

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FLORIDA HUMANITIES COUNCIL

FORUM



THE CIVIL WAR:

**WHEN FLORIDA
"OPENED UP THE
GATES OF HELL"**

WHY DID FLORIDA FIGHT IN THE WAR?

THE STORY OF TWO LOVERS 150 YEARS AGO

REENACTING IS FUN, EVEN IF IT KILLS YOU

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COVER: This montage includes images of Floridians in the Civil War era: soldiers, slaves, and troops marching under flags unfurled.

letter FROM THE DIRECTOR

On one of Florida's busiest highway interchanges just north of Tampa flies what is purportedly the largest Confederate flag in the world. Every time I catch sight of this 50-by-30-foot flag, I think of William Faulkner's warning that "The past is never dead. It's not even past."

Florida does not occupy the same place in Civil War history as our neighboring states. In fact, many would be surprised to know that Florida was third to join the Confederacy, after South Carolina and Mississippi. In today's Florida where the north is the south and the south is the north (as writer/folklorist Stetson Kennedy famously observed), many newly arrived Floridians ask me which side Florida took in the Civil War.

Florida's role in this watershed event was interesting and complex, which is why we chose it as the topic for this month's FORUM. Although we mention battles like the bloody clash at Olustee—Florida's major military engagement—we also explore aspects of the war less frequently discussed. Women, for example, are often depicted as plantation belles during the Civil War; but in truth, only a small percentage in Florida lived on planters' estates. As history professor Tracy Revels points out, most were people whose lives were defined by ceaseless labor in home and field. They were Crackers, slaves, and free blacks; and, during the war, all were required to do the backbreaking work normally shouldered by men. We also look at Florida's slave culture, imported by Old South agricultural entrepreneurs after Florida became a U.S. territory in 1821. The diverse experiences of slaves are reflected in reminiscences collected by WPA interviewers during the 1930s.

Rippling flags, soldiers marching, and hanky-waving girls left behind are stereotypically romantic images encountered in Civil War nostalgia. But unbearable heartache often accompanied the forced separation of families and lovers. We offer in this issue excerpts from a poignant series of letters between a young soldier and his bride; their plainspoken prose expresses the anxiety, sorrow, and danger that war carried even to the remote Florida frontier.

The state's wild coastline created opportunity for the South and problems for the North—and we recount stories of smuggling and secrets brought up from watery graves and now on display in Florida museums.

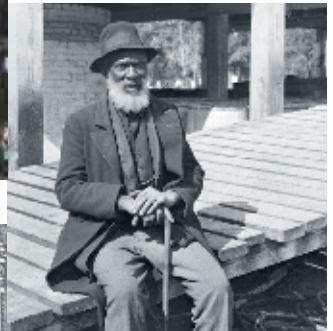
As one hardly given to studying war, I nonetheless find the ongoing interest in the tragic events of 1861 to 1865—and yes, the emotion born then and surviving to this day—instructive as to who we are as Americans and Floridians. Perhaps there is indeed no such thing as ancient history.

Janine Farver

FORUM

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Why did Florida fight in the Civil War?

TRAVEL BACK IN TIME TO 1860:



FLORIDA MAY BE KNOWN TODAY for Disney, development, and diverse cultures, but 150 years ago its largest population center was more like the Old South plantation belt in *Gone with the Wind*. Here, in a midsection of the Panhandle called “Middle Florida,” thousands of slaves worked on large cotton plantations owned by wealthy families who had migrated from Georgia, South Carolina, and other southern states. Slaves also worked on many smaller farms in the area, tilling fields, herding cattle and hogs, and cutting timber alongside their owners.



At top, a postcard of a cabin on an old Florida plantation.
Above, Pinehill Plantation home, Leon County.
Below, picking cotton on a Florida plantation.



Photos: Florida State Archives

Most of the rest of Florida was still frontier. Only three towns—Pensacola, Key West, and Jacksonville—had populations of over 2,000. Few people lived in the lower part of the peninsula. Florida’s total population was 140,424 residents—and nearly 45 percent (61,745) were slaves, according to 1860 census figures. Their owners, many from prominent southern planter families who had moved down starting in 1821 when Florida became a U.S. Territory, dominated the state’s economy and its political leadership.

The bloody wars had just recently ended between white settlers and Seminoles aided by runaway-slave allies. Most Indians and a few runaway slaves had been forced to emigrate to reservations west of the Mississippi, leaving only a few hundred who sought sanctuary in the Everglades. Poor white Cracker families had begun moving into the state’s central and southern reaches in 1842 to take advantage of a federal free-land program. Florida became a state in 1845.

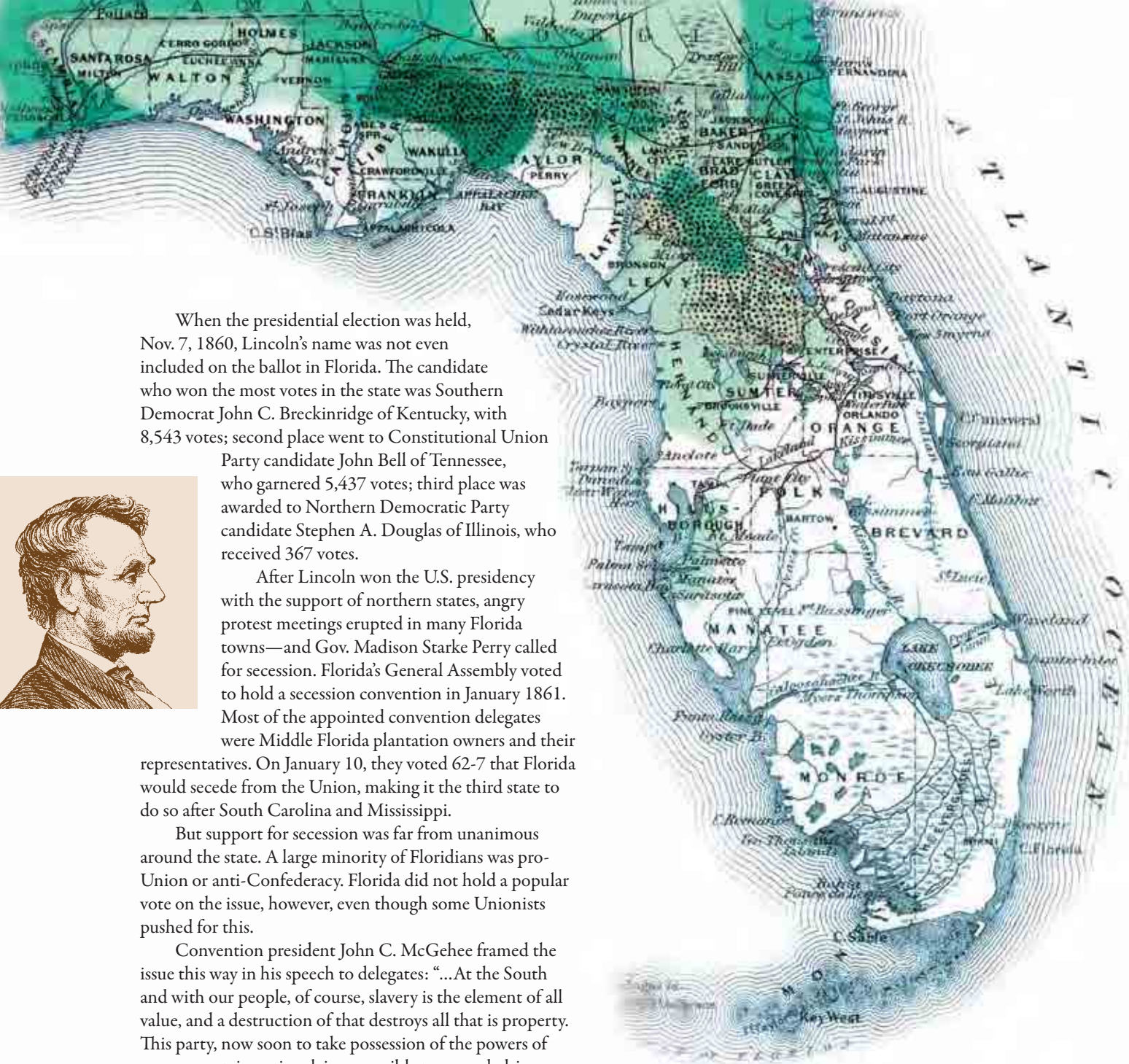
Starting in 1850 another wave of migrants from southern states had moved down. They included a substantial number from South Carolina, where the “states’ rights” theory was championed by leaders like John C. Calhoun, who held that states could declare null and void any federal law they deemed to be unconstitutional.

By 1860 transplants from South Carolina controlled much of Florida’s political landscape, along with other powerful plantation owners. Like those elsewhere in the South they were Democrats and ex-Whigs. They denounced the Republican Party of presidential candidate Abraham Lincoln as fanatical abolitionists who threatened the economic prosperity and way of life in the South.



Connect to more

For a link to Civil War sites in Florida, visit FORUM EXTRA! at www.flahum.org



When the presidential election was held, Nov. 7, 1860, Lincoln's name was not even included on the ballot in Florida. The candidate who won the most votes in the state was Southern Democrat John C. Breckinridge of Kentucky, with 8,543 votes; second place went to Constitutional Union Party candidate John Bell of Tennessee, who garnered 5,437 votes; third place was awarded to Northern Democratic Party candidate Stephen A. Douglas of Illinois, who received 367 votes.



After Lincoln won the U.S. presidency with the support of northern states, angry protest meetings erupted in many Florida towns—and Gov. Madison Starke Perry called for secession. Florida's General Assembly voted to hold a secession convention in January 1861. Most of the appointed convention delegates were Middle Florida plantation owners and their representatives. On January 10, they voted 62-7 that Florida would secede from the Union, making it the third state to do so after South Carolina and Mississippi.

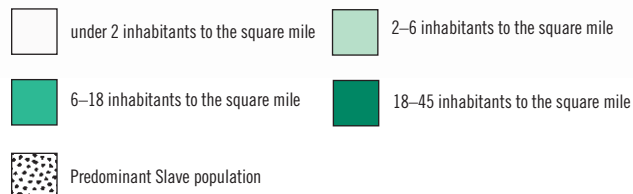
But support for secession was far from unanimous around the state. A large minority of Floridians was pro-Union or anti-Confederacy. Florida did not hold a popular vote on the issue, however, even though some Unionists pushed for this.

Convention president John C. McGehee framed the issue this way in his speech to delegates: "...At the South and with our people, of course, slavery is the element of all value, and a destruction of that destroys all that is property. This party, now soon to take possession of the powers of government, is sectional, irresponsible to us, and, driven on by an infuriated, fanatical madness that defies all opposition, must inevitably destroy every vestige of right growing out of property in slaves."

On the day of the convention vote in Tallahassee, former Gov. Richard Keith Call, an outspoken Unionist, told a jubilant crowd of secessionists: "You have opened the gates of Hell, from which shall flow the curses of the damned which shall sink you to perdition."



Richard Keith Call
Florida Territorial Governor
during 1830s and 1840s



"You have opened the gates of Hell, from which shall flow the curses of the damned which shall sink you to perdition."

FLORIDA GOES TO WAR

BY ROBERT A. TAYLOR



When Florida seceded from the Union, few doubted that the Confederate States of America would survive and prosper. Any attempts at coercion by the hated Yankees were sure to fail. If war did come it was certain to be easy, short, and of course glorious.

THE ACTUAL CONFLICT almost began in Florida that fateful year of 1861. A tense stand-off

almost came to gunfire between federals and rebels at Fort Pickens, located at the entrance of Pensacola Bay. But it was the firing on Fort Sumter near Charleston that commenced the hostilities.

Florida men of military age, and some who were not, flocked to join units bound for the greater Confederate army on the fighting fronts. Some 15,000 of the state's 140,400 inhabitants donned uniforms. This made Florida's manpower contribution to the Confederacy the largest per capita of any rebel state. Floridians soldiered in battles from Tennessee to Virginia, shedding their life's blood on fields in Chickamauga and Gettysburg. Others endured disease, poor and scanty food, and inadequate



Gov. John Milton

winter clothing in places far from warm Florida. Roughly 5,000 Floridians became war casualties, which was a high number for such a small state.

John Milton, a Jackson County planter, was Florida's wartime governor. Milton was devoted to the Southern cause and a firm believer in cooperation with the Confederate government in Richmond. But he faced a dilemma. The Confederate high command called most of Florida's fighting men to serve outside the state at more strategically important rebel posts further north, leaving Milton to figure out how to defend the state against Yankee attacks.

By the late spring of 1862 the Federals could claim control of much of Pensacola, St. Augustine, Fernandina, Key West, and Jacksonville (one of several Union occupations of that city). There were few men, and even fewer weapons, left anywhere in Florida. Richmond, with few exceptions, left Floridians militarily on their own for the duration.

Photos: Florida State Archives

EXTRACTING SALT FROM THE SEA

The night sky at Saint Andrews Bay glowed from fires boiling cauldrons of seawater. This protected inlet near present-day Panama City on the northwestern Gulf Coast was a key area for Confederate salt production during the war. By late 1861, the South grew desperate for salt. Union forces had cut off its previous suppliers of this important preservative for food. Florida, with its 1,200 miles of seacoast, became the new supplier.

Entrepreneurs, driven by patriotism or profiteering, produced salt all over the state by boiling seawater and bagging up the crystals after the liquid evaporated. The greatest concentration of salt works could be found on the protected St. Andrews coast where seawater was plentiful, fuel abundant, and a good network of wagon trails made it possible to move salt to Tallahassee and northward to Montgomery or Macon.

This activity did not escape the notice of Yankee sailors on Union warships out in the Gulf. The firelight and the horrible smell of boiling seawater told them that salt was being made to help the Confederacy. Enterprising and often bored, naval officers decided to strike a blow by leading raiding parties against salt works on the shoreline. One vessel, the U.S.S. *Restless*, was particularly active beginning late in 1863. Sailors and marines armed with sledgehammers landed, laid into the salt works, and threw bags of salt back into the sea. Then they rowed back to their ship, often bringing with them salt workers, who were Florida slaves seeking freedom.

But the salt operations proved very tough to shut down; time after time, they rose from the ashes to continue production. In fact, some were back in action before Union sailors got back to their ships. Spare parts were hidden nearby to make quick repairs. In time Union officers grew tired of this, concluding that it would be almost impossible to stop salt production without ground troops.

—ROBERT A. TAYLOR



This illustration depicts Union sailors destroying a rebel salt factory on the Florida coast in 1862.

Florida's major contribution to the war effort was economic—providing supplies and food to the Confederate states with the help of smugglers, farmers, ranchers, and slaves.

Rebel smugglers took advantage of Florida's extensive coastline to sneak valuable cargoes, like cotton, past Union ships to Cuba or the Bahamas where they bartered for vitally needed supplies like coffee, shoes, and sewing needles. They smuggled the supplies into Florida via secluded coasts and then moved their caches north with great difficulty on the state's few roads, rivers, and faltering railroads. No rail connection even existed to neighboring Georgia until 1865, but nonetheless the supplies got to the Confederate front. The smuggling in and out of Florida tied down dozens of Union warships that formed a blockade around the state's coastlines.

Ironically Florida's most valuable

economic contribution to the Confederate war machine was not imported but manufactured at home: salt. In the days before refrigeration, salt was essential to preserve food.

It was also necessary for tanning leather. And by 1862 it was in very short supply across the lower South. By boiling sea water, Floridians on



Capt. Richard H. Bradford, the first Florida soldier to be killed in the Civil War, died at the Battle of Santa Rosa Island, Oct. 9, 1861.

both coasts could make usable salt, which then was sent to Georgia and Alabama where folks were desperate for it. Millions of dollars were invested in Florida salt works by war's end.

By 1863, Florida also became an important source for food and was often called "the garden farm of the Confederacy." Floridians sent corn, corn whiskey, citrus fruit, sugar, and pork to the Confederate army, navy, and civilians as far away as South Carolina. But the state's primary food export during the Civil War was, not surprisingly, beef cattle.

NOV. 7, 1860—Abraham Lincoln is elected President

NOV. 30, 1860—Florida Gov. Madison Perry signs a bill for a Secession Convention

JAN. 3, 1861—Florida's Secession Convention convenes

JAN. 6–8, 1861—Florida troops seize federal arsenal at Apalachicola and take Fort Marion in St. Augustine; local citizens try to take Fort Barrancas in Pensacola Harbor

JAN. 10, 1861—Convention votes 62-7 that Florida should secede from the Union

JAN. 12, 1861—Florida troops capture Pensacola Navy Yard, Fort Barrancas, and Fort McCree

FEB. 8, 1861—Florida is admitted to the Confederacy as its third founding member

APRIL 12–13, 1861—Confederate bombardment of Fort Sumter, S.C., marks start of the Civil War

OCTOBER 7, 1861—John Milton becomes Florida governor

OCT. 9, 1861—Confederates try to capture Fort Pickens



Francis Asbury Hendry (back row, center) was a captain of the First Florida Cow Cavalry. This photo, taken in about 1870, shows him with Seminole leaders. Hendry County is named after him.



Streaty Parker, of Bartow, a soldier with the Cow Cavalry.



Columbiad guns of the Confederate water battery are shown at the entrance to Pensacola Bay in February 1861.



Jacob Summerlin, the Florida cattle baron known as "King of the Crackers," wearied of being paid in Confederate scrip for his cattle, so he began selling his cows to Cuba for Spanish gold.

The American cattle industry was born on Florida's piney prairies in the days of the Spanish conquistadors. By the 1850s large herds of wild cows wandered central and south Florida rivaling those in Texas. Cattlemen like the legendary Jacob Summerlin sold cows to the Confederate government beginning in 1861. However, he

eventually grew tired of being paid in Confederate scrip and, with his associates, turned to running cattle to Cuba in exchange for Spanish gold.

But because beef was in such demand, the Confederates formed special cattle guard units, called the Cow Cavalry, to make sure the Florida herds got to the Georgia line. Through these efforts vital rations were delivered to rebel troops in Tennessee and Charleston and to starving Union prisoners of war behind Andersonville's grim walls.

By 1865 Florida was an organized supply depot for the Confederate States. In fact the system continued to function even after Lee's surrender at Appomattox Court House. Such productivity played no small role in helping Florida recover economically from the war at a faster rate than its blighted neighbor states.

A major reason why Florida could be so generous in its resources during the war was the presence of many thousands of African American slaves. These Floridians worked the farms, boiled the salt, and helped drive the cattle that went to the Confederacy. Their labors, mostly in the interior of the peninsula, were rarely disturbed by Federal military operations. In the

process, though, many slaves were presented with opportunities to escape. Union soldiers and sailors offered them freedom, and many slaves were forced to choose between freedom with strangers or continued bondage with family and friends.

Florida's women also helped in great measure to keep the state's economy running under wartime stresses. With so many husbands and sons away fighting the war, they took up the challenge of managing farms and plantations and did heavy agricultural labor themselves when necessary. They raised families and dealt with critical shortages of consumer goods, often by improvising and "making do." Loneliness, isolation, and fear of attack were constant companions for these women. But they endured and found strength and a self-confidence they never knew they had.

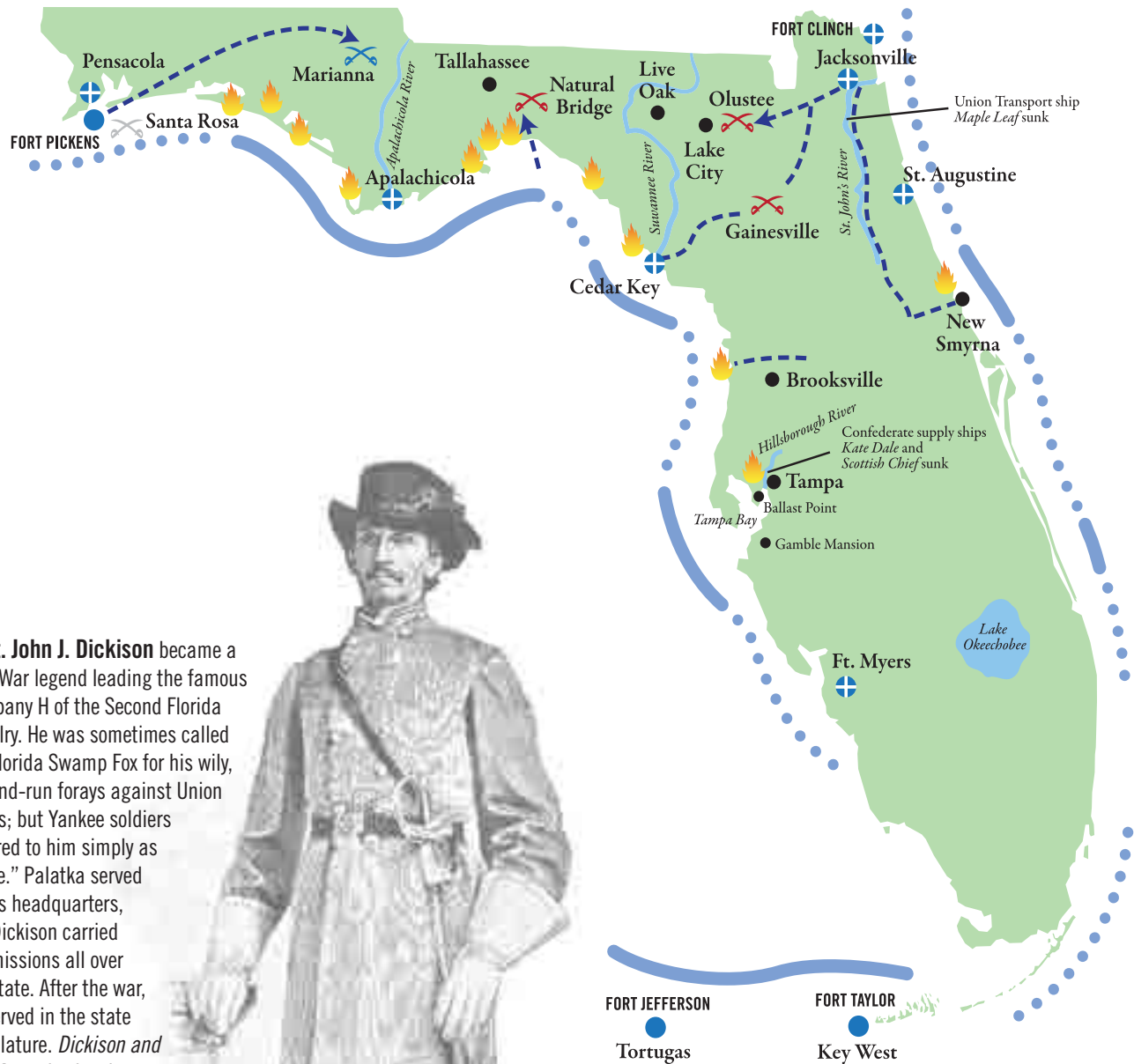
All Floridians regardless of gender or race found themselves caught up the Civil War in some fashion. This was indeed civil war, with the decidedly uncivil violence and cruelty that such conflicts generate. Pro-secession/ Confederate sentiment was never monolithic in Florida, and as the war dragged on antiwar Unionism grew. Pre-war geographic and political

FEBRUARY–MARCH 1862—Most Confederate troops are withdrawn from Florida.

MARCH 1862—Federals occupy Fernandina and St. Augustine, which they hold until the end of the war; Jacksonville is occupied the first of four times during the war.

OCT. 16–18, 1862—Union landing party near Tampa burns *Scottish Chief* and *Kate Dale*.

OCTOBER, 1862—Federals destroy salt works and 200,000 bushels of salt on James Island.



Capt. John J. Dickison became a Civil War legend leading the famous Company H of the Second Florida Cavalry. He was sometimes called the Florida Swamp Fox for his wily, hit-and-run forays against Union forces; but Yankee soldiers referred to him simply as "Dixie." Palatka served as his headquarters, but Dickison carried out missions all over the state. After the war, he served in the state Legislature. *Dickison and His Men*, a book written by the captain's wife Mary Elizabeth and published in 1890, tells the story of his wartime exploits.



FEB. 7, 1864—Federals occupy Jacksonville for the final time

FEB. 20, 1864—Battle of Olustee: The largest and bloodiest battle in Florida is fought east of Lake City; the Confederates win a decisive victory, stopping a Union advance that started in Jacksonville

APRIL 1, 1864—Union ship *Maple Leaf* hits a mine in the St. Johns River and sinks

differences did not disappear either. By 1863 the fantasy of a short painless war had evaporated. Confederate policies like a military draft and impressment of private property only weakened ties. In fact by 1865 there were two regiments of Florida Unionists in the blue-clad army, and pro-Union guerrilla bands roamed the state and clashed with their bitter rebel enemies.

On the other hand, rank-and-file Union soldiers serving in Florida found it to be very good duty. Boys from New York and Connecticut enjoyed Florida's warm weather, good rations, and exotic locales complete with palm trees. Yankees garrisoned Pensacola, Key West, and Saint Augustine, which became a Federal rest center. They picked fresh oranges from nearby groves and some managed to box them up and ship them northward to families, thus beginning a Florida holiday tradition.

While Florida saw no battles on the scale of Bull Run, the state did experience combat, which tended to result from raids out of bases like Pensacola, Jacksonville, or Fort Myers. Yankee sailors sallied forth as well on the Gulf Coast or from their gunboats cruising the St. Johns River. The



Artist's depiction of Capt. Dickson and his men in a fight with Union soldiers near Braddock Farm, Volusia County, in 1865. The Confederates won the battle, killing four federal soldiers and capturing 51 others, in addition to seizing wagons, cotton, horses, and small arms. Dickson's unit did not lose a man in the engagement.

Confederate commissary agents traveled through Florida collecting livestock from farmers to feed the army. This created great hardship for the civilians, as indicated in this excerpt from a letter sent to Florida Gov. John Milton by Rev. John R. Richards of Calhoun County describing the actions of agent J.P. Coker:

"...Some of my neighbors went after him and begged him to give them their milch cows, which he Mr. Coker, refused to do, and took them on. And now, my dear Governor, I assure you, on the honor of a gentleman, that to my knowledge there are soldiers' families in my neighborhood that the last head of cattle have been taken from them and drove off, and unless this pressing of cows is stopped speedily there won't be a cow left in Calhoun County. I know of several soldiers' families in this county that haven't had one grain of corn in the last three weeks, nor any likelihood of their getting any in the next three months; their few cows taken away and they left to starve; their husbands slain on the battlefield..."

On Jan. 26, 1864, Gov. Milton complained about the agents to James A. Seddon, Confederate Secretary of War. An excerpt from Milton's letter:

"...I would also respectfully invite your attention to the copies of letters received by me relative to the impressment of milch cows and calves by the commissary agents...The effect of the impressments made in West Florida was the desertion of a large number of the troops in that part of the State, a portion of whom have joined the enemy. From one company, which was considered the best drilled and most reliable company in West Florida, fifty-two men deserted with their arms, some of whom were known to be brave men, who indignant at the heartless treatment of the rights of citizens, have joined the enemy..."



African American soldiers in the Union army, as depicted by artist John Rae. Black troops at the Battle of Olustee included the 54th Massachusetts regiment, celebrated in the 1989 movie *Glory*.

Illustrations: Florida State Archives

1865

MARCH 6, 1865—Battle of Natural Bridge: Confederates, mostly cadets from the nearby Florida Military and Collegiate Institute, defeat Union soldiers and prevent the capture of Tallahassee

APRIL 1, 1865—Florida Gov. John Milton commits suicide

APRIL 9, 1865—Gen. Robert E. Lee surrenders to Gen. Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox

APRIL 14, 1865—President Lincoln is assassinated

APRIL, 1865—Some Confederate officials flee through Florida to the Caribbean

MAY 20, 1865—Florida is returned to Union control, and slaves are officially freed

largest clashes in Florida occurred in 1864–65 at Olustee, Fort Myers, and Natural Bridge. Only a few thousand troops fought at these places, and the battles were small compared to the titanic battles waged to the north. The bloodiest Florida fight was at Olustee, with combined losses of over 2,800 men.

The fateful spring of 1865 saw Lincoln returned to the White House and the Confederacy teetering on the brink of collapse. Ironically Tallahassee was the only Confederate state capital



Drawing of the Judah P. Benjamin Confederate Memorial at the Gamble Plantation near Ellenton, by artist John Rae.

east of the Mississippi not to fall to the enemy, though the Union had the military might to take it if they had truly wanted to. By late April word of Lee's surrender reached Florida. The Richmond government no longer existed. Florida's Confederate governor, John Milton, was dead—widely reported to have committed suicide when he heard that the Confederate cause was lost.

Rebel soldiers around the state stacked their arms, swore allegiance to the Union, and headed for home. Their war was over. But life for returning veterans would be very different than it had been before the war.

Some towns like Jacksonville suffered heavy damage; others like Apalachicola never recovered their pre-war prosperity. The state's economy would have to be rebuilt minus help from the federal government. Floridians, both Union supporters and ardent Confederates, had to learn to live together in peace. Black Floridians were now free, but no one knew how the freed slaves would fit into Florida life.

Meanwhile, thousands of Union veterans recalled their duty in exotic Florida, and more than a few opted to return. They brought about Florida's first postwar population boom—along with skills and needed investment capital to help revitalize the state. Luckily Florida still contained great natural resources not yet fully tapped. Yet the shadow of the Civil War lingered for many years as the old societal structures went the way of the past dreams of glory.



A cannon on display at the Olustee Battlefield Historic Site.

ROBERT A. TAYLOR, *history professor at the Florida Institute of Technology, is President Emeritus of the Florida Historical Society. His books include Rebel Storehouse: Florida in the Confederacy.*

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THUNDER *on the* RIVER

The following excerpt from historian Daniel L. Schafer's new book, *Thunder on the River: The Civil War in Northeast Florida*, describes the mood and scene in Jacksonville when Union gunboats approached the town on the St. Johns River in March 1862.

As the gunboats continued upriver, a white flag was seen hoisted above a house on the shore, prompting [Union Lt. Thomas Holdup Stevens] to send a party to the wharf with assurances that no harm would come to peaceful and unarmed citizens. As the squadron proceeded, more houses were seen flying white flags, giving the illusion of peace and calm, but the Federals grew increasingly apprehensive when they saw smoke from the fires of the previous evening still lingering in the skyline ahead. *The Tribune* correspondent recorded his fear that the town might already be destroyed. Stevens cast caution aside and ordered the squadron to proceed at full steam toward the clouds of black smoke. He would soon learn the full extent of the terror that Jacksonville's remaining residents had experienced...

As long as the gunboats had remained outside the bar at the entrance to the river, Mayor Hoag was able to avoid wholesale panic...But as soon as word arrived that the gunboats had entered the St. Johns River, conditions turned chaotic. Refugees began streaming out of town carrying their belongings. The town's small railroad depot became the scene of near riotous confusion as hundreds of panicked people contended for places near the track in hopes of boarding one of the special trains operating during the emergency.

With the departure of many of the city's older and more influential Southern residents, Jacksonville's Unionists were left to the mercy of a mob that was beginning to range through the streets with increasing belligerence. Calvin Robinson was warned by friends of a plan to murder him and destroy his property. Also singled out for execution was attorney Philip Fraser, a 42-year-old Pennsylvanian who had lived in Jacksonville since 1841 and served as mayor in 1855...

Hurrying to his home, Robinson gathered his family and survival rations and ran to a boat at the wharf behind his store. He had rowed only a few yards from the wharf when he and his wife witnessed "a column of troops march down Bay Street and another column down the back of the town and in a few minutes the city was under close military guard." Next came the ruffians of the vigilance committee, who saw Robinson and cursed at him as he and his family crossed the river...Later that evening, they "were startled by the sudden illumination of the surrounding woods, and looking out discovered that the Confederates had begun their work of burning the steam mills [to deny their use to the enemy]... Soon, all of these were in flames and their light reflected back from the sky, then overcast with heavy clouds, was a fearful sight to look upon. The whole heavens seemed like billows of flames."

DANIEL L. SCHAFER is Distinguished Professor Emeritus of History at the University of North Florida.

At top, a view of New Fernandina and Cedar Keys Railway, occupied by Federal naval and land forces in March 1862. Image from Frank Leslie's illustrated newspaper. Below, Union soldiers in an artillery camp in Jacksonville during the war.



Photo and Illustration: Florida State Archives

SAVE THE DATES!!!

MAY 27, 28 and 29, 2010



THE FLORIDA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING

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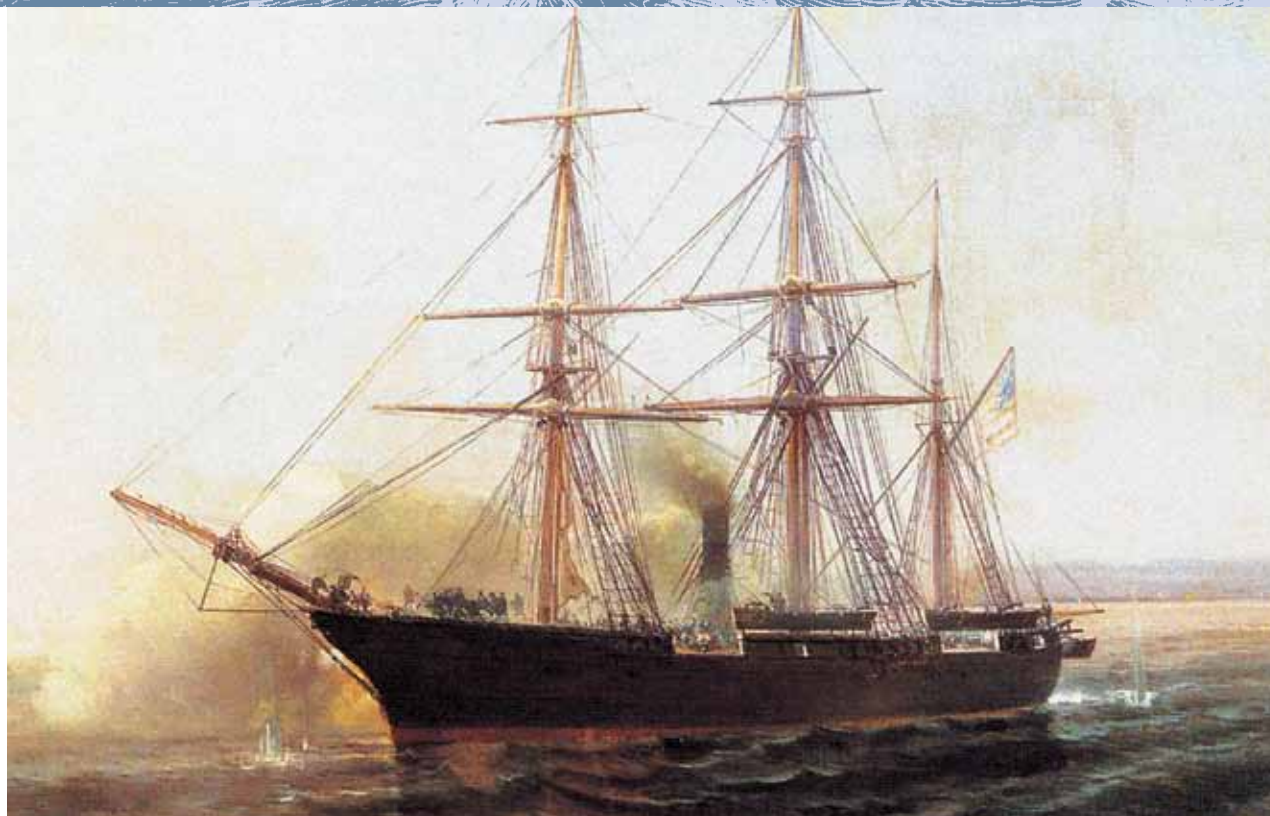
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This steamer is a federal ship, but it is similar to many Confederate blockade runners like the *Scottish Chief*.

TALES OF SPIES, SECRETS, AND SMUGGLERS

BY JON WILSON



Capt. James McKay

ON OCT. 16, 1863, TWO UNION GUNBOATS, the *Taboma* and the *Adela*, steamed up Tampa Bay on a mission. They anchored a mile offshore and commenced throwing thunder and shell at Fort Brooke and Tampa. Yankee gunboat Commander A.A. Semmes reported that the cannon fuses sputtered but that he and his crews nonetheless were able to bombard the targets “at

our leisure” with a 200-pound Parrott gun. While the barrage did extensive damage to the fort and the Confederate village of Tampa, that was not the real mission. The *Taboma* and the *Adela* were simply creating a diversion while more than 100 Union raiders slipped ashore at a nearby site called Ballast Point.

Once the raiders were on land they set out on a 15-mile trek through forest and scrub, taking care to avoid the occasional cabin that might shelter a rebel sympathizer. They lugged two large burdens: a boat, in case they needed to cross streams; and a sick man on a stretcher—their guide. The man, a Tampa native who had served in the Union Navy, knew the unfamiliar, wild terrain.

The Yankees trudged five hours until they came upon a secluded shipyard far up the Hillsborough River. There, two ships were moored—the *Scottish Chief* and the *Kate Dale*. Both bulged with cargoes of cotton. These

were fast vessels that for months had successfully smuggled goods back and forth past Union blockade ships along the Florida coast. They were slated to set out again soon to trade the cotton in Cuba or the Bahamas for arms, ammunition, medical supplies, liquor, and food to sustain a dying Confederacy. Former Tampa Mayor James McKay owned the ships.

McKay and other blockade runners from Florida were adept at slipping out of myriad bays, bayous, and rivers along the state's 1,200 miles of coastline. After trading their cargo in foreign ports, they would slip back through the blockade to Florida, bringing wartime contraband vital to the Confederacy. McKay and his ships had eluded Union enforcers at least six times over the previous few months. Now—after the South's prospects had been seriously damaged at the Battle of Gettysburg and the Siege of Vicksburg—Union leaders believed that by better enforcing their blockade they might be able to hurry the war's end. They targeted McKay's ships as a priority.

The Yankee raiders silently approached the moored ships. Soon the spark of a fire was seen in the half light, and within minutes both ships were burning. The raiders then took several prisoners (McKay not among them) and turned around to retrace their steps to Ballast Point. On the journey they encountered armed civilians and a Confederate cavalry unit. A battle on the Ballast Point beach resulted in casualties on both sides—the only Civil War episode in Tampa in which soldiers died.

Back at the secluded shipyard, the *Kate Dale* sank where it was. But the Confederates were able to tow the *Scottish Chief* downriver and salvage equipment before it went down. Both ships lay shrouded beneath the Hillsborough River's tannin waters for nearly 150 years.

Using sophisticated technology, marine archaeologists and dive teams from the Florida Aquarium found the *Kate Dale* in 2008 and pinpointed the *Scottish Chief* in 2009.

It is unlikely that either ship will be raised, although crews might excavate part of the *Scottish Chief*'s hull. Within the next two or three years the Florida Aquarium hopes to open an exhibit of this chapter in Civil War history, including any artifacts that can be recovered.

"Until we see what is hidden in the buried hull we won't know for certain," said Florida Aquarium spokesman Tom Wagner. "It already is very significant because of its role in history, who owned it, and how it came to rest in the Hillsborough River."

The role of the ship's owner in the Civil War is still unclear, Wagner said. "It depends who you talk to as to whether James McKay was a sympathizer for the Confederate army or a spy for the Union. I [see] him as a kind of Tampa Rhett Butler who was using both sides for capital gain."

Regardless of McKay's motives, the Union operation to put him out of business was portrayed as a success. Yankee gunboat Commander A.A. Semmes wrote in his official report: "I feel a great deal of satisfaction in having impressed the rebels with the idea that blockade-running vessels are not safe, even up the Hillsboro River."

JON WILSON, a retired Florida journalist, is a frequent contributor to FORUM.



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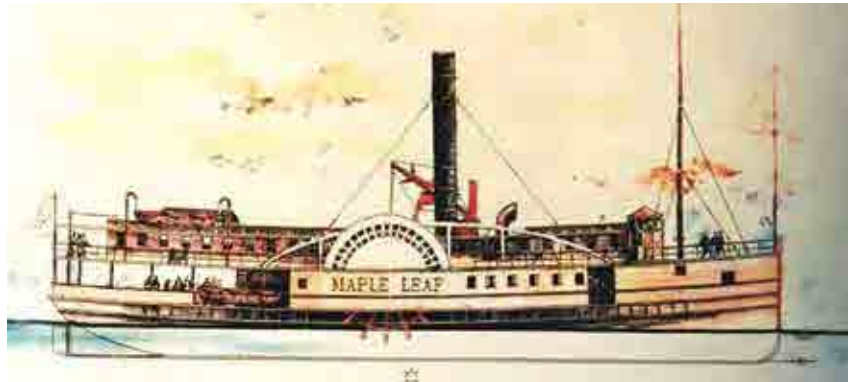
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RECOVERING HISTORY FROM A RIVER

A GLISTENING MOON LIT THE WATER

of the St. Johns River as a Union steamship stealthily pushed toward Jacksonville in the early morning hours of April 1, 1864. The *Maple Leaf* was a spacious side-wheeler, 181 feet long and 25 wide, and on this quiet night it carried passengers, crew, Confederate prisoners, and a massive shipment of military equipment and soldiers' personal belongings. Yet the heavy vessel moved smoothly through the water, its paddles making only a soothing whish. Then an explosion tore the night apart.



This is a colorized version of a drawing of the *Maple Leaf* based on an 1856 ambrotype and archaeological evidence. Source: *The Maple Leaf: An Extraordinary American Civil War Shipwreck*, by Keith V. Holland

Image from MilitaryHistoryOnline.com

THE BLAST RIPPED A HOLE in the ship's hull and collapsed the decks. A torrent of water rushed in and drowned the boiler fires. In two minutes the ship settled—leaving only the top of the wheelhouse and part of a smokestack visible above the water. A stench of black powder fouled the air. A jammed steam whistle shrieked. Fifty-eight passengers jumped onto the lifeboats. The ship slipped down into the murky depths of the St. Johns with eight people still aboard: four Confederate prisoners who were not allowed on the lifeboats and four crewmen killed in the blast. The lifeboats took the survivors to safety in Jacksonville; the Confederate prisoners were rescued later.

"The Steamer *Maple Leaf* Blown Up by a Torpedo," blared the headline in the *New York Times*. The device that blew up the *Maple Leaf* would be called a mine today. It was a keg-like contraption holding 70 pounds of small-grain cannon powder—one of a dozen that Florida's Confederates had planted in the St. Johns to disrupt Union boat traffic, prevent the resupply of Yankee garrisons, and discourage raids on river towns.

The story of the *Maple Leaf* was largely forgotten as the Civil War marched on to its grisly end. For the next 120 years the ship lay under 20 feet of water and a protective blanket of mud. But in 1984 amateur historians, led by Keith V. Holland of Jacksonville, found the site of the wreck. After a few years of research and legal work, they sent in divers who discovered the ship's hull. And within a few years this once-forgotten Civil War casualty became famous.

The river-bottom mud covering the wreck all those years had acted as a preservative, protecting the ship and its contents from the destructive forces of time. Its cargo was discovered to be the most important cache of Civil War artifacts ever found.

Divers salvaged nearly 3,000 items, among them mess plates, pails, pans, camp stoves, and field desks; toothbrushes, inkwells, dominoes, and daguerreotypes; twists of tobacco, fifes, flutes, and a clarinet; sea shell collections and ornate dishware likely looted from plantations. The *Maple Leaf* was delivering the material to soldiers who were encamped elsewhere and not aboard the vessel.



Henry Dale, a civilian from Boston, was captain of the *Maple Leaf*.

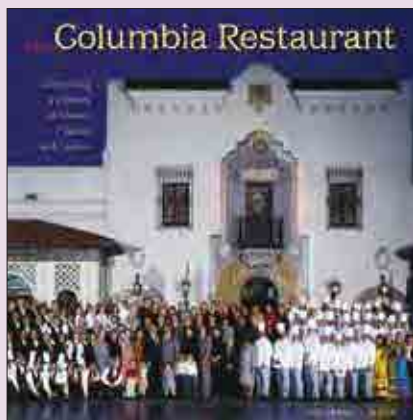
"The wreck of the *Maple Leaf* is unsurpassed as a source for Civil War material culture," wrote Edwin C. Bearss, former chief historian of the National Park Service. "The site combines one of the largest ships sunk during the war, carrying all the worldly goods of more than a thousand soldiers, with a river bottom environment that perfectly preserved the ship and cargo...Considered among Florida shipwrecks, *Maple Leaf* is probably the best preserved site in Florida."

The *Maple Leaf* exploration yielded the largest collection of Civil War relics in the world and even includes recovered sections of the wrecked ship. Displays can be seen at the Jacksonville Museum of Science and History and at the Mandarin Museum and Historical Society.

—JON WILSON

Connect to more

For a link to the *Maple Leaf* website, visit FORUM EXTRA! at www.flahum.org



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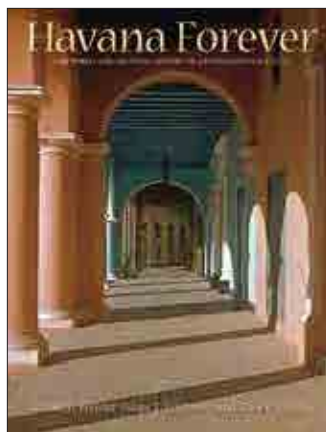
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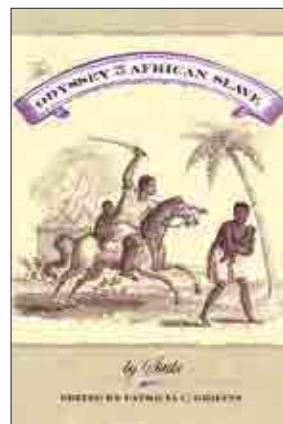
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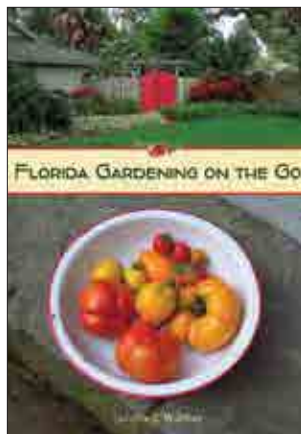


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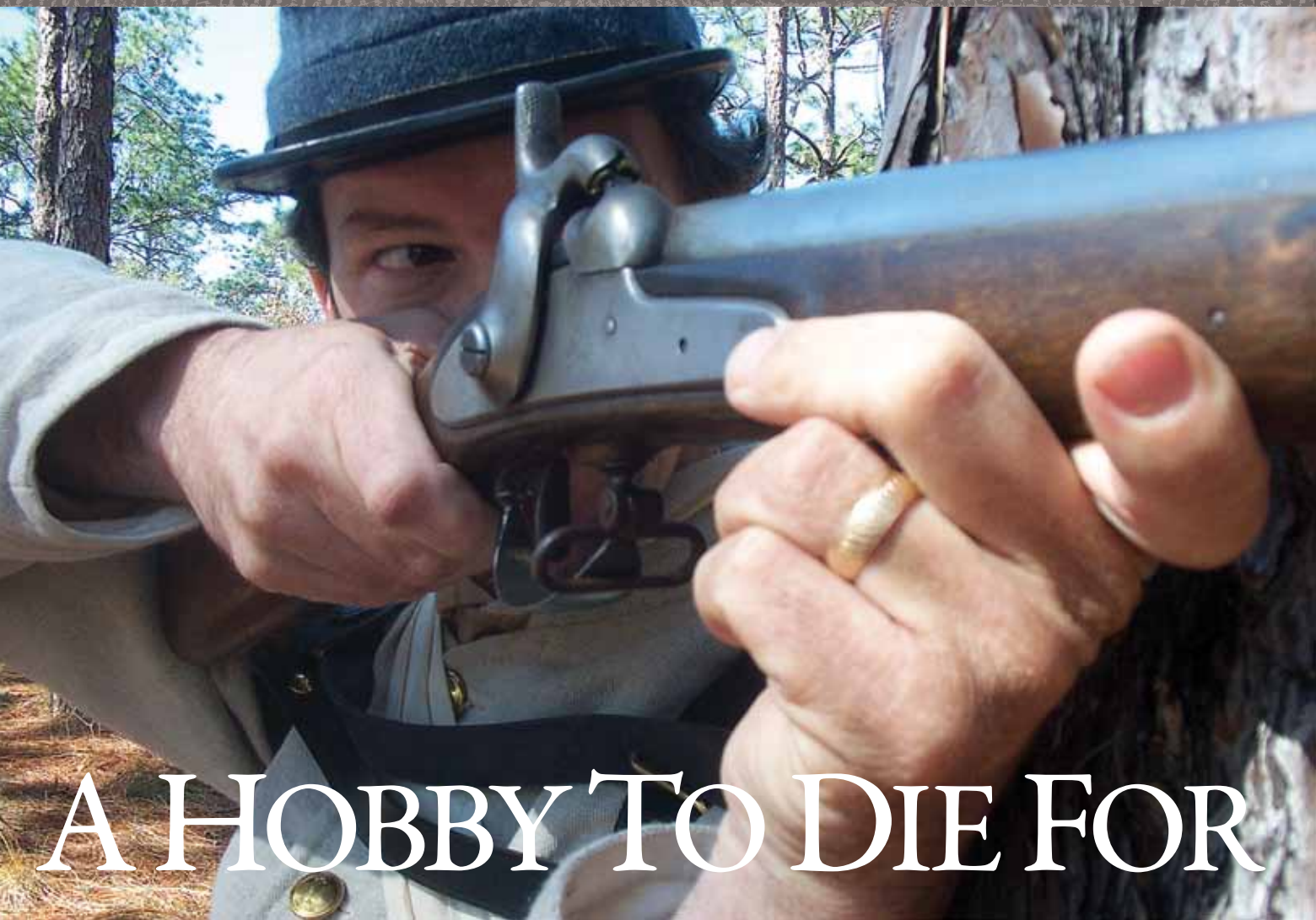
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A HOBBY TO DIE FOR

A Confederate soldier takes aim during a reenactment of the Battle of Olustee.

Photo courtesy of Brian Terrell

By THOMAS R. FASULO

Why would otherwise intelligent people wear wool clothes in the hot, humid Florida weather? Why would they spend days out in the heat, cooking their food over open fires, sleeping in tents or in the open air, marching and fighting, all in sweat-soaked clothing? Believe it or not, it is because they are having a wonderful time!

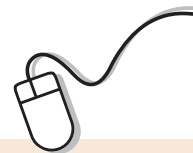
When asked why I reenact and perform Civil War living history, I tell people that it is a tremendous stress reliever from my day job. After all, nothing reduces stress like a couple of screaming bayonet charges across a battlefield. Plus, reenacting is the only

hobby I know where, when you get either tired or bored, you can “take a hit” (get shot), fall down, take a nap, and still be participating in your hobby. If you are just wounded, you can lie there and watch your friends still running around the battlefield with a better view than the spectators paid for. In fact, if you take a hit well, you may be complimented by your comrades saying, “Nice hit, Tom!” as they march past your body.

Tales of great hits are often discussed around the campfires. In fact, many reenactors look forward to the spectators leaving at the end of the day so they can step out of character and enjoy each other’s company. One of my favorite dying stories relates to when I was part of an infantry company during

a battle and our captain gave us the order to fire by volley at an opposing unit. As 40 of us fired at the enemy, only one of them fell down. No one thought much of this until a soldier in our front ranks said, “Boys, this would work a lot better if we didn’t all shoot at the same guy.” Perhaps the spectators that day thought we were doing some serious fighting, but we actually were laughing so hard we had trouble reloading for several minutes.

Another oft-told tale involves a Battle of Olustee reenactment in the early ‘90s. At this battle the Union forces are supposed to take heavy casualties; it was one of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War in proportion to the numbers of troops involved. My unit was on the Union side that day,



Connect to more

For more photos and a link to more about reenactments, visit FORUM EXTRA! at www.flahum.org

Everyone plays a role at a reenactment, even if it is only as “authentic background.”

fighting close to the spectators’ gallery. As the battle progressed our company commander told us to start taking heavy casualties. There was only one problem: None of the Confederate units was firing at us. Every five minutes or so, we would hear our captain call out, “Remember, start taking a lot of hits.” Finally, one Confederate unit came near us, but it fired at another Union company. Then, finally, one of the Confederate soldiers, reloading faster than the others, took the opportunity to shoot at us. So, remembering what we had been told, we took hits. About 10 to 15 of us dropped! All shot by one Confederate! Of course, we thought this was funny and many of us began laughing—but we weren’t laughing as hard as the spectators. Our Confederate friends still rib us about this.

Not all of the people who reenact like to interact with the spectators. Sometimes it’s because they are shy or they fear they don’t know enough about the war to answer questions. Others say the spectators spoil their “immersion” into the 1860s mindset they are trying to achieve. This is fine with those of us who love interacting as living historians. Everyone plays a role at a reenactment, even if it is only as “authentic background.” Remember, we are there to enjoy ourselves too!

If you attend a reenactment (battle) or living history (garrison), you might want to avoid asking some questions we hear all too often. These include: “Where did you really sleep last night?” (as if no one has ever slept outside or in a tent); “You’re not really going to eat that, are you?” (no, the pizza delivery man will be here soon); or “Are you hot in those clothes?” (uh, excuse me, ma’am or sir, do you know you are walking around half naked).

Some people are so used to modern conveniences that they are surprised by some things we do. For example, while serving as a member of the Florida Militia that seized St. Augustine’s Fort Marion, as happened in January 1861, I was sitting in the fort’s guard area. Since it was cold and rainy outside, we had a fire going to keep us warm. Two ladies came in and looked the area over. One walked down the aisle, examined the fireplace, then rushed back to her companion and exclaimed, “They have a real fire.”

Some people believe that living history takes a lot of effort and, to some extent, they are correct. But doing living history can also be very easy. At one event, I was showing a teenaged reenactor how to properly chop wood. Understanding the physics of chopping wood makes it much less of a chore.

However, after about 10 minutes, he put down the axe and left, saying, “I didn’t come here to chop wood. I came here to do living history.”

So I took the axe and slowly began cutting the firewood we needed to cook our supper. Within 10 minutes a spectator came by and took my photograph. He was soon followed by another camera-toting spectator, and then many others. What is it about cutting firewood that draws photographers? Perhaps it was the uniform? At one time I had so many spectators taking my picture I had to be careful where I swung the axe.

Soon, even a British BBC film crew came by and filmed me for a show they were doing on “hardcore reenacting.” Later that night, while I was sitting with friends by the campfire, the teenaged reenactor came over and asked me how I got so many people to take my picture. So I told him, “I didn’t come here to do living history. I came here to chop wood.”

THOMAS R. FASULO, an entomologist with the University of Florida, has studied the American Civil War for 50 years and has been involved in reenactments since 1993. He is webmaster of battleofolustee.org.



The Union attacks at an Olustee reenactment.



Photo courtesy of Brian Terrell

The Confederate infantry prepares for battle at Olustee reenactment.



Photo courtesy of Stephen Romero

alive!

FHC Board elects two new members

FHC's Board of Directors has elected two new members to replace two whose terms recently expired. The new members, who will serve through September 2012, are:

DEBORAH KYNES, a lawyer and former Dunedin City Commissioner who has spent more than 25 years as a civic leader in Pinellas County. Her work has included serving as chair of the Pinellas County Arts Council, the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, and the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council. She has a bachelor's degree in English from the University of

Arkansas and a juris doctorate from the University of Tulsa.

ANDREW H. McLEOD, director of government affairs for The Nature Conservancy's Florida Chapter, has spent most of his career in public service. He worked on the staffs of

two U.S. Senators and former U.S. Rep. Jim Leach, current NEH chair. McLeod has a bachelor's degree in history and religion from George Washington University, a master's degree in national security studies from Georgetown

University, and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard University. He is on the boards of the Florida Earth Foundation and the Tallahassee Trust for Historic Preservation.



Deborah Kynes



Andrew McLeod

Remembering Peggy Bates

The FHC community was saddened to learn of the death of Margaret L. "Peggy" Bates, who served on the FHC Board from 1992 to 1996. Ms. Bates, a political science professor for more than three decades at New College of Florida, was known at FHC for her dedication as a board member.

"Peggy was an active and engaged member of our board whose fierce intellect and passion for the humanities was demonstrated at every board meeting," said FHC Executive Director Janine Farver. "She was always available to hone the intellectual content of our programs and gave of her time and energy with such generosity."

Ms. Bates was a scholar of African politics and history and of international relations and law. In addition to teaching, she served as interim provost of New College from 1989 to 1992. After retiring, she was named professor emerita of political science in 1996. She died of a heart ailment in September at age 85.



Peggy Bates

**PrimeTime reading program to serve families in four libraries**

FHC is partnering with four public libraries this spring to present PrimeTime, a free, six-week literacy program that uses the humanities as tools to create excitement about reading. Combining award-winning children's books with humanities themes and open discussion, PrimeTime connects literature to the real world for participating families.

About 75 families are expected to participate this spring at West Oaks Library in Ocoee, Bruton Memorial Library in Plant City, the Venice Public

Library, and Bradham-Brooks Northwest Library in Jacksonville.

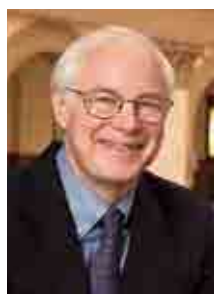
Support for these programs has been generously provided by Target, the Rice Family Foundation, Publix Super Markets Charities, and the Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice. Log-on to www.flahum.org/primetime for additional information.

NEH Chair Jim Leach brings message of civility to Florida

"Civilization requires civility," says Jim Leach, chair of the National Endowment for the Humanities. "Words matter. Polarizing attitudes can jeopardize social cohesion." Leach brought this message about the need for civility in public discourse to two Florida cities in January as part of his 50-state Civility Tour.

Leach spoke in Tallahassee at a public meeting co-sponsored by FHC and a local civic group named The Village Square. He also spoke in Sarasota at a national conference of museum directors. Leach's message has been well received at a time when much of the nation's public discourse has been rancorous.

"We can use words 'to bring out our better angels' or we can use them dishonestly to confuse and undermine each other," Leach said at the Tallahassee gathering, according to an account in the *Tallahassee Democrat*. "When it comes to the rivalry of ideas...our choice is to 'stir anger, polarize and compel violence' with what we say. Or, conversely, we can use 'healing language' such as Lincoln used in his second inaugural address, inspiring the nation to bind up its Civil War wounds 'with malice toward none.'"



Jim Leach

Leach, appointed in August by President Barack Obama as NEH's ninth chair, was a Republican member of Congress from Iowa for 30 years. After leaving Congress in 2007, he taught at Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School and served as interim director of the Institute of Politics and lecturer at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

Here are some highlights of the hundreds of free public events sponsored by FHC around the state. Dates and times are subject to change, and new events are continually added. For complete, up-to-date listings, go to www.flahum.org/calendar.



VERO BEACH—March 11 at 7 p.m., Emerson Center: Maritime anthropologist Michael Jepson presents “In Their Own Words,” a documentary of fishing families from Cortez and Cedar Key.

CLEWISTON—March 18 at 7 p.m., Clewiston Museum: Award-winning author Cynthia Barnett discusses Florida’s vanishing water supply, as outlined in her book, *Mirage: Florida and the Vanishing Waters of the Eastern U.S.*



ORMOND BEACH—March 27 at 10 a.m., Anderson-Price Memorial Building: Art historian Kristin Congdon addresses new ways to think about American folk artists.



VALPARAISO—April 7 at noon (Central time), Heritage Museum of Northwest Florida: Historian Stephen Craft discusses the contributions made by civilian aviation schools in the United States during World War II.



ST. AUGUSTINE—April 13 at 7 p.m., Flagler College Auditorium: Three scholars, including a Chautauqua performer, discuss the life of Henry Flagler, early Florida developer and railroad magnate.



SAFETY HARBOR—April 22 at 6:30 p.m., Safety Harbor Public Library: Storyteller Carrie Sue Ayvar takes the audience on a multicultural journey of the imagination with her large repertoire of tales spiced with Latin flavor.



LAKE WORTH—April 24 at 7:30 p.m., St. Andrew’s Episcopal Church: Scholar Gerard Fèreère presents a program about voodoo intended to create an understanding of the Haitian religion.

DELRAY BEACH—April 29 at 6:30 p.m., Delray Beach City Hall: Experts discuss local architecture and Sam Ogren Sr., Delray’s National Register architect. An exhibit is displayed throughout April.



HUDSON—May 1 at 2 p.m., Hudson Regional Library: Historian Paul Dosal highlights the political and economic forces that have linked Florida to the Caribbean for more than 500 years.



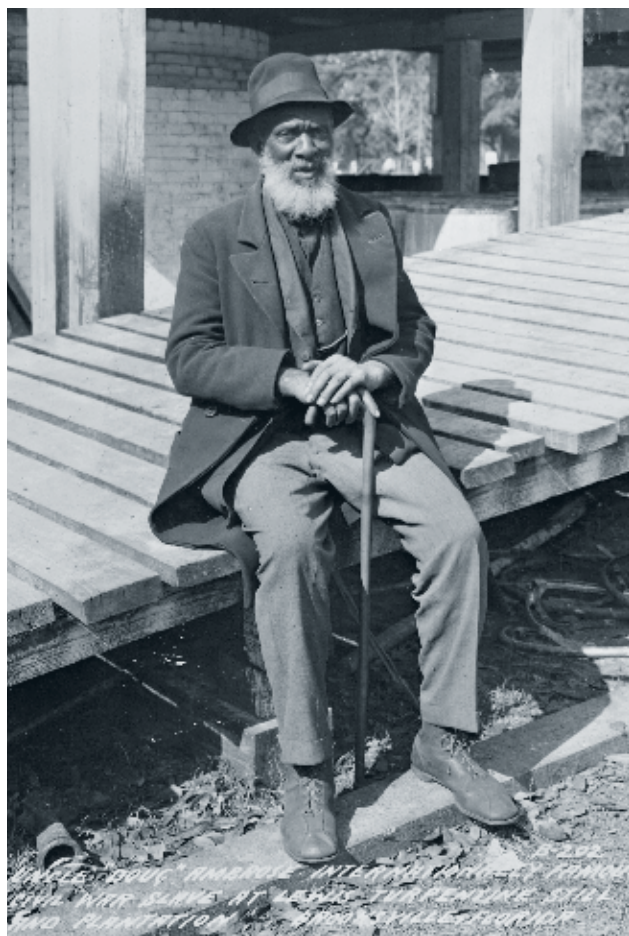
ST. AUGUSTINE—May 18 at 7 p.m., Flagler College Auditorium: Actor James Bullock interprets the African-American experience in Florida.



FLORIDA'S CULTURE OF SLAVERY

By LARRY EUGENE RIVERS

During the 25 years leading up to the Civil War, a five-county region of North Florida grew into a virtual barony of plantations and farms that echoed the wealthiest precincts of the Old South cotton kingdom. The vast majority of Florida's slaves lived in this central part of the Panhandle along the Georgia border. Called "Middle Florida," it centered on the capital city of Tallahassee and included Gadsden, Leon, Jefferson, Madison, and Hamilton counties—and eventually expanded into central Florida's Alachua and Marion counties.



Former slave "Uncle" Doug Ambrose is shown at the Lewis Turpentine Still and Plantation in the 1940s.

MIDDLE FLORIDA SLAVE OWNERS were pioneer entrepreneurs from Old South states who migrated to Florida after it became a U.S. Territory in 1821. Many hailed from the cream of Southern planter society. Coming from Kentucky, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, they settled on the rich, fertile land between the Apalachicola and Suwannee rivers and established farms and plantations primarily to grow cotton. By 1860 this area, virtually unpopulated by whites before 1821, had emerged as the state's plantation belt.

Middle Florida's economy was based firmly on slavery. Nearly all of the slaves (98 percent) were involved in agricultural labor. Most of them worked on large plantations established by wealthy "planters," an elite class composed of farmers who owned at least 20 slaves and more than 500 acres. This planter class—21 percent of Florida's slaveholders—held more than 75 percent of Florida's slaves.

The vast majority of Florida's slaveholders ran much smaller operations. They owned small- or medium-sized farms and held fewer than 10 slaves, often only one or two. Usually the slaves at these farms worked alongside their white owners on a variety of jobs and lived in small cabins near the main farmhouses.

Slaves on the larger plantations, however, were divided up into job categories. Some worked according to a task system as carpenters, shoemakers, blacksmiths, etc. But field hands (as opposed to house servants) were sorted into work "gangs." This "gang slavery" system, commonly associated with antebellum cotton culture, required each gang of slaves to routinely do one type of job, such as hoeing or plowing.

On the most fundamental level, the degree of harshness and oppression that marked a slave's life typically resulted

Photos and Illustrations: Florida State Archives

Amanda McCray

"The Pamell slaves had a Negro minister . . . it was from this minister they first heard of the Civil War. He held whispered prayers for the success of the Union soldiers, not because freedom was so desirable for them but for other slaves who were treated so cruelly. There was a praying ground where 'the grass never had a chance to grow for the troubled knees that kept it crushed down.' . . .

"Amanda was an exceptionally good cook and so widespread was this knowledge that the Union soldiers employed her as a cook in their camp for a short while. She does not remember any of their officers and thinks they were no better nor worse than the others. These soldiers committed no depredations in her section except to confiscate whatever they wanted in the way of food and clothing. Some married Southern girls.

"Mr. Pamell made land grants to all slaves who wanted to remain with them; few left, so kind had he been to them."

—Excerpt of an interview with a former Florida slave, from *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938*

from the nature of his or her master, his wife, and his relations. A bad master meant a bad life for slaves.

But there was also a common practice in the decades before the Civil War that involved leasing slaves to work on jobs outside of the owner's farm or plantation. Purchase of slaves for lease often was a part of estate planning. The state's early railroads, canals, and fortifications often owed their existence to the labor of leased bondsmen.

Cotton became the staple crop of choice in Middle Florida, just as it did in much of the Lower South. Some farmers also grew other cash crops, such as tobacco and sugar;

most also grew vegetables and other foods for their own use.

Some have argued that, because violence rarely flared from the slave quarters of these plantations and farms, slaves generally were happy with their conditions. Not so. Ample evidence demonstrates slave resistance constantly plagued plantation operations, whether it involved feigned illness, sabotage, running away, or whatever.

While Middle Florida offered the picture of a thriving and integral component of the cotton South, the other areas of East and West Florida retained some of the traditions and influences of the Spanish colonists who had controlled Florida during the previous 250 to 300 years.

These areas—Northeast Florida and portions of the peninsula as well as

in the general area of Pensacola—tended to permit more flexibility, opportunity, and social mobility for slaves.



This sketch shows slave cabins constructed of tabby (a mixture that includes sand and oyster shells) at the Kingsley Plantation, Fort George Island.



Top left: An advertisement of a slave sale in Leon County is dated May 27, 1842. At top right, former slave Charity Stewart, 93 when this photo was taken in 1937. She was hidden in the swamps during the Civil War to make soap for soldiers. Above: This illustration, published between 1860 and 1865 by Frank Leslie's illustrated newspaper, depicts a freedman in Monticello, Florida, being sold to pay his fine.

Shack Thomas

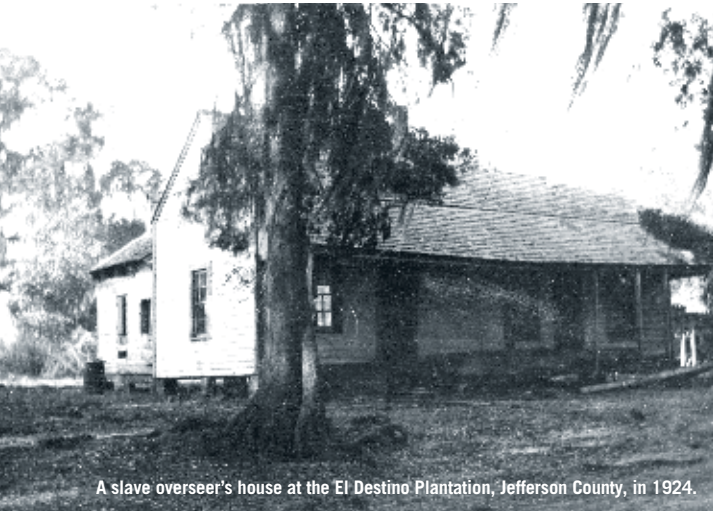
"During the years before 'surrinder,' Thomas saw much traffic in slaves, he says. Each year around New Years, itinerant 'speculators' would come to his vicinity and either hold a public sale, or lead the slaves, tied together, to the plantation for inspection or sale.

"A whole lot of times they wouldn't sell 'em, they'd just trade 'em like they did horses. The man [plantation owner] would have a couple of old women who couldn't do much any more, and he'd swap 'em to the other man for a young 'un. I seen lots of 'em traded that way, and sold for money, too.'

"Thomas recalls at least one Indian family that lived in his neighborhood until he left it after the War. This family, he says, did not work, but had a little place of their own. 'They didn't have much to do with nobody, though,' he adds.

"Others of his neighbors during those early years were abolition-minded white residents of the area. These, he says, would take runaway slaves and 'either work 'em or hide 'em until they could try to get North. When they'd get caught at it, though, they'd take 'em to town and beat 'em like they would us, then take their places and run 'em out.'"

—Excerpt of an interview with a former Florida slave, from *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938*



A slave overseer's house at the El Destino Plantation, Jefferson County, in 1924.

Squires Jackson

"He remembers the start of the Civil War with the laying of the Atlantic Cable by the 'Great Eastern,' being nineteen years of age at the time. Hearing threats of the war which was about to begin, he ran away with his brother to Lake City, many times hiding in trees and groves from the posse that was looking for him. At night he would cover up his face and body with Spanish moss to sleep. One night he hid in a tree near a creek, over-slept himself, in the morning a group of white women fishing near the creek saw him and ran to tell the men, fortunately however he escaped.

"After four days of worried traveling being guided by the north star and the Indian instinct inherited from his Indian grandmother, he finally reached Lake City. Later reporting to General Scott, he was informed he was to act as an orderly until further ordered. On Saturday morning... General Scott called him to his tent and said, 'Squire; I have just had you appraised for \$1,000 and you are to report to Col. Guist in Alachua County for service immediately.' That very night he ran away to Wellborn where the Federals were camping. There in a horse stable were wounded colored soldiers stretched out on the filthy ground. The sight of these wounded men and feeble medical attention given them by the Federals was so repulsive to him that he decided he didn't want to join the Federal army. In the silent hours of the evening, he stole away to Tallahassee, thoroughly convinced that war wasn't the place for him. While in the horse shed makeshift hospital, a white soldier asked one of the wounded colored soldiers to what regiment he belonged, the Negro replied '54th Regiment, Massachusetts.'

"At that time, the only railroad was between Lake City and Tallahassee which he had worked on for awhile. At the close of the war he returned to Jacksonville to begin work as a bricklayer. During this period, Negro skilled help was very much in demand."

—Excerpt of an interview with a former Florida slave, from *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938*

Interracial families were not uncommon. They sometimes were the result of forced relations, but recorded instances also hint at occasional romantic bonds and long-term commitments. Labor in East and West Florida varied, too, from Old South stereotypes. Slaves nursed, washed, and farmed, but they also engaged as stevedores, cowhunters, sailors, lumberjacks, and interpreters. Some slaves ran away and joined bands of Seminole Indians.

Most of Florida's population remained congregated in the northern part of the state until the end of the Second Seminole War in 1842. Then, to entice people to settle the lower part of the peninsula, the federal government offered an incentive plan: free 160-acre parcels of land to people who would move to the Florida frontier, south of Alachua County. The poorer Florida families, devastated by the bloody Seminole war, moved southward to take advantage of this free-land program. The property they left behind was then populated by more cotton planters, some from Middle Florida, others from Southern cotton states.

Marion County and, to a lesser extent, Hernando County came to be dominated by South Carolinians in the 1850s. These planters brought with them a mindset that effectively extended the Middle Florida culture. Floridians moved ever closer to acceptance of Old South ideas and ideals. By the 1850s the political and economic power of Middle Florida planters in politics would grow in proportion to their land holdings and acquisition of enslaved Africans.

In 1860, on the eve of the Civil War, 44 percent of Florida's 140,400 residents were slaves. After Abraham Lincoln was elected President in November 1860, the Florida



Amelia was born a slave in St. Augustine, sold at age 9 to a Louisiana farmer who treated her poorly and then at age 14 to another, kinder, master. In her later years, she returned to St. Augustine where this photograph was taken sometime in the 1900s.



Slaves worked at sugar mills like this one now in ruins near present-day New Smyrna Beach. The stone archway is part of the Cruger and DePeyster Sugar Mill, built between 1825 and 1835 and destroyed by Indians during the Second Seminole War.

Photos: Florida State Archives



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Acie Thomas

“Acie knew about the war because he was one of the slaves commandeered by the Confederate army for hauling food and ammunition to different points between Tallahassee and a city in Virginia that he is unable to remember. It was a common occurrence for the soldiers to visit the plantation owners and command a certain number of horses and slaves for services such as Acie did.

"He thinks he might have been about 17 years old when he was freed. A soldier in blue came to the plantation and brought a "document" that Tom, their master, read to all the slaves who had been summoned to the "big house" for that purpose. About half of them consented to remain with him. The others went away, glad of their new freedom. Few had made any plans and were content to wander about the country, living as they could. Some were more sober-minded, and Acie's father was among the latter. He remained on the Folsom place for a short while; he then settled down to share-cropping."

—Excerpt of an interview with a former Florida slave, from *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938*

[illegible]

A Tampa newspaper ad in 1860 offers a reward for the return of a slave.

The Civil War—when it came—produced a breakdown of slavery’s foundations. While Middle Florida was left relatively secure during the war, Union military incursions resulted in major disruptions of the institution of slavery in East and West Florida. In the east, particularly, the proximity of Union troops held out a beacon of hope for freedom.

In time the coastal counties and the St. Johns River region, where federal gunboats patrolled, witnessed a steady stream of men, women, and children seeking freedom from bondage.

Union raiding parties also added to the toll elsewhere in the state, destroying Confederate properties, disrupting rebel operations—and liberating slaves. Many of these freed slaves

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Preston Dickinson, *Fort George Hill*, 1915, oil on linen, 14 × 17 inches. Collection of the Munson-Williams-Proctor Art Institute. Gift of Edward Wales Root.

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Charlotte Martin

"Wilkerson [her owner] was very cruel and held them in constant fear of him. He would not permit them to hold religious meetings or any other kinds of meetings, but they frequently met in secret to conduct religious services. When they were caught, the 'instigators'—known or suspected—were severely flogged. Charlotte recalls how her oldest brother was whipped to death for taking part in one of the religious ceremonies. This cruel act halted the secret religious services."

—Excerpt of an interview with a former Florida slave, from *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938*

remained in Florida. Many also discovered that the protection of the U.S. government did not mean a life of ease and comfort; conditions at refugee camps were tough and white refugees always received preferential treatment.

Some slaves opted to serve in the Union Army or Navy. They participated in engagements large and small in battles both in and outside of Florida, fighting or serving as informants, guides, and river pilots. Many died fighting at places like Olustee and Natural Bridge.

Even on the Middle Florida plantations, which were geographically separated from the warzones, many bond servants tried to do their part from afar. In some instances they simply stopped cultivating corn and other crops for human consumption. Some slaves worked on the side of the Confederacy, but most did so as the result of impressment.

Slaves in Northeast Florida and to a lesser extent in West Florida actively resisted slavery and showed their desire for a

Union victory by joining the Federal forces. Bond servants in Middle Florida did not have the same opportunities to escape and join Union forces. Still they tried to hinder the progress of the Confederacy in other ways.

Slaves did not rise and slay white families while the master was away at war; they refrained not from lack of opportunity but from innate decency and respect for life. Still, they began to create separate institutions such as churches and to depend upon themselves despite white expectations as they awaited the Day of Jubilee.

LARRY EUGENE RIVERS, *Professor of History and President of the Fort Valley State University in Fort Valley, Ga., is the author of Slavery in Florida: Territorial Days to Emancipation.*

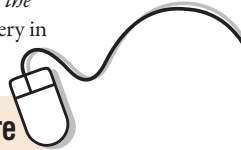
Photo: Florida State Archives



Virgil Waitman, shown in this 1920 photograph, was an ex-slave from Savannah, Ga., who arrived in Lake City just after the Civil War. He became known to everyone as Uncle Virge.

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Florida women shared hardship, heartache, and hope

BY TRACY J. REVELS

SUSAN BRADFORD EPPES, a privileged plantation belle in Tallahassee, once was regarded as the symbol of Florida's women during the Civil War. Her sprightly memoir, titled *Through Some Eventful Years*, could have been called *Gone with the Palmettos*. In it she described courtship and dances, faraway battles and home-front shortages, gallant captains and faithful slaves. The story's end features the young heroine's marriage to her handsome but impoverished Confederate soldier, who was a great grandson of Thomas Jefferson.

Even though her memoir captured Florida's historical imagination, it did not accurately depict the experiences of most women in the state at that time. Only a tiny number lived on plantations or had the educational advantages that Eppes enjoyed. The daughters of Florida were not merely handkerchief-waving supporters of "The Cause." They were Confederates, but they were also Unionists, collaborationists, and neutral observers. They were slave owners and slaves, refugees and rebels—and their stories were far more intriguing than those of any Old South stereotype. Heroines, cowards, and those who merely wished to be left alone mingled in a state that witnessed virtually every aspect of war—including invasion, occupation, and deprivation.

Florida's 1860 census found a total of 67,494 women in the state: 36,619 white



Top portrait:
Susan Bradford Eppes in 1864

Bottom portrait:
Nicholas Ware Eppes, great
grandson of Thomas Jefferson,
in the mid-1800s

females, 30,397 slave women, and 478 free women of color. (A higher percent of Florida's population at that time was male: A total of 72,930 men—41,128 of them white, 31,348 slaves, and 454 free men of color.)

For the vast majority of women—white or black—life was defined by unceasing toil, whether in the fields or in their homes. Slave women generally were expected to do the same kind of work as slave men: plowing, chopping wood, and picking cotton, as well as cooking and cleaning. Free black women found employment in occupations considered distasteful, such as doing laundry; they lived under complex legal restrictions that prevented them from being truly free.

Most white women were members of the Cracker class, ordinary farm women known for their hard work and fierce spirits. Very few women lived on plantations or in towns. The

Photos and Illustrations: Florida State Archives

A Civil War Love Story

elite women who did were literate and fond of writing letters and keeping journals. Because of this, historians know more about their lives than the lives of Crackers, slaves, and free blacks. But even elite ladies were not free from the work of mothering large families and supervising household slaves.

If Florida's women shared a world of work, they had very different feelings about the coming national crisis. Some, like the aged mother of future Confederate general Edmund

Kirby Smith, were bellicose in their defense of Southern rights. Despite her Connecticut birth, Smith proudly predicted in 1860 that if Lincoln was elected, "Southern men and Southern women will not sit down with folded hands." But just down the street in St. Augustine, Smith's friend Clarissa Anderson, another northern import to the Oldest City, cancelled

her newspaper subscription when the editors advocated hanging Unionists as "high as Haman."

Some women cheered as they attended secession meetings. Others, like Seminole war survivor Nancy Jackson of Tampa, had no sympathy for wild talk of rights and honor. For the most part, slave women were illiterate and unable to record their thoughts; but their actions, such as taking part in clandestine prayer meetings for Union soldiers, spoke their true feelings.

As the war began, many women were committed to the Confederate cause, and spent endless hours making flags, rolling bandages, and packing boxes with everything from soap to cooked chickens to Bibles. Women formed "thimble brigades," sewing circles to outfit local units with socks, trousers, and overcoats. They also improvised replacements for items that

WINSTON STEPHENS, a young Florida planter from Welaka, on the northern edge of the Ocala National Forest, married OCTAVIA (TIVIE) BRYANT on Nov. 1, 1859. A year later their daughter Rosa was born. A few months after that, when Florida seceded from the Union and joined the Confederacy, Winston signed up as a cavalry lieutenant in a unit stationed in Northeast Florida.



The letters Winston and Tivie wrote over the next few years capture the heartache and anxiety felt by people living through a war—a counterpoint to flags unfurling, drums sounding, and troops marching to glory.

Following are excerpts of their letters, which are collected in the book *Rose Cottage Chronicles: Civil War Letters of the Bryant-Stephens Families of North Florida*, edited by Arch Frederic Blakey, Ann Smith Lainhart, and Winston Bryant Stephens, Jr.

Nov. 5, 1861

"My dear Husband,

"Would you not like to look in upon us tonight and see how we do without you...Rosa asleep, now if you were only here our picture would be complete...Rosa has not yet forgotten how to say Pa Pa..."

Dec. 1, 1861

"My dear wife,

"...I don't want you to make yourself unnecessarily uneasy about me if you fail to hear when you should. I will write by every opportunity I see...Be careful with your meat this warm weather."

March 9, 1862

"My dear husband,

"...We are prepared for the 'Yankees' or rather prepared to see them, which I hope we will not do, I shall try to be brave but guess I'll be tolerably 'skeered,' for I tremble just talking of their coming, night before last I woke up shaking dreadfully I suppose from dreaming of them. The negroes seem troubled about their coming, declare they'll take to the hammock..."

WINSTON RECEIVES A BRIEF FURLOUGH AND VISITS HOME. TIVIE LATER LEARNS SHE IS PREGNANT WITH THEIR SECOND CHILD.

March 12, 1862

"My own dear husband,

"I suppose you heard that the [Confederate] Government has abandoned this State and the Governor has ordered all the regiments that are mustered into the Confederate service away from East Fla. What is to become of us. I think we will have to leave or be made Lincoln subjects...I think we are safe enough here if the Gun boats come up for they can not see us from the river and they probably will not come from Welaka here."

May 23, 1862

My Dear Tivie,

[A friend will bring] you a fine piece of bear that we have just killed. I shot him 8 times and Wm Stevens 5...I suppose the bear will weigh 400 clean—save the oil for cooking—let the negroes have what you cant consume by the time it will spoil."

Sept. 21, 1862

"My dear husband,

"...for the fiftieth time I say will we ever have peace...We have certainly gained a great many victories (if we can believe all) for which I am very thankful, but, oh such loss of life and seems to me to no purpose, if we do ever have peace how few there will be to realize it and how many of them will be desolate and unhappy...I wish to heaven that you could come home. My dear you say you will be cautious, it is easy enough to say it when you are quietly writing, but I am so afraid that when you are excited you will forget in your enthusiasm for your country how dear your life is to more than yourself"

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A portrait (circa 1840) of Mary Martha Smith Reid, who served with great distinction during the war as a matron of the Florida Hospital. The first Florida chapter of the United Daughters of the Confederacy was named for her.

were increasingly difficult to acquire, such as sugar, ink, and coffee.

Women who had never been to the field learned to plow, and some took to the woods to hunt. Others puzzled over the baffling array of taxes and Confederate currency, battling with Confederate commissary agents who were determined to seize horses and cattle. Many women helped their weaker comrades. Mattie English Branch made the rounds of her Liberty County neighborhood, assisting the more “delicate” women with planting corn, peas, and pumpkins. “I was young, healthy, and strong,” she later recalled, “and I felt that I must do something for the general good.”

Julia Stockton of Quincy was a model Confederate matron. Along with sewing, fundraising, and keeping her many children disciplined, Julia wrote almost daily letters to her beloved husband William. Filled with questions about business, community gossip, and humorous stories of their offspring, the letters also expressed the couple’s great love for each other and desire for reunion. While Julia Stockton did everything she could to support her husband’s cause, she did not accept it blindly, and frequently argued with him that honor was satisfied and he could resign. Many Florida women expressed similar sentiments by the end of the first year of the war.

Confederate women endured their

separation from loved ones by staying busy, by praying, and by focusing on their families. Parents worked to raise children together, even when hundreds of miles apart. Fathers issued stern advice, and gave mothers permission to make decisions about work and schooling. When William Stockton’s oldest son sought permission to join the army, William—by then a Union prisoner—allowed that the decision was not truly his to make, deferring to wife with the words “I fully rely on your own judgment and patriotism.”

For other Florida women, the task of simply enduring the war was even harder, as they were forced to conceal their support for the Union. In West Florida, a woman who refused to give information about the whereabouts of her Union-sympathizing husband was killed along with her children. Political violence was a very real possibility; chivalry had little place on the Florida frontier. Clarissa Anderson wisely held her tongue until St. Augustine was taken by Federal forces in 1862. Once the city was in Union hands, she opened the doors of Markland, her plantation home, to Yankee officers and their wives. Along with winning fame as a hostess, Anderson became a community peacemaker, helping to smooth ruffled feathers when irate townspeople clashed with the occupying forces.

Some women became Unionists not through politics, but through destitution. During the war, Federal troops station in and around Jacksonville provided supplies to starving women and children who were unable to survive without their male protectors and would gladly swear the Oath of Allegiance for a saddlebag filled with rations. Other women took to the swamps, providing food and information to draft dodgers and deserters. One group of Panhandle women paid for their loyalty to husbands and fathers when they were arrested and briefly imprisoned in Tallahassee.

Unionist women also arrived in Florida during the war by following

the troops. Some were wives and sweethearts of soldiers. Others, such as future Florida First Lady Chloe Merrick, came to do missionary work and assist the freedmen, providing education and religious training. One remarkable wartime immigrant was Dr. Esther Hill Hawks, a physician with the Fifty-fourth Massachusetts Regiment. Whatever their origin, women who arrived in Florida during the war quickly found their labor, whether teaching, nursing, or simply being a good wife to a military husband, was essential.

Slave women watched and waited. The slave grapevine was always active, and most black Floridians knew some details of the war. Sarah Brown of Tampa was representative of many slave women. Separated from her mother at a young age, she had been taken far from her birthplace and forced to work at a variety of tasks, including plowing, dairying, and nursing. She also had the courage to speak her mind. When she encountered her mistress weeping over her husband’s absence, Sarah rebuked her with the details of her own mistreatment and a pointed reminder that “tears will not do you any good.”

Throughout the conflict, Florida’s slave women waged a psychological guerilla war on the home-front. Well aware that their mistresses were unaccustomed to dealing directly with disciplining their workers, slave women “pushed the envelope” with behavior. Mysterious illnesses struck them, tools were inexplicably broken, eggs in the henhouse became impossible to find. Some slave women ran away to Union lines, or forged passes for others to flee, but most were satisfied with



Mauma Mollie, a slave in Jefferson County, was brought from South Carolina in the 1830s and died in about 1858. She nursed the family children and was “loved as a second mother. Black of skin but pure of heart, she doubtless stands among the faithful on the right of the King,” a family member wrote in 1873.

Photos: Florida State Archives



A tintype of Alice Hill Simms and her children, in Lafayette County before the war.



Chloe Merrick Reed, wife of Harrison Reed, Florida's ninth governor (1868-1873).

finding some way to make life miserable for their mistresses, realizing that if white female morale collapsed, a vital foundation of the war would crumble.

For free black women, the war generally provided new economic opportunities. Clustered in port cities such as Key West and Jacksonville, they quickly took advantage of Yankees who longed for home cooking and fresh laundry. Their race and gender gave them free access to Union camps. In Fernandina, a group of freedwomen won fame as cooks and caterers. Slave women liberated during the war savored their freedom as well. They enrolled their children in schools and looked for missing husbands. In Key West, a freedwoman watched her former mistress sweating in the garden, then leaned over the fence and asked her "how she liked it."

The end of the war came as both a shock and a relief to Florida's women. The news of Appomattox was accompanied by a grim reality that mocked any lingering romance from the opening of hostilities. Approximately 15,000 Florida men had joined the Confederate service, the highest proportion of eligible men given by any Southern state. One third of those men were killed during the war, and another third badly injured. The final third emerged unscathed, though assuredly shell-shocked and emotionally damaged by what they had witnessed. With such a large percentage of men having served, it was virtually impossible to find a woman in Florida who was not mourning the loss or injury of a

A Civil War Love Story continued from page 27

ON DEC. 14, 1862, TIVIE GIVES BIRTH TO ISABELLA, CALLED BELLE. THE INFANT DIES ABOUT A MONTH LATER.

Jan. 31, 1863

*"My dear dear husband,
"Ere this you are sharing the grief which now bows my heart down in sorrow, how unfortunate that we should have to bear this grief apart, the very time we should be together to try and comfort and sustain each other...I suppose we must be thankful that Rosa is left to us, but oh my heart pines for my little one [Belle]...you don't know how I long to have you here."*

Feb. 2, 1863

*"My Dear Wife,
"It is hard to think our loved one is no more, that I shall never see her loved face again...be comforted my Dear that He has left us one other to love."*

May 4, 1863

*"My Dear Wife,
"...Old Lady, I want to see you mighty bad, how do you feel on the subject? Golly I would give lots just to have one pouting smack...I've got to have you serve me as you did you know when and you sayed you would kiss me, din't you, and that was a kind act and duly appreciated by your Old Man."*

May 14, 1863,

*"My Dear Husband,
"You want to know how I feel about seeing you, I want to see you as much if not more than you want to see me...Did you sign your letter my lover with as much depth of feeling as you did four years ago? I can mine with a deeper."*

WINSTON RECEIVES ANOTHER FURLOUGH TO VISIT HOME. AGAIN, TIVIE LATER DISCOVERS SHE IS PREGNANT.

Aug. 19, 1863

*"My darling Wifey,
"Drydale gives a horrid account of the treatment he received at the hands of the Yanks... Death is better than to submit to such a people."*

Nov 6, 1863

*"My very dear Husband.
"I received your letter, with shoes and limes, and two bars sweet soap...I have put Rosa to bed and she has gone to sleep with a little lime in her hand...I started to tell you of my supper, I thought of you many times and wished you were here to enjoy it...Well my darling I must go to bed but hope my dreams of you to night may be pleasant...I often think what a blessed thing it is I have such a good husband, and pray that we may never be any less happy. Good night."*

Nov 30, 1863

*My Dear Wife,
"We had Inspection today and the Maj's horse became restive and blistered his hands and I had to act in his place. The Maj throws nearly all of the duties of the post on me. I have to act on all the dress parades and nearly all the Inspections. I am beginning to think him lazy...The Yanks are deserting quite rapidly from Fernandina, as 15 have come over in three installments... They also state that there are about 125 of them that will desert the first chance they get."*

Dec. 29, 1863

*"My Dear Wife,
"If it should happen that I cant come dont give way to your disappointment but keep up like a brave Wife and hope for the best. Dont make any rash wishes, as it is perhaps best for the service that furloughs should cease for a time."*

continued on page 36

father, brother, son, husband, or lover. Slave and free black women were also affected, as families had been separated and sold apart during the conflict. Simply finding loved ones was the beginning of a reconstruction of lives.

Across the state, the women returned to work to support their families rather than the Confederate cause. In St. Augustine, widows made palmetto trinkets to sell to Yankee tourists. In Jacksonville, both black and white women became laundresses. Margaret Fleming turned her plantation home of Hibernia into a boarding house, and in Tallahassee Ellen Call Long, daughter of a territorial governor, sold off family heirlooms to provide for her children. Julia Stockton's husband returned home, and the couple conceived another child, but William's health was broken and he died in 1867, leaving behind a large family and larger debts. Like many other women, Julia Stockton felt her future was uncertain.

Florida's women had many different reactions to the Civil War,

and a vast variety of experiences during it. Some bravely faced enemy guns, while others fled and became miserable refugees. Some theatrically spat defiance at Yankees as their female neighbors quietly welcomed Federals into their homes. Most women remained focused on what they considered to be their real country—their loved ones and family members.

At war's end, Florida's women endured their hardships with fortitude and even pluck. One slave woman, supposedly crippled for years, abruptly threw away her crutches and walked off the plantation. Other women tossed off the Victorian conventions that limited what they could do and say, taking up careers and eventually celebrating their own wartime accomplishments in letters and articles. One plantation girl finally took pride in having learned to cook. While nothing erased the tragedy of 600,000 American lives lost, the war opened doors that many Florida women had never realized were closed.

In 1926, Mrs. L.W. Jackson wrote "we can but regret that the pages of History hold so little of the dual lives of the Mothers, Sisters, wives and sweet-hearts of those strenuous days filled as they were with work, hope, fear, and anxiety." Today we can remember Susan Bradford Eppes, the plantation belle, but we can also remember Julia Stockton, Clarissa Anderson, Susan Brown, and all of Florida's long-ignored Civil War women.

TRACY J. REVELS, *professor and chair of the Department of History at Wofford College, Spartanburg, S.C., is the author of* Grander in Her Daughters: Florida's Women during the Civil War.

Photo: Florida State Archives



A photograph taken in the 1800s of Mrs. David Dunham and her children, of Palatka.

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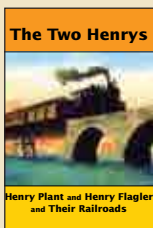
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Florida SCHOLAR *profile*

By JON WILSON

WHEN HE WAS 13 years old, Bob Carr became a time traveler. He visited the long-ago worlds of prehistoric Indians and early pioneers as he explored the banks of the Miami River. Dodging giant land crabs and rats as big as cats, he searched for relics that brought the past to life. Pieces of prehistoric pots, animal bones, and shells blended in a curious adolescent's mind with visions of old Tarzan movies. Seminole beads, 19th-century bottles, sealing wax, and carved bones conjured images of an old trading post.

"While my friends were fishing, I was mesmerized by the lush landscape around the river," says Carr, now 62 and one of Florida pre-eminent archaeologists.

Such magical experiences led to a lifelong passion for peeling back the layers of soil and shell to discover evidence of previous lives. In a career spanning more than 30 years, Carr has investigated more than 300 sites, including battlefields, ancient structures, and cave dwellings. He is co-founder and director of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the investigation and preservation of archaeological and historical sites across Florida and the Bahamas.

Some of Carr's work has yielded stunning results and generated national attention. Perhaps his most famous discovery has been the Miami Circle—the site of a Tequesta Indian council house or temple dating to about 200 A.D. The Tequesta are thought to have welcomed Spanish explorer Ponce de León to Florida in 1513. Carr found the site one day in 1998 after he dug



Photo: Miami-Dade County Historic Preservation Division

test holes following the demolition of an apartment building near Miami's Brickell Bridge.

The circle of holes that was uncovered is thought to have once held structural supports for a large building, evidence that the Tequesta were not simply nomadic hunters and gatherers; they had developed a sophisticated culture and built substantial structures. The discovery represented another huge step in reconstructing Florida's pre-European history. The site has been designated as a national landmark.

Carr's investigation of an ancient Native American canal system east of Fort Myers from 1991 to 2002 also demonstrated that Florida Indians had reached a level of sophistication and social organization earlier than had been thought. Called the Ortona Canals, the system links the Florida people to an established Native American culture in Ohio dating to 250 A.D. Carr's work produced "the smoking gun" proving the connection, Dr. James A. Brown,



Photo courtesy of Bob Carr

Photo at top shows the circle of holes that may have held structural supports for a Tequesta building in what is now Miami.

Above: Bob Carr (left) studies plans at a Miami construction site.

Northwestern University anthropology professor, told the *New York Times*.

Carr made one of his first major finds in 1964 after Hurricane Cleo had ripped a tree from the river

...he could stand almost anywhere on the river and sense what it must have looked like before 20th-century development.

Connect to more

To listen to or download an interview with Bob Carr about the Miami Circle, visit FORUM EXTRA! at

www.flahum.org



Archaeologist Bob Carr looks out from the shore of an island in the Bahamas, where he has done research.

bank. Wedged between the roots lay a mammoth, limestone boulder; it had a large hole at one end and was ornamented with punched and incised designs. “I knew instantly what it was—a Tequesta canoe anchor,” Carr says. It was the first ever found.

Carr began his professional work after spending seven years in Tallahassee earning bachelor’s and master’s degrees in anthropology at Florida State University. He worked for Florida’s Division of Historic Resources and for the National Park Service (NPS). Then, in the same week of 1978, he was offered two top jobs: He could become Miami-Dade County’s first archaeologist; or he could become an NPS archaeologist at Cumberland Gap, on the borders of Virginia, Kentucky, and Tennessee. The NPS job was a two-year stint and would have paid Carr twice as much as the Miami job—which offered just a one-year contract. He took the Miami job.

“To return to Miami and revisit my boyhood haunts and see it with a learned eye was a dream come true,” said Carr, who became Dade County’s Historic Preservation Director in 1999.

As a professional in charge of preserving history, Carr experienced modern Miami as few others could. He collected vintage postcards of the river he had roamed as a child. He studied aerial photographs. Soon, he could stand almost anywhere on the river and sense what it must have looked like before 20th-century development.

“While others navigated the busy traffic of Brickell Avenue, I saw the Brickell hammock, solution holes, and [Indian] mounds that once dotted the landscape,” he says. “My imagination and a growing body of data [has been] my time machine.”

JON WILSON, *a retired Florida journalist, is a frequent contributor to FORUM.*

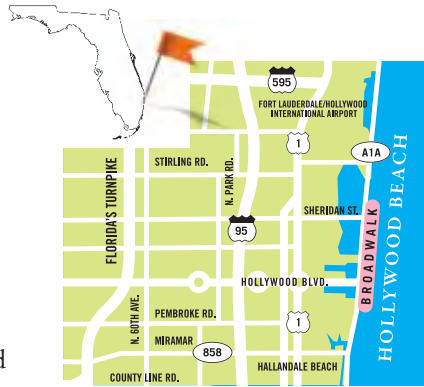
BOB CARR

- Co-founder of the Archaeological and Historical Conservancy, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the investigation and preservation of sites across Florida and the Bahamas
- Former archaeologist with the State of Florida’s Division of Historic Resources, the National Park Service, and the City of Miami
- Former editor of the *Florida Anthropologist* and former president of the Florida Archaeological Council
- Honors: the Ripley P. Bullen Award for excellence in the anthropological research of Florida and the Caribbean Basin; the 2003 Williams Preservation Award for outstanding service; and a 2008 Florida Magazine Association first place award for his article in *FORUM* magazine exploring pre-Columbian connections between Florida and the Caribbean

My favorite FLORIDA PLACE

BY GEOFFREY PHILP

WE WERE TWO COLLEGE KIDS—sea-crossed lovers from Colombia and Jamaica—and our families, divided by race and religion, were opposed to our relationship. We also didn't have a lot of money, and we needed somewhere to go after the movies so we could talk and get to know each other. My wife's family had spent many summers on Hollywood Beach Broadwalk, so when she suggested the beach as a rendezvous, I agreed. Little did I know then, 27 years ago, that the place would enchant me as much as it had enchanted her parents.



Still, it did seem to be an odd choice. Back in the '80s the only people who frequented the Broadwalk were retirees who hobbled along the sand. My wife and I loved it because it was

secluded and the food was cheap. We could always get a slice of pizza and a Coke at Little Venice for under five dollars. We spent many evenings gazing up at the sky and palms, listening to the wind rustling through the fronds and whispering its benediction on the dozing cabanas and catamarans dreaming of sunsets.

We walked and talked along the promenade until we got married. Then we welcomed our children—our “water babies”—into our conversation. As they have grown older and changed, so has the Broadwalk. It has been transformed from an isolated beach

A family rides bicycles along the Hollywood Beach Broadwalk.



What started as an infatuation with the Boardwalk changed into a love affair; what began as a necessity became a tradition.

into a place where many young families can play with their children at a wet park, seniors can listen to a concert, and people in between can enjoy themselves with a variety of activities: bicycling, rollerblading, or practicing tai chi beside a two-mile strip of beach.

We've also witnessed a change in languages. A restaurant that used to be called the North Pole is now Pole Nord, and many other restaurants have adapted to the language preferences of the French Canadian tourists and to the mixture of the Spanish of Cubans, Nicaraguans, *boriquas*, and Argentineans. The food is always excellent, and after a long walk to the southern end of the Boardwalk, there is always an ice cold beer on tap at O'Malley's Ocean Pub. There you can tune into the soundtrack for the many rhythms of South Florida: rock, reggae, metal, reggaeton, *salsa*, *meringue*, *compas*, and *rara*.

Photo courtesy of Geoffrey Philp



Nadia and Geoffrey Philp at Hollywood Beach Boardwalk last spring.

Yet some things never change. Little Venice is still there, passed down from father to son. And the Sheldon Hotel still looks across the sea as if to catch the glimpse of a sail, a plume of smoke from a ship to signal that a son has come home from the war, a father has returned from working on the Canal, a mother or daughter has survived the odyssey across the shark-crowded Caribbean Sea.

I've spent many nights on the balcony of the Sheldon remembering a line from Derek Walcott's poem, "Islands": "Merely to name them is the prose/of diarists...But islands can only exist/ If we have loved in them." I guess that's how I've felt about Boardwalk over the years as it has become more real to me and has become part of my imagination. It certainly is a far cry from how I felt when I first came to South Florida and while, waiting for a bus on Young Circle, Hollywood, I couldn't decipher another West Indian accent out of the babel of voices. It felt as if I was the only Caribbean person living in South Florida! In that moment a line came to me: "It is wanting to hear the lisp of the sea/ curled on the tongues of passersby." That poem, "Exile," which I

later finished while walking along the promenade was published in my first book of poems.

What started as an infatuation with the Boardwalk changed into a love affair; what began as a necessity became a tradition. Next summer when the summer equinox begins, my family and I will spend another summer on the Boardwalk. We will remember the names of our family members, now united, whose names have been erased by the corrosive signature of the sea. Then, toward twilight under a folded umbrella outside Little Venice, when the darkness gathers the parrots into the arms of the gumbo limbo, we'll amble down the side streets and watch the moon rise like a wafer from the cup of the sea. We'll laugh, cry, and fill in the gaps of our long conversation by the sea.

GEOFFREY PHILP, *associate professor of English and chair of the College Prep. Department at Miami Dade College, is a Jamaican-born writer. He is author of the novel Benjamin, My Son and five poetry collections, including Exodus and Other Poems and Florida Bound.*

Photo: Visit Hollywood Florida



A Civil War Love Story

continued from page 29

Jan. 1, 1864

*"My dear husband,
"Good news for you at last, we have succeeded at last in getting
a house...All I want now for the present is to have you come with
provisions."*

Jan. 26, 1864

*"My dear wifey,
"You can't imagine how much I want to see you and my dear Rosa...I
often think what would become of you and Rosa if I should get killed...I
want you to promise that no matter what befalls me that you will never
marry a yankee, no matter what his calling or position."*

IN 1864, A LARGE FEDERAL FORCE LANDED AT JACKSONVILLE INTENDING TO INVADE THE INTERIOR OF FLORIDA. THE STAGE WAS THUS SET FOR THE ONLY LARGE BATTLE TO BE FOUGHT IN FLORIDA—AT OLUSTEE ON FEB. 20.

Feb. 13, 1864

*"My Dear Wife,
"I write you a few lines to inform you of my whereabouts and what I am
doing etc. You see I am in Lake City. I am also well. I am having the
squadron formed to go to the front to join Genl Finegan, the enemy are
falling back slowly. We have a good force, over 3 thousand in front and
about 2 or 3 thousand coming from Georgia...God grant I may be spared
to you. If not, grieve as little as you can for your lost husband and take
consolation that I died a soldier defending a just cause."*

Feb. 22, 1864

*"My dear dear husband,
"We thought the Yankees had Lake City as the cars did not come from
there on Thursday and we had heard that the Yanks were advancing
on it...I never had such anxiety before as I have had since your removal
to [Lake City], but thank the Lord you are yet spared to me."*

Feb. 27, 1864

*"My Darling Wife,
"...Oh how I wish I could never see such a sight as I witnessed after
the battle near Olustee Station and then to think of the loved ones at
home who have been left lonely in this life by the loss of husband, Son or
Father...I hope God in his goodness will soon relieve us from this awful
condition...Give a kiss and love to dear Rosa and accept for yourself the
love and devotion of a sincere and loving Husband..."*

ON MARCH 1, 1864, WINSTON STEPHENS WAS KILLED. A UNION SNIPER, HIDING IN AMBUSH, SHOT WINSTON WHILE HE WAS LEADING A COLUMN OF CAVALRY IN PURSUIT OF UNION TROOPS. WITH WINSTON WAS HIS BROTHER SWEPSTON STEPHENS, WHO WROTE THIS TO TIVIE: "THAT LOOK, THE LAST LOOK WAS FULL OF LOVE. HIS LIPS MOVED BUT NO WORD ESCAPED. I SEE THAT LOOK NOW AND EVER WILL..."



Photo: Florida State Archives



Photo courtesy of University Press of Florida

A portrait of Octavia (Tivie) Stephens with son Winston on her lap and daughter Rosalie standing at right, in about 1868.

On March 15, 1864, Tivie writes this in her journal:

"With what a sad, sad heart I begin another journal. On Sunday Feb 28th, dear Mother was taken with a congestive chill. On Friday March 4th, [brother Davis Bryant] came with news of the death of my dear dear husband, he was killed in battle near Jacksonville on the 1st of March. Mother grew worse and on Sunday, March 6th, she too was taken from us between 12 and 1 o'clock she passed quietly away from Typhoid Pneumonia. At 7 o'clock p.m. I have [given] birth to a dear little baby boy, which although three or four weeks before the time, the Lord still spares to me."

April 14, 1864, Tivie writes to her brother Davis Bryant:

*"My dear brother Davis,
"I did not intend to long a time should elapse before answering your letter...and now I know not how to write I am so bewildered...my grief now is almost more than I can bear and it is only at times that I can submit, all looks so gloomy now, I feel as though I had little to live for, I try to do my duty to my children and live for their sakes, but have not the heart to do anything, all the pleasure of my life was wrapt up in Winston, he was almost my life, it seems as though I could not do without him much longer, I can not realize the whole truth, it seems dark and mysterious."*

Epilogue:

TIVIE NAMED THE NEW BABY WINSTON. DAUGHTER ROSA GREW UP, MARRIED, BECAME PREGNANT, BUT DIED AT AGE 22 BEFORE GIVING BIRTH. YOUNG WINSTON BECAME A TEACHER, THEN ATTENDED THE BALTIMORE COLLEGE OF DENTAL SURGERY. TIVIE NEVER REMARRIED. SHE DIED IN 1908 WHILE VISITING WINSTON AND HIS WIFE IN NEW BEDFORD, MASS., WHERE WINSTON HAD OPENED A DENTAL PRACTICE.

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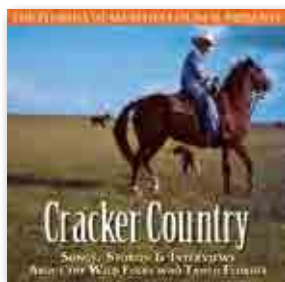
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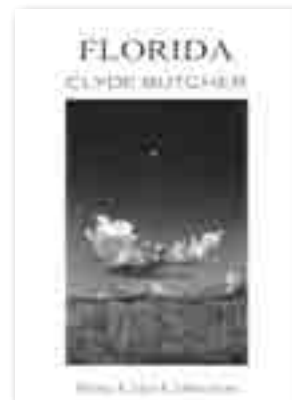


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