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LUMBER AND TRADE IN PENSACOLA AND WEST FLORIDA: 1800-1860

by JOHN A. EISTERHOLD*

OF ALL THE commercially significant communities along the Old South's gulf coast, Pensacola was most dependent upon lumber for its prosperity. Although it failed to develop into a great cotton port, Pensacola found that an expanding lumber industry offered a reliable export commodity upon which to base a steady if unspectacular rate of growth.¹ Favorably situated near rich timber resources, and possessing a good harbor, only enterprise was needed to make the city one of the nation's leading lumber ports.

The town's citizenry was constantly reminded of the potential importance of lumber by the energetic editor of the *Pensacola Gazette*. In an editorial written in March 1834, he detailed what this trade actually meant and could mean to the future of the area.² Noting that there had been a large percentage increase in the amount of lumber cut and shipped from Pensacola in the previous six years, he claimed that only one saw mill was operating within fifty miles of Pensacola in 1823. Lumbermen, and men with an eye for profit in general, had discovered how rich the area was in yellow pine and other timber— White Oak, the Red Cedar, the Juniper, the Cypress, and the Ash, all “of a quality and value not surpassed by that of any other part of the world.” Lured by abundant timber, some twenty-five mills were in operation by 1834. The editor believed that competition among lumbermen only served to increase the price of lumber, and that seemingly supply could never catch up with demand. All this, he concluded, had been demonstrated already in Mobile where “every thousand feet of lumber is worth ten dollars, not because they have more use

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1. Henry Clay Armstrong, *History of Escambia County Florida* (St. Augustine, 1930), 91; Herbert J. Doherty, “Antebellum Pensacola: 1821-1860,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXVII (January-April 1959), 337-57.
2. *Pensacola Gazette*, March 26, 1834.

for the article there, but because there is a large quantity produced, and vessels without freights are always sure of finding a supply of lumber in those waters."³

With its fine harbor and growing lumber production, there was no reason why Pensacola could not compete with Mobile. Some years earlier, when Hanson Kelly established a lumber mill and yard in Pensacola, most people predicted that it would be a failure. Kelly, however, prospered, and by 1834, even with many competitors, his mill was yielding a "reasonable profit," stimulating diverse businesses in town, and affording his employees a good living. An acquaintance of the editor, a man of "genuine practical sense," announced his intention to build a steam saw mill on "extensive plans" that would be capable of sawing 25,000 feet of lumber per day. With projected net profits at \$2.00 per 1,000 feet, about twenty to thirty per cent profit margin at current prices, lumber mills represented a potentially attractive investment.⁴

After 1834 most mills began changing over from water to steam-power. The water mills, generally running only two saws, had been capable of producing only a few thousand feet of lumber per day. Conversion made it possible to multiply production, satisfy domestic needs, and create a surplus for export. The citizens who held stock in the Pensacola Steam Saw Mill Company led this modernization drive. Noting that the "best business" was already being enjoyed by the saw mill owners, a subscriber decided that a "steam saw mill would do a greatly better business"; lumber could be "more accurately sawed, more easily cleaned and dried, and loaded on vessels," and the great quantities available would assure that ship captains "would always be sure to get a cargo at this port." Lumber, he asserted, was the town's "only staple." The streams running into Pensacola Bay made rafting from the interior easy. Buildings in the West Indies, where "cane built houses of the Spanuish Maine [*sic*] are all giving way to the substantial lumber tenements, for which the Gulf of Mexico have supplies," insured that demand and price for a continuously greater amount of lumber would remain constant. He predicted that the Pensacola Steam Saw Mill

3. *Ibid.*

4. *Ibid.* Kelly apparently came to Pensacola from Wilmington, North Carolina, where he was a merchant. See *Wilmington Gazette*, September 29, 1807.

Company would enjoy a handsome business for many years to come.⁵

Alexander McVoy was the most prominent lumberman in antebellum Pensacola. In September 1847, he formed a partnership with William J. Keyser, a local merchant, and began producing and merchandising lumber.⁶ Within a year, Keyser left the business, running a notice in the *Gazette* that the firm's enterprises would be continued by McVoy.⁷ While the brief partnership lasted, it seemed to flourish, with McVoy and Keyser offering a variety of services. Although the chief business of the firm was the buying, milling, and exporting of lumber, it also handled other goods, freighted diverse products, and booked passage for coastal and international travelers. All seven of the vessels clearing Pensacola in the week ending January 1, 1848, carried cargo and passengers booked by the firm.⁸ The partnership, and McVoy after the partnership's dissolution, also acted as receiving agents, selling from a large store a variety of goods, including, for example, hay and potatoes from as far away as Portsmouth, New Hampshire.⁹

As sole proprietor, McVoy seems to have prospered. As shipping agent for a number of schooners and brigs operating in the coastal trade, McVoy supplemented his merchant income and helped to arrange a regular schooner service between Mobile and Pensacola. McVoy announced, February 28, 1852, that the schooner *Walcott*, Captain Harry Maury commanding:

. . . will leave Pensacola every Tuesday and Mobile every Saturday The *Walcott* has two fine cabins furnished with every convenience and comfort, one of which is suited up exclusively for the ladies. All orders promptly attended to. For freight or passage, apply to Alexander McVoy, or to the captain on board.¹⁰

McVoy also branched out into politics during these years, and was elected city alderman. A Know-Nothing and a staunch Fillmore supporter in the election of 1856, McVoy was well-respected by his fellow Pensacolans.¹¹ But commerce, and par-

5. *Pensacola Gazette*, December 19, 1835.

6. *Ibid.*, September 24, 1847.

7. *Ibid.*, September 30, 1847.

8. *Ibid.*, January 1, 1848.

9. *Ibid.*

10. *Ibid.*, February 28, 1852.

11. *Ibid.*, February 28, 1852; October 18, 1856.

ticularly the merchandising of lumber, was McVoy's chief interest and occupation. The editor of the Pensacola paper recognized the lumberman's contributions to the community's economy and wrote of his activities:

On Thursday last, our Bay presented quite a beautiful appearance— three large Barques from Mobile, under full sail and sailing abreast of each other as if running a race, was a sight worth beholding.— We should like to see instead of three as many as a hundred. Our Bay has ample room and plenty of water.. We understand that these Barques have been chartered by our . . . fellow townsman, Alexander McVoy, Esq., for the purpose of freighting them with lumber to northern ports.¹²

McVoy shipped his lumber, laths, shingles, and staves to Apalachicola, New Orleans, Baltimore, New York, Boston, and other gulf and South Atlantic ports.¹³ Although most of his and Pensacola's lumber was destined for domestic ports, large amounts went abroad, chiefly to Cuba, but also to Nassau, Barcelona, Bremen, and Charges.¹⁴ The single largest overseas shipment, 468,000 board feet, ever sent out by McVoy was carried by the British barque *Snowden* to Barcelona.¹⁵ While schooners were large enough to carry profitable cargoes in the coastal trade, the lumbermen generally used barques, brigs, and ships for ports farther away than the West Indies. The typical schooner carried about 100,000 board feet, a brig, barque, or ship could carry up to 500,000 board feet.¹⁶ In fact, of some 4,000 vessels carrying lumber which cleared Pensacola prior to 1860, not a single schooner was listed as carrying lumber to Europe or South America.¹⁷ While they were the standard vessels of the local and coastal trade, their limited cargo capacity made long hauls unprofitable.¹⁸

From 1847 to 1855, McVoy's saw mill underwent several expansions, and he was often seeking competent sawyers. One ad-

12. *Ibid.*, June 5, 1852.

13. *Ibid.*, September 27, 1851; August 31, 24, November 9, 1850.

14. *Ibid.*, April 5, January 17, May 3, June 7, 1851; April 29, 1854; January 3, 1852; July 5, 1851.

15. *Ibid.*, August 17, 1850.

16. *Ibid.*

17. Compiled from some 4,000 cargo descriptions listed by the *Pensacola Gazette* during the antebellum era.

18. Howard I. Chapelle, *The History of American Sailing Ships* (New York, 1935), 220.

vertisement, calling for a man “perfectly understanding the management of a single saw in a Steam Saw Mill,” and offering “liberal wages,” required references from the applicants.¹⁹ In April 1855, however, McVoy’s luck seemed to have run out when his mill complex, some nine miles north of Pensacola, burned to the ground. The loss included all of the mill’s machinery, and was estimated at more than \$100,000.²⁰ The conflagration was believed “to have been the work of incendiaries,” and two of McVoy’s employees were arrested on suspicion of arson.

While many believed that McVoy would soon “have the mill reestablished in a better condition than before its destruction,” he did not have the necessary capital to rebuild.²¹ In a few months, however, he was back in the lumber business. A co-partnership was announced in September 1855, between McVoy, Samuel C. Keyser, and the firm of Puig, Mir, and Co. McVoy and Keyser were to act as general partners and would be responsible for any debts of the partnership. Puig, Mir, and Co. was to act as a “special partner,” claiming no liability past its initial investment, although sharing equally in the profits. The firm was capitalized at \$41,500.²² Puig, Mir, and Co. eventually withdrew from the partnership, although the new business apparently was prospering. McVoy seemed to spend all of his time in the lumber business; no further announcements concerning his other activities appeared in the *Gazette*.

The fire which ravaged McVoy’s saw mill was not an isolated phenomena. Destruction of saw mills by fire was a frequent occurrence in Pensacola and throughout the South. One property with “all the iron boilers, bricks, etc., belonging to the Steam Saw Mill lately burnt” was sold at public auction in 1843.²³ The Criglar Company, owning one of the largest mill complexes in the Pensacola area, lost one of its mills in February 1854, with a loss estimated at \$20,000.²⁴ When the “splendid Steam Saw Mill of Messrs. Anderson and Pritchett” burned in April 1857, the fire also destroyed a large quantity of lumber and several small houses located around the mill. The suspicious

19. *Pensacola Gazette*, March 9, 1850.

20. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1855.

21. *Ibid.*

22. *Ibid.*, September 8, 1855.

23. *Ibid.*, May 20, 1843.

24. *Ibid.*, February 18, 1854.

Pensacola Gazette noted that “the fire originated in the second story of the building, a good distance from the furnace, . . . there is every reason to suppose it the work of an incendiary . . . The loss is estimated at \$18,000 or more . . .”²⁵ Whether true or not, there was general suspicion after any mill fire that arsonists were to blame.²⁶ Defective equipment or negligence on the part of the workers seldom were considered possible causes. Whatever the cause, however, the fires were all too common, despite precautions to prevent them. Insurance was available, but high rates usually discouraged mill owners from protecting themselves.

Another source of aggravation were those who illegally cut timber on private or publicly-owned lands. As early as 1823, Alexander Scott, Jr., collector for the port of Pensacola, publicly warned such thieves against cutting Live Oaks or Red Cedar: “Owners, shippers, masters of vessels are hereby warned that no clearance will be granted in this District unless satisfactory proof be made at this office that such timber has not been cut from public lands.”²⁷ Scott threatened legal action against those committing such depredations.²⁸ John Hunt, an early mill owner in the Pensacola area, ran a notice in the *Gazette* in 1835, warning “persons from cutting wood or committing further depredations on my property.”²⁹ Another Escambian, William Bell, warned that he would prosecute anyone he caught illegally cutting timber on his property.³⁰ William F. Steele, United States attorney for the Florida Territory, sent a letter to Secretary of the Navy Samuel L. Southard, December 19, 1823, warning that if the government did not stop the illegal cutting of “red cedar and live oak . . . being cut for export from public lands,” the interests of the navy would be jeopardized. This valuable timber was often being cut for export to England, where it was destined to be used by the British navy. He noted that the practice had become so widespread that it was difficult to obtain a conviction

25. *Ibid.*, April 11, 1857.

26. *Ibid.*, March 13, 1858, has an article on a fire set by arsonists at the saw mill of Manuel Hernandez.

27. *Pensacola Floridian*, October 18, 1823.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Pensacola Gazette*, April 25, 1835.

30. *Pensacola Florida Democrat and Mechanic's and Workingman's Advocate*, July 13, 1848.

because of sympathy among the Pensacolans for the thieves.³¹

Neighboring communities like Apalachicola had similar problems. An 1838 city ordinance there provided a maximum fine of \$200 for those convicted of illegally cutting timber.³² The Apalachicola *Commercial Advertiser* carried a notice from the Apalachicola Land Company which warned "certain persons who are known to be now engaged in cutting and collecting a quantity of Cedar Timber on the lands of said Company, . . . not remove said Timber."³³ James G. Forbes, a government marshall assigned to St. Augustine in 1823 with instructions to protect public timber, found a brig loading on the St. Johns River with timber cut from public lands and bound for London.³⁴ Similarly, Thomas Douglas, United States district attorney for St. Augustine, observed that it was common practice for mill owners to cut timber for export from the public lands.³⁵ Nor were Pensacola and other Florida lumbermen exempt from petty theft. As early as 1821, one Florida mill owner cautioned lumbermen from buying "two feeding arms of a saw mill" which had been stolen from his mill.³⁶

One of the largest Florida operations was owned by Joseph Forsyth and E. E. Simpson. The partnership, probably formed sometime during the early 1830s, owned a diversified lumber complex on a heavily-timbered 500 acre site near Milton. They were running at least two saws by 1835.³⁷ By 1842, their establishment, along with that of a neighboring mill complex owned by another Pensacola shipper, John Hunt, was milling annually over \$100,000 worth of lumber.³⁸ In addition, there were some fifteen to twenty other mills located near Black Water, north of Pensacola, and most of them were sawing lumber for the Pensacola market.³⁹ One of these was the Acadia Pail Factory, owned by a Mr. Twitchell. With a machine capable of digesting blocks of wood a foot long, "the staves were sawed out, shaped,

31. Clarence Edwin Carter, ed., *Territorial Papers of the United States: The Territory of Florida*, 26 vols. (Washington, 1956-62), XXII, 309-16.

32. *Apalachicola Commercial Advertiser*, June 28, 1838.

33. *Ibid.*, August 21, 1847.

34. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 384.

35. *Ibid.*, XXV, 28.

36. *Pensacola Gazette*, December 31, 1821.

37. *Ibid.*, May 9, 1835.

38. *Ibid.*, September 3, 1842.

39. *Ibid.*

tongued and grooved, adjusted and smoothed, the bottoms made and inserted, and the hoops and bales prepared." The process took about thirty minutes, and resulted in a half-dozen Juniper pails.⁴⁰

Forsyth and Simpson's complex, capable as early as 1849 of sawing up to 20,000 board feet of lumber a day, was the largest in the area. They ran five gangs of saws, varying from one to ten saws for each gang. Powered by a steam engine, the saws derived power from burning sawdust carried to the furnace doors by means of a trough. The company also employed a steam-powered machining capable of "planing, mortising, and tonguing and grooving" that made sashes, blinds, and panel doors.⁴¹ An onlooker noted that even the saws were filed with the help of a steam engine: "In fact, a man has nothing to do but look on and see his work done as if by magic."⁴² Bagdad, described as a "handsome village" near Pensacola, was primarily populated by workers from Forsyth and Simpson's mills. Most of the skilled laborers were from the North, whereas the common practice in most southern mills was to employ a heavy concentration of slave and free Negro labor.⁴³

Forsyth and Simpson shipped their lumber both coastally and internationally. Their partnership prospered and lasted for the better part of two decades. Joseph Forsyth, a Whig, was active in local and state politics, and held a seat in the Florida senate until ill-health forced him to resign. One of the candidates for this vacancy was William L. Criglar, another Pensacola lumberman.⁴⁴ At the court ordered public sale upon Forsyth's

40. *Ibid.*, December 31, 1842.

41. *Ibid.*, March 17, 1849. For a description of the evolution of planing and moulding machines, see Manfred Powis Bale, *Woodworking Machinery: Its Rise, Progress, and Construction, with Hints on the Management of Saw Mills and the Economical Conversion of Timber* (London, 1880), 69-112.

42. *Ibid.*

43. *Ibid.* For examples of the use of Negro labor in saw mills, see John Hebron Moore, "Simon Gray, Riverman: A Slave Who Was Almost Free," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XLIX (December 1962), 472-84; also John Hebron Moore, *Andrew Brown and Cypress Lumbering in the Old Southwest* (Baton Rouge, 1967), 125-48, for a discussion of the use of free and slave labor at a large antebellum sawmill in Natchez, Mississippi. See also New Orleans *LeTelegraphe*, October 17, 1807; New Orleans *Daily Picayune*, September 12, 1856; *Wilmington Gazette*, January 1, 1801; and *Charleston Courier*, December 18, 1837.

44. *Ibid.*, November 4, 1854.

death, his five-twelfth's share in the partnership's machinery, stock, and properties were auctioned off for the benefit of his children. His surviving partner E. E. Simpson, and another lumberman, B. D. Wright, acted as executors for the estate.⁴⁵ Among Forsyth's property were twenty-five slaves who had been trained to work in his cotton factory.⁴⁶ The editor of the *Pensacola Gazette* considered Forsyth's death a serious loss, noting that he was a successful lumberman, as well as an outstanding public figure. E. E. Simpson continued to run the business.

Criglar, Batchelder and Company, which owned mills on Black Water and lumber yards in Pensacola, New Orleans, and Mobile, was one of the gulf coast's largest antebellum lumbering firms. The company in 1849 purchased the Black Water mills from John Hunt who owned a complex running two gangs of steam-powered saws as well as planing machines.⁴⁷ Criglar, Batchelder also obtained 5,000-6,000 acres of timberland and a stock of sawed lumber, both rough and planed. Located about a mile south of Forsyth and Simpson's mills, near Milton, Hunt's mills had been in operation for about seven years prior to the sale.⁴⁸ He had also been active as a merchant and shipping agent, and had shipped lumber, bricks, and other produce, mostly to New Orleans.⁴⁹ Hunt, whose ill-health apparently dictated the sale to Criglar and his associates, remained active in business although he was no longer involved in lumbering.⁵⁰

In addition to Criglar, the firm included Louis Batchelder, Thomas Murray, and J. C. Pooley. It enjoyed a steady rate of growth and diversification during the period before the Civil War. Criglar, from Pollard, Alabama, was apparently the driving force in the company, and he emerged as the dominant figure by the end of the era. Pooley ran two lumber yards at New Orleans, and took orders there for lumber from the Black Water mills.⁵¹

45. *Ibid.*, July 21, 1855.

46. *Ibid.*

47. See scattered references to John Hunt in William Louis Criglar Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. See also *Pensacola Gazette*, September 8, 1848, March 17, 1848; *New Orleans Daily Picayune*, September 22, 1860.

48. *Pensacola Gazette*, February 27, 1841.

49. See, for example, *ibid.*, October 31, 1835; February 27, 1841; April 4, 1846; September 18, 1847.

50. Certificate issued by Register of General land Office, January 7, 1859, Criglar Papers, folder 1, which mentions John Hunt.

51. *New Orleans Louisiana Courier*, April 1, 1855.

Murray accepted orders at the Mobile yard.⁵² The firm shipped mainly to New Orleans and Mobile, although occasionally orders were filled for Santiago, Cuba, New York, Key West, Tampico, Mexico, and Galveston.⁵³ In practical terms, however, New Orleans received virtually all of the lumber the firm shipped during the first full year of operation. Of the 3,393,000 feet of lumber loaded out of Pensacola in 1850, every known shipment went to New Orleans.⁵⁴ Thereafter New Orleans remained the major receiving port for the company's lumber.

From sixty-one shipments in 1850, Criglar's shipping activities and production grew steadily during the decade. Although statistics for the period are incomplete, it can be ascertained that a minimum of 3,059,000 board feet of lumber were dispatched from Pensacola in 1852, in some sixty-eight vessels. Other than a few shipments to Lavaca and Galveston, the rest went to New Orleans.⁵⁵ Production rose in 1853, but it slowed somewhat the next year when a mill burned at a loss of \$20,000. Apparently newer and more powerful machinery was installed as production climbed sharply after 1854.⁵⁶ In an effort to make operations more self-sufficient, and probably also because Pensacola continued to suffer from a chronic lack of shipping, the company acquired at least one schooner, the *Southron*, by 1853, and had added another, the *West Florida*, by 1855. A steamer, the *John Hunt*, and a lighter, the *Gopher*, valued at \$800, were secured by the end of the decade.⁵⁷ Running regularly between Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans, the vessels mainly carried cut lumber. Further evidence of diversification came in 1855, when although the total of lumber exported dropped to 3,044,000 board feet, the number of laths shipped increased to 527,000, and the number of shingles to 377,470. A limited quantity of sash, doors, blinds, and mouldings shipped by the com-

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52. Thomas Murray to William L. Criglar, October 22, 1863, Criglar Papers, folder 1.
53. *Pensacola Gazette*, March 13, 1858; December 25, December 12, June 6, 1857; April 28, 1855; May 24, 1856; May 5, 1855.
54. From the author's compilation of cargo "Clearings" listed by the *Pensacola Gazette* for 1850.
55. *Ibid.*, 1852.
56. *Pensacola Gazette*, February 18, 1854.
57. Inventory, January 31, 1862, Criglar Papers, folder 1.

pany indicates that it was growing both in output and diversification.⁵⁸

Despite the fact that the *Pensacola Gazette* did not run cargo descriptions in its list of "clearings" for three months in 1856, Criglar's vessels carried 2,749,000 board feet of lumber in the nine months for which the paper enumerated cargoes.⁵⁹ In 1856 the firm shipped substantial amounts of lumber to New York, Tampico, and Rio de Janeiro. This marked the company's entry into the South American trade.⁶⁰ The company's interests in international trade began developing in 1855 when J. C. Pooley noted in advertisements carried in the *New Orleans Louisiana Courier* that the mills could produce lumber suitable for both the coastal trade and "for the English and other European markets."⁶¹ By 1857, the last year for which a complete compilation is possible during the decade, the company shipped lumber coastally and internationally on some 122 vessels. Substantial growth of the business is evident from the quantity of lumber sold that year: 6,985,000 board feet of lumber, 912,000 laths, and small amounts of pickets and shingles.⁶² Most of the lumber still went to New Orleans, but large quantities were also going to New York, Tampico, Key West, Boston, and other cities.⁶³ It is probable also that there was a rise in domestic consumption in the Pensacola area during this period.

Criglar's personal wealth gives some good indication of the firm's size and prosperity. In January 1862, he itemized his various investments computing them to be worth \$316,842.87.⁶⁴ This analysis disclosed the facts about the scope of his enterprises. His "Mills, Lands, and Improvements, Carts, Teams, Extra Machinery, Lumber, Flats, and Boats, Farming Utensils, Log Chains, Extra Boilers, Log Saw and Engine and Corn Mill and Office Furniture" were valued at \$100,295.05, and the lumber, logs, laths, and shingles at \$45,409.25. Provisions and

58. Compilation of cargo "Clearings" listed by the *Pensacola Gazette* for 1855.

59. *Ibid.*, 1856.

60. *Pensacola Gazette*, June 21, March 1, May 3, 1856.

61. *New Orleans Louisiana Courier*, April 1, 1855.

62. Compilation of cargo "Clearings" listed by the *Pensacola Gazette* for 1857.

63. *Pensacola Gazette*, April 1, November 21, May 23, July 4, 1857.

64. Deed of bequest, Criglar to Louisiana Criglar, July 5, 1862, Criglar Papers, folder 1.

other supplies for the mill's slaves and free workers were worth \$3,050.65, the four vessels, \$10,300, timberlands, \$18,937, and slaves, \$138,850. The slave valuation included Criglar's interest in some 197 Negroes owned by the company. A prudent businessman, Criglar kept five extra rip saws, two dozen mill saws, two lath saws, and one cutoff saw on hand as spares so that mill shutdowns due to worn or defective equipment could be kept to a minimum.⁶⁵ The list does not include an analysis of Criglar's liabilities, though his correspondence with Thomas Murray during 1863-1864 shows that they must have been considerable. Criglar, of course, lost his slave investment as a result of the war.⁶⁶ He managed to survive the war, and continued actively with his lumbering operations into the 1860s.

Other lumbermen also contributed to Pensacola's rise to importance as a major lumber exporter before the Civil War. By the middle of the 1840s, the international exportation of lumber was becoming an increasingly important part of Pensacola's economy, although the bulk of it was still going to New Orleans. In 1846, the *Gazette* noted that Pensacola, which for many years had lived in Mobile and New Orleans's commercial shadow, was finally showing signs of becoming an important port in her own right. The editor called for renewed efforts to obtain direct trade arrangements between Pensacola and foreign merchants so that it would no longer be necessary to ship to Mobile and New Orleans for sale and then reshipment by their merchants, and no longer necessary to purchase imported goods from those cities. What was needed, the editor observed, to ensure Pensacola's prosperity, was to eliminate Mobile and New Orleans middlemen. By buying goods directly from foreign exporters and by shipping lumber to foreign ports, Pensacolans would not be paying for strengthening her business rivals in Mobile and New Orleans and her own "breaking down." Foreign merchants and shippers could find a considerable number of advantages in Pensacola, including ready money, cheap freight and labor, constantly available lumber, and a snug harbor.⁶⁷

Although Pensacola was not able to relieve the dependence

65. *Ibid.*

66. Murray to Criglar, October 22, 1863, May 31, 1864, Criglar Papers, folder 1.

67. *Pensacola Gazette*, December 12, 1846.

upon Mobile and New Orleans, there was a notable expansion of international trade in lumber. It is impossible to determine exactly how much lumber was shipped from Pensacola to foreign ports. The papers sometimes failed to list cargoes, pertinent records have not survived, officials often did not deliver ship clearings in time to meet editorial deadlines, and some shipments did not always clear customs. Nevertheless, from a compilation of some 4,000 known sailings, it can be determined that a minimum of 28,997,381 board feet of sawed lumber left Pensacola for international ports between 1821 and 1858. The total amount of lumber exported domestically and internationally was 161,945,736 feet, in addition to an indeterminate amount of shingles, staves, barrels, and wooden pails from the Acadia Factory near Pensacola, and cedar and pine logs, pitch, tar, and other products. It is impossible to determine the total shipment of these other articles, although they must have considerably supplemented the totals of sawed boards.⁶⁸

Cuban ports were the chief foreign recipients of Pensacola lumber. A minimum of 11,845,030 board feet of sawed feet of lumber was shipped to Havana; Cardenas received at least 2,639,128 board feet between 1821 and 1858; Matanzas received 1,598,261 board feet; and Sanitago 337,313 board feet.⁶⁹ Although there had been some earlier trade between Pensacola and Havana, it was not until the nineteenth century that the lumber operations became important. Lumber ships out of Pensacola—mainly barques or brigs—put into Mexican, Honduran, and finally South American ports.⁷⁰ Of the eighteen vessels which cleared from Pensacola for Rio de Janeiro in the 1850s, two were ships and sixteen were barques, and their cargoes averaged in excess of 175,000 board feet.⁷¹ Keyser and McVoy sent the largest shipment of lumber to Rio de Janeiro. Carried by the *Cornelia*, it amounted to 301,225 board feet.⁷² The barque, *White Cloud*, carried the smallest cargo, 106,419 board feet, shipped by

68. Compilation of 4,000 ship "Clearings" listed by the *Pensacola Gazette* from 1821 to 1858.

69. *Ibid.*

70. Chapelle, *American Sailing Ships*, 220.

71. Compilation of sailings for Rio de Janeiro from November 6, 1852 to March 27, 1858, as listed in the *Pensacola Gazette*.

72. *Pensacola Gazette*, June 16, 1855.

Criglar, Batchelder, and Company.⁷³ Shipments to other South American ports, like Montevideo, were generally sizable and invariably sent on ships or barques.⁷⁴

A limited amount of Pensacola lumber was exported to Europe, although it amounted to no more than two per cent of the total exported from Pensacola up to 1860. England was the chief customer, loading 1,429,072 board feet from 1855 to 1858. In addition, 3,326 pieces of timber were loaded on English ships during the 1850s and direct trade with England was clearly accelerating by the close of the decade.⁷⁵ One shipment, 481,454 board feet, was sent to Cork, Ireland, and another went to Greenock, Scotland.⁷⁶ There were also a few shipments to Bremen, Marseilles, and Barcelona.⁷⁷ Even as Pensacola's export volume rose, Europeans still bought their lumber mainly from Mobile, New Orleans, Savannah, Charleston, Wilmington, and Norfolk. Pensacola's desire to escape commercial serfdom was only partially realized. Nonetheless, a basis was laid for the time when Pensacola did become one of the most important lumber ports in the United States. The 27,389,175 board feet of lumber exported domestically and internationally in 1857 served as an indicator of the progressively growing importance of lumber and lumbering in the Pensacola area.⁷⁸

73. *Ibid.*, August 22, 1857.

74. *Ibid.*, August 18, 1857.

75. *Ibid.*, May 19, June 30, 1855; May 10, 1856; May 9, June 13, July 4, 1857; February 27, 1858.

76. *Ibid.*, May 23, 1857; March 20, 1858.

77. *Ibid.*, January 3, 1852; January 2, 1839; August 17, 1850.

78. Compilation of cargo "Clearings" as listed by the *Pensacola Gazette* for 1857.