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**MISCELLANEOUS LETTERS
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Head Quarters Department of Florida
Tallahassee. March 6. 1866

Bot. Col. Geo. L. Hartuff

A. A. G. Mil. Div. Gulf

New Orleans. La.

Colonel

Referring to my endorsement of January
30, 1866, upon communication from Ad. Gen. Dept of Alabama. Transmitted to me by
endorsement from Ad. Gen. Mil. Div. of the Gulf
of Sept 21, 1865, relative to the kidnaping of
negroes off Florida to Cuba, I have the honor
to report that I am of the opinion that no
cargo of negroes has been run off the coast
even if the same has been attempted and I can
find no evidence of the latter,

Lieut. Hammond 34th U.S. Inf. was sent
along the Coast of East Florida in disguise
to ascertain if possible the truth of the
rumours in that section of the country.
Copies of his reports together with letter of
Colonel Sproule 4th Infantry. Comdg. Dist of
East Florida. marked respectively A. B. & C.
are enclosed herewith.

A detective (Mr. Jenks) was sent to Western
Florida but he was discharged soon after and
elicited no information. An officer is ordered
to Southern Florida. disguised to investigate
this matter along the coast, his report will

duly forwarded. Lieut Hammond reports in conversation, in addition to written report, that there is nothing at Indian River to indicate any purpose on the part of the owners or crew of the Steamer Indian Queen, to kidnap negroes except the previous character of Citrus the Commander of the party. The steamer is now a perfect loss. The negroes in that section are few in number and those few are well aware of their rights and disposed to maintain them if assailed. They are also watchful and if any kidnaping is attempted in that part of the country the facts will soon be reported.

General Pierce of Mass is now visiting Enterprise for his health and intends to remain some months. Lieut Hammond made known to him the object of his trip to Indian River and requested him while at Enterprise to be watchful for any indications of unlawful traffic, which he promised to do.

Lieut Hammond thinks that the only suspicious circumstance in that section is the presence of a party of men at New Smyrna, under the leadership of one Hendrick an old blockade runner, who

has been there about five months, with the ostensible object of collecting cattle to be sent to the Bahamas, for which purpose his partner, one Shackelford is now at Nassau or Key West, endeavoring to obtain a light draught steamer.

The suspicion is entertained from their character that the real object is smuggling. This however cannot be carried on without the knowledge of the Collector at Smyrna, a Mr. Doub.

I am, Colonel,

Very respectfully

Your obedient servant

(sd) J. G. Foster

Major General Vols

Commanding

"a"

Jacksonville, Florida
March 1, 1866.

Lieut. E. M. D. Sams.

U. S. A. S.

Sir,

I have the honor to report that in accordance with the instructions of the Colonel Commanding the District I proceeded to Smyrna and took as

accurate an observation of the operations
in progress at that place as my limited
stay would allow. My scrutiny did not
succeed in detecting any irregularities.

There are but few persons at that
place or in the vicinity and these
mostly people of small means, mostly
wreckers and fishermen.

I returned to Enterprise where I
hoped to get a favorable opportunity of
going on to Indian River to look after
the party headed by Titus. At Mellenville
I succeeded in getting possession of such
intelligence as determined me to proceed
no farther. My informants were Mr Brantley
of Mellenville and a Dr James. These
men were vouched for by Capt Adams, Post
Commandant at Mellenville and further
recommended by their personal address and
candor. From Mr Brantley I learned that he
had visited the camp of Titus where he found
that persons engaged in preparing for market
fish and oysters in hermetically sealed cans.
He stated that he said he saw a large lot of
these cans, said to be right thousand.

The Steamer ^{Blyde} was at that time hard aground
in the sand and had been abandoned by
Titus and his party and was in charge

of the agent of the underwriters who was making preparations to get her off.

The report of Dr James is some two weeks later. He says that the attempt to raise the sunken steamer proved abortive and that she was abandoned and pronounced a total loss. on the discovery being made that her hull was broken.

The Dr also states that he visited the camp of Titus and his party, found only eleven persons engaged in pulling up fish and oysters as stated by Brantley.

Dr James further states that Titus would soon leave with the entire party for the north as the warm weather would end the fishing season.

No removals of negroes in the direction of the suspected locality came to my notice though I made diligent inquiry after such matters. St. John's River & Salt Lake on Indian River with a haul over of seven miles seems to be the chief channel of intercourse and traffic between the Indian River country and the Interior.

Thinking that, any further travel would not result in making other developments than those stated and that the crippled condition of the adventurers would for the present render their expedition

shambles. (even supposing a criminal purpose)
I thought most advisable to return to
Jacksonville.

I am, Sir, most respectfully
Your obedient servant
(s) D. McDonald
Lieut 34th U.S.

Lieut J. M. Sams.
U.S.A.

A true copy
Henry Patrick
2nd Lieut Aided Camp

f

~~Head Quarters District of East Florida~~

Jacksonville, March 2, 1866

Capt E. C. Woodruff
Adj. Asst. Adj. General
Department of Florida
Gallahussee

Sir,

I have the honor to transmit two
communications from Lieut D. McDonald
34th U.S. Troops who was sent under special
instructions to Smyrna and along the
Eastern Coast of Florida. There are no
indications that any attempt has been

intended or contemplated to abduct the colored citizens of Florida. The Expedition of Colonel Titus to Indian River in the Steamer 'Clyde' known as the Steamer Indian River has been a failure. The object was to put up fish oysters and turtles in tin cans and ship them to the New York Market. It is thirty three miles from Melonville on the St Johns to Smyrna. From the latter place there is a good road leading into the interior of Florida via Melonville and Oulterprise.

The advantages are such and the sparseness of population through this section of country offers great inducements to smugglers and a safe escort for bad men, refugees from law and justice from all parts of the country. A military supervision in that quarter will be of service to the General Government as well as to the State of Florida and Georgia.

As soon as I have troops at my control I shall reestablish the post at Melonville if it meets the approbation of the Major General Commanding.

I am, Sir, very respectfully
Your obedient servant

John S. Sprague
Col yth Infy, Condg

Henry Patrick

2^d Lieut Aide-de-Camp

'C'

Mellonville Florida

February 18. 1866

Lieut J. M. J. Sauns
A. A. A. G.

Sir

I have the honor to report in obedience to instructions from the Colonel and I visited New Smyrna and its vicinity. I found nothing there of a character to awaken suspicion that any of the people there were implicated in any scheme for abducting or kidnapping colored persons. I could not find that any such man as Griffin lived at Smyrna. The name was not known to Mrs Sheldon who had kept public house at Smyrna for many years. Men and boys are absent wrecking a large vessel stranded below the inlet.

Finding no facilities for prosecuting my journey towards the Indian River I returned to the St John at Enterprise with double object of communicating with Head Quarters as directed, as well as secure the aid from Capt Adams to enable me to reach Indian River by the way of St Johns River and Salt Lake.

Arrived there I find the Captain returned to

J — and his Company under orders to follow at an early period. I have not yet been able to secure the necessary facilities for making the trip which will be a tedious and difficult one. I have however a prospect of joining in an expedition with Genl. Pierce of Mass who is here for health and desires to take a journey

Two men have returned from Indian River in the past few days from whom I learn ~~much concerning the operations of Titus and his party.~~ The Steamer has broken in two so that she is a total loss, also a small Tug that was on board the Steamer is lost, but more than ten of the party are now at the camp and these are engaged in putting up and hermetically sealing fish and oysters for Provost & Co of N.Y. who were largely interested in the enterprise from the first,

The loss of Steamer and return of most of the operators would ^{to} delay the proceedings that nothing could be developed, at present even supposing the scheme to have been successful. I am persuaded that this place is more suitable for watching their operations than Smyrna or even the immediate vicinity of Suanini River for the reason that all travel to and from either of these places must pass through here. The

Officer in command here would hardly fail to detect any person engaged in spiriting away persons if his attention was directed to the matter.

It will be borne in mind that there are few negroes in this section and almost none at all east of the St. Johns, from the nearest point on Indian River to where colored people are found in any numbers is about one hundred and fifty miles and the route very difficult.

Mr Brantley of this place says that Titus will come away in about six weeks by the way of St. Johns River and Jacksonville. I understand Dr James to state the same. I shall request the Dr to call on the Colonel at Jacksonville where he is now going.

I am, very respectfully

Your obedient servant

(sd) S. M. Hammond

S. B. U. S. A.

A true copy

Henry Patrick

Lieut & Aide-de-Camp

Adj. Gen. Mil. Division of the Gulf

New Orleans, La. March 14, 1866

Respectfully forwarded for the information of the Lieut. General. For more than

two months I have been dilligently
investigating this matter and have
arrived at the conclusion that the various
rumours concerning the kidnapping
and running off of negroes to the
West India Islands had no foundation
in fact

1000 P. H. Sheridan
Major General U.S.A.
Commanding

Head qrs Armies of the U. S.

March 26, 1866

Respectfully forwarded to the Hon Secretary of War

and U. S. Grant

Lieut General

Respectfully referred to the Adjutant
General for file.

By order of the Secy of War

and Thos. F. Eckert

Actg Asst Secy of War

War Dept
Mch 29, 1866

Head Quarters Dept of Florida
Tallahassee Florida

April 27. 1866

Bt Col Geo L. Hartuff

Asst Adjut Genl

Mil Div of the Gulf

New Orleans. La

Colonel

I herewith enclose a copy of the report of Capt Maynard of the 52nd U.S. A. a most excellent and discreet officer whom I sent secretly in citizens clothes through the southern part of the State to ascertain all the facts to be gained concerning the alleged kidnapping of negroes, smuggling and the number and condition of the Indians. His report may be relied on, I doubt the

report that negroes were actually taken from Jacksonville to Havana, it looks like the old story of the Steamer "Indian River" which touched at Jacksonville on her way to Indian River where she was wrecked in Dec^r 1865. Her Captain endeavored to obtain hands in Jacksonville but the desire becoming known to the Agent of the Freedmen's Bureau at that place, suspicion was aroused and the steamer left without the desired hands, I believe there was a scheme formed to kidnap negroes on the east coast, but that it failed. I think the negroes in that section are too smart to be caught-rapping. I respectfully request that enquiry be made to ascertain if the carriage driver of Senator Trombs of Georgia has been missed from the country since the War and if so that a proper demand ^{for him} may be made upon the Governor General of Cuba. I also request that the Treas'y Dept may be asked to send a Revenue Cutter to New Smyrna and Indian River to look after the smugglers if any of these are, as seems to be probable from the within report, and also the report of Lieut Naimmond. Transmitted with my letter of the 6th March 1866

I am, Colonel,

Very resply
Yours obedt Servt
J. Estlin
May Genl Bondg Dept

Tallahassee Fla.

April 25. 1866.

Suz Genl. J. y. Foster

Comdg. Dept. of Fla.

Adjro. Tallahassee, Fla.

General.

In obedience to instructions to proceed thro' Eastern and Southern Florida for the purpose of ascertaining, such facts regarding the kidnapping of freedmen as may be found, and also to ascertain what steps were being taken to that effect, if any, to learn to what extent the Revenue of the U.S. was being defrauded at the sea-ports towns, along the Gulf Coast and also to obtain such general information about the Indians located in Southern Florida, as would interest and benefit the government, I have the honor to submit the following report.

I left Tallahassee on the morning of March 24. '66 and proceeded by Rail Road to Lake City, on the 26th inst, I started (mounted) on the road to Gainesville at which place I arrived on the evening of March 27th passing through Ellieville and Newnanville; at Ellieville I stopped at the house of Robert Martin, who informed me that a stranger dined at his house the week

previous and made the following statement:
That while he was in Atlanta, Ga., in Febru-
ary 1866, he met a man who was endeavoring
to hire freedmen to work on plantations either
in Texas or Arkansas, but whose true object
was to take them to some point on the Gulf
coast and ship them to Cuba, that there were
several men engaged in this transaction,
and that he was offered one hundred (\$100)
dollars in gold for every able bodied freedman
he would secure for shipment; he said
that he was knowing to the fact of several
being shipped from the port of Jacksonville,
Fla. during the month of November, 1865,
he further stated, that he had seen a letter
from ~~Doombs~~, now residing in Cuba, but
formerly U.S. Senator from Georgia which
stated that he had succeeded in buying
some of his former slaves and he was
fortunate in securing his old carriage driver.

I was unable to obtain the names of either
the party giving this information or the party
engaged in the transaction, or any further
clues other than as above stated.

On the morning of March 29 I started
on the road from Gainesville, passing
through the towns of Miconopi, Ocala and
Edinville, reaching Sumpterville April 2^d.

Here I learned that one Mr. Mason, a resident of Oxford Alabama, attempted to ship some freedmen from Indian River in Decr. 1865, taking them there ostensibly for the purpose of engaging in the fishing business, the men being kept in idleness a long time, they became dissatisfied and all went away. I was also informed of an attempt made by one Dr. Hopkins a resident of this State, to ship freedmen from New Smyrna in Decr. 1865, but as in the above instance the men became suspicious that they were not to be fairly dealt with and they all went away.

On the morning of April 4 I started on the road from Sumpterville, passing through Brooksville & Tampa, reaching Sanibel April 12, intending to proceed to Charlotte Harbor, and as far south as Fort Myers, but after making inquiries, I found it impracticable to proceed by land. I being unable to procure a guide and owing to the thinly settled section of the country, through which I would be obliged to pass and the undistinct trail to be followed, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible for one unaccompanied, of reaching their destination. In view of the above circumstances I con-

desired to return to Tallahassee. Starting
from Havana on the morning of April 17th
reaching Tampa the same day I chartered
here a small sloop to take me to Cedar
Keys at which place I arrived April 22nd,
touching on my passage at the following
named points: Clear Water Harbor, Bay Port,
Chickovitcha River, Homosassa, and Chrys-
tal River. - At Cedar Keys I learned that
in February last, a Mr. Whittier shipped
from that Port nineteen freedmen to
Sarasota Bay, to work on his plantation
there, and from information since received,
which I deem reliable, they were actually
sent to the place above mentioned, and
are now at work on Mr. Whittier's plantation
at Cedar Keys. I learned from Mr. J. M.
Williamson of the firm of Stokes Williamson
& Co., Richmond, Va. that a friend of his, but
recently arrived from Havana, mentioned
the fact of seeing in Havana, the carriage
driver belonging to Toombs (formerly U.
Senator from Georgia) and that this slave
expressed his desire to return to the United States.

Starting from Cedar Keys on the morning
of the 23rd instant, I proceeded by Rail Road
to Tallahassee where I arrived on the
evening of the 24th inst.

During the time I have been absent from this Post, I have visited all important towns and settlements, both in the interior & on the western coast. I have found the people peacefully disposed and willing to comply with all U.S. laws and anxious that the State may soon resume its former relation with the U.S. government. I have been unable to learn of any unlawful, or organized bodies of men and believe none exists. They all appear to be attending to their own personal concerns, and are disposed to treat the Freedmen well and to deal fairly with them in all business transactions. - I am of the opinion that no freedmen have been kidnapped and shipped from the Western Coast of Fla., and there are no indications of any future movements to that effect.

I also have been unable to detect that smuggling was carried on along the coast.

As regards the Indians, they have not visited Fort Myers since the withdrawal of the troops from that Post, no one having lived there since that time. They are located at the Big Cypress, and number about 150 warriors, their only trading post now is at the mouth of the Miami

River; they have no knowledge of any
change having been made on their boundary
line, and look to none other than the U.S.
government for protection.

Very respectfully

Your most obt. Servt.

(Signed) Geo. H. Hayward
Capt. 82^d U. S. I.

A true Copy
Capt. Chas. Munde
Adj. Brig. Genl. & A. A. G.

Headquarters

~~Military Division of the Gulf~~

New Orleans, La.

May 17th 1866.

Respectfully forwarded to the Adjutant
General of the Army for his informa-
tion.

(Sgd) P. H. Sheridan
Major General, U. S.
Commanding.

Treasury Department,
July 27th 1866.

Sir

I have the honor to acknowledge your letter enclosing communication from Major General Foster, Commanding the Department of Florida, with copy of endorsement by Major General Sheridan in relation to smuggling on the Coast of Florida, also regarding the kidnaping of Negroes, with a suggestion from Gen. F. that this Department "place ~~a small~~ ^a sailing Yacht of from 40 to 50 tons as a guard boat under the direction of the Deputy Inspector Mr. Jenks, etc. etc. - and in reply thereto I would observe that as it is learned from various authentic sources, as well from Commanders on the Revenue Service on that coast, as by the opinion of General Sheridan expressed on the letter transmitted that no danger exists or is to be apprehended with reference to the kidnaping of Negroes from the Florida Coast; - and as the Department has adopted what is considered ample precautionary measures to prevent smuggling by stationing Cutters at the proper points, also Revenue boats at St. Marks Indian River Tampa Bay and

other prominent points all along the coast,
it is not deemed expedient by this Depart-
ment to respond to the recommendation
for detailing a small cutter yacht to act
as a guard boat under the direction of
Mr. Jentle.

I am, very respectfully

Signed H. Mculloch

Secretary of the Treasury.

Hon. C. M. Stanton
Secretary of War.

Official copies.

E. D. Townsend
Adjutant General.