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FLORIDA AND THE WORLD'S COLUMBIAN EXPOSITION OF 1893

by STEPHEN KERBER

IT is a common misconception that Chicago, Illinois, is known as "the Windy City" for its weather. Actually, the name originated during the nineteenth century as a derisive comment upon the often-exaggerated rhetoric employed by Chicagoans engaged in praising their community. This prideful attitude would find its finest and most enduring expression in the poetry of Carl Sandburg. It was this same spirit of aggressive boosterism which in the 1890s enabled Chicagoans to win congressional approval to host on behalf of the nation a great international exposition celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of Columbus's discovery of the New World, and to create the most famous world's fair in history—the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893.¹

The act of Congress which created the exposition provided for a National Commission to work with and to supervise the local Chicago organization which would actually build the fair grounds and structures and operate the fair. The National Commission was to consist of two members from each state and territory (one Republican and one Democrat) and two alternate members to be nominated by the governors and then appointed by the president of the United States. Additionally, a Board of Lady Managers (consisting entirely of women to insure that their contributions to society would be represented fairly and comprehensively) was provided for in the act. The national commissioners appointed a total of 115 women to this board.²

Governor Francis P. Fleming nominated Richard Turnbull of Jefferson County (a Democrat) and Joseph Hirst of Tampa

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1. Reid Badger, *The Great American Fair: The World's Columbian Exposition & American Culture* (Chicago, 1979); David F. Burg, *Chicago's White City of 1893* (Lexington, 1976).
2. Badger, *Great American Fair*, 43-61; Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 1-113.

(a Republican) as Florida's two national commissioners; Jesse T. Bernard of Tallahassee and Dudley Warren Adams of Tangerine were alternates.³ Turnbull selected Miss E. Nellie Beck of Tampa as a member of the Board of Lady Managers and Mrs. Helen K. Ingram of Jacksonville as an alternate.⁴ Hirst picked Mrs. James (Mary C.) Bell of Gainesville as a member, and Mrs. Chloe M. Reed of Jacksonville, wife of former Governor Harrison Reed, as alternate.⁵ When Hirst subsequently was promoted to the position of secretary of installation for exhibits at the fair, Charles F. A. Bielby of Volusia County became his replacement.⁶ Although these prominent and politically-well-connected men and women were anxious for Florida to be represented in exhibits at the fair, their official duties were concerned with the planning and administration of the fair in its entirety rather than with persons and events in their home state. Of course, the appointment of these Floridians stimulated publicity about the fair and thereby prompted others to consider the potential benefits of participation.

It was in Orange County that the movement to secure a Florida presence at the exposition began. Mayor Willis L. Palmer of Orlando called a meeting on June 8, 1891, to discuss the possibilities of what might be attempted.⁷ At that meeting, Palmer proposed that a convention should be held in October 1891, to organize a state-wide movement. His suggestion was received enthusiastically, and a temporary executive committee was formed.⁸

A second meeting was called for June 18 at the Orange County courthouse. A seven-member committee was selected to plan and arrange for a state convention to be held in Orlando on the first Wednesday in October. Colonel George S. Foote of Zellwood, president of the county Farmers' Alliance, was named chairman of this committee, and Mahlon Gore, editor of the *Orange County Reporter*, secretary. It was hoped that each Florida county would send delegates to the convention and that industries and organizations would be represented also.⁹

3. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, June 22, 1890.

4. *Ibid.*, June 30, August 16, September 1, 1890.

5. *Ibid.*, August 8, September 1, 1890.

6. *Ibid.*, March 19, July 17, 1891.

7. *Ibid.*, June 9, 1891.

8. *Ibid.*, June 15, 1891.

9. *Ibid.*, June 19, 1891. See also, Titusville *Florida Star*, July 9, 1891; Pensacola

Another meeting was held in Orlando on July 16, 1891. The purpose was to designate the Orange County representatives for the October convention. A coalition of businessmen and farmers (approximately one-third of whom reportedly belonged to the Farmers' Alliance) met in the opera house to select the delegates. National Commissioner Richard Turnbull addressed the meeting and suggested the possibility of Florida joining with Nebraska, Arkansas, and Minnesota to construct a combination building in the section reserved for state buildings at the exposition. Turnbull estimated the cost would be \$20,000 per state.¹⁰

Thanks to the efforts of the planning committee members, many other residents of Orlando and Orange County, and the cooperation of newspapers, the Florida world's fair convention convened in Orlando on October 7, 1891. Judge James D. Beggs of Orlando presided. After a prayer by Reverend N. A. Bailey, Beggs summarized the history of the movement. Delegate George W. Wilson of Marion County then presented Governor Fleming, who urged Florida's representation at the fair. It would advertise the state and attract both people and capital to Florida. Patriotism, state pride, unity, and a love for the work would all be needed if an exhibit were to become a reality, Fleming noted.

After the governor's speech, a total of 111 delegates from fourteen of forty-five counties answered to the roll call. They included farmers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, newspaper men, real estate agents, and others. Each county was represented on the committee on plans and resolutions. The members included: Edward R. Gunby, Hillsborough County; G. P. Healy, Volusia; T. W. Anderson, Polk; George W. Wilson, Marion; Richard G. Robinson, Orange; Rufus E. Rose, Osceola; G. W. Idner, Brevard; L. C. Washburn, Lee; T. N. Gautier, Putnam; R. C. Hendry, DeSoto; Arthur T. Cornwell, Manatee; William N. Sheats, Alachua; Jonathan C. Greeley, Duval; and John Fabyan, Lake. The main charge of the committee was to decide on a scheme to raise money.

Daily News, July 4, 1891; *Savannah Evening News*, quoted in *Juno Tropical Sun*, July 15, 1891.

10. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 17, 1891; *Juno Tropical Sun*, July 29, 1891. See also, Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, August 15, 1891; Titusville *Florida Star*, August 20, 1891; Pensacola *Daily News*, August 26, 1891; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, August 26, 1891.

While the planning committee deliberated in private, the delegates listened to a series of speeches from the other representatives. Syd L. Carter of Alachua County bemoaned the failure of the 1891 legislature, in which he had served, to appropriate any funds for a fair exhibit. Duval County's James R. Challen proposed the creation of a stock company and the sale of shares as a means of raising funds. Tampa's Mrs. Lucie Vanevar promised Hillsborough County's support. John Fabyan of Lake County called upon Florida to raise at least \$200,000. California, he said, would likely raise \$1,000,000

A note of discord was sounded by C. L. Bittinger of Marion County. While his neighbors would do their share, he did not expect much support from the Farmers' Alliance, whose members he characterized as illiberal and unprogressive. His remarks prompted a reply in defense of the Alliance by Syd Carter. Matthew R. Marks of Orange County also disagreed with Bittinger's comments, noting the support in his own county for a Florida exhibit. E. D. Beggs of Osceola felt that each county should be free to raise funds by subscription or by taxation, so that the as-yet-unrepresented counties would cooperate. National Commissioner Charles Bielby concluded the discussion by urging that at least \$20,000 be raised for a joint building.

Since the opera house previously had been engaged for an illustrated lecture about Florida by promoter Arthur C. Jackson, the convention adjourned at 5:00 P.M.

The next day, the morning train brought twenty additional delegates from West Florida counties: Escambia, Washington, Jackson, Holmes, Santa Rosa, Walton, and Calhoun. The membership of the convention thereby rose to 131 delegates representing twenty-one counties. Each of the West Florida delegations selected a representative to join the planning committee: William Dudley Chipley, Escambia; L. M. Ware, Washington; William Hall Milton, Jackson; H. Evans, Holmes; Dr. A. C. Hoadley, Santa Rosa; J. T. Stubbs, Walton; and A. R. Higgins, Calhoun.

The committee on plans and resolutions presented its report through its secretary, William N. Sheats. It proposed the creation of a "directory," or executive committee, to raise \$100,000 to finance an exhibit. The thirteen-member directory included George W. Wilson, Marion County; W. D. Chipley, Escambia; George S. Foote, Orange; R. E. Rose, Osceola; Joseph H. Dur-

kee, Duval; David E. Maxwell, Nassau; W. H. Milton, Jackson; G. P. Healy, Volusia; Silas A. Jones, Hillsborough; B. R. Swope, Orange; Daniel Campbell, Walton; Gardner S. Hardee, Brevard; and Patrick Houstoun, Leon.¹¹ Chipley was named acting chairman, and he called the next meeting for Jacksonville at the Duval House Hotel on October 22.¹²

National Commissioners Charles Bielby and Richard Turnbull, and Nellie Beck of the Board of Lady Managers, met with the group in Jacksonville. Regular officers were then chosen: W. D. Chipley, president; Silas A. Jones, first vice-president; Joseph H. Durkee, second vice-president; George W. Wilson, secretary; and John F. Dunn, treasurer. A message of greeting was sent to the state Farmers' Alliance, then holding its convention in Dade City, asking for cooperation. Chipley also planned to appeal for support from the entire state. After listening to a proposal by promoter Arthur C. Jackson to erect a Florida state building at Chicago modeled on Fort Marion in St. Augustine (Castillo de San Marcos), the directory adopted the idea and authorized the employment of an architect to design the structure.¹³

The emergence of W. D. Chipley as leader of the directory illustrates the confusing and changing nature of Florida politics at the time. Chipley, a conservative Democrat and ex-confederate who represented Florida and Southern railroad interests, had vociferously opposed the reelection of United States Senator Wilkinson Call at the 1891 Florida legislative session at least partly because Call favored some Farmers' Alliance proposals such as railroad regulation. Despite this stormy political back-

11. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, October 8, 9, 11, 12, 1891; Pensacola *Daily News*, October 10, 11, 1891; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, October 10, 17, 1891; Titusville *Florida Star*, October 15, 1891.

12. Pensacola *Daily News*, October 18, 1891; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, October 18, 1891.

13. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, October 23, November 7, 1891; Pensacola *Daily News*, October 23, November 7, 1891; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, October 24, November 7, 14, 1891. Jackson had suggested a building copied after the Castillo de San Marcos as early as October 14, 1891. He may have conceived of his plan during the Orlando convention, or perhaps in anticipation of that gathering. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, October 15, 16, 1891; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, October 24, November 7, 1891. For alternate suggestions regarding a Florida building, see Pensacola *Daily News*, May 22, November 12, 1891; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, March 22, 1892.

ground, there was little mention in the Florida press about whether Chipley's selection as leader of the directory might be offensive to some Call supporters or Alliance men. The *Pensacola Daily News* on October 24, 1891, ran an editorial supporting the fair exhibit movement which stated that: "At none of the great gatherings which have recently been held in the state, and which have for their object the advancement of Florida on material lines, have any of the prominent supporters of Mr. Call been present."¹⁴ In turn, the Jacksonville *Telegram* seemed to suggest that Chipley had become involved in the fair movement, at least partially, in order to further his political struggle against Call.¹⁵ Chipley sought to smooth things over. He wrote to the editor of the Pensacola paper, protesting the "spirit" of the editorial, and calling upon every Floridian to "do his best" in "the grand work before us."¹⁶ At least as far as the newspapers were concerned, Chipley seemed to have succeeded in keeping his politics out of the fair movement.

The directory's next meeting was in Jacksonville at the Everett House on November 25, 1891. At this gathering, Gardner S. Hardee resigned as a director and was replaced by Ziba King of DeSoto County. In addition, Joseph H. Durkee tendered his resignation, and Francis R. Osborne, of the Southern Express Company, was his replacement. Chipley reported that he had already made a trip to Chicago to check possible sites for a Florida building, and had been assisted by Joseph Hirst, secretary of installation, and Arthur C. Jackson. The site tentatively assigned to Florida was approximately ninety by 100 feet in size. Since the preliminary plans for the Fort Marion facsimile would require a 400-foot square space, Chipley had looked into the possibility of securing a larger plot situated along the proposed Midway Plaisance connecting Jackson and Washington parks, the two largely undeveloped city parks where the fair would be constructed. He suggested that other members of the board join him in another Chicago trip to consider that decision.

Chipley also read a communication from Governor Fleming which detailed the governor's belief that the county commissioners were authorized to levy a tax for county purposes. According to Fleming, a tax to advertise a county through an exhibit at

14. *Pensacola Daily News*, October 24, 1891.

15. *Jacksonville Telegram*, quoted in *ibid.*, October 28, 1891

16. *Pensacola Daily News*, October 25, 1891.

Chicago would be justified. Encouraged by the governor's message, the directory urged that a direct tax of one mill upon all taxable property be levied by each county commission. The directory sought publicity through the newspapers and through speakers in the several counties.¹⁷ An open letter released December 11, 1891, called on the people to support the one-mill tax formula.¹⁸

The third directory meeting took place January 11, 1892, in Pensacola's Hotel Escambia. Francis R. Osborne resigned for health reasons and was succeeded as a director by Austin S. Mann of Hernando County. Chipley reported on his second Chicago visit, December 9, and said that he had been impressed by the scope of the preparations he had found there. However, he had concluded that "the voluntary tax plan will not work." Comparing notes of what they had observed in the counties, the directors estimated that only \$32,000 seemed likely to be raised either by county donations or by the voluntary one-mill tax.

On January 12, six women were added to the directory: Fanny B. Chapman of Marianna, Mrs. Medicus A. (Ellen Call) Long of Tallahassee, Mrs. Henry L. Crane of Tampa, Mrs. James K. (Mary Kerr) Duke of Orlando, Mrs. William M. (Clara Boulter) Davidson of Jacksonville, and Mrs. J. J. Finley of Gainesville. In addition, the "lady alternate national commissioners," Mrs. Helen K. Ingram and Mrs. Harrison Reed, were recognized as members of the board. The directory then returned to its first priority— money. In an attempt to verify whether sufficient funding could ever be obtained from the counties, the county commissioners were requested to meet with the directory on February 17, 1892, in Tallahassee. Governor Fleming was asked to issue his own call endorsing such a meeting and urging the county officials to attend.¹⁹

17. Chicago *News*, quoted in Juno *Tropical Sun*, December 24, 1891; Titusville *Florida Star*, November 12, 1891; Pensacola *Daily News*, November 7, 18, 26, 1891; Jacksonville *Standard*, quoted in Pensacola *Daily News*, November 28, 1891; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 26, 1891. See also, Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, January 2, 1892.

18. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, December 13, 1891; Pensacola *Daily News*, December 15, 1891.

19. Pensacola *Daily News*, January 12, 13, 1892; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, January 12, 14, 15, 1892; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, January 16, 1892. It is possible that Mrs. M. Stockton Young of Jacksonville may have served in place of Mrs. Davidson. See Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 17, 1892.

The meeting of the directors and the commissioners began at 3:00 P.M., February 17, in the chamber of the Florida House of Representatives.²⁰ Ninety-two commissioners from twenty-nine counties were present. Chipley, in his welcome speech, summarized the thinking which had generated the fair movement in Florida: "That Florida needs more immigration will not be denied by any intelligent citizen of our state. That our resources need more capital to develop them is recognized by every person here today. To secure this there can be but one suggestion. Let us place our resources and the possibilities of our state before the people seeking new homes and before capitalists seeking investments. How shall we do this is the question which concerns us. . . . What does Florida's World's fair directory offer you? Simply this: An attractive illustration of Florida's resources and possibilities, which all who see it must stop and investigate."²¹ Chipley concluded his remarks by urging the commissioners to levy the one-mill tax in order to finance the exhibit.

After Chipley had spoken, the convention organized by selecting former Governor William D. Bloxham as its presiding officer. Next, Governor Fleming took the floor, and he exhorted the commissioners to adopt the county tax. Fleming contended that the Florida exhibit would benefit every citizen of the state and that the one-mill tax would be an equitable way to pay for it.

William B. Lamar, Florida's attorney general, took an opposite view. He contended that county commissioners could not levy a tax in concert "to supply the want of a state appropriation," but funds from individual counties could be used for individual county exhibits. Most commissioners questioned the legality of the tax, and several opposed it altogether. Only the commissioners from Orange and Osceola favored the tax idea. A few commissioners wanted the governor to convene a special legislative session in order to appropriate funds for the fair, but the majority did not go along. The commissioners also refused to follow the attorney general's recommendation to appropriate a sum equal to the one-mill tax to pay for individual county exhibits.

20. Pensacola *Daily News*, January 20, 1892; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, January 23, 1892; Titusville *Florida Star*, January 28, 1892. A list of Florida's county commissioners is to be found in the Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 17, 1892.

21. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, February 18, 1892.

The Tallahassee convention had failed to secure any public funding for a Florida exhibit. At first, the directors and Chipley planned to resign, but they decided instead to wait upon the reports which were due to be presented at a meeting scheduled for March 23, 1892, in Tampa.²²

It was at the fifth directory meeting, held in the music room of the Tampa Bay Hotel, that the public effort to raise funds and to create a Florida state exhibit at Chicago expired officially. The situation had not improved since the Tallahassee convention, and the directors had to admit failure. All the funds which had been raised by subscription would be returned to the donors, and the directors agreed to pay for any operating expenses which had been incurred. They did decide, however, to maintain for the time being a paper existence in order that space reserved for a state building and for displays of exhibits in the great horticultural, agricultural, and mining halls at Chicago might not be immediately and permanently forfeited. The final communication of the directory announcing these moves was signed by W. D. Chipley, George W. Wilson, Silas A. Jones, B. R. Swope, George S. Foote, W. H. Milton, R. E. Rose, Albert W. Gilchrist, Mary Kerr Duke, Mrs. Henry L. Crane, Ellen Call Long, Fanny B. Chapman, and E. Nellie Beck.²³

Despite the enthusiastic efforts of many prominent men and women, and the support of several newspaper editors, the public movement for a Florida exhibit at the world's fair had come to nothing because neither the public, the state legislature, nor the county commissions wanted to pay for it. But the determination of one man was stirred rather than crushed by the disintegration of the directory. Almost nothing has been written about the life of Arthur Charles Jackson, but without his participation, Florida would never have been represented at the world's fair. Jackson was a promoter, showman, and entrepreneur whose travels took him to many sections of the United States. He was born in Waitsfield, Vermont, on June 29, 1858, the son of Alvin N. Jackson, a shoemaker, and Polly Schlagel Jackson. It is known that he attended the University of Illinois from 1875 to 1878, although he never received a degree. Jackson described himself

22. Ibid., February 17, 18, 19, 1892; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, February 20, 1892; Titusville *Florida Star*, February 25, 1892.

23. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, March 24, 1892; Pensacola *Daily News*, March 26, 1892; Titusville *Florida Star*, March 31, 1892.



Arthur C. Jackson. Photograph from Hubert Howe Bancroft, *The Book of the Fair* (Bancroft Company, 1895), Volume 3.

as a traveler and lecturer who had attended the Boston Latin School, studied law under General Benjamin F. Butler, and taught in the Boston public schools. He married Isabella C. Stetson on March 14, 1882.²⁴

In 1889, railroad and hotel magnate Henry B. Plant had selected Jackson to manage a Florida exhibit at the Paris international exposition, a responsibility he carried through satisfactorily.²⁵ Thereafter, it appears that Jackson continued to make his living by promoting Florida. For example, on December 11 and 12, 1890, he presented illustrated lectures entitled "Florida Historic" and "Florida Picturesque" at the YMCA hall in Elgin, Illinois.²⁶ Jackson had been present during the Orlando meeting of October 7-8, 1891, when the directory was first organized.²⁷ It was Jackson who had the idea of constructing a Florida state building in the shape of Fort Marion and who had sold the plan to the directors. Further, Jackson had accompanied Chipley on the fact-finding visit in Chicago.²⁸ Whether he was at this time a free agent pursuing his own fortune, or the paid agent of someone anxious to see Florida represented at the fair, is uncertain.²⁹

Jackson left Florida and did a great deal of traveling during November and December 1891. He publicized himself by writing letters to newspaper editors. In a letter written in San Francisco, December 15, 1891, he mentioned the consultation he had with Chipley in Chicago. He was then planning to visit other

24. *Who Was Who in America*, 4 vols. (Chicago, 1960), III, 441; *New York Times*, October 4, 1949; Portland (Maine) *Press-Herald*, October 3, 1949; Matt Bushnell Jones, *History of the Town of Waitsfield, Vermont, 1782-1908, With Family Genealogies* (Boston, 1909), 351; Maynard Brichford, University archivist, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, to Kerber, December 3, 1986; Portland (Maine) *Express* June 17, 1937; February 26, 1957.

25. *Pensacola Daily News*, October 7, 1892.

26. Elgin (Illinois) *Daily News*, quoted in Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, December 20, 1890. See also, *Pensacola Daily News*, October 7, 1892.

27. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, October 8, 1891; *Pensacola Daily News*, October 10, 1891; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, October 10, 1891.

28. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, October 15, 23, 1891; *Pensacola Daily News*, November 26, 1891. See also, Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 26, 1891.

29. An article in the *Florida Times-Union*, February 16, 1892, stated that Jackson had been appointed by Davis as an honorary commissioner of the fair in November 1891. It further stated that Jackson would tour the state after the Tallahassee convention giving illustrated lectures under the auspices of and for the benefit of the directory.

parts of California and also Mexico.³⁰ Evidently, Jackson changed his travel plans; on Christmas day he was in Denver. He passed through Chicago, and by January 11, 1892, he was in Montreal, Canada.³¹ It is possible that Jackson may have been sent on the cross-country journey by someone in Chicago eager to publicize the fair. When Jackson and his wife arrived in Jacksonville on February 15, 1892, he claimed to have been appointed by George R. Davis, the fair director general, as an honorary commissioner for the exhibition.³² Jackson had returned in time to attend the Tallahassee meeting, at which he may have shown photographs taken in Chicago a few days earlier.³³

On February 25, Jackson was once more in Jacksonville where he delivered an illustrated lecture on Chicago and the fair to 300 spectators in the Sub-Tropical Building.³⁴ Then, on March 6, 1892, he announced his second idea, the publication of a gazetteer which would advertise places, businesses, and opportunities in Florida and would generate the income needed for the construction of the Florida state building. His original gazetteer scheme involved the printing of 100,000 copies of a 1,000-page directory about Florida. For \$1.00, a donor would have his name listed, and for \$100, a purchaser would be entitled to one page of advertising. The goal was to raise \$100,000.³⁵ Thus, when the directory met at Tampa on March 23, with plans to abdicate, Jackson had already offered himself as the successor to that body.

Soon thereafter, possibly because of Jackson's merits or possibly because of the intervention of other persons, Governor Fleming appointed him and Joseph Hirst to be special Florida fair commissioners. They could use the gazetteer plan to raise money. Jackson's commission was issued on March 30, 1892.³⁶ One day later, it was announced that Henry M. Flagler had agreed conditionally to purchase \$20,000 worth of space in the

30. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, January 2, 1892.

31. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, December 31, 1891, January 17, 1892.

32. *Ibid.*, February 16, 1892.

33. *Ibid.* Jackson is listed as a member of the directory in a *Florida Times-Union* story, February 17, 1892. See also, *ibid.*, February 23, 1892.

34. *Ibid.*, February 26, 1892.

35. *Ibid.*, March 6, 1892. See also, *ibid.*, March 27, 1892.

36. Pensacola *Daily News*, April 2, 1892; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, April 2, 1892. See also, Pensacola *Daily News*, April 1, 1892.

proposed gazetteer and had offered to donate that space for a descriptive sketch of the state's advantages. Flagler's commitment was contingent on the sale of the remainder of the pages in the gazetteer to other advertisers.³⁷ In 1892, Flagler was considering plans to extend his railroad and hotel system south along the east coast of Florida to New Smyrna, the Lake Worth area, or perhaps even farther south.³⁸ His offer to purchase space in the gazetteer was surely based upon his realization that a prominent Florida exhibit in Chicago might prove of value to his own future interests.

Despite Flagler's involvement, the gazetteer scheme failed to attract wide-spread support. Jackson traveled throughout the state during the spring and summer of 1892, explaining the plan to everyone who would listen, but without demonstrable results.³⁹ He then modified his appeal and asked the county commissioners to purchase pages in the gazetteer, promising them in return the use of floor and wall space for county displays in his projected Florida state building as a bonus.⁴⁰ In July 1892, Jackson won the endorsement of the state press association, meeting in Gainesville, for his appeal to the county commissions, but this endorsement did not help him either.⁴¹ Thus, Jackson was experiencing no more success than the directory had achieved, either in raising money by subscription or through taxation. Unwilling to concede defeat, Jackson took the only alternative available to him; he borrowed the money to construct a Florida state building.

37. Savannah *Morning News*, April 1, 1892; Juno *Tropical Sun*, April 14, 1892; Pensacola *Daily News*, April 5, 1892. See also, Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, April 30, 1892.

38. Edward Nelson Akin. "Southern Reflection of the Gilded Age: Henry M. Flagler's System, 1885-1913" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1975), 49-93.

39. Pensacola *Daily News*, April 5, 1892; Juno *Tropical Sun*, April 7, 1892; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, April 11, 24, May 1, 11, 1892; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, April 2, 23, 30, 1892; Titusville *Florida Star*, May 5, 1892.

40. See Jackson's appeal of July 2, 1892, to the county commissioners. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 3, 18, 1892; Pensacola *Daily News*, July 5, 1892; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, July 16, 1892; Titusville *Florida Star*, July 21, 1892.

41. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 22, 1892; Titusville *Florida Star*, August 11, 1892; Juno *Tropical Sun*, August 4, 1892. See also, Jackson's appeal to the county commissioners of July 26, 1892. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 27, August 3, 1892; Juno *Tropical Sun*, August 4, 1892; Titusville *Florida Star*, August 11, 1892.

On September 6, 1892, Jackson announced that a large suitable space among the state building sites had been allocated for the Florida structure.⁴² Apparently work began on the Florida building in mid-September 1892.⁴³ A wooden framework would be covered by a coquina veneer to recreate the exterior finish of Fort Marion.⁴⁴ The foundation was completed by the end of the first week in October.⁴⁵ Some progress on the site was evident when the official dedication ceremonies for the fair were held on October 21, 1892, six months before the official opening. Governor Fleming demonstrated his continuing interest by attending the dedication activities, in company with members of his military staff, including Albert W. Gilchrist, David Lang, and H. T. Baya.⁴⁶

Jackson reported, December 4, 1892, that the building was substantially complete.⁴⁷ Only a few finishing touches and exterior decoration remained to be done. He said that he had borrowed the money to put up the building in anticipation of receiving approximately \$7,000 which had been promised by eight counties, plus whatever else might possibly be forthcoming.⁴⁸

The first news story identifying the source of Jackson's borrowed money appeared on December 18, 1892. In one of his many public appeals for support, Jackson referred to Henry M. Flagler and H. R. Duval as the sources of all "preliminary" funds.⁴⁹ H. Rieman Duval was receiver of the Florida Railroad and Navigation Company, and president of the Florida Central and Peninsular Railroad Company.⁵⁰ Jackson stated that the money expended on the building— which he now put at nearly \$10,000— had been advanced by Flagler.⁵¹

42. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, September 7, 1893.

43. *Ibid.*, September 11, 1892.

44. *Ibid.* Jackson initially had suggested that the exterior walls of the facsimile should be covered with a veneer of phosphate rock. *Ibid.*, October 15, 23, 1891.

45. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, October 8, 1892.

46. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, October 29, 1892. For a description of the state building by Guy Metcalf, see *ibid.*, November 7, 1892.

47. *Ibid.*, December 5, 1892. W. Mead Nalter of Chicago is mentioned in only one source as the architect of the Florida state building. J. B. McClure, *The World's Columbian Exposition* (Chicago, 1893), 238.

48. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, December 5, 1892.

49. See Jackson's circular letter dated December 17, 1892. *Ibid.*, December 18, 1892.

50. *Who Was Who in America*, I, 350.

51. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, December 18, 1892.



Panorama of state buildings at the Fair. The Florida building is in the center, with the Kentucky building to the right and Missouri to the left. Photograph from William Henry Jackson, *The White City (As It Was)* (White City Art Company, 1894).

With his Fort Marion facsimile a reality, Jackson continued to travel between Chicago and Florida, seeking to obtain additional funds and to arrange for the materials to be exhibited either in the Florida state building or in the other fair structures. He arrived in Jacksonville on January 2, 1893, displaying an official certificate indicating that the Florida building was complete and ready for occupancy. It was described as a square, 140 by 140 foot-building, on lot number seven (an area of 175 by 200 feet).⁵² The Florida building was surrounded by the buildings from the states of Kentucky, Arkansas, Minnesota, Louisiana, Missouri, West Virginia, and a building representing the territories of New Mexico, Arizona, and Oklahoma. Jackson was again in Jacksonville on January 21, 1893, with letters signed by Flagler, Duval, and Plant, authorizing free railroad transportation to Chicago for all Florida exhibits.⁵³

Presumably in order to formalize his position, Jackson arranged for the establishment of a new organization under his

52. *Ibid.*, January 3, 1893.

53. *Ibid.*, January 23, 1893; Titusville *Florida Star*, January 27, 1893.

leadership. This also may have been an attempt to give him the appearance of independence from Flagler in the eyes of fair officials in Chicago and of potential donors and exhibitors in Florida. The Florida World's Columbian Exposition Commission was established during a meeting at the St. James Hotel in Jacksonville on February 17, 1893. Jackson was elected president and executive commissioner, Guy Metcalf of Dade County was elected secretary, and John T. Talbott of Duval was chosen treasurer.⁵⁴

Since he had managed to construct his building and create his own organization, it began to appear that Jackson might be capable of achieving results beyond the reach of less-single-minded men. He announced on March 15 that within two weeks a trainload of Florida products and exhibits would depart for Chicago.⁵⁵ When another special fifteen-car freight train full of Florida materials reached Chicago on April 22, it did look as though Jackson's luck was continuing.⁵⁶ Cash Thomas, an employee of the Florida International and Semi-Tropical Exposition staged in Ocala during 1889-1890, was put in charge of the exhibits.⁵⁷ With opening day of the fair set for May 1, the components necessary for a successful Florida presence at the world's fair seemed to have been brought together primarily through Jackson's exertions.

Members of the Florida Press Association, who had been writing about the fair for years, decided to visit Chicago in 1893 as a group. The members first assembled on May 9 for their annual meeting in Tallahassee, at Munro's Opera House. The association dispatched an official delegation to urge the legislators, then in session, to appropriate public funds to finance the Florida exhibit. An assorted party of husbands, wives, and children embarked from Tallahassee by train on May 11. After

54. Titusville *Florida Star*, March 3, 1893; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, August 27, 1893; Juno *Tropical Sun*, March 2, 1893. Presumably, each of the eleven counties meriting representation had contributed funds to Jackson for the state building.

55. This announcement came during the second meeting of Jackson's organization. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, March 16, 1893. Passenger rates for rail travel to the fair from Florida were fixed during a meeting held in St. Augustine on March 10, 1893. See *ibid.*, March 11, 1893.

56. *Chicago Times*, quoted in *ibid.*, April 24, 1893.

57. *Ibid.* See also, Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, November 26, 1891, December 22, 1892.

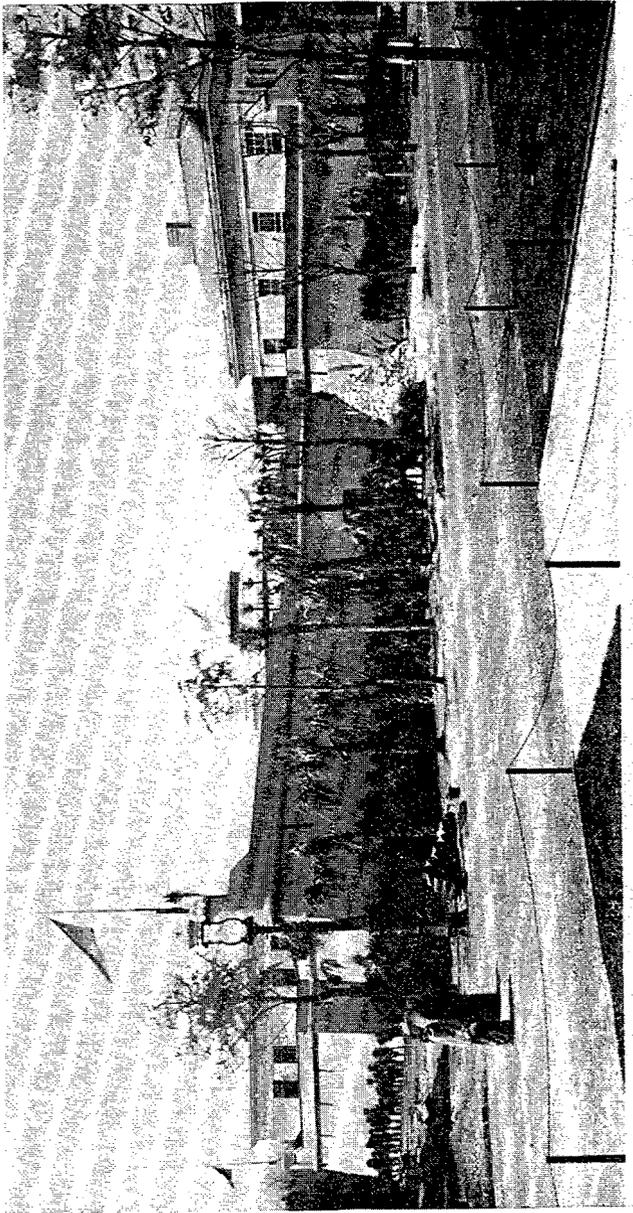
sightseeing at Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, the group arrived in Chicago three days later.⁵⁸

Very few of the Florida journalists who visited the fair subsequently wrote eyewitness accounts or even news stories about their impressions. Not many attempted to write about Florida's participation, and not one, so far as is known, attempted to present a comprehensive description of the physical and intellectual scope of the fair. The scattered news reports which did appear during May and June 1893, generally spoke well of what had been attempted by Florida but lamented that more had not been accomplished. Although Jackson's energy and his creation of the Fort Marion facsimile usually received favorable mention, the lack of outstanding Florida displays became a source of much discussion and frustration.

The following description of the Florida state building and the shortage of displays was typical: "Not far from the entrance and very nicely located are the gray walls of 'the Fort', as the Florida state building is called. From its turrets float four weather-beaten flags, Spanish, British, French, and United States, representing the countries who have at different times occupied it. It attracts universal attention and is concluded to be one of the most interesting and attractive buildings on the grounds. It is surrounded by thickly set rows of Spanish bayonets and in front tall palmettos rear their heads and greet the Floridian with a home welcome. In raised gilt letters 'Florida State Building' appears near the entrance upon the walls. In the court a large pyramid of phosphate is built up, also plants of all kinds. Just within the building are the various county spaces; here Mr. Cash Thomas and his assistants are busily engaged placing the exhibits and decorating. Very few have yet been received, comparatively— to our shame be it said. Here is a beautiful building, which is visited by every one who goes to the fair; space in abundance, transportation free; and yet our people will not accept the opportunity to make a record for themselves, and obtain all the wonderful benefits which would result from this way of advertising our state and her resources."⁵⁹

58. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, April 22, May 13, 1893; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 10, 11, 16, 18, 1893. For information about the activities of the Florida party in Chicago, see Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 21, 23, 25, 28, 30, June 3, 1893; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, May 27, 1893; Juno *Tropical Sun*, June 1, 1893.

59. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 3, 1893; Titusville *Florida Star*, May 19, 1893.



FORT MARION REPRODUCED

Florida State Building, from Bancroft, *Book of the Fair*, Volume 3.

Samuel C. Boylston, a former Confederate cavalry officer and a railroad and steamboat agent from Jacksonville, commented: "The state building is a daisy— the most unique thing on the grounds in the way of a state building. Everybody stops to look at it and, if they didn't want to go in, it would be all right; for the old fort is a big Florida advertisement in itself. But Jackson can't keep the door locked, and so the crowds get inside to find an exhibit that so far does us very little credit. There are the woods exhibits of the Plant system— a very nice thing and the same one that went to the Paris exhibition— a very interesting exhibit from Monroe County, and some from Dade county and other places now being arranged. But, bless my soul, what a chance we have got and how we are throwing it away every day!"⁶⁰

A Michigan man who maintained a winter residence near Crescent City, Florida, remarked that he was "amazed, mortified and chagrined . . . to witness the very sorry exhibit which she [Florida] makes at the World's fair." This man had no complaint about the Florida state building, but "in the agricultural, horticultural and other buildings, where takes place the real competition of the states, Florida either has no part at all or is so poorly represented as to make her friends feel that it would be better were she without representation."⁶¹ Joseph Richardson, a passenger agent for Flagler's railroads, estimated that 20,000 people daily visited the Florida building. He believed that there were "some very creditable exhibits there; and, while the whole of them is not a thousandth part of what we ought to have there, it is really not so bad as it has been painted."⁶² Retired Justice Edwin M. Randall of the Florida Supreme Court was not so charitable in his estimate. "I have been to the Fair and am ashamed of Florida," he said. "With the opportunities for a creditable show, the neglect by the Legislature and the people of Florida is shameful."⁶³ One especially disappointed visitor said: "I think it would have been better not to have attempted anything than to have done what has been done." He thought it might be best "to put our exhibit into the garbage wagon and dump it outside the grounds."⁶⁴

60. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, May 26, 1893.

61. *Ibid.*, July 3, 1893.

62. *Ibid.*, July 7, 1893.

63. Jacksonville *Metropolis*, quoted in Titusville *Florida Star*, July 14, 1893.

64. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, June 9, 1893.

Ironically, the gibes which fair visitors initially directed at the Florida displays and exhibits, soon expanded into personal criticism of Arthur Jackson. Mahlon Gore recognized this evolution of criticism and denounced the tendency in a letter from Chicago: "I may say here incidentally that Florida has missed her golden opportunity. She had allotted to her one of the most favorable positions in the horticultural building. There she had ample space for a grand exhibit. It is now conspicuous for its emptiness. The Florida building is ready. It has cost the state nothing, although it represents a considerable outlay of money. So far as any mutual benefit to the state is concerned it might as well close its doors. It is discreditable to the state that it contains so little. Just here I want to say a word privately for Arthur C. Jackson. He has worked untiringly and without reward from the state. He has worked in the face of opposing sentiment, and in spite of slurs and accusations. Whatever is here from our state is due almost solely to his efforts. He is still working and declares his purpose to work to the end or starve in the effort. If he has been rewarded to the extent of a dollar, no one has discovered that fact. Yet he has been accused of having made thousands of dollars out of the enterprise. No one knows or can point to any contribution or appropriation of money, however, out of which he could have made a cent. Mr. H. M. Flagler is behind him. Jackson has simply represented that gentleman and has looked after the expenditure of Mr. Flagler's money. The state and the people of Florida are indebted to Mr. Jackson. They ought not to bring malicious accusations against him."⁶⁵

The Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union* – a Flagler interest – came to Jackson's defense, stressing the point that there would be no Florida presence at Chicago at all except for his efforts.⁶⁶ The *Times-Union* sharply criticized W. D. Chipley for failing to deliver on an early conditional pledge of \$2,500 to the fair movement.⁶⁷ To this, the Pensacola *Daily News* rejoined that the Florida directory had realized the futility of attempting to raise adequate funds and had been entirely correct in abandoning the dream.⁶⁸ In other words, too little had indeed turned out to

65. Orlando *Daily Reporter*, June 6, 1893, quoted in *ibid.*

66. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, June 9, 1893.

67. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, quoted in Pensacola *Daily News*, June 15, 1893. See also, Pensacola *Daily News*, September 16, 1891.

68. Pensacola *Daily News*, June 15, 1893.

be worse than nothing at all, at least as far as world's fair exhibits. According to the Pensacola paper, Jackson had been "attempting to run a private show at Chicago which has failed and has become a disgrace to our people— an abomination in the nostrils of the nations of the earth." The paper indicated that Flagler and Jackson were "running a private business at Chicago which scandalizes the state and directly works injury to her best interests."⁶⁹

While the personal criticism no doubt irritated Jackson, his greatest tribulations were only just about to commence. With no warning, Florida Governor Henry L. Mitchell arbitrarily issued a proclamation on July 15, 1893, stating that because of the complaints about Jackson, he was revoking all fair appointments.⁷⁰ This proclamation evidently was dispatched to Joseph Hirst, secretary of installation, in Chicago, rather than to George Davis, director general.⁷¹

Mitchell's proclamation proved to be a bombshell. Public interest in the fair as measured by newspaper coverage revived immediately. Although Jackson was in New York when word of Mitchell's action reached Chicago, his wife spoke to reporters on his behalf. Mrs. Jackson reminded the journalists that her husband held a commission from Governor Fleming, that the Fort Marion facsimile had been built with private money, that Flagler had advanced \$15,000, that approximately \$7,000 received from counties had been paid to Flagler, and that H. R. Duval had also contributed money. Mrs. Jackson also maintained that there were Florida displays in the forestry, agricultural, mining, liberal arts, and horticultural buildings, in addition to the Florida state building.⁷²

Director General Davis wrote a cautiously-worded and respectful reply to Governor Mitchell on July 18, 1893, expressing considerable surprise and asking the governor for additional, specific information. Davis informed the governor that he had heard no complaints of any kind against Jackson except by Secretary Hirst.⁷³ David Lang, Mitchell's private secretary, responded to Davis on July 22. Lang explained that Mitchell had

69. Ibid.

70. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 22, August 27, 1893.

71. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, July 29, 1893.

72. Chicago *Herald*, quoted in Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, July 22, 1893.

73. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, August 27, 1893.

intended to remove only Jackson by his proclamation. The vague charges listed by Lang against Jackson amounted to three general points: Jackson was misrepresenting Florida at the fair because no official Florida state exhibit existed and he was using the names of prominent Floridians on his stationery without proper authorization; Jackson had presumed to remove the sign on a private exhibit without authority; and Jackson was selling an orange cider drink falsely identified as a Florida product.⁷⁴

It would appear that Jackson had fallen victim to his own achievements. He had provoked the jealousy and envy of several men who disliked him and who perhaps coveted the role which he had carved out for himself. Chief among these enemies were Secretary of Installation Hirst, James M. Kreamer of the Hamilton Disston interests, Florida Commissioner of Agriculture Lucius B. Wombwell, Leon County vintner Emile DuBois, and National Commissioners Richard Turnbull and Jesse T. Bernard.⁷⁵ It was these men who had brought influence to bear on Governor Mitchell to remove Jackson.

Thus, at the very height of the fair, Jackson was forced to spend the rest of the Chicago summer fighting desperately to retain his position. There is some evidence to suggest that the fair authorities temporarily permitted James M. Kreamer to supervise the Florida space in the agricultural building and Alexander D. Roussel to oversee the Florida section in the horticultural building.⁷⁶

After denying Mitchell's charges and authority over him, Jackson prepared and eventually presented on August 14, a formal, written refutation of the charges.⁷⁷ Jackson rejected individually and as a whole all the complaints. Hirst, Jackson explained, previously had supported him, but he was very seriously ill now. Jackson attributed Hirst's recent hostility to the decline in his health.⁷⁸

As for the three points in Mitchell's message, Jackson cited

74. Ibid.

75. Tallahassee *Tallahasseean*, quoted in Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, July 29, 1893; Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, July 8, 29, August 18, 26, 1893; Titusville *Florida Star*, August 4, 11, 1893; Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, August 27, 1893.

76. Tallahassee *Weekly Floridian*, August 18, 1893.

77. Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union*, August 27, 1893.

78. Ibid. In fact, Hirst was ill and he died in Chicago on the evening of September 3, 1893. Ibid., September 7, 1893.

the February 17, 1893, meeting in Jacksonville as the source of his authority to represent Florida at the fair. With respect to the reality of a Florida exhibit, he pointed to twenty-five carloads of Florida products which he had received for display in the Fort Marion facsimile and other structures. Several former governors and other prominent persons had been given courtesy titles by the Jacksonville meeting, but none had protested to Jackson that his name was being misused.⁷⁹

Secondly, Jackson admitted that he had argued with Kreamer, an employee of Hamilton Disston's Okeechobee Land Company, over use of Florida's space in the agriculture building. Jackson contended that although he had agreed to give Disston one-third of the space, Kreamer had attempted to monopolize the entire area and had interfered with the signs on several small county exhibits. Kreamer also had installed a wood exhibit in the space, which violated the rules of the fair, and officials had made Jackson remove it. Moreover, Kreamer improperly had moved a Marion County exhibit and in its place installed a wine exhibit by Emile DuBois of Tallahassee, a pioneer of Florida grape culture and wine production.⁸⁰

According to Jackson, DuBois was responsible for the third Mitchell complaint. He had requested permission to display and sell his Leon County wines in the Florida state building. He planned to have the wine dispensed by two Negro women in costume. When Jackson refused permission for such an arrangement, DuBois began spreading the rumors about the sale of a spurious orange cider drink. Jackson insisted that the identical drink was being sold at more than sixty locations throughout the fair grounds, including within the California building. The beverage was neither being marketed as a genuine Florida product nor as a Florida citrus drink.⁸¹

The dispute was assigned to a committee of the fair's executive officers to mediate. That committee ruled, on August 16, that Jackson had been elected properly by a private body of citizens and that his role could not be contested by an elected official of the state of Florida.⁸² The dispute was settled by Davis in Jackson's favor on August 28, 1893.⁸³ With the conclusion of

79. *Ibid.*, August 27, 1893.

80. *Ibid.*

81. *Ibid.*

82. *Ibid.*

83. *Ibid.*, August 29, 1893.

this spiteful episode, newspaper coverage of Florida happenings at the fair virtually ceased.

Much of the explanation for Mitchell's abrupt behavior toward Jackson is to be found in his peculiar personality and his intense jealousy of Henry M. Flagler. Mitchell envied the immense economic power and prestige which Flagler was gaining in Florida. There seems to be little doubt that when Mitchell, urged on by others, attacked Jackson, he was striking out also at Flagler. Mitchell's basic antipathy revealed itself again in December 1894, when he announced his intention to honor a Texas request for the arrest and extradition of Flagler over an alleged anti-trust law violation. The governor backed down after a few weeks under pressure from Flagler's friends.⁸⁴

It is impossible to evaluate precisely the impact of the Florida presence at the World's Columbian Exposition. It seems plausible that some potential tourists were encouraged to visit the state, but it is doubtful that many individuals saw anything at the fair to tempt them to invest their money in Florida. The long, fruitless preliminary struggle to provide for some type of Florida representation at the fair, however, both reveals the political conservatism within the state at the time and foreshadows the pivotal role which corporate power would play in Florida during the twentieth century.

The World's Columbian Exposition officially came to an end at sunset on October 30, 1893. Formal and elaborate closing ceremonies had been planned, but these were disrupted on the evening of October 28, when a disgruntled office seeker shot and killed Chicago Mayor Carter Henry Harrison. The murder turned the final ceremonies into a funeral gathering.⁸⁵ Harrison's expressed wish that Congress might fund the fair for another season in 1894 came to nothing.⁸⁶ During the winter of 1893-1894, poor people, vagrants, and tramps occupied the vacant fair buildings.⁸⁷ Despite suggestions that many of the structures should be preserved, only a few of the fair buildings survived for very long. The fate of the Florida building is unknown.

84. Sidney Walter Martin, *Florida's Flagler* (Athens, 1949), 253-54; David Leon Chandler, *Henry Flagler: The Astonishing Life and Times of the Visionary Robber Baron Who Founded Florida* (New York, 1986), 302, footnote 4.

85. Badger, *Great American Fair*, 129; Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 286-87.

86. Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 287-88.

87. Badger, *Great American Fair*, 130.

In January, and again in July 1894, fires consumed many structures.⁸⁸ The World's Columbian Exposition Salvage Company finally completed the disassembling of the fair buildings by 1896.⁸⁹ La Rabida (the facsimile Spanish monastery which had held several Columbus relics) ultimately became a hospital for children, the Art Palace eventually was incorporated into Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry, and the Midway (without the famed Ferris Wheel, which was moved to Coney Island) finally evolved into the tree-lined entrance to the University of Chicago.⁹⁰

Arthur Charles Jackson lived to the age of ninety-one, but he never again played a major role in the history of Florida. He continued to travel and to involve himself in adventure and promotional activities throughout his life. Jackson later became enthused over the beauties and riches of Seattle and Alaska. He claimed to have helped to establish the first libraries in Alaska, and he lectured in the United States and abroad about the area.

In his later years, Jackson founded the International Longfellow Society in Portland, Maine, where he finally settled. He became custodian of the Longfellow birthplace in that city and waged an extended but unsuccessful campaign to secure funds to restore and to preserve the structure. A widower since the turn of the century, Jackson lived alone in the decaying old Longfellow house for many years. So great was his admiration for the poet that he tried to model his very clothes and appearance after him, even to the extent of growing a long beard. Jackson died in poverty in Portland in 1949, and the dilapidated building was razed six years after his death.⁹¹

88. *Ibid.*; Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 287-88.

89. Burg, *Chicago's White City*, 288.

90. Badger, *Great American Fair*, 130.

91. Seattle Chamber of Commerce, *A Few Facts About Seattle, Queen City of the Pacific* (Seattle, 1898); Sitka (Alaska) *Alaskan*, December 17, 1898; *New York Times*, October 4, 1949; Portland (Maine) *Press-Herald*, October 3, 1949.