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A WEST POINT GRADUATE IN THE SECOND SEMINOLE WAR: WILLIAM WARREN CHAPMAN AND THE VIEW FROM FORT FOSTER

Edited by EDWARD C. COKER AND DANIEL L. SCHAFER

In the fall of 1837, Second Lieutenant William Warren Chapman departed from Old Point Comfort, Virginia, bound for Florida on the *Caladonia Brander*.¹ An 1837 graduate of West Point, he was en route to the Second Seminole War in Florida. After arriving at Fort Brooke in Tampa Bay on October 27, 1837, he was assigned to Company B, Second Artillery which had orders to regarrison Fort Foster. Located twenty-one miles north of Tampa Bay on the military road from Fort Brooke to Fort King, Fort Foster protected the bridge over the Hillsborough River and served as a supply depot for the forts to the north.² Initially, Chapman was appointed assistant commissary

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1. William Chapman was born January 31, 1814, Springfield, Massachusetts. He graduated from West Point in 1837. The letters in this article were written by Chapman to his fiancée, Helen Blair, born April 4, 1817, in Westfield, Massachusetts, died December 12, 1881, Columbia, South Carolina. The Chapman family letters have passed down through five generations of descendants and are presently in the possession of a great-great-grandson, Edward C. Coker.

The letters have been presented here in their original form unless otherwise indicated. Only those portions that were repetitious or were not relative to Florida affairs at the time have been removed. Because of space limitations, the greetings and salutations have been omitted after the representative examples in the first letter. Assisting with the historical editing of the Chapman letters were students in the 1989 Local History Seminar at the University of North Florida: Carol Smith, Michael Warren, Richard Gustavson, Albert Franson, and Henry Strickland.

2. Fort Foster was originally Fort Alabama which the Army built in March 1836 and abandoned April 26, 1836. The Indians subsequently destroyed it. In November and December 1836, Lieutenant Colonel William S. Foster and 320 men rebuilt the fort and bridge over the Hillsborough River. The work was completed in late December 1836 when General Thomas S. Jesup inspected and renamed it. The fort was abandoned a second time in June 1837, and it was rebuilt that November with the arrival of Chapman and

of subsistence and quartermaster in November and later also served as post commander for Fort Foster from early April until his departure May 4, 1838.³ While in Florida, Chapman wrote often to his fiancée, Helen Ellsworth Blair of Westfield, Massachusetts, telling of the war, the rebuilding of Fort Foster, and the illnesses and desperate loneliness of soldiers serving in the Second Seminole War.

Before Chapman arrived in Florida, the war had gone badly for the Army and local militia forces.⁴ Its origins lay deep in Florida history; in fact, war seemed inevitable as soon as land-hungry Americans began moving into Florida after the Spanish government ceded the province to the United States in 1821. Only three years earlier, Andrew Jackson had commanded a punishing invasion of Spanish Florida that devastated the Indian villages west of the Suwannee River. Clustered near the Flint River had been many villages of Mikasuki under the defiant leadership of Chief Neamathla.⁵ Nearby and stretching to the banks of the Suwannee were the villages of the Alachua, led by Chief Bowlegs who had been driven west by other land-hungry Americans during the 1812-1813 invasions known as the Patriot Rebellion.⁶ Descendants of bands of Lower Creeks from central and southern Georgia, they had begun moving into Florida after English colonists from South Carolina had killed or enslaved most of north Florida's indigenous Indians during the colonial phase of Queen Anne's War in 1701-1713. They

his force. The fort, located in present-day Hillsborough State Park on Highway 301 north of Tampa, Florida, has been reconstructed by the Florida Department of Natural Resources, Division of Recreation and Parks. The DNR's pamphlet, *History lives in Florida* (January 1988) provides information on Fort Foster.

3. As quartermaster, Chapman was the military officer in charge of administering rations, provisions, and supplies. The precise date he assumed command of Fort Foster is uncertain, but his letters suggest that it occurred in late March or early April 1838 after illness had debilitated other officers.
4. For historical information on the war, see John Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War, 1835-1842* (Gainesville, 1967; revised ed., 1985); John T. Sprague, *The Origin, Progress and Conclusion of the Florida War* (New York, 1847; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1964); and George S. Buker, *Swamp Sailor: Riverine Warfare in the Everglades, 1835-1842* (Gainesville, 1975).
5. Chief Neamathla was also known as John Hicks.
6. See Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco* (Athens, 1954); and Kenneth W. Porter, "Negroes and the East Florida Annexation Plot, 1811-1813," *Journal of Negro History* 30 (January 1945), 9-29.



From a portrait of William Warren Chapman, ca. 1840. *Photographs from the collection of Edward C. Coker.*

retained the independent town structures of the Creeks and named some of them for the towns from which they had migrated: Mikasuki, Tallahassee, Apalachicola, Tamathli, Hitchiti, and others. Interspersed among these Lower Creek bands were

approximately 1,000 Red Stick warriors who had migrated with their families from Alabama following Andrew Jackson's crushing defeat of the Upper Creeks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River in 1814.⁷ Other bands of Upper Creeks settled near Tampa Bay.

After decades of absence from the councils of the Creeks, the Florida Indians had developed their own traditions by 1821 and were commonly known as Seminoles or "breakaways" or "pioneers" from the Creeks. Although they still shared a common culture and spoke either Hitchiti or Muskogee, the two major language groups of the Creek Confederation, the Seminoles had developed intense hatred for their northern cousins based on the latter's alliances with Andrew Jackson during the wars of 1812-1814 and 1817-1818.

Representatives of the new American government signed treaties with the Seminole leaders in 1823 at Moultrie Creek, south of St. Augustine, and again in 1832 at Paynes Landing on the Oklawaha River. The first established a 4,000,000-acre reserve in south Florida for exclusive Indian settlement and included promises of financial support for twenty years. It was apparent, however, that the ultimate goal of white Floridians was total removal of the Indians. These settlers became so confident that Seminoles were powerless that a treaty signed in 1832 called for total removal within three years. In an 1834 conference, however, Indian leaders made it clear that they intended to resist removal.

A crucial issue at the 1834 conference was the ultimate fate of the blacks living among the Seminoles.⁸ Decades prior to the American accession, the Seminole bands had begun incorporating slave runaways from plantations north of the Spanish bor-

7. See Frank L. Owsley, Jr., *Struggle for the Gulf Borderlands: The Creek War and the Battle of New Orleans, 1812-1815* (Gainesville, 1981).

8. The story of the black Seminoles is recounted by Kenneth W. Porter, "Florida Slaves and Free Negroes," and "John Caesar: Seminole Negro Partisan," in *Journal of Negro History* 31 (April 1946), 190-207; "Negroes and the Seminole War, 1817-1818," *ibid.* 36 (July 1951), 249-80; "The Negro Abraham," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 25 (July 1946), 1-43; and George Klos, "Blacks and the Seminole Removal Debate, 1821-1835," *ibid.* 68 (July 1989), 55-78. See also J. Leitch Wright, Jr., *Creeks and Seminoles: The Destruction and Regeneration of the Muscogulge People* (Lincoln, 1986), and Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr., *Africans and Creeks: From the Colonial Period to the Civil War* (Westport, CT, 1979).

der, prompting much of the hostility and invasion sentiment that culminated with Jackson in 1818. White settlers hotly charged in 1834 that the Seminoles continued to offer safe haven to slave runaways and demanded their return. Conflict centered on which slaves were recent runaways and which were longtime members of the Seminole bands. In addition, Seminole warriors had legitimately purchased black slaves, a practice dating back to their days in the Creek councils. Since re-enslavement under white Floridians would have meant forfeiture of a quasi-independent existence, it is not surprising that the blacks were militant exponents of resistance.

The inevitable war finally came November 26, 1835. The Florida militia was called out as fighting erupted first in the Alachua vicinity. By the end of 1835, Seminole warriors had destroyed the prosperous sugar plantations south of St. Augustine and had conducted a highly successful concerted strike against Fort King and against a relief column marching north from Fort Brooke at Tampa Bay. Only three survived from the convoy of 108 officers and infantrymen under the ill-fated leadership of Major Francis L. Dade. In January of 1836, another sixteen plantations were destroyed by Seminole warriors, and numbers of slave runaways joined the Indian ranks. White refugees flocked into the towns of St. Augustine and Jacksonville, bringing with them their slaves to protect them from the raiders. Crowded into the settlements behind hastily prepared defenses and fearful of internal slave rebellions, the Florida settlers were in a precarious state.

For the remainder of 1836, the war went badly for the whites. Commanded first by Governor Richard Keith Call and next by Major General Winfield Scott, the forces of regulars and militia volunteers had little success. Secure in the remote woods and swamps, the Seminoles conducted guerrilla-style warfare against an enemy poorly trained for such fighting. Refugee centers added in 1836 included Newnansville, Garey's Ferry, and Middleburg.

Brevet Major General Thomas Sidney Jesup assumed command in December 1836 and adopted a strategy that proved successful. Dividing his forces into small and highly mobile detachments, he pressured the Seminoles constantly. Burning villages and farm fields and pursuing the Indians relentlessly, Jesup's troops forced defectors to come into army camps. At a

series of councils some of the chiefs seemed willing to cooperate in the removal policy. At one point 700 defectors were encamped at Tampa Bay under leaders Micanopy and Jumper. But again a conflict over the ultimate fate of the black Seminoles led the defectors to return to the woods and to the war.

The first major break came in September 1837 when General Joseph Hernandez, led by a slave defector, captured the band of King Philip south of St. Augustine. Before month's end, the list of captives included the leaders Yuchi Billy, Yuchi Jack, Coacoochee, and Blue Snake, along with their followers. In October, the militant Red Stick leader Osceola was captured, along with Coahadjo and seventy-five warriors. Controversy raged in the northern press about Jesup's orders to capture these leaders after announcing that they would parley under flags of truce. But Floridians rejoiced; for the first time in nearly two years they were optimistic that the war would soon end and the Seminoles would be exiled to Arkansas territory.

It was amidst this optimism that William Chapman arrived in Florida. While reporting on the war, he repeatedly stated that Indian resistance was futile and that the war would soon end. Little did he realize when he sailed for New Orleans on May 8, 1838, that the war would continue for another four years.

Old Point Comfort, Virginia,
September 23, 1837

My dearest Helen,

Your very sweet letter I have just received, and I hasten with great pleasure to answer it. . . . Dear Helen, the time seems long before I shall again see you but I daily and hourly look forward to that period with delight. God grant that the separation may be shorter than I now expect it will be. . . .

You need have no fears, my dear Helen, about my heart for I assure you that it will never be affected except by the bright eyes of New England. The ladies of the Old Dominion are indeed very pretty, but I have discovered no Helens among them. . . .

With Fort Monroe, I am very much pleased. We enjoy life here finely. Oysters, clams and fish we have in abundance and I have actually grown very fat in a week. If I go on at the rate I have commenced, I shall, soon be designated as the "fat Lieutenant." I never was in better health and spirits in my life.



From a portrait of Helen Ellsworth Blair Chapman, ca. 1840.

Our duties are pretty hard at present as we are fitting the troops for Florida. I have command of a company of 65 men. I am allowed an orderly who keeps with me all the time ready to obey my slightest wishes: besides him, I keep a valet. . . .

There has been one resignation in our Regiment since I came here and thereby I have risen one peg.

A detachment of 500 men and 13 officers are to sail from here for Tampa Bay, Florida the 25th of this month, or next Monday morning; and I am happy to inform you that I am among the number. I was not at first detailed to go with this detachment but being very anxious to get into the field and wishing to go to Tampa Bay, it being the headquarters of the Army, I applied to General Eustis for permission to go which he readily granted. . . . We shall probably be about 15 days going and we anticipate a delightful voyage. Hooker goes with us. He has gone to Norfolk today to purchase some books and chessmen to render the voyage still more pleasant. So Helen, you may hereafter direct your letters to Tampa Bay, East Florida: put under my name also 2nd Reg. Arty, U. S. Army. . . .⁹

About 8,000 troops are ordered to Florida, and it is the opinion of all the officers here, many of whom served in Florida last year, that the Indians will come in willingly or if not that they will be forced in and the war closed in two or three months; and then I shall return to my sweet Helen, and kiss her 1,000 times. . . .

Goodbye, my dearest Helen,

Ever your very affectionate, William

Ship Caladonia Brander, One mile off Old Point Comfort,
September 27, 1837

We are about to sail and General Eustis is on board to inspect the troops for the last time. He has just inspected my company and I seize the few moments that he may be occupied inspecting the others to write to her who is ever uppermost in my mind.

Oh, Helen, we have a most delightful ship and our cabin is furnished equal to any parlor besides we all have state rooms. . . .

9. Brevet Brigadier Abraham Eustis was ordered to Florida to assume temporary command until Brevet Major General Winfield Scott arrived. Eustis reached St. Augustine February 15, 1836. In March 1838, Eustis took command in the Suwannee region. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 138, 156, 164, 233, 238; and Sprague, *Florida War*, 106, 116, 122. Joseph Hooker was a West Point classmate of Chapman. Hooker distinguished himself in the Mexican War and in the Civil War; briefly he was commander of the Army of the Potomac.

I am second in command [of the detachment] on board this ship. Major Kirby is commander. . . .¹⁰

This is a ship of the largest class and has been for many years a Liverpool packet.¹¹ It is a most elegant vessel and manned by 24 experienced sailors. The accommodations for the officers are everything we could wish; and besides we expect to live well as the Captain has on board for our especial use 168 chickens, 72 ducks, 12 pigs &c, &c. The Captain thinks that we shall be at Tampa Bay by the 15th of October at which time the sickly season will be over and we shall be in readiness to commence the campaign at once. . . . I must try and get a little sleep before 3 o'clock, so my own dearest Helen, I must bid you good night.

Fort Brooke, Tampa Bay, November 1, 1837

We arrived here on the 27th of October, having been 30 days at sea. As I leave here in a few hours for Fort Foster, and have many preparations to make in the mean time, I must necessarily be very brief. The following important intelligence was received here two days since by the Commanding Officer from General Jesup.¹² Powell and seven other chiefs of the Micasukes, 73 warriors, 50 negroes, and 30 women were surrounded while in council, by a body of 300 Dragoons and taken prisoners.¹³ The Micasukes have shown a determined spirit for the commencement of the war to hold out until the last. The chiefs who were taken have had a very great influence, not only among their own tribes, but also among the Seminoles. Had it not been

10. Major Reynold M. Kirby was commander of the 1st Artillery Regiment. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 156.

11. Liverpool packets travelled regularly between American ports and Liverpool, England, carrying passengers, freight, and mail.

12. Major General Thomas Sidney Jesup took command in Florida, December 9, 1836, replacing Territorial Governor Richard Keith Call. He was relieved and turned command over to Zachary Taylor, May 10, 1838. He became quartermaster general, a post he held until his death, June 10, 1860. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 190-218, 239-50; Sprague, *Florida War*, 115, 180, 203.

13. Powell is better known as Osceola. Born an Upper Creek in Alabama, he migrated to Florida as a boy following defeat of the Creeks at the Battle of Horseshoe Bend to become a leader of the militant Red Stick band. The capture of Osceola was the result of a controversial decision by General Jesup to ignore a flag of truce. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 91, 214.

for them, peace would have been restored to Florida long ere this.

As General Jesup expresses it, "The Master Spirits of the war are taken." Of an engagement a short time before this capture, he writes, "70 Indians were taken prisoners." The war will now undoubtedly be carried on with great vigor, and it is confidently hoped with more success than heretofore. Forts Dade and Foster are to be re-garrisoned immediately. The Marines have been ordered to Charlotte's Harbor. There are here now upwards of 2000 regular troops, and about 200 Delaware Indians.¹⁴

Fort Foster, Florida, November 19, 1837

I almost despair of ever hearing from you while in Florida. I have not received a single letter from any one at the North as yet. . . . In my former letters I said but little about Florida. I will now tell you all which I think will interest you that has come under my observation.

With Tampa Bay, I was very agreeably pleased, but quite surprised to find that the officers consider this one of the most delightful posts in the country. Fort Brooke is situated at the head of the Bay, near the mouth of the Great Hillsborough River. The troops are encamped the whole year round. The encampment is situated in a grove of orange and live oak trees, and presents a very beautiful and imposing appearance. The weather was very delightful while I was there, and I think I never was more charmed with a place.

On the 30th of October, I was temporarily assigned to Major Belton's (B) Company, 2nd Artillery.¹⁵ This company and a de-

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14. The Delaware Indians were coastal Algonkian people pushed out of the region by European settlers. They eventually moved westward to the Indian territories. Some Delawares traded the long resettlement journey for jobs with the United States Army. In Florida, Delawares and Shawnees under the half-Indian Captain Parks served as guides and as emissaries to the secreted Seminoles, persuading them to turn themselves in at army camps to await migration to the West. For their work capturing Jumper, see Sprague, *Florida War*, 203-04.
 15. Major Francis S. Belton was former post commander of Fort Brooke. He assumed command of the 2d Artillery Regiment which was used as infantry in Florida. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 101, 135; Sprague, *Florida War*, 9, 107. Dragoons were heavily armed mounted troops.

tachment of Dragoons were ordered to re-garrison Fort Foster, a post about 21 miles from Fort Brooke. Companys G and H of the 2nd Artillery . . . were ordered to re-occupy Fort Dade. These three companies, with three pieces of Artillery, and a baggage train of 90 wagons, escorted by the First Regiment of U. S. Infantry (a part of whom were mounted), left Fort Brooke on the first of November for their respective posts.

Before leaving, Major Belton appointed me Assistant Commissary of Subsistence, and Quarter Master of Fort Foster. I was, in consequence of being a staff officer, entitled to the use of a horse, which I very willingly drew and rode on the march. We had considerable difficulty and delay in starting as most of our mules had never been "broken in." By 9 or 10 o'clock, the whole train was moving, and to me it was a most thrilling sight. We had an advanced and rear guard, and flankers of mounted men. The soldiers on foot moved in two lines (single file), one on the right and the other on the left of the train.

The first night we encamped on the Little Hillsborough [River], which is about seven miles from Tampa. I took an excellent cup of chocolate with Major Belton and Dr. Henderson and then "turned in" to Major Belton's tent for the night. The bugle was sounded at 3 o'clock in the morning, as a signal to make preparations for departure, and by sunrise we were again under way.

We arrived at Fort Foster about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, and our company immediately took possession of the post. The remainder encamped nearby. The train was off in good season for Fort Dade the next morning.

Fort Foster was built by Colonel [William S.] Foster and is situated on the Great Hillsborough River. This, by the way, is a most beautiful river and abounds with fine fish.

The fort is designed to command the bridge at this point, to serve as a depot for provisions and forage, and as a hospital for the sick and wounded who may be sent here from the interior. It is built of stockades and has two blockhouses, the guns of which have a cross fire on the bridge. . . .

In discharging the duties of Quartermaster, I have been engaged with about 20 soldiers ever since I came here in repairing the fort, building houses for the comfort of the officers and men, and erecting store houses for the reception of provisions and forage. We have completed in 14 days four large store

houses, (each capable of containing 30,000 rations) built two sheds, one 90 and the other 50 feet long; one Hospital, and three houses, besides repairing three. They are made after the Florida fashion, of course; more regard being paid to convenience and comfort than to beauty. Major Belton says, however, that we have the handsomest fort in Florida.

We have fine hunting and fishing in the vicinity. Occasionally we amuse ourselves by shooting an alligator. Our dragoons and two or three of the officers go out every day and scout the neighboring hammocks. I generally go out every other day. I have ridden through some hammocks where you could not see a person 10 paces from you. Our attempts to find the enemy in this vicinity have thus far been fruitless. Our express rider, coming through a hammock nearby very early yesterday morning, got a little frightened. He said he heard an Indian cock his rifle, and saw the bushes stir. He fired his pistol, plunged his spurs into his horse and rushed from the "Scene of Danger." How I should have laughed to have seen him.

On the 6th of this month, a train of 40 wagons arrived here with provisions and forage for this post from Tampa. A part of the escort consisted of about 200 Delaware and Shawnee Indians.¹⁶ They encamped in a hammock on the opposite side of the river and soon killed four deer and a turkey.

I am very happy here in Florida, and my situation is far more pleasurable than I ever expected it would be.

The War is probably over. The Cherokees have been sent to St. Augustine to meet the Chiefs of the Seminoles and the Micasukes, and to act as mediators between our government and those tribes.¹⁷ We have now in the field, besides militia and volunteers, 3,600 regulars. The army is in motion and General Jesup is active and energetic. Powell and those prisoners taken with him are in confinement at St. Augustine and have sent out a runner for their families. Powell says that he is not sorry that he is taken for he had got about through fighting. He is a brave

16. Like the Delawares, some Shawnees accepted temporary jobs with the United States Army.

17. The United States Army employed the Cherokee Indians as mediators in the Seminole conflict. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 222-23, 240, 270; and Gary E. Moulton, "Cherokees and the Second Seminole War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 53 (January 1975), 296-305.

warrior and a patriot and future generations will honor his memory.

I told Major Belton that in case we had more fighting, I should prefer going into the field, to remaining here. For some reason or other he seems to have taken quite a liking (as the Yankees say) to me, and urged me to stay with him and said if I would he would write to Washington to have me appointed a regular Assistant Commissary and Assistant Quarter Master in the Army and said that he should be happy to have me join his company and embark my military fortunes with his. What I shall do, I hardly know. I will tell you in my next.

Major Belton was an officer in the last war, and an aide to General Scott for a part of the war and for a part to General Gaines and has served through both campaigns in Florida. He is a brave, discreet officer and one in whom much confidence is reposed by the War Department. . . .

P. S. I have one of the finest horses in Florida. He would suit you to a "T." He can walk, pace, trot, and canter equal to anybody's horse.

November 20th. I have just returned from hunting. I reckon I made some havoc among the Sandhill Cranes, a bird rather smaller than a turkey and very fine eating.¹⁸ I have finished my blacksmith's shop and tomorrow I am going to build a horse shed and barn.

Fort Foster, Florida, November 22, 1837

Your very, very sweet letter was received with unbounded joy yesterday morning. . . . How happy, very happy, I am that one so dear to me, dearer than relations, friends, acquaintances and the whole world together is so near. Oh, Helen, that I had wings, I would fly over to Savannah between tattoo and reveille, press you to my bosom, snatch a kiss and fly back again without the Commanding Officer's knowing of my absence. I am glad, dear Helen, that you came to Savannah. . . .¹⁹

18. Sandhill Cranes, sometimes called Whooping Cranes, are rare in Florida now but were once plentiful. They have been described as "a long-necked, heavy-bodied, gray-brown bird about four feet (1.2m) high."

19. Around November 1837, Helen Blair left her family in Massachusetts to teach "47 scholars" in Savannah, Georgia.

Oh, I wish I could write more but I cannot as I am soon to start for Tampa, after provisions, forage, &c. and have many things to do before I go; among others I must sleep a short time. It is now about 12 or 1 o'clock and I have been writing business letters (I left my watch at home.) and I have ordered my horse to be saddled and the escort (which in passing, I think useless in this section of Florida.) to be ready at 5 o'clock in the morning to start. I shall be accompanied by Lieutenant Daniels and an escort which came with him from Fort Dade today.

I presume you will be happy to hear that I have concluded after much persuasion to remain here with Major Belton instead of going into the Field. We shall probably stay here until the war is over, so dear Helen I am just as safe here as you are in Savannah in that great easy (lazy) chair and enjoy the same "soft warm air" and am as careless, independent, and happy as a basket of chips. I expect the express back tomorrow. . . .

P. S. Oh, be sure to direct your letters to this post, via Black Creek. I did not get yours until one month after it was written because it went by the way of St. Marks, I presume.²⁰

Fort Foster, Florida, December 7, 1837

Good news! Indians are coming in to Pease creek, Alligator, &c. Colonel Taylor says that the war will close without bloodshed.²¹ I will write soon.

Fort Foster, Florida, December 10, 1837

Your two very affectionate letters dated Savannah have been received. . . . I should have written you oftener, my dearest Helen, but I really and truly have not had time to write a good

20. St. Marks is north and west of Fort Foster, located on the Gulf coast at the mouth of the St. Marks River.

21. Pease Creek is south of Tampa Bay and empties into Charlotte Harbor. Zachary Taylor was promoted to brigadier general for the capture of Holatoochee and forty warriors at the Battle of Okeechobee in late December 1837. In May 1838, Taylor replaced Jesup as commander in Florida. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 245-46. Alligator, or Halpatter Tustenuggee, was a war chief of the Alachua band and a great influence on Micanopy. He was one of the leaders at the Dade Massacre and at the Battle of Withlacoochee. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 127, 304, 374-75; and Sprague, *Florida War*, 97-98, 195.

letter for three weeks. In consequence of the lameness of our dragoon officer, I have had all his duties to perform, in addition to performing those of my two staff offices and my duty in the company. I have had to take command of scouting parties, of escorts, of trains. I have been to Tampa Bay twice, to Fort Dade on the banks of the Withlacoochee once, and on scouting parties almost every day. I have been writing, also in my capacity as clerk for four or five days making out my monthly returns and abstracts of Ordinance, of Commissary, and Quarter Master's stores; and I am thankful that I shall finish them in one day more, and then my dearest Helen shall have her share of the use of my pen. My employments here, however, suit my inclinations most admirably. I should like them better if there was rather more adventure, and fighting in them; however, this last is done with in Florida as you shall presently hear.

You ask me how I liked my voyage, &c. As for the voyage, . . . I cannot say much about [it], for I had the extreme felicity of being sea sick just the whole of the said 30 days. What rendered the voyage still more delightful to me, and to all of us, was that the ship took fire about 2 o'clock at night and only by a miracle was the fire extinguished. Moreover, when off the Bahamas, we had a mutiny among the crew, which was quelled by the captain's knocking down one sailor, and flogging another with the rope's end. On the whole, it was a very comfortable good sort of a voyage, at least so I have been told. . . .

That "dreaded, hated Florida" you say. Why, it's the greatest country in the world, and I am very happy here. If you should just see me some pleasant morning, on my little roan horse, with my double barreled gun going at a full gallop with my three dogs at my heels in pursuit of game, you would think I was happy. Yes, to tell the truth, if it was not for that little Yankee girl that I have taken such a shine to, I could live here all my life as contented and happy as the wild deer which roams the hammocks. I have a little puppy which I paid a dollar for, whose name is Powel— a fine dog that you'd like, I think.

Those gentlemen in Savannah are very polite to supply you with books. Present them my thanks, and give them a dollar. . . . Tell them to look out for I am getting to be an excellent shot.

Well, my dearest Helen, passing from the gay to the serious, I have followed your kind advice and taken good care of my health. I have not drank a drop of wine, or of any liquor since

I have been in Florida and have not been sick a moment. I have gained about 20 pounds of flesh since I arrived at Tampa, and my whiskers and moustache have grown wonderfully in length and beauty. Fine looking young man, that Chapman.

Coming from Fort Dade last week in command of a mounted escort, the Sergeant rode up to me and said that he saw something at a distance in a swamp. I took twenty men, all well mounted and made a charge at full gallop. I saw something and fired: on arriving at the spot where it fell, I beheld a fine, fat, wild Indian cow which we took to our fort and lived on for several days. . . .

This morning Major McCrea, with two companies of mounted men arrived here from the Kissimmee River bringing us the following interesting and cheering intelligence. On the first of this month, Captain Parks, a half breed who is in command of the Shawnee and Delaware Indians attached to Colonel [Zachary] Taylor's Division on the Kissimmee, volunteered to go with three of the Shawnees to the Camp of Alligator and see what he could effect.²² He was instructed by Colonel Taylor to tell the Indians that if they come in immediately they should be treated with kindness and that General Jesup's treaty made last fall should be complied with. Captain Parks after traveling about 40 miles arrived in safety at Alligator's camp where he found Alligator, Jumper, Holatouchee (who will be the successor of Micanopy) and about 400 Indians assembled.²³ He communi-

22. Zachary Taylor called Parks "an active and intelligent half-breed, who is at the head of the friendly Indians, both Shawnees and Delawares, and whom I had employed to arrange and bring in Jumper" and his followers. See Sprague, *Florida War*, 204.
23. Jumper, also known as "Ote Emathla," was Micanopy's counsellor and was one of the most influential and feared Seminoles. Micanopy, also known as "Sint Chakkee" succeeded John Hicks (Neamathla) as head chief of the Alachuas (see note 5). His central authority was recognized by most Seminoles, but he apparently possessed poor leadership qualities and was easily swayed by others. Holatouchee was Jumper's son and Micanopy's nephew (Jumper married Micanopy's sister). Seminole descent lines were generally matrilineal, at least prior to the war. Therefore, it was assumed that Holatouchee was picked as Micanopy's successor. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 125-27. When Chapman referred to "General Jesup's treaty made last fall," he must have meant instead the March 6, 1837, document signed by Jumper and the other chiefs representing Micanopy. This led to the surrender of several hundred Indians, including Micanopy and Jumper, prior to the liberation at the Tampa detention center by Osceola and Sam Jones on June 2, 1837. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 299-304.

cated his instructions and they told him that they were very willing and desirous to come in but feared that they would not be treated as he promised. After some consultation they concluded to send some of their chiefs to the Kissimmee, to have a talk with Colonel Taylor.

On the evening of the 5th, Jumper, his son, Holatouchee and one other Indian accompanied by Captain Parks and the Shawnees arrived on the Kissimmee. On the morning of the 6th, they held a talk with Colonel Taylor when it was agreed that all the Indians at Alligator's camp should come in without the least delay to Pease Creek; that Captain Parks with his whole Indian force should leave the Kissimmee on the 9th for Alligator's camp with a sufficient number of mules to carry their provisions and to transport their families and moveables to Pease Creek; that General Jesup's treaty should be complied with and that one of the Indians should remain a hostage. After the talk, Jumper and his party returned leaving one of their number with Colonel Taylor.

Facts are daily becoming developed which show that the Seminoles have had more reason to make their bold stand and to prolong the contest than has hitherto been known. It is now ascertained that they had long been endeavoring to induce the Negroes of the south and the Cherokees to combine with them against the whites. The Cherokee mediators who are now in Florida inform us that the Seminoles have had runners between Florida and the Cherokee nation for the last two years.²⁴

I have no doubt that the Seminoles having been assured by the Cherokee mediators that they can receive no assistance from their nation, and despairing, probably of obtaining any from the Negroes, and seeing the folly and infatuation of contending against 8000 troops, have concluded to sheath the scalping knife in Florida and go peaceably to their appointed western home.

Abraham, the celebrated interpreter, says that they would have gone at first had the Seminole delegation, of which I think he was one, been sent to the country assigned them at a more

24. This information is not discussed in any of the standard sources on the Seminole Wars. While Mahon, Porter, and other authorities agree that the black Seminoles effectively communicated with Florida slaves and induced many to join in the rebellion, none have mentioned a South-wide conspiracy to include plantation slaves and the Cherokee. Gary Moulton is also silent on this subject.

favorable season of the year.²⁵ It was in the dead of winter, when everything seemed to them dreary, uninteresting and forbidding. Was it at all surprising that they should prefer to try to maintain their ground in the warm, delightful climate of Florida, with the uplifted tomahawk, than to go willingly to the cold, uninviting banks of the Arkansas.

December 11th. The express from Black Creek has just arrived, and brings us the following glorious news. Micanopy, St. Cloud, Sam Jones's nephew, 49 other Indians, 32 negroes, the Cherokee mediators, &c. came in on the third conducted by Coahadjo.²⁶ Squire Sam Jones sent word that he was now in earnest, and would come in if General Jesup would not put him in petticoats, as he sent him word he would do last summer. The Cherokee delegation went out on the 5th to bring in Sam Jones, with conciliatory messages from the chiefs and the General. A council was held at Camp Mellon and the chiefs here agreed to everything proposed by General Jesup, and are to remain at Camp Mellon. Runners have gone in every direction and the trails are filled with women and children coming in. Ten days are given for all to come in and give up their arms. Powel's and Coahadjo's families are in. Micanopy says that there is no forked tongue this time.

I am happy to tell you, my dear Helen, that there is not the possibility of a doubt that the war is over. Preparations are making for the removal of the troops in Florida. General Jesup has this day sent three companies of Alabama volunteers to this post to eat provisions in order to save transporting them. . . .

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25. Abraham was a former slave of Micanopy, later freed, who rose to prominence by serving as an interpreter for the Seminole delegation to Washington, DC, in 1826. Both Seminoles and whites thought he was strengthening their position during negotiations, but he secretly persuaded slaves to take refuge with the Indians. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 128; and Porter, "The Negro Abraham," 1-43.
 26. St. Cloud was possibly George Cloud, a prominent Seminole. Sam Jones's Indian name was "Arpeika." He was a medicine man of the Mikasukis who used his position to harden his people's determination against moving to the proposed reservations. Coahadjo was the Seminole sub-chief captured with Osceola during the parley at Moultrie Creek. When Micanopy sent word to General Jesup that he wanted a conference, Coahadjo guided the soldiers to his camp. After Micanopy's return to Fort Mellon under a flag of truce, he was held there as prisoner by Jesup. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 214; Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, 254.

Fort Foster, Florida, December 23, 1837

I have just received your very affectionate letter and am so very unhappy that you have never heard from me that I scarcely know what to do with myself. . . . I have a good mind to desert and carry this letter to Savannah myself, and when I come back to flog all the Post Masters on the road. I have never yet received an answer to a single letter which I have sent out of Florida and I am almost tired of writing. . . . I have a notion to write every day so as to accumulate such a pile of them at the place where they are stopped that they will, just to get rid of them, send them on. . . .

Before I forget it, I will tell you that we have no regular Post office within 100 miles of here and, consequently, I have never paid the postage on my letters to you. Should you happen to receive them all at once, it will be quite a draw on your funds. I am going to try to make some arrangement with the Post Master at Black Creek to pay the postage on all letters sent to Savannah, Georgia and that may be the means of getting some letters to you. Continue to direct your letters to Tampa Bay and not to Fort Foster as I shall get them quicker.²⁷

I am very much pleased with Florida and have been perfectly well the whole time. I have a fine post and my duties, though numerous, are very pleasant. I am Quarter Master, Commissary of Subsistence, and Post Master at this post and receive an extra compensation of 20 dollars per month. . . .

The officers here are preparing to enjoy Christmas finely. I killed an ox today and sent for a barrel of Oysters. We consider the war over here, and have not seen an Indian in this vicinity these two months. I have been sport hunting and fishing on the Hillsborough [River].

Oh, by the way, I have sent to Cuba for one of those little white Spanish lap dogs for you. They cost about 20 dollars. Mrs. Belton used to have one and all the children in the town used to come to see it. . . .

27. Helen Blair paid from eighteen to thirty-seven and one-half cents per letter for postage-due, a surprisingly high amount considering the prevailing wage rates.

Fort Foster, Florida, January 13, 1838

Your affectionate letter of the 19th last was received four days since, and relieved me of a good deal of anxiety. . . . I am most happy to hear that you are enjoying yourself so well in Savannah. . . .

I am more pleased with my situation and often tell Major Belton that I never was so happy in all my life. I go to Tampa about once a week and always bring up a variety of good things or "creature comforts" as somebody calls them. The Major and his eldest son, as he sometimes calls me, have purchased some fowls and we are going to raise chickens. I have begun to make a flower garden. Not exactly a flower garden as I am going to plant a few onions and potatoes among other things.

Lieutenant Thomas and Lieutenant Morgan were here a few days since.²⁸ Lieutenant Morgan came 22 miles to see me. I wish you could see my long whiskers, and beautiful moustache. You would laugh, I know. I have grown quite fat here and weigh more than I ever did before: viz. 160 pounds. I shall I reckon be a great man in one way if I am not in another.

Coming from Tampa last week I rode five miles after dark through the woods on an old Indian trail. You would have laughed heartily to have seen me. I was mounted on a little Indian pony which went at a full gallop, with my gun in one hand and a bag containing 100 dollars in Specie in the other. I only touched the reins once, when the little rascal took it into his head that he would run with me. He is a fine riding pony and I would buy him for you if there was any way to get him North.

Major Belton and myself were riding out about four miles from the fort yesterday, and we discovered a most beautiful warm spring.²⁹ I have not doubt that it will one day become as celebrated as any of our northern springs. I named it Belton's Spring. The rocks in its vicinity contain a great many petrified shells. The scenery around it is most charming. I am going to Tampa day after tomorrow and when I return I am going to

28. Probably 2d Lieutenant George Thomas, a member of the 3d Artillery and 1st Lieutenant E. W. Morgan, an artillery officer and West Point classmate of Chapman. See Sprague, *Florida War*, 107, 168-69.

29. Present-day Crystal Springs which lies several miles east of the fort.

visit Bowlegs and Wans towns which are about 10 miles from here.³⁰

In the spring our rides will be enchanting; at that season there is in this neighborhood more than 300 varieties of the most beautiful flowers. If I ever get disgusted with the world, I believe I will come to Florida and live by hunting and fishing. . . . [Portion of letter missing.]

St. Augustine, Florida, February 27, 1838

I have been such a rover of late, that really I have not had time to give you information of my movements. Just before I left Fort Foster for this place, I commenced a long letter to you and had written six pages, when Major Belton called me to his tent, and requested me to proceed to St. Augustine without delay. It was about 11 o'clock at night and before dawn of day I set out accompanied by my servant. I was so positive that I should go to Savannah before I returned that I did not send the letter and expected to surprise my dearest Helen in fine style. I was so perfectly delighted with the idea of seeing my sweetest so soon, that I did not sleep but one hour that night and you can easily judge of my extreme disappointment when on arriving at St. Augustine, I learned that there was no boat going to Savannah before I should be obliged to return. Is it not too bad that I cannot see you, my own dearest, when I am so near.

I have spent four days very agreeably here and formed some pleasant acquaintances. St. Augustine is crowded with visitors from the North, and is very gay. I very unexpectedly met several of my classmates and also the beautiful Mrs Lieutenant Thomas here.³¹ Of course, we talked over old matters and brought to

30. Bowlegs, chief of the Alachua band preceding Micanopy, owned large herds of cattle. Bowlegs was driven west to the Suwannee River during the "Patriot Rebellion," 1812-1813. His followers allied with the Mikasukis of Fowltown. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 10, 16, 24-25. Kenneth W. Porter theorizes that Bowlegs was the brother of King Payne and the uncle of the Billy Bowlegs who became famous after 1839 and as the leader of the Third Seminole War in the 1850s. See Kenneth W. Porter, "Billy Bowlegs (Holata Micco) in the Seminole Wars, Part I," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 45 (January 1967), 219-42; and "Part II," *ibid.* 46 (April 1967), 391-401.

31. Possibly the wife of Lieutenant George C. Thomas of the 3d Artillery. See note 28.

remembrance days of happiness gone by. Mrs Thomas seemed very glad to see me, and I have called on her often during my stay here. There are several officers wives boarding in St. Augustine, whose husbands are in Florida.

The first evening I arrived here I attended a party at Mrs [Charles] Downings. Her husband is a member of Congress from Florida. It was really a very splendid affair. I had the honor of dancing a cotillion with Mrs Thomas, and also of being introduced to many "pretty girls."

The next evening a party was given to Lieutenant Chapman, by Mrs Major Belton, Mrs Captain Webster, and Mrs Judge Smith, at the residence of Judge Smith's where the first two and, of course, the last lady boarded.³² Mrs Belton tried her best to have me fall in love with a Miss _____ (I have forgotten the name) and was surprised at my indifference to the lady's charms. . . .

Yesterday I was invited by Lieutenant Steptoe to join a horse-back riding party.³³ I went with a Miss Nevens, a young lady from Philadelphia and the reputed belle of St. Augustine. The ride was very pleasant, but I should have enjoyed it much more if— you know what I was going to write— so I will not trouble myself to write it.

This evening I am going to attend another party at Mrs Downings and tomorrow I shall leave this delightful place for Port Foster, via Picolata, Black Creek, Forts Harley, Frazier, Micanopy, King, Armstrong, and Dade. How agreeable to be once more in the society of intelligent ladies, after being for many months in the swamps of Florida, enduring all the hardships and privations of an Indian campaign. I remain in Florida cheerfully because it is my duty to do so, but the ardor with which I first entered this country has become abated, since I have seen that, instead of the thanks of our government for our exposure of life and health, we receive nothing but its cold ingratitude.

32. Perhaps the wife of Captain Lucien B. Webster, post commander at Fort Marion in St. Augustine. Mrs. Smith is probably the wife of Peter Sken Smith, a founder of the St. Augustine and Picolata Railroad Company and a director of the Southern Life Insurance and Trust Company of St. Augustine. See George E. Buker, "The Americanization of St. Augustine, 1821-1865," in Jean Parker Waterbury, ed., *Th Oldest City: St. Augustine, Saga of Survival* (St. Augustine, 1983), 163.

33. Edward J. Steptoe, West Point class of 1837.

When I am again settled at Fort Foster, I will give you an account of my voyage to New Orleans. I have seen Colonel Crane today and he says that he thinks that our Regiment will be ordered North by the First of May. . . .³⁴

St. Augustine, Florida, February 28, 1838

I have been so constantly on the move since I last wrote that I have had not time to give you the news of the war.

I presume you have long ere this heard of General Jesup's and Lieutenant Powell's battles and I will not therefore give you an account of them.³⁵ The situation of affairs at present is this: General Jesup has offered the Indians that part of Florida south of a line drawn east from Egmont Island, (Egmont Island is about 40 miles south of Tampa Bay.) and has sent one of his aides to Washington to ascertain if the Government will consent to it. Hostilities have ceased and the Indians are coming in by hundreds daily.³⁶

I was ordered on the 22nd of January to take Jumper and family, Micanopy's wife and children, 12 warriors and their families and three negroes amounting in all to 38, to Fort Pike [Arkansas], via New Orleans. I arrived there in safety and without difficulty and returned to Tampa in 14 days.

Jumper is the Orator and "Sense Keeper" of the Seminole Nation and was one of the chiefs who went to visit the country assigned to the Indians in the West.³⁷ He is a tall, noble-looking

34. Colonel Ichabod Crane was appointed commander of troops in northeast Florida, July 24, 1836. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 177-78.

35. Lieutenant Levi N. Powell, United States Navy, assigned to drive the Indians from the Everglades in 1837-1838. He was an important strategist of the concept of riverine warfare. See Buker, *Swamp Sailors*, 21n, 49-60, 99, 137.

36. Jesup's offer was made February 11, 1838. He argued that the war, as it was then being fought, could drag on for years. His plan would confine the Indians to south Florida, and he would permit them to raise a single crop while denying them access to arms and ammunition. Within a year under this policy, Jesup expected the Indians would voluntarily move to the West. Secretary of War Joel Poinsett rejected the plan. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 235-37.

37. Jumper, or Otee Emathla, was a Red Stick Creek who had fought against Andrew Jackson in Alabama in 1812 and in Florida in 1818. He married Micanopy's sister and became his "sense-bearer" or lawyer-advocate. One of the chiefs who went to the West in 1832 to inspect the designated lands, Jumper argued against removal. He often served as spokesman for the

Indian and is decidedly the most intelligent one I have ever seen. I had frequent talks with him during the voyage and was highly surprised and pleased with many of his remarks.

Speaking upon the subject of temperance, I told him that the "Great Spirit" (for whom all the Indians have a great reverence) was displeased whenever his children drank ardent spirits. He said he did not think so; for since He had given us the necessary knowledge and means of making it, he could not believe that He was displeased when we made use of it. I expressed some other opinions to him, with which he did not coincide, and he finally said to me, "I have my own heart and mind and can judge for myself. You are a young man and are more liable to err than myself."

We, however, agreed upon most points, and became very good friends; and when I left him, he told me that if I would go to the West and live with him, he would give me the prettiest squaw of his tribe for a wife. (The Chiefs have the disposal of the squaws in marriage.) He has a wife and six children to whom he seemed very much attached. He could not bear the idea of leaving Florida, and was very much affected whenever the subject was mentioned.

Anyone who has ever visited their beautiful villages, and seen their orange groves, and their neat yards filled with various kinds of fruit trees, and has enjoyed this warm delightful climate, would not be surprised at the reluctance of the Indians to exchange Florida for the cold country of Arkansas. I never pass an Indian village, but that I think of what Jumper said in a part of the Treaty "Talk" at Fort Moultrie when the first treaty was made. He said, "It is hard to leave our homes, to leave our yards where our children have played before us."³⁸

councils. A leader at Dade's Massacre and involved in many of the major engagements of the war, Jumper surrendered and agreed to emigrate in early January 1838. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 79, 82-83, 92-96, 105, 127, 149, 199-200, 227; Sprague, *Florida War*, 50-51, 84, 97, 204; and Wright, *Creeks and Seminoles*, 253.

38. The source of Chapman's information on Jumper's talk is unclear; it is not reprinted in the standard sources. He may have repeated remarks made by Jumper during their travels together. His opinions regarding the Indian villages must have been formed during his visits to Bowlegs and Wans Towns.

Before the war he lived near the Wahoo Swamp, where he cultivated a small tract of land, and owned several hundred cattle and a number of ponies.³⁹ He and his family were driven from their home, and for the last two years they have lived like all the other Indians in swamps and hammocks, half naked, and half starved. Wearied with this kind of life in his declining years, he at last concluded to come in and go to Arkansas that he might spend the remainder of his days in peace. I parted with him with regret, and shall ever remember him as a brave, devoted patriot, and an injured, unhappy Indian.

I arrived at this place a few days since, via Forts Dade, Armstrong, King, Micanopy, Crane, Frazier, Harley, Black Creek and Picolata. I passed the battleground and saw the graves of the soldiers and men and the triangular markers.⁴⁰ I will not attempt to describe the melancholy feelings with which I reviewed the scenes. There lay before me, far in the interior of Florida, the bodies of a hundred men and eight gallant officers who had been my associates at the Academy. We arrived at the battle ground at 5:00 o'clock at night and saw the graves. The next morning at daybreak we were again on our march. We leave St. Augustine tomorrow for the Indian territory.

Wishing you many pleasant rides on your little pony. . . . I will close my short letter. I hope I shall hear from you soon.

Fort Foster, Florida, April 15, 1838

I have not heard one word from you for six weeks. . . . Do, dearest, write me one line and relieve my extreme anxiety. I have just recovered from a very dangerous illness but I leave here tomorrow for Tampa Bay to resume my duties on the Court Martial.⁴¹ General Jesup will be at Tampa tomorrow and I shall learn my destination for the summer. The express is saddled and waiting.

39. Wahoo Swamp was across the Withlacoochee River from the Cove of the Withlacoochee.

40. He refers here to the site of the Dade Massacre.

41. Chapman's illness and the revival of the war were mentioned in an April 10, 1838, letter from E. W. Morgan, posted at Fort Dade (also preserved in the Chapman collection held by Edward C. Coker). Morgan was a West Point classmate of Chapman's.

Fort Foster, East Florida, April 22, 1838

I have written to you so many times of late without receiving any answer, that I hardly know . . . in what relation I now stand to you. . . .

I feel very low spirited this morning. I am alone and unwell. Major Belton has gone north for the benefit of his health. Lieutenant Woodbridge is at Tampa Bay; the Doctor and a great many men are sick. I am in command of the post and company and performing the duties of Commissary and Quartermaster. . . . I believe I am cruel to suspect for one moment that you have forgotten me or that you have transferred to another the love you have so often and kindly expressed to me but I hardly know what I am about this morning, so dearest, excuse me.⁴²

. . . We expect orders very soon to go to the Cherokee Nation, so dearest Helen write soon in order that I may get your letter before I leave.

New Orleans Barracks, Louisiana, May 17, 1838

I have just arrived here from Tampa Bay which place I left on the 8th. Your last four letters have been received. The last three were received while on the passage from a vessel which left Tampa Bay after ours. I was very sick with a fever during the passage and your kind letters coming to hand at the time they did were more gratifying than any former ones. . . .

I am very sorry that . . . you were so disappointed in not seeing me in Savannah about the 10th of May, but all the troops at Tampa Bay were ordered to Calhoun, Tennessee via New Orleans, Mississippi and the Tennessee rivers.

42. Chapman's lonely and melancholy tone in this letter, the last one known to have been written in Florida, reflects the ravages of malarial fever. He had been sick for months, as had the doctor and most of the men at his post. Although he left Florida on May 8, a recovery had not been effected by May 18 when the last letter in this sequence was written. Chapman had asked superior officers for advice on combatting the disease but was told "men must expect to get ague and fever in this country. [Brigadier] General [Walker K.] Armistead informed me just now that he had done all he could in directing you to move out in the pine barrens. . . . Take some of your sheds (canvas) down and get outside." See F. J. Becton to Chapman, April 25, 1838. Fort Brooke, also in the Chapman collection. With such advice it is not surprising that nearly 16,000 soldiers were on sick rolls in Florida from May 1841 through February 1842. See Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War*, 320.

I was relieved at Fort Foster on the 4th of this month, but did not know that we should leave Tampa Bay so soon. We left with a few hours warning. Three companies of the 2nd Artillery and the following officers came in the same vessel. Lieutenants Conkling, Luther, Morgan, Woodbridge, Armstrong and your servant. I am just off the sick report. . . .

Everyone believes that the Cherokees will not fight and that whether they do or not, the whole affair will be wound up in two or three months and then the Artillery will be ordered to their posts on the seaboard.

I can easily get a leave in the fall and it is my wish to be married then and I know of no possible objection to it. If anything should happen in regard to the Army to prevent it, then I shall certainly resign. What is the use of a commission if it keeps me forever from those I love and brings no happiness. My mind is fully made up on this subject and if you do not coincide, I can't help it. You can form no idea of what I have suffered during this five year engagement and rather than have it continue much longer, I would prefer to have it broken off forever.

May 18. This Florida climate which is apparently so delightful has rather broken me down in body and mind and I feel that I require the society of those whom I love. Oh, that I could be at home with my mother and sisters a short time. They seem to have my happiness more continually in view than anyone else. I am getting tired of this wandering life of a soldier and would willingly spend the rest of my life in the quiet pleasant town of my nativity.

I do not feel so well this morning but presume I shall before the day is out. I would like, my dearest Helen, to write you more but I can scarcely hold up my head. Oh, Helen, I wish I could avoid being so depressed. . . . Oh, Helen if you love me, don't stay at the South this summer. Please, dearest, write me often and regularly at Calhoun, Tennessee. We shall leave here tomorrow or the next day.

Yours as ever, William

POSTSCRIPT

Upon leaving Florida, Chapman recuperated in New Orleans until May 22 and thence travelled up the Mississippi River



From a daguerreotype of William Warren Chapman and son, William Blair Chapman, ca. 1850.

and the Tennessee River to Calhoun, Tennessee, to serve in the removal of 18,000 Cherokee Indians to the west of Arkansas. Called by Cherokees "The Trail of Tears," 4,000 Indians died during the forced evacuation.

Chapman's involvement in the Cherokee removal was brief. Because of illness, he was furloughed at the end of June 1838 when he traveled to Savannah to accompany Helen Blair to Westfield, Massachusetts. They were married there on August 29, 1838.

Chapman, a career Army officer, was promoted to first lieutenant, 2nd Artillery, on July 7, 1838, and, following his marriage, served on the northern frontier in Buffalo, New York, from December 1838 through 1841 during the Canadian border disturbances. The Chapmans' first child, William Blair Chapman (Willie), was born in Buffalo, July 18, 1840. Later, Chapman was stationed at Fort Columbus (Governor's Island), New York, from 1841 through 1845, remaining on quartermaster's duty from 1845 through 1846. Chapman was promoted to captain, staff-assistant quartermaster, on May 11, 1846. Chapman served in the Mexican War from 1846 through 1848, and as aide-de-camp to Brevet Major General John E. Wool from June 23, 1846, to November 14, 1847. He was in the Battle of Buena Vista in northern Mexico, February 22-23, 1847, and was breveted a major for gallant and meritorious conduct.

After the Mexican War, Chapman was stationed during the years 1848 through 1852 at Matamoras, Mexico, and at Brownsville, Texas (where as quartermaster he built Fort Brown), and Brazos Santiago, Texas. The Chapmans' other child, Helen Blair Chapman (Nellie), was born at Fort Brown on October 23, 1851. Chapman was quartermaster of the army depot in Corpus Christi, Texas, from 1853 through 1857, and then was transferred to Fort Monroe, Virginia, in 1858. He died at Old Point Comfort, Virginia, on September 28, 1859, at age forty-five.⁴³

43. General G. W. Culliver, *Biographical Register of the Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy Vol. I*, 667.