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# WILLIAM DUNNINGTON BLOXHAM

DUNNINGTON

THE YEARS TO THE GOVERNORSHIP

by RUBY LEACH CARSON

If any contemporaries of William D. Bloxham (1835-1911) made any inquiries concerning the family background of Florida's two-term governor, they left no record of his ancestry. As the son of a Leon county planter, born and reared in the heart of the political scene in Florida, his presence required no explanation. The War for Southern Independence, and then Reconstruction, of epic importance, engrossed men's thoughts. Even Bloxham's activity in statecraft was sufficiently important and picturesque to focus journalistic attention upon the man's achievements almost to the exclusion of his earlier background.

This little was known about the family: His father, William Bloxham, had come from Alexandria, Virginia, to the new territory of Florida in 1825 to seek his fortune.<sup>1</sup> But whom had the elder Bloxham left behind? Which Bloxham ancestor had left the old world to begin life in the new? When the author of this biography began research in 1943, the only answer to these questions was the legendary reply "Bloxham's grandfather had been a wealthy shipbuilder in Alexandria after coming from England to America."<sup>2</sup>

City and county records failed to lend any support to the legend. While the writing of this biography proceeded, the first chapter of the work remained unwritten. Contact with the governor's elderly widow, his second wife, was made. Although hitherto unknown biographical data concerning his closing years resulted, this correspondence yielded nothing about his family. It remained for Dr. James Miller Leake, professor of history at the University of Florida, who was directing the thesis from which this article is abridged, to find a clue. Browsing in *The Diaries of George Washington* he came upon

1. James Bryan Whitfield, *William Dunnington Bloxham*, Appendix to the *Journal of the Florida State Senate*, 1935, p. 30. Hereafter referred to as Whitfield, *Bloxham*.

2. *Ibid.*

(April 1, 1786 : "About noon, one James Bloxham, an English farmer from Gloucestershire arrived here with letters of Recommendation."

A search in Washington's writings revealed much more about this farmer. James Bloxham had been highly recommended.<sup>3</sup> After the Englishman's arrival at Mount Vernon he had spent nearly six weeks looking over the place before entering into an agreement. The new farm manager was "a man of parts, if one may judge by the contract,"<sup>4</sup> which was signed at Mount Vernon on May 31, 1786, and which provided a salary of sixty guineas a year, with a home and other inducements added.

In present-day values, this would be a high salary for such work. To Bloxham, however, it was more than a salary. It offered an opportunity in the new world to recoup the family fortunes and perhaps a return eventually to their former station. James Bloxham had been deprived of his birthright by an ancestor who, according to tradition, had gambled away the Bloxham inheritance.<sup>5</sup>

Washington expected to learn from Bloxham, for the benefit of his five plantations, the best practices in English scientific farming. Twenty-six days after the contract was signed, Washington wrote George William Fairfax:

The character given me of him by Mr. Peacey is full and ample, and his appearance and conversation being much in his favor, I have agreed to give him sixty guineas pr. ann: For his services, and find him and family provisions, a house to live in, a garden to work and two Cows to furnish them with milk. In consequence thereof he has written for his wife and children to come to him.<sup>6</sup>

3. Washington to Fairfax, *Washington, Writings*, June 26, 1786, vol. 28, p. 469. See also Ritter, H. L.: *Washington as a Business Man*, New York, 1931, pp. 70-74.

4. Joseph D. Sawyer, *Washington*, II, 316.

5. Bradley, *English Surnames*. Statements included in compilation under call number C S 439. B 673, "Pedigree of Bloxham," Genealogical Section of Library of Congress, Washington, D. C.

6. Washington to Fairfax, June 26, 1786, *Washington, Writings*, vol. 28, p. 469.

Ten guineas of Bloxham's first year's pay was used to bring his wife, Mary, and their four children to America.<sup>7</sup> During the rest of the year plans were being made for the crossing. Washington took an active part in this:

I have a farmer . . . . He has now written for his wife to come to him, with her children, and to bring with her some seeds, implements of Husbandry &ca. to this Country.<sup>88</sup>

In February 1787 the family arrived at Mount Vernon. By January 7, 1788, the adjustment to life in America had been made, because on that date Washington wrote to Peacey that Bloxham and his family were in good health and appeared to be contented with the country.<sup>9 9</sup>

The second son of this family, James, was to be the grandfather of the Bloxham who would in another century and in another state, restore prestige to the ancient family name. He was ten years of age when his father left Washington's employ and invested his savings in a farm on "Hunting Creek" in the same county.<sup>10 10</sup>

Bloxham had been in Washington's employ four years when the break came in what had been a satisfactory relationship.<sup>1111</sup> The unhappy termination of this relationship, the cause of which is not explained, seems the only possible explanation for the silence with which Bloxham's descendants seem to have cloaked their ancestor's connection with George Washington. There is reason to believe that the Florida governor lived his long and useful life without having had the satisfaction that such knowledge would doubtless have given him.

James must have remembered always the years spent around what was probably the world's most famous plantation, Mount Vernon ; but pleasures he might have

7. *Ibid.*, Contract between Washington and Bloxham, pp. 444-446.

8. *Ibid.*, Washington to Welch, November 15, 1786, vol. 29, p. 66.

9. *Ibid.*, vol. 29, p. 356. Washington to Peacey, January 7, 1788.

10. Fairfax County, Vt., records. Deed. Book Y, p. 14. July 20, 1795.

11. *Washington, Writings*, vol. 31, pp. 36, 37, Washington to Whiting, April 14, 1790.

associated with those childhood days could very well have been clouded by recollections of his father's ultimate unhappiness there.<sup>12,12</sup>

Death came to the elder James Bloxham less than three years after moving to the new home. The estate, which consisted of forty acres, went to the oldest son, William.<sup>13</sup> <sup>13</sup> The son James became a planter, like his father, and his estate joined that of his brother, William.<sup>14</sup> No record of the younger James Bloxham's marriage has been found, but it probably took place when he was in his early twenties, as he was twenty-four years of age when his first child, William, was born in 1805.<sup>15</sup>

In 1825, at the age of twenty, William Bloxham went to the new territory of Florida to make his home. No other member of his family accompanied him. He was to prosper in Florida, where he would become a Leon county planter. That would explain why, upon returning to Virginia in 1859 because of the death of his father, he could well afford to relinquish his share the estate, which was quite modest, consisting mainly of slaves. William Bloxham's name appears on this deed in the Fairfax county records :

Whereas by the death of BLOXHAM who died intestate in Fairfax County, and who was my father, leaving both real and personal estate undivided among or between his heirs . . . I now therefore the said BLOXHAM residing near Tallahassee, in Florida, but being now in the City of Alexandria, Va., on a visit to my relatives, for and in consideration of my affection and respect for my brother BLOXHAM.<sup>16</sup> . . .

12. *Idem*.

13. Fairfax County, Va., Records, *Deed Book* MM, no. 2, p. 52.

14. *Ibid.*, *Deed Book* ZZ, no. 2, p. 126. William Bloxham's land is described here as being "about 1 mile from Alexandria town, and on w. side of the new Turnpike road and adj. land of James Bloxham."

15. Date on William Bloxham's headstone, St. John's Episcopal Cemetery, Tallahassee.

16. Fairfax County, Va., Records, *Deed Book* B, no. 4, p. 90.

This document, dated May 7, 1859, attests that William Bloxham, who goes down in history as the father of Governor Bloxham, had never severed the family ties which bound him to his relatives in Virginia.

William Bloxham was an obscure young man after his arrival in Tallahassee just one year after that city had been founded. His name did not appear on the public records for several years. In 1829, however, he presented himself at the Market House of Tallahassee to vote for a delegate to represent the new territory in Congress.<sup>17 17</sup> The following year, when he was 25 years of age, William Bloxham married Martha Williams, the 15-year old daughter of Captain Drury Williams,<sup>18 18</sup> a well-to-do planter whose 400-acre plantation was located in Leon county eight miles east of the capital.<sup>19 19</sup> The family had moved to Florida from Georgia.<sup>20 20</sup> Martha's fine character, culture and refinement were such as to cause her to become in later years when her son was famous, almost a legendary character. She was delicate physically and needed and received the devoted care of her husband.<sup>21 21</sup>

Three years after their marriage, William and Martha Bloxham purchased 100 acres which was the nucleus for their first plantation. It was located about ten miles northwest of Tallahassee.<sup>22 22</sup>

On July 9, 1835, Martha gave birth to a son, William Dunnington Bloxham.<sup>23</sup> While he grew into boyhood his father continued buying up the land about him, until in

17. The original 1829 voting list is preserved in the State Library, Tallahassee.
18. Leon County, Fla., Records, *Marriage License Book*, vol. 1. The year of Martha's birth was 1815, according to the date on the headstone of her grave in St. John's Episcopal Cemetery in Tallahassee.
19. Leon County, Fla., *Tax Book for 1829*, State Library, Tallahassee.
20. *Ibid.*, *Miscellaneous Proceedings*, May 19, 1826, to December 18, 1841, Will of Drury Williams, p. 200.
21. Mrs. Gertrude Bloxham, widow of Governor Bloxham, correspondence with the author. Hereafter referred to as Mrs. Gertrude Bloxham correspondence.
22. Leon County, Records, *Deed Book D*, p. 384.
23. Whitfield, *Bloxham*, p. 30.

1844 he had accumulated 1,200 acres.<sup>24 24</sup> In 1856 William Bloxham was taxed for slaves valued at \$25,000 \$25,000 and real estate valued at \$11,600.<sup>25</sup> "Billy," as playmates called the younger Bloxham, grew up knowing the happy side of plantation life in the Old South. He had a horse, he went hunting and fishing<sup>26 26</sup> and, like other small boys on plantations, he probably had a negro boy near his own age as a personal slave.

Like any normal boy, young Bloxham loved fun and was full of mischief. His mother's tubercular condition probably caused her to guard her young son's health with unusual zeal, for he remembered all his life the asafoetida which she kept attached to a string around his neck, expecting it to ward off disease. The boy was devoted to both parents, who were very ambitious for him; and his father's lectures about the importance of his amounting to something made a deep impression on him, for he spoke of them frequently in later years.<sup>27 27</sup>

His adolescent school days were spent at Brownwood Institute, a preparatory school at LaGrange, Georgia.<sup>28 28</sup> The trips to and from LaGrange were made by stagecoach, requiring several days. In the ante-bellum days the departure of the stagecoach for the 35-mile trip to Thomasville, Georgia, which would be young Bloxham's first overnight stop, meant the blowing of bugles by the coachman, the scramble for seats by the passengers, the crack of the great whip over the backs of the two horses, and then a dramatic disappearance in a cloud of dust and the final lingering echoes of the "far-sounding horn."<sup>29</sup>

Always on the lookout for fun, one can imagine that these trips were never dull to young Bloxham. He was

24. Leon County, Fla., Records, *Deed Book G*, p. 568.

25. *Tax List*, State Library, Tallahassee.

26. Mrs. Gertrude Bloxham correspondence.

27. *Idem*.

28. *Idem*.

29. Recollections of Miss Miriam Choate, who declared the trip to be accurately described in *The Tallahassee Girl* by Maurice Thompson (1881).



always seized with laughter over the memory of one incident of this trip, an incident he anticipated each time the stagecoach approached the scene of action, which was a noon-time stop for changing horses and eating lunch. An old woman who sold apple pies would ring a bell and cry out: "Open-face, kivered and cross bar!"<sup>30 30</sup>

Brownwood Institute, which has now ceased to exist, had a beautiful setting. The campus on which the young Bloxham studied, played and strolled was immense. Its one-hundred acres of magnificent oaks, velvety lawns and flower gardens were penetrated by winding walks and broad driveways, surfaced with white sand. In the center were the school buildings, which were in English style designed by English architects. The founder of the school, Dr. Robert C. Brown, who established it in 1840, had spared no expense in buildings and equipment. After Dr. Brown's death, the school was bought by Dr. Otis Smith, a Baptist minister from Massachusetts, who must have been in charge when Bloxham attended. During the years 1852 and 1853, Dr. Smith had chartered Brownwood to the state as a school for boys with himself as its president, and for many years it was considered one of the better schools in the South.<sup>31 31</sup>

When the time came for young Bloxham to go to a larger institution to study law in preparation for his life work, his family selected the College of William and Mary at Williamsbur, Virginia. No doubt its proximity to the relatives in Fairfax county may have influenced the family in making this selection. Bloxham was now eighteen years of age. The records of the College of William and Mary are meagre for the years 1853-'54, and 1854-'55, when Bloxham was a student there.<sup>32 32</sup> He is listed as having been a Methodist during his first year

30. Mrs. Gertrude Bloxham correspondence.

31. Clifford L. Smith, *History of Troupe County, Ga.*, (1935). This data was taken from the book for the author by the LaGrange Chamber of Commerce.

32. *The History of the College of William and Mary*, (Including the General Catalogue), from its foundation 1660 to 1874, J. W. Randolph & English, Richmond, Va., 1874.

and as an Episcopalian during his second year; and during both years as boarding with a Mrs. Maupin.<sup>33</sup> Five days before his twentieth birthday, Bloxham received the degree of Bachelor of Laws. As he was an honor student he was called upon to deliver an address at the commencement exercises. "The Failure of Free Government in Europe" was the subject chosen by this future statesman, whose engrossing qualities as a profound thinker and eloquent speaker were recognized at college.<sup>34</sup>

After his graduation, as was the custom among some of the prosperous planters of the South, young Bloxham was given a trip to Europe.<sup>35</sup> Upon his return to Florida he did not engage in the practice of law, but assisted his father in the management of his plantations, for by now the older William Bloxham had purchased other lands about two miles southwest of Tallahassee.<sup>36</sup>

By this time, Martha Bloxham's health was such that her husband and son moved from the plantation to take up temporary residence in a roomy, comfortable house in Tallahassee, where she could be under the close supervision of a physician; however, she died of consumption during 1856, at the age of forty-one.<sup>37</sup> Her grave in the Bloxham plot in St. John's Episcopal Cemetery in Tallahassee bears the dates 1815-1856.

The year 1856 was a memorable one for young Bloxham. As a member of the Leon county delegation to the Democratic State Convention at Madison on April 16 he made his debut in politics by helping to nominate Madison S. Perry of Alachua county for governor of Florida.<sup>38</sup> This was nearly three months before he had celebrated his twenty-first birthday.<sup>39</sup> His talent for politics must

33. *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd Series, (V.1925) pp. 43, 49.

34. Whitfield, *Bloxham*, p. 30. Undocumented statement.

35. *Idem*.

36. *Idem*.

37. Mrs. Gertrude Bloxham correspondence.

38. *Floridian and Journal*, April 16, 1856.

39. Bloxham would be twenty-one before the General Election when the nominee of this Convention would be voted on.

have been recognized by his elders, or he never would have been singled out at such an early age and in a region where so much political talent existed.

In the meantime, young Bloxham had fallen in love. Much has been said in Tallahassee about the charm of Mary Davis, gracious and kindly Virginia girl with whom he was to enjoy forty-eight years of married life. After her father, Dr. William Davis, had retired from the practice of medicine at Lynchburg, Virginia, he settled in Tallahassee, where Mary was a devout member of the Episcopal Church, although she had been educated in a convent in Mobile.<sup>40</sup>

In November 1856 Tallahasseeans read in their *Floridian and Journal*:

Married in Lynchburg, Va., on the 28th ult. by the Rev. Thomas E. Locke, WILLIAM D. BLOXHAM to MISS MARY C., DAUGHTER OF THE LATE Dr. Wm. Davis, both of Leon Co., Fla.<sup>41</sup>

Mary Davis was just nineteen and already was well-known and well-liked. William's parents had never participated actively in the formal social life of Tallahassee, mainly because of Martha Bloxham's delicate health; but this was not the case with Mary's relatives, who enjoyed great social popularity.

A year after his marriage young Bloxham bought from his father, for the sum of \$5,000, a plantation west of town which adjoined the estate of the Princess Murat, widow of Prince Achille Murat, exiled nephew of Napoleon Bonaparte.<sup>42</sup> To this home he took his wife, and here they lived until they bought the Murat place in 1870. After five years at the Murat home, the Bloxhams moved back next door into their own beautifully landscaped place, with its driveway of oaks, and its lawns and gardens.<sup>43</sup> Here "guests were received with a degree of

40. Mrs. S. D. Shore, of Plant City, Fla., grandniece of Mary Davis Bloxham, to author, March 14, 1945.

41. *Floridian and Journal*, November 15, 1856.

42. Leon county, Fla., Records, *Deed Book L*, p. 674.

43. Recollections of Judge J. B. Whitfield, told to author in 1944.

cordiality which at once dispelled all feeling of restraint and made them perfectly at home." <sup>44</sup>

Those first few years of their married life were to be their most carefree. A son, whom they named William, was born to them in 1857, <sup>45</sup> and their pleasure in his arrival was unspoiled by any foreknowledge that his mind would never develop beyond the childhood stage. Bloxham became a Master Mason in Tallahassee's Jackson Lodge No. 1 in 1859. <sup>46</sup> and his wife was active in St. John's Episcopal Church.

#### THE WAR FOR SOUTHERN INDEPENDENCE

Bloxham enlisted first in the War for Southern Independence on April 2, 1861, <sup>47</sup> as a private in Captain R. B. Hilton's company, later known as Company D, First Regiment Florida Infantry, but he was "discharged 25 April, order General Bragg" according to the company muster-roll. The reason for his discharge appears in his formal resignation, January 8, 1862, which gives "disability (chronic disease of lungs)."

Six months after his discharge, Bloxham became active in Florida politics for the second time. He was twenty-six in 1861, when Leon county's representative to the state Legislature, J. B. Galbraith, was elected attorney-general, and Bloxham was elected to this vacancy without opposition October 7, 1861.

Despite his youth and inexperience, Bloxham took a leading part in this session, the first after Florida had seceded, so he made his legislative debut in a time of trouble. The House Journal for that year shows that he was an active member. At its first meeting he nominated S. B. Love of Gadsden county for speaker, which met with unanimous approval of the House. <sup>48</sup> He introduced

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44. *Floridian*, November 16, 1869.

45. Date on headstone in St. John's Episcopal cemetery, Tallahassee.

46. *Masonic Records*, Jackson Lodge No. 1, Tallahassee.

47. Official Records, War Department, Office of Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.

48. *House Journal*, 1861, p. 5.

a bill authorizing holders of Treasury notes to exchange them for bonds of the State;<sup>49 49</sup> and the same day he reported for the Committee on Schools and Colleges. This committee declined to endorse the Governor's recommendation that the General Assembly authorize the arsenal at Mt. Vernon (now Chattahoochee) for use as a Military Academy, an arsenal of construction, and State Armory.<sup>50 50</sup>

Despite his part in politics, Bloxham had no intention of remaining out of active military service: if he could help it. Since his resignation had been accepted to take effect February 11, 1863, Bloxham actually was still technically in the service when the Trapier Guards organized in Tallahassee on February 27, 1862, and elected him captain.<sup>51 51</sup> He was retired to civil life again the following year when his father died on March 12, 1863.<sup>52</sup>

In reply to a letter in the press<sup>53 53</sup> suggesting that he be a candidate for representative in the legislature, and another<sup>54</sup> saying that inasmuch as Captain Bloxham's health did not permit him to serve in the Army, the people thought that he could render them good service in the legislature, he declined to become a candidate "for reasons of a character" which he could not "disregard."<sup>55</sup> These reasons may have been his intention to get back into the army again, this time in a noncombatant capacity, for he was appointed captain and assistant quartermaster, Confederate States Army, to take rank from February 19, 1864, and assigned to the Fifth Battalion of Florida Cavalry stationed at Madison.<sup>56 56</sup> Bloxham served until August of that year, and then returned

49. *Ibid.* p. 243.

50. *Idem.*

51. *Florida Sentinel*, (Tallahassee), March 4, 1862.

52. Date on William Bloxham's headstone, St. John's Episcopal cemetery, Tallahassee.

53. *Florida Sentinel*, June 23, 1863.

54. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1863.

55. *Ibid.*, July 21, 1863.

56. *Official Records*, War Department, Office of Adjutant General, Washington, D. C.

to civil life again, his appointment not having been confirmed by the Senate.<sup>57 57</sup>

Then Bloxham turned his attention to his plantation again. It was larger now, for in October of 1863 he had purchased two eighty-acre tracts, with improvements, from Richard Saunders, for \$2,400.<sup>58</sup> On December 8, 1863, he bought his first piece of Belle Vue, the estate of the Princess Murat, which adjoined his plantation. His purchase consisted of forty acres, for which he paid \$1,800. It was improved property, located between Tallahassee and Quincy.<sup>59</sup>

These purchases added two hundred acres of land which the Leon county tax books show that he owned in 1860. In that year his land had been valued at \$12,600 ; his fifty-two slaves at \$31,000 ; twenty horses and mules at \$2,000 ; 200 cattle at \$400. He paid \$78.41 for state taxes and \$18.95 for county taxes.<sup>60 60</sup> In addition to his own property, Bloxham had the estate he had inherited from his father, which made him a fairly wealthy man in terms of values of this period.

On December 8, 1864, his only daughter was born,<sup>61 61</sup> and christened Martha Williams Bloxham.

After the war Bloxham with the other planters of the South tried to adjust themselves, and their former slaves to a new economy not based upon slave labor. He established a school for negroes on his plantation, and hired an educated negro, John Wallace, as its teacher. Wallace later became a State senator in the Republican ranks and the author of *Carpetbag Rule in Florida*.

Misuse of power in Florida developed under the management of Thomas W. Osborn of New Jersey, whose corrupt practices could however, exceed those of a more radical faction of the Republicans which developed in 1867. The radicals, known as the Billings-Saunders-

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57. *Idem*.

58. Leon County, Fla., Records, *Deed Book N*, p. 241.

59. *Ibid.*, p. 252.

60. Leon County, Fla., *Tax Book for 1860*. State Library, Tallahassee.

61. Date on headstone, St. John's Episcopal cemetery, Tallahassee.

Richards faction, and the Osborne faction, "had everything, their own way, with the military to back them,"<sup>62</sup> since the South had come under military control as a result of the Reconstruction Acts of March 2 and March 23, 1867.<sup>63</sup>

The constitution framed by a convention in 1865 was turned down by a Republican Congress because it did not enfranchise the negro. Another constitution was to be voted on in May, 1868, together with the general election.

Uniting to fight the common enemy, a Conservative party had been formed in Quincy on March 31 of that year by Florida Democrats, former Whigs, Southern Unionists and some new *bona fide* white residents from the North. Bloxham was named as one of the four candidates for Presidential electors for the Seymour-Blair ticket. The other three candidates were A. J. Peeler of Leon county, Wilkinson Call of Jacksonville and G. A. Stanley of Pensacola.<sup>64</sup>

With Peeler as a speaking partner, Bloxham stumped middle Florida in behalf of the Conservative ticket. He was thirty-three years of age, and already a good orator. The *Floridian* declared that no other speakers in the campaign battled more faithfully or struck harder or more effective blows for the Conservative cause than did these two. The paper praised especially the fearless and bold manner in which these two men had exposed the iniquities and corrupt schemes of the political adventurers, carpetbaggers and Radical office seekers.<sup>65</sup>

The Radical Republicans had nominated Harrison Reed, a federal postal agent in Florida, who had come to Florida as direct tax commissioner, for the governorship ; and William M. Gleason, a Northerner who had

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62. John Wallace, *Carpet Bag Rule in Florida*, pp. 44, 45.

63. John Spencer Bassett, *A Short History of the United States*, pp. 609, 610.

64. *Floridian*, May 5, 1868.

65. *Idem*.

moved into Dade county, for the office of lieutenant-governor.<sup>66</sup> An example of the discord in the Republican ranks, and of Bloxham's ability to capitalize on the situation is found in the *Floridian's* account of a meeting the Conservative Club held in Tallahassee the month before the election. A mixed crowd had assembled, and after a stirring speech by Bloxham, there was a call for "Carpetbagger Richards" who, as the *Floridian* reported, came forward and made a strong speech against Saunders, leader of the rival carpetbag faction. When Richards had finished, the crowd gleefully called for Saunders, who "pitched into" Richards. Bloxham closed the meeting by inviting special attention to the split in the opposition, each denouncing the other as not fit to be trusted. "Let all who want harmony," said Bloxham, "unite with the Conservatives."<sup>67</sup>

Despite a Republican victory in the election of 1868, Bloxham's campaign for the Conservative party had brought him before the State as a political leader of ability. He had ceased to be merely a Leon county politician, and was now considered a statesman to whom the masses would go "with a rush." Because of this, in the off-year election of 1870, the Democrats had him in mind for the highest place on the State ticket, which was the office of lieutenant-governor. The other office to be filled was a representative in Congress.<sup>68</sup>

When the convention opened in Tallahassee on August 23, 1870, Silas L. Niblack was selected as the Democratic candidate for Congress, and Bloxham was nominated as the candidate for lieutenant-governor. This was all done in less than five minutes. Just what Bloxham had come to mean to Floridians, before he had ever made a state-wide campaign for office, is indicated in the *Floridian's* comment upon his nomination. His popularity was declared to be unbounded and to extend

66. William T. Cash, *History of the Democratic Party in Florida*, p. 49.

67. *Floridian*, April 21, 1868.

68. *Ibid.*, August 2, 1870.



throughout the State.<sup>69 69</sup> Another newspaper, commenting upon his nomination, declared him to be "clever, polite, entertaining, and for all of that very determined."<sup>70 70</sup> Another paper pointed out that he was extremely popular with both races,<sup>71 71</sup> and still another declared him to be a young man of brilliant promise.<sup>72 72</sup>

The radical nominee who was Bloxham's opponent was Dr. Samuel T. Day of Columbia county, while Niblack's opponent for the seat in Congress was a negro, Josiah T. Walls, a "dark mulatto, who had come to Florida from Pennsylvania."<sup>73 73</sup>

Bloxham made such a vigorous campaign that by election day, November 9, he had developed strength of victorious proportions. Several days after the election, unofficial reports from over the State indicated a Democratic victory. Then came gossip and intrigue about radical Republican plans to have Day counted in as lieutenant-governor, and the radical candidate Walls counted out as representative. Wallace wrote concerning the matter,

The leaders of the ring and such other members as sat in the "amen corner" at once held a consultation to devise means to successfully behead Bloxham, the Democratic giant.<sup>74 74</sup>

The canvassing board began counting votes in the office of the secretary of state on November 29, although nine counties had not yet been heard from. Having learned that two of the board were determined to manage the count so that Day would receive a majority, Bloxham "had his spies on hand." Editor Dyke of the *Floridian*, from his position at the key-hole outside the locked door,

69. *Ibid.*, September 6, 1870.

70. *Ibid.*, September 13, 1870, quoting *Madison Messenger*.

71. *Ibid.*, quoting *Gainesville Sun*.

72. *Ibid.*, quoting *Monticello Advertiser*.

73. *Ibid.*, August 23, 1870.

74. Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

made the definite discovery that nine counties had not yet reported. Bloxham at once tried to get legal in stopping the canvass until all returns were recorded. While Bloxham won this legal point, the radicals brushed the victory aside by having the judge who had granted the injunction arrested on trumped-up charges.<sup>75 75</sup>

When the radicals gave Day a fake certificate of victory over Bloxham, although a final count of all the counties showed that Bloxham had won by 64 votes, Bloxham laid the case before the Supreme Court. Here his election was finally established, but while the Court was making its decision, the radical-controlled Legislature in session then repealed the act which had created a Board of Canvassers of three State officers. The Supreme Court thereupon dismissed the proceedings.<sup>76 76</sup> Bloxham was denied the office to which he had been elected, but Niblack won his seat in Congress over Walls.

Bloxham was now a prominent figure in Florida politics. Resentment over this injustice won him friends and supporters who had previously counted themselves Republicans, while members of his own party became more devoted to him than ever. Henceforth, Bloxham was to be referred to by friends and in the newspapers as "Governor Bloxham."

Among Bloxham's most ardent admirers was the former negro school teacher, John Wallace. As he commented upon this situation in his book he showed his hero-worship by his expressed belief that the radical ring had been "for the first time confronted with a political giant, who was destined to overthrow the carpet bag dynasty of Florida."<sup>77 77</sup>

Jacksonville friends upon first hearing the returns which showed a majority for Bloxham, sent him the

75. William Watson Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida*, pp. 626, 627.

76. *Fla. Rpts.*, v. 13, State *ex rel* Bloxham vs. Bd. State Canvassers, pp. 64, 76, 77.

77. Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

biggest rooster he had ever seen, along with a large photograph of himself, and this jingle:

Crow, gallant cock  
For the victory won !  
Crow for Bloxham,  
Florida's favorite son.<sup>78</sup>

About two years later, after impeachment proceedings had been begun against Governor Reed in January 1872, a situation developed which the Democrats hoped could be solved by claiming the governorship for Bloxham. The Legislature had adjourned *sine die*, after convening for the impeachment trial, and despite the fact that the case had not been definitely settled, Reed decided to resume his duties as governor. He did this on April 8, 1872, while Acting-Governor Day was out of town.<sup>79</sup> This precipitated such a conflict between the two men over the office that the Democrats in a published statement suggested to the public that the solution to the problem was the recognition of Bloxham's victory at the polls on November 8, 1870. Thus, this "Proclamation of the People" pointed out, since Bloxham had been elected lieutenant-governor, the people should give "their entire obedience to all the proclamations . . . that may be issued by our legal Governor, William D. Bloxham."<sup>80</sup>

All of this discord within the radical ranks gave the Conservatives plenty of ammunition for the 1872 election campaigns. As early as January of that year the *Tampa Peninsular*<sup>81</sup> began looking ahead to the fall election. In an editorial captioned "A Wise Suggestion" this paper stated, in part: "Give us William D. Bloxham for Governor, and all the reformation that is desired will be attained. . . ."

So it was that Bloxham's name was the only one presented as their candidate for the governorship when

78. Mrs. Gertrude Bloxham correspondence.

79. Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 631, 632, 634, 637.

80. *Floridian*.

81. *Floridian*, January 30, 1872, quoting the *Tampa Peninsular*.

the Conservatives held their State convention at Jacksonville on August 14, 1872. As the roll call by counties brought him every vote, he was of course declared unanimously nominated.<sup>82</sup> The man who had the honor of placing Bloxham's name in nomination was Aristides Doggett of Duval county,<sup>83</sup> son of John L. Doggett who had been a member of the Legislative Council of the Territory of Florida in the 1820's.

Bloxham's speech before the Convention was a masterpiece of diplomacy, viewed in the light of the party's needs in 1872. Editor Dyke preserved extracts of it in the *Floridian*, from which the following statements are quoted :

Why is it that men of all parties and of every political faith are here? Four years of misrule, unparalleled in the annals of nations, have caused an utter stagnation of business, stopped the tide of immigration and caused hundreds of our best men to seek fortunes among strangers ; heaped a mountain of debt upon an impoverished people, and steeped the Legislative Halls in corruption. . . .

The men who followed with honor the banner of the Lost Cause, unite this evening with those who, with equal heroism, were led to victory under the Star Spangled Banner, and now cordially "clasp hands across the bloody chasm." (Applause).

We not only lay aside our prejudices, but we assert the equal political rights of all men of every color and condition and shall see to it that they are ever preserved inviolate. ( Cheers). When we raised our banner of reform to "show our faith by our works" we inscribed upon it the name of Horace Greeley, (Prolonged cheers). . . .

We cordially take the hand of Liberal Republicans and accord to them the same honesty we claim for ourselves. . . .<sup>84</sup>

82. *Ibid.*, August 20, 1872.

83. *Idem.*

84. *Idem.*

But Bloxham faced obstacles impossible to overcome. One of these was the national political situation, for the Democrats had little chance of electing Horace Greeley over so popular an opponent as Ulysses S. Grant.

Bloxham was defeated by Ossian B. Hart, a Republican who had been appointed associate justice of the Supreme Court by Governor Reed. Wallace, accounting for the defeat, wrote that Bloxham could have been elected had he been spared certain friends whose speeches had not been so conciliatory in tone as Bloxham's had been. Many of the White Republicans met in convention at Jacksonville, according to Wallace, and endorsed Bloxham for governor and Horace Greeley for president, "and the road looked clear for Bloxham until his so-called friends took the stump."<sup>85</sup> Hart had a majority of between four and five thousand.

Despite the subsequent discoveries of election frauds,<sup>86</sup> Bloxham did not sulk after his defeat; nor was he discouraged in the fight against radical rule. A friend urged him to give up the seemingly hopeless political struggle and move to another state, but Bloxham replied :

Let not the disappointments, growing out of our recent political defeat, warp our judgments in determining our future course; wait until excitement, naturally engendered by a heated partisan contest, shall have given place to the "sober second thought." It is true, our taxes are ruinously high, and our material and financial condition not such as to commend itself; yet let us hope that the incoming administration will profit by rather than follow in the wake of the unfortunate mistakes of the one just closing.

I believe as I have always stated on the "stump," that Judge Hart is an honest man. It is true, as is thought by many, that he is a man of strong prejudices, and not liable to rise to the true

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85. Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

86. Cash, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

dignity of that real statesmanship that would inaugurate a feeling of confidence by a broad and liberal policy ; while others have grave apprehension of the influences that will surround him. The future alone can develop whether or not those fears are well grounded. But let us not judge in advance . . . let us rather give a generous confidence and lend a helping hand to assist him in his important duties.

. . . . Let us offer every inducement to immigration, and endeavor by all means to draw from Europe and the over-crowded North a portion of their muscle and their capital; fill up our State with an *enlightened* immigration, and *public opinion* will soon correct the evils of an incompetent State Government . . . .

I feel proud in having received support of a large number of Northern Republicans who have made Florida their home. Let us all join hands, then, to promote immigration - develop our internal resources and secure for our State a sound financial basis.<sup>87</sup>

Bloxham had not permitted his interest in politics to absorb all of his time and attention. By 1867 he had become noted locally for his agricultural experiments. His sugar cane machinery in 1869 attracted the attention of a committee from the Leon County Agricultural Society.<sup>88</sup> He continued to add land to his plantation, and in 1870, about three years after the death of the Princess Murat, he bought Belle Vue<sup>89</sup> her home and plantation at a public sale, and paid \$3,666 for the 366 acres it included.<sup>90</sup> The following year he enlarged his estate with one purchase of 280 acres, for which he paid \$504 "at the court-house door," and another purchase of 240 acres for \$2,100.<sup>91</sup>

87. *Floridian*, December 24, 1872.

88. *Ibid.*, November 16, 1869.

89. Leon County, Fla., Records, *Deed Book Q*, p. 130.

90. *Ibid.*, *Deed Book P*, p. 2631/2.

91. Leon County, Fla., Records, *Deed Book Q*, pp. 2-99.

Bloxham was one of thirty chartered members of a Grange, or chapter, of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, which was organized in Tallahassee on March 21, 1874; and he was elected its secretary.<sup>92</sup> A similar organization, the Farmers' Alliance, was to become a political factor in Florida thirteen years later. Land holders of Middle Florida, meeting in Tallahassee on January 5, 1876, gave Bloxham an opportunity to promote one of his favorite projects for the advancement of Florida—the encouragement of immigration. At a later meeting he reported his plan “for advertising the resources and attractions of the several counties.”<sup>93</sup> The same year he made an “eloquent speech” on the subject of advertising home resources at a meeting of Leon County’s Industrial and Immigration Society.<sup>94</sup>

While Florida’s far-seeing citizens were thus trying to develop a new economy they were also working toward the turning-point in the Conservative Democratic party’s long struggle to regain home-rule for Florida. Nearly a decade of failures had not discouraged them.

In the spring of 1876 Bloxham and other Democratic leaders turned thoughtfully and resolutely toward the fall elections. They were determined to win in the gubernatorial race, even if they had to nominate a Northern man in order to appease the old-line Whigs and to attract enough Republican votes to carry the election. In the nomination of a Conservative Democrat recruit from the Northern ranks, the Democrats finally decided to place their hopes for victory.

George F. Drew, lumberman of Ellaville, Florida, was the candidate most generally agreed upon in advance of the Convention at which he was nominated. But why Drew? There were other able Conservatives in Florida who during the War had been Unionist in sentiment. Drew’s wealth may have had something to do with the fact that he was selected, for he was a successful lumber-

92. *Floridian*, March 24, 1874.

93. *Ibid.*, January 11, 1876.

94. *Ibid.*, March 22, 1876.

man who "was referred to sometimes as Millionaire Drew." He was a native of New Hampshire who had started business in Florida twenty years before the War.<sup>95</sup> The Democratic party needed a candidate with money to finance his own campaign, but also one whose reputation for business ability and honesty was unquestioned.

Drew not only met these requirements but he possessed an attractive personality and a subtle gift for politics, sometimes disclaimed by himself,<sup>96</sup> but which is obvious to the student of the political history of Florida during the eight years of his influence. Historian Davis says that Drew's "nomination at this crisis by Florida Democrats was expedient."<sup>97</sup> Fortunately for the Democrats he was available.

Bloxham's leadership at the two-day State convention of the Conservative Democratic party, June 7-9, 1876, was outstanding. It was upon Bloxham's motion that Drew was nominated for governor by acclamation, "amid loud and prolonged cheering."<sup>98</sup> Upon a motion by Bloxham, the convention proceeded to the nomination of two presidential electors for the State at large. J. E. Yonge of Escambia county and Wilkinson Call of Duval county, Democratic leaders of influence and ability, were chosen. Alternates were William Curry of Monroe county and B. F. Wardlaw of Madison.

Upon a motion by Bloxham, the convention proceeded to the election of delegates to the St. Louis Democratic convention. At the beginning of the meeting, Bloxham had offered a resolution congratulating the people of Florida on having elected two Democratic members to Congress.<sup>99</sup>

95. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 692.

96. *Florida Times Union*, (Jacksonville), June 11, 1884. Hereafter to be referred to as *Times-Union*.

97. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 692.

98. *Floridian*, June 13, 1876.

99. The Congressmen were Senator C. W. Jones and Representative J. J. Finley. Florida's other members in Congress, Senator S. B. Conover and Representative W. J. Purman, were Republicans.



As a member of the State Democratic Executive committee, Bloxham attended its meeting in Tallahassee on June 21, when the work of the campaign was planned. A month later, the committee met in Jacksonville, where they planned the opening meeting of the campaign, a grand rally on August 5 at Madison in Drew's home county. Over 2,000 attended and Drew was the main speaker. Other speakers were Bloxham, former governor Walker, Wilkinson Call and R. H. M. Davidson. "Never before was there such interest . . ." declared the *Floridian*.<sup>100</sup>

The Republican ranks in Florida continued to be split by factionalism during the campaign of 1876. Their nominee for governor was Marcellus L. Stearns, incumbent ; and for lieutenant-governor, David Montgomery of Madison county.<sup>101</sup> Candidates and speakers for both parties now fought in the field and on the platform "with no holds barred." W. J. Purnam, Radical nominee for Congress, wrote a circular criticising Drew's Union record ; Democrats accused Purnam of having caused an innocent person to be murdered in Jackson county,<sup>102</sup> Stearns was accused of having stolen food and supplies from negroes while connected with the Freedmen's Bureau ; and David Montgomery was charged with arson.

Bloxham did not engage in the low tactics in which some of his fellow Democrats were said to have indulged, although he did attend Republican mass meetings and, in his more peaceful way, did stir up discontent in the Republican ranks. Wallace, actively working for the Republican ticket, but sincerely friendly to Bloxham, wrote that Bloxham was always on hand at the Republican meetings to remind the people of embarrassing facts, and that he gave the Republicans so much trouble that they devised a plan to dodge him. They stopped an-

100. *Floridian*, Aug. 8, 1876.

101. Davis, *op. cit.*, pp. 689, 690.

102. Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 336.

nouncing their meetings by poster, and sent men around on horseback two or three hours before the meeting was to start.

"By this means we got clear of Bloxham at our meetings," Wallace wrote. The plan was not, however, effective. Although at their meetings the people would be instructed not to go out to hear Bloxham, "for our lives we could not keep the black brother away from the silver tongued orator," complained Wallace. He continued :

We would go to a precinct and get the brother all right for Stearns, and would report that all was well ; but when we would hear from that precinct again Bloxham had been there and taken him back. The thing continued until the day of election.<sup>103</sup>

The tense atmosphere preceding the election of 1876 caused a committee of citizens on October 30 to confer with Governor Stearns on initiating measures to prevent disturbances on election day. Bloxham was a member of this committee. The nation was either expecting, or was planning for, irregularities in the forthcoming presidential election in the Southern states still under Federal military control. The *New York World* on September 5, 1876, announced that the attorney-general planned to station United States troops in Florida "in the great colored belt to give protection and a feeling of security to those counties." The *Floridian* believed that this was "for the sole purpose of serving as an excuse for sending soldiers to aid in carrying an election."<sup>104</sup> It was historian Davis's opinion, however, that the presence of the soldiers was useful in restraining Democrats who were not over-scrupulous about means, and who sought results primarily.<sup>105</sup>

Although on the face of the returns the Democrats in Florida elected both their State and National tickets,

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103. *Ibid.*, p. 334.

104. *Floridian*, Sept. 22, 1876.

105. Davis, *op. cit.*, p. 703.

the State victory was acknowledged only after a bitter struggle. The National election was decided by partisan rulings and decisions of the Electoral Commission.

One historian expressed the opinion generally held in Florida when he wrote that

... the election was not without compensations to the people of Florida. The Federal troops were soon withdrawn from the state; and with the disappearance of the Federal bayonets, the carpetbag rule collapsed and the state passed into the hands of its own citizens.<sup>106</sup><sup>106</sup>

Although Mary Bloxham had managed the plantations efficiently during her husband's absence in his various campaigns,<sup>107</sup> plantations without slave labor were not so lucrative as they had been before the War. Bloxham was shifting his activities from those of a planter to those of a public official, and in another four years he would give up his farming entirely. He was appointed secretary of state by Governor Drew and since his plantation was only two miles from town, he was able to see almost as much of his family as before. Continuing his planting, it was noted that at the Middle Florida Agricultural and Mechanical Association's fair in 1879 he was both an exhibitor and the orator of the day.

### ***The Campaign of 1880***

By October 1879 a Bloxham-for-governor campaign was under way, developing such proportions that he announced through the *Floridian* that he was "in no sense a candidate." After this, and without Bloxham's consent, the *Floridian*, Florida's foremost newspaper, continued whole-heartedly to champion him for the gubernatorial nomination.

On June 10 Democratic delegates from each county would meet in a nominating convention at Gainesville.<sup>108</sup><sup>108</sup>

106. James Miller Leake, *A Short History of Florida*, p. 92.

107. Susan Bradford Eppes, *Through Some Eventful Years*, pp. 372, 373.

108. *Floridian*, March 23, 1880.

A letter-writing campaign for Bloxham soon got underway and the newspapers speculated cautiously on possible candidates.

Although Ocala's *East Florida Banner*<sup>109</sup> and the *Jacksonville Union*<sup>110</sup> came out for Drew ; and although the *Pensacola Gazette*<sup>111</sup> came out for its own favorite son, General E. A. Perry, a definite feature of the pre-convention campaign was the strong undercurrent of public sentiment for Bloxham. Actually, this sentiment had been gathering momentum since that election of 1870 in which he had won but did not receive the lieutenant-governorship.

A letter signed "Jacksonville," appearing in the called for Bloxham for governor and John T. Leslie of Hillsborough county for lieutenant-governor.<sup>112</sup>

The *Gainesville Sun*, which had mentioned Bloxham for the nomination, declared that the public had yet to learn Drew's wishes in the matter of running for reelection. Drew was all this while, as was to be revealed later, nursing a secret grudge against Bloxham, since Bloxham, more than any other potential candidate, stood in the way of Drew's nomination to succeed himself. Drew's resentment was not restrained by the knowledge that the Democratic victory in the State in 1876 had been due more to Bloxham than to any other man.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, Drew was well aware of the fact that his elevation to the governorship in 1876 had been in no sense a personal reward.<sup>114</sup> He must have known at that time that Bloxham was the man the people would have preferred as governor.

Drew's recollections of conversations which he claimed had taken place between himself and Bloxham during pre-convention days became known to the public four years later through the columns of the *Jacksonville*

109. *East Florida Banner*, April 24, 1880.

110. *Jacksonville Union*, April 20, 1880.

111. *Pensacola Gazette*, March 23, 1880.

112. *Floridian*, October 1, 1879.

113. Wallace, *op. cit.*, p. 127. See also Eppes, *op. cit.*, pp. 372, 373.

114. *Times-Union*, June 11, 1884.

*Floridian* nearly eight months before the convention, *Times-Union*. His charges that Bloxham had promised him that he would not become a candidate for the governorship in 1880, if Drew wanted to run, were written in a vein of fury.<sup>115</sup> Bloxham's reply, published four days later in the *Times-Union*, revealed that, instead of having promised Drew that he would stay out of the gubernatorial race in 1880 if the governor wanted to enter it, he had on the contrary urged Drew not to try for a renomination.<sup>116</sup> Also he contradicted a statement by Governor Drew that he (Bloxham) had promised in the presence of certain friends that he would publish a card in the *Jacksonville Union* refusing the use of his name in the convention.<sup>117</sup> Drew in his published statement accused Bloxham of "astonishing duplicity" and "political trickery" previous to the nominating convention in 1880. Replied Bloxham, in his published statement of June 15, 1884: "This is the first intimation that I could notice that Governor Drew's personal relations with myself were not pleasant."

No documentary evidence in support of Drew's charges has as yet been found, and none of the witnesses mentioned by him ever gave the press corroborative statements. Articles in the *Floridian*, together with an interview by its editor, supply some documentary evidence in support of many of Bloxham's statements in reply.<sup>118</sup>

Bloxham did not attend the convention which would place his name at the head of the State Democratic ticket for the 1880 election. The delegates assembled in Gainesville on June 10 at Roper's hall. The *Fernandina Mirror* praised the delegation extravagantly:

For intelligence, culture and gentlemanly bear-

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115. *Idem*.

116. *Floridian*, June 15, 1884.

117. *Idem*.

118. *Ibid.*, June 17, 1884.

ing, the Democratic Convention of 1880 has never been surpassed on this continent. . . .<sup>119</sup>

Bloxham's name was placed before the convention by J. E. Yonge of Escambia<sup>120</sup> and Drew's was offered by T. H. Willard of Madison. Mr. Willard's nominating speech was a high tribute to the governor and his administration. The third name presented was that of Samuel Pasco.

The first roll-call result was Bloxham 116, Drew 95, and Pasco 42. On the second Bloxham gained 10½ votes, while Drew lost nine.<sup>121</sup><sup>121</sup>

Before the third ballot was taken, Governor Drew's name was withdrawn by George P. Raney and immediately General E. A. Perry's name was thrown into the conflict. The third ballot stood: Bloxham 159½, Pasco 60, and Perry 321½. The names of Pasco and Perry were then withdrawn and the vote for Bloxham was made unanimous.<sup>122</sup>

Livingston W. Bethel of Monroe county received the nomination for lieutenant-governor. As a running mate for Bloxham, Bethel's nomination produced general satisfaction. He was important politically in his own county, where only three years previously he had been winner in a spirited election. He was known in Florida in 1880 as a young man of exceptional mental ability and personal charm, and as the most popular man in Monroe county.<sup>123</sup>

Tallahassee staged a tumultuous recognition of the fact that their hometown favorite had received the gubernatorial nomination. Everyone in "Bloxhamdon" who could walk, ride horseback, or come by carriage, buggy or wagon, gathered in front of the capitol. Colonel T. W. Brevard introduced Bloxham as one "whose voice, during the past 15 years, has been heard on the side of right

119. *Floridian*, June 15, 1880, quoting *Fernandina Mirror*.

120. *Idem*.

121. *Floridian*, June 17, 1884.

122. *Ibid.*, June 15, 1880, quoting *Fernandina Mirror*.

123. *Floridian*, June 15, 1880.

on every political battlefield in Florida," and Bloxham replied with his usual eloquence. There was the boom of cannon and a parade of the Governor's Guards.<sup>124</sup>

The canvass was probably the hardest in which Bloxham had ever been engaged. He entered it with plenty of campaign experience however, as it was his fourth political "swing round the circle." The campaign opened in July in Key West, with Bloxham, in company with General Perry, Senator Call and R. H. M. Davidson.<sup>125</sup> Through August, September and October Bloxham followed a schedule prepared and published in advance by the State Democratic Executive Committee. The press, for the most part, was extravagantly friendly.

Drew and Bloxham made an outward show of party harmony in the campaign. While speaking at his Live Oak meeting in September, Bloxham was praising Drew when that gentleman entered the hall. Responding to the call for "Drew," the former governor stated that he had come to the meeting for the purpose of endorsing Bloxham.<sup>126</sup>

The election was very quiet. In Tallahassee there wasn't even a street fight. Bloxham's majority was 5,081; while Drew's in 1876 had been only 497. Truly, the Democrats had made progress since they had ousted carpetbag rule in 1876. The Republican candidate whom Bloxham had defeated was former U. S. Senator S. B. Conover, a man who had done everything in his power in 1876 to have the presidential votes of Florida counted for Hayes. And now, in the 1880 campaign against Bloxham, Conover had been able to carry only six of the State's thirty-nine counties : Alachua, Duval, Jefferson, Leon, Marion and Nassau. In these "black belt" counties he had polled nearly half of his entire vote.

The convention which nominated Bloxham had gone on record as favoring the disencumberment of the State's

124. *Ibid.*, June 15, 1880.

125. *Semi-Weekly Floridian*, August 3, 1880.

126. *Ibid.*, September 21, 1880, quoting *Live Oak Bulletin*, September 18, 1880.

Internal Improvement Fund, the granting of public lands for the construction of a railroad through South Florida, and the completion of the road from the Apalachicola river to Pensacola<sup>127</sup>

How successfully Bloxham carried out his party's plans is a story of statecraft, and as such does not belong to this narrative of Bloxham the crusader.

A study of William Dunnington Bloxham's life reveals his political career as falling into three diverse patterns. In dealing with problems of the War for Southern Independence and Reconstruction, he was the aggressive consolidator of the conservatives, and it is as such that we have thus far seen him. In his first administration, when he would lift the lien against the State-owned lands and start an era of railroad building, he would make history as an executive. For his second administration, when he would hold the Democratic party together by a more peaceful course than circumstances had required of him during his earlier years, he would become the tactful and conciliatory party man. Many Floridians like to think of him, however, in those earlier days, when he was called upon to sacrifice his time, talents and money without immediate reward, though the reward came at last.

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127. *Floridian*, June 15, quoting *Fernandina Mirror*.



# A CONNECTICUT YANKEE FIGHTS AT OLUSTEE

LETTERS FROM THE FRONT <sup>1</sup>

by VAUGHN D. BORNET

Olustee was the most important battle of the War for Southern Independence in Florida. While the Union army under Brigadier General Truman Seymour was not "completely defeated, with . . . utter rout," <sup>2</sup> it was a severe setback in the plan of the administration for separating Florida from the Confederacy. If the effort had been successful, the political and economic results would have been serious for the South.

A personal light from the Federal standpoint is thrown on the bloody repulse at Olustee in the letters of Private Milton M. Woodford of Bristol, Connecticut. <sup>3</sup> By chance, fate had determined whether Woodford would grow up to help defend or try to crush secession. He was born November 26, 1834 in Connecticut, but his parents decided to make their fortunes in Texas and emigrated there a few years later. On the sudden death of his wife, the bereaved father decided to return to his New England home to guarantee his children a proper home environment. <sup>4</sup>

The War had been going on for only a few months when a strong moral and religious strain in his makeup seems to have persuaded Milton Woodford, then a mechanic, to enlist. The date was September 4, 1861, the regiment the Seventh Connecticut Volunteer Infantry, <sup>5</sup>

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1. The second half of this letter series will appear in the next issue of the *Quarterly* under the title "A Connecticut Yankee After Olustee."
  2. James A. Seddon, Confederate Secretary of War, to Jefferson Davis, April 28, 1864, in *War of the Rebellion, Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, Series IV, Vol. III, 324.
  3. I am indebted to Milton M. Woodford's descendants and especially to Robert Woodford Ellison, his great-grandson and a former student of mine for permission to work in the family papers.
  4. Evelyn Woodford to Lucy Churchill, Matagorda, Texas, Nov. 24, 1838.
  5. The official regimental history is *History of the Seventh Connecticut Volunteer Infantry; Hawley's Brigade, Terry's Division, Tenth Army Corps, 1861-1865*, compiled by Stephen Walkley (private, company A), n.p., 1905. The battle of Olustee is discussed on pages 119-123. See also, *A History of Company K of the Seventh Connecticut Volunteer Infantry in the Civil War*, by a member. n.p., 1910.

and his close friends fellow enlistees from Bristol—especially one Lyman S. Johnson.<sup>6</sup> Each signed up for three years.

The bare facts of a man's military service are quickly and easily told. Woodford's first action came in the successful campaign against Fort Pulaski, Georgia. A patrol on James Island, South Carolina, resulted in his capture, however, and he spent the summer of 1862 in the Columbia jail. After serious illness and exchange he entered a tour of duty at Camp Parole, Annapolis, Maryland as a male nurse to wounded troops. It was not, therefore, until January, 1864, that Woodford, still a private, was able to rejoin his regiment at Hilton Head, South Carolina. Bloody fighting lay ahead. The Seventh Connecticut was about to leave for Florida in accordance with a politically inspired plan to cut off Florida from the rest of the Confederacy and restore it to the Union.

The Florida expedition was halted suddenly and decisively in the battle of Olustee, and it is at this point that the following letters begin. In addition to the advance into battle, the engagement itself, and the retreat to Jacksonville they reveal in some detail months of busy but disheartened activity by the defeated Federal army as it labored to protect its position on the St. Johns river. Later letters which reveal the writer's role in the Petersburg, Virginia, campaign, his promotion to corporal, and the long awaited day (September 12, 1864) when he was mustered out at the end of his three years have been omitted.

The full story of the battle of Olustee (Ocean Pond) fought over swampy and pine barren land about fifty miles west of Jacksonville has not been told, although much of the picture can be pieced together from the

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6. The writer had access to the Rev. Mr. Johnson's manuscript "Recollections of the Civil War" written in retrospect sometime after 1926.

official records.<sup>7</sup> As Colonel George F. Baltzell, U.S.A., stated, "A careful study of this source leaves one unsatisfied . . . . It is undoubtedly true that these official records must give more accurate and complete information than any others, since the reports were generally made within a few days after the event occurred and have the sanction of official responsibility for accuracy and completeness. Yet that which sought does not exist. Purported facts relating to the same occurrence are greatly at variance, while important elements necessary for analyzing and deducing other facts are entirely missing."<sup>8</sup>

If the official dispatches of generals and key officer subordinates on both sides fail to satisfy, can the informal correspondence of a common soldier in the ranks be expected to do any better? On most of the significant details of the engagement it cannot do as well. But an army, after all, is made up of individual men, and (in theory at least) one person can frequently reveal the feelings and innermost thoughts of the group. When an army is defeated each man in it is defeated. The cold, impersonal reports of a commanding officer do not begin to tell the whole story. So it is that the greatest value of the following letters seems to lie in the mixed emotions which fight there for supremacy—emotions perhaps typical of the immediate company, the regiment, or even the whole army.

Woodford had no such purpose, of course. He wrote to let his wife know that he lived, to tell a civilian friend of the violent and exhausting life led by soldiers in the field, and to keep an absent comrade informed of the

7. *Off. Rec.*, Series I, Vol. XXXV, Part I contains nearly all the official dispatches relating to Olustee. (The short title *Off. Rec.* as used hereafter refers to this complete reference unless otherwise indicated.)

8. "The Battle of Olustee (Ocean Pond), Florida," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, April, 1931, 199. A map of Florida as it was during the War appears in *Confederate Military History*, Gen. Clement A. Evans, editor, 12 vols., Atlanta, Ga., 1899, Vol. XI, 192. A sketch of the battlefield appears opposite page 66 of this volume and also appears with the article just cited.

latest military events. He was in general surprisingly accurate. It should be remembered that he wrote without fear of censorship, for there was none, and his blunt, soldierly comments on his superior officers are made without apology. He is neither glib nor eloquent. Indeed, he once confessed to being unable to collect his thoughts. "What I do write," he revealed, "is what comes into my mind first."<sup>9</sup> He is in the best modern scholarly tradition when he tries to differentiate between fact and rumor and even gives the source of important information. "Now this is only a story," he confides, "but as it is reported by our chaplain, who has pretty good facilities for ascertaining the truth from headquarters, I venture to give it to you, with the caution that the official report may contradict the whole story."<sup>10</sup>

Private Woodford's powers of observation and knowledge of human nature seem to be superior. Perhaps in a measure responsible for this were the high moral and spiritual aspects of his character. At Camp Parole he was president of a "Temperance Society and Debating Club"<sup>11</sup> but did not let it remove him from his fellows. "Speaking of the proportion of *bad men* in the army," he wrote his sister, "I don't know as it is any larger than among the same number anywhere else when they first enlist, but I notice men grow bad fast, especially in a place like this [Camp Parole] where they have nothing to do."<sup>12</sup> Baptist Woodford's God is ever before him "If I should live to get an honorable discharge from the service, and have my usual health, I shall not regret the experience of the campaign. Those who live it through and are not disabled by wounds or sickness, or ruined by the vices of camp life, will be benefitted by it. I hope we may, as individuals and as a nation, recognize the hand of God leading us 'in a way

9. To his wife, from Bermuda Hundred, Va., June 3, 1864.

10. To his wife, from Bermuda Hundred, Va., June 25, 1864.

11. Woodford's manuscript diary, July 31, 1863. The diary was abandoned previous to February, 1864.

12. To his sister Tina from Camp Parole, Annapolis, Md., Dec. 6, 1862.

we knew not.' I wish our people, as a people, could realize that in God is our only hope. We are to use the means, of course, but use them trusting in *Him*. Too many are trusting in the means and leaving God out of the question."<sup>13</sup>

It can be seen that these letters have a certain quality of fascination, but their historical value lies elsewhere. Although they tell about Olustee in detail they correct few if any important matters of fact. But they show how an enlisted soldier felt—which can be said neither of the official records nor of accounts based almost entirely on them.<sup>14</sup> They demonstrate, in their matter-of-fact tone, the businesslike approach toward battle and death possible to a veteran soldier. Violent and bombastic malice toward the enemy is almost completely absent. Finally, as Milton Woodford's letters change in tone from his initial gratitude at mere survival to a later feeling which is, perhaps, self-justification and accompanying recrimination, they show what may well be successive stages in the destruction and rebuilding of any defeated soldier's morale.

Editing of the letters involved the verification of many statements of fact in order to establish the writer's reliability, the exclusion of personal material of no apparent historical value,<sup>15</sup> and the addition of suggestive notes.

A new accent by historians on the lives, thoughts, and emotions of ordinary soldiers in the ranks is certainly needed if the full story of the military history of the United States is to be revealed. The Woodford letters may well be a step in that direction.

13. *Ibid.*

14. The best purely military account of the battle of Olustee is that of Colonel Baltzell. William Watson Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (New York, 1913), has a chapter on the Olustee campaign which presents some of the political and economic aspects of the battle. *Confederate Military History*, Vol. XI, deals with Texas and Florida in the war. The Florida section was written by Col. J. J. Dickison.

15. Expressions of endearment to his wife, speculations about the arrival of money he sent home, the activities of relatives, etc.

Camp near Jacksonville, Florida.  
Feb. 23rd, 1864.

My own dear Wife:-

You are wondering why you don't hear from *Milton*, and your heart is full of anxiety on my account. I know it all, my own dear one, and I have wanted to send you word where I was and how; but since I wrote the first part of this letter I have been on the move all the time, and most of the time have not had my knapsack, nor a bit of paper to write on, and no chance to *send* if I had written. I am sorry, but can't help it.

I hope this will find you well, and the little darlings *better* at least of their cough. I don't know how much I can write now, so will say just here that we have just returned from a trip fifty miles into the interior of Florida. Arrived here last night completely tired out, dirty, ragged, some sick, all *sore* more or less ; but I am still alive, thanks to a kind Providence.

The great "expedition" from Hilton Head [South Carolina] has sailed, landed, gone in, and *come out*, or at least, part of it, all that ever will. Very likely you will see some account of the performance, perhaps correct, perhaps not; so I will give you a statement of things as *I* saw them; perhaps not all *now*, for I am too tired and played out to think very fast, and may not have time to write much today.

February fifth we <sup>16</sup> had orders to get ready to go *somewhere*, right away. No one, not even the Col. had any idea where. I was detailed for fatigue and had to work till we were ready to go aboard the steamer, so I could not send you the letter I had partly written.

One object of the expedition became apparent on the *start*, and that was seemingly to find into how small a compass a regiment of men could be packed. The 7th Conn. and the 7th N. H. [New Hampshire] were both

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16. The 7th Conn. Vol. Inf. For the embarkation orders see *Off. Rec.*, 280-1. Maj. Gen. Q. A. Gillmore to Brig. Gen. Truman Seymour. Gillmore commanded the Dept. of the South, Seymour the Dist. of Florida.

put on the "Ben Deford," a moderate sized steamer, and if you ever saw a flock of sheep, or drove of pigs in a small pen, you can form some idea of the shape we were in.

For a while we had no room to lie down or even to sit down, and just had to stand as close as we could stand all over the boat. After a while one and another would find a corner or space somewhere to stow himself, until we could finally all sit down ; then if one wanted to go on deck, he had to walk over the rest.

Saturday morning found us out to sea bound south. Many were the surmises as to the place of our destination, but none seemed to know. The sea was rather rough, and about nine or ten o'clock a good many might have been seen leaning over the side of the vessel, paying their tribute to "Old Nep." In fact, more than half of us were sea-sick. O such a time ! Were you ever sea-sick? If so, I need not describe it to you, and if not, I need not try, for I couldn't.

Sunday morning we were in sight of land, and about nine o'clock our boat struck on the bar at the mouth of the St. Johns river, Fla. Here we lay till night waiting for high water; but when it came we got off only to ground still harder in another place. It was found impossible to get her off, and Monday morning two small steamers came alongside. One took the 7th N. H., the other the 7th Conn. (The two regiments are called by the boys "the 77th New England"). We had a beautiful sail up the river 25 miles to Jacksonville.

This is, or has been, a very nice place for a Southern town ; but part of it has been burned, some by the Rebs and some by our own men last year.<sup>17</sup> What remains of it shows that Northern men built it. . . . As soon as Col. Hawley's brigade (He is acting Brig. Gen.)<sup>18</sup> had all landed, we took up our line of march for the

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17. Davis, *Civil War and Recunstruction*, describes the military situation during 1862 and 1863 in East Florida in chapter VII.

18. Col. Joseph R. Hawley, later Brig. Gen., and a United States senator from Connecticut after the war.

interior, the 7th Conn. in advance as usual. About three miles out we came onto the enemy's pickets, who skedaddled as lively as their horses could carry them; but, loaded down with knapsacks and 70 rounds of cartridges and three days provisions, we were ordered to double-quick after them.

Of course that could not last long; but we went on a quick step for about ten miles, when we came to a rebel camp just deserted. Here we took one piece of artillery that in their haste they could not carry off. We stopped here for the night, all but four companies of cavalry and the 40th Mass. mounted Infantry, who pushed right on that night to Baldwin, some fifteen miles farther on. Tuesday we marched to another deserted camp called Camp Cooper, (The first was Camp Finnegan). At all these places the Rebs left just as our men came in sight.

Camp Cooper is at a station on the R. R. between Jacksonville and Lake City. Here they had four pieces of artillery drawn up in line to give us a salute; but when they heard the cavalry coming their hearts failed them<sup>19</sup> and they left their guns and made off, and when we got there next day we found them just as they left them.

After resting nearly 24 hours, we went on to Baldwin, some ten miles. Here we found about 100 bales of cotton, some resin etc. This is the junction of three railroads, and a place of some importance to the enemy, as they get more or less supplies, such as beef, pork, salt, etc. from that part of the state through which those railroads pass. We stayed here one night, then had orders to leave our knapsacks and go in light marching order, that is, with just as little as we can get along with, either

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19. Comments of this loosely confident nature are typical of human nature, it seems, and must not be considered good evidence of why, in this case, these Confederates retreated. In this case, however, he was right, for Capt. J. L. Dunham, C.S.A., Co. A, Milton Light Artillery, wrote in his official report that the warning of a sergeant shouted at 11 to 11:30 at night plus the sound of Union forces in the distance caused his men to flee *en masse*! *Off. Rec.*, 347.



a blanket or overcoat, but not both. I took my overcoat and left all the rest.

About one o'clock we left Baldwin and marched ten miles without a rest. Here the Cav. had a little skirmish and lost three men killed and fourteen wounded. The Rebs lay in ambush and fired on them as they rode through a narrow place, then ran as fast as legs could carry them and left their horses. Every man took to the woods in a different direction. Our men captured about fifty horses and killed some of the Rebs, how many I could not learn.

We had a cup of coffee made and started right on again, and marched ten miles farther that night, making twenty miles march that day. That night it rained, and if ever I passed a disagreeable night, that was one of them. Tired out, the wind blowing, rain pouring, no rubber blanket, and forty miles from our base of operations, with no knowledge of what might be around us, I thought of the warm fire, pleasant faces and good cheer of *home*.

But the longest night has a morning, and that was no exception. Morning came, and with it the sun. Then you would have pitied the poor pigs around there. About half the boys were foraging for pork, and by the *squealing* one would naturally think that every man intended to eat a whole pig, which, by the way, would not be a very big job for a hungry man. The hogs here look about like the fish we call roach,<sup>20</sup> and not much larger. Their noses are the largest part of them, but by killing enough of them we made out a meal.

Then we were ready for the usual camp rumors. Some said we were to advance right on to Lake City, and from there to the capitol of the state; but other rumors said that Col. Henry with his Cav. and mounted Inf. had found the enemy in force, and that we should get no further at present; and so it proved. We stayed there one night more, then fell back to Barbers, where

20. He refers, probably, to a similarity in facial expression. Webster's *New International Dictionary* has a picture of this fresh water fish.

the Cav. had the fight. Here we remained, (but did not lie idle) till last Saturday morning (the 20th) when, with between four and five thousand men, we started inland again.

The Cav. and a light battery went in advance about fifteen miles, when they encountered the enemy's lines of skirmishers, who would not give way for our Cav. skirmishers. As soon as we came up, the 1st and 2nd companies were ordered out as skirmishers to drive the enemy back.<sup>21</sup> The first Co. (ours) was deployed, and the second held as reserve, the Rebs firing on us all the time.

As soon as we were deployed, [we] were ordered to advance, keep cool, take good aim and not waste our ammunition. Perhaps you will better understand if I explain what it is to deploy as skirmishers. The Co. is formed into a single line, the men five paces apart, then the whole line, reaching about a half a mile, moves forward, the reserve Co. following the center of the line about 100 yards in the rear. As we advanced, the enemy retired, keeping just in sight.<sup>22</sup> Whenever we could get near enough to stand any chance of doing execution we would blaze away at them, and they returned the fire in a way that showed that they were good marksmen, for their shots came plenty near enough, although none of us were hit.

This kind of running fight was kept up for about three miles, then we came in sight of their line of battle. Then we lay down and our artillery fired a shot over our heads; then we got up and went on again a short distance, when we lay down for our artillery to fire again. This second shot drew a reply from the other side, and in less time than I can write it the whole skirmish line rushed up to within good fair rifle shot; and such a rattle of riflery is seldom heard from so few men.<sup>23</sup>

21. Confirmed in the official report of Capt. B. F. Skinner, 7th Conn., Feb. 25, 1864, *Off. Rec.*, 307.

22. The Confederates planned to draw the Federal army toward their previously prepared entrenchments. *Off. Rec.*, 331-2.

23. The 7th Conn. was armed with Spencer carbines. *Off. Rec.*, 303.

The enemy were behind earthworks, but the fire of the skirmishers was so hot that they had to send out two regiments to dislodge us.<sup>24</sup> The rest of our regiment was brought up, and the others as fast as possible, and very soon the battle became general ; and another thing soon became apparent, and that was, that the enemy had three men to our one.<sup>25</sup>

Our men for the most part fought well, and the darkys just as well as anyone,<sup>26</sup> but we were greatly outnumbered, and merely held our ground till dark, when we retired from the field leaving our dead and those who were wounded too badly to walk, or at least a good many of them.

I think our commanding general (Seymour) showed very poor generalship in taking us into such a place in the way he did,<sup>27</sup> for although his own was the advancing army, it is plain to be seen that he was *surprised*.<sup>28</sup> He didn't expect a force at that place; but as Commanding General, he *should* have known something about it. It turns out that they had 15,000 men.<sup>29</sup> No wonder we could

24. Elements of the 64th and 32nd Ga. regiments. Baltzell, "Olustee," 215.

25. Private Woodford had good company in his exaggerated opinion of the enemy's strength. Officers of the Federal forces wrote similar views in their official dispatches-as did the Confederates. Although the Union forces had a slight advantage, the armies at Olustee were actually nearly equal in size (about 5,000 men each). Commanders in battle normally over-estimate the size of the enemy.

26. Seymour agreed. *Off. Rec.*, 290. Losses among negro troops were heavy.

27. Gillmore expressed this feeling more definitely in November, 1865 in an indorsement to Seymour's battle report: "General Seymour was never entrusted with the execution of any general plan in Florida." He used phrases like "ill-judged advance . . . direct disregard of those instructions . . . disastrous battle of Olustee . . . the 'results' were a 'decisive' defeat upon the field of battle . . ." *Off. Rec.*, 291.

28. Maj. Gen. Gillmore: ". . . our forces appear to have been surprised into fighting or attempting to fight, an offensive battle, in which the component parts of the command were beaten in detail." *Ibid.*

29. This must have been a "grapevine" report, for Adolph Major, Chief Medical Officer with the Union army, later reported that the 15,000 men information even came to Seymour "but no reliance was placed on such dubious information in regard to strength as well as position." *Off. Rec.*, 299. Yet on the day after the battle Seymour gave the Confederate total as "10,000 to 15,000" and repeated this on the 26th. *Off. Rec.*, 488, 495.

not drive them out. Our loss is *severe*; how heavy I don't know.<sup>30</sup>

Our regiment, although clear in advance and under the very hottest of the fire, lost comparatively few men.<sup>31 31</sup> We lost one lieutenant killed. Our company had one man killed and three wounded. . . . The loss in the other companies I have not learned as yet. As soon as the wounded who had been brought off the field could be got into wagons, we commenced our retreat, and before twelve o'clock were back to Barbers where we started from in the morning, having marched nearly forty miles<sup>32 32</sup> and fought a five hour battle with three times our number. You may imagine that we were somewhat tired, and so we were.

Sunday morning we fell in again to retire still farther back, as it was reported the Rebs were following us with their whole force, and there was danger of their flanking us. We took our place in the line and started out with the brigade. When about a mile out, an Aide came riding up with orders for the 7th Conn. to go back and act as rear guard.<sup>33</sup> We thought this rather hard after what we had done, but there was no help for it.

We came back to Baldwin Sunday, and all but our regiment and the 40th Mass. kept on to Camp Cooper. We stayed all night, and yesterday came in to Jacksonville. Today we have to *rest*.

Your letter of the 10th has just come. Dear Lina, I am so glad to hear from you. Am glad to know you re-

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30. Federal : killed 203, wounded 1,152, missing 506. Confederate: killed 93, wounded 847, missing 6. *Off. Rec.*, 298, 337. The large "missing" figure for the Federal army is typical of defeated armies. Yet Seymour insisted that the issue was "finely drawn, nearly equal to its very close, the enemy's losses as heavy as my own, ground firmly held to the last." *Ibid.*, 290.

31. The 7th Conn. lost: killed 5, wounded 42, missing 22. *Off. Rec.*, 298. The regiment's battle strength was 10 officers and 365 enlisted men. *Ibid.*, 307.

32. This was not a boastful overestimate, for Capt. Skinner of the regiment reported that they "marched a distance of 36 miles, 18 of which was marched without rest and over bad ground; many swamps, ditches, pickets, and fences intervened to obstruct my march." *Off. Rec.*, 309.

33. Woodford was one of 125 men so deployed. *Off. Rec.*, 308.

ceived the money. The mail closes right away and I must cut this short. My love to all. God bless you, my own dear ones.

Milton

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On Picket in the Woods 5 miles  
from Jacksonville, Fla.  
February 25th, 1864

Friend Thompson: <sup>34</sup>

You will see at once that this a second edition. Since writing the *first* I have been on the go all the time, and have not had a chance to write to my wife until yesterday.

We left St. Helena in a hurry and I had no time to mail letters or anything else, except attend to my regular duties. No doubt you have read all about the Expedition to Florida, and perhaps anything I can write will not be news to you, but still it may not be entirely uninteresting to have a brief account from a private who saw *some* of the show. I presume *you* heard a good deal more about the Expedition before it sailed than we did, for a good deal was said in the papers about it *north*, but it took us all by *surprise*. So many of our men were home on Furlough that we thought we should not be called on for anything of that kind until they came back.

But on the night of the 4th orders came for us to be ready to embark [details of their arrival in Jacksonville are the same as in the above letter] early next morning. Col. Hawley is in command of a *Brigade*, <sup>35</sup> and as soon as it was landed [at Jacksonville] we took up our line of march for the interior, the 7th Conn. in the *advance* as usual.

A few miles out we came upon some Reb pickets who made tracks with as little delay as possible. We kept on until after dark, when we came onto a *camp* from which

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34. One S. G. Thompson of New Haven, Conn. Woodford wrote this civilian about four times a year.

35. Italics here are accounted for by Private Woodford's pride in the additional authority given his chief. Vicarious satisfaction in the advancement of an able and popular superior officer is a common phenomenon in military organizations.

they had just skedaddled, leaving in their haste a very fine rifled *field piece*. The Infantry stopped here for the night, but 4 companies of the 1st Mass. Cavalry and the 40th Mass. *Mounted Inf.* pushed on 15 miles further to a place called *Baldwin* where a quantity of Cotton, Bacon, etc., was captured.

Between "Camp Finigan" (where we stopped) and Baldwin, is a station where was another camp called "Camp Cooper." They *intended* to make a stand there, and had 5 pieces of artillery placed in position to give us a warm reception when we should come, but when they heard our cavalry dashing down the road, their hearts failed them, and they left their pieces, jumped onto the train that had just come with reenforcements, and got 'as far away as possible. And when the Cavalry entered Baldwin, the Rebs were leaving the other end of town. Next morning the cavalry pushed on and at a place called *Barbours* came onto a company of cavalry being in *ambush*, who fired into them killing three and wounding 13 men, then left their horses and each man for himself took to the woods. Our men killed some and captured others—how many I don't know.

Tuesday morning we marched to "Coopers" and found things just as they were left by the "Johnnies." Remained here twenty-four hours then went on to Baldwin. There we left our knapsacks and went in "light marching order." Thursday the 11th, we left Baldwin—marched to Barbours, 10 miles, then on to Saunders, 10 miles further, making 20 miles marching that day. That night it *rained*, and if ever I longed for a good fire under a friendly roof, and something good to eat, it was that night. I can't describe it so you can *realize* it, so won't try. I hope you may never *experience* such a time.

Next morning the sun came out and every one felt better. *Pigs* run wild here, and if you could have heard the squealing in every direction you would have thought that every man had turned *butcher*. It takes a southern pig to make a meal for a *hungry* man.

The Cavalry sent back word here that they had found

the enemy in force 2 miles from *Lake City*, and it was thought advisable to fall back a little, and on Saturday went back 10 miles to Barbour's. This is a good position to defend as there is a creek here and other things that make it a strong position. Here we remained just a week, drilling, *digging*, scouting, reconnoitering, etc.

Saturday morning (the 20th) we fell into line with 5 days' rations in our haversacks. I can't find out just how many men were in line, but as near as I can calculate, between four and five thousand men in all.<sup>36</sup> We marched to Saunders, and five miles or more beyond, when our advance cavalry came onto the enemy's line of skirmishers. As soon as the 7th came up, the 1st Company (ours) was deployed as skirmishers. We then advanced and drove the Rebs some four or five miles, when we came onto, or in sight of, a line of breastworks supported by a long line of infantry, cavalry and artillery.

Our general (Seymour) seemed to think the 7th ought to take the whole thing,<sup>37</sup> and we were ordered to advance right on. For the 7th to hear an order is to *obey*.<sup>38</sup> In less time than I can write it, our men had rushed right up within good fair range and with their seven-shooters, poured in such a fire as cannot be delivered by any other arm in use. "Johnnies" couldn't stand that long, and had to send out two Regiments to drive off our line of *skirmishers*. Just at this time the 7th N. H. came up, but the shot flew too thick for them and they broke and *ran*, I am sorry to say.<sup>39</sup>

36. This was a good estimate. Gillmore and Seymour gave the figure as 5,500. *Off. Rec.*, 288, 291.

37. Woodford's resentment against his commanding officer grows steadily.

38. Captain Skinner's commendation of the 7th Conn., though roughly typical of such statements, is timely here: "Of my command I can only speak in the highest terms, both officers and men exhibiting the utmost coolness, bravery, and patience; in fact, it was a feature to be noticed and praised that when called to perform arduous duties it was done with a cheerfulness really remarkable." *Off. Rec.*, 309.

39. It is interesting to note the difference in attitude between the commanding officer and the private here: Seymour blamed his failure to win a victory largely on the failure of the men in the 7th New Hampshire (*Off. Rec.*, 288-9, 290), but Woodford, for his part, regards the loss as the inevitable result of poor generalship.

It soon became evident that we were greatly outnumbered, as they were in strong force in front, and were moving to get on both of our flanks. Our men for the most part fought *well*, and the *darkies just as well as any*. (There were two regiments of them—perhaps more). But we were too few in numbers to do more than hold our ground, which we did til dark (5 hours), when we moved off the *bloody* field, leaving our dead and many of our wounded—also 7 pieces of cannon which had lost all their horses killed,<sup>40</sup> and most of the men.

We have lost *heavily* and it seems to *me, unnecessarily*. Probably you may see different opinions from mine, but it is *my opinion* that the battle should *not* have been fought, and Gen. Seymour is the only one to blame.<sup>41</sup> No one here has any confidence in him.<sup>42</sup> I hope he may do better next time.

We marched back to Barbours that night, making *40 miles' march and 5 hours' fight in one day*.

I may write more next time, but must stop for now.

Woodford

Jacksonville, Fla.

Feb. 27th, 1864

Dear Bro. Johnson :—

I've a great long letter to write you and I hardly know what to write first. I may have to "fall in" before I have written a page, but will commence now and finish when I can.

The day I received your letter we were preparing to

40. Checks well with *Off. Rec.*, 289.

41. Colonel Hawley, after the war, charged that the decision to advance beyond Baldwin was taken by Seymour despite considerable hesitancy from his staff. *Battles and Leaders of the Civil War*, vol. 4, 79. Quoted in Davis, *Civil War and Reconstruction*, 285n.

42. The Rev. Mr. Johnson recalled in his "Recollections" (written when there were only three survivors of the regiment still living) that Olustee had brought disastrous results. "It is sadly depressing to men in the ranks to suffer because of the incompetency of officers in command. This was the grievance of our boys as I rejoined them in Florida. I have forgotten the general's name, but he was not of our regiment . . ." Resentment has a long life.



embark on some unknown expedition, or rather to some unknown destination. The regiment was reorganized for the occasion, being formed into four companies; Co.s A and G under Capt. Mills; Corp'ls Butler and Hatch Acting Sergeants, Charlie Hills and Lardner Acting Corp'ls. As Capt. Mills was in command Co. G had the right of the line. Sergeant Cook is color-bearer, the one who had carried the colors at dress parade not liking the idea so well in case of action.

On the night of the 5th of Feb. we embarked [details the same as above]. . . .

The expedition appears to be one of some size, as I counted some 25 vessels of all kinds as we passed up the river. Col. Hawley commands a brigade, and Capt. Skinner the regiment. . . .

We landed at Jacksonville about 1 o'clock and as soon as the brigade were all ashore we took three days rations and started for the interior, the 7th Conn. in advance, as usual. There was with us four companies of 1st Mass. mounted infantry, a few of the cavalry acted as advance guard for us, and the rest took roads to the right and left of us.

About three miles out of the city we came upon the enemy's pickets, who took themselves off as lively as possible; but I suppose Gen. Seymour thought we could catch them easy enough, and gave us the order to "double quick," which we did for half a mile or so, with knapsacks on. This soon played out. We thought if our mounted men could not catch the Rebs, we should not be likely to till they stopped. We kept on however at a smart step for ten miles, when we came upon a large camp that had just been left by the Rebs, and left in a hurry too, so much so that they failed to carry off a very fine rifled field piece. Here the infantry stopped for the night, but the cavalry and the 40th, who had joined the main body, pushed on to another camp, called Camp Cooper. It seems the Rebs intended to make a stand at that place, but when they heard our cavalry charging down the road they left their battery, which was in position, got onto a train of

cars that had just come up with reinforcements, and made off, and the next day when we came along, the guns stood there where they left them. The cavalry took seventeen prisoners at this place, and the same night pushed on ten miles beyond to a place called Baldwin.

As at the other places, so here, the Rebs ran out of one end of the town as our cavalry entered the other. The next morning they started again and went ten miles, when they came to a creek where the Rebs had torn up the bridge and lay in ambush on the other side, and as our men came up, fired into them killing three and wounding fourteen men.

After this gallant act the Rebs scattered to the woods every one for himself. Our men killed some and caught some of them, how many, I don't know. They then waited for us to come up, or at least, part of them.

We stayed at Camp Cooper one night, then went to Baldwin and stopped one night. Here we left our knapsacks. Thursday the 11th we left Baldwin in "light marching order," marched ten miles without resting. Here we found the cavalry and the wounded men. After getting a cup of coffee we were told we had ten miles further to go that night. It seemed to me that I *could not* do it; for with all the marching I ever did, I never felt so lame and sore as at that time. But no one knows what he can do till he gets where he is obliged to do it. We "fell in" and marched ten miles to a place called Saunders, making twenty miles march that day. We thought John's Island was a hard time for us; but our trip down here has been a *series* of Johns Islands marches, and part of the way reminded me of that time, for we had some miles of just such marching. Florida is a great level piece of woods (pine) full of swamps, just the place for skirmishing.<sup>43</sup>

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43. This letter to Johnson, a fellow "veteran", has a more professional tone than Woodford's other letters. Such terms as "skirmishing" are not explained in this technical letter.

The night we got to Saunders it rained and was *cold*, and if ever I spent an uncomfortable night, that was one of them. The wind blew and the rain *poured*. We were all tired out and *hungry*. We built fires and sat down and let it rain....

By the way—I have not told you anything about the towns we passed through and I may as well do so now. Jacksonville is quite a place. A good many of the buildings are brick, built in good style, and show that they were built by Northern men. A good part of the place has been burned, part by the Rebs and part by our men; but there is enough standing to show what it has been. Baldwin is composed of a depot, tavern, half a dozen shanties, three *railroads* and a *rail fence*. Barbours is a house, barn, three shanties, two rail fences and a *creek*, where our cavalry had the skirmish. Saunders has a depot, tavern, and one or two houses. The houses between these places are few and far between, in fact, it is a brand new country, and for *my* part I can't see what there is in here worth sending an *army* after; but I suppose Gen. Seymour or some other general does.<sup>44</sup>

Saturday, for some reason or other the whole force moved back to Barbours.<sup>45</sup> This is a good position to hold, as the creek is deep, and can be crossed only in certain places. Here we lay a week, but not *idle*. Every day we had a scout, battalion drill, or something else of the kind. Gen. Seymour does not believe in soldiers lying still. If there is nothing else, he will have them put on everything and march out five miles or so and back just for exercise. He is very unpopular among the men.

Sat. the 20th we took five days rations, and with two

44. Gillmore explained to his superior officer that the occupation of Florida between the Suwannee and the St. Johns Rivers was desired to procure an outlet for cotton, lumber, timber, turpentine, and other products of the state, to upset the Confederate commissary department's railroad utilization and troop provisioning system, to obtain negro recruits for the Union army, and to restore Florida to the Union. Gillmore to Halleck, Jan. 22, 1864, *Off. Rec.*, 279.

45. Reports of a mounted force on the right flank caused Gillmore to order Seymour to withdraw his advance units to Baldwin. *Off. Rec.*, 283-4.

light batteries, three darky regiments, and five white ones in all, started for Lake City, the Seventh in advance of the infantry, and the cavalry in advance of us. We went to Saunders and five miles or so beyond, when our Cav. skirmishers came onto the Reb's line of skirmishers. As soon as we came up, the 1st and 2nd Co.'s were deployed as skirmishers (1st Co. deployed, and 2nd held as reserve) and sent right forward. As soon as we advanced, the Rebs retreated and kept just out of shot for five miles or more, when we came in sight of their line of earthworks and a long line of battle of infantry, cavalry and artillery. (We had kept up a running fight all the way with their skirmishers.) We had the order to "forward"! and in less time than I can write it we rushed up where we had a good fair sight of Rebs, and such a *cracking* you never heard from the same number of men, for it is impossible to fire so fast from any other gun in the service as from our little rifle. Each man of us had a tree to cover him, and every one took good aim. As soon as the rest of the regiment came up *they* were deployed, that is, they scattered, every man taking a tree and fighting on his own hook, just like skirmishers.<sup>46</sup>

It seems the commanding general was taken by surprise, not thinking to find the enemy there in force. The regiments were brought in one at a time and formed in line right in the hottest of the fire, and it is no wonder that some of them broke and ran, as some did.<sup>47</sup> Our

46. Davis: statement that "The Southern troops took advantage of natural cover as the Virginians under Washington in Braddock's army had done a hundred years before," (*Civil War and Reconstruction*, 292) based only on a Confederate's comment, "Our men sheltered themselves behind the trees ... thus gaining considerable advantage over the enemy, who used the trees to a less extent," (*Off. Rec.*, 341) seems to be overdrawn. It hardly takes into account the training and instinctive common sense of at least the veterans among the Federal troops.

47. The official dispatches relating to this episode form a good example of how officers sometimes protect each other's reputations by blaming disaster loosely on "the men." The two officers directly involved in the *conflict of orders* that led to the breaking of the 7th New Hampshire told a clear story of that mistake on their part. Brig. Gen. Seymour nevertheless turned in a report which passed over this episode and blamed the breaking of the regiment *on the men themselves*. They were, he said, "conscripts and substitutes, of a very inferior class." *Off. Rec.*, 304, 311, 290.

regiment stayed at their place in the front until our ammunition was all expended, when we went back and formed in line, lay down and waited for more ammunition. The darky regiments fought as well as any, and lost heavily. I don't call myself competent to judge, but I am told it was a very severe fight. The shot came in showers, and near enough to me; but I did not get a scratch, thanks to a kind Providence. . . . Sergeant Cook was hit on the head by a spent ball which knocked him down, but he soon recovered and took the colors again.

We soon found we had "caught a Tartar," for the Rebs were three to our one at the least calculation, and after fighting five hours we were obliged to retire from the field, leaving our dead and wounded,<sup>48</sup> seven pieces of artillery, and more or less of small arms. Very likely you have seen the account of the battle and our loss, which is more than *I* have.<sup>49</sup>

The loss from our Reg't (or Battalion) is 78 killed, wounded and missing. As soon as the wounded who could be were got into wagons, we commenced our retreat, and this time the 7th Conn. took the *rear*,<sup>50</sup> and at two o'clock Sunday morning were at Barbours, having been gone 20 hours, in which time we had marched over forty miles and fought five hours. The 7th Conn. won the praise and approval of the commanding general, and although it has always stood as high as any regiment in this department, it never had so good a reputation as now. Col. Hawley was under the hottest of the fire and was as cool as though on dress parade, and in fact, the whole regiment, with very few exceptions, acted *well*. The line of skirmishers rallied on the colors, and formed a line and "dressed up" as coolly and with as much precision as though on drill, with the bullets whistling and the shells

48. Seymour tried to obtain the Federal wounded on parole to give them medical treatment, a policy urged on him strongly by his chief medical officer. Brie. Gen. Finegan refused this request. *Off. Rec.*, 301, 329-30.

49. Woodford believed Johnson to be in Maryland or Connecticut at the time.

50. During a retreat the rear is, of course, nearer the enemy and therefore more dangerous.

screaming around us. Not a man showed any disposition to *run* (that *I* saw) and when we moved off the field we went in good order.<sup>51</sup>

Sunday morning we continued the retreat, as information was received that the enemy were following us with 15,000 men. Again the 7th was chosen for a *rear guard*, although our *place* was near the *right*. Our Co. deployed as skirmishers, and in that way marched back to Baldwin ten miles through swamps. I sha'n't try to tell you how I felt, for I can't. You can imagine.

At Baldwin we lay down and slept all night, although all the rest of the infantry had gone on, and the Rebs were reported advancing on us. We thought we would as soon fight as go any further that night. Monday morning we took our knapsacks and trudged along, and at night found ourselves in Jacksonville twenty miles away.

Tuesday Gen. Seymour said the 7th had done all that had been required of it, and done it cheerfully, and now they were to have a chance to rest. Accordingly we were allowed 24 *hours rest*; then fell in and marched out five miles, stayed 24 hours, and marched back; and here we are *fortifying*, chopping down woods so that the gunboats can have a fair sweep at the Rebs, etc., etc.

How long we shall stay I can't tell; long enough, I hope, for our feet to get well. . . . Our original New Britain squad is at last all separated. Will any of us meet again here?<sup>52</sup>

Now I must close this. I don't know as you can read what I have written; but it's the best I can do under the circumstances. . . . I wish I could see you a little while. I would ask more questions and tell you more stories (true ones) than I can write in a week, but I *must* stop . . .

Second Edition—March 6th

I have not sent this letter yet. . . . We have a good sized regiment now, about 700 men,<sup>53</sup> and if we ever get

51. This observation pertains to the 7th Conn. only.

52. "Here" clearly means "this World" rather than "Florida" in view of the other letters he wrote.

53. Additional personnel had arrived.

another so fair a sight at the Rebs as we did at Olustee, we will make them fear and hate the 7th Conn. more than ever. . . .

If you hear that we are *mounted*, you can tell them they *don't* know. The *Rebs mounted us rough **shod*** the other day, but we have no horses as yet, though there has been a rumor that we were to have them. I hope not, for I don't want to get used to the drill just for six months. . . .<sup>54</sup>

Now Goodnight. Yours truly,  
Woodford.

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54. His three year enlistment would expire in September, 1864.

# CARPETBAG IMPERIALISM IN FLORIDA 1862-1868

by GEORGE WINSTON SMITH

## PART II

*Part I of this monograph recognized the minor but continuous northern economic influence in Florida from the early nineteenth century to the time that Yankee enterprise surged into the peninsula a generation after the War for Southern Independence. There were shown in some detail the commercial implications in northern determination to hold the State during the secession crisis, the expectations of profitable exploitation which arose with the first military occupation by Federal troops, and the attempts of Florida's refugee "unionists" to kindle sympathy in the North for the "regeneration" of their homeland. Attention was given also to the extravagant plan of Eli Thayer, the veteran promoter of free Kansas during the 1850's, to organize "free labor" immigration to Florida on such a scale that a host of soldier-colonists would soon create there a Utopia of diversified industry and small farms—each community to be replete with free schools, spired churches, and other characteristics of New England civilization.*

*Although Thayer's Florida scheme had a large measure of Support from New York businessmen, leading newspapers, crusading clergymen, would-be immigrants of German-American extraction, and others, it reached only the blueprint stage because of President Lincoln's practical objections. In contrast to Lincoln's attitude, Salmon P. Chase, the Secretary of the Treasury, seemed quite willing to use his powers on behalf of Thayer's project. In this he was abetted by Lyman K. Stickney who became the most notorious of the early Florida carpetbaggers. After the Thayer proposal was shelved, Stickney was able to continue his machinations in war-stricken Florida by reason of the fact that Chase had appointed him chairman of the Florida Direct Tax Commission under the authorization of the congressional act of June 7, 1862. This law, although technically but a supplement to a direct tax law of 1861 which levied a tax upon all the States, was a move to confiscate the real property of southern landholders. Administered by Stickney, it threatened to become an instrument of predatory corruption in Florida. His fellow commissioners were Harrison Reed (a Wisconsin editor), and John S. Sammis (a Jacksonville refugee). For a time at least, Sammis was willing to cooperate in Stickney's designs; Reed soon became his inveterate enemy. Late in 1862 they were ready to take up their work in Florida.*

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### (I) ORIGINS OF THE STICKNEY RING

Before the Florida Direct Tax Commissioners could hope to make extensive tax assessments and sales of "rebel" property in Florida, further military operations were essential in the Jacksonville area. Nevertheless, Fernandina and St. Augustine already were in posses-



sion of the Union forces, and Stickney could see before him a limited entree to southern wealth. Before he made a leisurely journey southward at the end of 1862, he quietly began to make preparations. With James M. Latta, an Indianian then employed in the Interior Department, he made an agreement whereby Latta would advance sums with which to buy Florida cotton and turpentine in the occupied ports, and retain one-third of the profits.<sup>1</sup> A Florida Yankee, Calvin L. Robinson received from Stickney a promise of employment as an assessor with the Tax Commission, together with assurances that Stickney would recommend him to New York merchants who wished to find an agent for the collection of their Florida claims. Stickney also made arrangements to send to Florida on a government transport, a considerable quantity of supplies for the commission. These later proved to be merchandise which in part found its way into a commercial establishment set up by Stickney and his associates at Fernandina. For when Stickney finally arrived there he organized a trading firm in partnership with Robinson and William C. Morrill (a resident of Fernandina) under the name of Robinson, Morrill and Company. Most of their stock consisted of the goods brought in under the label : "government property." There were quantities of stationery, clerical supplies (i.e., paper, inkstands, penholders, pens, ink, rulers, portable desks, portfolios) clothing, Yankee notions, wines, brandy, whiskey, medicines, field glasses, collapsible cups, sheaf knives, and many other articles in demand by those of the armed forces who in that occupied area had no access to traders in free markets. Many of these goods were the supplies of the Tax Commissioners, but the other Florida Commissioners never saw them ; and they were there by the grace of Stickney's generously padded expense account.

It was, of course, contrary to Treasury regulations

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1. House of Representatives, *Executive Document*, No. 18, 38th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 69, 97.

that these wares, even those which Stickney himself bought for the trade, should be sold without special permits and the consent of military authorities in the district. All the more remarkable, therefore, was it that Brigadier General Rufus Saxton commanding at Beaufort on the Sea Islands, not only consented to Stickney's trading activities, but even allowed some goods to be taken from the Sea Islands to Fernandina for sale there.<sup>2</sup> On his leisurely journey to Florida, Stickney disembarked at Beaufort where he spent most of January and February. By making patriotic speeches to the freedmen and ingratiating himself into the favor of the staff officers, he built up a most cordial relationship with Saxton. After visiting Florida in February, Stickney returned to Beaufort, and with capital of about \$1,500 he established a newspaper, *The Free South*. Its circulation was small, but Saxton (who received frequent praise in the paper) allowed Stickney's printing materials to come in from the North on government transports, and gave the publisher one of the old Beaufort mansions rent free for his printing establishment. For the same advertising a New York daily would have carried for \$300, *The Free South* asked from the South Carolina Direct Tax Commissioners nearly \$7,000 to publish their South Carolina tax sale notices in four successive issues.<sup>3</sup>

Later Stickney brought journalism in Florida under the influence of his "ring" when he *moved* an "abandoned" press from St. Augustine to Fernandina, and began to publish *The Peninsula*. Its first managing editor was Latta, the Interior Department clerk; when Latta quarreled with Stickney, the leader of the "ring" transferred the paper to his brother, John K. Stickney, and to his partner, William C. Morrill. Jacksonville then became its place of publication.<sup>4</sup>

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2. *Ibid.*, pp. P-8, 13-15, 100.

3. *New York Tribune*, February 27, March 19, 1863.

4. H. Rep. Ex. Doc. No. 18, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess. pp. 7-8, 15.

## (II) THE STICKNEY-HIGGINSON EXPEDITION

While Stickney spent considerable time in the manipulation of his business negotiations, he never lost interest in the broader aspects of imperialism in Florida. The Federal troops in the Department of the South with headquarters at Hilton Head on the Sea Islands promised a considerable success to Yankee carpetbaggers if their commanders would authorize operations on the peninsula. Here again circumstances favored Stickney.

The early months of 1863 found the Department of the South relatively inactive. Major General David Hunter, commanding, at Hilton Head, had more than enough forces to secure the Sea Islands, but although an attack upon Charleston harbor was in the offing, he was unwilling at the time to risk serious offensive operations on the mainland. In January, therefore, he authorized Colonel Thomas Wentworth Higginson and the First South Carolina Colored Regiment to make a plundering raid up the St. Marys river. From this the negro troops returned to Beaufort with bars of railroad iron, yellow pine lumber, a cargo of bricks, rice, resin, cordage, and "other small matters suitable for army purposes." Even a flock of "contraband" sheep was soon grazing near the regimental camp.<sup>5</sup> As for Stickney, the black troops after their successful foray began to assume greater importance in his plans. He knew that Higginson and the negroes were eager for more action of the sort they had just experienced, and that Hunter wished to separate the colored regiment so far *as* possible from the activities of the white troops: the General himself admitted that the blacks "could not consistently with the interests of the service (in the present state of feeling) be advantageously employed to act with our other forces."<sup>6</sup>

Stickney had no trouble in working up Higginson's enthusiasm for an attack upon Jacksonville. "My chief

5. *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (129 vols. Washington 1880-1901). Series I, XIV, pp. 196-198.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 424-425.

aim," wrote Higginson, "was to get the men into action, and that of the Florida [Tax] Commissioners [was] to get them into Florida." Soon Stickney, Higginson, Saxton, and one or two others visited Hunter at Hilton Head. They found the general in a genial mood, and after a lengthy though pleasant chat received his permission to send Higginson's men to Florida. At the most there were to be only a thousand blacks, although Higginson evidently hoping to enroll new recruits at his destination, took arms and uniforms with him for again that many. "It was urged," Higginson later reminisced, "that it was worth while to risk something to hold Florida, and perhaps bring it back into the Union." In his report to the Secretary of War, Saxton gave another argument which Stickney might well have recalled from the earlier propaganda on behalf of the Thayer plan. Saxton hoped that all of Florida might be cleared of the enemy "and an asylum established for persons from other States who are freed from bondage by the proclamation of freedom. . . ."<sup>8</sup>

The orders issued to Higginson sent him to Fernandina, and from there to Jacksonville, where he could entrench himself, "carry the proclamation [of emancipation] to the enslaved," occupy as much as possible of the country, and "weaken, harass, and annoy" the Confederate troops in Florida. On the morning of March 10, gunboats convoyed Higginson's command up the St. Johns river to Jacksonville, and then threw shells in the direction of the enemy as the colored detachments went ashore. Skirmishing broke out as Higginson secured his base by cutting down linden trees for barricades and abbatis; he quickly wheeled field pieces into the streets, and burned those houses which stood in the way of his gunboat batteries. Then he was able to glance about at his conquest, and pronounced the occupied town attractive. Before the war, he remembered, Jacksonville had

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7. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment* (Boston, 1870), pp. 97-98.

8. O.R., Series I, XIV, p. 423.

been the center of a rapidly expanding lumber trade. Extensive wharfs faced the river front, and blocks of brick warehouses combined with evidences of "neatness and thrift everywhere visible" further reminded him that before the war energetic Yankees had owned much of its property. "Rebels" had burned to the ground the large hotel renowned as the chief resort of northern invalids, but the abolitionist colonel was still able to find comfortable quarters in a "handsome brick house" which had been the home of a native New Yorker.<sup>9</sup>

Higginson's stay in Jacksonville would have been more pleasant had he not begun to worry immediately over his "deficiency in numbers." The optimistic reports which Saxton was sending to Washington notwithstanding, Higginson's command numbered but nine hundred effectives, and although he had come to recruit in Jacksonville, he found hardly any able bodied negroes left in the town when he arrived there. Stickney, who had landed with the expedition, then demonstrated his usual inclination to meddle in military affairs by volunteering to secure at Fernandina from the command of Colonel Joseph Hawley four additional companies of white troops and a light battery. The fearful Higginson was only too eager to endow "the energetic Judge," as he affectionately referred to Stickney, with the commission which so inflated the conceit of the would-be imperialist that he boasted he was going to "obtain a large reinforcement of troops for the purpose of holding this place permanently." On the evening of the 20th, Higginson effusively greeted the return of "our devoted civic ally, Judge [Stickney], and superficially it did appear to be a triumphant arrival as the transport *Boston* loaded with the 6th Connecticut Regiment trailed the Tax Commissioner up the river. Two days afterward a portion of the 8th Maine Regiment under Lieutenant Colonel Joseph F. Twitchell also landed at Jacksonville.<sup>10</sup> Despite Higgin-

9. O.R.N., Series I, XIII, p. 745; Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, pp. 99n, 105-106.

10. *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107, 117; Thomas Wentworth Higginson, *Cheerful Yesterdays* (Boston and New York, 1898), pp. 261-262; O.R., Series I, XIV, p. 226.

son's gratitude for his "devotion," Stickney did not procure these reinforcements; they came from Saxton's command at Beaufort, not from Fernandina. From the beginning the department commander, David Hunter, would have disavowed any intention to use them for the permanent occupation of Jacksonville. The 8th Maine brought rations for only ten days, or just long enough to guarantee a safe evacuation. By March 27, ironclads had arrived at Beaufort for an attack upon Charleston, and Hunter had sent brigades to North Edisto and Coles Islands en route to that South Carolina bastion. He needed troops from Florida for picket line duty on the Sea Islands when his best regiments left for the Charleston operations.<sup>11</sup>

#### *Evacuation and Firing of Jacksonville*

The Stickney-Higginson expedition was nonetheless determined to produce some tangible evidence of a successful raid. No sooner had he established his headquarters at Jacksonville than Higginson sent his second in command, Colonel James Montgomery, from Kansas and a ruthless veteran of the "border warfare," with a portion of the Second South Carolina Volunteers up the broad St. Johns river to establish recruiting posts for runaway slaves. Montgomery did more; he plundered everything in sight. When he returned to Jacksonville with his 120 men they bore "fruits of foraging" which "loaded to the very water's edge" the transports assigned to evacuate them from the town. It was on the morning of the 29th that the heavily loaded vessels with their cargo increased by Unionists clutching their personal effects and furniture slipped quietly downstream toward the sea as those on their decks looked backward at "the sight and roar of the flames, and the rolling clouds of smoke" which arose from buildings fired by

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11. *Ibid.*, pp. 424-425, 427, 432.

the incendiary torches of the Federal troops.<sup>12</sup>

Stickney might well have seen the destruction of his ambitions in these fires, but he was not long discouraged by this abortive conclusion of Higginson's pillaging adventure. With only a pause in the Sea Islands the indefatigable Tax Commissioner continued on his way to the North, and in April he was once again in Washington, asking Chase to obtain from the War Department light gunboats, four regiments of infantry, two companies of cavalry and six columbiads—all to be used in Florida for the assistance of the Direct Tax Commissioners! With an eye to the political future, Stickney flattered Chase, and reassured him that if the Federal taxation and trade regulation statutes were "vigorously enforced" they would be "all sufficient . . . to make Florida a loyal, free State before the meeting of the next Congress."<sup>13</sup>

If Higginson's negro regiments had not made Federal occupation of Jacksonville a lasting reality, Stickney was not less hopeful that black troops would eventually be the answer to his problem. When he arrived in the North, he learned that Massachusetts business men under the auspices of Governor John A. Andrew were raising new colored regiments, while in the Mississippi valley Adjutant General Lorenzo Thomas with a commission from Lincoln himself was busy putting negro refugees into Federal uniforms. Both Stickney and Chase saw the possibility of diverting some of these forces to Florida. At the end of May, Chase informed Garfield that the Florida project would, *it* seemed, be realized after all, and that it wasn't unlikely that negro troops would be relied upon for its accomplishment.<sup>14</sup>

12. *Ibid.*, pp. 223, 226-229, 234, 237-238, 837-838; Higginson, *Army Life in a Black Regiment*, pp. 114, 126-128; O.R.N., Series I, XIII, p. 794; Branch Cabell and A. J. Hanna, *The St. Johns, A Parade of Diversities* (New York, 1943) p. 209.

13. Stickney to Chase, April 16, 17, 1863, Chase MSS., vol. 74, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

14. Chase to Garfield, May 31, 1863 (copy), Chase letterbooks, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

To Major General James S. Wadsworth, the Secretary of the Treasury sent Stickney with a proposition that the general should lead such a campaign, but only to receive a cagy reply which read: "I have passed several hours very agreeably with your friend Mr. Stickney, and learned a great deal more of Florida than I had ever known before. It is a more interesting field than I had supposed, but I have always been opposed to detaching troops to operate in the extremities of the Confederacy, and what I should prefer for myself would be a field of more active military operations.<sup>15</sup> Undaunted by one more failure, Stickney, in June, was requesting Secretary of War Stanton to give Mansfield French, a belligerent northern missionary to the Sea Islands, authority to raise a regiment of colored men in New York City and Brooklyn for an invasion of Florida.<sup>16</sup>

### (III) THE TAX COMMISSIONERS IN FLORIDA

One of the motives behind Stickney's determination to overrun Florida was his design that it should be set off as a separate military district. Although his relations with Saxton and others at Beaufort had been quite satisfactory, Stickney foresaw greater personal advantage in a cleavage of Florida from the Department of the South. His partner, William C. Morrill later admitted that if they had succeeded in this, he (Morrill) might have become post sutler at Fernandina with all traders and regimental sutlers obliged to buy at his establishment, "let alone the demand [for goods] that would naturally arise from citizens in the State, especially in exchange of cotton, sugar, etc., for the necessities of life." If, Morrill hinted to Calvin L. Robinson, the third member of the partnership then in the North, Robinson

15. *Id.* to Wadsworth, May 31, 1863, *Ibid.*; Wadsworth to Chase, May 31, 1863, Chase MSS., box 13, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

16. Stickney to Stanton, June 6, 1863, Chase MSS., vol. 76, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.



would describe their prospects to northern mercantile houses, with emphasis upon their expectations for "a proper mercantile business after the war," they should be able to get sufficient credit.<sup>17</sup>

When, in June, 1863, Stickney visited New York, he had to adjust another matter. This involved the sale by the Florida provost marshal who was none other than James M. Latta, a member of Stickney's "ring," of railroad iron belonging to the Florida Railroad Company. Latta had struck off a quantity of this iron to Calvin L. Robinson, a fellow "ring" member, for \$250.00, and Robinson had shipped some of it to the North where he had prospects of selling the lot for between eight and ten thousand dollars. But Sammis, Stickney's erstwhile friend and a member of the Tax Commission, had revealed the transaction to Colonel Joseph Hawley who took steps to seize the iron on the grounds that the sale had been collusive and illegal. Stickney used his influence in New York and Washington with marked effect, and soon he was able to assure Robinson that the "iron business" was "all right." No proceedings were begun against Robinson or Latta, and apparently they were able to dispose of the iron to northern buyers. Stickney, however, made it clear that Sammis was "out of the ring."<sup>18</sup> From the beginning the other Tax Commissioner, Harrison Reed, had remained aloof and had quietly begun to oppose Stickney at Fernandina. Sammis' defection meant that Stickney, although still Chairman, would be a minority of one on his own Tax Commission. Nor did he have long to wait for tangible evidence of this.

Acting in Stickney's absence from Florida, Sammis and Reed put the unredeemed property of Fernandina up for sale at auction beginning on June 15. They did so knowing that Stickney had earlier argued for postpone-

17. H. Rep. Ex. Doc., 18, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess., pp. 152, 154.

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 91, 150.

ment of this sale "until more territory should be open to the Tax Comrs. and more people present to secure homes." As soon as he had word of the sales, Stickney began a furious attack upon his colleagues. He could point to the meager proceeds of the auctions which brought only \$10,912.38 (including taxes paid by those reclaiming their property which amounted to \$304.13). It was undeniable also that the conditions which accompanied the sales were not above suspicion. At the first day's auction Harrison Reed was the only commissioner present, and with the exception of one piece of property to be used as a colored orphan asylum, he bid in all that was offered for the government. In the latter days of the sale both Reed and Sammis bought personally two blocks each of town property, and Reed, in addition, bought a lot for each of his two sons. Stickney also professed to be shocked that the two commissioners paid \$2,200 for advertising, but the advertisements appeared solely in *The Peninsula*, and Stickney himself was the owner of the newspaper.<sup>19</sup>

Stickney insisted that the Fernandina sales could have been held just as well in November as in June. Since he had not been present, and had received no notice of the time or place of the auctions (Reed and Sammis insisted they had informed Stickney of these facts) Stickney charged that the sales were illegal, and immediately began to demand that the Commissioner of Revenue set aside as irregular the tax sale proceedings. He also began to press for the removal of Reed and Sammis from the commission.<sup>20</sup>

Under oath, Stickney swore that he had no other motive but public policy in taking his stand on the Fernandina sales, but afterward he admitted that while in New York during June, 1863, he became attorney for

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19. *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 5; Stickney to Chase, November 3, 1863, January 7, 1864, Chase MSS., vols. 83, 86, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

20. H. Rep., Ex. Doc., 18, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 3.

Marshall O. Roberts who had a claim against the Florida Railroad Company for over \$700,000. Roberts was the President of the United States Mail Steamship Company, and even then was acquiring profits of \$3,000,000 for the charter and sale of his steamships to the government. When Thayer was publicizing his immigration plan in the fall of 1862, Roberts wrote to him that he had advanced large sums of money to complete the Florida railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Keys, and because of that the Thayer plan might be of great service to him. "The loss of this sum," he explained, "has greatly impoverished me, but you may yet aid me in getting something out of it. I will do my share cheerfully." If transportation were needed, Thayer might keep it in mind that the Roberts steamers were "fine sea-going ships, and ready for service." Roberts might have added that the Florida Railroad Company owned the original plat of Fernandina, besides property there in depot grounds, railroad iron, rolling stock, buildings, the wharf, and whatever lots in the city had not passed into the hands of private buyers. Some of the heavy stockholders, such as David Yulee and Joseph Finegan, were avowed rebels, and their property would become forfeit for the non-payment of taxes. Knowing this Roberts sent Stickney a \$500 retainer, in return for which Stickney proposed to rescue the debt owing to Roberts and other northern creditors by a bill in chancery (in the United States court) to oust the "rebel" owners. He would then get title to the property for Roberts and the others. But much of the company's property was in Fernandina, and Stickney's uncooperative associates on the Tax Commission were proceeding to strike off that town to the Government and private buyers. Unless these sales were set aside the company (assuming that the "loyal" creditors might secure control of its assets) could not meet the

conditions of redemption. If the sales were negated, Roberts might redeem the property for a small sum.<sup>21</sup>

September found the three Tax Commissioners in Washington, ready to carry their unsavory squabble to the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, J. J. Lewis, and to Chase himself. The whole affair was particularly embarrassing to the Secretary of the Treasury who as recently as the previous June had written enthusiastically of the Commissioners, praising them as "men of ability and sound judgment." Mistakenly, he considered Stickney to be an old resident of Florida, and disregarded all warnings against that adroit Commissioner's devious course. For example, Edward L. Pierce, a friend whom Chase trusted and respected, advised the Secretary at the time that Stickney was pressing his case (i.e. September, 1863) that it would be well to watch Stickney's trans-

21. The post-war evolution of the Florida Railroad Company (i.e. the Fernandina and Cedar -Keys line) falls outside the scope of this work. However, in 1868, the United States Attorney General, William M. Evarts, took under consideration the application of Florida Railroad Company trustees for the issue of repayment drafts to purchasers of certain tax lands in Fernandina, with a claim by the trustees that the lands had been duly redeemed by them under Federal statutes. Evarts ruled that the application could not be granted in the absence of any certificate from the Board of Tax Commissioners authenticating the redemption. This, however, was after Stickney ceased to control the Florida Commission. See, B. F. Hall, *et als*, eds. *Official Opinions of the Attorneys General* (39 vols., 1852-1941), XII (1870), pp. 517-518. It is more significant that the trustees (in reality they were trustees of the Florida Internal Improvement Fund) offered the road for sale at auction in November, 1866, and at that time the creditors of the Florida Railroad Company paid \$323,466 for it; E. N. Dickerson was one of the leaders of this group, but Marshall O. Roberts was certainly one of the most important of his associates. The *Commercial and Financial Chronicle* openly announced that the road was purchased by Roberts without mentioning the others. After much swindling in the railroad's lands and other misfortunes the road finally passed into the hands of a party of capitalists headed by the Englishman, Sir Edward Reed and C. D. Willard. They combined it with the Florida Central, and other peninsular lines. Finally, it was acquired by the Atlantic Coast Line system. See, Helen R. Sharp, "Samuel A. Swann and the Development of Florida, 1855-1900," *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, XX (1941), pp. 170, 177-178, 186-187; *The Commercial and Financial Chronicle*, III (1866), pp. 522, 663, XXXII (1881), p. 100, XXXIV (1882), p. 86.

actions ; but the advice went unheeded. On many another occasion Chase had been guilty of execrable judgment in the choice of subordinates, and with continuing obstinacy he had kept them in office. Perhaps his own political ambition combined with his estimate of their value to his faction served to blunt his own moral sense, but it was also true that even the most shallow of these appointees paid lip service to strong anti-slavery opinions which Chase so earnestly claimed for himself. Stickney, however, did not pretend to be a champion of the freedman ; he went so far as to suggest in his correspondence with Chase that the negro should not be made a "speciality." Yet Chase was nonetheless infatuated with Stickney's blandishments.<sup>22</sup>

It was obvious in September, 1863, of course, that Stickney's enemies on the Tax Commission had been guilty of certain irregularities which Stickney could use to pillory them before public opinion, and he did not hesitate to do just that. As the newspaper accounts of the sales began to appear, editorial cries of indignation demanded that the malefactors should suffer appropriate punishment. When their heads did not immediately roll, the *Chicago Tribune*, to cite but one instance, angrily proclaimed: "It is notorious that the commissioners of taxes for Florida have sold vast tracts of land to themselves for a song. . . . but we have not heard that the guilty parties have been removed from office." Congress should be called upon to provide "adequate penalties for that class of offences."<sup>23</sup>

Stickney's enemies on the Tax Commission were willing to fight for their offices. Sammis, attempting to counter Stickney's influence with Chase, appealed to Chase's personal friend William Allen Butler, the head of a powerful New York law firm which included the

22. Chase to Robert J. Walker, June 8, 1863, Chase letterbooks, Historical Society of Pennsylvania ; Pierce to Chase, September 17, 1863, Chase MSS., box 10, Historical Society of Pennsylvania ; Stickney to id., January 6, 1863, Chase MSS., vol. 70, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

23. *Chicago Tribune*, November 17, 1863.

Collector of the New York port. Harrison Reed likewise tried to procure strong assistance. His brother, Herbert Reed, an appointee in the New York customs house, wrote to Chase on his behalf; another influential correspondent of Chase, William Henry Brisbane of the South Carolina Tax Commission, was Harrison Reed's uncle by marriage.<sup>24</sup> In a bid for the favor of radical anti-slavery men, Commissioner Reed wrote to the veteran abolitionist Samuel J. May that the recent sales of the Florida Commission had been "thronged" by negroes. Some of these colored people, according to Reed, were then promised that "buildings" should be erected on vacant lots and sold to them 'on time'. About thirty families had been able to secure homes at prices they could afford to pay for them. "As a class," Reed expounded, "they are essential to the future prosperity of the South, and as free laborers if properly protected and directed, will cause the wilderness of the Slave States to 'blossom as a rose,' and 'the desert waste to smile with abundance.'"<sup>25</sup>

Reed and Sammis were fighting a lost battle, for, on September 11, Commissioner J. J. Lewis gave Stickney his first triumph by ruling that the Florida sales should be set aside as void "for want of concurrence of all three ... [Commissioners] in the proceedings," and because of "other irregularities on the part of the two, who acted in the absence of their sick colleague." (Stickney had insisted that his trip to the North in the spring of 1863 was due to illness!) Lewis further held that it was the duty of the government to order a resale. Soon after this, Sammis submitted his resignation, and William Alsop whom Stickney recommended received the place. Although he did not return to Florida as Commissioner, Harrison Reed retained his appointment for several

24. William Allen Butler to Chase, October 24, 1863, Chase MSS., vol. 82, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress; Herbert Reed to *id.*, November 3, 1863, *Ibid.*, vol. 83.

25. Cited in New England Loyal Publication Society Broadside, No. 126 (October 10, 1863), Boston Public Library.

months, and visited the Sea Islands where he did his utmost to plague his victorious rival.<sup>26</sup>

In scoring his marked success, Stickney carefully maneuvered Chase by the most skillful responses to the Secretary of the Treasury's outstanding trait—vanity. Neither was the carpetbagging Yankee unaware that Chase's self-conceit merged with an overpowering lust for political power. A casual glance at the correspondence which passed between the two men easily demonstrates that from the beginning Stickney had scored his best points with references to the opportunities of political reconstruction *in* Florida. It is unnecessary to assume that Chase from the outset foresaw that reconstructed State regimes controlled by his friends would be stepping-stones to the White House for himself. In the light of the evidence it is safer to assert that Chase had faith that the South could be regenerated by such governments more effectively than by the proposals of Lincoln or others in the government who voiced opinions chronically opposed to his own.

It would even be difficult to say at just what point Chase began to think seriously of himself as a rival to Lincoln for the Republican-Union nomination of 1864, but certain it is that by September, 1863, he was actively doing just that. By then the spoilsmen in his department were beginning to inform him of devices intended to corral convention delegates. In the custom houses, internal revenue offices, special trade agencies, and especially in the States disrupted by the war his appointees were striving to offset the efforts of those who were responding to Lincoln's patronage favors. At best the Chase enthusiasts could see a close decision if they drummed up maximum support in the North, but in direct proportion to the success of their efforts there would the importance of southern delegations from recently reconstructed states emerge as the decisive element in

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26. New York *Times*, September 12, 16, 1863; Stickney to Chase, November 3, 1863, Chase MSS., vol. 86, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

the convention. Florida, if reconstructed under Stickney's leadership, would fit well into the category of useful delegations.

While the decision on the Florida tax sales was still forthcoming, Washington correspondents of New York newspapers began to revive earlier stories that Floridians were loyal; if they received help they could rid the State of "rebels" by employing Florida negroes recruited within the lines of Federal military occupation. Such had been the identical pattern of Stickney's failure the previous spring, but the correspondents were willing to overlook this at the prospect that Florida might send "loyal representatives" to the next session of Congress; that, in turn, would do much to insure recognition of a Florida delegation at the approaching Republican-Union convention.

When, early in September, Stickney called to consult with him about the reconquest of Florida, Chase was in the proper mood, and Stickney's picture, as usual, was painted in the most brilliant colors: 5,000 men could reclaim the State, and Quincy A. Gillmore, then commanding the Department of the South, approved of such a Florida campaign. Without disclosing Brigadier General Rufus Saxton's past benefactions in affairs commercial, Stickney was hopeful that his military friend from the Sea Island might be given command in Florida. From Stickney's ubiquitous ally, the Reverend Mansfield French, Chase received stirring Biblical assurance that a colored army marching into Florida would create such a panic among the secessionists there "as when the Syrians fled, through fear, from Samaria."<sup>27</sup> During October, Chase secured for his admiring private secretary, Homer G. Plantz, the lucrative District Attorney's post at Key West, and Plantz, who John Hay declared "went down with but two ideas, to steal money for himself and votes for Chase" became Stickney's useful

27. Mansfield French to *id.*, October 10, 1863, *Ibid.*, vol. 82; New York *Tribune*, September 10, 1863; Chase Diary, MSS., (entry of September 6, 1863), Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.



adjutant. When, in December, Chase began to reveal his first slight doubt of Stickney's probity, and sent a cautious inquiry, Plantz hastened to reassure him that Stickney was worthy of any trust: "He [Stickney] is universally respected and trusted by our best men here; and as heartily denounced by copperheads and ex-Secessionists."<sup>28</sup>

As was becoming his custom, Stickney after his summer's sojourn in the North tarried for a time at Beaufort on his way to Florida. His purpose was to talk with Major General-designate Gillmore, and from the General surprisingly enough he extracted the promise of another campaign in Florida if the War Department would give its consent. To Chase the Tax Commissioner penned a confidential note: "I think it is very important indeed for *you* that General Gillmore be identified with the Florida conquest. He is anxious to win distinction according to the Republican programme. At the same time I do not think the Senate ought to be in a hurry to confirm him as Maj.General. Wait until the delegation in Congress [from Florida] ask for his confirmation for his services in conquering the rebels of their State."<sup>29</sup>

For the next two months Stickney continued to develop his plans. He steadily grew bolder until finally, on December 14, he clambered aboard the U.S.S. Vermont, then lying in Port Royal harbor, and told its incredulous commander, William Reynolds, that gunboats would be needed to cooperate with a brigade of infantry, which was about to leave with a body of cavalry for campaigning in Florida. Reynolds could only say that Stickney must secure the admiral's consent before using the gunboats, but the astonished officer hurriedly made a report of his interview to Rear Admiral John A. Dahlgren, commanding the South Atlantic Blockading Squad-

28. Plantz to Chase, December 5, 1863, January 12, 18, 1864, Chase MSS., vols., 84, 86, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress: Tyler Dennett, *Lincoln and the Civil War in the Diaries and Letters of John Hay* (New York, 1939), p. 110.

29. Stickney to Chase, December 11, 1863, Chase MSS., vol. 85, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

ron, who was then supervising operations off Morris Island near Charleston. Dahlgren then indignantly complained to Secretary of the Navy, Gideon Welles, saying that prior to Reynolds's letter neither Stickney nor anyone else had mentioned another diversion toward Florida; he considered it as nothing less than injurious to his main attack against Charleston. But Dahlgren might better have saved his words, for even then Gillmore was suggesting the feasibility of Florida operations to Major General Henry W. Halleck, and on December 22 he received through Halleck permission granted by Stanton to undertake such a movement in the peninsula.<sup>30</sup>

So certain was Stickney of military sponsorship for reconstruction in Florida that in company with William Alsop and Calvin L. Robinson he went to St. Augustine, where, on December 19, they staged a unionist meeting in the district court room. Stickney's *Free South* announced that this meager assemblage was a response to President Lincoln's amnesty proclamation of December 8, 1863 which, in setting forth the Lincolnian ten percent plan of reconstruction, provided for oath taking by the people, with a promise, that if this were done to the extent of ten percent of the State's votes in 1860, Lincoln would extend recognition to a government of their formation.

There is no evidence that Stickney favored Lincoln's reconstruction formula; he was quite willing to use it as a pretext to establish his own ascendancy over a "rump" government of unionists in Florida, but if such a government were based upon so little as one percent of the population his influence would probably be greater in it than if it were more representative of the State's voters. In his speech to the St. Augustine unionists, Stickney first reassured the handful of "loyalists" that unlike the earlier Thayer scheme, the new plans for the regeneration of Florida did not require that "a soldier's vocation" should be theirs. He did predict, however, as

30. O.R.N., Series I, XV, pp. 179-180; *Senate Report*, No. 47, 38th Congress, 1st Session, p. 1.

Thayer's propaganda had done a year before, that with free institutions thousands of Germans would make their homes in Florida. The resolutions adopted at the St. Augustine meeting had been drawn up by Stickney and submitted to Chase for approval; they directed the appointment of a committee composed of Stickney ring members and Plantz with authority to call a State convention. In an account of the St. Augustine proceedings which Stickney sent to the *New York Tribune*, *New York Evening Post*, *Washington Chronicle*, and other prominent anti-slavery papers of the North, there were allusions to St. Augustine as a favorite winter resort for invalids from the North in the ante-bellum era. One of these "inspired" articles noted, that New England troops who occupied the city were drawn from almost every trade and profession. If they were allowed to remain there until the end of the rebellion they might have a part in constructing "the framework of a glorious commonwealth." The *Free South* (which had an exchange list in the North) praised Stickney "for the energy and wisdom with which he has pushed forward this good work." Regarding the possibility of political reconstruction it continued: "Her [Florida's] people long dwelling in ignorance will now be brought into the light of education; her rivers long silent will now soon teem with commerce; her rich soil relieved from the blight of slavery and cultivated by freemen will pour its treasures into the granaries of the world. A new era has commenced."<sup>31</sup>

To emphasize the material benefits of unionism, Stickney accompanied his December meeting with a tax sale of St. Augustine real estate. These auctions began on December 21, and lasted for one week. There were, he informed Chase, "many bidders." One obstacle, however, was Stickney's enemy on the Tax Commission, Harrison Reed, who refused to participate in the sales and

31. Beaufort (South Carolina) *Free South*, January 2, 1864; *New York Tribune*, December 29, 1863; Stickney to Chase, December 21, 1863, Chase MSS., vol. 85, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

argued they were illegal because *The Peninsula*, the advertising medium for the sale notices, had suspended publication for a week during the period in which the law required consecutive announcements of sale. Stickney then renewed his demands that Reed be removed from the Commission, and Reed finally resigned as of January 1, 1864.<sup>32</sup>

Altogether the St. Augustine sales did not justify Stickney's report to Chase that the property had been moving "remarkably well." The proceeds amounted to \$19,329 in cash, with lots valued at \$4,578 struck off to the Federal government. William C. Morrill, Stickney's partner, bid in about \$2,000 of the property, and Stickney himself later took possession of one lot. He then proceeded to repair the house on it, planted trees and vines, and gave other indications that he was claiming ownership. Ironically, the Commissioners apparently bought one of the lots for John Hay, Lincoln's private secretary, who certainly purchased tax sale property when he visited Florida between January and March of 1864.<sup>33</sup>

Stickney's relations with Hay were most peculiar. Why so ardent a Chase man as Stickney should personally invite Lincoln's private secretary to participate in southern reconstruction was in itself an enigma. Yet Stickney did just that. On the night of December 28, Hay, in Washington, received letters from Stickney and another Florida resident inviting him to come to Florida, and be their representative in Congress. That same evening, Hay talked over Florida's reconstruction with Lincoln who advised him to go "and engineer the business there." With the reports of Stickney's St. Augustine meeting before him, Hay believed there was a possibility "of getting the State under way" early the next spring. "I will go down there," he recorded in his diary, "& form my plans after I get there, as to my own

32, *Id.* to id. December 21, 1863, January 7, 11, 1864, *Ibid.*; H. Rep. Ex. Doc. no. 18, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess., p. 3.

33. *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 15; Dennett, Hay, pp. 43-44, 46.

course.”<sup>34</sup> Already, in 1863, Hay had visited Florida, and had written: “. . . I never saw a more beautiful country than Florida. The soil is almost as rich as our [Illinois] prairie land. All sorts of fruit and grain grow with very little cultivation, and fish and game of every kind abound. . . .”<sup>35</sup> Stickney knew of Hay’s interest in the State, and he also believed him to be a personable young man who was loyal to Lincoln but perhaps gullible enough to fall in with the Stickney plans for political reorganization. It could not be gainsaid that Hay would use his influence to keep Gillmore’s interest in Florida up to the mark. Finally, and most important, since Lincoln was taking a deep interest in reconstruction it would be but a short while before he would attempt to interfere in Florida’s affairs anyway, so why not forestall hostile interference by inviting Hay, and attempt to control rather than oppose his influence?

When Hay arrived at Gillmore’s headquarters on the Sea Islands, he presented to the General a formal letter of instruction from Lincoln. This contained no extraordinary request for a change of Gillmore’s plans, but in his reply to it Gillmore indicated plainly enough that he understood his future duties to include an increasing emphasis upon political reconstruction in Florida. He wrote: “. . . I am led to the impression that . . . I am expected to initiate, guide, and control, such measures as may be necessary under the Presidential Proclamation of December 8th, 1863, to restore the State of Florida to its allegiance. . . . The plan now being pursued by Gen. Banks in Louisiana impresses me very favorably, and can doubtless in its principal features, be both easily and speedily applied to Florida.”<sup>36</sup>

34. *Ibid.*, pp. 145-146.

35. William R. Thayer, *The Life and Letters of John Hay* (2 vols., Boston and New York, 1915), I, pp. 154, 271. Thayer said that Hay acquired a total of seven pieces of land in Florida in 1864, and that he got patents for these after the war.

36. Gillmore to Lincoln, January 21, 30, 1864, Lincoln MSS., vols., 139, 140, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress; S. Rep. no. 47, 38th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 2.

Gillmore correctly understood both Lincoln and Hay, but Stickney was also present to extend warm greetings to the President's Secretary when he arrived in the Sea Islands. Confidentially reporting to Chase, Stickney contended that Lincoln had approved of the St. Augustine meeting, and that Hay was "directed to cooperate" with him (i.e. with Stickney). There would be, Stickney promised, no difficulty in "signing-up" enough voters to establish a State government, and the task would be the easier because Chase had sent a revenue cutter to aid the Tax Commissioners in gathering together unionists from along the coast and St. Johns river. Chase, of course, had not done so with knowledge of Hay's mission; indeed, Stickney's letter implied that Chase might not yet have been advised that Hay was going to Florida.<sup>37</sup> At no time did Stickney exhibit the rancor over Hay's presence that Plantz did when he snarled: "Private Secy. Hay is coming here to run for Congress, with which end in view Mr. Lincoln makes him a major." Secretly, Stickney was just as earnest. Gillmore, he whispered to Chase, had given him to understand that he was Chase's friend, "decided and active," while Stickney himself had been organizing "a free State league, or if you please a Chase league," which he thought would "work to a charm," and deliver Chase control of the State under a unionist constitution.<sup>38</sup>

Stickney did not minimize the influence which Hay, through Lincoln, had with Gillmore, but he also remembered that so early as December 30 the General had arrived in Fernandina for a tour of inspection and had taken "a lively interest" in Florida affairs.<sup>39</sup> Upon returning to the base at Hilton Head, Gillmore replied to a note from Chase who urged him to action in Florida with assurances that he had engaged "Judge Stickney" in long conversations and "expected valuable advice and

37. Stickney to Chase, January 26, 1864, Chase MSS., vol. 87, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

38. Id. to id., February 5, 1864, *ibid.*, Plantz to id., January 27, 1864, *ibid.*

39. Stickney to *id.*, January 11, 1864, *ibid.*

assistance from him.”<sup>40</sup> Nearly a week before Hay’s arrival Gillmore disclosed to Stanton and Halleck his intention to occupy the west bank of the St. Johns river. Halleck with typical harshness then reminded Gillmore that such an expedition might be successful in gathering recruits (negroes and unionists), and open an outlet for cotton, but that it could have only small value as a military measure. Nevertheless, Gillmore persisted. Butressed by Hay’s encouragement and Lincoln’s order, he confidently announced on January 31 that he meant to occupy the richest portion of the country between the St. Johns and Suwanee rivers to bring out cotton, lumber, turpentine and other products. Furthermore he intended to begin the restoration of Florida to the Union. Led by Brigadier General Truman Seymour, three brigades and one light battery left Port Royal harbor on February 5 for Jacksonville. Gillmore and his staff followed two days later.<sup>41</sup>

In the preparations for the campaign, Hay essayed to play an important role, but he was still able to pay a call at Fernandina to evaluate the unionist sentiment there. His conclusions, written out for Lincoln while his steamer, bound for Jacksonville, lay off the mouth of the St. Johns river, were significant:

I have found among the leading men I have met a most gratifying unanimity of sentiment. Those who have formerly been classed as Conservative are willing to accept readily the accomplished events of the war and to come back at once: while those of more radical views who, we have reason to fear, would rather embarrass us, are readily in favor of your plan as exhibited in the case of Louisiana and Arkansas. There is no opposition to be apprehended from either native Unionists or Treasury Agents. The people are ignorant and apathetic. They seem

40. Gillmore to *id.*, January 18, 1863 [*sic.* 1864], Chase MSS., box 6, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

41. Dennett, Hay, pp. 165-166, *Sen. Rep.* no. 47, 38th Cong., 1st Sess., pp. 1-2.

to know nothing and care nothing about the matter. They have vague objections to being shot and having their houses burned, but don't know why it is to be done. They will be very glad to see a government strong enough to protect them against these every day incidents of the last two years. I have the best assurances that we will get the tenth required: although so large a portion of the rebel population is in the army & so many of the loyal people refugees in the North, that the state is well-nigh depopulated. We will have a clean slate to begin with. . . .<sup>42</sup>

Hay's, and for that matter Lincoln's, reconstruction technique were here clearly set forth. Events were to prove the young secretary's prophecy of the requisite ten percent to be overly optimistic. His estimate of the Treasury Agents' inability to harm Lincolnian reconstruction could have been either the most self-evident naivete, or the shrewdest of conclusions drawn from his early meetings with Stickney. Either he had failed altogether to understand Stickney's machinations, or he was certain that he could overmatch Chase's representative in the political vendetta that was certain to follow.

The expedition began auspiciously enough. On the afternoon of February 7, Seymour arrived with his forces at Jacksonville; that night he pushed inland, captured one hundred prisoners, and four days later his advance had taken him to within four miles of Lake City. When Hay arrived in Jacksonville with Gillmore that much occupied place was "gay with flags & busy with shipping."<sup>43</sup> Such was the familiar flurry of activity which inevitably accompanied a campaign of that type. It was an adventitious growth dependent upon the army, but it also sapped the resources of the countryside. Large droves of cattle and hogs began to appear within the Federal lines, and preparations began to extract other

42. Hay to Lincoln, February 8, 1864, Lincoln MSS., vol. 142, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

43. *Sen. Rep.*, no. 47, 38th Cong., 1st Sess. p. 3; Dennett, Hay, P. 159.



wealth from the banks of the St. Johns. One correspondent remarked that Jacksonville was beginning to "assume quite a business aspect." Traders were applying for permits to land their goods, and one Yankee enterpriser thought of operating a hotel.<sup>44</sup> Gillmore unhesitatingly solicited Chase to open the Jacksonville port for trade; and he informed Halleck: "I desire to see the lumber and turpentine trade on the St. Johns river revived by loyal men. Stickney in similarly importuning Chase for the relaxation of trade restrictions reminded him that if Jacksonville, Fernandina, and St. Augustine became commercial centers hindrances to northern immigration would disappear."<sup>45</sup> The northern press was not as eager for regeneration through military conquest as it had been earlier in the war. The *New York Times* which had backed Thayer strongly spoke cynically of "the scatteration policy again."<sup>46</sup> But with the arrival of northern troops in Jacksonville some publicity extolling the opulence of the sub-tropical triumph began to appear in New England newspapers. The *Boston Advertiser* predicted that when Florida renewed its allegiance to the Federal government there would no doubt be "a considerable movement in the northern and middle states of persons desirous to change our severer climate for that of the perpetual springtime of the valley of the St. Johns. . . ." There they would find "magnificent pine lumber," and "valleys of the greatest richness of soil."<sup>47</sup> A published letter from a Union army officer waxed enthusiastic over the Jacksonville region. The city, he recalled, had been an important ante-bellum lumber market, and had been connected with Tallahassee by a rail-

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44. *New York Times*, February 23, 1864.

45. Cited in *Sen. Rep.* no. 47, 38th Cong., 1st Sess., p. 3; Stickney to Chase, February 24, 1864, Chase MSS., vol. 88, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

46. *New York Times*, February 13, 1864; See, however, *ibid.* February 26, 1864, which admitted that a timely blow might be struck against Confederate supply centers, especially those of beef cattle, in Florida.

47. *Boston Advertiser* cited in *New England Loyal Publications Society Broadside*, no. 170 (March 3, 1864), Boston Public Library.

road built with northern capital. In central Florida pineapples grew "as easily as onions in Massachusetts." He concluded that "any judicious plan of colonization could not but find in Florida ample success...."<sup>48</sup>

At the time, the old New England Emigrant Aid Company was beginning to arouse itself for such an effort. Having finally settled its financial accounts, that strange combination of militant philanthropists and shrewd Yankee capitalists with which Eli Thayer had tried to claim Kansas for "free labor" was again ready to turn its attention to organized emigration. In 1862, the membership of the Society had chosen for president, John Carter Brown, the Providence cotton manufacturer. Amos A. Lawrence, another textile capitalist was one of the vice-presidents, and wealthy Bostonians such as Martin Brimmer and C. J. Higginson accepted places on the board of directors, as did J. P. Williston of New Bedford, William Cullen Bryant, and Senator Edwin D. Morgan of New York. Eli Thayer was noticeably absent, but the veteran colonizer and Unitarian, Edward Everett Hale, was willing to assume the burdens of promotional leadership. In January, 1864, he framed a report to the executive committee which discussed Florida, and this was quickly followed by an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*.<sup>49</sup> The latter effort was a colorful bit of propaganda. It began with a sweeping analysis of the effects of northern invasions throughout history, and leaped to the hasty conclusion that: "Northern invasions, when successful, advance the civilization of the world. . . . The softness of Southern climates produces, in the long run, gentleness, effeminacy, and indolence, or passionate rather than persevering effort. . . ." From the standpoint of progress, Hale believed that the war was "nothing but a terrible piece of ploughing . . .", and as it drew to its close there was great need for those from the North who

48. Cited in *ibid.*, no. 174, (March 17, 1864).

49. Hale to Amos A. Lawrence, January 26, 1864, Lawrence MSS., vol. 24, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston; *History of the New-England Emigrant Aid Company with a Report of Its Future Operations* (Boston, 1862), pp. 27-33.

would "begin on the harrowing and planting" of the southern soil. With more specific attention to Florida, he continued:

Take for instance, this magnificent Florida, our own Italy. . . . It will be a Free State, offering the privileges of a Free State to the eager eyes of the North of Europe. That valley of the St. Johns, with its wealth of lumber, the even climate of the western shore,—the navy yard to be reestablished at Pensacola,—the commerce to be resumed at Jacksonville,—the Nice which we will build up for our invalids at St. Augustine,—the orange groves which are wasting their sweetness at this moment . . .—will all be so many temptations to the emigrant. . . . The lumberman from Maine and New Hampshire who have seen the virgin riches of the St. Johns, like the Massachusetts volunteers who have picked out their farms in the valley of the Shenandoah . . . will furnish men enough, well skilled in political systems, to start the new republic in regions which have never known . . . a true republic . . . till now. . . .<sup>50</sup>

### ***Political Reorganization Fails***

Meanwhile, in Florida Hay and Stickney were busy with the first steps in political reorganization. Hay scarcely had reached Jacksonville before he began to post copies of Lincoln's Amnesty Proclamation about the town. With a book of printed "loyalty oaths" under one arm, he visited Confederate prisoners, and was highly elated when they came to him under a colored guard to hold up their hands as he read through the oath. The townsmen were less responsive, and he correctly surmised they knew that if they were "true to Gillmore" they might get cotton for trade, but if "false to Finegan" (the Confederate commander in the vicinity) they might "stretch hemp."

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50. (Edward Everett Hale), "Northern Invasions," *Atlantic Monthly*, XIII (1864), pp. 245-249.

So quickly did high hopes vanish that just a week after Hay began his work, Stickney was able to advise Chase that Hay was ready to admit that Lincoln's reconstruction plan would fail in Florida because of failure to enroll ten percent of the 1860 voters.<sup>51</sup> Inwardly Stickney was not at all distressed by this; he had nothing to gain if Lincoln's prestige increased due to a successful execution of the ten percent plan; if oaths were accepted from that many Floridians the political aspect of the new government would be entirely too conservative to guarantee the Stickneyites control of it. Stickney's power would be much more secure with a "rump" convention composed of a small group of carpetbaggers and poor-white unionists such as he had gathered together the previous December in St. Augustine.

What little hope remained for a quick restoration of the State disappeared when the Federals, on February 18, suffered a decisive defeat at Olustee. In that engagement, Seymour with about 5,500 men was rashly pushing ahead toward the Suwanee valley when he came upon about the same number of well-placed Confederate troops under Brigadier General Joseph Finegan's command. After heavy losses, Seymour retreated all the way to Jacksonville where the Union forces remained for many months without another important advance while nearly 15,000 Confederates hovered nearby.

The Olustee rout was remarkable because of Seymour's strange inconsistency. Gillmore had instructed him to hold Baldwin, Jacksonville, Magnolia, Palatka, and "the south prong of the St. Mary's river." At these points Gillmore planned to establish "small works" for defense; they would mark out a quadrilateral surrounding Jacksonville for Stickney, Hay and the other "reconstructionists" to work out their designs in. At least for the time, the "loyalists" would find sufficient resources for exploitation.

51. Dennett, Hay, pp. 159-162; Stickney to Chase, February 16, 24, 1864, Chase MSS., vol. 88, -Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

When they were issued these instructions apparently had well suited Seymour who warned Gillmore that a further movement toward the interior was inadmissible. Then with a somewhat critical reference to Gillmore's relations with the carpetbaggers he observed: "... what has been said of the desire of Florida to come back now is a delusion. . . . Stickney and others have misinformed you. . . ." Just before Gillmore returned to Hilton Head on February 14, the two generals conferred in Jacksonville about the defenses to be erected there and at nearby positions. The main body of Seymour's troops was then at Baldwin. No advance into the interior was authorized, and Gillmore left Florida fully believing that there would be no more extended offensive operations of any kind. Then on the 18th he was shocked to receive at his Hilton Head base a dispatch from Seymour, dated February 17, which briefly stated that Seymour intended to advance without supplies to destroy a railroad near the Suwannee river, a hundred miles inland from Jacksonville. Gillmore immediately rushed countermanding orders by his Chief of Staff, Brigadier General John W. Turner, but Turner's boat was delayed by a storm for nearly two days, and he arrived at Jacksonville only after the battle of Olustee had begun. When he was asked to account for his hazardous change of strategy, Seymour explained that there was little doubt in his mind that "the people of this State, kindly treated by us, will soon be ready to return to the Union; they are heartily tired of the war"; but only six days before he wrote this he had cautioned Gillmore that "Stickney and others" had misinformed Gillmore by delusive claims that Florida was ready to come back into the Union!<sup>52</sup>

When news of the Olustee affair reached the North, newspapers of the Democratic opposition maintained Hay's mission had been a political trick to gain delegates

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52. *Sen. Rep., no. 47, 38th Cong., 1st Sess.*, pp. 14, 21; Nicolay and Hay, Abraham Lincoln, VIII, p. 284; "Florida," in *The American Annual Cyclopædia* (title varies, 42 vols., New York, 1867-1893), IV, p. 378; O.R., Series I, XXXV, part. 1, pp. 281-282.

for Lincoln to the Republican-Union party convention at Baltimore. With a degree of truth, the New York *Herald* complained that the Gillmore expedition had been undertaken "by express direction of President Lincoln" for political objectives. At the other extreme of opposition, Lincoln's enemies among the radical anti-slavery Republicans in Congress obtained an investigation of the fiasco by their congressional Joint Committee of Investigation, the Committee on the Conduct of the War. After taking some testimony from the principal figures involved in the episode this Committee grudgingly conceded that Gillmore had planned his expedition before Hay arrived with instructions from Lincoln, and that Seymour's military decisions had not been ordered by the President. Nonetheless, rabid Chase supporters such as Plantz took obvious delight in Hay's discomfiture.<sup>53</sup>

Stickney carefully hid any elation over Hay's embarrassment. He chose to stand by quietly while the efforts in the North to win the nomination for Chase reached their climax in a circular letter issued under the sponsorship of Senator Samuel C. Pomeroy of Kansas. The "Pomeroy Circular," however, proved to be a clumsy political device and the Chase "boom" suffered rapid deflation. On March 1, Stickney admitted to Hay that "no power on earth" could prevent Lincoln's nomination.<sup>54</sup> It was self-evident that so many northern state delegations had aligned themselves with Lincoln that there was greatly diminished need for the southern "pocket boroughs."

But Stickney continued to strive for political dominion in Florida. Of Hay he wrote, "I have not opposed him but rather moulded his views in harmony with my own. He now works with me, and for the measures I wish to prevail."<sup>55</sup> Simultaneously, Stickney was

53. New York Times, March 7, 1864; New York *World* cited in *Boston Traveller*, March 12, 1864; New York *Herald*, February 28, 1864; *Sen. Rep.*, no. 47, 38th Cong., 1st Sess., 25 pp.

54. Dennett, Hay, p. 165.

55. Stickney to Chase, March 2, 1864, Chase MSS., Vol. 88, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

dispensing Treasury patronage to known friends of Chase. Robert Carter, a treasury department clerk from Beaufort, came to Jacksonville at Stickney's invitation to be editor of *The Peninsula*, and he immediately offered himself as a candidate for collector of the port there. For tax assessor under the Direct Tax Act, Stickney chose his brother, John K. Stickney. Finally, the would-be boss informed Chase that the executive committee chosen at the St. Augustine meeting of the preceding December would appoint Plantz, Philip Fraser, and himself as delegates from Florida to the Baltimore convention.<sup>56</sup>

### *Opposition to Stickney*

By the spring of 1864 Stickney had to reckon with factional rivals in Florida politics. One of these opponents was O. M. Dorman, a paymaster in the army, who in January wrote to Congressman Jesse O. Norton from Hilton Head, pleading for a chance to accompany Gillmore's expedition to Jacksonville where he might rally the unionists who favored Lincoln's Amnesty Proclamation. His letter passed from Norton to Lincoln, and the request was granted. The day before Dorman wrote to Norton he had a long conversation with Hay during the course of which Lincoln's secretary listened to his tirade against Stickney's reconstruction measures. It is hardly conceivable that Dorman would almost immediately after that have sent his appeal to Norton without some encouragement from Hay. Within a month Stickney was complaining that Dorman, "the worst copperhead in the country," was busy trying to form a State organization in Florida.<sup>57</sup>

Stickney also faced treason in his own house. During March, Calvin L. Robinson disposed of his interest in the business partnership with Stickney and Morrill by selling

56. *Id.* to *id.*, March 15, 1864, *ibid.*, Vol. 89; Robert Carter to *id.*, April 9, 1864, *ibid.*

57. O. M. Dorman to Jesse O. Norton, January 21, 1864, Lincoln MSS., Vol. 139, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress; Stickney to Chase, February 16, 1864, Chase MSS., Vol. 88; Dennett, Hay, p. 155:

his share to them. That this accompanied a political break as well became evident when Stickney complained that Robinson's recent acts had satisfied him that Robinson was "politically unstable."<sup>58</sup> Other opponents then challenged Stickney's ambitions. Buckingham Smith of St. Augustine, John S. Sammis (Stickney's former associate on the Direct Tax Commission), and others met in Jacksonville, May 18, to call a convention for the appointment of delegates to the Baltimore convention. Apparently, even Philip Fraser went over to this group. When their convention met on May 24, they appointed a five-man delegation which included Robinson and other Stickney opponents.<sup>59</sup> The Stickney faction, however, nominated its own representatives to Baltimore, and engaged in recriminations with the other camp.<sup>60</sup> Plantz, who came North to attend the convention with Stickney, admitted to Chase that the nomination was "pre-determined" for Lincoln, but Stickney, just a few days before the opening session professed to see "a strong tide" setting in Chase's favor.<sup>61</sup>

One of the most irritating questions at Baltimore did concern the admission of delegations from the seceded States. The committee on credentials at length agreed to extend to one Florida delegation the privilege of occupying seats on the convention floor, but denied it voting rights. The delegation also received an invitation to name one member to the Republican Union National Committee. This proved to be none other than Calvin L. Robinson.<sup>62</sup>

Stickney's influence declined steadily during the later stages of the war. In the spring of 1864 the Treasury Department finally authorized an investigation of

58. H. Rep., Ex. Doc., No. 18, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess., p.15; Stickney to Chase, March 15, 1864, Chase MSS., Vol. 89, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

59. "Florida," in *The American Annual Cyclopedia*, IV, pp.373-379.

60. Dennett, Hay, p.167.

61. Stickney to Chase, May 25, 1864, Chase MSS., Vol. 90, Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

62. *Cincinnati Commercial*, June 8, 11, 1864; *New York Tribune*, June 9, 1864; *New York Times*, June 9, 1864.



his activities, and after Chase resigned his cabinet post in June, Stickney's Florida enemies sought his removal from the Tax Commission. One of them wrote to the new Secretary of the Treasury: "I hear that the Tax Commission is no longer to be cursed by its former chairman. Thank God for that. If the department could have had the views of the honest men and General officers of this department he would have gone long ago. . . . but Mr. Chase would not listen. Stickney has done us much damage but I trust the courts of the U. S. will in a measure right the wrongs. . . ."<sup>63</sup> Stickney managed for a time to retain his place on the Tax Commission, but the attacks upon him continued. His nemesis, Harrison Reed, even placed in Lincoln's hands a long letter exposing Stickney's dealings with the Florida secession legislature. In January, 1865, a congressional document in the form of a committee report made public many of the tawdry details of Stickney's "ring" which an investigation had uncovered the previous spring.<sup>64</sup> Thereafter, Stickney did not again approach the center of the Florida political stage. When Chase, who was by then Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court, made a tour of the South in 1865, Stickney hurried up the gangplank of the vessel carrying his most influential friend the moment that craft docked at Jacksonville. Stickney's enemies then circulated the rumor that Chase was ready to give Stickney assistance in rebuilding and operating the Fernandina and Cedar Keys railroad.<sup>65</sup> But nothing came of this.

Within the State newly arrived carpetbaggers such as Thomas W. Osborn and Daniel Richards with their "Lincoln Brotherhoods" and "Loyal League of America" were striding into the foreground. The most ironic twist was afforded by the emergence of Stickney's bitterest enemy, Harrison Reed, who became a carpetbag gov-

63. Charles D. Lincoln to William P. Fessenden, September 14, 1864, Fessenden MSS., Manuscripts Division, Library of Congress.

64. *H. Rep. Ex. Doc.*, no. 18, 38th Cong., 2nd Sess.

65. William W. Davis, *The Civil War & Reconstruction in Florida* (New York, 1913), p.352.

ernor and storm center of Florida politics in the reconstruction era. Once, in 1868, Stickney telegraphed from New York the text of a bill for the incorporation of a Florida Savings Bank, which a confederate, A. A. Knight, introduced into the legislature. Although the bill sought to create a speculative monstrosity and granted no protection to investors, it passed both houses within twenty-four hours. Harrison Reed had the satisfaction of vetoing the bill, and exposed its swindling provisions so convincingly that the Senate upheld his action.<sup>66</sup>

Stickney the Florida propagandist had a longer life by a year or two than Stickney the political boss. He never ceased to publicize the State as a sub-tropical paradise. His newspapers at Beaufort and Jacksonville carried lavish prophecies of the peninsula's future wealth, and it was obvious they did so with the hope that northern exchanges would copy their columns. After the Olustee disaster had been followed by a discreet interval, Stickney again secured the attention of the influential *Washington Chronicle* which remarked that Stickney had prepared for publication his "History of Florida." No doubt this was the same "history" that Stickney had begun in connection with Eli Thayer's immigration plan. According to the *Chronicle*, Stickney was detailing Florida's "resources and advantages" with "special reference to the wants of emigrants."<sup>67</sup> The volume did not appear, and two years later it was none other than J.D.B. DeBow's *Review* which printed another "chapter" with an introductory heading which announced: "The following constitutes one of the chapters of a very able work which is now in the course of publication from the pen of L. D. Stickney on the 'History of Florida'. When finished, it will be one of the most valuable works in relation to that 'Land of Flowers' which has ever emanated from the press. We trust that the author's enterprise and spirit will be rewarded with

66. John Wallace, *Carpetbag Rule in Florida* (Jacksonville, 1888), esp. pp.42-46, 83, 89.

67. *Washington Chronicle*, July 27, 1864.

heavy orders for the work. . . .” Whatever other inconsistencies and defections he was guilty of, this “chapter” published in the greatest economic journal of the southern tradition stressed Stickney’s obdurate zeal for immigration to Florida. After recalling the advantages arising from the redivision and “parcelment” of lands during the great revolution in France, he preached that “the South’s proudest triumph and real glory now consists in shaking off the prejudices of the past, and in keeping pace with events which follow a great political and social revolution. . . . By encouraging the migration of sober, industrious people to the State, . . . the door to prosperity unprecedented in history will be opened wide.”<sup>68</sup>

The propagandist Stickney continued to publish his *Florida Union* until May, 1867 when he retired from its editorship.

#### (IV) POST-WAR TRENDS

The northern interest in Florida which Stickney tried so persistently to exploit, developed but slowly in the dreary years after Appomattox. In 1866, Edward Everett Hale while struggling to arouse active sympathy for the founding of “a new Antioch” in Florida, admitted that the northern people were turning away from the South. He lamented: “It [the North] has found that with the West it can run the machinery very well, and thinks little and cares less what becomes of the Southern States. . . .”<sup>69</sup> Nevertheless, Hale and his associates of the New England Emigrant Aid Company continued their efforts; with John Murray Forbes and Martin Brimmer as the leading spirits, they began to sell shares at \$100 each to those who desired to become part of a Florida colony, and early in May, 1867, they sent to

68. “Florida-Past, Present and Future . . .,” *De Bow’s Review Monthly*, XXXIII, (1866), pp.382-392.

69. Hale to William B. Weeden, September 18, December 20, 1866, in Edward Everett Hale Jr., *The Life and Letters of Edward Everett Hale* (2 vols., Boston, Little Brown and Company, 1917), II, pp.22-23.

Jacksonville a representative to publish an Emigrant Aid "loyal" paper there. However, the agent appointed to gather together the emigrants for Florida had but limited success, and in September, 1867, the Company announced that it was foregoing its plans for an organized community in favor of advice to settlers who would go singly or in small groups to settle where they pleased in the peninsula. To carry on this service it continued to solicit funds in 1868, and it likewise accepted gifts for the *Florida Union*, its newspaper outlet for northern ideas which they had taken over from Stickney.<sup>70</sup>

Although not in the nature of idealistic communal units, migration, especially to the St. Johns valley, did begin. It was perhaps the most renowned of all anti-slavery propagandists, Harriet Beecher Stowe, herself imbued with a desire to "form the nucleus of a Christian neighborhood" somewhere along the banks of the St. Johns, who believed that immigration "was positively and decidedly" setting in, but she complained it was "a mere worldly emigration, with the hope of making money, nothing more. . . ."<sup>71</sup> There was a reviving interest in Florida's citrus fruit. According to one estimate, in 1866 alone between 75,000 and 100,000 trees were transplanted and budded in the State. Watermelons too were beginning to receive attention as a possible cash crop for northern markets.<sup>72</sup> In 1867, the Federal Commissioner of Agriculture noticed that although Florida lands as a whole had depreciated 55 per cent from their 1860 valuations, near the St. Johns river they had in-

70. Hale to Charles Hale, May 7, 1887, *ibid.*, p.25; Hickman, *loc. cit.*, pp.266-267.

71. Charles E. Stowe, *Life of Harriet Beecher Stowe . . .* (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1891), pp.400-412; Charles E. Stowe and Lyman B. Stowe, *Harriet Beecher Stowe*, (Boston and New York, Houghton Mifflin and Company, 1911), p.239; Harriet B. Stowe, "Our Florida Plantation," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. XLIII (1879), pp.641-649.

72. "Some Facts in Regard to the Cultivation and Consumption of Oranges," in *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1877* (Washington, Government printing office, 1878), pp.564-565; George W. Atwood, "The Fruits of Florida," in *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture For the Year 1867* (Washington, Government printing office, 1868), pp.140-147.

creased 33 percent in market value where northern settlers had established themselves and made improvements.<sup>73</sup> Some of these northern newcomers were fishermen; several small colonies of them at New Berlin, Mayport, and Palatka had arrived with their gill nets to catch shad for the northern markets. Mostly from Connecticut, they sometimes returned to northern waters for summer fishing, but continued a thriving business in Florida.<sup>74</sup>

The first post-war "fever of speculation" was hindered in becoming something more than that by the difficulties which surrounded the acquisition of good land titles. If such entanglements could be avoided there were other sources of discouragement. In orange speculations the immigrant was tempted to go beyond his capital. A heavy frost in December, 1868, destroyed most of that year's fruit, and afterward the "die back" and black aphid ruined many a grower. Labor was scarce and incapable. Malaria and chills added physical discomforts. It was hard indeed to make a living from dairying and truck farming until the citrus began to bear. There were inadequate transportation lines to the North, and until the early 1880's most of the fruit had to be sent by water routes. Unfair tactics of commission merchants and bad packing made the problem worse; crates of fruit were carelessly tossed about ship decks, and fully a third of the melons shipped from Florida ports to New York never reached their destination. If any immigrant lacked outstanding merits of skill, patience, intelligence, and application he was almost certain to fail, as hundreds did, and leave the State in disgust. The war psychology lingered on to make the immigrant's social adjustments more difficult. Illustrating this, a pamphlet published during the reconstruction era advised prospective immigrants they would be safe in Florida, but added:

While it is undoubtedly true that a stranger

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73. "Relative Value of Lands," *ibid.*, p.105.

74. Goode, *The Fisheries and Fishery Industries*, Vol. V, pt. 2, pp.528-530.

could not hope to meet with as much cordiality and courtesy in the South as in those more fortunate regions that have never been tossed in the boiling cauldron of secession, or been cursed with the pressure of the iron heel of conquering armies in a bitter civil war, it is also true that there is nothing to deter an immigrant who seeks to better his condition from settling in Florida, except the absence of that courtesy and kindness which he would receive at the West, or even in the South before the terrible struggle for the death of slavery had perverted the minds and embittered the hearts of men.

On the other hand, post-war psychology in Florida had another aspect expressed in the same imperialistic propaganda by the remark that "the whole population of the State" was becoming "rapidly convinced that 'men, money and labor' . . . [were] to be the watchwords of success in the future of Florida." Gradually, this idea became dominant. Associations were formed in various counties to cooperate with a State Bureau of Immigration established by a new State constitution.<sup>75</sup>

The new capitalism was first noticeable in the tourist centers. Whereas Whitelaw Reid in the spring of 1865 could describe Jacksonville as nothing but a few brick warehouses and stores fronting upon almost bottomless sand streets, it presented, in 1869, quite a different appearance to another reporter who noticed its clean thoroughfares, plank walks, new store buildings, and enlarged wharves. Everywhere he thought he **saw** "the magic touch of Northern hands and capital. . . ." More particularly, he observed that the influx of winter visitors was through northern enterprise being supplied

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75. *Florida, Its Climate, Soil, and Productions*: (Jacksonville, 1868), p.11; Louise Seymour Houghton, "The Truth About Florida," *Lippincott's Magazine*, Vol. XXVII (1881), pp.508-512; Theophilus W. Moore, *Treatise and Hand-Book of Orange Culture in Florida, Louisiana and California* (Third edition, New York and Jacksonville, 1883), esp. 14, 55, pp.141-143.

with small houses.<sup>76</sup> Solon Robinson, a Connecticut-born organizer of agricultural societies who had become widely known as editor of Horace Greeley's New York *Tribune* in its agricultural department, had moved to Jacksonville for his health, and was busy superintending the construction of new dwellings. In the St. Johns valley, "a small army" was cutting pine, and more than half a dozen saw mills were running in the city.<sup>77</sup>

Florida was now on the eve of a much greater development brought about mostly by men and capital from without the State; but the narratives about Sanford, Disston, Plant, Flagler, and others are very different from the stories of those who brought nothing with them except a carpetbag and empty but yearning pockets.

76. Whitelaw Reid, *After the War: A Southern Tour . . .* (Cincinnati, etc., 1866), p.162; Ledyard Bill, *A Winter in Florida . . .* (New York, 1869), p.82; T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida . . .* (St. Augustine, The Florida Historical Society, 1925), pp.150, 161.

77. Herbert A. Kellar, ed., *Solon Robinson, Pioneer and Agriculturist* (2 vols., Indianapolis, Indiana Historical Bureau, 1936), II, pp.38-39.

## JOHN WESTCOTT'S PLAN FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION IN FLORIDA, 1844

by NITA KATHARINE PYBURN

In 1843 the Legislative Council of Florida passed two acts pertaining to education ; one providing that "the sheriff of the several counties . . . be Commissioners of school lands in their respective counties." Each was to rent or lease the land and retain ten percent as commission. The remainder of the proceeds was to be paid to the county treasurer at the beginning of the year. The county court was to appropriate the funds thus accruing "to the education of the poor children of the County in which such land was situated."<sup>1</sup> In 1844 another act was passed which provided that the people of the township elect trustees to administer the land.<sup>2</sup>

The second act pertaining to schools passed in 1843 was entitled "An Act for the preservation of the Seminary Lands . . . and the disposition of the fund arising from the lease thereof." It provided for the appointment by the Governor and with the consent of the Legislative Council of five Trustees to be known as the Trustees of the Seminary Lands. They were to serve without pay, and were to "take charge of the fund named, or to be obtained from Congress under the act for the distribution of the proceeds of the lands among the States and

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1. *Acts of Florida*, 1843, pp. 34-36

According to the Northwest Ordinance of 1785 section sixteen of each township was to be retained for schools. Payson Jackson Treat, *The National Land System, 1785-1820*, p. 264. "The Ohio enabling Act established the necessary precedent for future educational grants. After this time Congress would reserve school and seminary lands during the Territorial period and then vest them in the State on its admission into the Union . . ." *Ibid.*, p. 272. The federal law which was the general directive for reserving the sixteenth section in each township for common schools was given in 1826. *Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, Vol. IV., p. 179. The federal law which gave the territory of Florida the use of the land was passed in 1827. The State was to lease the school and seminary lands from year to year and appropriate the money for schools. *Ibid.*, pp. 201-202.

2. *Acts of Florida*, 1844, pp. 61-64.



Territories, and also the Seminary Fund in the Treasury, and the sum due from rent or occupancy of said Lands . . . '3

Thomas Baltzell was the first president of this Board of Trustees.<sup>4</sup> He sent out a circular which had the endorsement of the Governor, dated November 12, 1844.<sup>5</sup> The aim as stated was to obtain "information expedient and proper to the promotion of education in Florida." The Board had in mind the adoption of means of securing the "inestimable blessings of a good education" to every child in Florida. They thought this could be done with the aid and cooperation of the people throughout the state. The Board was to "... prepare and digest a plan for the instruction of youth throughout the Territory."

The circular calling for opinions, presented an opportunity to John Westcott to present a plan for a system of education better suited to the needs of a government,

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3. *Acts of Florida*, 1843, pp. 36-37.

In 1823 the Federal Government reserved from sale an entire township in East Florida and one in West Florida for the use of Seminaries of Learning, *Public Statutes at Large of the United States of America*, Vol. III. p. 756. The Ohio enabling act set the precedent for the distribution of five per cent of the proceeds of the land sales. Payson Jackson Trent, *op. cit.*, p. 268.

The two acts of 1843 reflected the dual system of education which was transplanted from England and practiced by practically all of the states until after 1850. Ellwood P. Cubberley, *Public Education in the United States*, pp. 198-206; Stuart G. Noble, *A History of American Education*, pp. 125, 149-150, 160; Edgar W. Knight, *History of Education in the United States*, 264 ff.

4. Thomas Baltzell was born in Frankfort, Kentucky in 1804. After he was licensed to practice law in 1825, he moved to Jackson county, Florida, which county he represented in the Legislative Council in 1832 and the Constitutional Convention in 1838-9. He was Trustee of the Seminary Lands in 1843-1844, "Elected by the General Assembly in 1845 as first judge of the Eastern Judicial Court, he served until 1853, when he was elected Chief Justice of the Supreme Court" which position he held until 1859. He represented Leon county in the House of Representatives in 1862-1863 and in the Constitutional Convention in 1865. He died in Tallahassee in 1866. *Manuscript Collection* of Dorothy Dodd, State Library, Tallahassee, Florida.

5. A copy of the circular is in *Papers and Documents Relative to Seminary Lands*, Field Note Division, State Department of Agriculture, Tallahassee, Florida.

“deriving its just powers from the consent of the governed.”

#### WESTCOTT'S PLAN

Plans for a system of education suited to the needs of a democracy worked out by Horace Mann, Caleb Mills, and others are widely known. Almost unknown is the one presented by John Westcott<sup>1</sup> of Madison, Florida in his answer to the circular sent out by the Board of Trustees in 1844. According to the plan, he envisioned a general system of education for his state which reflected an understanding of the relation of education to a republican form of government and how education might be used to attain democracy.

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Madison, Fla.

Nov. 28, /44

Dear Sir:

Your circular upon the subject of education has been received. I have made those enquiries, and take the first opportunity to answer [your questions] as far as possible.

To the first:

**What is the number of children in your County between the ages of ten and twenty-one?**

Answer: That we have at least 300.

To the 2nd:

**What is the number of schools in your County, with the number of scholars in each?**

We have at present four schools, about fifty scholars receive their benefit, probably half the year.

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1. John Westcott (1805-1889), a brother of James D. Westcott, was a native of New Jersey. He was a cadet at West Point and studied medicine which he practiced during the Seminole War (1837-1842) and during the Civil War. He served as surveyor general, and was a projector of internal improvements in Florida and the father of the early east coast canal system. In 1885 he was a member of the Constitutional Convention. Rowland H. Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida*, Vol. II, pp. 157 ff.

The letter from Westcott is in *Papers and Documents Relative to Seminary Lands*, Field Note Division, State Department of Agriculture, Tallahassee, Florida.

To the 3rd:

**What number of children receive advantages of education in *your* County?**

Not one half.

To the 4th:

**What is the course of instruction in *your* County?**

In three schools reading, writing, & arithmetic; in one, the above with Geography, philosophy, & music.

To the 5th:

**Are the schools sustained through means of the 16th sections, or have they derived benefits from them?**

The Schools have received no benefits from the Sixteenth Sections.

To the 6th:

**Are those sections, in *your* County, of value, and may they or not be turned to account?**

They are of value, and may be turned to account.

To the 7th:

**What plan would you propose to make those lands most available for the use of the schools?**

This is a very difficult subject, but one upon which I have thought much, for several years. I have formed a plan in my mind. The leading features of which is to create a large common School fund (out of the rents of the land) gradually impress upon the public mind, the importance of Popular Education, and as the importance of the Subject progresses in each township, for them to receive the Benefit of the fund. At present, I would have the school lands in each county rented out—(in December of each year) to the highest bidder, by a commissioner of school lands and fund in each county (The commissioner to be appointed by the Governor and Senate). The money received should be loaned out (unless it is required for immediate use). That it should be a part of the duty of the School Commissioner of each county to cause a notice to be put up annually in each township (having within its bounds twenty scholars) calling voters together, and personally inquire by vote taken (the ma-

jority at the meeting to rule the township) the amount of tax if any they are willing to raise, upon an equal assessment of their property toward the support of a common School in their township. That said township shall receive from the School funds an amount equal to half (third) (quarter) the amount they raise by tax. That there should be a Sec'ty of School Land & funds, to reside in Tallahassee, to whom all the Bonds for money loaned out by the School Commissioner of Each County should be made payable, whose duty it should be to receive the interest, keep accounts with the Commissioners, have a general Superintendence of the School lands in each county, go into the Territorial or State School fund, without it is drawn before a limited time, by a tax upon themselves as above stated, after it gets there, to remain sacred until the fund amounts to \$..... (enough for the annual interest to support the schools).

To the 8th:

*What plan would you propose as to the fund of \$1,000 derived from **the** General Government?*

I would recommend that it be immediately expended for uniform libraries (for each county in the Territory) to be accessible under proper regulations to all classes of community ; including particularly the rising generation of both sexes over 12 years of age. Well selected libraries, I believe would form important auxiliaries of public instruction and moral reformation. The books to be chiefly works on morals, natural philosophy, Natural History, Geography, Agriculture, Astronomy, History, and Biology, Chemistry & Physiology, and Political Economy.

To the 9th:

*What disposition would you suggest of **the** Seminary Lands, and of **the** fund received through rent?*

Rented at present & the money received, added to the school fund.

To the 10th:

**What number of children from your County, are sent abroad for education, and at what expense?**

None.

I know not, that I can offer any suggestion, not likely to occur to the board of trustees. Were I to hazard any, it would be, to impress upon the board the importance of urging the Legislative Council to adopt at once, a general system of education and of raising a *common school fund*. "A popular government without popular information or the means of acquiring it, *is* but a Prologue to a farce, tragedy, or perhaps both." Knowledge will ever govern ignorance, and a people who mean to be their own governors, must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives. Education is to the Republican body politic, what vital air is to the natural body; necessary to its very existence, without which *it* would *sicken*, *droop*, and *die*.

The system adopted, ought to be considered in its broadest sense, as not only embracing literary and scientific, but political, moral, and religious instruction. On education viewed in this light depends that is good and great, magnanimous and praiseworthy in the human character, and *essentially* important to the social state of man. The institutions of our country are bottomed upon the *virtue* and intelligence of the people and on the maintenance and preservation of that foundation will our prosperity depend. Let the great body of people be well informed, and their moral character be preserved, they will know and understand their rights and privileges. A correct moral principle will always prompt them to a faithful performance of civil and social duties which will inevitably insure the enjoyment of those rights and privileges. A proper education gives us a veneration for God, a charity for our neighbor, learns us our duty to each other as citizens. It unmask things that seemed terrible and insurmountable to us, refutes our errors, restrains our luxury, reproves our avarice.

As a matter of policy, education is the first great

interest to look to, before, and after going into a State Government. Keep the Mass virtuous and well informed, and the penal laws on our Statute book, will, in a great measure, become obsolete and a dead letter. It is certainly safer, and easier, by reasonable administration of gentle preventives, to ward off a disease from the natural body, than to be compelled to eradicate the disorder, when introduced, and seated in the system. So with a republican form of government, it is safer, wiser, and less expensive by a proper system of education, to preserve the virtue and integrity of the people, and thereby prevent the introduction of crime, and moral disease, than be compelled to use harsh and severe measures to root them out. One hundred dollars judiciously laid out in the education of youth, will go further in the maintenance of a free government, and in promoting the happiness and prosperity of the people, than thousands expended in enacting criminal codes, establishing and maintaining courts of judicature, jails and penitentiaries, without education. It is certainly better policy to take precautionary measures to make and keep men good citizens, than to be compelled to use coercive measures to restrain them when they have become bad. The former if reasonably attended to is easy. The latter is *difficult* if **not impracticable**.

Our government is, and must always be, moved by public opinion, or the sentiments of the people, and it would not be possible for the Legislature to establish, and *successfully* maintain, any course of measures, however wise and salutary, contrary to the sentiments of the great body of the people, hence the need of a system of general education which will not be onerous in the beginning, but gradually develop its benefits, as the people understand and take advantage, in primary meeting of its provisions.

The subject is leading me too far, but if the view taken of the importance of popular education be correct, it is a subject upon which we all should feel an interest,

and cooperate, not only for our own best interests, but for the prosperity and happiness of generations, and ages in the future.

Yours Respectfully,  
JOHN WESTCOTT

Hon. Thomas Baltzell  
President Board of Trustees  
Seminary Lands

## REGIONAL AND LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETIES

### THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHERN FLORIDA

The corresponding secretary of the Historical Association of Southern Florida, David O. True, has issued a printed bulletin, which appears at intervals, for the members of the Society and others interested. In the current issue are reprinted the tables of contents of the **seven** published numbers of *Tequesta* and the next issue now in press : 1941-1948. The numerous titles listed show the important place taken by this annual in the writing and publication of Florida's history. The ninth issue will appear early in the year.

The Association holds historical program meetings throughout the winter. The first, on December 13, was an address by Chief Henry R. Chase of the Miami Fire Department, "Thirty Years a Fire-fighter," together with an exhibit of fire-fighting material of early days collected by Vincent K. O'Meara of the Dade County Fire Department, which is one of the outstanding collections in the country.

John W. Griffin, Florida State Archeologist, **will** address the next meeting on the results of his work on Florida Indian mounds ; and Dr. J. E. Dovell, of the University of Florida, who has studied the Everglades for several years and published a number of articles on that subject, is preparing a paper on drainage and flood control which will feature the March meeting.

The Florida Historical Society has been invited to hold its next annual meeting in Miami as guests of the Association and the University of Miami. Plans are nearing completion under the direction of Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau, chairman of the program committee, for a noteworthy meeting on April 8 and 9, which is told of in the Society's section below.



## JACKSONVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Jacksonville Historical Society, whose activities during the past season were told of in a recent number of this *QUARTERLY*, is carrying out an equally active program for this year. The present officers are: president, Webster Merritt; vice presidents, Frank Elmore Jr., William D. Barfield, H. H. Buckman III; secretaries, Mrs. Oscar Rawls, Mrs. John S. Porter; treasurer, Dena Snodgrass; historian, Herbert Lamson; publicity chairman, Fannie Webb Holt.

The success of the Society's publication *Papers of the Jacksonville Historical Society*, issued last year, has encouraged them to make this a biennial publication, and the next issue will appear early in 1949. This is being published by the editorial committee with Miss Audrey Broward as chairman.

The program committee, with Herbert Lamson as chairman, has planned a series, the first of which was an address "Ninety-six Years of Engineering Development on the St. Johns River" by Oscar G. Rawls, U. S. Army Engineers, delivered before the Society and the public on November 10.

The Society took part in the Garden Center Flower Show with a booth commemorating the 1901 Fire Relics.

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THE ST. AUGUSTINE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society was saddened by the loss of Miss Virginia Gee, Acting Secretary and Librarian, who had organized and recatalogued the greater part of the library. Mrs. Marion Moulds has taken her place, and with her extensive training in library work and her knowledge of Spanish will contribute much to the Society's program.

The fall months saw the completion of one of the Society's major projects, the preservation and rehabilitation of the "Old Curiosity Shop," on St. George street.

This building was erected about 1800 by Juan Parades, but was given the current name much later by a watchmaker and antiquarian.

The translation of Barcia's "Ensayo Chronologico de la Florida," a project of the Society's described in the July issue of this QUARTERLY, is now about half completed and will be published ere long.

Among other projects are preservation measures for the marble tablets on the "Constitucion" monument (erected in the Plaza in 1813 to commemorate Spanish adoption of a liberal constitution), and placement of bronze markers on the historic cannon mounted around the city's Plaza.

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#### A LAKELAND MARKER

Through the efforts of Miss Serena C. Bailey, librarian of the Lakeland Public Library, and others in Lakeland who are interested in its history, a marker has been placed in the grounds of the Library upon the site of the encampment of the 2nd Massachusetts Regiment, U. S. Army, during the Spanish-American War.

# THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## THE ANNUAL MEETING

While their own more recent history might, quite naturally, come first with history-minded South Floridians, they have continuously shown much interest also in the past of the whole State. There has always been the fullest cooperation between the Florida Historical Society and the Historical Association of Southern Florida, and a good part of the membership and several of the officials of the two bodies have been common to both. So it will be like a family gathering when the State Society holds its annual meeting in Miami at the invitation of that Association and the University of Miami. The date, April 8 and 9, has been fixed at a time when the season is still on and the weather likely to be at its best, yet it will be after the jostling crowd has thinned out enough to assure elbow-room and reasonable accommodations.

If you attended our annual meeting of 1941 with the same hosts the recollection might well take you there again. If you were not there then you should be eager to go this time. Abundant historical entertainment is assured. The Program Committee, with Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau as chairman, has long been at work, and a number of papers on Florida subjects are being written by those who have specialized in certain fields of the State's history; and as much or as little of other entertainment as you wish is offered by our hosts.

You have doubtless always intended to attend at least one meeting of the Society. This is the meeting you should choose. Everyone is welcome to the program sessions, so bring your friends with you.

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## CALL FOR 1949 ANNUAL MEETING

On the recommendation of Dr. C. W. Tebeau, Pro-

fessor of History in the University of Miami, and Chairman both of the committee on local arrangements and of the program committee for the 1949 meeting, to be held in Miami, Florida, Dr. Mark F. Boyd, President of the Florida Historical Society, issues a call for the 1949 Annual Meeting to be held on April 8 and 9, at the McAllister Hotel, Miami.

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#### THE MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The good number of new members listed below, while not so many as the last report, shows a continuation of the widespread interest in our campaign to build up the Society throughout the State. Jacksonville this time takes the lead from Gainesville, but several other localities are getting to work and the next report will show the result of their efforts. Time is growing short, for the final report, accompanying the annual report of the president will be presented to the annual meeting in April.

The future of the Society, for a few years at least, depends upon our success in increasing the membership now. There still are many counties which have no members, and some of the large cities are not yet well represented. Our growth is up to the individual members. Will not each one try to bring in those around him or her who care for the history of our State.

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#### NEW MEMBERS

##### ALACHUA COUNTY

##### *Nominated by*

C. G. Mixson, Gainesville .....	Sam C. Proctor
Ray E. Held, University of Florida .....	Sam C. Proctor
George R. Bentley, University of Florida .....	Sam C. Proctor
James D. Glunt, University of Florida .....	Sam C. Proctor
George E. Wolff, University of Florida .....	Sam C. Proctor
Stanley E. West, University of Florida .....	Sam C. Proctor
Rev. and Mrs. Chris Matheson, Gainesville .....	Edward C. Williamson

<b>BREVARD COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Julia King</b> , Merritt's Island .....	Webster Merritt	
<b>Damon Hutzler</b> , Cocoa .....	W. T. Cash	
<b>CITRUS COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
Mrs. <b>J. A. McRae</b> , Homosassa .....	H. Maddox	
<b>DADE COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Edwin Mead</b> , Miami Beach .....	Gaines R. Wilson	
<b>Russell T. Pancoast</b> , Miami Beach .....	Gaines R. Wilson	
<b>DUVAL COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Dr. and Mrs. Leo G. Temples</b> , Jacksonville .....	Webster Merritt	
<b>Joseph E. McCarthy, Sr.</b> , Jacksonville .....	Webster Merritt	
<b>Mrs. Joseph E. McCarthy</b> , Jacksonville .....	Webster Merritt	
<b>Joseph E. McCarthy, Jr.</b> , Jacksonville .....	Webster Merritt	
<b>John H. Flood</b> , Jacksonville .....	J. Wm. Decker	
<b>Mrs. Thomas A. Palmer</b> , Jacksonville .....	Dorothy Dodd	
<b>Henry H. Buckman III</b> , Jacksonville .....	Frank H. Elmore, Jr.	
<b>Herman Ulmer</b> , Jacksonville .....	R. P. Daniel	
<b>JEFFERSON COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Elizabeth Mays</b> , Monticello .....	W. T. Cash	
<b>LEON COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Judge Dozier A. DeVane</b> , Tallahassee .....	Mark F. Boyd	
<b>Steve Yates</b> , Tallahassee .....	Mark F. Boyd	
<b>LAKE COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>H. K. Stokes</b> , Minneola .....	Edward C. Williamson	
<b>MONROE COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Marie L. Cappick</b> , Key West .....	Ruby Leach Carson	
<b>Mrs. Stephen W. Douglass</b> , Key West .....	Marie L. Cappick	
<b>OSCEOLA COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Mrs. Elizabeth A. Cantrell</b> , Kissimmee .....	Edward C. Williamson	
<b>PALM BEACH COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Mrs. B. C. Edington</b> , Lantana .....		
<b>PINELLAS COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Marvin E. Kaniss</b> , St. Petersburg .....	Alberta Johnson	
<b>POLK COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>J. Hardin Peterson</b> , Lakeland .....	H. Maddox	
<b>N. H. Bunting</b> , Lake Wales .....	Alberta Johnson	
<b>SARASOTA COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Karl H. Grismer</b> , Sarasota .....	Karl A. Bickel	
<b>SEMINOLE COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Mrs. Anita R. Crawford</b> , Oviedo .....	Mrs. B. G. Smith	
<b>VOLUSIA COUNTY</b>		Nominated by
<b>Hildegard C. Pawley</b> , New Smyrna Beach .....	Mrs. J. J. Sweett	
<b>Harley L. Freeman</b> , Ormond Beach .....	J. Wm. Decker	
<b>James P. Martin</b> , Villa Nova, Penna. ....	Alberta Johnson	

## DECEASED

<b>Francis P. Fleming</b> .....	Jacksonville
<b>Judge J. B. Whitfield</b> .....	Tallahassee
<b>Alfred Hasbrouck</b> .....	Winter Park
<b>J. Harry Schad</b> .....	Gainesville
<b>Emma L. G. Thomas</b> .....	Winter Park

## A NOTEWORTHY GIFT TO OUR LIBRARY

The Society has seldom received so interesting and so valuable a gift as a recent one from Hester Fleming Williams of Jacksonville. This donation is the Florida historical material preserved by Governor Francis P. Fleming, her grandfather.

As most of our members know, it was Governor Fleming who reestablished our Society in 1902, and carried it on his own shoulders until his death in 1908. Though his name did not appear on the title-page of the *QUARTERLY*, it was he, while president in 1908, who edited and published the *first two* numbers.

So Francis P. Fleming, with George R. Fairbanks of 1856, and Arthur T. Williams of 1924, are the ones the Society honors most.

Governor Fleming served in the 2nd Florida regiment in the War for Southern Independence and preserved the muster-rolls of most of its companies. These originals, thirty-four documents, are included in the gift of Mrs. Williams.

There are also numerous letters which Francis Fleming, as a youth of twenty-one *years*, wrote to his family from the front during the War. Some of these, with extracts from others, will be published in the *QUARTERLY*. Included also are contemporaneous newspaper clippings of the Florida troops in the Virginia campaigns, later letters to Governor Fleming from notable Floridians, the original letters included in Governor Fleming's published volume *Florida Troops in Virginia*, several rare Florida pamphlets, and other printed and manuscript Florida historical material.

## OTHER ACCESSIONS

Since the last issue of the Quarterly our Library has received:

Gov. R. K. Call to Gov. McDonald of Georgia (an original letter regarding a fugitive murderer) Feb. 23, 1842. Gift of Dr. C. Herbert Laub, University of Tampa.

Florida soldiers imprisoned at Ft. Delaware, Civil War.

Muster roll. Co. B. 2nd Fla. Reg. Gifts of Mrs. Lucius Albert Jones, Miami.

*Flames of Time*, by Baynard Kendrick. (Florida historical 1787-1813).

Florida's *Banishing Era*, by Mrs. Langdon Pearse. Gift of the author.

*Florida my Florida*. Song composed by Rev. G. V. Waugh, Florida Agricultural College, with photograph of the author. Gift of Kenneth E. Crouch.

Gifts of Mrs. Franklin L. Ezell, Leesburg:

Leesburg booklets, views, etc.

Portraits and clippings, Gen. R. E. Lee, and Light Horse Harry Lee. *Florida, An Industrial Survey*.

*Ponce de Leon Land*, by George M. Brown.

Common *Forest Trees of Florida*, Fla. Forestry Assn. 1925.

*Florida History and the New South*, an address by C. Seton Fleming.

View of old Methodist church at Newnansville.

*Delius, A Critical Biography*, by Arthur Hutchins. London, 1948.

Gift of Mrs. Henry L. Richmond.

View and history of oldest house at Key West.

Gift of Mrs. Stephen W. Douglass.

*The Story of the Telephone in Miami*.

Gift of C. J. Tucker, Jr.

Photostats of letters written from Micanopy in 1877. Descriptive. Gift of James Calvert Smith.

Original document, State of Florida vs. John Anderson (murder) 1845.

Gift of Dr. C. Herbert Laub, University of Tampa.

*Florida Archeology and Recent Ecological Changes*, by John M. Goggin.

Gift of the author.

*A West Indian Am* from *Florida*, by John M. Goggin and Irving Rouse.

Gift of the authors.

Map of Florida, 1848. Surveyor General's Office, St. Augustine.

*Henry Morrison Flagler*, In *Memoriam*.

Gift of James P. Martin.

Views of St. Augustine (2) 1885

Gift of H. Herbert Smith, Minnesota Historical Society.

*Principal Events in the History of Florida*. Department of Agriculture, 1921.

*Journal of the Annual Convention*, Diocese of South Florida. Protestant Episcopal Church 1948. Gift of Rev. W. F. Moses.

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS NUMBER OF THE QUARTERLY

*Ruby Leach Carson of Miami* has a B. A. degree from the University of Miami and an M. A. degree in history from the University of Florida. The present contribution is a part of her thesis there. She has contributed "Florida, Promoter of Cuban Liberty" to this QUARTERLY.

*Vaughn A. Bornet* has an M. A. degree from Emory University. He was Instructor in History at the University of Miami when writing this contribution, and is now at Stanford University.

*George Winston Smith* is Assistant Professor of History, College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, the University of Illinois.

*Nita Katharine Pyburn*, Associate Professor of Education, Florida State University, has a Ph.D. degree from the University of North Carolina.

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TO THE READER: This is an invitation to any one interested in Florida's history to join with us in the Florida Historical Society. The annual dues are four dollars, and this includes the QUARTERLY which is sent to all members as issued. Application may be made to Mrs. Alberta Johnson, Secretary, P.O. box 1149, St. Augustine.