Middling cotton is cotton of medium grade. Cotton in the lint is cotton which has been ginned as distinguished from cotton in the seed.

³ The above contract established a tenantry based on cotton rental, that is, a definite amount was paid for the use of the land. It may be noticed that the rent is entirely in cotton. Those on a crop sharing basis usually paid in fodder as well as cotton.

& Screw, ⁴ & to deliver the same at the R. R. ⁵ - and to do whatever else is usually required of Plantation Laborers., & to be faithful at his work.

In consideration of the faithful performance by John of the above conditions & agreement Mr. Jones will, after deducting for all advances which have been or may be made by him to John, give him two thirds of the Cotton, Corn & fodder made by John.-

John hereby mortgages his crops to Mr Jones to secure him for all advances.-

Signed the 16th day feb 1874. ⁶

G. Noble Jones
his
John X Pride
mark

Witness
Wallace S. Jones.

State of Florida
Jefferson County

Be it remembered that on the 21st day of February A. D. 1874 personally appeared before the subscriber, a Justice of the Peace in and for said county Wallace S. Jones and made oath that G. Noble Jones and John Pride parties in the foregoing instrument of writing did in his presence sign the same as for their own acts respectively and for the purposes mentioned in the said instrument of writing-In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the day and year above written-

Geo Whitfield (Seal)
Justice of the Peace

⁴ The screw was the apparatus used for pressing the cotton into the bales as it dropped from the gin.

⁵ The R. R. was probably the Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Mobile Railroad.

⁶ It should be noticed that the same negro who made the preceding contract changed the basis of his tenantry in this contract to crop sharing.

Memorandum of Tenant Contracts, El Destino and Chemonie, 1873⁷

West agrees to pay \$2.75 per acre (46 acres) for 2 years from Jany. 1st '73. Madison plows a steer-agrees to feed steer. He gets one half of cotton and three quarters of the corn and fodder.

Winter agrees to pay 600 lbs lint for all land cultivated by him. From last year's account Winter paid \$27.65 on mule. Were he to pay cash now, it would take \$72.35 to finish paying for mule. Until he does finish paying, he is to be charged at the rate, of \$12 a month.

Aberdeen, Harry, Dick, Joe, Demps, Barak, Charles get 1/4, corn and 1/3 cotton provided the 1/2 corn shows 75 barrels to the mule.

Lewis gets 2/3 of cotton and 3/4 of the corn.

John Pride rents for 2 bales of 450

Chamouni Boys give 450 (pounds of) lint for every 20 acres.

Sarah Williams gets 1/3 all round.

Ephraim gets 1/2.

Robert and Ben get 2/3

A Tenant's Contract for the Purchase of a Mule and the Rent of a Farm, 1874⁸

(Unsigned draft in the handwriting of
Wallace S. Jones.)

I agree to sell to Charles Howard a mule called Pigeon for \$187., one half payable on the first of Jany.

⁷ Reprint from Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 581. This memorandum is especially valuable not only because it illustrates the existence on one plantation of various kinds of tenantry, but, also, because it includes the current types of tenantry, money rental, cotton rental, and crop-sharing. The percentage of the share of the crop-sharing tenantry was usually determined by the ownership and feeding of the mule used. West was on money rental; Winter, John Pride and the Chamouni Boys were on cotton rental; the rest were crop sharers on various terms.

⁸ Reprint from Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 583.

[1875] Eighteen hundred and seventy-five, the other half payable with twenty per [cen]t interest on the 1st Jany., 1876, interest to run from the first of Jany 1875. Upon the payment of the last instalment with interest, I agree to make title to Charles for the mule. If the mule dies before it is paid for, Charles agrees to pay for the mule as if it had lived. I further agree to rent Charles 40 acres of land in River Field⁹ for one year at the rate of 900 pounds of good cotton, payable and deliverable by the first Jany. next at Station One, J. P. and M. R. R.¹⁰ He pledges his crops for the performance of this agreement, also for advances which may be made by me to Charles; he will pay taxes on mule.

In witness thereof we sign our names to this agreement Jany. third 1874.

⁹ River Field was one of the old ante-bellum divisions of the plantation. It was located on the eastern boundary and was crossed by Burnt Mill Creek.

¹⁰ The J. P. and M. R. R. was the Jacksonville, Pensacola, and Mobile Railroad. On March 20, 1869, the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad was sold at public auction by the Internal Improvement Board for \$1,220,000 to one Franklin Dibble and associates. *Minutes of the Proceedings of the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of the State of Florida*, I, pp. 373, 383. In June of the same year the Jacksonville, Pensacola and Mobile Railroad was incorporated "to secure the speedy completion, equipping, and maintenance of a connection by railroad between Jacksonville on the Atlantic coast and Pensacola on the Gulf coast, and Mobile, in Alabama, running through the State of Florida." The company received the exclusive right for twenty years to build a road from the terminus of the Pensacola and Georgia Railroad at Quincy to the dividing line between the States of Florida and Alabama in the direction of Mobile. Permission was also granted that the new corporation might combine with the Pensacola and Georgia and the Tallahassee Railroads. McClellan, *Digest of the Laws of the State of Florida, 1822-1881*, pp. 1055-1060. The road went into the hands of a receiver in 1872. Many of the members of the corporation had been associated with the earlier projects.

A Chattel Mortgage by a Negro Tenant, 1874¹¹

State of Florida

Jefferson County

Whereas George Noble Jones has advanced to us, John Pride Caroline his wife Forty dollars to enable us to pay for the purchase of said mule named John Bull, and whereas the Said George Noble Jones has advanced to the undersigned one hundred and seventy six dollars 22/100 on account of supplies, to enable us to feed and clothe ourselves and family we hereby convey to said George Noble Jones the aforesaid mule, this conveyance to be void whenever we shall pay to George Noble Jones or his representatives the aforesaid sum of one hundred and seventy six dollars 22/100 for said advances and the aforesaid sum of forty dollars on account of purchase of said mule. Witness our signatures this-eighteenth day of February, 1874.

John X Pride
Caroline X Pride

Witness :

G. Fenwick Jones.
Wallace S. Jones.

(This is the last instalment of this series of plantation documents.)

¹¹ Reprinted from Phillips, *Florida Plantation Records*, p. 582.