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## THE NEW YORK TIMES VIEWS CIVIL WAR JACKSONVILLE

by RICHARD A. MARTIN\*

**D**URING THE CIVIL WAR, military units North and South had their newspaper contingents in camp and field— war correspondents living out of saddlebags stuffed with pencils and notebooks, artists with sketch pads, and photographers working out of wagons jammed with the apparatus of their craft. Although southern newspapers were restricted by shortages of newsprint and men, northern journals prospered, publishing prolifically every shade of drama and every degree of tragedy the conflict offered. In fact, as Allan Nevins has observed, Civil War correspondents enjoyed such a virtual monopoly on the news “they were able to write with greater fullness and thoroughness than their successors in the two World Wars.” Nevins also made the point that despite the voluminous record they compiled, the work of America’s Civil War correspondents was largely ignored in the memoirs of contemporary military leaders, and continued to be neglected by the nation’s historians for almost a century.<sup>1</sup>

Among exceptions to this rule was William Watson Davis, whose *Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* leans heavily on representative contemporary newspaper accounts. Davis’s study draws much of its strength and many of its interesting and provocative passages from newspaper sources.<sup>2</sup> Turning to Jacksonville, one finds that historians generally have overlooked or neglected available Civil War newspaper sources. T. Frederick Davis drew on state and local journals for his *History of Jackson-*

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1. Louis M. Starr, *Reporting the Civil War: The Bohemian Brigade in Action, 1861-65* (New York, 1962), xv-xvi.
2. William Watson Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (New York, 1913; facsimile edition, Gainesville, 1964).

ville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924, but apparently paid little attention to the national press. His treatment of Jacksonville during the Civil War cites only one newspaper clipping, and does not identify its date or origin. As a result, Davis's account during this period lacks a depth and perspective it might otherwise have attained.<sup>3</sup>

Jacksonville received more attention in the northern press than other places of far greater military importance, perhaps because it was a focal point for politicians, adventurers, and visionaries who regarded northeast Florida as the ideal place for launching their various schemes. Eli Thayer regarded the area between the St. Johns River and the Atlantic Ocean as the logical location for launching a permanent occupation of the state by 20,000 nine-month army volunteers. These men were to be armed and transported to Florida at government expense, and, when the territory east of the St. Johns had been secured, they would be discharged and allowed to settle the area permanently, establishing a loyal government which would bring the state back into the Union.<sup>4</sup>

Vice President Hannibal Hamlin petitioned Lincoln to appoint Thayer as military governor of Florida, 134 members of Congress signed a petition favoring the plan, and the House Committee on Military Affairs passed a resolution advocating the scheme as a means "to strike the rebellion a telling blow."<sup>5</sup> At various times, influential business, civic, and political leaders, and delegations of congressmen descended on the White House to urge the President to call up the needed volunteers. Thayer at

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3. T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924* (St. Augustine, 1925; facsimile edition, Gainesville, 1964), 122, 137, 116-32.

4. On January 25, 1863, the *Times* reported at length a speech by Eli Thayer outlining his plan in great detail. *New York Times*, January 13, 1863, carries the full text of a resolution of the House Committee on Military Affairs endorsing the colonization scheme. A dozen articles were published in the paper concerning Thayer and the colonization scheme in its various forms. See *New York Times*, October 3, 19, 25; December 18, 29, 1862; January 6, 13, 25; February 8, 19, 1863. The colonization campaign ran its course between the second and third occupations of Jacksonville. Military demands in more strategic theaters of war, continuing Confederate resistance in northeast Florida, the burning of Jacksonville in October 1863, and finally, the disaster at Olustee early in 1864 doomed the project to oblivion.

5. *New York Times*, December 18, 1862; January 13, 1863.

one point declared that 40,000 volunteers were ready as soon as Lincoln issued the necessary orders.<sup>6</sup>

In January 1863, Lincoln received a delegation of German-Americans who called to discuss the colonization of Florida, "stating that thousands of German citizens were ready and anxious to share the fortunes of the enterprise." At that time, according to one report, Lincoln "assured the delegation that Mr. Thayer's plan . . . had received the earnest and cordial attention of himself and Cabinet, and that while recent military events had forced the postponement of this enterprise . . . yet he trusted the delay was for but a few days."<sup>7</sup>

A year later, when his prospects for renomination by his party were none too bright, Lincoln himself considered the possibility of exploiting the political potential of Florida in order to strengthen his candidacy.<sup>8</sup> Secretary of the Treasury Salmon P. Chase, in league with Florida Unionists, was also interested in Jacksonville and northeast Florida as a possible base for advancing his own candidacy for the Republican presidential nomination.<sup>9</sup> But the conduct of Chase's agents in Fernandina, Jacksonville, and St. Augustine was such that the treasury department was forced to mount an investigation of

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6. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1862; January 6; February 8, 19, 1863.

7. *Ibid.*, January 6, 1863.

8. Lincoln was accused by his opponents of engineering, for political purposes, the fourth occupation of Jacksonville in February 1864, which led to the Federal defeat at Olustee. Although Lincoln was cleared of having any such direct interest in these events, in the sense of precipitating them, the evidence is clear that when he was advised of the pending military expedition to Florida, and learned that certain "worthy gentlemen" planned "to reconstruct a legal State Government" there, he took a personal interest in the matter. Lincoln commissioned one of his own aides, John Hay, as a major in the army and sent him on the expedition to determine the real strength of loyal sentiment in Jacksonville and northeast Florida. The *Times* published the report of the Committee on the Conduct of the War relative to these matters, including Lincoln's official correspondence, on April 12, 1864. A "reconstructed" Florida government at this time would have been eligible to elect voting delegates to the Republican National Convention in June of 1864. Since Lincoln was seeking the Republican nomination for a second term, it would have been vital to his interests to follow political developments in Florida closely, and, if necessary, to influence them on his own behalf. As it turned out, this was not necessary.

9. Ovid L. Futch, "Salmon P. Chase and Civil War Politics in Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XXXII (January 1954), 163-88.

their activities, submitting the results to the House Select Committee on Rebellious States.<sup>10</sup>

Jacksonville was central in other wartime controversies which made headlines or were argued in newspaper editorials. Early in the war, many Northerners considered Florida to be the ideal location for resolving the nation's Negro problems, and editorials argued the merits of colonizing the state with blacks.<sup>11</sup>

Military operations in the Jacksonville area also became the subject of editorials which were as much concerned with political questions as they were with tactical or strategic considerations. The Federal high command was criticized for occupying Jacksonville in 1862, then condemned for evacuating it after strong Unionist sentiments were demonstrated by a significant number of residents in the town and its environs.<sup>12</sup> The entire affair became the subject of a congressional investigation and provided ammunition for opponents of Lincoln's war policies.<sup>13</sup>

Again, in 1864, the reasons for the fourth and final occupation of Jacksonville, which led to the disastrous Federal defeat at Olustee, were investigated by the Joint Committee on the Conduct and Expenditures of the War. Simultaneously, Copperheads and anti-administration newspapers seized upon the Jacksonville occupation and Federal defeat to renew their attacks on Lincoln.<sup>14</sup>

Many of the events underlying these controversies were covered for northern newspapers by observers attached to army and naval units operating in the Department of the South, which included northeast Florida. The dispatches these correspondents wrote— often termed “letters” but published as news items— provide a wealth of material for historians which is not duplicated

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10. *House Executive Documents*, 38th Cong., 2nd sess., no. 18, pp. 1-185.

11. *New York Times*, October 3, 1862.

12. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1862.

13. Richard A. Martin, “Defeat in Victory: Yankee Experience in Early Civil War Jacksonville,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, LIII (July 1974), 30-31; Edwin M. Stanton to Galusha A. Grow, April 28, 1862, in U. S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series I, Volume VI (Washington, 1882), 131, *House Documents*, 47th Cong., 1st sess., no. 63, p. 131. Generally, the *Times* was opposed to operations in northeast Florida.

14. *Senate Reports*, 38th Cong., 1st sess., no. 47, pp. 1-25; *New York Times*, March 7, 1864.

in more formal and standard sources such as the published official records of the war.

At least half a dozen accredited correspondents for the *New York Times* operated in and out of Jacksonville during and immediately following the war. Many other "stringers" or "special correspondents," some of whom were officers or enlisted men attached to various military units, submitted Florida dispatches routinely to the *Times*. As was the practice with newspapers of that era, the *Times* occasionally published reprints from southern newspapers, as well as letters from soldiers and other eye-witnesses which were sent to hometown papers and republished in the *Times*.<sup>15</sup>

These writers in most cases are relatively unknown.<sup>16</sup> Of the dozen correspondents who were permitted to sign their dispatches, all but one used whimsical-sounding pen names or initials, with the result that only three can be identified, and only one of them with certainty. What we learn of these three affords some insight into their qualifications as reporters and war correspondents.

Ben C. Truman, the only correspondent whose actual byline appears on any of the *New York Times* articles out of Jacksonville, worked for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* early in the war. He covered Sherman's march through Georgia and the fall of Atlanta; got news of the Confederate defeat at Franklin, Tennessee, to New York four days before the war department received word of the battle through official channels; and also gave the *Times* a scoop over its competitors when he dispatched the first news published in the North of Hood's defeat at Nashville.<sup>17</sup>

Many dispatches concerned with events in Georgia and Florida were datelined out of Port Royal or Hilton Head, South

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15. On February 28, 1864, for example, the *Times* published a letter by L. B. Wyman, an officer who saw action at Olustee and wrote, "our troops have been badly whipped." *Times* dispatches of March 1, 1864, included a letter from an artillery officer to his parents describing his battery's experience at Olustee. The *Times* picked up the letter after it was published in Rhode Island's *Providence Journal*. Not much later, on March 6, 1864, the *Times* published a long "Rebel Account of the Battle of Olustee" reprinted from the Lake City *Columbian*.

16. Chester M. Lewis, director of archives for the *Times*, could find very little about them in the newspaper's records and published histories. Lewis to the author, July 12, 1974.

17. Starr, *Reporting the Civil War*, 199, 268, 276-77; *New York Times*, December 27, 1864.

Carolina. Among the earliest of these, some were signed "H. J. W.," who may have been Henry J. Winser. This correspondent later achieved fame of sorts by paddling more than fifty miles in a leaky dugout to get his account of Farragut's victory at New Orleans aboard a steamship to New York for delivery to the *Times*.<sup>18</sup>

Dispatches signed "J.M.W.," and "Wopsey" came out of Port Royal and Fernandina in the period March-April 1862, and may have been by the same man, James M. Winchell. There is reason to believe that he enjoyed superior status as a *Times* correspondent. It was to Winchell that *Times* managing editor Alexander Wilson turned after the *Times* was forced to reprint dispatches from the competing *New York Tribune* which brought the first news of the bloody battle of Antietam. The failure of *Times* correspondents on the scene to get their dispatches through was attributed by Wilson to lack of organization. Accordingly, he ordered Winchell to instruct other *Times* correspondents on how to operate and organize their work more effectively in the field. The *Tribune's* Washington editor, Samuel Wilkeson, had let his correspondents know that there was only one way to report a battle properly, and that was to be "so closely observant of them as to be in danger of being killed." At one time, Winchell, along with Albert D. Richardson of the *Tribune*, appeared before President Lincoln as spokesmen on behalf of war correspondents operating with Federal armies who were being harrassed by certain officers who threatened to jail or shoot them as spies. In 1864, Winchell obtained a two-hour interview with Lincoln, which pinned down for the first time the fact that the President would seek renomination. But Winchell personally supported Chase for the nomination, and while working for the *Times*, doubled as the secretary for the Chase National Committee.<sup>19</sup>

Generally, the *Times* identified its Florida-related dispatches as "From Our Own Correspondent," "From Our Special Correspondent," or as "Correspondence of *The N.Y. Times*," each with an appropriate dateline. Articles so labelled originated out of Port Royal, Fernandina, Tallahassee, Hilton Head, and Jack-

18. Starr, *Reporting the Civil War*, 288; *New York Times*, January 3, 1862.

19. Starr, *Reporting the Civil War*, 122, 148-49, 255, 257; *New York Times*, March 15, 20; April 14, 1862.

sonville. Other articles were tagged, "From Our Jacksonville Correspondent," or "Our Jacksonville Correspondence," with variations when the items originated in other towns, including Fernandina and St. Augustine. Still other items carried signatures which now tickle the curiosity, including "Vagabond," "S.G.," "V.H.," "X.I.T.," "R.," "V.," and "Seminole."<sup>20</sup>

Possibly the most colorful and exciting writer who witnessed events in the Jacksonville area was a correspondent who signed himself only as "WHIT." His report of the fourth and final occupation of Jacksonville, and of Colonel Guy V. Henry's remarkable cavalry raid fifty miles into the state, which set the stage for the Battle of Olustee, covered the entire front page of the *Times* and carried over onto the back page. The fact that "WHIT" personally rode with Henry's troopers, sharing in the danger and excitement of their daredevil mission, may account for the length of his report. That the *Times* printed so much that came from WHIT's prolific pen is something else again, and speaks highly of the paper's regard for his work as well as the importance it attached to affairs in Florida.<sup>21</sup>

In the period 1862-1865, the *New York Times* carried more than 100 dispatches on the war in Jacksonville and northeast Florida. The paper also published fifteen editorials discussing or questioning the conduct of the war or national politics and military policies as they affected the area. Twice, the *Times* devoted its entire front page to eyewitness reports of the war in Florida, datelined Jacksonville, and largely concerned with events in, or directly related to, the town.<sup>22</sup>

Even relatively minor dispatches take on a larger significance in context of the bulk of this material. For example, on January

20. Of the 129 Florida articles and editorial the author has found in the *Times* for the period under study, only twenty carried a signature of any kind.

21. *New York Times*, February 20, 1864. "WHIT" also contributed much to a second front page devoted to news of Florida and datelined Jacksonville on March 1, 1864. Yet there is no clue to his identity, although *Times* Archivist Chester M. Lewis would like to learn his real name. Lewis to the author, July 12, 1974. "WHIT's" account of what he saw and experienced while riding with Colonel Henry's troopers may be without parallel in the record of Civil War journalism in Florida. Even Wilkeson of the *Tribune* would have admired the *Times* man's performance as a war correspondent in being "so closely observant" in action and under fire "as to be in danger of being killed."

22. *Ibid.*, February 20, March 1, 1864. It was not unusual for Florida war news to run from two to six columns in the paper.

14, 1862, the *Times* carried an article based on an interview with Isaac Tatnall, an escaped slave and steamboat pilot who was familiar with coastal waters in north Florida and south Georgia. Tatnall's descriptions of conditions at Brunswick, Georgia, and of garrison strength and fortifications at Fernandina provided valuable information in advance of the Federal expeditions into these areas a few weeks later. The same article reported additional information gleaned from other escaped slaves or contrabands. Following this lead in studying the *Times* articles, one learns that these former slaves played key roles during the war as sources of vital information and as guides for Federal expeditionary forces operating in northeast Florida.

Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson went so far as to assign major credit for the success of his expedition up the St. Marys River to a former slave. Commanding a black regiment, the First South Carolina Volunteers, on a foray into south Georgia and north Florida along the St. Marys, Colonel Higginson reported: "Everything, even to the piloting of the vessel, and the selection of the proper points for cannonading, was done by my own soldiers; indeed, the real conductor of the whole expedition . . . was Corporal Robert Sutton, of Company G, formerly a slave upon the St. Mary's River—a man of extraordinary qualities, who needs nothing but a knowledge of the alphabet to entitle him to the most signal promotion. In every instance where I followed his advice the predicted result followed, and I never departed from it, however slightly, without having reason for subsequent regret."<sup>23</sup>

Unionists who managed to live out most of the war in northeast Florida provided similar services to Federal forces operating in the state. "WHIT" described one of the guides who led Colonel Henry from Jacksonville to Camp Finnegan, Baldwin, Barber's Station, Sanderson, and Lake City, as among "the most valuable auxiliaries we have in our command." The unnamed guide was said to be acquainted with "every road and by-path" and was described by "WHIT" as having "better military judgment than half of the Generals in the field." Each column in Henry's command had its own guide, some of whom probably

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23. *Ibid.*, January 14, 1862, February 10, 1863.

were escaped slaves.<sup>24</sup> Among whites who offered assistance in this manner, John Alsop, a Jacksonville lumberman, was the most active. He probably was the military genius "WHIT" described who rode with Colonel Henry, and he is named as the guide who led a Federal expedition up the St. Marys River which seized 1,500,000 feet of dressed lumber and other valuable war material.<sup>25</sup>

As might be expected, the *Times* frequently reported on matters concerning blacks in occupied Florida, and, of course, slavery was referred to routinely in the paper's war dispatches and related editorials. But more than a score of articles contain significant information on the condition and progress of blacks in northeast Florida. These dispatches reporting military operations in and around Jacksonville in 1863 and 1864— including the Battle of Olustee— say much about the Negro as a soldier during the war, since black troops were predominant in these later expeditions to Florida.<sup>26</sup>

*Times* articles concerning blacks ranged from the story about Isaac Tatnall in 1862, to a report of a mutiny among black troops in Jacksonville in 1865. The mutiny occurred on October 28, after the war had ended, when men of the Third Colored Regiment rebelled over the treatment of one of their comrades who was hung by the thumbs for an infraction of regulations. Two of the mutineers were killed, the colonel commanding the regiment was shot through the hand, and a lieutenant was stabbed several times. Fourteen of the "ringleaders" were tried in proceedings aboard the military transport *St. Marys*, anchored off Jacksonville. Six were later executed at Fernandina, a like number were given prison sentences, and two were acquitted. Other mutinies among black troops, and riots among freedmen in Florida late in 1865, were reported in the *Times* and are in-

24. *Ibid.*, February 20, 1864.

25. *Ibid.*, March 6, 1864. This item, reporting the St. Marys expedition, is signed "Seminole." The writer stated that Alsop "accompanied the expedition, as he did that of . . . the recent capture of Jacksonville and Baldwin." Alsop's "thorough acquaintance with the country and many of the people, rendered both expeditions an essential service."

26. Articles of more than routine interest regarding blacks in northeast Florida during and immediately after the war were published in the *Times* January 14, March 20, October 3, 19, 1862; January 9, February 10, March 21, 22, 25, April 1, 1863; January 19, February 20, March 1, 14, 1864; June 16, August 1, 17, October 1, November 17, 26, December 25, 1865.

dicative of the unrest and confusion that characterized the period immediately following the war.<sup>27</sup>

The reaction of Florida blacks to emancipation when it went into effect on January 1, 1863, was not reported in the *Times*, but the paper did carry a descriptive account of how the occasion was celebrated at Port Royal, South Carolina. Formal military and religious ceremonies preceded the barbecuing of ten oxen for 3,000 freedmen. These guests were served by officers of Colonel Higginson's regiment of Negro troops who were soon to see action in Florida. There followed a day of festivities including concerts, baseball, entertainment, and games of all kinds. Not all was rosy, however, and the *Times* correspondent noted that some of the blacks seemed suspicious and less than enthusiastic about emancipation. The correspondent learned why when he questioned his own "servant" and was told that the men were afraid they would now be drafted into the army. Significantly, the correspondent appended to his article a lengthy army directive outlining regulations for managing the employment of blacks on farms and plantations under military supervision.<sup>28</sup>

The *Times* launched its coverage of the war in Florida with several accounts of the occupation of Fernandina. Among these, "Wopsey's" is the most unusual and interesting. "It was a clear, starlit night," "Wopsey" wrote at one point, describing the Federal fleet preparing to sail for Florida. And later, as the warships entered St. Andrews Sound, "Wopsey" lyricized, "The fleet glided majestically around the point of . . . [Cumberland Island] while from the light-house, which stood near the point, floated the Stars and Stripes, placed there by some of the active little gunboats which had preceded us." "Wopsey's" account of the duel between the gunboat *Ottawa* and a train puffing out of Fernandina carrying the last contingent of men, women, and children trying to escape through the closing Federal ring, must have excited the awe and sympathy of *Times* readers. A body of Confederate cavalry, the Fourth Florida Regiment of Dragoons,

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27. *Ibid.*, November 17, 26, December 25, 1865; Jacksonville *Florida Union*, December 6, 1865.

28. *New York Times*, January 9, 1863. A similar article reporting how the blacks of St. Augustine celebrated the first anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation a year later, was published January 19, 1864.

escorting the train fired revolvers ineffectually at the *Ottawa* as it raced the locomotive to a point on the Amelia River where the tracks crossed a bridge to the mainland. Then riflemen inside the train fired at the gunboat, prompting a barrage from the *Ottawa's* heavy guns which struck a flatcar loaded with household goods and furniture, killing two young men sitting on a sofa. "Wopsey's" dispatch contained a variety of information including the story of how a Federal army surgeon cared for the bodies of the two young men killed on the train, and assisted relatives at their burial. "Wopsey" also described the "absurd antics" of navy "Jack-tars" when they were allowed on shore to stretch their legs. Among other things, the correspondent reported, the sailors "captured" a locomotive outside the town and twenty of them pulled it back into Fernandina with ropes.<sup>29</sup>

Another *Times* correspondent's account of the last train out of Fernandina added the information that when the *Ottawa's* shells began falling near the cars, a number of passengers jumped off "and took to the bush." One of these, it was reported, "is said to have been [the] late Senator Yulee of Florida, accompanied by his servant." Several of Yulee's letters later turned up when "Wopsey" personally searched a house in Fernandina belonging to Confederate General Joseph Finegan. The letters, "Wopsey" declared, were likely written by Yulee "at his seat in the Senate" and were described as "teeming with rank treason."<sup>30</sup>

*Times* editors probably enjoyed the references to Yulee's discomfiture. In an editorial of March 20, 1862, following the occupation of Fernandina, the *Times* referred to Yulee as "that unhung knave," and accused him of being the ringleader of "a score or two of ambitious rebels" who were responsible for Florida's secession. "It was in the National Capitol that the conspiracy to take Florida out of the Union was hatched, and the Sovereignty Convention at Tallahassee but followed the promptings of these conspirators," the *Times* article declared.

Whatever its personal prejudices, the *Times* did not allow them to interfere with its mission of keeping its readers as well informed as possible. Two weeks after the paper condemned Yulee, it reprinted an article from the *Mobile* (Alabama) *Reg-*

29. *Ibid.*, March 15, 1862.

30. *Ibid.*, March 11, 15, 1862.

ister which reported Senator Yulee in an entirely different light: "The evacuation of Fernandina was conducted very badly, and much was lost owing to the inefficiency of the Colonel in command. Ex-Senator Yulee, President of the Florida Railroad, was untiring in his efforts to save the property of the citizens. He was the last man to leave Fernandina, and was on the train that was fired on. He escaped by great efforts, and projected an expedition on Monday night to bring off the train that had been left, which would have been entirely successful had not the railroad bridge been set on fire by order of Col. Hopkins, in command, just as the train reached it. All the Florida troops need to insure success is a worthy commander."<sup>31</sup>

*Times* coverage of the war in Jacksonville was unusually thorough. For example, in a forty-day period during March and April 1862, the paper published nineteen items about the town and its first occupation and evacuation, including two dispatches from southern newspapers. On March 20, the date the first news of Jacksonville's surrender was reported, the *Times* carried five separate dispatches, including material from its own correspondent on the scene, the navy's report on the expedition, an editorial on "The Conquest of Florida," and the full proclamation of Jacksonville Mayor H. H. Hoeg, informing his people that their town would not be defended. The mayor's proclamation stated, in part: "It is the opinion of our most experienced and intelligent citizens . . . that, if the enemy meet with no resistance, private property will be respected, and unarmed citizens will be allowed to pursue their usual occupations . . . if, after we have offered no resistance, and given no just provocation, violence should be committed, the whole blame will rest upon the aggressors."

The *Times* responded in an editorial headed, "Light Under the Southern Cross," which observed that Mayor Hoeg apparently would not have been surprised "if the National troops, on taking possession of . . . [Jacksonville] should proceed to rob and murder on every hand." The conduct of both northern and southern troops provided no basis for such an assumption, the *Times* noted, and added, Mayor Hoeg "had undoubtedly been brought up in the characteristic Southern notion that a 'Yankee'

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31. *Ibid.*, March 23, April 6, 1862.

was the impersonation [*sic*] of all that was mean and vile; and, since the rebellion, what could he have known of us except from the wretched Southern newspapers, who have never found any epithet toe [*sic*] vile to be applied to us." The editorial concluded with the thought that it: "has been a constant and well-founded complaint . . . that the people of the different sections [of the nation] were ignorant of each other. The war seems to be meeting this complaint, It is rather troublesome sending so many teachers down there to teach the lesson."<sup>32</sup>

Later in the war, when Federal troops actually set fire to Jacksonville, destroying the courthouse, churches, and other buildings and residences, the *Times* deplored the act, but directed its major editorial emphasis against other newspapers which were using the incident to discredit President Lincoln's management of the war. The *Times* branded as "exaggerations" the reports in other newspapers which said the town had been completely destroyed. In an editorial on "The Burning of Jacksonville," the *Times* referred its readers to an official military report which assigned partial blame for the fires to "Secessionists" and stated that, in any case, no more than twenty-five buildings had been destroyed. "It is certainly unfortunate that we should have among us a class of patriots who will twist and exaggerate an insignificant affair like this into one of the most shocking Union atrocities— to the infinite infamy of our army and the disgrace of the whole nation."<sup>33</sup> Altogether the *Times* devoted four editorials to the first occupation and evacuation of Jacksonville, one to the third occupation and burning of the town, and six to the fourth occupation and the Olustee disaster.<sup>34</sup>

The second occupation of Jacksonville, in October 1862, including the duel between Federal gunboats and Confederate guns on St. Johns Bluff, was reported in four dispatches.<sup>35</sup> Seven articles were devoted to the progress of the third occupation and

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32. *Ibid.*, March 20, 1862.

33. *Ibid.*, April 17, 1863. The third occupation of Jacksonville and the evacuation and burning of the town were covered by the *Times* in articles on March 21, 22, and 25; and April 1, 8, 17, 1863.

34. *Ibid.*, March 20, 25, 26; April 20, 1862; April 17, 1863; February 4, 13, 28, 29, March 7, 15, 1864.

35. *Ibid.*, October 10, 19, 20, 1862. Two dispatches were published on the 19th.

burning of Jacksonville in 1863.<sup>36</sup> Twenty-two articles were published covering the fourth and final occupation of Jacksonville and the Battle of Olustee. These latter stories were largely the work of the redoubtable "WHIT." His description of the final occupation of Jacksonville and Colonel Henry's cavalry raid into the interior, runs to twenty-one single-spaced typewritten pages in transcription, and is a dramatic eyewitness account of one of the most daring exploits in Florida Civil War history. Another dispatch by "WHIT," half as long again, reported the Battle of Olustee as he saw it.<sup>37</sup>

Two major articles published during the first occupation of Jacksonville in 1862 dwelt at length on the attempts of loyal residents of the town to repudiate Florida's secession government, adopt a new state constitution, and return Florida to the

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36. *Ibid.*, February 10, March 21, 22, 25, April 1, 8, 17, 1863. The article on February 10 concerned a Federal expedition along the St. Marys River, which set the stage for the third Jacksonville occupation by exposing the black troops who conducted both operations to their first enemy fire.
37. *Ibid.*, February 13, 14, 20, 23, 27, March 1, 6, 8, 13, 14, 16, 17, 24, April 1, 12, 13, 18, 1864. On several occasions more than one dispatch was published. On February 20 and March 1 the paper's entire front page was devoted to Florida war news out of Jacksonville. The author traced 129 relevant items published in the *Times* in the period under study. About half a dozen of these could be described as "miscellaneous information," very brief in nature. For example, when Vice President Hamlin petitioned President Lincoln on Eli Thayer's behalf (December 18, 1862) the *Times* devoted one sentence of its Washington roundup to the incident, under a sub-heading, "The Governorship of Florida." During the period February-March 1864, when the *Times* published six editorials and twenty-two dispatches about Jacksonville and Olustee, the phrase "all quiet on the Potomac" was echoed by an occasional brief notice that "everything is quiet at Jacksonville." Three items in the collection are background material, such as the Emancipation Day celebration of blacks at Port Royal (January 9, 1863), and a petition from the black community at New Bern, North Carolina, which reflects attitudes, problems, and conditions of freed slaves in the South at the end of the war. Certain presidential orders and Federal regulations affecting Jacksonville and northeast Florida are also included, among them President Johnson's orders lifting trade restrictions, opening southern ports, and pardoning certain classes of southern citizens. Of the 129 articles in the collection, eighty-four were war communiqués or dispatches out of Jacksonville, many quite detailed. Fifteen were editorials. All of this material illustrates the wealth of information available about Jacksonville in Civil War papers of the North. The *Times*, of course, devoted as much attention to other parts of the state. These materials, used in support of standard references which have been worked and reworked, particularly by local historians, help fill gaps, link hitherto unrelated events, and provide new reservoirs of information which can be used to acquire better insights and perspectives on the war.

Union.<sup>38</sup> When the Unionists were forced to flee into exile because of the Federal evacuation, the *Times* reported the arrival of about fifty of the refugees at New York, as well as the action taken by the city council to provide funds for their relief. Discussing the plight of the refugees, New York Mayor George Opdyke told the city council that the Jacksonville Unionists had been encouraged by army occupation authorities to declare their loyalty openly, and were assisted in taking steps to reject Florida's secession government and reconstruct a loyal one of their own. The abandonment of the town placed these Unionists at the mercy of Confederates waiting for the evacuation, forcing them to flee. Consequently, Mayor Opdyke said, the city owed "some substantial evidence of the public sympathy" to these "destitute fugitives from a relentless despotism" until such time as the national government could provide for their needs. After a move was defeated to appropriate \$2,500 for the refugees, the city council approved an immediate grant of \$1,000.<sup>39</sup>

In late 1862 and early 1863, the *Times* reported the details of Unionist meetings held in public halls like New York's Cooper Institute, which featured speeches by such luminaries as Horace Greeley, William Cullen Bryant, Cassius Clay, and Eli Thayer. Twice, at meetings in the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Fifth Avenue Hotel, Jacksonville Unionist Phillip Fraser was among the platform guests, spearheading the personal campaign of his fellow Jacksonville refugees for military intervention to return Florida to the Union. Fraser's message to the cheering New York audiences was simple and direct. He believed in "Union and Liberty, one and inseparable"; agreed to any solution for an end to slavery; and declared martially: "Buckle on your armor. Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war!"<sup>40</sup>

When the final occupation of Jacksonville in 1864 made it possible for many of the displaced Unionists to return home, the *Times* continued to follow their activities. During the summer of 1864 the paper reported at length on the proceedings of a Union convention in Jacksonville which appointed a committee of five

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38. *Ibid.*, March 31, April 2, 1862.

39. *Ibid.*, April 22, 1862.

40. *Ibid.*, October 25, 1862; January 25, February 7, 8, 1863. A wealthy attorney, Fraser had lived in Jacksonville about ten years prior to the war and was intendant (or mayor) of the town in 1855.

men "to take [responsibility for] all necessary action and measures to organize a state government for the State of Florida." The Jacksonville convention also elected delegates who were pledged to support Lincoln at the Republican national convention, held at Baltimore that same month.<sup>41</sup>

As has been noted, the *Times'* coverage of the final occupation of Jacksonville and the Battle of Olustee, was comprehensive and might be termed definitive in a journalistic sense. This campaign is also interesting, from a journalistic point of view, because of its impact on *Times* editorial policy. Prior to the expedition, the *Times* consistently opposed Federal operations along the southern coast, including Florida. The paper had used prior operations against Jacksonville— and subsequent abandonments of the town— as examples of poor military strategy and wasted effort. The *Times* repeatedly called for the concentration of Federal strength against Confederate strongpoints, whether major southern cities or armies. It warned against the diffusion of Federal arms in coastal and other secondary operations, especially when repeated experience proved that these had little or no effect upon the outcome of the war. At one point a *Times* correspondent reflected, in a dispatch out of Hilton Head, that the "great mistake" of General T. W. Sherman, in command of overall Federal forces which took Jacksonville for the first time in 1862, had been "scattering his force amongst the unimportant islands and towns of the coast." This made a reconcentration necessary, resulting in the abandonment of Jacksonville. "We know how it worked at *Jacksonville*; how every Union family that could followed the troops when withdrawn, sacrificing the most of their property to rebel vengeance: and how those that *could not* leave suffered in consequence."<sup>42</sup>

When news of the fourth occupation of Jacksonville reached the *Times* in February 1864, the paper revived its objections to such operations in an editorial headed, "The Scatteration Policy Again." Pointing out that it could see no wisdom in the move, nor calculate any "adequate object" for the expedition, the

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41. *Ibid.*, June 4, 8, 9, 1864. The convention admitted the Florida delegation but denied its members voting privileges. Before the convention adjourned, one of the Florida men, Calvin Robinson, was appointed to the Republican National Committee.

42. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1862. See also *Ibid.*, April 20, 1862, February 4, 1864.

*Times* reminded readers that: "Jacksonville has already been twice [*sic*] occupied by our troops, and twice abandoned as useless . . . There is not the smallest military importance in Florida."<sup>43</sup>

When the defeat at Olustee triggered a barrage of criticism against Lincoln's administration, the *Times* reconsidered. Noting that one of the objects of the campaign was to cut off the supply of Florida beef to the Confederate armies, the paper reversed itself in an editorial on "The Real Military Importance of Florida." Published shortly after the defeat at Olustee, the editorial stated: "We trust that, despite the ill-luck that has met the opening of the Florida campaign, the work may still be kept up, if its results should promise to be really as important as surmised" [in severing Confederate supply lines]. Continuing its defense of Lincoln, the *Times* published two additional editorials on the subject. One acquitted Lincoln of any blame or responsibility for the defeat at Olustee, placing the burden solely on the military commanders involved. Labelling Copperheads as the party of "disunion" and defending Lincoln against their charges that Olustee only proved the futility of the war as a means to peace, the *Times* declared in another editorial that the contrary was true. The defeat at Olustee was proof, the paper said, that armed force was the only hope for concluding the war successfully in the face of such determined opposition throughout the Confederacy, including the backwoods of Florida.<sup>44</sup>

As time was to show, the final occupation of Jacksonville worked to the town's advantage. Under military auspices, Jacksonville was rebuilt quickly. Business and commerce were restored and relative prosperity set in long before other southern towns had cleared away the rubble of defeat and lifted the paralysis of trade that followed in its wake. Less than three weeks after Jacksonville was occupied for the final time, and long before the war ended, the *Times* reported that the town was "beginning to assume quite a business aspect. Traders have succeeded [*sic*] in obtaining permits to land their goods, and it is stated that a party contemplates opening a large hotel."<sup>45</sup>

43. *Ibid.*, February 13, 1864. There had been three prior occupations of Jacksonville in March 1862, October 1862, and March 1863.

44. *Ibid.*, February 28, March 7, 15, 1864.

45. *Ibid.*, February 23, 1864. Some boarding houses may have opened by this time, but it would be several years before a hotel was built.

There were still hard times ahead, but by July 1865, only a few weeks after Florida's formal capitulation, Jacksonville was reported as "full of people, black and white," who were described as "generally healthy" though "much exposed by the disorganization of society, and many privations and inconveniences." The town was sufficiently recovered to mount a grand Fourth of July celebration, complete with a steamboat excursion to Green Cove Springs in which 200 citizens participated, having "a grand time, returning by moonlight about midnight."<sup>46</sup> By the end of July, railroad and mail service had been restored, and in mid-August the *Times* reported: "Jacksonville is recovering something of its ancient prosperity. New saw-mills are in operation, and large quantities of goods have been brought to the place." Although "stiff prices" still prevailed, the *Times* noted that refugees were returning to their homes in greater numbers, and that many northerners, "mostly discharged officers and soldiers, have gone into business here . . . Sea Island cotton, has done more than anything else to get business in motion, and direct attention from the calamities of the war. . . . Business in Jacksonville, and to some extent, throughout Florida, is assuming its former character. New saw-mills have been built, schooners are taking on board loads of lumber, new buildings are going up, our stores are well filled with goods, new warehouses have been completed, and the conversation of the people has changed from war to business."<sup>47</sup>

In the same manner, war news had given way in the columns of the *Times* to peacetime matters. Appropriately, the last Florida dispatch published in 1865, under the byline of Ben C. Truman, is unique in the collection under discussion. It is the only article concerning Jacksonville or northeast Florida published in the period 1862-1865 which makes no direct reference to the war, the military occupation of the state, or even to reconstruction politics. The article reads like an account of Florida during the Golden Age of Jacksonville tourism in the 1880s. Truman advertises the state's beauties, its mild climate, the health of its people, and the low incidence of disease, using statistical charts to support his conclusions. The *Times'* last mention of Jackson-

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46. *Ibid.*, July 22, 1865.

47. *Ibid.*, August 1, 17, 1865.

ville is positive, reporting the arrival of the steamer *Helen Getty* with nine teachers for the “colored schools” of the town, making fourteen in all to serve an average attendance of “about two hundred and fifteen scholars.”<sup>48</sup>

In concluding his long description of Florida for the tourist or investor, Truman declared: “I must say that I bespeak for Florida a glorious future. I predict that peace, prosperity, wealth and happiness will be her lot. Her rich lands will come rapidly under cultivation, and increase tenfold in value; her noble waters will be thronged with the appliances of commerce; population, such as she desires, will flow steadily into her borders; cities and villages, and palatial mansions will dot her landscapes; schools and churches, and public institutions will be her boast; and a refined society, living in affluence and comfort, will grace this land of flowers, encompassed by ocean and gulf. What may we not expect of her, now that she has FREEDOM for her guiding star?”<sup>49</sup>

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48. *Ibid.*, December 27, 1865.

49. *Ibid.*