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UNPRETENDING SERVICE: THE JAMES L. DAVIS, THE TAHOMA, AND THE EAST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON

by DAVID J. COLES

THE United States Navy's primary mission during the Civil War was to blockade the Confederate coastline. To accomplish this, the North Atlantic, South Atlantic, East Gulf, and West Gulf Blockading Squadrons were established.¹ Perhaps the least known of these was the East Gulf Blockading Squadron (EGBS), which was created January 20, 1862, and began independent operations a month later on February 22. Charged with responsibility for the blockade of the Florida peninsula from Cape Canaveral on the Atlantic coast to St. Andrew Bay in the Gulf of Mexico, the EGBS operated for three and one-half years. During that time, the squadron's officers and men captured or destroyed 283 blockade-runners, virtually eliminated the sugar and salt industries along the Florida coast, provided haven for thousands of Unionist refugees, conducted scores of raids, and participated in combined operations with Federal forces located in the state.²

The Florida coastline presented many difficulties for the Union blockaders. The state's proximity to Spanish Cuba and the British Bahamas made it a popular destination for blockade-runners, and its sheer size—nearly 1,300 miles of shoreline—posed a formidable challenge for a squadron lacking sufficient ships, men, and equipment. The EGBS could often maintain fewer than twenty ships on station. Additionally, much of the

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1. Stanley Itkin, "Operations of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron" (master's thesis, Florida State University, 1962), 1, 4-5; David D. Porter, *The Naval History of the Civil War* (New York, 1886), 33-37; Richard S. West, Jr., *Mr. Lincoln's Navy* (New York, 1957), 57-72. The Mississippi Squadron and the West Indian Squadron also existed for much of the war.
2. Itkin, "Operations," 1-3, 200-01. See also Church E. Barnard, "The Federal Blockade of Florida During the Civil War" (master's thesis, University of Miami, 1966).

coast and waters around the peninsula were inadequately charted. This particularly was true in south Florida and along the Gulf coast. Numerous small rivers and streams emptied into the Gulf, and shallow bayous and bays extended for miles, offering perfect hiding places for light-draft blockade-runners.³

The only large Confederate port in the EGBS's area of responsibility was Apalachicola, which through the 1850s had been one of the busiest cotton-shipping centers on the Gulf.⁴ Still, the squadron was required to spread its ships along the entire coastline. They generally were stationed— when ships were available— at St. Andrew Bay, St. Joseph Bay, Apalachicola, St. Marks, Cedar Key, Tampa Bay, Charlotte Harbor, Jupiter Inlet, and Indian River. Some vessels also patrolled the northern coast of Cuba, the eastern Gulf, and the northern Bahamas.⁵

The headquarters of the EGBS was at Key West. Strategically located less than 100 miles from Cuba, the outpost guarded the primary shipping lane into the Gulf. Its port facilities also provided an invaluable logistical and administrative base. Union forces stockpiled supplies there, and they appropriated civilian dry-dock and marine-railway operations to enable the navy to make complicated repairs. Key West provided, as well, the only rest and rehabilitation port for the EGBS, an important factor for sailors coming ashore after long months on the blockade.⁶

Key West offered an additional attraction to the navy. United States ships that seized an enemy vessel were entitled by maritime law to a portion of the value of the captured cargo. The District

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3. Rodney E. Dillon, Jr., "The Civil War in South Florida" (master's thesis, University of Florida, 1980), 1-19; Itkin, "Operations," 2. See also William Watson Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (New York, 1913; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1964); and John E. Johns, *Florida During the Civil War* (Gainesville, 1963; reprint ed., MacClenny, 1989).
 4. Lynn Willoughby, "Apalachicola Aweigh: Shipping and Seamen at Florida's Premier Cotton Port," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69 (October 1990), 178-94. Harry Owens, "Apalachicola Before 1861" (Ph.D. dissertation, Florida State University, 1966), 1-3.
 5. As to the location of particular ships at specific stations, see United States War Department, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion* (hereafter *ORN*), 30 vols. (Washington, DC, 1894-1922), ser. 1, XVII, for the relevant reports and correspondence relating to the EGBS.
 6. Jefferson B. Browne, *Key West, the Old and the New* (St. Augustine, 1912; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1973), 90-95. See also Donald Lester, "Key West During the Civil War" (master's thesis, University of Miami, 1949); and Dillon, "Civil War in South Florida."

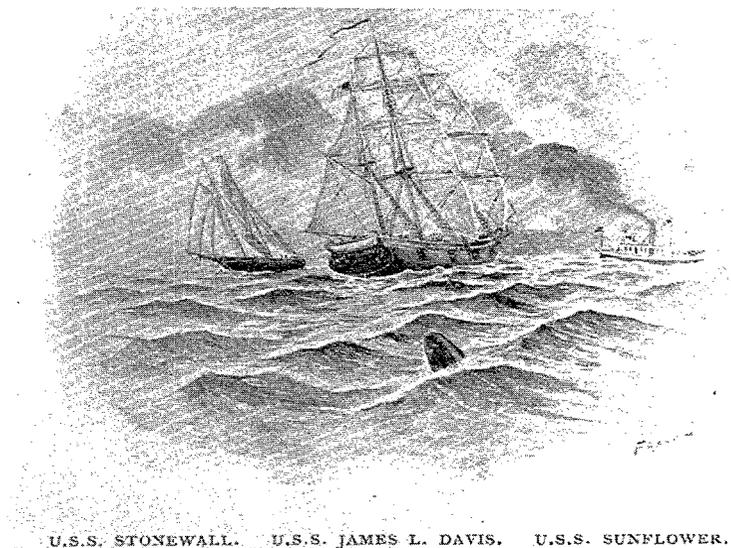
Court of the United States for the Southern District of Florida operated at Key West and held jurisdiction over claims from the East Gulf, West Gulf, and West Indies squadrons. The court adjudicated disposition of at least 160 ships during the war. After determining the prize value of the captured ship, the capturing blockader received one-half of the total. All crew members claimed a portion of the award, with the commander and other officers retaining the largest shares. The government reserved rights to the remaining one-half of the prize value. If more than one ship participated in the capture, the capturing vessels split the settlement. The prize could be small or large. On one occasion, twelve ships divided a total of \$1.11. In contrast, the *Magnolia* captured the steamer *Matagorda* outbound from Galveston in September 1864 carrying cotton valued in excess of \$389,000.⁷

The EGBS became fully operational in the spring of 1862. Captain William McKean commanded the squadron during its first months of existence, and he was largely responsible for its early successes. Subsequent commanders included James L. Lardner (June-November 1862), Theodorou Bailey (November 1862-August 1864), Theodore P. Greene (August-October 1864), and Cornelius K. Stribling (October 1864-June 1865). Permanent commanders received the acting rank of rear admiral.⁸

Eighty-five ships served in the ranks of the EGBS during the war. The best way to understand the reality of day-to-day life aboard these men-of-war during the blockade is to examine the activities of individual ships and their crews. Specifically, the *James L. Davis* and the *Tahoma* campaigned throughout most of the war with the EGBS, and their experiences serve as a microcosm of the squadron as a whole.

7. Itkin, "Operations," 52-54, 219, 229; Dillon, "Civil War in South Florida," 17-18; William S. Allen to Father, December 1, 1862, box 4, manuscript collection, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville. Allen was a clerk with the District Court of the United States for the Southern District of Florida, which adjudicated claims on captured blockade-runners.

8. Edward William Callahan, *List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900* (New York, 1901; reprint ed, New York, 1969), 35, 230-31, 322, 369, 527; ORN, ser. 1, XVII, 242, 325-26, 734, 740, 757, 764-65, 860.



The *James L. Davis*. This drawing by Frank Hendry can be found in Eugene Chapin, *By-Gone Days, Or, The Experiences of an American* (Boston, 1898).

The United States Navy purchased the *James L. Davis* on September 29, 1861, and commissioned it two months later. A wooden-hulled sailing vessel, the bark measured 133 feet in length with a beam of 30 feet 7 inches. It had a relatively deep draft of twelve feet. The *Davis's* armament consisted of four eight-inch cannon.⁹ Its crew size varied from forty-five to sixty-nine, and the number of officers remained constant at eleven. While most of the men had been born in the United States, foreign-born individuals comprised a sizeable minority. In January 1862, for example, the ship's muster roll indicates that nine of the forty-five sailors came from outside the United States: two each were natives of Ireland and Norway, and the other five hailed from England, Denmark, Russia, Scotland, and British Guiana. Of the American-born complement, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Pennsylvania had the most representatives.¹⁰

9. James L. Mooney, ed., *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, 8 vols. (Washington, DC, 1959-1981), III, 494; *ORN*, ser. 2, I, 112.

10. *James L. Davis* muster rolls, 1862-1865, record group 24, National Archives, Washington, DC.

The average age of the crew was slightly over twenty-six and one-half years— a figure somewhat higher than might be expected and certainly higher than a comparative sampling of army recruits would show. The oldest crew members were forty-seven-year-old Samuel Vredenburgh, a New York native, and Andrew Atkinson, a forty-five-year-old Florida mulatto. Fifteen-year-old Christopher Burns was the youngest. Sailors on the *Davis* were comparatively short in stature. William Leggatt stood tallest at just over six feet, but only two other men measured even five feet ten inches. At least four men were five feet two inches, or shorter. Characteristically, the muster rolls indicate that many of the men had tattoos.¹¹

Six of the regular crew were listed on the muster rolls as mulatto, Negro, or black. In contrast to army policy during the Civil War, blacks served in integrated crews on naval vessels. Three of the *Davis's* black crew members served as cooks or stewards. Others included two landsmen and the captain of the forecabin. In addition to the regular crew, contraband blacks often enrolled in a ship's company after escaping to the Union fleet. At one point, the *Davis* carried nine contrabands as quasi-crew members.¹²

The newly commissioned *James L. Davis* left Philadelphia for Gulf service on January 2, 1862. Commanded initially by Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Joseph Winn, the ship first was assigned to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron. Within a month of its arrival in the Gulf, however, it was transferred to the EGBS. On March 2, the ship took position on the blockade off Cedar Key.¹³

The *Davis* recorded its first naval victory on March 10, 1862. While patrolling in the northern Gulf, its crew sighted an unidentified schooner steering to the northeast. After Lieutenant Winn ordered a shot fired across its bow, the ship raised a British ensign. Executive Officer Alexander Waugh and a small party

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11. *Ibid.* Ship muster rolls indicate that about half of the crew had tattoos, including initials and designs such as male and female figures, anchors, and crosses. The designs apparently were recorded for identification purposes.
 12. *Ibid.* The muster roll dated September 30, 1863, lists nine contrabands aboard ship. See also *James L. Davis* logbook, April 6-8, 1862, record group 24, National Archives, for references to contrabands.
 13. Mooney, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, III, 494; *Davis* logbook, December 1861-March 1862; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 183.

rowed over to the vessel to examine it. The ship was the *Florida* from Nassau, New Providence. It carried a crew of eight and a cargo of coffee, soda ash, soap, spool cotton, hoop skirts, and assorted dry goods valued at \$15,000. The *Florida's* captain, William Marr, informed Lieutenant Winn that his ship was bound from Havana to Matamoros, Mexico. Nonetheless, the Federals occupied the ship and dispatched it to Key West for adjudication. The admiralty court found that the ship in fact was bound for Apalachicola and awarded \$8,560.29 in prize money for the ship's capture.¹⁴

The *Florida's* capture proved the most valuable of the entire war for the *Davis's* crew. During the three years the ship served with the EGBS, it seized or destroyed only three Confederate vessels. Part of the *Davis's* disappointing record can be traced to its design. Not built as a blockader, the ship had a deep draft and obviously depended upon favorable winds. It was no match for the shallow-draft steamers often employed as blockade-runners, although it did prove valuable against smaller sailing vessels used along the coast.

After less than one month on blockade duty off Cedar Key, the EGBS ordered the *Davis* north to relieve the U. S. S. *Mercedita* at Apalachicola. This was the most important blockading station in the squadron as it guarded the only navigable river system in Florida that led to Confederate industrial centers in the interior. The town of Apalachicola had been fortified early in the war, but shortly before the *Davis's* arrival the Confederate command removed most of the area's defenders in response to Union victories in Tennessee. Although a small Rebel force continued to man the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee River defenses, Apalachicola remained a virtual no man's land. Occasionally, small groups of Confederates occupied the town, but it usually housed only a tiny civilian population.¹⁵

The *James L. Davis* soon settled into the dull routine of blockade life. Small boats regularly went ashore to St. George, St. Vincent, and Dog islands for fish, oysters, water, and meat. Drilling and cleaning the ship otherwise occupied the crew's time.

14. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 186, 190, 228, 237; Itkin, "Operations," 207.

15. William Warren Rogers, *Outposts on the Gulf: Saint George Island and Apalachicola from Early Exploration to World War II* (Pensacola, 1986), 50-89; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 195-96; *Davis* logbook, March-April 1862.

Scrubbing hammocks and decks, spreading awnings and boarding nettings, white-washing the water casks, cleaning the berth deck, varnishing the mast heads, and scraping the stanchions were among the regular duties recorded in the ship's log. On Sundays, Paymaster B. F. Price conducted divine services on the poop deck or in steerage, and the crew usually devoted Mondays to washing. Only the occasional arrival of a mail or resupply vessel interrupted the monotony.¹⁶

As might be expected, morale suffered during prolonged stays on blockade station. The conduct of the vessel's officers sometimes exacerbated the situation. Particularly, Lieutenant Winn alienated many of the officers and crew. On April 26, 1862, Assistant Surgeon E. B. Jackson complained to Winn concerning his treatment aboard ship. The next day Winn would not allow the paymaster to board the mail and supply steamer *Rhode Island*, which had just arrived on the blockade. As a result, the *Davis* did not receive needed fresh provisions.¹⁷

Two serious incidents occurred on May 13. At 1:00 A.M., Winn found the watch officer, Acting Master's Mate A. J. Lyons, "so sound asleep . . . it was only by shaking him that he was aroused."¹⁸ Winn had Lyons arrested. The same day, Executive Officer Waugh returned in the ship's launch after attempting to shift the buoy at West Pass. Waugh reported to Winn that he had failed to move the buoy "on acct. of part of the launch's crew getting drunk at night while I was asleep."¹⁹ According to Waugh, Lieutenant Winn "took no notice of the affair, merely saying that . . . [he] might have expected as much."²⁰ Similar incidents led Officer of the Day Henry Coward to record in the ship's log on June 1, 1862, "things are com[ing] to a nice pitch on board this vessel."²¹

Enlisted men, as well as officers, reacted to the boredom and loneliness of the blockade. Fights among the men occurred frequently, and sailors regularly found themselves placed in irons or on the ship's "blacklist" for fighting or insubordination. More serious infractions included a reduction in rank, formal incar-

16. *Davis* logbook, various entries for April-June 1862.

17. *Ibid.*, April 26-27, 1862.

18. *Ibid.*, May 3, 1862.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*

21. *Ibid.*, June 1, 1862.

eration, and even reducing an individual's diet to bread and water. The consumption of liquor provided one of the few diversions. On May 20, 1862, the following was entered on the log: "Spliced the main brace in honour of the late victories gained at N[ew] Orleans & elsewhere after which the ships Company gave three cheers and tiger for the Union."²²

Liberal distribution of alcohol, however, increased disciplinary problems. Bosun's Mate Charles Williams reported to Winn on the evening of June 3 that he had been struck on the head by an unknown assailant wielding a batfish. The lieutenant thereupon threatened to suspend the men's grog ration for one month if another such incident took place.²³

Despite such problems, the officers and men of the *Davis* and the other Union ships off Apalachicola remained charged with responsibility for maintaining the blockade. They enforced the informal agreement reached between the blockaders and the citizens of Apalachicola that allowed small boats to ply the bay for the purpose of fishing, oystering, and hunting. The Federals regularly monitored the activities of these boats, ensuring that none violated the terms of the agreement by engaging in military-related activities. Armed skiffs from the *Davis* and the other blockaders also occasionally ventured to Apalachicola in an effort to gain information about Rebel forces and future efforts to run the blockade. Because Confederate batteries had been erected at several points and obstructions placed in the river above Apalachicola and below Chattahoochee, small raiding parties periodically ascended the river, though no serious attempts were made to gain permanent control of the area. Unionists were content to maintain the status quo, for if obstructions limited their ability to move upriver, they also prevented blockade-runners from moving downriver to the Gulf. Despite the relative security created by the obstructions, the Federals still worried that Confederate ironclads—rumored to be under construction at the navy yard at Columbus, Georgia—might appear to confront them.²⁴

22. *Ibid.*, May 20, 1862.

23. *Ibid.*, June 3, 1862.

24. Maxine Turner, *Navy Gray: A Story of the Confederate Navy on the Chattahoochee and Apalachicola River* (Tuscaloosa, 1988), 27-49, 111-27.

After serving off Apalachicola for six months, the EGBS relieved the *Davis* from blockade duty to perform the vital, yet inglorious, duty of supplying ships in the squadron. Before leaving its blockading station, Acting Volunteer Lieutenant John West replaced the generally disliked Joseph Winn.²⁵ Unfortunately, the change did not appreciably improve the morale or efficiency of the vessel.

The *Davis* left the blockade on September 3, 1862, and began a ten-day sail for Key West. At that port, it received stores and provisions to supply the various EGBS ships. Ironically, while serving as supply vessel, the *Davis* captured its second blockade-runner. On the morning of September 24, 1862, a crewman sighted the schooner *Isabel* bound from St. Marks to Havana with a cargo of cotton. Although Lieutenant West sent the *Isabel* to Key West for adjudication, no extant record notes how much, if any, prize money the court awarded. Following the capture, West placed several *Davis* crewmembers in irons for stealing a supply of liquor kept by the captain of the *Isabel* and becoming drunk.²⁶

Even in the relatively innocuous role of supply ship, the *Davis* was inefficient and often the center of controversy. Lieutenant George Welch of the bark *Amanda* complained to Admiral Bailey in January 1863 that his crew had to go on half rations. He blamed this on the "interminable passages of the supply vessel *J. L. Davis* and her otherwise erratic movements."²⁷ Bailey evidently had received other complaints. On January 17, 1863, with the *Davis* anchored at Key West, he removed Lieutenant West from command and replaced him with Acting Master William Fales. The admiral notified Navy Secretary Gideon Welles of the change, asserting: "This vessel was, and has been for months past, in a state of complete disorganization as to officers and crew. . . . [This condition was caused by the] incompetency and lack of moral force of the Commanding officer. The vessel I

25. *Davis* logbook, August 19, 1862; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 312; Callahan, *List of Officers*, 579. West originally was listed as an acting lieutenant, but his correct rank was apparently acting master.

26. *Davis* logbook, September 24, 1862; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 314-15.

27. George Welch to Theodoros Bailey, January 17, 1863, Correspondence of Admiral Theodoros Bailey, record group 45, National Archives (hereafter Bailey Papers).

learned had become a by-word in the squadron & was bringing discredit upon the service."²⁸

Compounding the *Davis's* problems during this period was the presence of deadly yellow fever aboard ship. In December 1862, Fleet Surgeon G. R. B. Horner reported that twenty-four EGBS ships had suffered cases of fever in the previous five months. The *Davis*— the last ship infected— reported sixteen cases in the preceding month alone. Two serious cases had been left at the Key West marine hospital, and two other crew members died. The outbreak soon subsided, but fever again struck the EGBS in the summer of 1864, virtually halting operations for a three-month period.²⁹

With its new commander, the *Davis* ceased supply operations and left Key West in March 1863 to replace the bark *Ethan Allen* on blockade duty off St. Joseph Bay. The ship remained at that isolated position for eight months without effecting a capture. The *Davis* did manage seizure of a few bales of cotton thrown overboard by a blockade-runner escaping another Union vessel. The arrival of a supply vessel served as a welcome diversion. In June, for example, the *Hendrick Hudson* rendezvoused with the *Davis* and transferred to it the following stores: bread, pork, preserved meat, pickles, apples, coffee, sugar, flour, butter, molasses, vinegar, beans, beef, potatoes, onions, and two precious pieces of ice.³⁰ Finally, in November 1863, the *Davis* sailed to Key West for an overhaul.³¹ The bark received orders to a new blockading station— Tampa Bay— in January 1864, and there it stayed for eight months.³²

In the spring of 1864, the *James L. Davis's* career as a blockader nearly ended abruptly and ignominiously. Logistical difficulties and manpower shortages had long haunted the EGBS. Many

28. Bailey to Gideon Welles, January 17, 1863, Bailey Papers.

29. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 339-40, 757; Itkin, "Operations," 155-66; John F. Van Nest, "Yellow Fever on the Blockade of Indian River, A Tragedy of 1864," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 21 (April 1943), 352-57. Surprisingly, the *Davis's* logbook makes no mention of the yellow fever outbreak. The 1864 yellow fever epidemic at Key West was so severe that the Union command temporarily moved the headquarters of the EGBS to the vicinity of Tampa.

30. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 378, 400; *Davis* logbook, June 25-29, 1862. Details of life aboard the *Davis* during 1863-1864 can also be found in Eugene Chapin, *By-Gone Days, Or The Experiences of an American* (Boston, 1898), 69-110.

31. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 588, 592, 605.

32. *Ibid.*, 619.

ships operated with only a skeleton crew, forcing Admiral Bailey to consider decommissioning several vessels and consolidating their crews. The admiral planned to convert the unused ships into coal hulks and to place them at strategic locations along the coast to refuel EGBS vessels. On April 19, 1864, Bailey informed Secretary Welles that he wished to convert the *Davis* to this new use. In doing so, he described it as “the vessel least adapted to the service in this squadron.”³³ Considering that the ranks of the EGBS included several converted New York City ferryboats, this certainly reflected no great credit upon the *Davis*. Most likely, the morale and efficiency problems recently encountered on the ship affected Bailey’s decision.³⁴ Fortunately for the bark’s continued service, the admiral discarded the plan when 180 recruits arrived at Key West to fill the EGBS’s depleted ranks.³⁵

Saved from conversion to a coal hulk, the *Davis* proceeded to conduct some of its most successful actions of the war during the late spring and summer of 1864, including a combined operation against Tampa and a series of raids along the lower west coast. In these expeditions, soldiers from the District of Key West and Tortugas— including units comprised of Unionist refugees and black troops— aided the *Davis* and other EGBS ships.

Union land operations in south Florida had increased in size and frequency in 1864 as the Federals aggressively moved to stymie Confederate cattle shipments. The Second Florida Union Cavalry served as part of the force involved in these operations and in raids conducted from the Union base at Cedar Key. This regiment consisted of Florida Unionists, refugees, and Confederate deserters who had escaped into areas of the state under Union control. Many of these men and their families originally had been protected and provided for by the ships of the EGBS. Late in the war the bases at Fort Myers, Cedar Key, and the blockading station off Apalachicola attracted hundreds of refugees. Some of these men served in the EGBS while many others joined the ranks of the Second Cavalry, organized in late 1863

33. Bailey to Welles, April 19, 1864, Bailey Papers.

34. Ibid. Rachel Minick provides a history of the New York City ferries that served in the EGBS in her “New York Ferryboats in the Union Navy: The East Gulf Blockading Squadron,” *New-York Historical Society Quarterly* 48 (January 1964), 51-80.

35. Bailey to Welles, April 25, 1864; Welles to Bailey, May 2, 1864, Bailey Papers.

and 1864 under the auspices of General Woodbury of the army's District of Key West and Tortugas.³⁶

The refugees provided invaluable information to the Union, but they also presented a severe logistical problem for the EGBS. In addition, some Federal officials such as Admiral Bailey, questioned whether all were true refugees. In a controversial order issued in February 1864, Bailey warned that "Jew-pedlers [sic] and other foreign traders" were coming out to blockading vessels "under the pretense of being Refugees from rebel conscription, but really for the purpose of getting transportation to Havana and Nassau, with a view to future attempts to violate the blockade."³⁷ Bailey directed that no further "refugees" be given assistance unless they first took an oath of allegiance to the United States.

In keeping with the increase in land operations in south Florida, the *Davis* cooperated in a combined army-navy expedition against Tampa in May 1864. The town had little military value, but it was the site of a small battery of cannon, and blockade-runners used Tampa Bay as a staging area. On May 4, the steamer *Honduras* arrived in Tampa Bay with detachments of the Second Florida Cavalry and the Second United States Colored Infantry. Early the next morning, two companies of black soldiers boarded the *Davis*, and the vessel was taken in tow to Gadsden Point. The *Honduras* followed later with the remaining army troops. That evening all the land forces boarded the *Honduras*, along with a fifty-four-man naval landing party from the *Sunflower*, *Honduras*, and *James L. Davis*, commanded by *Davis*

36. Dillon, "Civil War in South Florida," 243-94; Canter Brown, Jr., *Florida's Peace River Frontier* (Orlando, 1991), 155-75; John F. Reiger, "Deprivation, Disaffection, and Desertion in Confederate Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 48 (January 1970), 279-98; John Franklin Reiger, "Anti-War and Pro-Union Sentiment in Confederate Florida" (master's thesis, University of Florida, 1966); Johns, *Florida During the Civil War*, 154-69; Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of Rebellion*, 2 vols. (Des Moines, 1908; reprint ed., Dayton, OH, 1978), II, 1020.

37. Unnumbered General Orders, February 10, March 9, 1864, Orders and Circulars, East Gulf Blockading Squadron, record group 45, National Archives (hereafter Orders and Circulars, EGBS). In the March 9 order, Bailey expanded on his policy. "Our protection and assistance are not to be indiscriminately extended to all who ask for it, and . . . our vessels are not to be made a convenience for foreigners or for traders, nor even for refugee-citizens of the United States, except [when] they be unmistakably loyal, and are leaving the rebel cause in good faith, not to return."

Captain William Fales. Before daylight on May 6, two parties went ashore, the largest of which comprised 200 soldiers and sailors. They quickly advanced upon and occupied the town. A brief skirmish at the battery left one Confederate dead and several others wounded. Union forces captured about twenty prisoners, two six-pound field pieces, Confederate money and mail, and other miscellaneous property. The Federals destroyed three large cannon at the battery that were too heavy to move. Union forces also captured the small smack *Neptune*, loaded to run the blockade with fifty-five bales of cotton. All three ships present during the raid received credit for the *Neptune's* capture. It was the final ship captured by the *Davis* during its blockading career.³⁸

The naval landing party, which included men from the *Davis*, performed creditably during the Tampa operation. One officer reported that Fales "led his party into the town on the double-quick, capturing several prisoners, [and] wounding 2 who were trying to get away."³⁹ General Woodbury, who commanded the District of Key West, praised the sailors for "cooperat[ing] very zealously and effectively" with the army troops.⁴⁰ The raid did not produce substantial results in terms of facilities destroyed, prisoners captured, or battles fought, but it did reinforce the policy of using army and navy forces in combined operations along the Florida coast. It also certainly improved the reputation of the *James L. Davis* within the EGBS.

On July 11, 1864, a small party under Acting Master Griswold destroyed salt works near Tampa that had been producing 150 bushels per day. Five days later the Federals struck again, wrecking four salt boilers and related equipment. Early the following month, a gig from the schooner *Stonewall*, attached as a tender to the *Davis*, ascended the Manatee River and destroyed a large sawmill and gristmill as well as a sugar mill mistakenly believed

38. *Davis* logbook, May 4-8, 1864; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 693-96; United States War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (hereafter *ORA*), 128 vols. (Washington, DC, 1880-1901), ser. 1, XXXV, pt. 1, 389-91; Chapin visited Tampa during the occupation finding it a "very neat, pretty place with small white painted houses." The inhabitants, however, were "a very poor dejected looking lot of people . . . only about half decently clothed." See Chapin, *By-Gone Days*, 86-90 (quote, 89-90).

39. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 694.

40. *Ibid.*, 694-95; *ORA*, ser. 1, XXXV, pt. 1, 389-91.

the property of Jefferson Davis.⁴¹ Captain Theodore P. Greene, acting commander of the EGBS, commented that the raids “show[ed] a very commendable spirit on the part of officers and men.”⁴²

After serving off Tampa Bay for most of 1864, the EGBS command ordered the *Davis* to St. Joseph Bay on September 1. The remaining months of the year and early 1865 passed quietly. After more than three years in southern waters, the ship was in need of an extensive overhaul of the type that could not be accomplished in Key West. On April 21, Admiral Stribling informed Navy Secretary Welles that he had sent the ship to Philadelphia for repairs. With the conflict drawing to a close, some of the ersatz warships like the *Davis*— forced into service early in the war— were now expendable. According to Stribling, the *Davis* was “a sailing vessel . . . not calculated for the Navy except upon such service as we had in keeping up the blockade of the coast.”⁴³ He failed to note that without such ships the effective blockade of the South would have been impossible. When the war ended, the *James L. Davis* still awaited an overhaul. On June 20, 1865, it was sold at auction for \$12,500.⁴⁴

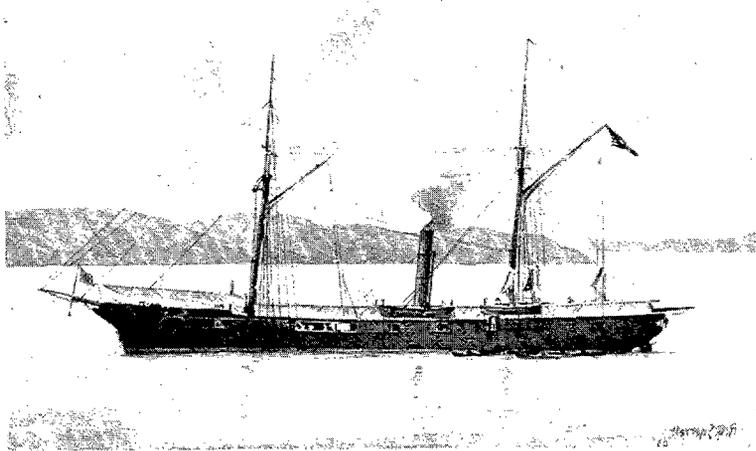
Designed specifically for naval service, the *Tahoma* was a more formidable fighting ship than the *James L. Davis*, and it certainly compiled a more enviable combat record while on duty with the EGBS. Built in Wilmington, Delaware, in 1861 at a cost of \$100,000, the vessel was commissioned at Philadelphia on December 20 of that year. Described officially as a “wooden-hulled 4th rate screw gunboat,” it weighed 507 tons and measured just over 158 feet in length and 28 feet in breadth. Although larger than the *Davis*, the *Tahoma* had a shallower draft of ten feet six inches. Its armament was impressive, initially consisting of one

41. Manatee County historian Janet Snyder Matthews has identified the sugar mill as that owned by Robert Gamble. See Janet Snyder Matthews, *Edge of Wilderness: A Settlement History of Manatee River and Sarasota Bay, 1528-1885* (Tulsa, 1983), 260; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 741.

42. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 741.

43. Cornelius K. Stribling to Welles, April 21, 1865, microcopy 89, roll 204, “Letters Received by the Secretary of the Navy From Commanding Officers of Squadrons (‘Squadron Letters’), 1841-1886,” National Archives.

44. Mooney, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, III, 494; *ORN*, ser. 2, I, 12.



The *Tahoma*. This 1903 drawing by R. G. Skerrett appears in *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 30 vols. Washington, 1894-1922), ser. I, XVII.

ten-inch Dahlgren cannon, two twenty-pound Parrot rifled cannons, and two twenty-four-pound howitzers.³⁵

Under the command of Lieutenant John C. Howell, the *Tahoma* left Philadelphia for the Gulf of Mexico in late December 1861. The ship carried a crew of seventy-nine, virtually all recently enlisted at Philadelphia. Many of the men had seafaring experience, with twenty-one listing their occupations as sailor or mariner. Also included were two waiters, two barbers, one brick layer, and a “morocco dresser.” As with the *Davis*, a number of blacks served aboard ship.⁴⁶

During its voyage to Key West, the *Tahoma* encountered heavy weather off Cape Hatteras that caused the ship’s engines to break down and the vessel to drift across the Gulf Stream. Throughout its service, mechanical and structural problems plagued the ship. It leaked badly and required pumping several times daily to keep from foundering.⁴⁷

45. Mooney, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, VII, 12-13; *ORN*, ser. 2, I, 219.

46. *Tahoma* logbook, December 1861-January 1862; *Tahoma* muster roll, December 1, 28, 1861, record group 24, National Archives.

47. *ORN*, ser 1, XVII, 44. The *Tahoma* log book for the years 1862-1864 records the daily pumping required to keep the ship afloat.

The *Tahoma's* first blockading station was off Cedar Key. Initially, duty was light, with one sailor writing home, "The life on board of a *Man of War* is lazy enough I assure you, nothing to do, but eat, drink, sleep and *Smoke* and exercise the Guns occasionally." He added that the *Tahoma* had not yet seen serious combat, but that "we are on the lookout for Secesh, and are ready for a fight at a second's notice. . . . It is my opinion that we will all smell powder before we return."⁴⁸

For several months the ship remained off Cedar Key, occasionally shelling Confederate-held islands and sending out expeditions in the ship's launches. Lieutenant Alexander Crosman usually led the raids, and he soon gained recognition as one of the most daring officers in the EGBS. During one such raid on February 23, 1862, the *Tahoma* suffered its first casualty when Seaman John Patterson died from a shot through the eye. Lieutenant Powell reported the death with regret but optimistically asserted that the expeditions "have been of much service in developing the characteristics of men and officers, and have had a beneficial effect on the crew generally."⁴⁹ This aggressive attitude marked the *Tahoma's* activities throughout its service in the EGBS and stood in marked contrast with that of the *James L. Davis*.

The *Tahoma* remained in the northern Gulf during most of 1862. In June, the vessel, along with the *Somerset*, crossed the St. Marks bar and destroyed a small Confederate fort located near the lighthouse. EGBS Commander James Lardner called the expedition "good service against a nest of rebels . . . prepared for . . . mischief."⁵⁰ Four months later, again in conjunction with the *Somerset*, the *Tahoma* made a series of boat raids on salt works in the vicinity of Cedar Key.⁵¹

In July 1862, the *Tahoma* made its first capture near Yucatan during a cruise in the Gulf of Mexico. The schooner *Uncle Mose* carried a cargo of cotton worth over \$30,000. The *Tahoma* captured one additional unnamed boat in 1862 and ten more the

48. C. H. T. to Jennie Koehler, March 2, 1862, *Tahoma* Letter, box 27, manuscript collection, P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History.

49. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 44, 134-37, 179-81; *Tahoma* logbook, January-February 1862; C. H. T. to Koehler, March 2, 1862.

50. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 264.

51. *Ibid.*, 316-19; *Tahoma* logbook, October 1862.

next year. The ship's impressive capture total did not earn the vessel its greatest fame. That came with a series of land raids it conducted from 1862 to 1864.⁵²

Important to the success of the *Tahoma's* efforts was the quality of its leadership. After one year in the Gulf, the ship received a new commander on Christmas Eve 1862 when Admiral Bailey appointed Lieutenant Commander Alexander A. Semmes. He remained captain until Lieutenant Commander David Harmony took command in early 1864. Another *Tahoma* officer played an important role as well. Acting Master Edmund Cottle Weeks, from a prosperous Massachusetts family, had studied medicine and had been partner in a merchant shipping company. He served with Admiral David Farragut before transferring to the EGBS. Weeks was the *Tahoma's* executive officer until he resigned in 1864 to accept command of the Second Florida Union Cavalry.⁵³

In October 1863, the *Tahoma* rested in waters off Tampa Bay. Semmes learned that several ships were preparing to run the blockade, and on the sixteenth—preparatory to sending a land force to capture them—he shelled the battery at Tampa in cooperation with the *Adela*. That evening Semmes landed a 100-man force under the command of Acting Master Thomas Harris of the *Tahoma*. The party found and burned two ships moored in the Hillsborough River that were loaded with cotton and ready to run the blockade.⁵⁴ The next morning, a concealed group of Confederates fired on the sailors as they reembarked. In the sharp engagement, the Federals suffered three killed, ten wounded, and several men captured. Despite the losses, Admiral Bailey proclaimed the raid a success, referring to it as a “brilliant little affair.”⁵⁵

52. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 287-88; Itkin, “Operations,” 245; Mooney, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, VII, 12-13.

53. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 336; Callahan, *List of Officers*, 246, 490; Edmund C. Weeks biographical materials, Weeks Family Papers, M74-022, Florida State Archives, Tallahassee; Rowland H. Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida*, 2 vols. (Atlanta, 1902), I, 714-15.

54. The two burned vessels were the *Scottish Chief* and the *Kate Dale*. They carried a total of 167 bales of cotton. See Karl H. Grismer, *Tampa: A History of the City of Tampa and the Tampa Bay Region of Florida* (St. Petersburg, 1950), 144-45; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 570-79; *Tahoma* logbook, October 14-17, 1863.

55. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 570-79 (quote, 577); *Tahoma* logbook, October 14-17, 1863.

In early 1864, the *Tahoma* launched its best known and most productive land raids of the war: a series of attacks on the extensive Confederate salt works in the vicinity of St. Marks. With the assistance of refugees who had escaped to the fleet, Edmund Weeks and Ensign J. Green Koehler led three separate assaults on these works, destroying some 8,000 bushels of salt, 555 salt kettles, 95 large salt boilers, 268 furnaces, and a variety of other materials. The only Union casualty occurred when a refugee shot himself in the leg. "I can not speak in too high terms of Acting Master E. C. Weeks, who commanded the expedition. This officer performed the duty assigned to him with alacrity and cheerfulness . . . [and is] an officer of courage and skill," wrote Commander Harmony in his report of the expeditions.⁵⁶

Since its commissioning and assignment to the Gulf, the *Tahoma* had not undergone significant maintenance or repairs. The ship leaked badly, and by June 1864 its condition had deteriorated further. A diver sent down to examine her hull reported that the vessel's false keel had rotted and her copper sheeting had been stripped "to a considerable extent."⁵⁷ As a consequence, Admiral Bailey ordered the vessel to the New York Naval Yard for repairs. The *Tahoma* did not return to the EGBS. While in its service, however, the ship had been one of the squadron's most successful. It captured or assisted in the capture of twelve enemy craft worth almost \$60,000. Only five EGBS ships stopped more blockade-runners, and the *Tahoma* ranked thirteenth in value of seizures. Additionally, coastal raids conducted by the men substantially damaged the Confederate war effort. The vessel also served as an important conduit between the EGBS and various deserter bands operating out of the upper Gulf coast, such as the one led by William Strickland of Taylor County. The deserters provided information on Confederate activities in return for supplies and equipment provided by the navy.⁵⁸

56. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 648-52; *Tahoma* logbook, February 13-27, 1864.

57. Baily to Welles, June 19, 1864, Bailey Papers.

58. The *Tahoma's* repairs took eight and one-half months. In April 1865, it was recommissioned for a tour of duty off the northeast coast. The ship was decommissioned in July 1865, but it returned to Gulf service during 1866 and 1867. Its final decommissioning occurred August 27, 1867, and it was sold at auction in New York on October 7. *ibid.*; *ORN*, ser. 2, I, 219; Mooney, *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, VII, 12-13; Itkin, "Operations," 238-45; *Tahoma* logbook, February-March 1864.

Neither the *James L. Davis* nor the *Tahoma* participated in the EGBS's largest naval operation, the early 1865 raid on Newport and St. Marks. Major General John Newton, commander of the District of Key West and the Tortugas, planned the operation, apparently to earn military accolades for his neglected district before the end of the war. Likely, the general would have moved against Tallahassee had his coastal operations proved successful.⁵⁹

Fifteen ships of the East Gulf Squadron participated in the expedition to St. Marks, making it the largest assemblage of squadron vessels during the war. Lieutenant Commander William Gibson initially led the naval forces, but on March 2, Commander Robert Shufeldt of the *Proteus* proceeded to St. Marks, assumed command of the naval forces there, and rendered "all the aid and assistance possible to the expedition."⁶⁰ The navy's specific responsibilities were to assist in landing the 1,000-man force, to proceed up the St. Marks River with a portion of the fleet, and to drive the Confederate defenders from Fort Ward, a small earthwork built on the site of an earlier Spanish fortification, San Marcos de Apalache. The army, meanwhile, was to move overland and capture the town of St. Marks from the rear.⁶¹

Problems quickly frustrated Newton's plans. Stiffer than expected Confederate resistance and an inability to cross the St. Marks River at Newport forced the Federals to undertake an eight-mile detour to the north. There they hoped to cross the stream at Natural Bridge where the river flows underground for a short distance. In a sharp engagement at the crossover, however, a motley Rebel force repulsed the Yankees on March 6, 1865. The Federals suffered nearly 150 casualties. The naval force had worse luck than the army. The St. Marks River proved far more shallow than anticipated, and even the lightest draft vessels could not ascend it. The *Honduras*, the *Fort Henry*, and the *Britannia* all grounded far short of St. Marks. With no chance

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59. Robert Bruce Graetz, "Triumph Amid Defeat: The Confederate Victory at Natural Bridge, Florida, March 1865" (senior honors paper, Florida State University, 1986), 26-29; Mark F. Boyd, *The Battle of Natural Bridge* (Tallahassee, n.d.), 1-5; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 812-21; *ORA*, ser. 1, XLIX, pt. 1, 57-70.
60. Stribling to Robert Shufeldt, March 2, 1865, Robert W. Shufeldt Papers, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.
61. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 812-21; *ORA*, ser. 1, XLIX, pt. 1, 57-70.

of naval support and with his own forces defeated at Natural Bridge, General Newton retired to the St. Marks lighthouse for reembarkation.⁶² The expedition's failure was not regretted by all. St. Marks, Commander Shufeldt noted, "so far as the navy is concerned . . . is not of the slightest importance."⁶³

The final collapse of the Confederacy began with the surrender of the Army of Northern Virginia on April 9, 1865. Within weeks, Union forces occupied Mobile—the only Confederate port of significance that remained open—and General Joseph E. Johnston capitulated in North Carolina on April 26. As news of these events reached the EGBS, word also came of President Lincoln's assassination. As a display of mourning, all ships in the squadron kept their colors at half mast for a designated period and fired a cannon every half hour for one day.⁶⁴

Military activities by the EGBS naturally decreased during this period. Nonetheless, on May 8, 1865, the *Isonomia* captured the *George Douthwaite* off the Warrior River. The bark, inbound from Jamaica, carried a cargo of sugar, rum, wool, ginger, and mahogany. It represented the last of the 283 prizes taken by the squadron during the war.⁶⁵ Squadron ships also patrolled vigorously along the coast in hopes of capturing fugitive Confederate officials such as President Davis, Secretary of War John C. Breckenridge, and Secretary of State Judah P. Benjamin. Unfortunately for the EGBS, Breckenridge and Benjamin slipped through the blockade to Cuba while the army in south Georgia captured Davis.⁶⁶ One last alarm was sounded just before the war's end when word arrived that the English-built Confederate ram *Stonewall* had arrived in Havana. This powerful vessel would have represented a serious obstacle to maintaining the blockade.

62. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 812-21; Graetz, "Triumph Amid Defeat," 34-63, 69-70.

63. Shufeldt to Stribling, March 7, 9, 1865, Shufeldt Papers. Six EGBS sailors received the Medal of Honor for service during the St. Marks expedition, apparently the only such awards given during the course of the war to members of the squadron. See *The Congressional Medal of Honor: The Names, The Deeds* (Forest Ranch, CA, 1984), 831, 840, 883, 885, 900, 912.

64. General Order #19, April 26, 1865, Orders and Circulars, EGBS.

65. *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 842-43.

66. *Ibid.*, 835, 838, 841. A. J. Hanna, *Flight Into Oblivion* (Richmond, 1938; reprint ed., Bloomington, IN, 1959), details the escape of Confederate officials through Florida. See also James C. Clark, *Last Train South: The Flight of the Confederate Government from Richmond* (Jefferson, NC, 1984).

Fortunately, the ship surrendered in May to Spanish authorities.⁶⁷

With the cessation of hostilities, the Navy Department swiftly demobilized a large portion of its wartime forces. On May 20, Secretary Welles ordered the EGBS reduced to fifteen vessels. Volunteer officers desired discharges, and sailors with little time left on their enlistments went north with the surplus ships. Eleven days later, Acting Secretary Gustavus Fox directed further reductions in the fleet and notified Stribling to “economize in the use of coal and give directions to all vessels to keep steam down, except in an emergency.” He also changed the squadron’s official name from the East Gulf Blockading Squadron to simply the East Gulf Squadron.⁶⁸

In an effort to improve relations between conquered Southerners and the occupying Federal military, Admiral Stribling called on June 3, 1865, for naval personnel to make every effort to “induce the inhabitants of the country to resume their former peaceful pursuits.” He continued, “To this end it is necessary that the greatest kindness and forbearance should be shown them, and any assistance rendered, not inconsistent with public duty.” The admiral added that squadron personnel were “strictly enjoined to do nothing calculated to irritate or wound the feelings of the people recently in rebellion . . . and to cultivate amicable and friendly relations with the inhabitants.”⁶⁹

Admiral Stribling previously had asked for a discharge from command of the EGBS for health reasons. He received an order from Welles on June 17, 1865, directing him to turn over command of the squadron to Acting Rear Admiral Henry K. Thatcher. Thatcher took command of the newly organized Gulf Squadron consisting of the remaining ships of the East Gulf, West Gulf, and Mississippi squadrons. The East Gulf Blockading Squadron was set for dissolution. Stribling departed Key West on July 5, but before he left he issued a final, congratulatory order to his officers and men. “If the service you have [been] employed upon has been barren of great actions,” he wrote, “you may rest satisfied that it has not been without influence in putting down the rebellion. Never was a coast of such extent

67. *ORN*, ser 1, XVII, 841, 845-51.

68. *Ibid.*, 851, 854-55.

69. Unnumbered circular, June 3, 1865, Orders and Circulars, EGBS.

more successfully blockaded than the coast of Florida. For such service, though unpretending, the country will not be unmindful, or neglect those who have toiled and watched in out-of-the-way places in the performance of duty."⁷⁰

As Stribling stated, the EGBS compiled a distinguished record of service. The extensive salt industry along Florida's Gulf coast fell victim to continuous raids by naval forces. East Gulf ships provided a sanctuary for hundreds, if not thousands, of white and black refugees. The refugees repaid this generosity by serving aboard squadron ships as well as in the ranks of the Second Florida Union Cavalry or in quasi-military guerrilla groups along the coast. These loyalist units helped project Federal military power into the Florida interior. Additionally, the EGBS captured or destroyed 283 Confederate blockade-runners valued at more than \$7,000,000.⁷¹ The unpretending service of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron and of ships such as the *James L. Davis* and the *Tahoma* clearly had "not been without influence in putting down the rebellion."⁷²

70. Unnumbered general order, June 29, 1865, Orders and Circulars, EGBS; *ORN*, ser. 1, XVII, 860.

71. Itkin, "Operations," 190-99. Itkin's work includes valuable information on inbound and outbound cargoes of captured blockade-runners as well as statistics documenting the ships and cargoes captured by each vessel in the EGBS. Salt was the most common inbound cargo, and cotton was the most common export.

72. Unnumbered general order, June 29, 1865, Orders and Circulars, EGBS.

EAST FLORIDA PAPERS, 1784- 182 1

by SHERRY JOHNSON

IN 1821, as a result of the Adams-Onís Treaty negotiated in 1819, the province of East Florida was ceded from Spain to the United States. On November 5, 1821, during the transfer proceedings in St. Augustine, North American representatives certified that they had received a series of documents, a transaction that was affirmed by Spanish royal notary Juan de Entralgo.¹ In doing so, United States commissioners acquired the official archives relating to the Spanish administration in East Florida from 1784 to 1821, a time designated by historians as the Second Spanish Period.² Collectively, these documents have come to be known as the East Florida Papers.

Presently, the original copies of the East Florida Papers are located in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, but their journey from Florida took a long and circuitous route. As a representative of the Spanish government, Entralgo surrendered under duress the archival records entrusted to him. United States representatives, on the orders of acting governor Andrew Jackson and with help from American troops, seized five boxes of papers from Entralgo by breaking down the doors to the notary's office.³ The commissioners behaved in a similar manner at the St. Augustine residence of Governor José M. Coppinger where they broke into his office and seized an additional six

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1. Papers on the Transfer of the Archives to the United States, November 5, 1821, bundle 488, East Florida Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress (hereafter cited as EFP with appropriate bundle number). The original documents were consulted for this research, but microfilm copies of the East Florida Papers are available in the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.
2. The collection of documents contains some materials dated prior to the Second Spanish Period such as wills from the 1760s or copies of royal decrees previously issued.
3. Irene A. Wright, "The Odyssey of the Spanish Archives of Florida," *Hispanic American Essays: A Memorial to James Alexander Robertson*, A. Curtis Wilgus, ed. (Chapel Hill, 1942), 176.

boxes of documents.⁴ The United States representatives' actions perhaps were justified as they believed that Spanish officials intended to remove important documentation to Cuba. This would have deprived the United States and the territory of Florida of property rightfully theirs according to the terms of the cession treaty.⁵ The commissioners desired the archives in order to determine the validity of extant property claims and to facilitate future sales of unsurveyed land. Accordingly, when the archives were seized, records of property transactions were of primary concern to the United States commissioners.

Once the Spanish archives passed into possession of the United States, the American authorities apparently lost their enthusiasm for protecting the integrity of the documents. By the summer of 1822, Governor William P. DuVal, writing to Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, reported that the archives were being "very negligently kept."⁶ Hoping to forestall incidents of fraud, theft, forgery, substitutions, and alterations, the territorial legislature in August 1822 created an office of the keeper of public archives.⁷ Three years later, Florida's Land Claims Commission succeeded in bringing the need for safeguarding the Spanish archives to the attention of Congress, which established two custodial positions to be headed by appointed keepers of the public archives, one in St. Augustine and the other in Pensacola. William Reynolds was appointed as keeper for East Florida, but he was soon succeeded on January 2, 1829, by his associate, Antonio Alvarez. A native son and former secretary to Governor Coppinger, Alvarez performed this task for over twenty years, during which time the former Spanish archives—some 64,299 documents—remained in St. Augustine under his care.⁸

In 1848, three years after Florida had been admitted to the Union, Congress mandated that all public archives must be deposited in an office officially designated by the president under the care of a surveyor general. Consequently, President James

4. Ibid.; L. David Norris, "The Squeeze: Spain Cedes Florida to the United States," *El Escribano* 25 (1988), 132.

5. Norris, "The Squeeze," 128-33; Wright, "Odyssey of the Spanish Archives," 176.

6. Wright, "Odyssey of the Spanish Archives," 177.

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 178-83.

K. Polk authorized in October 1848 the transfer of the archives in Alvarez's care to the office of surveyor general in St. Augustine. At that time, Alvarez sought to surrender his responsibility to the appointed surveyor general, Robert T. Butler, who refused to accept the documentation in "bundles undefined."⁹ Less than a year later, a new appointee, Benjamin Putnam, did accept the guardianship of the papers. On Putnam's recommendation and because of his years of exemplary service, Alvarez was retained as clerk and custodian of records, and the Spanish documents remained in the courthouse in St. Augustine. In 1857, a schedule of documents that had been prepared by Alvarez as part of the transfer in 1849 was sent to Tallahassee, presumably as a preliminary measure to yet another proposed relocation of the entire collection. The removal to Tallahassee never occurred because of the onset of the Civil War, but the Spanish archives now became the property of the state of Florida under the care of the clerk of the circuit court in St. Augustine. In 1861, Federal forces occupied the city, but the significance of the records was respected by occupation troops. Shortly after the war's end, in 1867, the papers became the responsibility of the United States attorney for the northern district of Florida.¹⁰

An inspection conducted in 1867 at the instigation of the General Land Office, Department of the Interior, sought to determine the location and the condition of records pertaining to land transfers. At that time, the General Land Office decided that the Spanish archives should remain in St. Augustine temporarily in the custody of the district attorney. In 1869, when the office of surveyor general was moved to Tallahassee from St. Augustine, Marcellus L. Stearns, the surveyor general, also transferred the archives to the capital. The documents remained in Tallahassee for another thirty-five years. A procurement act passed by Congress in 1903 authorized that the Library of Congress should receive documentation pertaining to local matters for future safekeeping.¹¹ Accordingly, the papers were transferred to Washington where they were examined, cleaned, and catalogued under the direction of librarian Mabel M. Manning.¹²

9. *Ibid.*, 185.

10. *Ibid.*, 185-90.

11. *Ibid.*, 195-201.

12. Mabel M. Manning, "The East Florida Papers," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 10 (August 1930), 392-97.

In succeeding years, many of the documents in poor condition—particularly records relating to property transfers (*Escrituras*)—were laminated and bound into volumes thus preserving the fragile and precious contents for future scholars.¹³

In 1965, the St. Augustine Foundation and the University of Florida in cooperation with the Library of Congress commissioned a microfilming project under the direction of Michael V. Gannon.¹⁴ With completion of the project, the nearly 65,000 documents became readily available to scholars and researchers. A quarter century later, in 1991, the Institute for Early Contact Period Studies at the University of Florida, also under the direction of Professor Gannon, sponsored a research visit to investigate the condition of the original documents. While portions of the Library of Congress collections had suffered from previous depredations and years of neglect in the nineteenth century, many portions of the collection are still legible, and other sections remain in excellent condition.¹⁵

By the twentieth century, the political orientation of the East Florida Papers— and particularly the correspondence of the Spanish governors— was recognized as a valuable asset by historians interested in utilizing primary materials to understand Florida's past. From these sources, many works on Florida's political and military history have been written by American and Spanish scholars such as Joseph B. Lockey, Helen Hornbeck Tanner, Janice Borton Miller, and Juan Marchena Fernández. These works provide the foundation for many subsequent studies.¹⁶ Archaeological research and preservation efforts of the Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board and the National Park

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13. Sherry Johnson, "Report on Archival Investigations in the Original East Florida Papers in the Library of Congress, November 1991" (typescript), Institute for Early Contact Period Studies, University of Florida, Gainesville.
 14. Michael V. Gannon to Gerard W. Gawalt, October 28, 1991, copy in author's possession; Gannon to author, October 28, 1991.
 15. Johnson, "Report on Archival Investigations," 7.
 16. Joseph B. Lockey, *East Florida, 1783-1785: A File of Documents Assembled, and Many of Them Translated* (Berkeley, 1949); Helen Hornbeck Tanner, *Zéspedes in East Florida, 1784-1790* (Coral Gables, 1963); Juan Marchena Fernández, "St. Augustine's Military Society," Luis Rafael Arana, trans., *El Escribano* 14 (1985), 43-77; Janice Borton Miller, *Juan Nepomuceno de Quesada, Governor of Spanish East Florida, 1790-1795* (Washington, DC, 1981). Rembert W. Patrick, *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on the Georgia-Florida Border, 1810-1815* (Athens, 1954), did not utilize the East Florida Papers as a primary source.

Service rely on the material in the East Florida Papers.¹⁷ In recent years, the emphasis on institutional, political, and military history has been eclipsed by scholarship with social and economic emphases, much of which has been published in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*. The East Florida Papers lend themselves well to such studies. Shipping records illuminate trade networks that existed between St. Augustine, Fernandina, Havana, Charleston, and New York.¹⁸ A recent revisionist study of the *situado* (subsidy), which provided government salaries and monies for the upkeep of the garrison, has determined that until 1808, military revenues arrived with regularity.¹⁹ Jane G. Landers's examination of the black community in St. Augustine is an important contribution to an understanding of the little-known world of the inarticulate classes.²⁰ From the wealth of documentation in the East Florida Papers, new works continue to appear that add to the historical knowledge of life in the Second Spanish Period.

The East Florida Papers, while an important and valuable resource for scholars, is not without its flaws. Over the years, researchers have remarked about incomplete or fragmentary documentation within series of bundles (legajos) or within indi-

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17. The Probate Records (bundles 301 p5-19, reels 134-45, EFP); the Escrituras (bundles 361-80, reels 167-73, EFP); and the Book of Mortgages, 1784-1821 (bundle 407, reel 174, EFP) provide background information regarding the type of activity, structure, and the inhabitants of many of St. Augustine's historic sites. Susan R. Parker, research historian, Historic St. Augustine Preservation Board, to author, April 29, 1992. See also James Cusick, "Class and Ethnicity in Late Colonial St. Augustine," paper presented at the meeting of Society for Historical Archeology, January 1992, Kingston, Jamaica, and at the Southern Anthropological Society meeting, April 1992, St. Augustine; Luis R. Arana, "Construction of the Castillo de San Marcos, 1784-1821," *El Escribano* 25 (1988), 136-45.
 18. James Cusick, "Across the Border: Commodity Flow and Merchants in Spanish St. Augustine," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 69 (January 1991), 277-99; Christopher Ward, "The Commerce of East Florida during the Embargo, 1806-1812: The Role of Amelia Island," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 68 (October 1989), 160-79; William S. Coker and Thomas B. Watson, *Indian Traders of the Southeastern Spanish Borderlands: Pantón, Leslie & Company and John Forbes & Company, 1783-1847* (Pensacola, 1986); Pablo Tornero Tinajero, *Relaciones de dependencia entre Florida y Estados Unidos* (Seville, 1978).
 19. Ligia Castillo-Bermúdez, "The Situado: A Study in the Dynamics of East Florida's Economy during the Second Spanish Period, 1785-1812" (master's thesis, University of Florida, 1989).
 20. Jane G. Landers, *African American Life in Colonial Spanish Florida* (Urbana, IL, forthcoming); Landers, "Black Society in Spanish St. Augustine, 1784-1821" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1988).

vidual bundles themselves— omissions that often were considerable. Of particular concern was the series of Notarized Instruments or Property Conveyances, the Escrituras (bundles 361-80). Two bundles from the original holdings of the Escrituras (370, 377) containing four years of documents (1795-1796, 1809-1810) are missing, although at one time the collection of Escrituras was complete and in United States possession.²¹ These records were part of the collection that American representatives certified having received from Juan de Entralgo in 1821. Included within this documentation were bundles for 1795-1796 and for 1809-1810.²² During the ensuing years, however, these two bundles apparently were lost as bundles 370 and 377 currently are not part of the Library of Congress collection. Gaps in the numerical sequence of the collection—bundles 381-84, 386-406, 413-87 are a few examples of missing legajos— suggest similar discrepancies, a process that Irene A. Wright diplomatically attributes to “attrition.”²³

The spiriting away of documents may not have been the exclusive province of North Americans, however. An examination of the Matrimonial Licenses (bundle 298R9) demonstrated that perhaps half of the documents are missing. This series ends abruptly without explanation with entries for May 1803, which suggests that the surviving bundle was the first of two or more bundles of marriage petitions required by law after 1778.²⁴ None of the missing documentation is held by the Library of Congress, and no evidence of these materials ever having been transferred to United States possession can be established, though similar registrations continued in Cuba throughout the nineteenth century.²⁵ Perhaps Governor Coppinger was successful in removing to Cuba some of the documentation he was charged with guard-

21. Notarized Instruments, bundles 361-80, EFP.

22. Papers on the Transfer of the Archives to the United States, November 5, 1821, bundle 488, EFP.

23. Johnson, “Report on Archival Investigations,” 4-5; Wright, “Odyssey of the Spanish Archives,” 200.

24. Richard Konetzke, ed., *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica, 1493-1810*, 3 vols. (Madrid, 1953-1962), III, 401, 406-13, 438-42. For Cuba, see Verena Martínez-Alier, *Marriage, Class, and Colour in Nineteenth-Century Cuba: A Study of Racial Attitudes and Sexual Values in a Slave Society* (Cambridge, 1974), 30-31, 96-99.

25. Johnson, “Report on Archival Investigations,” 6-7.

ing.²⁶ If such were the case, information about Florida's families and family networks may be available in collections in Havana. The noted Cuban historian Manuel Moreno Fraginals, however, believes such documents, if they do exist, will more likely be found in the Archivo General de Indias in Seville, Spain.²⁷

In spite of certain gaps in the documentation, the collection of East Florida Papers is a unique and valuable resource for scholars of the Second Spanish Period.²⁸ Researchers may work with confidence that all materials held by the Library of Congress are duplicated on microfilm copies. Finding-guides to the microfilm and the original documents are valuable tools and can save many hours of documentary searching. In particular, the calendar compiled by archivists at the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida is a superior research tool, and consulting either the original card catalogue or the microfilm copy on the first reel of film is recommended before initiating documentary research. Such vast documentation in original form or on microfilm awaits researchers and will contribute significantly to scholars' ability to interpret the role of Florida and the borderlands.

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26. Norris, "The Squeeze," 125-33; Wright, "Odyssey of the Spanish Archives," 171-76.
 27. Interview with Manuel Moreno Fraginals by the author, March 31, 1992, University of Florida. According to Bruce Chappell, much Florida material is in the Cuban Archivo Nacional in Havana. See Chappell, "Report on Archival Investigations in Cuba" (typescript, 1982), P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History.
 28. Bruce S. Chappell, "Spanish Manuscripts of the Florida Borderlands in the P. K. Yonge Library," *Latinamericanist* 12 (March 1977), 4-5.