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"We Could Have Sent the Old Barbarian Back to the  
Hermitage": Joseph M. White and  
Anti-Jacksonianism in Territorial Florida,  
1821-1839

by ERNEST F. DIBBLE

**I**N early territorial Florida, two political groups emerged with allegiances to national presidential leaders. One group was led by Richard Keith Call and other friends of Andrew Jackson.<sup>1</sup> The second was led by Joseph M. White, friend of James Monroe and the Adamses. As a symbol of these early antebellum allegiances, Andrew Jackson's "cronies" in Florida occasionally visited Jackson's home, the Hermitage, near Nashville, Tennessee. For similar reason, Joseph M. White journeyed to Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1831, to pay homage to his presidential circle by attending a Harvard commencement. Both John Quincy Adams and Charles Francis Adams thought it opportune to visit the Whites in their temporary quarters in the Tremont House, Cambridge.<sup>2</sup> Although citizens of a territory could not vote in presidential elections, Florida was strategically very important because of unsettled conditions in Spanish colonies nearby. Besides, patronage and internal improvement appropriations were at stake, and as delegate to Congress, White was the only official spokesman for the territory in Washington.

President Adams and his son were entertained on at least two separate occasions by a story that White delighted to tell. He repeated how Jackson exploded in anguish and rage at the taunting suggestion that some of his personal letters were to be published. Jackson did not want the world to know that the President of the United States was such a poor speller.<sup>3</sup> It was a good story which re-

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1. See Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., *Richard Keith Call: Southern Unionist* (Gainesville, 1961) (Hereinafter, *Call*).
2. See Marc Friedlaender and L. H. Butterfield, eds., *Diary of Charles Francis Adam* (Cambridge, 1968), 123-24, and John Quincy Adams, *Diary*, in Microfilm of the Adams Papers, Part I (Boston, Massachusetts Historical Society, 1954), Reel 130, September 2, 1831.
3. John Quincy Adams, *Diary*, August 31 and September 2, 1831.

affirmed White's allegiance to the Virginia and Massachusetts aristocracies of American politics. Unfortunately his affiliation with outgoing political leaders crippled White's influence over Jackson's appointments to office when he became president.

Upon his return to Florida from Cambridge, Joseph White ran again for the most coveted elective office of the Territory of Florida—the office of delegate to Congress. The result was another victory for White. For 12 years, from 1825 to 1837, White led what his opponents called the “White Party,” the most successful political group in the territory. Each time White ran for political office against a Jackson crony, he won. Each time he opposed either Richard Keith Call, Joseph Hernandez, James Gadsden, or another Jacksonian, he won. At least 15 times White faced Call in the United States Supreme Court and won. For over a decade, the White party continued to defeat close friends of Jackson's during the heyday of an assumed Jacksonian democracy. No wonder a British observer commented in 1833 that although Americans think their character hard to understand, it is really their politics that is incomprehensible.<sup>4</sup>

One reason for that incomprehensibility may derive from the fact that there has been no academic study of White and his many anti-Jacksonian successes in Florida. The following pages are intended to remedy that deficiency and emphasize that in Florida, who represented “Jacksonianism” provides a contradiction.

Another example of contradiction arises from the common practice of crediting Jackson with the initiation of the “spoils system” of appointments.<sup>5</sup> Reluctant at first, in 1821 Jackson finally agreed to become the first territorial governor of Florida to show gratitude to his many friends by giving them high political office in the new territory. In fact, it was this suggestion that persuaded him to accept the governorship.<sup>6</sup> However, he soon realized that President James Monroe had already eclipsed him by initiating a territorial spoils system of his own. Monroe was particularly unsparing in job handouts to his own friends and political creditors, disregard-

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4. Murray Keller Sumwalt, “United States Democracy During the 1830s and 1930s as Observed by Representative British and French Writers,” (M.A. Thesis, University of Miami, 1967), 17.

5. Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson* (New York, 1966), 110-111. Remini argues that the spoils system was more a matter of principle than practice to Jackson.

6. Arthur W. Thompson, *Jacksonian Democracy on the Florida Frontier* (Gainesville, 1961), 1-2.

ing Jackson's wishes and expectations. Thus, Jackson and many of his companions who remained in Florida could hardly be expected to look with great favor upon Monroe's appointed men. Joseph White was one of these men. Arriving in Pensacola in June, 1822, less than a year after Jackson himself arrived, White was treated as a late-coming immigrant by Jackson's favorites.

White came to Florida with an appointment to the first legislative council.<sup>7</sup> Born in 1781 in Kentucky, he was brought up on the figurative laps of Revolutionary War veterans. He partook deeply of the patriotic sense of national unity expressed by such diverse veterans of 1776 as Andrew Jackson and John Marshall. However, he arrived with more than one solid credential as an anti-Jacksonian, for he had recently married the beautiful young daughter of Kentucky governor, John Adair.<sup>8</sup> By this marriage White had bonded himself to anti-Jacksonians because of an Adair-Jackson controversy sustained throughout the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>9</sup> The feud resulted from Jackson's accusation that Adair's Kentucky militia had fled in the face of enemy advance at the famous Battle of New Orleans in 1815. Some evidence suggests that White was also in the battle with the Kentucky militia. It is certain that he did serve later under Governor Adair as a Commonwealth Attorney for the 4th Judicial District of Kentucky.<sup>10</sup>

In addition to political and marital connections with Adair, White held another anti-Jackson credential as a distant relative of James Monroe. White used this relationship to communicate and advise Monroe on Florida political events. Thus, in the small population of Florida in 1822, White, his two Florida-dwelling brothers, Adairs, Pleasants, and Andersons all were related to President Monroe.<sup>11</sup> These families represented a small group of leading citi-

7. Clarence E. Carter, ed., *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, 28 Vols. (Washington, DC, 1934-1969), *Florida Territory*, XXII, 406, 422-23. (Hereinafter, *Territorial Papers*).

8. Although not a single article has been published about Joseph M. White, at least six have been published and republished about his wife, Ellen Adair White, often called Mrs. Florida White. The best article about her is Margaret Anderson Uhler, "Florida White," *Southern Bell*, *Florida Historical Quarterly* 55 (January 1977): 299-309.

9. See William Garrard Leger, "The Public Life of John Adair" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 1953), 168n.

10. *The [Frankfort, Kentucky] Commentator*, February 8, 1821.

11. See James Barnett Adair, *Adair History and Genealogy* (Los Angeles, 1924), 54-71, 78-87.

zens upon whom White could count in his political career. With this background, White became the leading Monroe man and later the leading Adams man in Florida politics.

Before White entered his first elective contest in 1825, he had established his credentials and his political base by obtaining several appointments and by developing a private law practice specializing in land claims. He was not only a member of the first legislative council, but also the first appointed adjutant general of the territory,<sup>12</sup> U.S. Attorney for West Florida for one term,<sup>13</sup> the first secretary to the land commission of West Florida, and later, one of the three land commissioners.

Although most of his appointments came from President Monroe, Floridians recognized their need of White's multi-lingual and sophisticated legal talent. Within two months of his arrival in Pensacola, he was being urgently recommended for membership on the West Florida land commission. At the urging of the two other commissioners, President Monroe made the appointment.<sup>14</sup> And, in 1823, White was among the top three vote-getters among the nine posted for a "straw vote" to determine recommendations for presidential appointments to the second legislative council.<sup>15</sup> In private practice and as land commissioner, White gained a widespread reputation, becoming probably the best land expert in the country. And land acquisition was the best method for gaining economic and political power in the early decades of the territorial frontier. In private practice White became the favorite lawyer of Spanish claimants to small tracts of land. And he also listed among his clients claimants to the largest Spanish grants in Florida and elsewhere on the Gulf Coast. Within a year of advertising his practice, he represented John Innerarity, whose famous Forbes Purchase of 1,250,000 acres White later successfully defended against Call in the United States Supreme Court presided over by John

12. George Cassel Bittle, "In the Defense of Florida: The Organized Florida Militia from 1821 to 1920" (Ph.D. diss., Florida State University, 1965), 20. Also, Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 658-59.

13. This appointment was actually made by Henry Marie Brackenridge because the Monroe-appointed United States attorney did not arrive. See Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 738-89; XXIII, 47.

14. For these letters and White's commission, see Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 514-15, 687, 711-12, 717-18, 808.

15. Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 803-804.

Marshall. As land commissioner, White dominated the other commissioners by his expertise. He not only championed the pre-emptor— the squatters on the land— in and out of the commission, but he also urged graduated land prices and the validity of claims given as “an indulgence extended by the Spanish Government to indigent persons. . . .”<sup>16</sup> In the early years, his defense of Spanish claimants to both the largest and the smallest grants in the commission and in court provided him an important political base in campaigning against the Jacksonians’ decided antagonism to anything Spanish.<sup>17</sup>

The first significant election in the Florida territory was held in 1825. Joseph Hernandez had been appointed to his position as the first delegate to Congress. Richard Keith Call, the incumbent, had run as the only candidate from populous West Florida in 1823. The 1825 election, in contrast, was a heated and bitter race.

Call and White had begun what became a bitter rivalry in the first legislative council when White introduced a bill that would allow soldiers to vote. At the time, it was assumed that all soldiers would vote for Dr. James Bronaugh, Jackson’s army surgeon. However, when Bronaugh died in 1822, White assumed the mantle of the soldiers’ friend. Congress disallowed soldier votes, but the law did not include the Revenue Service and Navy. This was the reason that White’s opponents in future elections often invoked the specter of Revenue and Navy ships proceeding at full sail to Florida ports to cast unanimous votes for White. Despite this exaggeration White was able to count upon military voters in addition to his relatives, the pre-emptors, and Spanish claimants as part of his political power base.

The work of the land commission was complete enough to receive high praise in the press during White’s first campaign. And,

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16. *Proceedings of Commissioners of Claims Presented, West Florida, 1822-1824*. Record Book 2. Old Spanish land claims records now lodged in the Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of State Lands, Crown Building, Tallahassee. These records were in the Field Note Division, Department of Agriculture until transferred to Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund in 1961, then to the Bureau of State Lands in 1975.

17. One of many commentators on this anti-Spanish attitude is John Innerarity to John McDonogh, March 1834, McDonogh Papers, Howard-Tifton Memorial Library, Tulane University. Innerarity reflects an old resident’s conviction that Jackson opposed every old Spanish grant.

exposing a land fraud effectively gained him votes. White had uncovered a large land swindle attempted by a group which included Peter Alba, Jr., then mayor of Pensacola. Alba responded by attempting to assassinate White on a Pensacola street in front of witnesses.<sup>18</sup> By some magic of indirection, Alba's attack was associated with White's political enemies. Most notably, sympathy with and defense of White against Alba worked against Call, White's main opponent for office. The assassination attempt caused voters to swing even more to White after Call decided to withdraw, just two months before the voting. After Call withdrew, the campaign was reduced to mild counterclaims about who should get credit for any benefits derived from the federal treasury. Should White, who wrote the resolutions asking for canals, a navy yard and roads in the first legislative council, or Hernandez and Call, the first two delegates promoting White's resolutions for appropriations in Congress.<sup>19</sup> White easily won over Hernandez.

The first important political campaign of territorial Florida was a highly personal contest in a territory inhabited by only about 1,700 individuals (1,100 of them west of the Suwanee River). But it profoundly fixed personality conflicts for the next dozen years with several long-term ramifications that influenced future elections. One of those was the staunch following retained by the winner, now called "Honest Joe" for his exposure of the land fraud. One of Joe's followers suggested in the next election that, "you can state to the wavering that he saved to the U.S., while land commissioner, 40,000 acres of land coveted by . . . P. Alba & his unprincipled gamblers."<sup>20</sup>

Another repercussion of the 1825 election was Call's challenge to duel White, which took two years for friends on both sides to

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18. Full details of the assassination attempt are in the *Pensacola Gazette*, January 8, 1825. Testimony on the fraudulent land claims are in *Proceedings of the Land Commissioners* . . . Record Book 1, 37-45. White relayed the incident in "Joseph M. White to the Secretary of State," Carter, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 17-18. Although White did not so claim, Call was implicated with Alba's fraud in the *Pensacola Gazette*, February 5, 1825.

19. The fact that White wrote the resolutions in the first legislative council is established by several testimonials in the press. The initial controversy between White and Call remained a lively issue during elections at least through 1833.

20. Adam Gordon to Samuel Keep, April 11, 1827, Keep Papers, Special Collections, John C. Pace Library, University of West Florida.

avert. Perhaps reminiscent of the averted Adair-Jackson duel, both sides in the White-Call conflict did everything possible to avoid dueling. The social process of cancelling a duel was much more intricate than was the simple challenge and acceptance of one. This "gentlemen's solution" to conflict by challenge, delay and reconciliation started to fall apart because democratic passions intruded. The cancelled duel was almost rescheduled when disappointed White partisans boasted that, "While you [Call] first held out the sword, you had subsequently descended to the olive branch . . ." <sup>21</sup> The whole area had been aroused by anticipation of the duel and as Call's intermediary soothingly suggested, "we cannot control tavern talk." <sup>22</sup> Although this duel was averted, both a brother, Everett White, and his son, Oscar White, later duelled over politics.

Perhaps the most significant repercussion of the 1825 election contributing to the future pattern of territorial politics was the contrast of personalities and methods of campaigning between White and Call. Call's attitude about political life has been well described as "imbued with the old Virginian notion" of *noblesse oblige* service to humanity, of condescending to assume a statesman's role. Call "never quite grew out of the idea that gentlemen did not solicit votes." <sup>23</sup> The same can easily be said of Call's sometimes surrogate-candidates, James Gadsden and Joseph Hernandez.

In sharp contrast, White exemplified a new breed of political leaders who sensed deeper roots of democratic politics. White knew how to appeal to constituents, how to build a power base through influencing appointments, and how to protect himself through the press and gain political credit even for that which he was not responsible. Call very much disliked writing letters, whereas White delighted in personal and public communications. He was praised in the press as a great public speaker, who could attract a crowd to testimonial dinners organized for him. His annual letters to the people of Florida reveal a man with an appealing political philosophy, deserving of the credit for propelling Florida into fifth rank among states and territories in appropriations from

21. J. W. Ramage to Richard Keith Call, April 25, 1927, Call Papers, Florida Historical Society Library, University of South Florida. Ramage was Call's intermediary for this duel.

22. Ramage to Call, October 18, 1826, Call Papers.

23. Doherty, *Call*, 19.



the federal budget. On the national scene, White gained the respect of men like Daniel Webster for his legal acumen and verbal rhetoric.<sup>24</sup> White also became internationally known for his legal abilities and published compilations of land laws. In contrast, Call's biographer noted that he studied law only a few months and read law "spasmodically and without direction."<sup>25</sup> No wonder, then, that White never lost an election or court case to Richard Keith Call. And Call never won any elective position after 1823, even though he received several appointments, including governor of the territory.

White continued to expand his role as chief protagonist of territorial development. He consolidated his political credentials by becoming a plantation owner. In 1828, he entered into a law and business partnership with Georgia poet and congressman, Richard Henry Wilde.<sup>26</sup> Together, they purchased about 6,000 acres of land and 250 slaves, and built a plantation, Casa Bianca, not far from Tallahassee. This gave White a proper setting for promoting himself as a planter in the Jeffersonian style.

By 1831, White had attained a position of prominence in both territorial and national politics. Nationally, White tried to keep his anti-Jacksonian moves obscured. He did, however, publicly support Judge Henry Marie Brackenridge, whose appointment and conservation programs at the Naval Live Oak Reservation near Pensacola were under attack. White had defended Brackenridge since 1823 because this "enlightened, honest, and upright judge" had "protected the old [Spanish] inhabitants in their rights . . ."<sup>27</sup> Call had blamed Brackenridge for his role in the Callava affair, wherein Jackson had seized some papers from the Spanish Governor, Jose Callava, and then had him thrown in jail.<sup>28</sup> This development and a similar circumstance with Governor Joseph Coppinger, of East

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24. Webster's effusive compliments about White's arguments for a ship canal across Florida were fully aired in the *Pensacola Gazette*, January 14, 1826. Webster and White were later involved together in legal cases on land claims.

25. Doherty, *Call*, 24. Also 16.

26. See Edward L. Tucker, *Richard Henry Wilde: His Life and Selected Poems* (Athens, GA, 1966), 22-23.

27. Joseph M. White to President James Monroe, November 13, 1823, Papers of President James Monroe, Library of Congress. In this private letter, White also suggested a governor of more "commanding reputation" than William P. DuVal.

28. Call rehashed the Callava affair while running for delegate to Congress in 1833, in his April 17, 1833, "To the People of Florida" open letter. It can be found in Call Papers, Florida Historical Society Library.

Florida, were kept alive by Callava and Coppinger, who resided in Cuba. This had proved embarrassing to Call when he and five successive agents had gone to Cuba searching for Florida materials in the Spanish archives.<sup>29</sup> White's support of Brackenridge against Call in both land matters and the Callava affair thus deepened the rift between White and the Jacksonians. In 1832, White publicly defended the Naval Live Oaks purchase on the floor of Congress in a bitter exchange that one Florida newspaper described as "more personal than anything that has ever happened in Congress."<sup>30</sup> Live Oaks conservation was a pet Adams' project. White also wrote a letter to the Senate, which was published in support of Brackenridge's severe attack on Jackson.<sup>31</sup> Brackenridge lost his presidential appointment as judge and departed from the territory. White managed to have the United States Senate reject Jackson's first nominee to replace Brackenridge, but he could not stop Jackson's spoils system appointees for very long.<sup>32</sup> After Brackenridge left Florida, the first American forest conservation experiment died by Jacksonian strangulation.

Although publicly supporting Brackenridge against Jackson, White hid his role in attempting to organize a national coalition behind William Wirt, who White considered the only presidential candidate able to unite all factions against Jackson in 1832. White solicited Wirt's consent to be a presidential candidate, which was granted as long as no Clay-Adams deal was involved.<sup>33</sup> This could be interpreted to mean that Wirt would not promise White the position of secretary of state if he won the presidency. Wirt had already

29. A. J. Hanna research notes in "Spanish Archives of Florida" file, Florida Vertical File, Rollins College Library, Orlando, Florida, reveals information that Callava and Coppinger were in Cuba and supposedly behind all the obstacles raised to prevent Call and other agents from obtaining archival materials.

30. *Key West Gazette*, March 1832. Although this paper was editorially for "Jackson and States Rights," it endorsed White.

31. See "Letter to H. M. Brackenridge, Esq.," May 16, 1832, and "To the Senate of the United States," February 21, 1832, in *Judge Brackenridge's Letters* (Washington, 1832), 13-15. This pamphlet includes letters of Brackenridge and supporters attacking Jackson.

32. See Kermit L. Hall and Eric W. Rise, *From Local Courts to National Tribunals: Federal District Courts in Florida, 1821-1990* (1991), 13.

33. Letters from William Wirt to Joseph M. White, October 10, November 14, 1831, William Wirt Papers, MS1013, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

been nominated as presidential candidate by the Anti-Mason Party convention, even though he was only half-hearted in his stand against Masonry. Wirt privately believed that Masonry should disappear because, although most masonic lodges were composed of white men, some black lodges existed from Boston throughout the South. He believed the black lodges were bases for insurrection and murder, and felt this should impel "the reflecting, prudent, and virtuous portion of the Masonic community to throw up their charters and dissolve their lodges."<sup>34</sup>

Anti-Masonry was hardly in evidence in Florida, even though J. W. Ramage had reported being attacked by anti-Masons in 1825, when he mediated for Call in the proposed Call-White duel.<sup>35</sup> The Tallahassee lodge was dominated by Jackson cronies who made Jackson an honorary member. But anti-Masonry could not crystallize around White, himself a Kentucky Mason.<sup>36</sup> White's advocacy of the Wirt coalition was based upon the practical consideration that about 500,000 anti-Masons existed, just about the number by which Jackson had won the previous election. White wrote six anonymous letters from "An Old Man," published in the *Baltimore Chronicle* to urge Wirt's candidacy on the upcoming National Republican convention. Dismissing John C. Calhoun succinctly, White argued against Henry Clay as an impossible candidate, incapable of uniting anti-tariff states, anti-Masons, and dissenters from the Jackson party in the South and West. White argued that Wirt, with anti-Masonic origins, could carry Pennsylvania, New York and probably all of New England. Because Wirt could claim the approval of former presidents Jefferson, Madison and Monroe, he could also carry the south.<sup>37</sup>

Henry Clay was nominated and White's attempt at making a president and defeating Jackson was foiled. He wrote to Salmon P. Chase after the National Republican convention that if the advice

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34. William Wirt to The Honorable Dabney Carr [Virginia], September 30, 1831, Wirt Papers.

35. See J. W. Ramage to Richard Keith Call, October 18, 1826, Call Papers.

36. See St. Louis *Missouri Republican*, October 11, 1839, 2. White was given a burial with full Masonic honors in 1839.

37. An Old Man, *The Presidency*, published in *Baltimore Chronicle* and separately printed (n.p., n.d.).

of the "old man" had been followed, "we could have sent the old barbarian back to the Hermitage."<sup>38</sup>

White was successful in his own campaign for re-election in 1833. Reflecting the 1832 national elections, nullification and secession overshadowed local issues in 1833 Florida. The dilemma of territorial politics was aptly expressed in the stance of more than one newspaper, declaring both for Jackson and nullification. White ably sidestepped these controversial issues as not needing comment. He declared the national government very necessary and invaluable because Florida was a territorial "appendage of the union." And on nullification and secession, he felt it "unnecessary for me to offer any observations upon them."<sup>39</sup> Thus, White was able to emphasize the dependency and need Florida had for the Union. He had stated earlier that, "If impotent clamor on the subject of disunion, constitutes devotion to the South, I have not indulged in it."<sup>40</sup> Actually, White had no need to speak out on state's rights in a territory because Call stated White's position for him. Call repeatedly brought forth White's 1825 comment that state's rights was "a *withering doctrine* calculated to *blight the prospects of this rising country*."<sup>41</sup> In this way, White's more unionist views were brought clearly to the electorate.

Some support for White's unionist attitudes existed even outside of White's circle of followers. For one example, Judge Robert Raymond Reid, commenting on Calhoun and nullification, declared, "If the people are fools he will succeed."<sup>42</sup>

The Jackson-Calhoun controversy on the national scene even caused dissension between Jackson's closest friends and political leaders in Florida. Noteworthy is the quarrel between Call and Gadsden, supposedly because Gadsden was such an extreme secessionist. However, the real reason for the quarrel was not as ideological as it was practical. They both campaigned against White as secessionists, but Gadsden was a more extreme nullifier. Call had

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38. Joseph M. White to Salmon P. Chase, May 18, 1832, Salmon P. Chase Papers, Library of Congress. White has been suspected of writing anonymous letters. His correspondence with Wirt and Chase establishes his authorship without doubt.

39. Joseph M. White, "To the People of Florida," *Key West Gazette*, August 22, 1832.

40. St. Augustine *Florida Herald*, November 30, 1830.

41. Quoted by Call in "To the People of Florida," April 17, 1833.

42. *Diary of Robert Raymond Reid, 1833, 1835* (Copy prepared by Historical Records Survey, WPA, 1939, from original owned by Mrs. Charles F. Andrews), 12.

been advised by friends that only he could defeat White, so he started campaigning after Gadsden was already competing. Gadsden reminded Call that they had agreed not to run against each other. But Call responded by stating that friends felt Gadsden was running as a "White" man.<sup>43</sup> With these strained relations, Call campaigned for Jackson and secession. His position was somewhere between White and Gadsden. In a published "Letter to the People of Florida," Call declared the right of secession. He stated in unambiguous terms that, "No man can be more devoted to the doctrine of states rights than myself" and "I have believed that a state has a right to withdraw from the Union without her citizens committing the crime of treason."<sup>44</sup> Although opposed to the doctrine of nullification, Call's latter statement on secession and treason placed him squarely at odds with Jackson's point of view.

Call's isolated and almost tearful unionist stand in 1861 at the time Florida seceded has overshadowed his stand in 1833 for the right of secession.<sup>45</sup> In his public expression on the right of secession in 1833, perhaps Call was trying to appeal to all voters in the midst of an election. One may hope that Jackson did not read Florida newspapers, because Call also ended up on the wrong side of the famous Peggy Eaton affair. He could be reminded by Jackson that Peggy had fought with Call when he tried to be too friendly to her.<sup>46</sup> However, the breakup of the Jackson party in Florida was augmented more by the nullification and secession issues and personal conflicts than by the Peggy Eaton affair.

When the Florida voting was completed, White had won again. He had won both in 1831 and 1833, both elections dominated by nullification arguments. In 1831, however, Governor William P. DuVal, thoroughly in the Jackson camp, declared the election a tie and called for a re-election. Amidst strenuous objections aroused

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43. R. K. Call to James Gadsden, August 28, 1833, Call Papers. See also Call to Gadsden, August 24, 1833, and Benjamin D. Wright to Call, May 29, 1832, wherein Wright states that "Opponents of Honest Joe are almost unanimous in the opinion that you are the only man who can beat him."

44. Ibid.

45. Ellen Call Long perpetuated the idea in *Florida Breezes; or, Florida Old and New* (Facsimile Reprint of 1883 Edition, Gainesville, 1967) that Call was always unionist, an idea picked up by Arthur W. Thompson, *Jacksonian Democracy on the Florida Frontier* (Gainesville, 1961), 6, and others.

46. Doherty, *Call*, 32-33.

all over the territory, White reminded DuVal that only Congress has a right to call a re-election. White also asked if the votes DuVal excluded "are illegal votes, or only an illegal return of legal votes."<sup>47</sup> Upon investigation of stationery and other expenses, White established how vigorously the governor's office had worked for his defeat. Although many justices refused to re-open the polling places, DuVal set up a second election anyway. Wherever the polls were reopened, White won almost unanimously. Thus, on the major issue of the day, Floridians were able to vote three times for union, twice in 1831 and once in 1833 to reject nullification and secession. A toast first voiced at a public dinner for White in 1830 was still appropriate in 1833: "Florida— as impatient to break into the union, as South Carolina is to break out."<sup>48</sup>

Richard Keith Call stated that it was the "nullification element" that caused his defeat in 1833, perhaps because Gadsden siphoned votes away from Call. However, as one authority stated, it was not nullification that beat him but Joseph M. White.<sup>49</sup> Although White continued to win every election he entered, he decided not to run in 1837. Florida, like the country at large, was a one-party territory at the time White arrived and remained so during his lifetime.<sup>50</sup> White did not provide a base for two-party growth. And the fact that such a successful anti-Jacksonian did not provide organizational results seems important to analyze, especially in the light of two-party developments in other states and in Florida shortly after his death. The explanation seems to lie in the fact that until 1832 no significant ideological differences existed between political antagonists. When differences did show up, White was closer to so-called Jacksonian democracy than were Jackson's own spokesmen in Florida.

No significant differences existed over slavery, religion, Masonry, tariffs, Florida banks, or the Second National Bank. No differences existed over the desirability of gaining as generous as possible an annual dowry from the federal government. Factions only argued who could do it better.

47. Joseph M. White to Governor William P. DuVal, July 7, 1831, Governor's Correspondence, Box 1, Folder 3, Florida State Archives.

48. Quoted in *Niles Weekly Register* XXXIX (September 11, 1830), 55.

49. Sidney Walter Martin, "Richard Keith Call, Florida Territorial Leader," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 21 (April 1943): 338.

50. See William T. Cash, *History of the Democratic Party in Florida* (1936), 10.

White and the Jacksonians agreed in attitudes on Indian relations. Although publicly identifying in 1823 with the Treaty of Moultrie Creek for the political advantage it could offer,<sup>51</sup> White privately expressed dislike of any treaty with Indians.<sup>52</sup> Like Jackson and his Florida cronies, White did not understand Seminole attachment to Florida soil and their attachment to their black “vas-sals.” He served as a spokesman in a parlay, convinced that Seminoles should prefer living beyond the Mississippi.<sup>53</sup> He expected them to leave without blacks going with them. He inter-vened to urge Georgia troops to the border of Florida<sup>54</sup> and to get General Winfield Scott recalled from his command of troops in Florida.<sup>55</sup> Although apparently responsible for Scott’s withdrawal from command, White privately blamed Call and Gadsden for the botched defenses of Florida. Even so, no real ideological differ-ences existed on questions of law and order in the face of the Sec-ond Seminole War.

White is not known to have had any significant military experi-ence. In contrast, Call, Gadsden, and Hernandez were all military leaders in a period noted for the emergence of the military hero as political hero. Yet White was given the brevet title of “Colonel” when he had been appointed the first adjutant general. In that po-sition he had administered the oath of office to those who would subsequently become his political opponents. The title and his ad-vocacy of soldiers’ suffrage rights helped White win the military vote. In his demand for wide suffrage, White was closer than Jack-sonians to Jackson, who had advised giving soldiers voting rights in 1822. In this and other significant ways, White was more demo-cratic than the Florida Jacksonians.

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51. Joseph M. White, “To the People of Florida,” *Pensacola Gazette*, June 4, 1825. By the time of his *Joseph M. White’s Circular to the People of Florida* (Washington, 1826), White had changed to urging Seminole removal from Florida.

52. For one example, see Delegate White to the Secretary of War, *Territorial Papers*, XXIII, 864-67.

53. *Ibid.*

54. Joseph M. White to Governor Schley, May 14, 1836, in Executive Correspondence, Incoming, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia.

55. White wrote to Jackson, who sent the letter through General Thomas Sidney Jesup to Scott, with an endorsement ordering Scott to withdraw from command. See General Jesup to F. P. Blair, June 20, 1836, in Thomas Sidney Jesup Collection, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress. The story was retold, with documents, in the *Richmond Enquirer*, September 10, 1852.

White and the Jackson cronies who unsuccessfully ran against him were all large plantation owners. Yet White was more on the humanitarian side on such issues as prison reform, establishment of an insane asylum, and especially on free public education. He espoused a much more democratic philosophy and displayed more democratic beliefs about the political process, about response to constituent relations, and particularly about land and ethnic politics.

White surfaced early as champion of the Spanish ethnic subculture. He differed from both Jackson and the Florida Jacksonians on this important subject. He had been recommended by Floridians for the second legislative council as unique because so many appointees were "strangers to the language of a great part of this population."<sup>56</sup> His outstanding advocacy in land commission, Congress, and the courts of Spanish land claimants, whether of ten acres or a million, contrasts sharply with Jackson and his cronies on anything Spanish. He successfully urged on Congress laws to protect pre-emptors against land speculators, and tried for graduated land prices, based upon his belief that Florida could become a land of small farmers. He felt homesteading worthy, but argued only for graduated prices to make land available to a "squattling, erratic race of settlers" who populate the southern states. He urged a policy for "converting indigent squatters into profitable producers," feeling assured that the pride of ownership could provide the poor a share in the American dream.<sup>57</sup> If, as so much literature relates, economic democracy is a handmaiden of political democracy, White, the anti-Jacksonian, was the sincerest champion of democracy in territorial Florida. Indeed, his transmuted Jeffersonian belief in the small farmer extended to belief in small landholding as the secret to the earthly resurrection of man.

Sectional disputes did not divide the territory of Florida in the 1820s but when secession did erupt into prominent debate in the 1830s, White's thinking was closer to Jackson's than the younger Call and other Florida Jacksonian political leaders. For this and other reasons discussed above, Jacksonian democracy on the Florida frontier was close to the reverse of what it had seemed to be.

56. Peter Alba and Nicholas S. Parmantier to the Secretary of State, December 4, 1823, in *Territorial Papers*, XXII, 803-804.

57. *Communication from the Delegate of Florida...Showing the Necessity for the Graduation of Prices* (Washington, 1828), 20th Congress, 1st Session, Senate Doc. 33, esp. 4-9.



The National Republicans of 1832 are supposed to have been “precursors” of the Whigs nationally.<sup>58</sup> But not so in Florida. White died in 1839, before the Florida Whigs were organized.<sup>59</sup> The Jacksonians became the Whigs in Florida. Thus, the “Jacksonian Democrats” of succeeding years were more legitimate descendants of Joseph M. White than of the Jackson cronies who spoke in his name.

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58. National Republicans are considered “most clearly the lineal precursors of the Whigs” in Richard C. Bain and Judith H. Parris, *Convention Decisions and Voting Records* (Washington, 1973), 14n.

59. See Herbert J. Doherty, Jr., *The Whigs of Florida, 1845-1854* (Gainesville, 1959) for the organization of Florida Whigs.