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## A New Englander on the Indian River Frontier: Caleb Lyndon Brayton and the View from Brayton's Bluff

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**A NEW ENGLANDER ON  
THE INDIAN RIVER FRONTIER:  
CALEB LYNDON BRAYTON AND  
THE VIEW FROM BRAYTON'S BLUFF**

*edited by* EDWARD CALEB COKER AND DANIEL L. SCHAFER

**I**N July 1844, from atop a high bluff overlooking the Indian River in St. Lucie County, Caleb Lyndon Brayton commenced an affectionate correspondence to his wife which continued until his death from tuberculosis ten years later.<sup>1</sup> Lyndon had come to Florida to improve his health and seek his fortune. His pregnant wife, Marian, and his young son, Thomas Lyndon, remained behind in Augusta, Georgia, waiting for him to become established on the Florida frontier. Brayton, a native of Rhode Island, began his career as a merchant in Fall River, Massachusetts. The onset of tuberculosis prompted a move to the warmer climate of Augusta in the late 1830s where he became a wholesale and retail merchant of boots and shoes.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of his illness, Brayton's letters from Indian River demonstrate that he threw himself into pioneer life with remarkable energy. In June 1843 he claimed 160 acres under the Armed Occupation Act, which had been passed by Congress the previous year to help control the few Indians who remained in Florida after the Second Seminole War.<sup>3</sup> Lyndon cleared the land on

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1. Caleb Lyndon Brayton, born July 11, 1816, in Cranston, RI, married Mary Ann Paine at Plainfield, CT, July 8, 1838. Marian, born April 4, 1811, at Randolph, VT, attended Wheaton College. The Braytons had four sons: Joseph Lyndon, born at Fall River, May 25, 1839, died November 5, 1839; Thomas Lyndon, born at Augusta, August 8, 1841; Ellery Metcalf, born at Augusta, June 16, 1844; and William Paine, born at Augusta, September 17, 1850, died April 19, 1871. The Brayton letters are in the collection of Edward Caleb Coker, Jacksonville. Clifford Ross Brayton, Jr., *Brayton Family History* 2 vols. (Albion, NY, 1982), I, 236.
2. [Augusta, GA] *City Directory* (Augusta, GA, 1841).
3. Fort Pierce had been deactivated before Brayton arrived. The Armed Occupation Act permitted a head of family or a single man fit to bear arms to claim 160 acres south of Gainesville. Brayton was among 1,184 individuals

his claim and built a cabin on high ground located on the south side of old Fort Pierce. He called the land "Brayton's Bluff."<sup>4</sup>

By the spring of 1845, Brayton had planted over 140 acres of arrowroot, pumpkins, and other produce and had marketed poultry, salted fish, and green turtles in Key West. Although limited capital hampered his early efforts and hindered reunion with his family, he acquired schooners for trade to Key West, Charleston, and Havana. He supplemented his income with a contract to deliver mail, served as the first county clerk, and expressed high hopes that the pineapples and other fruits and vegetables he had planted would bring him wealth.

The frontier hardship that most tested Lyndon's endurance was loneliness resulting from prolonged absence from his family. Despite entreaties to Marian to join him, she continued to reside alternately in Augusta and in Fall River. In 1849, when he was finally ready to bring his family to Florida, Brayton witnessed first hand a terrifying Indian attack in St. Lucie County and figured prominently in leading the survivors to safety. The unsettled state of the frontier following the attack further delayed Brayton's plans for his family. He eventually brought his son Thomas to Brayton's Bluff in 1851, although the return trip from New England became a test of endurance. When the steamboat stopped at Palatka to install a new boiler, Brayton and another man paddled 125 miles up the St. Johns River. They reached Enterprise on Lake Monroe two and one-half days later.

Not until 1854 did Marian finally come to Indian River, on a visit prompted by news that Lyndon's life was nearing its end. Tuberculosis had finally ravaged his body. In a letter written eight months before his death, he described himself as weak and phlegmatic and weighing less than 100 pounds. The slight chill of autumn in south Florida exceeded his tolerance.

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whose claims were confirmed; 6,000 persons are thought to have moved to frontier areas because of the AOA. Kyle S. VanLandingham, *Pictorial History of Saint Lucie County 1565-1910* (Ft. Pierce, 1976; revised ed., Ft. Pierce, 1988), 6; James W. Covington, "The Armed Occupation Act of 1842," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 40 (July, 1961), 41-52.

4. Brayton's Bluff was fractional lot No. 2 of Section 23, Township 35 South, Range 40 East and is shown on the 1856 Ives Map of south Florida. The site today is in the city of Fort Pierce. It is located along South Indian River Drive, one mile south of the St. Lucie County Courthouse. J. C. Ives, "Military Map of the Peninsula of Florida South of Tampa Bay" (Washington, DC, 1856).



Caleb Lyndon Brayton., 1816-1854. *Collection of Edward Caleb Coker.*

Brayton's lonely letters from Indian River do more than attest to the courage and initiative of a nineteenth-century Florida pioneer. They also provide a window on frontier life, complete with details of cash crops and market prices, agricultural experimentation, and the fledgling trade networks in the Indian River area. Travel routes to south Florida and the adversities faced by travelers are described by a man with abundant first-hand experience. Of primary importance is Brayton's eyewitness account of the 1849 Indian attack on the frontier settlement of Fort Pierce.

Braytons Bluff, St. Lucie Co., July 11, 1844

Dearest Marian

I have this morning [learned] that I was again blessed in being the father of another fine son & that you were doing well [after] your intense suffering. I cannot but express my desire that you should be extremely careful of your own health (as well as that of your dear children). . . .<sup>5</sup>

Dont fail to get Cape Jessamine, Peony, Grape, Pink Rose bush, & Tulip rooted & growing in pots or boxes before you leave, as I should like them here. Send me some Arbor Vitae seeds, and keep sending others when you can.

I had a letter from Maj Taylor a few days since, and he says "There is the crop of Arrow Root which is of the greatest importance to you & me, from what I have recently ascertained from an acquaintance of mine who cultivated last year in Jacksonville. I went to see his grounds, saw his machine for grating & saw his commission merchant who sold it in New York and he told me he paid over to the gentleman who raised it \$52 per barrel, after all expenses had been deducted and that he raised 8 barrels on less than an acre of ground. . . . I have seen no Arrow Root that looks better than mine & from that we are sure it will grow on the Bluff. I brought a sample of tobacco to Augustine and had segars made of it, & the segar maker pronounced it equal to the best Cuba Tobacco. These must be our crops no doubt, & from what we have both seen they will grow on the Bluff."<sup>6</sup>

5. Brayton's original spelling and punctuation have been retained, except to avoid confusion. Corrections, additions, and deletions are marked in the edited letters.

6. Charles Taylor applied under the Armed Occupation Act in December 1842. Arrowroot grew wild, to huge sizes. A tuber which resembled a rutabaga turnip, arrowroot was used by the Indians for bread flour. Dennis Eagan, *The Florida Settler or Immigrants' Guide* (Tallahassee, 1873).

. . . The Maj's views accord with mine, that the Arrow Root is one our most profitable crops, that it requires no more labor than a common corn crop in Georgia (except preparing for market), that the drought does not materially injure it, nor the insect trouble it. In short that it is much more certain in my opinion than Tobacco. It should be planted in November or December.

My corn looks as well & grows as fast as any I ever saw in Georgia. But the worms have commenced cutting it & no doubt will ruin it. The Lemon seeds have come up well. The Walnuts were rotten. I shall attend to your request about the Hemp. . . .

I never wanted to see you as much in my life, & the little one too. How does he look? What colour his eyes hair &c &c. Tell me all the particulars as soon as you can write. Take good care of him & Tommy & learn them to love me. . . . Your dahlias look well. Have you any fruit this year? Learn Tommy to read as soon as you think practicable. I should think him old enough to learn his letters. He must have a finished education. Remember me to all.

Yours in Love, Lyndon

St. Lucie, July 20, 1844

As you are truly my dearest, by no other appellation can I call you. I have not heard from you since my last letter yet I cannot let an opportunity pass, without dropping you a line as I know you would certainly have written me (when you are so well aware of my extreme anxiety to hear from you particularly at this time). I hope, dearest, you have ere this recovered from your late indisposition and are now enjoying your health and strength. That your cares are now increased, I very well know. . . .

What would I not give, what privation would I not undergo, could I for a short time be permitted to enjoy the society of my dearest Marian? And are you not equally anxious to see me? Say dearest you are. Then as your friends are so unwilling for you to follow me to an atmosphere congenial to my constitution & you have decided to listen, [could] you grant me the privilege of meeting you and our little ones at [St.] Augustine to pass a few days together ere you add another thousand miles to the great distance which already so painfully separates us? If such a favour could be granted me, I should feel much better reconciled to another years separation from you. . . .

Please send me *Barnaby Rudge* and other books to amuse me in my widower days for I am very lonely. I miss society very much, particularly Marian's. I am very well & very *fleshy* & very fortunate for you (perhaps) that Congress in not sending the mail, has been equally backward in sending us Females. Could you not afford to send us even a widow to share our lonely hours? Poor society you know is better than none, particularly in this land of scarcity. . . .

I have not finished painting our little boat. Her name is MARIAN which is beautifully inscribed on her bow with a pencil made of my hair & by my own hand. She does honour to the name she bears, in being the acknowledged beauty & fastest sailor on the Sound.

I have two most beautiful Geraniums. One has the odor of Thyme, so strong, entirely new to me, & really handsome. The other a Rose Geranium. I shall amass a list of West India fruits, which you will please send your brother, John [Paine], and prevail on him to obtain either the trees or the seed as I have no opportunity of so doing. He can easily bargain with [ship] captains to procure them. He can get a large supply for a price & I will endeavor to repay him this winter.

Plantain, propagated by roots; Banana; Mango trees; Mangotan, Alligator pears; Guava [all from cuttings]; Pine Apple, with suckers from the roots; Zapoda, Coffee trees & tea, French lemon; Maine Apples; Olives; Apples, fruited yet sweet; Calabash; Mandarin Oranges; Blood red Maltese Oranges; Citron; Anchovy Pears, raised from the stones; Bread fruit, raised from seeds

I shall be spicing and salting fish and fish roe in about two months. I shall use my best endeavors to make it a lucrative business. It can only last about two months as the fish cannot be well cured after December. I hope however to make several hundred dollars by the business. Next year (should I live) I shall raise only the crops of Arrow Root & Tobacco, both of which we can grow successfully. No crops are more profitable.<sup>7</sup>

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7. Massive shoals of mullet and other fish were common in the area in the nineteenth century. Settlers may have followed Spanish and Cuban practices by salting and drying fish. VanLandingham, *Pictorial History*, 17; Janet Snyder Matthews, *Edge of Wilderness: A Settlement History of Manatee River and Sarasota Bay, 1528-1885* (Tulsa, OK, 1983), 74-78.

Don't neglect having the English cow's calf retained for me. I wish you would send me your old crockery when you break up. I very much want two large platters, some plates, tumblers, saltcellars, soup plates, a soup tureen and ladle as we not infrequently have turtle soup. I have nine fine green turtles now in my turtle crawl. Chafing dish for oysters of which we have plenty, that are fine all summer. . . .<sup>8</sup>

August 3rd. Day before yesterday was election day in our new county. I was nominated for the legislature by the Whigs, but declined running as I could not attend to it, had I been elected, for it would have interfered much with my fishing business. . . . I was then nominated for county clerk [and] accepted. N. F. Merrill, the young man who dined at our house last Summer was my opponent. Altho our number is small, there never was a more exciting time in Augusta on election day than we had. Merrill & his friends were out for a week from one end of the Sound to the other & had, as he thought & said, the election sure. But when the votes were counted out, I had 18 out of 26. So you see that I am quite as much esteemed in this community as we could expect any evidence of in this party time.<sup>9</sup>

Mr. & Mrs. Turner have this day moved into Maj Taylor's house next to my place so I shall not be quite so lonely. I told you if you did not come out or send me a widow, I would get some neighbors, but I am now saved the trouble. . . .

I want some blankets & when you break up also some woolen stockings or socks. . . . If you will send me some cloth, cruel, & a pattern or patterns, I will work anything you wish. I have a good deal of leisure time & it will amuse me. Take good care of Tommy & little [Ellery]. Do write all about him. How he looks? What is his name, etc. Kiss them for me and . . . write soon,

8. Marian was closing their Augusta home and returning to Fall River. Green turtles grew to 300 pounds. Because of relentless pressures from commercial hunters, green turtles are now an endangered species. Robert M. Ingle and F. G. Walton Smith, *Sea Turtles and the Turtle Industry of the West Indies, Florida, and the Gulf of Mexico* (Coral Gables, 1949); Archie Carr, *The Windward Road: Adventures of a Naturalist on Remote Caribbean Shores* (New York, 1967), 237-52.

9. In 1821, the Indian River area was part of a large St. Johns County, the southeastern portion of which became Mosquito County in 1824. St. Lucia County was formed in 1844 from parts of Mosquito County. The name was changed to Brevard County in 1855, and the current St. Lucie County was created from it in 1905. See VanLandingham, *Pictorial History*, 9; Allen Morris, *The Florida Handbook 1991-1992* (Tallahassee, 1991), 431-32.



Braytons Bluff, St. Lucie, April 19, 1845

I have not heard one word from you since last November, however, as there has been no communication with Augustine since that time, I flatter myself there are many dear & cheering letters in the [post] office for me. . . . I cannot refrain asking why we should be any longer separated? Why must I be deprived of the comfort and society of my dear wife & children for a longer period than next October or November? . . . Is it because you dread the annoyance of the accursed mosquitoes? No! dearest, I am confident & happy in the belief that you are deterred by no such trifling consideration. Tis true, for months in the year (from June to October) they are almost unendurable here, but the other eight there was never a more delightful place to live.

Our climate is not surpassed by that of Italy even. We have the finest deer, fish, turtle, Oysters, &c imaginable. As my own palate can testify. I have just dined sumptuously from the two latter. . . .

Florida is no longer a territory. Texas and herself have simultaneously doffed the garb of a child, & taken to themselves that of a man. In other words they are both recognised as States and we are enjoying like privileges with yourselves.<sup>10</sup>

Dearest, I have now no doubt of ultimate success in this delightful country. Oranges, Lemons, Pine Apples, Figs, Bananas, Plantains, Ginger, Arrow Root, Indigo, & indeed almost all the tropical fruits can be raised here. I have them all now growing, & have a residence, that with my darling wife & family, & a few embellishments from her fair hands, in a few years, will make one of the most delightful in the world. You may think that I exaggerate, but I have learned to call things by their right names, & see them in their true light. I intend by fall to have two very comfortable rooms, with a passage between of 10 ft. & two good servants rooms over head. A good kitchen & two good fowl houses, I am today building the second one 10 ft square each.

I have 12 hens & 55 chickens, & calculate to have 200 before fall. I shall send 100 to Key West in July or August where they readily command 50 [cents each]. I have 142 acres of Arrow

10. Florida was the twenty-seventh state admitted to the Union, on March 3, 1845.

Root from which I expect to realize \$3 or 400. I hope to raise Rice sufficient for my family & Pumpkins in abundance. Next year if I live, I expect to sell \$1000 worth of produce. Now dearest I once more enjoin on you, to, . . . without a moments delay, put [into a half barrel] some 100 grape cuttings, Pomegranates, Figs, Raspberries, & etc. Water them well and have them ready to bring with you.

Leave one bud only of the grape above the surface. I am particularly anxious about them. As I fully design having a large vineyard. Our grounds & climate are well adapted to the successful growth of them and nothing more profitable, less expensive, or more delightful than the pure beverage of the grape. You will get the most of the cuttings if possible from the Catawba & Isabella vines as they are superior for wine. . . . The Scuppernong grape is one of the very best for wine. . . .

There are Pine Apples here now bearing, & if there is anything that looks beautiful it is them. I have just obtained 38 & have 30 Bananas which will give me by fall more than two hundred. I shall have considerable fruit another year, & from the plants I now have[,] shall be able to obtain more than 1,000 in a year from this time, & 5,000 the year following, & 25,000 the next— 50,000 is a large plantation of them. 200 Orange trees, 100 lemon, 50,000 bananas & 50,000 Pine Apples are an independent fortune to any man, & there is no difficulty in having them, besides many other valuable fruits, such as Citron, Tamarind, Lime, Guava, Custard apple &c &c.<sup>11</sup>

How do the dear little children do? Are they good boys? How I want to see you & them. Kiss them for me. If you know anyone who wishes to come out next winter to board, they would pass the winter pleasantly. I have regained my health again.

St. Lucia, August 21, 1846

I arrived safe and well at home a week today, after an absence of 4 months. You may know I was glad to get back to the “wretched, miserable hole.” I feel the want of your society dear, more than ever since my return, & I wish I could devise a way for you to come immediately, but my expenses this summer have

11. It is important to note that pineapple production was prevalent this early. At least one historian places the first pineapple experiments in the 1880's. VanLandingham, *Pictorial History*, 16-17.

been so heavy that I fear I shall be unable to have you come till late in the fall. As soon as I can I shall forward the L'argent, for I cannot live another winter in this lonely, disagreeable way. . . .

The Schooner leaves tomorrow for Key West where this will be mailed. She takes down a load of Turtles & Pumpkins. It no doubt seems strange to you that we are sending pumpkins to market but dear they are worth from \$18 to 25 pr Hundred there. Key West you know is a small island and they raise no vegetables, consequently such things meet with a ready sale. Poultry is worth 6\$ pr doz. She carries some this trip. 600 Pumpkins & 110 Turtle. She will probably go to Charleston with a load on her return. This winter she will run to the West Indies.

I have figs bearing & grapes & every year will make some addition to my list of fruits, till I shall have all that will grow in a tropical climate. The Pine Apples here were as fine this year as you ever saw. In 2 years I have no doubt but whole vessel loads of them will be exported to N.Y. from this place. Three frame houses were erected in my absence & things look prosperous. There will be 10 times the exports from this place this year that there is in Augustine & yet you ask me if I cannot go there. That place is entirely used up. There is nothing now to support it.

One marriage took place while I was gone & a very worthy couple they are. I was at the first courting frolic. In fact they would not have spent that night together if it had not been for me. They are about 45.

Remember me to all friends. . . . How do the boys behave? Do they go to school? Take good care of them.

St. Lucie, October 16, 1848

Dearest, . . . cannot you manage someway to get to Smyrna, from which place I could get you, by small boat inside, as there is water communication inland from St. Lucie to New Smyrna all the way. Except 1/2 a mile.

I have been sick some time; am now better, tho feeble. I never was as sick in my life, as I have been some few weeks back, but I am now about, & you need not give yourself any uneasiness concerning me. . . .

Some months ago I wrote [that I] had already assessed the taxes & expected in a few weeks to collect. The greater part of the taxes were in old Spanish Grants, & since they were [assessed],

the owners filed their objections to the survey and location of them and the [tax] was set aside, so that they have got to be resurveyed before they can be subject to Taxes; which may not be for some years. Which makes my office worth mere nothing instead of \$150 as I expected.<sup>12</sup>

Our only resource here for means is turtles and fish of which we have an abundance but no way to get to market. Vessels will not come here.<sup>13</sup> Last Winter a Mr. Ward, who married in New Bedford, and myself turtled together & after catching 300 head and not being able to do anything with them we purchased another schooner together for \$600 payable in Key West in Turtles. She was a beautiful little thing of 13 tons, & just as we had carried the last load and returned home, Mr. Ward, the capt, got her on to the bar & she is a total wreck. Cargo all saved except about 3,000 Pine Apple plants we had been to Havana for. So that we derived no benefit from her except supplies of provisions by her for some months. Fortunately we got twine the last trip for the coming winter business, else I should have been flat. . . .

My Evil star still predominates, but my energies are unbroken, & had I good health & my dear family with me, I should feel rich without a cent in the world. I am just as sanguine of ultimate success as ever, tho it requires time.

Trees & plants are promising. My Pine Apples look better and bear larger fruit than any in the West Indies & from those I already have, I can in 3 years have an income of from 5 hundred to 1000 [dollars] and the 4th year so fast do they multiply that I shall have 25,000 fruit & provided they can be got to market you can as easily tell what they will be worth as myself. My oranges too will be bearing then, besides many other kinds of fruit. . . .

I will tell you now how you can come out provided you can manage for means, you can come to Charleston in the Steam Packet every week[:] from there to Fort Melon in Steam Boats every week, and from there to New Smyrna by waggon a distance of 30 miles for \$5 in one day. You are then 150 miles from me, but I can easily get you from there if you will let me know when

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12. Brayton planned to borrow from his in-laws to bring his family to Florida and had pledged his fees from tax collection to repay the debt.  
 13. The shallow passage on St. Lucie Sound barred larger vessels.

you will leave NY. Or which is a much cheaper & equally pleasant way, you can leave NY in large schooners for Jacksonville most any time as there are many vessels that come to St. Johns every winter for lumber and come nearly empty so that you would have excellent accommodation and could bring every thing you wanted to for \$20 probably, children \$20 more say. You could then take the Steam Boat to Fort Melon as before and waggon to Smyrna the whole cost \$20 more perhaps. I would advise this course as it is the cheapest & fewer changes and just as safe & pleasant.

There is one Saw Mill in Jacksonville called the Panama Mills which has many vessels out every winter. She has owners in N.Y. but who they are I dont know. Your brother John could easily ascertain that. I will make arrangements in Smyrna to have your letters sent to me forthwith so that you will not have to remain long there, you can go to the house of Mr. Sheldon and stop. And now dear do try & come if possible.<sup>14</sup>

I have 2 cows but they do not give milk now but will in some 3 months, a plenty of hogs always fat and abundance of venison. I have an indian hunter & have not been without Turkey or Deer on my table every day for 3 months. I am putting an addition of 20 ft to my cabin so that you can be comfortable. I shall raise it next week. I have a pair of Oxen and aplenty to eat & all I can say is come if you wish to rejoice my heart. You can have 3 or 4 children to school at \$20 a year if you chose & you can board them too if you like. By that means our children could be daily instructed. . . .

Kiss the children. . . . I almost forgot to tell you how pleased I was at Thomas letter. It [showed] me that he was a good boy & had inclination for study & that you had done your duty by him.

Dunlawton, July 25, 1849

Your truly excellent letter of July 1st is just received & I hasten to answer it, tho I have barely time to say a few words,

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14. Panama Mills, the first steam-powered sawmill near Jacksonville, was located at Trout Creek. It was owned by Charles F. Sibbald, a Pennsylvanian. Brayton may have been thinking of Mayport Mills, at the mouth of the St. Johns River, which was owned by men from New York and New Hampshire. John Dwight Sheldon was from Greenfield, MA. T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924* (Jacksonville, 1925; reprint ed., Jacksonville, 1990), 67.

it being one scene of excitement and confusion around me. You will wonder at receiving a letter from this place, which, by the way is the name of an extensive Sugar Plantation of Col. [John J.] Marshall, some twelve miles north of New Smyrna, where we are now busy fortifying against an expected attack of the Indians.<sup>15</sup> Yes dear, the Indians have broken out & killed one of my neighbours, & wounded another. I will give you an account as far as my time will allow. On the 12th inst 4 Indians came in at the residence of Col. Wm Russell on Indian River about 7 a.m.<sup>16</sup> I had passed the night [there]. We were sitting conversing when they came up. They appeared as friendly as usual, remaining around the house till about 10 a.m. when they walked to a neighbours about half a mile distant, & ground their knives, which was a common occurrence, & therefore nothing thought of it. Having business myself with Capt [D.H.] Gattis, the gentleman at whose house they were gone, I started to see him & when about half way there I met the 4 Indians, stopped & conversed with them a few minutes, bid them goodbye and passed on. I saw nothing unusual in their appearance.

They told me when we separated that they should come & see me in a few days. They passed on to Col Russell's where two of them stopped; the other two went on to the house of Mr. Ward, (about one mile distant) who was absent from home & plundered his house of everything it contained. They then returned to Mr. Russell's and loitered round the house talking & laughing with the children as usual & even making them presents of beads, rings & etc. Then Russell seeing his brother in law Mr. [John] Barker (who resided near) in his field stepped over to chat with him.

Soon [the four Indians] approached to within a few paces of where they were standing, when all four took deliberate aim, &

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15. Marshall, forty-two years of age and a South Carolinian, had an estate worth \$40,000 in 1850, located at Dunlawton, in Orange County. Manuscript returns of the Seventh U.S. Census, 1850, Orange County (population schedule).
  16. William F. Russell's homestead was nine miles north of Brayton's Bluff, where Fort Capron later was established. In 1850, Russell, born in South Carolina, was Inspector of Customs, forty-five years of age, and a farmer with an estate worth \$5,000. Susan Russell, forty-one, was the mother of six children, ages fourteen to two. Other individuals mentioned in the letter were AOA settlers whose homesteads were dispersed along the river. Ives, "Military Map"; Manuscript returns of the Seventh U.S. Census, 1850, St. Lucie County (population schedule).

fired on them. One ball passed through the left arm of Col. Russell fracturing the smaller bone & slightly grazing his abdomen. They then threw down their guns and pursued Mr. Barker who ran for the house. They succeeded in overtaking him a short distance from the house when they stabbed him, causing his immediate death. Col. Russell ran for Capt Gattis's where I then was. I dressed his wound, while Capt Gattis tried the guns & finding them out of order, we fled to the boats.<sup>17</sup>

Capt Gattis took Col. Russell in his boat & pushed off. Another gentleman & myself launched another boat which lay on shore & were just pushing off when 8 Indians came up within 25 paces & took deliberate aim over a fence & fired on us.<sup>18</sup> One ball passed through the sleeve of a negro man in the boat with us. They reloaded & again fired at us, but none of the shots took effect. Before they could reload again we were out of reach. The sun by this time had nearly set. What to do we did not know. We finally concluded as we had no arms, that our only course was to get some as soon as possible. We accordingly made direct for my house, I having one of Colts 8 shooters & a double barrell gun. After getting opposite to my house no one was willing to go ashore, not within gun shot of the shore. Consequently I was compelled to jump overboard where the water was nearly up to my neck & wade ashore.

I got my guns & ammunition but did not stop to get my papers or clothes. I then repaired to the boat & went all over the settlement, wading ashore at every house, in the same manner I did at mine. After alarming all the neighbours & getting them

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17. Contemporaries blamed John Barker, an AOA claimant and owner of a trading post near Sebastian River, for provoking the attack. Robert Ranson, *East Coast Florida Memoirs, 1837 to 1886* (Tallahassee, 1926; reprint ed., Port Salerno, FL, 1989); VanLandingham, *Pictorial History*, 9. James W. Covington's "Billy Bowlegs, Sam Jones, and the Crisis of 1849." *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68 (January 1990), 299-311, mentions unfair trading but stresses that the conspirators had been "outlawed" by Seminole authorities and may have been motivated by anger at the Florida legislature for confining them to the reserve and limiting liquor sales. Seminoles captured and delivered three of the conspirators to Florida officials for punishment.

18. Brayton very clearly wrote that four Indians came to the home and shot at Barker and Russell, but that "8 Indians . . . fired on us." Covington suggests that only four were involved. Covington, "Billy Bowlegs," 303. Ranson relates that Russell accidentally spilled ink on his wounded arm during the night. The next day, believing that mortification had set in, he insisted the arm be amputated. Ranson, *East Coast Florida Memoirs*, 16.

into small boats, we launched a small schooner boat of about 3 tons in which we put all the women and children & what things they could gather up in the hurry & hustle of moment, & anchored her off in the stream.<sup>19</sup> They put fire to Capt Gattis's house as soon as they rifled it of all it contained. The firing of the house was no doubt a signal for those in ambush to rush to their assistance.

As soon as day dawned (for you must know that all I have described was the work of a night) we commenced searching for Col. Russell's family, who all took the bush as soon as the firing commenced. [We later learned that] after reflecting a few moments Mrs. Russell thought best for them to take the boat which they did. . . .

After searching for them in vain, Capt Gattis, two other gentleman & myself armed ourselves & went on shore, visiting the premises of Col. Russell and Mr. Barker. We found the houses rifled of everything they contained, even the ticking was taken from the beds. Chairs & furniture broken. We did not discover an Indian tho we freely expected to encounter them. We found Mr. Barker in the field murdered. The cattle were floating about the river dead & I assure you every thing presented a gloomy and frightful appearance.

Not being able to discover any traces of Col. Russell's family, we became convinced that they must have started for Smyrna as two of the boats were gone. After we had got the little schooner to sea with a cargo of some 30 souls, Mr. [Thomas] Morrison & myself took a boat & arms & went in pursuit of those who were missing. About 10 a.m. on the following day, having sailed all night we discovered a boat several miles ahead of us. They took down their sail & ran ashore & hid. . . [thinking] we were Indians & would not show themselves. We finally [found] Mrs. Russell, Mrs. Barker, Miss [Minerva] Bullock, 5 white children, 2 negro girls & one little negro infant who had in the confusion . . . got separated from its mother. Mrs. R. had an infant also.<sup>20</sup>

19. VanLandingham writes that the terrified settlers "secured passage on a schooner belonging to Capt. Pinkham, a member of the colony, and sailed to St. Augustine." As Brayton's account makes clear, the events of the next few days were far more complicated. There is an AOA claim from Reuben H. Pinkham. VanLandingham, *Pictorial History*, 9.

20. Minerva Bullock, twenty-two years old, probably was governess/teacher for the Russell children. Thomas Morison was an AOA homesteader whose claim was located two and one-half miles north of Fort Pierce.



Of all the heartrending scenes, dear, that ever I witnessed this was the most distressing. Here were a parcel of helpless women & children, bare footed & bare headed, & almost naked. The children crying & screaming for water & food, having been two days without anything to eat except Oysters, which they gathered & opened with their scissors. The women were clinging to us wailing & weeping, begging to know if their husbands were dead or alive. To break the news to them was indeed a task, but it had to be done as they were impertinate in their entreaties. Judge of the unpleasantness of our situation, in the midst of an enemy with a parcel of women & children looking to me for protection. After getting them composed . . . we found that they had not seen the other boat in which was one of Mrs. Russell's little daughters & 8 negroes. We however concluded that as we were in a very dangerous position, our best course was to get those we had already found to Smyrna where they could be under the protection of some one while we should continue the search for the other boat.

But when we arrived at Smyrna we found them there, having walked on the beach a distance of 130 miles in 4 days. How was it possible for those children (some of whom were only 5 & 6 years old), to walk that distance in that incredible short space of time, without any provisions, (except what berries they could pick & turtle eggs they could find) is hardly possible to conjecture.<sup>21</sup>

How long we shall remain I can't tell, but probably only a day or two, as I am expecting Col. Russell will send a vessel for his family, who I shall accompany to St. Augustine. What course I shall take I don't know being without a cent of money & only the clothes I stand [in], which are now beginning to give way. If any of my friends feel as if they could spare a few dollars, now is a time that it will be accepted.

Oh how disappointed I am. Just as I was calculating on having you join me in October, & feeling that I could make you comfortable & happy, at that moment all my hopes are blasted. You will now not make any calculation to come to Florida till the Indians

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21. The refugees went to the home of Jane (Murray) and John Sheldon, four miles south of New Smyrna Beach. Sheldon transported the refugees to Dunlawton and St. Augustine. Jane Murray Sheldon, untitled memoir, written manuscript, Jacksonville Beaches Historical Society; Zelia Wilson Sweett, *New Florida, Florida in the Civil War* (Daytona Beach, 1963).

are exterminated. Government I presume will immediately establish a garrison at Indian River. In that event I should wish to return, & look after my effects. But rest assured that I shall not expose myself to any further danger & think it highly probable that I shall go north if I can get the means to carry me there, tho it is getting late in the season.

No one has endured the fatigue as well as myself, nor has any one been exposed to half the dangers or hardships that I have. In fact hardly a soul would have been saved had it not been for me. If any assistance can be rendered me now is the time I need it. The mail is closing so I must stop. I will write you again in Augustine. Write me immediately. Kiss the boys and believe me dearest, Your ever affectionate Lyndon

St. Augustine, Jan'y 2, 1850

I arrived here day before yesterday. . . . My health is quite as good as when I left [Mass.], tho I contracted another cold in Charleston, which keeps me still barking. But we are having most delightful weather, & I hope soon to be right side up.

This morning at sunrise the thermometer stood at 60. St. Augustine has a goodly number of transient people here, in quest of health, & Jacksonville is filled to overflowing. Almost every private family is compelled to open doors to the invalid. Indian River would be crowded if people could go there safely & be accommodated. There are over 500 persons now at Indian River [including soldiers], which gives it a lively appearance. Several of the citizens have returned.

There is no telling whether the Indians will remove peaceably or not. It is my impression now that they will resist to the last, tho nothing is known here of their movements & determination. I expect to leave here tomorrow in the Steamer for Indian River. . . . She is only 12 hours going.

My house I learn is not burned, tho stripped of every thing even to the floors. I had about 4,000 ft of lumber which is also missing. I found my friends here all well. Majr Russell is at Indian River & his wife thinks of accompanying me down, tho I hardly think she will go. Still there is no danger. . . .

I had a lonesome passage dear, & would give all my old shoes to see your smiling face. If I conclude to remain you must make up your mind to come to Florida next fall. . . . How is Ellery's

leg? I would not doctor him much, but pay strict attention to his diet, & bathe him thoroughly every day & rub his limb with coarse towels. I wish I had taken him with me, for I think sea bathing & the saline atmosphere would be productive of much good to him.<sup>22</sup> I feel anxious about Thomas. You had better get him some shoulder braces & have him wear them constantly. Have him practice some kind of gymnastics daily, & don't allow him to stoop over his books so much. . . .

St. Augustine, Jan. 6, 1850

You cannot imagine how lonely I feel, and how much I miss your society. . . . I received a letter from Mr. Fowler a few days since as well as the Post Master Genl informing me that the department would give me \$1,000 pr annum to carry the mail once a month from New Smyrna to Miami and back, which I have accepted. I have let out the contract to another gentleman for \$500. He is to furnish everything except the boats. They will cost me about \$200 so that I will probably make 300 by the contract for the first year & nearly 500 after that, besides passengers & packages. I shall likewise get this gentleman appointed P.M. at Indian River & shall attend to the business and divide the profits. I suppose that will pay me some 25\$ pr annum.

The Steamer has not yet arrived, & when I am to get away from this miserable hole is more than I can tell. That I am heartily sick & tired of staying here, is evident to everyone. . . .

We are having most delightful weather. Invalids keep pouring in from the northern cities. My claims on the Government are rising, \$2000 for losses sustained by the depredations. What course Government will take with the Indians, is impossible to tell, but I think unless some treaty is soon made with them, that a war of extermination will ere long be waged. Poor deluded creatures: they had better take their papooz's on their backs & bid adieu to Florida; for if they resist, no mercy will be shown them. . . .<sup>23</sup>

22. Ellery Brayton, born June 16, 1844, contracted polio as a child and was slightly impaired in one leg as a result.

23. Government policy is discussed in James W. Covington, *Billy Bowlegs War, 1855-1858: The Final Stand of the Seminoles Against the Whites* (Chuluota, 1981), 14-27, and Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 86-101. After the 1849 attacks, the goal still was to induce emigration west, but the approximately 450 remaining Indians refused to depart. The Third Seminole War was fought from 1855 to 1858.

St. Lucie County, Jan. 25, 1850

There are some 500 Officers & Soldiers stationed here [at Ft. Capron], which renders it perfectly secure near the Garrison, tho I do not consider it safe to go to my place to live which is some 9 miles distant. However there is some prospect that another post will be established nearer my place. I am making arrangements to start the mail, & shall probably get it in operation in about 4 weeks.<sup>24</sup>

I have found my oxen. Have butchered one which brought me \$56.25. I shall kill the other next week which is a little heavier. I have also found one cow. The balance of my cattle I expect the soldiers have killed.

Mrs. Russell is here. She came with me from St. Augustine. Major Russell has sent for the balance of his family, who will be here in a few days. The Garrison is established at his place. Several of the Officers have their families with them.

It looks like a New England village here, all is bustle and activity. The Sound is white with sail. Buildings are going up daily. Vessels are on the Stocks. Three Stores are open. Teams are moving in every direction. Roads are being constructed. A splendid road is nearly completed from here to Tampa Bay & a military post established every ten miles the whole length of it, from one side of the peninsula to the other. I do not think Government will disturb the Indians at all, but will throw a sufficient force into the country to afford ample protection to all, & keep the Indians hemmed up & so entirely cut him off from all intercourse with the whites, that they will have no alternative but to starve or emigrate. Unless they can get powder, lead, salt & etc. they must leave. Already are they meeting the troops as they are crossing the country & begging for tobacco, salt & etc. Government will act on the defensive entirely, but is ready to pay liberally whenever the Indians will think of removing, which must come sooner or later. . . .

My cough is rather troublesome & I am thinner of flesh than I have ever been since I left Augusta, but don't be uneasy for I think the climate will soon strengthen me. . . .

24. The 1850 census listed twenty-two heads of families in St. Lucia County, including Caleb Brayton, thirty-seven, a mail contractor with an estate of \$1,000. Living with Brayton was Charles Johnson, also a mail carrier. Manuscript returns of the Seventh U.S. Census, 1850, St. Lucia County (population schedule).

I shall start the mail on the 1st day of March from New Smyrna, & shall leave that place on the 1st of every month. . . . I want you to subscribe to the Whig paper published in Fall River, & have it direct to me. . . .

Indian River, June 23, 1850

I have been quite unwell since I last wrote you. In fact I was considerably alarmed about my situation. I felt very similar to what I did when I lost my health in the city of Augusta & had seriously thought of leaving for a while, but about 4 days since I began to feel better and am now improving, as fast as I failed. I had become so feeble that I could scarcely walk without tottering, & was reduced in flesh, so that I only weighed 122 pounds. My dear, you need not feel uneasy about me however, for I am improving rapidly. I understand my constitution so thoroughly that with half a chance I can feel myself pretty safe. Every one seemed to regard my case as almost hopeless & thought me nearly insane, that I would not have a physician. I weighed the matter well & came to the sage conclusion that, tho the physician might be very skillful, yet he knew nothing of my constitution, & consequently his skill in my case would amount to little less than experiments. . . .

I should have written you a long letter, but I have not had energy to do it. Army movements are in "status quo." Nothing is known what is intended to be done with the Indians at this time, but I think we will have hot work this fall. . . .

Indian River, July 21st, 1850

Did I not once send you a keg of Manatee meat? There has recently been two taken here. One of them they succeeded in capturing alive, & have this day started with him for Charleston, intending to take him from there to New York and exhibit him, unless [the New York showman P. T. Barnam] will give them a reasonable price for him. They feed entirely on grass; the head resembles somewhat that of a cow, and they are called the Sea Cow. Its skin is similar to the elephants with occasionally a few hairs scattered over it. It has two fore flippers somewhat resembling those of a turtle with nails on the end, it has no fin, and a tail nearly circular. They grow to an enormous size. The one they have started with is about 9 ft long, 3 ft wide & 2 ft deep.

Its eyes & nose & nostrils are similar to a cows. It has no ears. It has back teeth like a cow, but no front teeth. . . . The flesh you know is like beef. Should you have an opportunity, I would advise you to go see [this] curiosity.

Burnham & Clark are the gentlemen who caught it. Should you see Mr. Burnham make yourself known to him. He is a fine looking, dark complexion, black eyed man, and is a very pleasant, unassuming person. . . .<sup>25</sup>

What time in September darling do you expect to be confined. How I long to be with you at that trying time, to be indulged with your caresses, and to hold to my bosom the pledge of our love. You can scarcely imagine, my dear Marian, the anxiety I shall feel, till that eventful period is passed. . . .

Indian River, Jany 22nd 1851

Your letters are getting to be like Angels visits, few & far between, but I suppose your multiplicity of concerns requires all your time. . . .

How I wish you could be here to enjoy this delightful weather and partake of our fine turtle, fish, oysters and ducks. They are truly delicious. Did you get the barrel of Fish I sent you? I hope they were in good order. They are not quite equal to a mackeral but are a very good substitute. Thermometer stands today at 79 which is about the usual temperature.

You have not yet told me if you are willing to come to Florida. I am tired darling of living this way. Besides I have to pay \$12 per month board and that would half support us here where things are so abundant. I have not yet heard from Washington but hope to by return mail. . . . Government owes me \$725 up to [Jan. 1, 1851].

What are you making such a fuss about the Fugitive Slave law for? You had better take care of the poor whites, & let the negroes to their masters. They are better off with them than anywhere else, & are as much the property of their masters as their plantations. Nine out of ten if left to themselves would return to their masters voluntarily.<sup>26</sup>

25. Mills O. Burnham and William Burnham settled near Fort Pierce under the AOA. Ranson, *East Coast Florida Memoirs*.

26. Interestingly, the spouses differed over slavery and enforcement of the Fugitive Slave Law, she agreeing with the explosive response in New England to southern efforts to enforce the law, and he with the bitter protests in the South against abolitionism in New England.

Tell the boys I have a little Pony just big enough for them to ride, & if they are good boys & learn well they shall have a boat & pony when they come to Florida.

Enterprise, Florida, April 22, 1851

We arrived [from Massachusetts] day before yesterday; had a fatiguing time & was detained four days on the way. Besides having to travel from Palatka to this place (a distance of one hundred & twenty five miles) in a canoe, we were two days and a half performing it. We traveled day & nights. I fixed up a place in the boat so that Thomas was very comfortable & slept quite as much as usual. But I hardly closed my eyes from the time I left till I arrived here, & I assure you I am nearly used up. A gentleman who came up with me, . . . one of the ruggedest looking men you ever saw is down sick in consequence of the trip.

The Steam Boat on this route is putting in a new boiler, which caused the difficulty. We stopped one day in Washington, one day in Richmond, one day in Savannah and one day in Palatka, so that in fact we were travelling only nine days. Thomas has not been the least dissatisfied or homesick, has an excellent appetite & seems very well. I am delighted with him. . . .

Now dearest I will tell you how I am situated. In the first place my remittance of \$500 from Washington is not here. All my letters have been sent back from Indian River. . . .

I have got just 10 cents in my pocket. I shall be obliged to ride over to Col. Marshalls & borrow the money, which will cause me to leave Thomas here instead of carrying him to the Col's as I originally intended, for if I take him & my baggage with me I shall be under the disagreeable necessity of telling the landlord I am out of funds, and as he is a stranger to me I had rather lost \$20 than to do it. There is a mail [coming] from the Col's this evening & it is possible my draft may come in that, but my hopes are small.<sup>27</sup>

I think it is pretty certain that I lost the mail contract. I have learned since I came here that my former mail carrier has put in proposals for it— he is lower than my bid. . . .

Wednesday morning 23rd. I am abed feeling miserably, but hope by keeping my bed today I may get along without being

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27. The journey to Dunlawton would have been more than thirty miles north-east from Lake Monroe in the direction of today's highway 415.

sick longer. My draft arrived last night from Col Marshalls which was a great relief to me. I dont know that it will be possible for me to get it cashed. I have asked those most likely to have the means but have not yet succeeded. My head aches very bad so I must close with many kisses & much love for you & the children.

Indian River, Dec. 26, 1852

I received the box you sent me with Thomas clothes a few days since. Thomas was much pleased with them. . . .

I have been extremely unfortunate lately. Both of my mail boats have been caught in heavy weather recently & much damaged. One of them is now sunk 75 miles from here. I start for her day after tomorrow. The extent of her injury must be considerable.

My house is within about 2 months of being finished & I shall send for you as soon thereafter as I can raise the money, unless there is open war with the Indians, which will be determined on by that time. You are aware that Bowlegs & other prominent Indian Chiefs when at Washington agreed to emigrate to the west of the Mississippi next March. Of course nothing can be told with any certainty till that time. Should they not at that time make positive demonstrations of removal by bringing in their property, & women & children a war with them will be inevitable, for should the Government not take hold of the matter the State will. Major Genl Benjamin Hopkins recently spent several days with me & told me that he should not wait longer than March unless they show strong signs of leaving soon. And what is still better he told me he should have a depot at this place & promised me the Quarter Masters situation. The pay I suppose is about \$100 per month.<sup>28</sup>

Should hostilities commence I should send Thomas north the first good opportunity. His health is greatly improved & he has grown considerably. He has been on the beach looking for shells. . . . I am sorry to hear such unfavorable accounts of Ellerys

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28. Major General Benjamin Hopkins was appointed commander of the Florida militia in January 1851. The two-month service of the militia "succeeded in: sending one man to Indian Territory; separating several women from their husbands; indirectly causing the suicide of an old woman and 'liberating' one hundred and forty hogs from the Indians." Covington, *Billy Bowlegs War*, 23-25.



leg. Will you let me have him if I send you Thomas. I think this climate would benefit him. . . .

Yesterday was Christmas, but we had nothing unusual here. We calculated to have had a regular Christmas dinner. I went for oysters, & two men living with me went hunting, fully calculating to have a deer & turkey, but unfortunately did not get either, so that we abandoned the idea entirely. They all went on the beach & I remained at home alone. But if I could have had some of your pumpkin pies, I would have been satisfied. I have more than 300 pumpkins now within a stone throw of the house. They are much finer here than at the North. We use them regularly as a vegetable. We stew them and mash them up with grease & pepper.

Indian River, March 9, 1853

I could soon make you very comfortable, if there is any comfort to be taken in a Cabin. Mine is nearly completed. I am now occupying one room, for you must know there are five in the house, besides a pantry. I was strongly urged to take a boarder. . . . He is here for his health, is quite feeble & wishes to bring his wife. You can have a plenty of boarders if you wish. People are anxious to come here for their health. The salubrity of the climate is unsurpassed. It is exactly the place for the invalid & will at no distant day be much resorted to by that class of persons, or I am no prophet.

The rumor respecting the murder of Genl Hopkins & others was entirely false, but he has been removed from office, so that my nose is out of joint. I think it will be a long while before his equal is in the field.

I am glad to hear you are all well. Thomas is well, but I am feeble & have been for several weeks. I am very thin of flesh, never more so, but hope I shall soon be better. We have had a very pleasant winter. No frost. What would you give to have green vegetables all winter? Yesterday we shot 2 wild Turkey weighing 15 lbs each. They are delightful. Have you ever tasted of a Banana? I have one putting out fruit, I wish you could be here when it matures. It is the best fruit I ever tasted. Thomas has some 50 Chickens, we have a plenty of eggs. . . .

Bring all your furniture whenever you do come as you will need it. Your parlor is little more than 16 ft square, it is not

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quite so stylish as your brother Johns, but you can't see through more than half the logs. While you have an opportunity to get cloths cheap you ought to make you as much bedding & etc. as you will want for a long while. I have straw matting for one room certain & perhaps more. I have one good bureau tho small, a Good Mirror, 5 good chairs (including a rocking chair) for a bedroom, a good wash stand. This comprises all my furniture that would be of any value to you. I intend to have a small Mahogany table made by my Carpenter before he leaves. I shall use it for my bedroom as a writing table. In short I have good furniture enough for one bedroom, with the exception of the bedstead & bedding. Of that I have 3 good blankets & 2 good pillows, & 4 good sheets.

You are correct in thinking I will not make much this year. But we must take the bitter with the sweet. It cost me \$75 to repair my mail boat. But I am all the while improving my place, so that by the time my contract expires, I hope we shall be about to make a living from that together with taking boarders. . . .

New Smyrna, July 2nd 1853

I have been here at the house of Mr. Sheldon now a week, hoping that the trip from Indian River to here & the change in diet would be beneficial to my health, but it seems otherwise ordained. And tho I have . . . spoken of my feeble health, yet you will be astonished when I tell you that I fear my life is fast drawing to a close. But dearest such is the fact. My disease has so insidiously worked on me for the last few months, that I had not realised the rapid progress it was making until a short time since, when I awoke to a true sense of my situation. Tho I still hope, which is always the case in diseases of the nature of mine, I hope against reason & good judgment. I am now just able to walk about. I wish I could go north, but I cannot. I am very anxious to see you, & would like to while I am able to get about, which cannot I think be but a few weeks more at farthest.

It is necessary also that you should be here that you may become acquainted with my [business] affairs, [and] aside from the qualifications and comfort it will be to us to be together at this time, it will be [financially] to your advantage. It would be a great gratification and comfort to me to see my dear little boys again, but I dont see that you can well bring them, in fact I would not advise it. . . .

I shall be here about 10 or twelve days longer when I shall return. You cannot get here in time to return with me, but by leaving N.Y. in time to arrive in Charleston to take the Steamer Carolina (a very fine boat) on the 30th you will reach Palatka in time to take the *Sarah Spalding* on Monday the 1st of August. Tuesday you will reach Enterprise where you will have a cart or wagon conveyance 30 miles to New Smyrna, where you will find my boat with Capt [William] Davis in charge.<sup>29</sup> You will be perfectly safe with him. He is an excellent boatman. He has long been at Indian River. His wife has been in Augustine since the Indian difficulty. I inclose some Steamer notices which will assist you in travelling.

Now dearest I will tell you what you find indispensable here. . . . Bring a Stove with 6 or 8 ft pipe. Dont think now that you can't, or that you can get along without it. . . . I attribute my present situation more to cooking out doors than anything else. I could not hire a cook. There is no one here to hire. You will have to do the cooking. Whenever you wish to dispose of the stove it will readily bring more than the cost and expenses.

There is no trouble in bringing any thing you wish but [bring only] what is absolutely necessary. Bring a mattress, knives, & forks, spoons, plates & etc., also a mosquito bar. Not one with coarse meshes either. This cross bar muslin is the best, as that keeps out both mosquitoes and sandflies. The sand fly is very minute & annoying. Marian if you could bring out some shirt calico to make up, you could sell them readily & get money for them, which could help affray your expenses. You will have plenty of time & unless you have something to busy yourself about— you will be very lonesome. . . . Thomas is well. He is at Indian River. Bring some school books for Thomas. I shall write father in a few days. I wish I was with him. . . . Kiss the children for me. . . . I hope I may yet live to see them.

It seems strange to me I have been sick so long, to think & see & feel that I can't get better again. I have been weaker than I am now, but never so light. I suppose I weigh about 110. But I never felt as I do now. I never coughed & raised as I do now, & besides my mouth has become sore and my teeth are all loose. What I raise now is the regular pus. I have never raised it before. I raise now by the mouthfuls. . . .

Now dearest I must close. I feel much fatigue and very sore. . . .

29. On Captain William Davis, see VanLandingham, *Pictorial History*, 8.

New Smyrna, Oct. 17, 1853

I intended to have gone to Enterprise today & write you from there, but I find myself too feeble this morning. [Travel] will cost you not over \$50. . . . When I send the money I will tell you when to start so as to arrive at Enterprise at the [right] time. There is a small Sloop running regularly between Savannah and New Smyrna. The Capt is now here. He will return and leave Savannah again in about 3 weeks.

Now I wish you to purchase the following articles & send them. . . . One cooking stove, a second hand one will answer, [and] one parlor stove. For the cooking stove I want one knee and 6 feet pipe, for the parlor I want 4 knees and 18 feet pipe, one bbl dried apples, one dried peaches, one beans, one onions, one apples, one cider, one firkin butter, and any other things you may have to send. Bring some sweet corn to eat & some to plant. Send me a bill of the cost of the things & if \$110 is not enough to cover the cost I will send more.

New Smyrna, Oct 20th 1853

Day before yesterday some Gents arrived here from Enterprise who came up on one of the Boats from Pilatka & informed me you was at Pilatka & was coming up in the other boat. Yesterday Thomas & myself were looking anxiously for you. But when the mail arrived . . . Mrs. Brayton was not on board the boat, so now til I hear from you I shall not know where you are.

We are having very cold unpleasant weather. My health is very poor, in fact I doubt very much if I shall be able to [travel to] meet you. . . . You can't imagine how much I want & need you. I can't get any thing to eat & I am dying for want of little nice things. If I could get some peach or apple sauce every day, how I should relish it. I dont want food. Bring a few garden seeds & 2 light hoes. I cant get anything of the kind here, & I should like to exercise a little sometimes. . . . We have nothing but heavy Negro hoes & I can't use them. . . .

I have old Will again, tho he is not much worth, still he can bring your wood & water & do all such things. In fact he does everything now & works some besides.

Bring Willie. Tell Ellery to be a good boy and he shall come next time. . . . I am froze now. What shall I do when cold weather comes. There is no blood in me I weigh only 100 lb.

New Smyrna, April 6, 1854

I returned here last evening from Enterprise with the intention of returning to Indian River with the boat, but find myself too much jaded. [Marian was then at Ft. Pierce.] I must have a few days rest, & shall therefore stop till the next boat. We have had very cold weather ever since I have been here. I want very much to get home. I find comforts there that I don't any where else.

I send you some oil. Keep Will grubbing & hoeing and Thomas studying.<sup>30</sup> There is no corn in these parts over knee high. Get in all the potatoes possible. Attend well to the trees & poultry. No sugar or molasses can be obtained here. There will be a vessel there the last of this month for turtles, when I shall have such things. Tell Willie the oranges are all gone. There are quite a party here on the way to Indian River looking for lands. In haste, your affectionate

Lyndon

Caleb Lyndon Brayton died of tuberculosis June 9, 1854. The details of his burial are not known. Marian Brayton returned to Fall River. In 1871, she moved to Augusta, where she died April 20, 1883. Ellery Brayton attended Brown University and graduated from Harvard Law School in 1866. He served, in Augusta, as clerk of the superior court of Richmond County from 1867 until 1871. Later, he moved to Columbia, South Carolina, served in the legislature, and practiced law before his death March 6, 1907. Thomas L. Brayton lived in Florida until 1861. He returned to Massachusetts to join the Seventh Regiment, Massachusetts Volunteers. After the war he was a bank teller in Fall River until illness forced a move to Greenville, South Carolina, in 1876. He served as a deputy United States Marshal until he was murdered July 20, 1881, in Central, South Carolina, by John McDow, a moonshiner.<sup>31</sup>

30. The 1850 Census does not identify Old Will. He may have been one of fourteen slaves owned by Colonel Russell in 1850. Manuscript returns of the Seventh U.S. Census, 1850, St. Lucia County (population schedule).
31. Brayton, *Brayton Family History*, 236; misc. newspaper clippings and other unpublished records in the Brayton family letter collection.