

1969

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Recommended Citation

Owens, Harry P. (1969) "Port of Apalachicola," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 48 : No. 1 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol48/iss1/4>

PORT OF APALACHICOLA

by HARRY P. OWENS *

WHEN CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN MARSHALL handed down a decision on the Forbes Purchase claims Apalachicola entered a new phase in its development. The recently organized Apalachicola Land Company exerted its efforts to develop a major cotton port. Some citizens, dissatisfied with the Apalachicola Land Company, began a rival port on St. Joseph Bay. St. Joseph failed to develop as a commercial center and it ceased to exist by 1842.¹ During the two decades before the Civil War, Apalachicola experienced prosperity to such a degree that it became the third largest cotton port on the Gulf of Mexico.

Apalachicola maintained a steady and substantial population increase from the time that the Apalachicola Land Company began to develop the area to the Civil War. The population,² by decades, was:

Year	Free	Slave	Total
1840	808	222	1,030
1850	1,184	377	1,561
1860	1,384	520	1,904

The 1850 census recorded 212 laborers, which included stevedores and draymen; forty-six men exhibited a skilled trade; and sixty-eight were connected with boats as captain, engineer, or seaman. Merchants, businessmen, and clerks counted for eighty-three men, while eleven were employed in conducting the port business, and thirteen were associated with the city or county

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1. *Colin Mitchel et al. v. United States*, 9 Peters (U.S.), 711-62 (1835); James O. Knauss, "St. Joseph, An Episode of the Economic and Political History of Florida," Part I, *Florida Historical Quarterly*, V (April 1927), 177-95; Part II, *Florida Historical Quarterly*, VI (July 1927), 3-20.
2. *Sixth Census of the United States, 1840* (Washington, 1841), 454-55; *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850* (Washington, 1853), 400;

government. Twenty were engaged in professional jobs which included physicians, druggist, teachers, and a minister. Seven men listed their occupation as "bar keep," but one status-conscious man, a South Carolinian, who pursued the same occupation, listed his job as "tavern keep." The 1860 census showed a slight increase in the number of people listing themselves as employed in a commercial business, while the number of laborers slightly decreased. The list of skilled jobs increased with the addition of several new occupations such as telegraph operator, cabinet maker, boat maker, and boat caulker. The number of fishermen tended to decline, but only because many listed themselves as oystermen rather than fishermen. Another occupation listed in 1860, but not 1850, was woodman or woodcutter for steamboats. With these few exceptions, the occupational statistics remained about the same.³

The foreign born population remained almost constant, with 291 in 1850 and 283 in 1860. In both instances, Irish immigrants were the most numerous of the foreigners; slightly over 140 for each census. England, Germany, and Italy followed with forty or less, and the remainder were divided between other European countries, Canada, and Cuba. Irish immigrants were more prominent in the laboring class, while Italians comprised the largest national group among the fishermen and oystermen.

Eighth Census of the United States, Population, 1860 (Washington, 1864), 54. Comparative populations for other Florida towns as compiled by the *Eighth Census*, 54, show:

Town	Total Population	White Population
Apalachicola	1,904	1,378
Jacksonville	2,118	1,133
Key West	2,832	2,241
Pensacola	2,876	1,789
St. Augustine	1,914	1,175
Tallahassee	1,932	997

Apalachicola ranked sixth of Florida towns when comparing total population, and fourth when ranked by white population. Milton had a larger white population than Apalachicola also.

3. Compiled from original, handwritten, unpublished schedules of the "Seventh Census of the United States, Population Schedules for Franklin County, 1850," 309-38, and the "Eighth Census of the United States, Population Schedules for Franklin County, 1860," 421-56. Microfilm in the Robert Manning Strozier Library, Florida State University, Tallahassee, and the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

Germans were generally laborers or in the skilled trades, while a substantial number of Englishmen were connected with commerce.⁴

Slightly less than forty per cent of the native born population were native Floridians; 307 came from the southern states, with Georgia contributing 171; South Carolina, 38; Alabama, 36; and North Carolina, 26. The largest number from outside the South came from New York, 60; Connecticut, 29; Pennsylvania, 24; Massachusetts, 18; and Rhode Island, 16. In both censuses men from New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Rhode Island dominated the jobs pertaining to commerce, but individuals from the southern states could be found in all the jobs listed.

Agricultural statistics were almost non-existent. A. S. Clements, census taker for 1850, left the notation that he had been instructed not to notice the agricultural forms, and he listed only the livestock that was located within the city. He counted seventy-four horses and two mules. The 1860 census taker must have counted the livestock outside the city because he recorded the presence of only two horses and two mules. This absence of draft animals explains why only one blacksmith was listed in each census, and why blacksmith or livery stable advertisements were noticeably absent from the Apalachicola newspapers.⁵

Apalachicola's success as a commercial center depended to a large degree on its harbor and port facilities. St. Joseph and Pensacola often criticized Apalachicola for its shallow harbor, but when the Apalachicola Land Company dredged the channel to the city wharves in 1836, ships drawing approximately twelve feet of water could anchor at the town.⁶ When the navy department recommended harbors that could be used as a depot

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4. Compiled from original, handwritten, unpublished schedules of the "Seventh Census of the United States, Population Schedules for Franklin County, 1850," 309-38; *Eighth Census of the United States, Population, 1860*, 55. There is a discrepancy between the published *Eighth Census* which enumerated 283 foreign born and the original census schedules which contain the names of 269 foreign born.
 5. Compiled from the original, handwritten, unpublished schedules of the "Seventh Census of the United States, Population Schedules for Franklin County, 1850," 309-38. and the "Agricultural Schedules for Franklin County; 1850," 67-72; *Eighth Census of the United States, Agriculture, 1860* (Washington, 1864), 18-21.
 6. Tallahassee *Floridian*, July 30, 1836, reported that a contract had been let to deepen the channel to thirteen feet.

in 1842, the secretary suggested Pensacola, St. Joseph, Tampa, and Dry Tortugas. He considered St. Joseph the least desirable and was willing to abandon that project if any one of the ports should be eliminated. Failing to suggest Apalachicola because the water was not deep enough, he stated that although there were “. . . two entrances affording, in the shoalist part, thirteen feet, and in the deepest, sixteen feet, . . . no vessel of any draft of water can lie nearer to the town than ten miles.”⁷ At the same time that the navy refused to consider Apalachicola, the coast survey for the harbor was completed. This report indicated that ships using Dog Island Pass (East Pass) could not come within ten miles of the town, but ships entering St. George’s Pass could approach to within three miles. Subsequent reports indicated that ten to fifteen feet of water were available at all the passes, and one survey showed twenty feet of water in the middle passage.⁸ Sometimes, Apalachicolians made fun of their facilities. After a long, rainy season, the *Commercial Advertiser* warned, “somewhere in the middle of the Bay . . . judging from the sand that is missing from the wharves, there ought to be an enormous sand bank. Vessels by keeping a northwesterly course till they run into it will undoubtedly find it Lighters will do well to have ploughs attached to their bows, as it will be almost impossible for them, if the thing keeps on, to get to town without some mode of cutting a passage.”⁹

United States Senator David Levy Yulee, in a letter to *DeBow’s Review*, attempted to show that all Florida ports were valuable for the coasting and foreign trade. He pointed out that Lloyd’s of London listed only thirty-three ships out of 10,430 vessels that drew twenty feet or more. While the depth of the channel influenced the number of ships entering Apalachicola

7. *Report of the Secretary of the Navy*, Vol. 11, 27th Cong., 2nd Sess., *Senate Report No. 98*, pp. 1-6.

8. *Survey of the Coast from Apalachicola [sic] to the Mouth of the Mississippi*, 27th Cong., 2nd Sess., *House Document No. 220*, p. 2. Captain Comforth of the brig *Harbinger* reported that his vessel, drawing twelve and one-half feet, touched bottom only once in West Pass. See *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, August 15, 1840; *Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, 1852*, 32nd Cong., 2nd Sess., *Executive Document No. 64*, p. 42, and sketch G, *Report of the Superintendent of the Coast Survey, 1853*, 33rd Cong., 1st Sess., *Executive Document No. 14*, p. 63.

9. *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, September 23, 1844.

Bay, it did not greatly hinder the port's development because the majority of Apalachicola's trade was coastwise rather than to foreign ports. The coastwise trade generally was conducted in smaller vessels, such as brigs, schooners, and steamers, while shipments to foreign ports went in deeper draft ships.¹⁰ Statistics for the number of ships using Apalachicola are inadequate. *Commerce and Navigation Reports* in government publications do not provide an accurate count of vessels entering and clearing from the various customs districts. This lack of information was caused by inadequate or late reporting, and it resulted in insufficient figures to provide an adequate comparison between Apalachicola and other ports.

While port officials were concerned about ships entering and clearing Apalachicola Bay, the merchants had a much larger interest in shipping. The cotton trade was based on a well established plan. Planters occasionally consigned their cotton to foreign ports, but the vast majority of Alabama and Georgia planters along the river used the commercial houses at Apalachicola. Local merchants received cotton from upriver, pressed it for shipment, and then sent it on to a northern or a foreign market.¹¹ Merchants established a "tariff of charges" which included commissions on sale of merchandise, five per cent; purchase of goods, two and a half per cent; procuring freight, five per cent; disbursement on vessels, two and a half per cent; collecting or adjusting insurance, two and a half per cent; cash advances, with produce in hand, two and a half per cent; receiving and forwarding cotton, fifty cents per bale; and, storage of cotton, twenty cents per month.¹² Charges on a bale of cotton shipped from the upper reaches of the river to New York through Apalachicola included

10. David L. Yulee, "Connexion of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico: The Florida Railroad," *DeBow's Review*, XX (April 1856), 492-514; Robert G. Albion, *The Rise of New York Port [1815-1860]* (New York, 1939), 95-121. The Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, April 30, 1859, reported that one-fourth of the cotton shipped from Apalachicola went to foreign ports.

11. *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, IV (March 1841), 200-27; Albion, *The Rise of New York Port*, 95-121.

12. *Apalachicola Gazette*, July 4, 1836.

FLORIDA HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

Freight from Columbus to Apalachicola	\$1.00
Charges at Apalachicola	.75
Freight from Apalachicola to New York	4.00
Insurance per bale	1.00
Total	\$6.75 ¹³

Included in the charges at Apalachicola were wharfage fees of thirteen cents and lightering fees of thirty cents per bale. Sometimes cotton was not unloaded at the wharves, but was taken directly to a vessel in the harbor by the steamboat that brought it down river.¹⁴

A list of the leading merchants in 1844 would have included the firms of J. Day and Company, McKay and Hartshorne, Lockhart and Ridgway, D. B. Wood and Company, Harper and Holmes, Preston and Maclay, and W. G. Porter. Other merchants who developed large businesses at a later date were Thomas Orman and Benjamin Ellison. Many of the partnerships appeared in the advertising columns of the local paper for only one season; the next year they might appear as names of different firms. Preston and Maclay in the 1840s became J. C. Maclay and Company in the 1850s, and the McKay of Dodge, Kolb and McKay of 1840 became McKay and Hartshorne in 1844. Occasionally a partnership was established with offices in Apalachicola and Columbus; such a partnership was formed between Edward Hardin and Henry Raymond in 1844.¹⁵

William G. Porter was one of the larger merchants throughout the antebellum period. His advertisements in local papers indicated that he sold a wide assortment of goods which included hardware, household goods, foodstuffs, and "American gold in sums to suit the purchaser." He often used the schooner *Margaret Ann* to bring cargoes of pineapples, oranges, bananas,

13. *Ibid.*, October 11, 1838.

14. *Ibid.*, March 24, 1836; *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, January 22, 1844, and March 21, 1846. Steamboats engaging in this practice were required to pay the same license fee as lighters in service.

15. *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, December 1840-April 1844. This list was determined by examining the shipping lists for that period and selecting firms which received large shipments from the upriver country and from coasting and foreign vessels. John C. Maclay Papers, duplicate bills of lading, 1858-1860, in possession of Mr. Corey M. Henriksen of Apalachicola. This is one of the few surviving records from antebellum Apalachicola.

coconuts, cigars, and molasses from Havana. John C. Maclay, a leading merchant, purchased large quantities of salt from Liverpool. The duplicate bills of lading from this firm revealed that most of the goods shipped by Maclay were bales of cotton, and about one-half of this cotton was sent to Liverpool.¹⁶

Thomas Orman, a successful merchant and one of the largest slave owners in Apalachicola, came to Florida from Syracuse, New York, and began as a farmer near Marianna. He later moved to Apalachicola, where he prospered as a merchant and built a large two-story home overlooking the river. According to surviving records of his firm he engaged in an extensive trade with upriver farmers and planters. Some of the notations show that he received several hundred bales of cotton from individual planters, but most of the entries concerned smaller accounts. R. B. Evans of Quincy sent a quantity of venison in exchange for salt, a pocket knife, and several breakfast dishes. The venison was valued at \$5.00 and the goods plus freight, amounted to \$9.78. Evans sent additional venison to pay the balance. Dr. Horace Ely of Marianna had an account with Orman, and he always paid cash when he received the goods. Most of the orders from small farmers were paid for in produce - eggs, butter, lumber, chickens, corn, and pork.¹⁷ The amount of business carried on by any one merchant can only be estimated; newspaper advertisements, shipping lists, and government reports only give slight information. For example, Benjamin Ellison bought 21,500 oranges from the schooner *Margaret Ann* in February 1855, but there is no indi-

16. Apalachicola *Commercial Advertiser*, 1843-1844, advertisements; General Accounting Office, Quarterly Reports, nos. 15312 (1854), 22969 (1857), 23378 (1859), 32486 (1861), National Archives, Record Group 217. (Numbers in parenthesis represent the year.) Hereinafter referred to as NA, RG 217, GAO. Maclay purchased 6,283 sacks of salt from the *Lady Franklin* of Liverpool in February 1854. Maclay Papers.

17. "U.S. Census, Slave Population Schedules for Franklin County, 1855," 161-71. Orman owned thirty-six slaves; interview with Mrs. Paul Anderson, a great, great niece of Thomas Orman and present occupant of the house. Mrs. Anderson recalls the family legend that the widow's walk was used to keep a lookout for hostile Indians coming down the river, as well as to observe vessels entering the harbor. The widow's walk does offer a vantage point for both tasks. Thomas Orman Papers, Account Books, December 1849, p. 23; May 1848, p. 86; June 1848; April 1849, pp. 110-78. These three books, the largest single collection of antebellum records, are in the possession of Mrs. Paul Anderson of Apalachicola.

cation that he was able to sell these profitably. The firm of Dodge, Kolb and McKay of 41 Water Street advertised two cotton gins imported from Philadelphia, in addition to 100 barrels of "old rectified whiskey," twenty barrels of New England rum, and twenty barrels of New England gin.¹⁸

A large part of the mercantile business was done on a commission basis. L. F. E. Dugas, after leaving Columbus, Georgia, started a commission enterprise in Apalachicola in 1844, and informed his friends in New York, New Orleans, Mobile, and Havana of his new operations. Ludlum S. Chittenden advertised that he had established a business relationship with Judson and Company of New York City, and he promised to sell to all merchants and to anyone in the upriver country who would send him their references. Other commission merchants speculated on various items: H. R. Taylor bought 629 bars of German steel, while the firm of Crawford and Snow accepted 100 bushels of hair.¹⁹

A list of the major items brought to Apalachicola from foreign ports included salt, green fruits, iron, sugar, molasses, wines, and some foodstuffs. Salt was the major import item, and most of it came from Liverpool. An article in *DeBow's Review* complained about the "vile and heterogeneous mass sold in American ports, under the name of . . . Liverpool salt." About seventy per cent came in ships as ballast. Apalachicola merchants purchased 43,227 bushels of Liverpool salt in 1840, and they paid the duty on 3,395 tons of salt at Apalachicola in one quarter of 1852. It is impossible to determine how much of this was landed in Apalachicola, but it is reasonable to assume that large shipments of salt entered the United States at Apalachicola, but were distributed along the coast through the coasting trade.²⁰

Large quantities of wines and spirits reached Apalachicola by vessels sailing from Liverpool. Notations in customs reports, such as 252 gallons of sherry, 118 gallons of gin, sixty-six gallons of brandy, or 454 gallons of porter, were common. The *Windsor*

18. NA, RG 217, GAO, no. 17697 (1855): *Apalachicolian*, December 26, 1840.

19. L. F. E. Dugas Papers, Letterbook, October-November 1844, No. 1306, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; *Apalachicola Gazette*, April 16, 1836; NA, RG 217, GAO, no. 32486 (1861).

20. *DeBow's Review*, XXIII (August 1857), 147, 163; NA, RG 217, GAO, nos. 1828, 2172, 2349, 2551 (1840).

Castle arrived from Liverpool with four casks of hollow ware, seven casks of nails, two anvils, one vice, eighteen chains, sixteen baskets of assorted hardware, three dozen fry pans, 2,080 bars of iron, and 200 tons of salt. This was a rather unusual cargo, since most ships from Liverpool contained mainly salt and iron goods. Sometimes they brought a few boxes of merchandise (unenumerated) or small lots of foodstuffs such as butter, cheese, olive oil, sugar, and molasses. Green fruits - oranges, bananas, and coconuts-came from Havana. Ships reaching Apalachicola from foreign ports brought only small quantities of manufactured goods and foodstuffs; the major items were Liverpool salt and fruit from Cuba. ²¹

Apalachicola merchants offered for sale a large inventory of fine goods and foods that reached them through the coasting trade. Statistics relative to this trade are scarce. Port records were kept for a few years and were then discarded, and Congress made no provisions for gathering information concerning the coasting trade. On several occasions, the secretary of the treasury informed Congress that additional legislation was required if it wanted more information. In the absence of official statements regarding this trade, it is reasonable to assume that all items, not generally imported from foreign ports reached Apalachicola through the coasting trade. This does not eliminate the probability that many foreign manufactured items entered the United States at another port and were subsequently shipped in coasting vessels to Apalachicola.

The following indicates the wide variety of goods advertised by Apalachicola merchants: boots, shoes, fur, felt and palm leaf hats, cloth of all kinds, ready made clothes, gloves, cotton bagging, shawls, Irish linen, silk hosiery, Negro cloth, blankets, sheeting, cutlery, clocks, table silver, trunks, crockery, fine china, chairs, violins, flutes, tuning forks, piano forte keys, a barouche,

21. *Ibid.*, nos. 613, 727 (1838), 6329, 6388, 6389 (1846), 13508 (1852). An American ship brought 3,277 anvils to Apalachicola in 1843, *ibid.*, nos. 4288 (1843), 477 (1837), 3594 (1842), 4823 (1843), 5432 (1844), 23269 (1857). Foreign imports increased in variety during the earliest part of the Civil War; Confederate customs records for Apalachicola District list the sloop *Octavia*, schooner *Retrieve*, and steamer *Florida* entering numerous items such as revolvers, cartridges, sabers, military shoes, leather, soap, and large supplies of drugs and medicines. National Archives, Record Group 365, Confederate Customs Records, Box 4, Folders 3, 11.

mattresses, stemware, carpets, rugs, candles, soaps, starch, patent medicines, books, hams, shoulders, bacon, coffee, sugar, molasses, tea, lard, prunes, fruits, spices, nuts, butter, cheese, fresh and salted mackerel, bread, dried fruit, onions, garden seed, hay, flour, meal, corn, wines, liquors, whiskeys, cranberries, rifles, pistols, lead, shot, gunpowder, cotton gins, blacksmith tools, sheet copper and tin, mill stones, steam engine, bar iron, and ship supplies.

A few unusual "for sale" notices advertised a schooner, the town of Liverpool located a few miles above the destroyed town of Roanoke, and 2,000 pounds of goose feathers. Noticeably absent from Apalachicola were advertisements for slaves. One notice, appearing in the *Commercial Advertiser* in 1843, informed the public that four slaves were to be auctioned to satisfy a mortgage foreclosure. There were very few other such announcements.²²

New Orleans shippers supplied most of the food and whiskey and a small amount of manufactured goods which were sold by Apalachicola commercial houses. Shipping lists and advertisements indicate that pork, flour, corn, and whiskey were the major items imported from New Orleans. Samuel Spencer reported in *DeBow's Review* that Apalachicola merchants sold over 20,000 pounds of "western bacon" to upriver buyers. New York, Boston, Baltimore, Providence, Rhode Island, and Mystic, Connecticut, were Atlantic ports that supplied Apalachicola with such goods as manufactured items, dried fruits, metal products, books, clothing, ice, machinery, and building materials.²³

Mercantile firms dominated the economic activity of Apa-

22. A partial list of goods advertised in the *Apalachicola Gazette*, 1837-1839; *Apalachicola Courier*, 1839; *Apalachicolian*, 1840; *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, 1843-1844.

23. Advertisements in the *Apalachicola Gazette*, 1837-1839; *Apalachicola Courier*, 1839; *Apalachicolian*, 1840; *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, 1843-1844; *The Commercial Review of the South and West*, VI (October-November 1848), 296. (*The Commercial Review of the South and West*, originated in 1846 by J. B. D. DeBow, took the official title of *DeBow's Review* beginning in 1850.) The shipping news in the *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, January 8, 1844, offered a good example: from New York - twenty-five tons marble, one pipe, six barrels of gin, ten boxes soap, 2,300 boxes merchandise (not described); from New Orleans - coffee, sugar, whiskey, flour, molasses, cheese, lard, cranberries, beef, bacon.

lachicola, but several smaller and related businesses complemented the trade of the larger concerns. Presses and warehouses were essential parts of the cotton trade. The river traffic was aided by chandlers and shipbuilding establishments, and during the summer months, ice became a major item in the port's trade. Banks were closely allied to the commercial interests. Several locally owned banks and an out-of-state bank competed with Florida's "Big Three" - the Union Bank of Florida, the Bank of Pensacola, and the Southern Life Insurance and Trust Company. Twelve newspapers from 1833 to 1861 reported the news, served as political organs, and offered merchants the opportunity to advertise their goods and services. All of the establishments shared an intense interest in the cotton trade.²⁴

Apalachicola, a river and seaport town, existed and prospered on the cotton trade. Four quotations from Apalachicola newspapers offer an illustration and an insight into the attitudes and activities of the town. That there was little activity during the summer months was illustrated by the following:

The small amount of shipping in port - the absence of steamboats at the wharf - the scarcity of cotton - the unemployed draymen to be seen in the shade, quietly waiting for a job - and at night the unlighted counting rooms, all give indication that the "business season" is over. The recently departed vessels have all carried away more or less all of our itinerate population. The *Viola* left yesterday morning for Columbus, taking off quite a number, and others are only waiting to *collect* and wind up business, and they will have gone also - leaving the city in the possession of its *inhabitants proper*.²⁵

As the fall season approached, the scene began to change.

24. David Y. Thomas, "A History of Banking in Florida," typed mss. in the Robert Manning Strozier Library, 13. Information regarding the newspapers may be found in James O. Knauss, *Territorial Florida Journalism* (DeLand, 1926) and William W. Rogers, "Newspaper Mottoes in Ante-Bellum Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLII (October 1963), 154-58. The twelve newspapers, listed in order of their appearance, were, *Apalachicola Advertiser* (1833-1835); *Apalachicola Gazette* (1836-1840); *Apalachicola Gazette* (daily 1839); *Apalachicola Courier* (1839-1840); *Apalachicolian* (1840-1841); *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser* (1840); *Apalachicola Florida Journal* (1840-1842); *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser* (1843-1860); *Apalachicola Republican Herald* (1843); *Apalachicola Watchman of the Gulf* (1843); *Apalachicola Star of the West* (1848); *Apalachicola Times* (1849).

25. *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, June 13, 1846.

. . . Vessels are making their appearance in the bay, and lighters are passing and repassing laden with their omnifarious freight. The ringing of the auction bell - the cries of the auctioneer, and the puffing and blowing of the steamers as they traverse our waters, reminds us of the busy scenes which will ensue when they come booming down the river with their tall chimneys just peeping over the bales of cotton with which they are laden. Horses and drays are running hither and thither, as if anxious to hurry along the time when they can get a load. And our citizens, particularly the "Summer Boys," as they style themselves, have become so satiated with leisure, that they manifest great anxiety to commence active operations. In a few weeks our wharves will be covered with cotton - our streets filled with people, and the places of business and amusement opened, and every inducement held out to those who wish to enter the field of competition and struggle on for wealth. Again, and again, will the latest news be sought for; and again will the speculator rub his hands, and laugh or look sad, and put them in his breeches pocket, as his anticipations of gain are realized or blasted.²⁶

Then suddenly, as the depth of the river increased with the winter rains,

. . . steamboat follows steamboat - each wharf has its pile - every merchant has his business - every clerk his duty - loafers are out of fashion - and it is all bustle, bustle, bustle - exclusively *masculine* bustle.²⁷

As the business season got under way, the following scene could have occurred:

The River is riz - the boat bells are ringing, ships are loading, draymen swearing, negroes singing, clerks marking, captains busy, merchants selling, packages rolling, boxes tumbling, wares rumbling, and every body appears to be up to the eyes in business.

I took a walk up water street [*sic*] this morning, for the purpose of taking a bird's-eye view of the busy world, learning the news and so on. On one of the wharves I saw a Steamboat Captain, and thought I would learn something about the up country from him.

"What's the news up the country, Captain?"

"Step aboard the boat, sir, - off in five minutes - loaded

26. *Ibid.*, September 30, 1844.

27. *Ibid.*, November 30, 1844.

down to the guards - fare only twenty dollars to Columbus - will you walk aboard?"

"Guess not, sir;" and walking on a short distance, I met a dry goods dealer.

"Good morning, sir."

"Twenty thousand."

"Twenty thousand what, sir," said I, astonished.

"Twenty thousand dollars worth of goods I've sold this morning," and away he went.

Well - thinks I, these are queer times, I can't get a civil answer from any one, it appears. Just then I saw a farmer passing along. Guess I'll get some news this time, that man isn't crazy, and walking up to him -

"What's the news in your section, stranger?"

"Five hundred, at eleven and three-eights."

"Five hundred thunders! what do you mean?"

"Why I've sold my five hundred bales of Cotton this morning. But you need not be in such a passion about it, I reckon you won't have it to pay for."

The fact is, Apalachicola is herself again. The bales, boxes, packages, &c. with which the wharves are crowded, with the cheerful hum of business is enough to make glad the heart of any man who loves an air of prosperity.²⁸

Shipments from the upriver country to Apalachicola included small amounts of tobacco, corn, resin, hides, and timber, but cotton was the major product shipped downriver. Some times it reached Apalachicola in early August, but this was exceptional. The cotton was stored along the streets, on the wharves, and in warehouses, and by September the marshal had to stake off Water Street so that the bales would not block traffic. Usually about one-fourth of the cotton crop reached Apalachicola by the last of December. A majority of cotton came to Apalachicola during January and February; in March, the weekly receipts began to fluctuate, and by May, only a few hundred bales arrived per week. The last of the crop usually reached the wharves in late June.²⁹

28. *Apalachicola Gazette*, December 12, 1838.

29. *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, 1844; "Receipts from the Interior," W. R. Taylor to the secretary of the treasury, June 1, 1850, Record Group 56, Series Group, Letters to and From Collectors of Small Ports, 9, National Archives. Taylor reported that large quantities of timber were cut from the public domain and shipped to Columbus and Apalachicola. The steamboat *Augusta*, on her maiden voyage to Apalachicola from Eufaula, unloaded five barrels turpentine, forty sheep,

The period between 1843 and 1851 seems to have been the most prosperous time for Apalachicola, but the absence of full statistics for the 1850s precludes an accurate statement.³⁰ The last two seasons (1859-1860) indicate that cotton receipts either remained fairly consistent throughout the decade, or that busi-

twelve dozen chickens, twenty pounds butter, forty-six dozen eggs, one bag peaches, one koon [*sic*] skin, one tom cat, and one sheep shank. *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, July 7, 1846. The weekly receipts for an average year showed the general trends; the following statistics from the *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser's* shipping lists show the number of bales of cotton for the day reported:

Before December 25, 1843, 31,956; January 4, 1844, 6,463; January 8, 1844, 7,719; January 15, 1844, 6,818; January 22, 1844, 3,018; January 29, 1844, 5,931; February 5, 1844, 5,113; February 12, 1844, 4,561; February 19, 1844, 5,773; February 26, 1844, 4,095; March 11, 1844, 6,725; March 16, 1844, 2,286; March 23, 1844, 5,017; March 30, 1844, 3,555; April 6, 1844, 2,056; April 13, 1844, 5,109; April 20, 1844, 2,783; April 27, 1844, 1,809; May 4, 1844, 1,766; May 11, 1844, 1,163; May 18, 1844, 1,756; May 25, 1844, 171; June 1, 1844, 1,588; June 8, 1844, 589; June 15, 1844,

30. The following indicates the amount of cotton received at Apalachicola and the amount shipped to foreign ports:

Year	Total Received	Shipped to Foreign Ports
1837	32,291	9,055
1838	50,828	unknown
1839	44,935	unknown
1840	72,232	unknown
1841	64,495	unknown
1842	86,864	38,794
1843	125,920	57,934
1844	121,619	40,015
1845	153,392	61,285
1846	110,480	41,080
1847	108,476	35,763
1848	120,458	48,012
1849	108,531	29,103
1850	[1?] ³⁰ 240	unknown
1851	135,142	unknown
1852	unknown	unknown
1853	150,000	unknown
1854	unknown	unknown
1855	77,321	unknown
1856	77,281	37,541
1857	65,607	32,349
1858	67,941	30,745
1859	108,382	39,542
1860	133,079	59,090

These statistics were compiled from *Apalachicola Gazette*; *Columbus (Georgia) Enquirer*; *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*; *Mobile (Alabama) Register*; *Tallahassee Floridian*; *Niles' Register*; *DeBow's Review*; *U.S. Coast Survey for 1853*; *U.S. Commerce and Navigation Reports for 1856, 1857, 1858*; and *Florida House Journal, 1860*. Statistics for 1855-1858 were for cotton received by mid-March. Later statistics were unavailable.

ness returned after a slump of several years. Throughout the period 1837 to 1850, Apalachicola was the third largest cotton port on the Gulf of Mexico, after New Orleans and Mobile. Pensacola and St. Marks shipped little cotton. Pensacola exported a lot of timber, and St. Marks shipped some cotton and tobacco, but neither offered any real competition for Apalachicola. Galveston, Texas, replaced Apalachicola as the third largest port during the late fifties.³¹

Three rivers - the Apalachicola, Flint, and Chattahoochee - drained a large area in Florida, Georgia, and Alabama, and provided transportation routes from Apalachicola to the interior. More than 130 steamboats operated on the rivers from 1828, when the first seamboat reached Apalachicola, to the outbreak of the Civil War. Apalachicola was listed as the home port for sixty-four of these boats. Many others, of course, visited Apalachicola or moved up the rivers while serving in the coasting trade. Most of the boats which visited the Gulf port only once or twice and which did not name Apalachicola as their home port, listed New Orleans or some other Mississippi River port as their home port.³²

Almost all of the boats were built in shipyards along the Mississippi and Ohio rivers. Ninety-five were built on the Mississippi River or its tributaries; yards in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, constructed eighteen; fifteen were completed in Cincinnati, Ohio, and eleven were constructed at Elizabeth, Pennsylvania. Steubenville, Ohio, and Louisville, Kentucky, each contributed six vessels used on the Apalachicola River system. The remaining thirty-nine were built in various yards between New Orleans and Cincinnati. Twenty were constructed on the local rivers: eight were built at Apalachicola, and twelve along the Chattahoochee River.³³

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31. U. S. *Commerce and Navigation Reports, 1856-1860*, show that Pensacola only exported eighteen bales of cotton to foreign ports during that period. *DeBow's Review*, XXIX (December 1860), 529. Cotton receipts at Galveston were: 1856 - 90,298; 1857 - 71,390; 1858 - 118,398; 1859 - 150,016; 1860 - 193,963.
32. William M. Lytle, *Merchant Steam Vessels of the United States, 1807-1868* (Mystic, 1952), 1-294; Bert Neville, *Directory of Steamboats with Illustrations and List of Landings on the Chattahoochee-Apalachicola-Flint-Chipola Rivers* (Selma, 1961), *passim*. Boats not listed in these sources may be found in newspapers from Apalachicola, Columbus, Eufaula, and Albany.
33. *Ibid.*

The great majority of these vessels were side-wheelers; only thirteen of 115 were stern-wheelers. The side-wheel was the most efficient arrangement for the propulsion unit until the serious problem of "hog backing" was overcome. The steamers varied in size from the thirty-one-ton *Flint* to the 372-ton *America*. Tonnage statistics exist for sixty-one of the boats listing Apalachicola as home port. Only six of these were less than 100 tons; thirty-one measured 100 to 150 tons; sixteen were between 150 and 200 tons, while seven were more than 200, and only two measured more than 300 tons. Tonnage rates for 113 (including the sixty-one of Apalachicola) reveal that about two-thirds of them were measured in the 100 to 200 ton class. One authority on western steamboats found that steamboats of 100 to 200 tons, built during the 1840s, generally had a length slightly more than six times greater than the width, and a depth of one foot for every thirty-three feet of length. A 120-ton boat, built to the rule of thumb applied in shipyards along the Mississippi, was about 140 feet long, twenty-three feet wide, and slightly over four feet deep. A boat of this size carried its own weight in cargo, and drew fourteen inches of water when empty, and thirty inches when loaded.³⁴

Twenty steamboats were built along the river system. Two locally built boats, the *Edwin Forrest* and *Flint*, were stern-wheelers, and eighteen were side-wheelers. The thirty-one-ton *Flint* was the smallest, while the *H. S. Smith* (243 tons) was one of the largest. The *H. S. Smith* carried a cargo of 1,002 bales of cotton on her maiden voyage from Columbus to Apalachicola. The record for the largest number of bales of cotton probably goes to the *Peytonia*, which carried 1,305 bales on one trip in April 1846.³⁵

34. *Ibid.*; Louis C. Hunter, *Steamboats on the Western Rivers: An Economic and Technological History* (Cambridge, 1949), 86-96.

35. *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, April 18, 1846. The boats built along the river system were:

Name	Tonnage	Where built	When built	Ended service
<i>Albany</i>	168	Albany	1846	1852
<i>Apalachicola</i>	148	Apalachicola	1843	.....
<i>Edwin Forrest</i>	.....	Old Agency	1836	.....
<i>Eufaula</i>	131	E u f a u l a	1845	1854
<i>Flint</i>	31	Apalachicola	1846	1848

The rivers served a hinterland containing in 1850 a population of almost 186,000 people, including 79,949 slaves. The population almost doubled during the following decade to a free population of 131,957 and 129,051 slaves. The number of farms in the river area in 1860 gives an indication of extensive agricultural operations.³⁶

	0-99	100-499	500-999	1,000 plus
State	acres	acres	acres	acres
Florida	885	362	52	19
Alabama	3,199	1,123	158	38
Georgia	3,352	2,639	536	165
Total	7,436	4,124	746	222

Apalachicola merchants tried to secure the trade of this rich agricultural area by offering goods and services. They urged the farmer to "bring your cotton to Apalachicola, sell it here, and lay in your stocks of dry goods and groceries from our market. Our merchants have *any quantity* on hand, and will dispose of them on as good terms, and probably better, than you can procure them elsewhere. You will find no difficulty in transportation, as our river is high, and we have now plying between this place and Columbus, and Albany, fifteen or sixteen fine, substantial Steamers, commanded by as skilful [*sic*], enterprising, and accommodating captains, as any waters can boast, - and last though

<i>Florence</i>	159	Apalachicola	1841	1845
<i>Gen. Harrison</i>	184	Columbus	1841	1842
<i>Gen. Sumter</i>	155	Apalachicola	1842	1845
<i>H. S. Smith</i>	230	Columbus	1848	1850
<i>Henry Crowell</i>	....	Old Agency	1836	.....
<i>James Y. Smith</i>	148	Apalachicola	1841	1847
<i>Lotus</i>	202	Apalachicola	1845	1848
<i>Louisa</i>	152	Apalachicola	1839	1847
<i>Mary A. Moore</i>	195	Eufaula	1845	1853
<i>Magnolia</i>	.....	Old Woman's Bluff	1844	.....
<i>Native Georgian</i>	.....	Fort Gaines	1834	.....
<i>Notion</i>	145	Columbus	1844	1850
<i>River Bride</i>	72	Columbus	1859	1861 - CSA
<i>Southerner</i>	180	Apalachicola	1847	1851
<i>Wave</i>	243	Columbus	1857	1861-CSA

36. *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, 364-65, 400-01, 421; *Eighth Census of the United States, Population, 1860*, 8, 54, 72-73; *Eighth Census of the United States, Agriculture, 1860*, 193, 195-96.

not least, *freights are cheap.*"³⁷ But freight rates were not always considered cheap even though they varied from seventy-five cents to \$1.00 per barrel and \$1.00 per bale of cotton. Occasionally upriver merchants complained about the freight rates and charges. Eufaula merchants held a public meeting, and unavailingly accused the Apalachicola merchants of forming a "combination" which was unfavorable to the inland shipper.³⁸

But Apalachicola businessmen offered more than just goods and services in an effort to secure trade. The Chamber of Commerce offered silver pitchers in 1842 for the best lots of cotton shipped to the port, and the next year the prizes included a silver coffee urn, silver tea service, silver coaster and trays, and a \$100 rifle for the best ten bale shipment.³⁹

Floridians living along or near the Apalachicola River used it as a means of transportation. Marcus Stephens of Quincy suggested either St. Marks or Apalachicola to his sister who was sending goods from North Carolina. C. M. Harris, also of Quincy, ordered much of his goods, including flour and bacon, from New Orleans. The steamboat *Chipola* brought them through Apalachicola Bay to a landing on the Apalachicola and they were then transported overland by wagons to Quincy. Chandler C. Yonge of Marianna, also purchased his fancy goods and fine clothes from New Orleans. Most of his foodstuffs came through the Apalachicola merchants.

John F. Comer, farming near the Chattahoochee River in Barbour County, Alabama, bought most of his supplies from Eufaula merchants who had connections with Apalachicola firms. James Abercrombie, in an adjoining Alabama county, occasionally used steamboats to bring goods from Apalachicola and St. Joseph, but most of his business was conducted in Columbus with firms like Redd and Johnson.⁴⁰

37. Apalachicola *Commercial Advertiser*, January 15, 1844.

38. *Ibid.*, March 23, 1848, February 8, 1849.

39. Apalachicola *Florida Journal*, June 4, 1842; *Columbus Enquirer*, June 9, 1842; Apalachicola *Watchman of the Gulf*, August 12, 1843; Apalachicola *Commercial Advertiser*, April 12, 1843.

40. Marcus C. Stephens to Sarah G. Stephens, October 13, 1834, Marcus C. Stephens Papers, No. 3402, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; C. M. Harris to Isaac R. Harris, December 13, 1848 and December 24, 1848, Wright-Harris Collection, Duke University Libraries, Duke University, Durham. (C. M. Harris was living in New Orleans and his brother Isaac lived in Quincy.) Chandler C. Yonge Papers, 1853-1858, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History,

Lands along the Flint River were opened for extensive cultivation during the 1840s. The river to Albany, Georgia, was a narrow, shallow, twisting waterway, and rocks and shoals in the Flint River presented a major problem to navigation,⁴¹ but steamboats were able to reach the town in the rainy season with little difficulty. The *Edwin Forrest* towed a barge to Danville, a few miles north of Albany, and the center of a large cotton producing area. Goods shipped from Apalachicola by the river route were much cheaper than shipments from Savannah through Macon and then overland to Danville. Molasses from New Orleans through the Savannah markets sold for forty-three and a half cents in Danville; the same article, shipped through the Apalachicola trade, sold for twenty-four cents.⁴¹

Portions of six Florida counties bordered the Apalachicola, or were near enough so that farmers could use the river for transportation. Four Alabama counties touched on the Chattahoochee which offered a transportation route either to Apalachicola or Columbus. The largest area drained by the river system was in Georgia; the triangle formed by the Flint and Chattahoochee rivers contained nine counties in 1850, and twenty-one ten years later. Thirty-one counties in three states were drained by the rivers in 1860. Farmers in twenty-four of these counties relied heavily on river transportation before the railroads came. In seven other borderline counties, farmers could transport cotton to the river by wagon, or, by covering an equal distance, could use the rail heads in central Georgia. Florida counties could use other ports and markets.

All of the counties, including those that may or may not have used Apalachicola as a trade center, produced 142,973 bales of cotton in 1850. That same year, Apalachicola merchants received 130,240 bales, about ninety-one per cent of all the cotton produced in the drainage area. Ten years later, that same area produced 303,851 bales of cotton, but Apalachicola received

University of Florida, Gainesville; John Fletcher Comer Papers, Farm Journal, 1844-1847, No. 1714, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Redd and Johnson Papers, Ledgers and Day Books, 1845-1860, 25 vols., No. 2921, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; James Abercrombie Papers, File G. 1., Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

41. Unsigned letter from Danville to Apalachicola merchants, *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, March 30, 1848.

only 133,079 bales, or slightly more than forty-three per cent. During this decade, cotton production increased considerably except for two or three bad crops, and Apalachicola continued to receive a considerable number of bales. Even though the number received was relatively stable, the percentage of the total crop received in Apalachicola dropped from about 40 per cent to less than forty-five per cent.⁴²

Several factors affected the amount of cotton reaching Apalachicola. Commerce between Apalachicola and Columbus during the 1850s was reduced by conditions on the river. Columbus newspapers, as early as 1852, ceased to list steamboats trying to reach their wharves. Only occasionally was there mention of the river, and then it was sometimes in a sarcastic vein. Several Apalachicola businessmen were stranded in Columbus in 1854, because the river was so low; this occurred in December, quite late in the year for a rise in the river. Two years later, the rainy season of 1856, a rise in the river did not occur before February.⁴³ Paris Tillinghast, a Columbus businessman, reported in 1855 that there had been "no river here for the last 12 months & and very little navigation for three years past."⁴⁴ A man signing himself "W." wrote a lengthy article for the *Columbus Enquirer* insisting that the river was not drying up, as some suspected, but that two years of extremely low rainfall was responsible for the lack of water.⁴⁵

The river channels were gradually filling with silt because there was not enough rainfall to produce a swift current, and the same thing was happening to the harbor at Apalachicola. A little was done about these obstacles to river transportation. In 1845, Congress granted 500,000 acres of land to Florida; five years later added the swamp lands to these holdings. To be used for internal improvements, these lands were administered by the trustees for the Internal Improvement Fund - who were generally concerned with railroads and canals. The railroads, canals, and connecting canals pushed Apalachicola and its river system into the background.⁴⁶

42. See fn. 30.

43. *Columbus Enquirer*, January 1852 - December 1856.

44. P. K. Tillinghast to W. S. W. Tillinghast, September 22, 1855, Tillinghast Papers, Duke University.

45. *Columbus Enquirer*, November 27, 1855.

46. *Coast Survey for 1857*, 35th Cong., 1st Sess., *Executive Document No. 33*,

The report of the Internal Improvement Fund trustees barely mentioned Apalachicola in 1854, while praising other ports: "Upon the Gulf side we have the noble bays of Pensacola, St. Andrews and Tampa; besides many others of sufficient capacity for the accommodation of any amount of Gulf trade."⁴⁷ Four years later, the trustees were concentrating their attention almost entirely on railroads. B. F. Whitner of Tallahassee wrote an article for *DeBow's Review* extoling Florida's railroad and port facilities without mentioning Apalachicola, and Senator Yulee also propagandized these facilities without emphasizing Apalachicola.⁴⁸ The merchants rightly accused the trustees of "grossly and shamefully neglect [ing]. . ." their city.⁴⁹ During 1859, Floridians began to take a new look at Apalachicola. The Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal* seldom mentioned Apalachicola, either in articles or in advertisements, but in 1859, the editors visited Apalachicola and reported that they were "more than ever impressed with the fact that something ought to be done towards facilitating greater intercourse between it and middle Florida." D. P. Holland, Franklin County's delegate to the Florida House of Representatives, introduced several measures to improve navigation for the bay and river. The house approved a bill to aid navigation on the Apalachicola River in 1861, but further action was interrupted by the Civil War.⁵⁰

In addition to the low water and increasing river obstructions, the direction of trade was also changing away from Apalachicola. As early as 1854, a Columbus newspaper commented, "what has been deemed improbable and visionary . . . a few years ago, when prophesized by some of our late citizens, that 'in less than ten years the Chattahoochee will run upstream'-

pp. 89-92. In this report S. C. McCorkle reported that the river channel could ". . . be deepened without great cost, and when done it will open in to the country one of the most valuable timber ports to be found on the coast." *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIX. (December 1858), 478-79, reported that a new channel had been found in East Pass.

47. *Florida House Journal*, 1854, 137.

48. "Report of the Trustees of the Board of Internal Improvements, November 17, 1858," 20-37, appendix to *Florida House Journal*, 1858; B. F. Whitner, "Railroads and Railroad System of Florida," *DeBow's Review*, XIX (September 1855), 316-23; Yulee, "Connexion of the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico: The Florida Railroad," 492-514.

49. *Florida House Journal*, 1860, 16.

50. Tallahassee *Floridian and Journal*, April 30, 1859; *Florida House Journal*, 1860, 141, 143, 244, 337-48.

alluding to the course of cotton up instead of *down* the river - has already become history.”⁵¹

When the river was low, farmers sent their cotton to Columbus by railroad or by wagons.⁵² The amount was never really large when compared with the amount produced in the total area. Columbus businessmen did not use all the cotton received, but shipped the greatest portion of it by railroad to Macon and Savannah or to Montgomery and Mobile. The local newspaper claimed that nine-tenths of all cotton received was shipped by railroad as soon as Columbus was connected by rail with Macon.⁵³ This rapid transportation which, in part, changed the transportation route from the Gulf to the Atlantic, ironically was accomplished with the aid of riverboats. The steamer *Jenkins* from Apalachicola brought 600 kegs of spikes for the last few miles of the railroad.⁵⁴

Savannah businesses-warehouses, factories, and commission merchants-began advertising in Columbus newspapers as soon as the line neared completion. Advertisements from that port took the place of those once used by Apalachicola merchants, who ceased to advertise in Columbus papers during the early 1850s. Freight rates were advertised as being cheap, yet at fifty cents per 100 pounds of cotton, railroad rates were higher than steamboat rates. It was not long before shippers began complaining about high freight costs on the rails as they had previously complained about high steamer rates. Railroads so occupied the position once held by riverboats that the Columbus paper reported railroad accidents as it once reported steamboat disasters.⁵⁵

Two railroads in Alabama siphoned off part of the crop

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51. *Columbus Enquirer*, November 14, 1854.
 52. "Muskogee County," File Box 106, J. R. Jones Papers, University of Georgia, Athens; advertisements in the *Columbus Enquirer*, 1852-1854; *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXVI (February 1852), 257-58; Paris Tillinghast to W. S. W. Tillinghast, September 22, 1855, Tillinghast Papers; *DeBow's Review*, XIV (May 1853), 508.
 53. The statistics for cotton received in Columbus are: 1850 - 59,835 bales, *Columbus Enquirer*, May 28, 1850; 1852 - 43,816 bales, *ibid.*, May 17, 1853; 1853 - 55,893 bales, *ibid.*; 1854 - 70,229 bales, *ibid.*, May 9, 1854; 1855 - 62,438 bales, *ibid.*, May 8, 1855; 1856 - 71,000 bales, *ibid.*, September 23, 1856. Later years were not reported in sufficient detail to warrant any tabulation.
 54. *Columbus Enquirer*, September 21, 1852.
 55. *Ibid.*, January 1853 - December 1855.

raised in Russell and Barbour counties which previously would have gone to Apalachicola. The Montgomery and West Point Railroad connected these two points, while a branch line from Opelika covered the distance to Columbus. A second line, the Mobile and Girard, was planned to run between Montgomery and Girard, just across the river from Columbus. The line was completed from Columbus to Union Springs, Alabama, before the Civil War.⁵⁶

More important than these two lines was the Southwestern which penetrated the Flint-Chattahoochee triangle south of Columbus. This line originated in Macon where it joined the Central system, and connected Macon with Fort Valley and Smithville. At the latter point, the line branched off to the south and to the west. The western branch went to Cuthbert, and by 1860 it reached the Chattahoochee River at Georgetown, just across the river from Eufaula, Alabama. This same line branched at Cuthbert to penetrate the cotton area to Fort Gaines. The branch extending southward from Smithville eventually reached the Flint River at Albany. The Southwestern Railroad, which traversed the Flint-Chattahoochee drainage area to Georgetown, Fort Gaines, and Albany, transported a great deal of cotton which at a previous date would have been shipped downriver to Apalachicola.⁵⁷

Statistics on the amount of cotton received in Apalachicola between 1854 and 1858 are fragmentary and cannot be relied upon to prove that railroads in Georgia and Alabama destroyed the cotton port of Apalachicola. Figures for these years were based on reports issued in March of each year, which was eight or ten weeks before the end of the cotton season. Statistics for 1859 and 1860 are more reliable and show a trade equal to the amount carried on during the 1840s, or that the cotton trade did not seriously diminish because of the railroads.⁵⁸

The war department surveyed the Apalachicola-Chattahoo-

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56. *Ibid.*, October 16, 1855, advertisements; Albert Burton Moore, *History of Alabama* (Tuscaloosa, 1951), 314 and map opposite; Thomas D. Clark, "The Montgomery and West Point Railroad," *Georgia Historical Quarterly*, XVII (December 1933), 293-99.
57. Dale H. Peeples, "Georgia Railroads: Civil War and Reconstruction," (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Georgia, 1961), 1-5.
58. For figures on cotton received in Apalachicola during the 1850s see fn. 30. William L. Saunders stated that railroads were responsible for the declining importance of Apalachicola, *Apalachicola* (n. p., n. d.), 3.

chee River system in 1872 and made one of the most comprehensive reports ever submitted. Captain A. N. Damrell and a Mr. C. Trill reported on the decline of Apalachicola and its future. Captain Damrell said, "During the war the commerce of Apalachicola was almost entirely destroyed, but the year after (1864) [*sic*] I understand that the amount of business done there equaled, if it did not exceed, that of 1860. The cotton receipts for 1864, I have heard stated as 129,000. Since that time commerce of the place has steadily and rapidly declined."⁵⁹ He blamed the decline on the railroads and the loss of a channel in both the river and the bay.

Trill also made his report, which stated: "During the war of course all business was more or less stopped. After the termination of the same, the few boats that had not been burned or otherwise destroyed were old and rotten, and the most of them not fit to run any longer; no money to build new ones was in the hands of the ruined owners then; and if there was, the bad conditions of the river . . . and the decay and the filling up of the harbor at Apalachicola . . . did not let the undertaking appear promising enough, and so it came that nearly all the trade changed over to the railroads. . . . How great this trade has once already been, and how necessary an improvement of the river is, is shown by nearly two hundred and fifty wrecks on the same."⁶⁰

According to these two observers, the Civil War was equally responsible for the decline of the port of Apalachicola. The war and the fall of Apalachicola to Union forces brought commerce to a standstill.⁶¹ Apalachicola earned the distinction of being the third largest cotton port on the Gulf of Mexico during the 1840s. New Orleans and Mobile were much larger, but no Gulf port approached their size any closer than did Apalachicola. During the decade of the fifties railroads connected the upriver cotton areas with Savannah and Montgomery. Between 1850 and 1860 cotton production increased in the river drainage area, but Apalachicola did not receive a proportionate increase in cot-

59. A. N. Damrell to J. H. Simpson, April 20, 1872, *Report of the Secretary of War on the Survey of the Apalachicola and Chattahoochee Rivers*, 42nd Cong., 2nd Sess., *Executive Document No. 241*, pp. 5-6.

60. Report of C. Trill, *ibid.*, 21.

61. Joseph D. Cushman, Jr., "The Blockade and Fall of Apalachicola, 1861-1862," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLI (July 1962), 38-46.

ton receipts. Nevertheless, at the beginning of the Civil War, the port received as much cotton as it had during the 1840s. After the war, the port experienced a short revival of trade, but the rivers and harbor were in bad condition, and the steamboats had almost all been destroyed by the war. Apalachicola never revived as a major cotton port.