

(h) "Among the many unique personalities of Key West, representing the varied phases of foreign characteristics of this era, was one Captain Joselyn, who several years before, as a member of a shipwrecked crew, had been stranded in Key West. As owner and skipper of the sloop 'Flirt', Joselyn had an unsavory reputation among the elite of the City, but his faults might have been, if not overlooked, at least palliated by the less critical but more dominant maritime population of Key West had he not persisted, in the face of all tradition to the contrary, in rigging his vessel as a sloop, when all other vessels in these waters, except small fishing boats, were schooner rigged which, as every old sailor knows, is handled easier in the heavy winds prevalent along the Florida keys. Many crimes, ranging from petty thievery, to piracy and murder, were attributed to Joselyn; and many gruesome yarns were spun at night aboard weather-bound vessels anchored under the lee of protecting keys of his many unscrupulous deeds. It was said he had boarded unprotected and stranded or wrecked vessels on the Florida reef, robbed the passengers of money and jewelry, taken what he wanted of the cargoes, and then decamped to some unknown rendezvous to hide until all witnesses to his crime, abandoned to their fate upon the helpless crippled vessel, were drowned or had been rescued to leave Key West forever for parts unknown. Of sailors who had shipped with him and had incurred his ire, some, during the dark midnight watch, had mysteriously disappeared; others had been intentionally knocked overboard by the sudden jibing of the Flirt's main boom, until, because of his vile reputation, Joselyn could get only seamen of very low character or strangers to sail with him." (From reference CCXXXV(f)).

- (i) "Five soldiers who had an inkling of Captain Joselyn's baseness but no true knowledge of the depth of his villainy, agreed to pay him \$200.00 if he would take them in his sloop to the mainland near Punta Rassa.

Joselyn, surmising the men were deserters from the Army, although they were then wearing civilian clothes, took their money and, hiding them in the hold of his sloop, left Key West one night and, late the next night, anchored off Lostman's Key, one of the Ten Thousand Islands. Here he ordered the helpless credulous dupes to disembark, telling them they were on the mainland and that they would find a settlement with a sawmill where they could get work a short distance back in the woods. The poor wretches were only too glad to leave such a harsh and vile scoundrel, and, without a supply of food or water, and carrying only the clothing they wore, they landed on Lostman's Key." (From reference CCXXXV(f)).

- (j) ".....As the Allen schooner neared Lostman's Key, the men on the beach rushed frantically into the water as far out as they could wade, one man swimming ahead of the others. The schooner being of light draft could go in close to shore near where the men were waiting. Scotty luffed the 'Jennie' into the wind and George dropped the anchor. The man who was swimming grasped the bobstay and tried to climb aboard but, being too weak, Scotty reached down and helped him. The other men were so excited they might have drowned if Scotty had not gone to their aid with the dinghy. They held to the sides of the boat while he sculled and soon had them aboard the schooner. As they stood upon deck, wild of eyes, half crazed by anxiety, and emaciated by hunger and privation, they presented a woeful aspect.

"After the excitement had somewhat subsided and the schooner was again on her course, Scotty asked how the men happened to be on Lostman's Key. 'Joselyn left us there; told us it was the mainland', answered Spud. He then explained who they were and that they had paid Joselyn to land them on the mainland near Punta Rassa. After the men had eaten and become stronger, they entertained Scotty and George all the way to Chocokuskee by relating incidents of their stay on Lostman's Key. George, who had of such adventures but had never dreamed he would participate in one, was deeply interested and asked many questions. He was particularly interested in Spud, the youngest of the maroons and the most talkative.

"Realizing the need of a large supply of food for the maroons, the vessel was anchored near Pelican Key to obtain some clams. The clams here were so plentiful that several hundred were gathered in an hour and George and Spud went on Pelican Key to hunt coons. They saw several coons feeding on the beach and George shot two, as well as two curlews on a nearby mud bank. They then went to the rookery near Pelican Key and procured several young curlews which were unable to fly from the nest. These young birds, like young pigeons or squabs, are good to eat.

"As they sailed along looking for the pole or beacon they had placed on the rock at the mouth of the pass Chocoluskee, they saw the tide flowing into another pass which seemed navigable. Following this pass a short time, they emerged into Chocoluskee Sound near an island of several acres in area, surrounded by a dense growth of mangroves. They anchored near and George and Spud put off in the dingy to explore the island.

hok- s.) "They had rowed along the shore but a short distance when they came to an opening in the mangroves, apparently an old landing place. They went ashore and found that the interior of the island ~~was composed of high shell mounds.~~ ~~It was composed of high shell mounds.~~ In a clearing nearby, they saw several old bearing lime trees, the ruins of the palmetto thatched hut, and what looked like a grave bordered by conch shells. Under a gumbo limbo tree, was a cairn of alligator skulls and turtle shells, all surmounted by several deer antlers. The place, in weird abandonment, bespoke only want, suffering, disaster or tragedy at some time in the dim past.

"They arrived at Chocoluskee that evening and, stopping at the mouth of the creek, took Weeks aboard the schooner and continued on up the creek to the clearing Weeks had made for Mr. Allen's home. A tent was made of an old spare sail on the 'Jennie' for the maroons to sleep under on shore. As they all sat around a cheerful fire, Weeks entertained them by telling of hunting and fishing adventures of his during his life at Chocoluskee until bedtime, when he returned home.

"While awaiting the return of Mr. Allen from Key West, the maroons, wishing to show their gratitude for being rescued and to pay for their board, worked hard clearing land. The consumption of food in the camp had increased so much that George, afraid the supply would be depleted before his father could arrive with more, each day went hunting and fishing. There were so many fish and oysters in the Sound and birds along its shores that he had little trouble keeping the camp well supplied with fish and game. One day, while hunting, he went South as far as the shell island Spud and he had explored. He named the island Chocoluskee Island. About halfway to the shell island, he came to the Mouth of a creek flowing from the Everglades, to which he gave the name 'Halfway Creek'." (From reference CCXXXV(f)).

"Another time Mr. Allen, planning to start early

(2) ".....Another time, Mr. Allen, planning to start early the next morning for Key West, suddenly remembered that the compass which Scotty had brought ashore to polish had not been returned to the schooner. Fearful lest it be forgotten, he arose from bed and carried the compass to the schooner. As he stepped aboard and opened the cabin hatch, a draft of gas-laden air escaped. By the light of his lantern, he could see George and Scotty lying upon the bunks. Jumping into the cabin, he hastily shook George who was unconscious. Carrying him on deck, he returned and aroused Scotty who was barely able to move, and helped him on deck. Mr. Allen had arrived in good time and, if he had been ten minutes late, George and Scotty might never have recovered from the effects of the fumes of the open furnace.

"Mr. Allen left the next morning for Key West and gave George written instructions as to what work was to be done on the place. He left an old negro named Tom as cook and a laborer named George Christian, a Swede, and Spud. Christian was to get sugar cane from Weeks to plant and Mr. Allen took a load of sugar cane for Weeks to Key West, chiefly to sell to negroes there who paid 10¢ a stalk for the cane to chew. He also took a lot of oysters and clams and, a 'norther' making a fair wind and cooling the air, he arrived in Key West with the oysters and clams still alive and in good condition. These oysters to the extent of 7,000 had been gathered and left in piles in the water until his schooner was ready to leave. He stopped at

1101

Pelican Key and gathered several hundred clams.

"Coolness, having arisen between Spud and Mr. Allen, Spud left Mr. Allen's employ and worked for Weeks at the mouth of the creek for a month, and then left Chocoluskee for Punta Rassa." (From reference CCXXXV(f)).

from reference CLXX, (*Brederton Herald*, 1862.)

- (a) "Florida Role in Benjamin's Life Related. Gamble Mansion Visit is Prelude to Journey to England.

"Dedication today at Sarasota of a memorial to Judah P. Benjamin brought into prominence the Gamble Mansion at Ellenton.....

"It was from Gamble Mansion that the Confederacy's Secretary of State left for the spot in Sarasota designated formally today as his probable departure point for England via Bimini, the appended account of which voyage was given by Captain Frederick Tresca, then a pioneer resident of Manatee.....

"In the month of June, 1865, after the surrender of the Confederate President Jefferson Davis, Judah P. Benjamin and John C. Breckenridge, who so narrowly escaped at the same time, came South together as far as Tampa, Florida. At this point they separated.

"Mr. Benjamin came on still further south, to the then extreme frontier settlements of the Manatee River, on the Gulf coast, in company with Capt. L. G. Lesley, and stopped at the residence of Captain A. McNeil on the north side of the river.

"The Captain left Mr. Benjamin there while he crossed the river to find Captain Tresca and see if he could be induced to take Mr. Benjamin to Nassau.

"Captain Tresca said he would go, and after conveying the anxious Secretary to his house, left him there and proceeded to Cedar Key. He stopped in at Bayport en route and purchased an open boat. He then went to Captain Peas and Lieut. Stephens, who were the officers in command at that place, and obtained a permit for coasting as far as Cedar Key.

"From Cedar Key he returned home, made the necessary arrangements for his voyage, and proceeded to Sarasota. He was here met by Mr. Benjamin, who had come across the country in a one-horse cart under the escort and guidance of Mr. E. Glazier.

"Late that evening Capt. F. Tresca, Mr. Benjamin and Hiram McLeod -- the party all told -- started down the coast with the intention of keeping inside as much as possible, in order to prevent being stopped by the boats, which were lying off every pass of any importance.

"It was necessary after leaving Big Sarasota Pass to go outside, and just as they were off Casey's Pass sure enough they saw four boats from the blockade bearing down upon them.

"Not being able to continue their course without capture, they returned and went in at Little Sarasota Pass and secreted their boat among the thick bushes, remaining there all night and the next day.

"When night again came they very cautiously set sails, and started, and sailed all night. The night was dark and cloudy and just before entering Charlotte Harbor they passed close enough to a blockade vessel to throw a biscuit on board -- but didn't throw it. Next morning at sunrise they arrived at Punta Rassa, sailing inside all the way from where they

1103

entered Charlotte Harbor. After remaining at Punta Rassa about 3 hours the party set sail for 'Marco'.

"Between the last two points they got out of fresh water and stopped at a small river to replenish. Then they continued on to Cape Romano, where they found two wells. In one of these there were 3 dead coons, in the other two dead snakes. The prospect for water was not very inviting, but under the circumstances it was that or none. They went to work and cleaned out one well, and after waiting for it to fill, replenished their water cask again. From there they went down through the 'Thousand Islands', and passing Indian Key stopped all day at Tresca's River. (Turner's River?).

"Both water and provisions gave out at this point, and their only subsistence was a large turtle they had the good fortune to catch while there.

"Pushing on to Pavillion Key, they got both water and provisions from Mrs. Bethel and Mrs. Brown.

"At this place Mr. Benjamin was suspected. They met quite a number of friends from Key West there, among whom were Mrs. Mary N. Brown, through whose effort they were saved from capture, and Capt. Wm. H. Bethel, who kindly furnished them with everything necessary for the continuance of their voyage. From him Capt. Tresca bought a large sloop boat to supply the place of the old one, which had become pretty well identified, and in danger of being overhauled by pursuers.

"The party remained at Pavillion Key all day, and at night set sail in their new boat. The wind was blowing heavily. When some distance off the shore they fell in with a Government transport loaded with U. S. Troops bound North. Capt. Tresca applied for the bearings of Gin Key Light. They gave them to him, and then asked him what they were doing there. The Captain told them they were fishing and had been blown off their course.

"After separating from the transport, a light breeze sprang up and they went on their way rejoicing. At 6 o'clock that evening they got on the banks, and steered for Bimini, at which point they arrived without further accident.

"Upon their arrival, Captain Tresca placed Mr. Benjamin in charge of an English negro, who was the Custom House officer, and returned home." (From reference CLXX).

1104

11. From reference CCXXXVI(a) (Mo. Interview 1946)

"NOTES ON EARLY DAYS IN COLLIER COUNTY, AS FURNISHED BY MR.
R. B. STORTER OF NAPLES, FLORIDA, AUGUST 17, 1946.

1. Captain George W. Storter:

Captain Storter was born July 1, 1862 at Eutaw, Green County, Alabama, and came to Florida in June, 1877, with his father, George Storter, and his brother, R. B. Storter. The Storter family left Alabama during the latter part of June, 1877, in a covered wagon and arrived at a place known as Fort Winder, Florida, (now called Platt), about 3 miles west of Fort Ogden, on July 15, 1877.

In September, 1881, the elder Mr. Storter came to Everglades which, at that time, was known as Chokoloskee -- the name assigned to the general area of the Ten Thousand Islands --, to farm with Mr. William S. Allen, another early settler in this area. The following February, Mr. Storter's sons, George W. and R. B., came down to help harvest the crop of tomatoes and eggplants and remained in Everglades until May, 1882.

(Continued on next page)