

## REMINISCENCES OF CAPT. JAMES McKAY, JR.

*James McKay, Jr., was born in Mobile, Ala., in 1842 and moved with his parents to Tampa in 1846. In his later years he wrote two lengthy articles about the early history of Tampa and Hillsborough County. The first was printed in the Tampa Times, Dec., 20 1921, and was later reprinted in D. B. McKay's Pioneer Florida. The second article appeared in the Tampa Times, Dec. 18, 1923, and is reprinted below. He died in 1924. Items in brackets are editor's corrections.*

### "History of Tampa of the Olden Days"

By JAMES McKAY, JR.

There have been many articles published by the press of the early days of Tampa, composed by those who obtained their information from hearsay and not personal knowledge, that were only partly correct. I will, to the best of my memory, relate what I know from the late forties and fifties of what Tampa was then, and its slow but substantial growth to the seventies.

As I have stated previously, our family came to Tampa from Mobile, Ala. in 1846. At that time there were but few citizens, who were civilian and but few houses outside of the government reservation. The military post was known as Fort Brooke, garrisoned by the Fifth Infantry, and commanded by Colonel Waite. There was but one store, owned and operated by W. G. Ferris, on the reservation. He was known as the sutler for the post. These stores are now called post exchange at army posts.

The north side of the government reservation ran east and west along Whiting street. The town was situated north of this line, and was a bed of sand and thick growth of what was called the scrub. The postoffice

was on the reservation. At the time our family came to Tampa, the postmaster was Dr. John M. Palmer. He constructed a small hotel on the north side of Whiting street near the river and named it the Palmer hotel. This was a building containing 10 or 11 rooms, with a dining room the entire length of it on the back, and about 15 feet wide, which was used later on as a dance hall for the young people. This hotel withstood the hurricane of 1848 although the water rose two feet over the main floor. Colonel Hugh T. Fisher was the manager of this hotel. He became the postmaster June 10, 1850. Colonel Fisher was the grandfather of our present deputy sheriff, Mr. Brooks.

In 1846 Darling & Griffin opened a store at the corner of Whiting and Tampa streets. Later on the name of this firm was changed to Kennedy and Darling. My father also opened a small store in 1850, at the corner of Washington and Franklin street, where the *Tampa Daily Times* is now published.



**Hillsborough County Court House, constructed 1854**

### **Hurricane in 1848.**

In 1848, the town was visited by a terrific hurricane causing the tide to rise above 15 feet above low water mark, washing away the W. G. Ferris store and the house we were living in; in fact, most of the houses that were located on the river bank. Our family was moved to the Palmer hotel, and when driven out of there on account of the tide, to the Darling and Griffin store, and then to the military hospital on the reservation. As soon as Mr. Ferris could obtain material he erected a small building

on the south side of Whiting street near the intersection of Franklin. This street did not extend farther south, on account of the reservation. A few years later Mr. Ferris, having some trouble with the military officials, they ordered him off the reservation, when he moved his store to the corner of Florida and Washington streets and built his residence on the same lot. This residence became the old folks home and later on was moved to the site the home is now occupying and somewhat improved, or made larger.



**Original Masonic Lodge Building, corner of Franklin and Whiting Streets.**

The military built a wharf for the use of their vessels, at the mouth of the river and also a twin warehouse for quartermaster and subsistence stores, connecting with the wharf. I recollect the government stables were also near this storehouse and the lot on which the temporary stables were built contained many bitter-sweet orange trees. Later on, when the Indians became unruly, the stables were moved to the east side of the reservation and increased to several hundred for cavalry and mule teams. I think, at one time, there was some 200 wagons of four mules each, used for transportation of supplies to troops occupying posts in the interior.

In 1848-49-50 my father owned and operated the schooner Sarah Matilda-named for my mother- between Tampa, Mobile and

New Orleans. With the exception of the government vessels, this was the only vessel that was being used commercially for this port. He also constructed a twin wharf at the foot of Washington street. Cattle were penned between the wharves, for shipment to Key West, by schooner.

The Indians having moved to the Everglades and the country being in a peaceful condition, many settlers came into the country and some located in Tampa, purchasing lots and building homes, clearing up the scrub as they would build, putting down plank sidewalks and in some instances shell, but the sand remained in the streets making it hard on teams as well as pedestrians. No lot of 105 feet by 105 feet sold for more than \$25 or \$140 for the square. That is what our family paid for the lots where the Olive

hotel is, also The Times lot, and the Almeria hotel square. How many of us would like to purchase them at this price now?

### **Shipping in 1851.**

In 1851 we shipped cedar logs that were cut from up the Hillsborough river, to Blanchard and Fitch in New York, for making pencils. In 1851 my father erected a saw mill at the place where the Tampa Steam ways is now situated, for the manufacture of lumber. Previous to this, all lumber was freighted from Mobile. Sawdust from this mill was placed on the municipal streets to assist teams in hauling. When the yellow fever appeared in town many of the citizens claimed it was from decayed sawdust and the practice was stopped.

In [1849] Mr. Payne's store situated near Peace River, present Hardee County, was burned by a party of Indians and he was massacred. The Indians being at peace the government demanded that the perpetrators of this crime be delivered to the authorities and they pressed this demand with such force that Billy Bowlegs surrendered three of his tribe. [The three were later sent to the Indian Territory In August, 1850, Daniel Hubbard, an orphan boy, was abducted by Indians and murdered. In 1851, Billy Bowlegs delivered the three alleged murderers to civil authorities in Tampa. See "The Seminole Indian Murders of Daniel Hubbard," by Jas. W Covington, *Sunland Tribune*, Vol. XV, Nov. 1989.] They were placed in jail and held for some time, when one day about noon, they gave a war whoop and when the sheriff went to the jail found all three of them dead, hanging to the bars, with their blankets. One of them did the hanging and then stood on a bucket, kicked it from under him, as he was found with his feet on the floor and his legs bending so as to throw his weight on his blanket, showing

how determined they were. Benjamin J. Hagler was the sheriff at that time. I was a boy [8] years of age and I have never forgotten how these Indians looked, while hanging. This incident was so impressed on my mind that it has remained with me to this date.

As time rolled along the town began to grow, slowly but substantially. The following merchants opened stores on Washington street. John Jackson, C. L. Friebele, James McKay, W. O. Ferris, E. A. Clark. Michael Wall had a clothing store, corner of Franklin and Whiting street. Brown & Company also had a clothing store, on Washington street. There was a Spaniard named Jose Vigil who carried on a confectionery store on Franklin street. He was a unique character. His vest, and he was never seen without wearing one, came down nearly as long as his coat, having an immense watch and chain in one pocket with a large lot of silver change in the other pocket of the vest. He was very tall and slender, with large black eyes and a fierce looking moustache and when he wished to impress you with his importance he would put on a Gasparilla look. But he was kindhearted and always gave the boys candy, or some little sweet mints, especially when he would receive a lot of decayed fruit from Havana and wanted the boys to cull it over for him. Every Christmas he would have a miniature representation of the birth of Christ, and his home was then thrown open to the people. His wife and sister-in-law being musicians of a fine type playing the guitar and piano and his father--in-law playing the violin, making it exceedingly pleasant and happy for us. When the war between the states began he moved to New Orleans and died before the war ended.

TAMPA HERALD.

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**TAMPA, FLORIDA.**

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7. 1854.

**Our Court House.**

Through the kindness of Mr. Breaker, contractor and builder of this magnificent Court House, we are enabled to furnish our readers with a full description of its order, size, various offices, &c. &c.

The building is 76 ft. long, by 45 wide, and two stories high. The 1st. story is 12 ft. between joints; the second is 14 1-2 ft. On the 1st floor is the City Hall, Judge of Probates, Clerks', and Sheri&, Offices, and Grand Jurors' room. A spacious Hall extends from the Southern entrance of the building, between the four Offices to the City Hall. On the 2nd floor is the Court Room, 42 by 45 ft., and two spacious Jury rooms, with a passage extending from the south entrance, between the jury rooms to the Court-room. A projecting Portico, an each end, the whole width of the building supported by heavy *Grecian Columns*. A double flight of stairs ascends from each end of the building, landing - on the 2nd floor of the portico's. The Roof is mounted with a Domo and Tower, 18 ft in diameter, and 24 ft high, covered with Tin, or Zinc. The extreme height of the building, from the pinnacle of the Tower to the ground is 68 feet; and the whole is being beautifully finished in a combination of the *Grecian, Ionic, and Corinthian Order's*.

The plan was drawn by the contractor, Mr. Breaker, who has engaged to erect the building, for a sum less than \$5000. The execution of this contract, we are satisfied, will be attended with considerable loss to the builder, unless the generosity and liberality of the County Commissioner's shall interpose to prevent it, For the credit of our Town and County, we hope they will, and that too, with no *niggardly* hand.

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Fort Myers was established, I think, in 1850 by the government. My father was appointed sutler of this post in 1852 and used a small schooner named Emma to take his goods

from Tampa to Fort Myers. He also opened a store at Fort Denaud, which was on the Caloosahatchee river some 20 miles above Fort Myers and chartered a little steamer he owned, named the Woodduck to the quartermaster department to carry supplies to the troops at that place. She was operated between Punta Rassa, Fort Denaud, and Fort Myers.

**The First Court House.**

The mails were brought to Tampa overland from Gainesville by stage first weekly, then semiweekly, under contract with my father in 1852. The first court house was constructed in [1848] and the second and larger court house was built by the Rev. John H. Breaker, being a two-story building in [1854]. In 1855 the Morgan Steamship Line operated their steamers between New Orleans and Havana, touching at all the Florida ports semi-monthly, which also gave the town mails, freights and passengers.

The Leonardy brothers conceived the idea of erecting a hotel of some 25 rooms on the lot occupied by the Scottish Rite building, naming it the Florida House. This building my father purchased from them and operated as a hotel until the beginning of the war. It was full every winter, with tourists who visited the town for their health. In 1852 we opened a ferry at the foot of Jackson street, so as to cross the stage with the mail. It was also used by the public. Ponds that were located on the east end of Jackson street caused the city officials as well as the people, considerable annoyance, especially during the rainy season. One of these ponds at the corner of Jackson and Marion street would take in all four corners and prevent pedestrians from passing in that direction. I have skated rocks over ice on this pond when it was frozen over during the winter.

The authorities dug a ditch in the center of Jackson street to drain these ponds, and in some places it was 12 feet deep. Across Franklin and Tampa streets small bridges were placed so as to permit passage of teams and the public. This did not accomplish what was desired so the ponds were filled in later on.

The first Masonic lodge was organized, I think, in [1850] and the upstairs of my father's store was fitted up for holding their meetings, and later on I think in the later part of [1852], the lodge building at the corner of Whiting and Franklin street was erected, first a two-story building, the upstairs for a lodge and the lower floor used principally for school purposes, and later on an addition of a two-story building at right angle to the first one, was constructed. I am under the impression that my father was one of the charter members of this lodge, and had as much if not more than any other citizen in its organization and construction but later on had a difficulty with one of the members, withdrawing from the lodge, saying he would never enter it again as long as this party was a member, and I do not think that he ever attended a lodge meeting after that. I am under the impression that he had several hundred dollars of stock in this organization which he lost for some reason. If I have made incorrect statements in reference to this matter and the lodge has records on file in regard to it, I would be very glad to be put right in the matter. [James McKay, Sr. became a member of Hillsborough Lodge No. 25, F&A.M. Apr. 10, 1850. He was expelled Dec. 15, 1855 due to a dispute with fellow Mason Madison Post. McKay was reinstated in the lodge, Sept. 5, 1863.]

We children attended school in this lodge building. Rev. J. K. Glover, a Methodist minister, was the teacher. About this time

the Know Nothing Party, was organized against the Democratic party. The political excitement reached our quiet little town, and Rev. Glover advocated the former party so strong, denouncing the Democratic Party, that we were removed from his school and sent to James Petty as teacher. Well do I remember the public meeting that was held in the court house. Rev. J. K. Glover advocating the tenets of the Know Nothing party and Mr. Alfonso DeLauney denouncing the former party and defending the principles of the Democratic party. Their speeches were bitter but the people believed that Mr. DeLauney was right. The Know Nothing party was of short life. Mr. DeLauney was appointed postmaster Dec. 21, 1852 and served a little more than 8 years, he was of French descent, very intelligent and a fine talker.

In the month of December, 1855, the Indians again went on the war path and the early part of 1856 found a number of volunteer companies mustered into the military service, and also more regular troops sent to Fort Myers and Tampa. The government sent also two small steamers from New Orleans named Grey Cloud and Texas Ranger, to ply between Tampa and Fort Myers. My father also purchased the schooner Venice at Mystic, Conn., to freight goods from New Orleans to Tampa. Things around Tampa began to be active and quite a lot of money was placed in circulation.

The Indians burning and massacring settlers near Tampa, the citizens were organized and performed picket duty on all the roads entering Tampa. Boys as well as the men were used in the discharge of this duty. The stage conveying the mails had a guard of several soldiers mounted, to protect it. The court house bell was to sound the alarm in case of a night attack and the citizens were kept in a state of excitement all the time.

Considerable improvements were made on the reservation. New barracks and officers' quarters and store houses were erected.

### **End Indian War.**

The government finding it difficult to drive the Indians out of the country or capture them, concluded to enter into negotiations with them and with this plan in view sent Major Rector, with 50 civilized Indians from Arkansas, into the Everglades some distance below Fort Myers, in [1858]. These Indians scouted around until they got in conference with Billy Bowlegs and Sam Jones, the Seminole Chiefs and at a meeting induced Bowlegs to leave them and emigrate to Arkansas with his band, at so much for each warrior, squaw and piccanniny, They were concentrated on Egmont Key and when all reached that point were embarked on the Steamship [Grey Cloud], for New Orleans. Sam Jones decline to leave the state, but this ended the Seminole war.

Mustering out of the volunteers threw a lot of disreputable men on the town and they became so bad that the citizens organized themselves as a band of regulators, whipping some and driving them out of town and in one or two instances hung some. This broke up lawlessness and the town was restored to quiet and order.

After the excitement of mustering out of volunteers was over and the unruly element driven out of town, business began to improve and all citizens co-operated in making improvements to their property and others locating in the town, adding to the population, Tampa put on city airs. There was not an over plus of skilled mechanics "out sufficient to carry on all building and construction work. These mechanics were experts in their lines of work. None better

could be had in the state. Houses were built to last a lifetime.

In 1857 during the summer, Tampa was visited by an epidemic of yellow fever, but it being very late in the summer and cold weather coming on, there were not many cases and but few deaths, but in 1858 it started early in the season and spread rapidly over the town. All that could move to the country did so but there were many deaths, some of our best citizens passing away. I was stricken with the disease and only for my mother and grandmother, being most excellent nurses, they having passed through an epidemic in Mobile sometime previous, I would not be here today writing this article. There were many theories advanced from what source came the disease. Some stated that it was introduced from New Orleans by schooner. Others claimed it originated from filth in the town. Any way there was a campaign of cleanliness and sanitary measures were adopted in the winter of '58 and early '59. These measures were rigidly enforced and before the summer of '59 came in, the town, was placed in fine shape. But it gave the town a setback from which it did not recover for two years.

In 1858 my father came to the conclusion the country would be benefited from the exportation of cattle to Havana, Cuba, so he purchased the brig Huntress, fitted her up with cattle pens and contracted with the Morgan Steamship Line to load their decks twice each month, paying \$1,500 per trip, whether he loaded the decks or not. He constructed a small dock at Ballast Point and lightered the cattle out of these vessels. Through this source quite a sum of money was placed in circulation in south Florida. In fact after the military left this part of the country the shipment of cattle was the only source of obtaining money. There was only a small amount of sea island cotton made in

this section and some potatoes, sugar and hides. These were brought to town and sold in trade, for other goods.

### **Starts Life Work.**

September, 1853, I was sent to the Kentucky Military Institute, situated near Frankfort. My brother-in-law, Col. R. B. Thomas being commandant of cadets and professor of mathematics. But my brother, George, dying in 1859, Colonel Thomas was requested to return to Tampa at once, and later on I was called home to take charge of all outside work and handle the floating property.

There is one thing that I have forgotten to state farther back in this article. It has been remarked that Tampa had not been visited with a hurricane since 1848 until the one of 1921, which is an error, Tampa was visited with a pretty stiff hurricane in 1853, that I recollect very well. The schooner John Roalef owned by W G. Ferris and sons arrived from New Orleans with a cargo of general merchandise and just as she had finished discharging this cargo, this hurricane came along, bringing in a tidal wave with it that landed this vessel about 100 yards north of the A. C. L. railroad warehouse where it stands now and about 100 yards from the river bank. My father bought this vessel, had her jacked up and repaired, dug a canal to the river and launched her into this canal, floating her. The tide must have risen some 10 feet above low water mark as this vessel was drawing some five feet or more of water, at the time she went ashore.

During the winter of 1859 the young men of the town organized the Tampa Cornet band, employing J. A. Butterfield as leader. This band was composed of some 14 members

and when, after practicing a few weeks, it ventured in giving promenade concerts and dances, charging a nominal sum for admittance, it gave the young people many evenings of pleasure and enjoyment. There are only two of this band now living. Henry Crane and myself.

In January, 1860, there was constructed a pasture fence, beginning on Hillsborough bay just near the present site of the Spanish sanitarium, extending across the peninsula about two miles north of Port Tampa, to old Tampa bay, for the purpose of concentrating cattle. The demand for cattle had increased to such an extent that my father in the spring of this year went north to purchase a steamer suitable for the trade and after searching the eastern ports, not finding a suitable vessel, went to Chicago and there purchased the steamer Salvor. She was not of sufficient size for the trade, so he took her to New York, cut her in two, putting 70 feet in the middle of her. Before leaving Tampa he purchased from Captain L. G. Lesley, his entire stock of the S. V. brand of cattle, as well as 2,000 head of beef cattle from other parties. These cattle were all delivered to this pasture by June 5. The steamer should have arrived here by June 1, but owing to the slow manner of completing the work on her, she did not reach Tampa until the middle of July. In the meantime the pasture went dry, not a drop of water for cattle and many died before the rains began. There were only about some 3,500 head that were in a condition to stand shipping, and those that were left alive, we altered the marks and brands and drove to Manatee county. The pen where I received all this number of cattle, some 8,000 head, was situated some 200 yards from where I am now living. At that time there was but one house within one mile of the pens. What wonderful improvements have I witnessed since that time.

### **Population 1,500 In 1860.**

During this year, 1860, Tampa continued to improve both as to business and population. To the best of my recollection there were about 1,500 inhabitants. [Thomas E. Jackson in 1924 estimated Tampa's 1860 population as 451 in the incorporated limits and 100 in the suburbs.] After the election of Abraham Lincoln as president, considerable excitement followed, when in January, 1861, Florida seceded and the climax was reached and every one went wild.

Later on, the militia was called out and every available man was put to work throwing up breastworks and batteries at the mouth of the river, to resist an attack from the United States navy, which we believed at that time we would wipe off the face of the water.

The S. S. Salvor was offered to the Confederate government and Commodore Hartstene was sent here to inspect her. She made a trip down the bay with him and when he returned he told my father that she would not do for the government, as she drew too much water for inside work and was not fast enough for outside work. So having two or three loads of cattle on hand, she continued freighting them to Havana. On her last trip he received a tip that when she returned to Key West from Tampa she would be seized by the federal government, but as there were a great many southern sympathizers in Key West who were anxious to get to the main land, he offered the Salvor to take them to Cedar Keys, obtaining permission from the commanding officers to do so. One hundred and eighty-six boarded her, and he made the trip to Cedar Keys with them not charging a cent. On the return trip he came by Tampa,

loaded cattle and returned to Havana. As he passed through Key West, the commanding officer notified my father that an officer would go with him to Havana to purchase animals for use of the military at Key West and for him to follow his orders. On arrival at Havana the crew refused to return to Key West and the ship was laid up. The officer was informed to get back to Key West the best way he could. My father chartered a fishing smack to bring him to Tampa, as he wished to ascertain the situation in the south. Secretary S. R. Mallory who was a great friend of his, advised him to run the blockade with the Salvor. The south would go to war and they wanted arms and ammunition. So he returned to Havana, obtained a cargo of guns and other war materials and merchandise, induced some of his Cuban friends to invest in the enterprise, which they did, the cargo costing some \$400,000. Clearing the ship for Nassau, under the English flag, but bound to Cedar Keys; he sailed out of Havana harbor in the afternoon, headed for Nassau, but when night came on, changed the course for Cedar Keys. The next day he was captured by the Keystone State and towed to Key West. My father was confined in Fort Taylor and the steamer, with my brother, Donald, and the crew taken to Philadelphia. Donald was sent to Fort Lafayette, N. Y. harbor. Seven of the crew, being negroes owned by my father were freed. The steamer was sold and purchased by Clyde and Company. The cargo was also sold.

### **Companies Formed.**

In the meantime, formation of companies began. I had been first lieutenant of a militia company under Captain Lesley but when we were to muster into the service the order was to reorganize, when I, with some other of the Tampa boys, Drew and T. W. Givens

left for the front. Givens left some 10 days prior to Drew and myself. He joined the Twentieth Florida regiment, as quartermaster sergeant, near Jacksonville, where they were forming as a regiment.

Drew and myself went to Fernandina to join Finegan's Legion, but on arriving there were told by General Finegan that he had given up the raising of a legion, as the government had notified him the arms could not be furnished at that time. So we continued on to Richmond, to join the Second Florida regiment, but on arrival at Richmond, Colonel Thomas, who was adjutant of the Second Florida, advised me to apply for the position of captain quartermaster of the Fourth Florida regiment that was then being organized in Florida, which I did, through Secretary Mallory. I was appointed and ordered to report at Apalachicola to Colonel Ed Hopkins, commanding the regiment, who, with two companies, was stationed there. The balance of the regiment was scattered along the coast, as far down as Tampa. Later on the regiment was concentrated at Fernandina. Drew joined a Texas regiment and we never met again.

Tampa furnished several companies of men for the army, and after a year the inhabitants, all of who could leave, moved to the country and the town again began going down grade. Some few troops were kept, as a guard to give notice of the approach of the enemy -- not for protection of the place, for this they could not do. Tampa was a dead town at this time. Only when the enemy gunboats visited the place and would throw a few shot and shell in the town did the people show much life.

The Fourth Florida left the state in May, 1862, for Tennessee and joined Bragg's army and in the early part of 1863 was ordered to Mississippi, to the relief of

Vicksburg, under Johnston, he having some 2,000 wagons loaded with supplies for Vicksburg.

The night of the fourth of July, 1863, we finished placing our pontoons, over the Big Black, when about 2 o'clock of the morning of July 5 we received notice that Vicksburg had capitulated on the fourth to General Grant and that General Sherman was on his way to try and capture Johnston's army. It was but a very short time before our army was in motion on the retreat, for our fortifications around Jackson, Miss., and when we reached Jackson our rear guard was skirmishing with Sherman's advance guard.

After the fall of Vicksburg the federals had full control of the Mississippi. This was a great loss to the south, as it cut off the supply of beef cattle from Texas. The government then turned its attention to Florida for supply of beef cattle. Some 160 veterans who lived in South Florida and knew the range and how to handle cattle, were detailed from the army, and ordered to report to Major Stubbs, at Madison, Fla. A wire was sent by Major P. W. White, of Quincy, who was chief commissary of the state, that I be ordered to report to him for detached duty, which was disapproved, but later on in the fall of 1863 I received orders to report to him, which I did. I was assigned to duty in south Florida in charge of these men.

Many deserters from the army and some from the lower part of south Florida below Fort Meade, with the notorious Jim Green, located at Fort Myers, and increasing in such numbers the Federal government organized them into companies. There were also negro solidiers with this command. These deserters made raids in the interior, taking cattle owned by loyal southerners and destroying

homes to such an extent, the authorities sent Colonel Munnerlyn to this section, directing him to organize the citizens and all home companies into an organization under the name of Munnerlyn's battalion, for the protection of south Florida, with headquarters at Brooksville. During the summer of 1864 a body of these deserters numbering about 90 under Jim Green, well armed and equipped, marched overland from Fort Myers in direction of Fort Meade, with the purpose of destroying all houses in that locality but they were discovered when within 15 miles of their destination we met them with some 25 men and had a fight, they killing one of our best men, Jim Lanier. However we stopped them from carrying out their foul intentions and turned them down the Peace Creek swamp, they making their escape during the night.

### **Tampa Captured.**

They again made a raid into Tampa, capturing the town. General Woodbury in command and some 400 deserters and negro soldiers holding the town for two days, after taking what property suited them hurriedly left, hearing that Dickison and his men were advancing on the place to attack it. I was at Fort Meade with 55 men, organizing some 1,200 head cattle, to forward to the army of Tennessee, when I received the news of the capture of Tampa at 2 o'clock that afternoon. I left with 35 men for that place, reaching within two miles of the town at 11 o'clock the same night, when I obtained information as to the force that occupied the town. Immediately upon receipt of news of the capture of Tampa, couriers were dispatched calling all citizens to report to the Six Mile creek, as quickly as possible, which they did and by noon of the next day we had about 75 men and boys. The morning after my arrival near Tampa, I sent a flag of truce into the

town by Gideon Zipperer and another man, two of the bravest and best men I had with me, requesting that my wife and child be permitted to leave the town with these men, as I would attack the town within 24 hours. Mr. Zipperer is now living below Bartow on his magnificent home and orange grove. The Federals declined to permit either the men or my wife to leave the town and held them until they evacuated the place, taking some 60 bales of cotton that my father owned. The two vessels that carried these troops to Tampa, named Honduras and Huzzas, both were purchased by my father and renamed the Governor Marvin, and Southern Star. This was after the war. Many times have I read the log books of these vessels giving an account of this expedition. Captain Van Sice commanded the Honduras at the time of this expedition. I got acquainted with him in Havana after the war, he then being master of the City of Vera Cruz of the Alexander Steamship Line plying between New York and Havana. He discussed with me the capture of Tampa.

A few years later Captain Van Sice, with the City of Vera Cruz, was lost in a hurricane off St. Augustine.

I had placed pickets on all roads leading out of Tampa, with orders to halt all passers, no matter who they were. The picket force was composed of six men. At 12 o'clock the night of the day the federals evacuated Tampa, six men came riding up the road from the direction of Tampa and although the guard heard them talking before getting abreast of their position they were permitted to pass without challenging. I was notified two hours afterwards, when I immediately started six men after them, but it was too late, for they had some 10 or 12 miles the start of our men. The deserters proved to be Jim Green and five of his followers.

These deserters taking so many cattle from the range, Colonel Brevard and Captain Dickison were ordered to cooperate with us in breaking up Fort Myers but the federals landing in Jacksonville, they were recalled, and when it was reported that they were advancing out of Jacksonville in the direction of Lake City, I received orders to report there with all dispatch possible, with all available forces. The men were badly scattered and it required three days to get them together, but I succeeded in leaving with 110 of those who had seen service in the armies of Virginia and Tennessee. Although we rode all day and part of the night we did not reach Olustee until the morning after the battle, without our horses just completely worn out. We were allowed two days rest up and ordered to return to our station.

### **Futile Effort.**

[In early 18651 Major W. M. Footman was ordered to this section to organize as large a force as possible, to attack Fort Myers. He succeeded in getting together some 150 men, when we left Fort Meade with all the supplies we could pack on our horses, one piece of artillery and one wagon with a large skiff and this skiff loaded with corn. After the first day's travel we came to the flat country and it being the rainy season our horses traveled in water from ankle deep to their saddle skirts. In fact it was a difficult matter to find dry land sufficient for the command to camp on. When we reached the Caloosahatchee river at Fort Thompson we found the river half a mile wide and a strong current running. Rafts were constructed and towed with the skiff to cross our equipage on. It required some eight hours to cross. Part of the artillery ammunition was lost on account of the skiff capsizing. We tried to follow the trail at night, with the intention of

attacking the place just at daylight, but the advance guard got lost on account of so much water, and the darkness, so we sat on all horses all night, 12 miles from Fort Myers. At daylight we made a start, riding rapidly, with Gideon Zipperer and three men a mile in advance, they having orders to ride in a sweeping gallop when nearing [Billy's] creek, where the federal picket was stationed. This they did and captured the picket and four men. At the same time the command moved up rapidly and captured some negro soldiers and two or three deserters who were washing their clothes in a pond. Noticing a bunch of cattle north of us I was ordered to take four men and reconnoiter, which I did. We discovered men with the cattle but as the country was very open they discovered us and after pursuing them two miles we captured two of them. The others escaped in the direction of Punta Rassa. When we formed into line and began an attack we discovered that nearly all of the ammunition both for artillery and small arms was worthless, damaged by water. This was a terrible disappointment to all, as, coming so far, with a prospect of success, we were compelled to return without accomplishing our object, only capturing some 20 prisoners and several hundred head of cattle. We returned to Fort Meade the most worn out and dilapidated looking set of soldiers you ever saw, horses jaded and men half starved.

Jim Green and his gang of deserters made one more raid before the ending of the war. [July 1864]. They landed in the night at the mouth of Anclote river and captured some of our pickets, among them being C. L. Friebele and E. A. Clark, who were merchants of Tampa before the war. They, with another one of our men were sent as prisoners to Ship Island, near Gulfport, Miss. The intention of this gang of deserters was to capture and burn everything around

Brooksville, but as we were concentrating our men they got cold feet and turned in the direction of Bayport. Two of our home companies, one from Brooksville and the other from the vicinity of Tampa, neither company knowing the other was in the vicinity of the entrance to the swamp at Bayport, at 12 o'clock at night, each thinking the others were deserters, opened fire. Young Campbell was killed and Captain Lesley was wounded in the arm before they found out all were Confederate soldiers. The deserters had passed into Bayport some two hours previously. The next morning about 10 o'clock I, with some 20 men from Tampa, reached the place where the shooting had taken place. Seeing a new grave, we removed some of the earth and discovering it was a white blanket that covered the body knew it was one of our men. Shortly afterwards a courier came up from Brooksville who informed us of the shooting between our own men.

I was paroled at Bayport, May 6, 1865. My parole was signed by a Captain Pease. A few days after this Judah P. Benjamin of the Confederate cabinet drove into Brooksville with a single horse and open-top buggy, wearing a large felt hat, looking for lands to purchase. We soon found out who he was, when he was sent on down the line. A boat was secured to take him out of the country and Captain Fred Tresca an old shipmaster of Manatee, was selected to take charge of the small boat. He was successful in getting to the Bahama banks with Mr. Benjamin, after being searched two or three times by federal gunboats.

After the close of the war we all returned to our homes, which we found in most instances in a dilapidated condition. Tampa was a hard-looking place. Houses were in bad order. Streets and lots were grown up mostly with weeds and the outlook certainly

was not very encouraging. To make matters worse two companies of negro soldiers were sent to garrison the place. White officers commanded them. It was not long before the troops became overbearing and in some instances threatened arrests of our citizens. I was one that was to be brought before a military court, for the destruction of papers and documents. Getting uneasy over the many reports coming [?] I, with my brother Donald, mounted our horses and laid out in woods for six weeks. The excited condition of the country and activity of the officers at this place being reported to Washington by a revenue officer, a special agent was sent here to investigate with authority to act and he soon had matters straightened out. I received notice from my father to report to the commanding officer in the garrison before stopping anywhere, which I did and was given a paper stating that I was not to be molested only on order from Washington. Shortly after this event the negro soldiers were removed and white troops of the regular army went to garrison the place. It was not long before they were on good terms with the citizens - and assisted in pushing the town ahead, trying to make us forget that we were enemies at one time.

My father succeeded in getting to Havana by a fishing smack and from his friends in Cuba got sufficient funds to take him to New York, landing there with only a few dollars in his pocket. Meeting the old merchants he dealt with previous to the war, they assisted him in buying the Steamer Honduras, which he named the Governor Marvin, costing \$72,000. He also bought a stock of goods valued at \$24,000. He left New York in October, 1865, with this vessel loaded and 165 passengers. he met a hurricane off St. Augustine and came very near losing vessel and all hands, but by the graciousness of the Heavenly Father he pulled through it with some slight losses only.

Two or three days after the hurricane, in passing down along the Florida reef, he saw some 21 vessels of all kinds ashore, as quick as he could, he discharged freight and passengers that were for Key West, patched the steamer up, and left for a bark loaded with sugar and a steamer that was ashore and worked on them for two weeks, for which he received enough to pay for one-half of the Marvin.

When reaching Tampa about the last of November, he entered into the shipping of cattle to Cuba but as the cattle were beginning to get poor and the grass being bad in Cuba, they did not sell for sufficient to pay for cost, duties, and freight and about the last of December he discontinued shipping them.

In the meantime stores opened on Washington street and although there was not much money in circulation, still there was considerable business, mostly in trade. I K. Roberts and Company operated a weekly line of steamers along the coast from New Orleans to Havana, bringing freight and passengers. That was of great assistance to this section of south Florida.

Florida was placed under a provisional government, by the federal government but it was administered by a humane governor with[out] the severity that the officials at Washington thought it should be and it was not long before carpetbaggers were put in control backed by deserters and negro soldiers.

### **Jim Green Helped.**

A renegade judge of the court was placed in office in this section and with the notorious Jim Green and his deserters to assist him,

they joined the republican party, the fight became quite interesting. The loyal Confederates soon were engaged in a struggle that was not much inferior to the war between the states. At one time it appeared as another losing proposition but with the aid of the Ku Klux Klan, all over the south began to see daylight. In 1876 this state as well as others, emerged from the fight by placing George E Drew in the governor's chair, [but] Florida's vote was given to Hays.

It was not long after this when the renegades and deserters were fired from office and sound democrats installed. From that time this section began to improve, and every person felt safe and happy. Previous to this there were many night rides by the citizens, to accomplish what they did.

In 1866, during the summer, the trade with Cuba had increased to such an extent that my father purchased the Steamship Southern Star to assist the Governor Martin to freight cattle, but the demand did not last longer than that year, as the insurrection in Cuba broke out and buyers were afraid to put cattle on pastures. He chartered the Marvin to a party of Spaniards to load mules at Tampico, but when we arrived there found an insurrection had sprung up in Tamaullipas and we were detained for a month, when we loaded 357 mules for Havana. Arriving at our destination we found the city in a state of excitement for fear of an attack from the Cuban army. The night of the day of our arrival, while myself and officers of the ship were upstairs in the Louvre playing billiards, as a battalion of Spanish soldiers were passing, someone fired a pistol. The soldiers opened fire on the lower or ground floor and shot the place all to pieces. We made our escape over the tops of buildings and were let down through a trap door on the top of the building on the opposite side of the block. It was not long before we found

ourselves on board the Marvin and very glad to be there.

### **Tried to Conceal Contract.**

In 1876, when the leaders of the Republican party were in Tallahassee [?] the situation with our democratic leaders, I was in Washington, having the mail contract between Tampa and Cedar Keys transferred from my father's name-he having died shortly before this-to myself. I received a wire from General Dickison saying that an agent of the party was on his way to Cedar Keys to take passage on the Valley City for Manatee to try and get possession of the Pine Level returns. I sent a message immediately to my brother, Donald, who was master of the Valley City, she being at Cedar Keys that day. After loading he anchored her down the channel and when the train arrived he only had a yawl boat to take mails from the train and this party was told he could not get passage, as the boat would not carry him. He returned to Tallahassee and reported the situation, and an effort was made to cancel the contract but as Senator Connover was my friend he prevented it.

I have been compelled to mention my father many times, which I could not prevent, from the fact that in the early days of Tampa there was not a single interest connected with the town but what he was either the originator, or connected with it in some manner. He was identified with every improvement in the town.

As this article is rather lengthy I will close, wishing you and all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year.