

SAILING DOWN THE COAST:

Jupiter to the Keys, 1891

Edited with Introduction by Barbara A. Poleo

Floridians who experienced the turmoil of Reconstruction could hardly imagine the events and opportunities for capitalists and adventurers that followed over the next fifty years. Those with vision, and money, lent their talents, dreams and fortunes to recreating Florida. James Edmundson Ingraham arrived in the 1870s and died in the mid 1920s. His life spanned a time of great change for Florida and indeed his dedication and drive shaped the course of Florida history. Few contemporaries of Hamilton Disston ultimately saw the results of Everglades drainage and the Boom years of the 1920s. To follow the life and accomplishments of Ingraham is to witness the maturing of Florida from near bankrupt frontier to a destination of the rich, the famous, the infamous and the industrious.

James Edmundson Ingraham made numerous explorations of unsettled Florida in the nineteenth century, including his well-documented 1892 trek across the Everglades from Fort Myers to Miami, but the account which follows is more personal and records a routine business trip down the east coast of Florida—probably one of many undertaken with the blessings of his associates. From his arrival in Florida until their deaths, Ingraham collaborated with the 'state builders,' Henry Shelton Sanford, Henry Bradley Plant, and Henry Morrison Flagler.

Born in Dartford, Wisconsin, on November 18, 1850, Ingraham completed his education at Racine College in Racine, Wisconsin. The 1870 census records him living in St. Louis, Missouri with his father, John Phillips Thurston Ingraham, an Episcopalian minister, his mother, Cornelia Root Ingraham, his siblings and his maternal grandfather Elizear Root and his wife. Ingraham married Maria Elizabeth Baker in June 1872 at St. Louis, Missouri.

By the mid 1870s Ingraham had settled in Sanford, Florida in the employ of Henry Shelton Sanford. Building on the clerical skills acquired in St. Louis, Ingraham spent the next decade perfecting his business acumen. As general agent for Henry Sanford, he purchased and

sold land, collected debts, administered retail businesses, supervised employees, oversaw orange groves and actively participated in court cases. In other words Ingraham developed expertise and a fine-tuned, hands-on knowledge of not only business, but, more importantly, the kaleidoscope of commercial enterprises that were converging in Florida.

The growth of Sanford initially depended on water transportation, but the recognition of the development potential of central Florida led to the construction of railroads. Ingraham focused his efforts on the emerging land and railroad interests, particularly between Sanford and Tampa. In 1879 he became president of the South Florida Railroad and later formed an association with Henry Bradley Plant. By the time Henry Sanford died on May 1, 1891, Ingraham had already acquired a vast knowledge of the mid-section of peninsular Florida and, like others, had begun investigating the opportunities of the lower peninsula.

In May of the year that this diary was written, the Florida legislature passed a joint resolution calling for the Board of Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund to set aside a portion of the swamp and overflowed lands to the Seminole Indians of south Florida. The land was to be conveyed to three trustees appointed by Governor Fleming. During the summer of 1891, James Edmundson Ingraham, together with F. A. Hendry and Garibaldi Niles, became the first trustees.

Although some pages of the journal for this trip are missing, the reader catches glimpses of the writer's personality and realizes that James Ingraham must have chronicled hundreds of days in similar fashion, for this journal is the product of habit and exhibits the mind of an experienced diarist. Step back in time to late nineteenth century Florida, before railroads, before roads, when water provided the only practical solution to reaching pioneer settlements along the south Florida coast.

Annotations and explanatory notes are printed in italics.



James E. Ingraham, as he appeared at the turn of the twentieth century, about the time he served as President of the Model Land Company.

Map of Florida in 1891, the year Ingraham recorded his observations of a trip down the state's lower east coast (courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).



5 AM Caught a small Yacht
 Leaky Wind all right
 10 AM No wind came to anchor
 Late worth salt just ahead
 of us - 12:30 AM June 21
 Made sail with wind from
 NW, a most beautiful Meteor
 Showed a few minutes ago it
 looked as thick as a main stem
 & green sides and top part
 as it passed through some
 clouds to the Sunday Morning
 by 11 AM running down the
 beach with fine spray to
 Northward Yacht sides far
 astern of us - 1 PM Passed
 several houses to the beach
 fish today, and now anchored
 ahead of a small little
 Coconut Grove stand on
 about to be 30 miles north
 of Jupiter - All out
 Wind left us about 10



Ingraham launched his trip to south Florida from St. Augustine, seen here in an 1891 photograph (courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).

Page from Ingraham's original handwritten diary of his 1891 adventure (courtesy of P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History).



Unidentified steamboat in the Jupiter Narrows, ca. 1900 (courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).

Saturday, June 20, [18]91 11 A.M. Had a visit from the Captain of the yacht *Leader*. His boat is anchored just outside the bar. He reports the water very shoal and says the bar is filling up, a report corroborated by the boatmen here. If we do not get out today, may have to return via Jupiter Narrows, as the sand flies have nearly driven us crazy. This is a contingency which must be avoided. We are all anxious to see the Beach to Westward of us.

12 M [midday] Rowed to the PO [post office] and met on the dock an old acquaintance named Mattherson who was Purser on the *Dictator* when I first came south 20 years ago. Our efficient cabin boy has also discovered a friend aboard the steamer lying at the wharf & has decided to sever his connection with the *Suwannee*. Alas! Our last hope of a profitable negotiation with the Seminoles is at an end. **4 p.m.** Crossed the bar at Jupiter Inlet under bare poles. 3 ft. of water only on the bar, which we shore over, no sea on. Stand down the coast with light N.E. wind which gradually hauled to SW. King offering to do the cooking he has been released from any day watch, taking the wheel at night from 6 to 8 & from 4 to 6. Capt. Myers & myself taking alternate 4 hour watches for the balance of the time.

3 P.M. Caught & passed Yacht *Leader*. Wind SW very light. This item, out of time sequence, is as noted

in *Ingraham's diary*.

10 P.M. No wind. Came to anchor Lake Worth Inlet just abeam of us

12:30 A.M. June 21st Made sail with wind from N.W. A most beautiful meteor showed a few minutes ago. It looked as thick as a man's arm & grew wider and narrowed as it passed through some clouds to SW. **Sunday Morning** are now running down the beach with fine breeze to northward. Yacht *Leader* far astern of us.

1 P.M. Passed several sharks, & a Devil Fish today, are now anchored abreast of a pretty little Cocconut Grove stated on Chart to be 30 miles south of Jupiter. This cocconut grove was most likely located at *Hypoluxo*. All our wind left us

The Dictator was built by Thomas Stark in Brooklyn, New York in 1863. A side-wheeled paddle steamer, it was bought by Captain Louis Mitchell Coxetter after the Civil War and made the Charleston, South Carolina to Palatka, Florida run. It burned on the Hillsborough River in December 1884 (courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).



Large jewfish caught at Jupiter Inlet, ca. 1900 (courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).

about an hour ago. Have had a troll over all morning, but so far "nary a bite". **6 P.M.** A little breeze sprung up from N.E. about 2 o'clock & we made sail, but only accomplished about 2 miles when we lowered sail & came to anchor. Heavy squall to south'ard which however passed to Westward of us—sea very smooth all day. Three Turtle crawls being in sight on the beach, King & myself took the two dingies & landed, This time without an upset. Found one Turtle nest empty. *Lake Worth pioneer, Charles Pierce* noted in his memoir that May, June and July were "turtle season," the time when sea turtles nested. The season peaked during the month of June. Pioneers used turtle eggs in cakes and bread and boiled them. Because the white





Turtles and their eggs provided early settlers with food and a source of income (courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).

of a turtle egg did not harden, the eggs were never fried. Turtle season also rewarded the pioneers with bear meat. On moonlit nights a pioneer could "sit for bear" in the grass along the beach and wait for a bear to come sniffing for turtle eggs. In one case the Robber was evidently a Bear, as his tracks were still fresh—Several Tarpon jumped up within sight of the boat during the day. Large sharks continue to show up hourly. The water is beautifully clear, small shells can be seen distinctly in two fathoms of water—Tried to get King to throw a dime over to see if we could distinguish it at the bottom, an offer which for some reason he declined. **8 P.M.** Made sail about 7 o'clock and are now slowly laying up the Beach with light S.W. wind. Have just passed first House of Refuge south of Lake Worth. Located at Delray, this was the Orange Grove House of Refuge. What a nice quiet life the keeper of one of these Houses must have. I understand there has not been a shipwrecked sailor on the Fla coast in five years. **Monday, June 22d 8 A.M.** Sailed all night and probably made 15 miles. Are now passing mouth of Hillsborough River, a most deserted looking country. This is the River where the Biscayne Bay Mail Carrier is supposed to have been eaten by a shark while attempting to swim across. We passed the Mail Carrier (not the one the shark breakfasted on) yesterday. He was walking toward Lake Worth about five miles an hour. Mattheson told me at Jupiter that the Mail Carrier charged \$5.00 for the privilege

[Ingraham's spelling] of walking to or from "Bears Cut" [Inlet between Virginia Key and Key Biscayne on Biscayne Bay]. It seems he owns the boats on the two Rivers which have to be crossed. This accounts for the premium on pedestrianism. An article in the Tropical Sun, dated May 13, 1891, identifies the "barefoot mailman" as Henry John Burkhardt. Born in Philadelphia on June 26, 1862, he walked one hundred twenty miles weekly along the beach, carrying the mail from Hypoluxo to Miami. Burkhardt began his trek from Hypoluxo on Monday morning and returned there Saturday night. Although he narrowly escaped drowning and attacks by wild animals, he was never hurt and could boast that he never missed a trip. Burkhardt acquired a homestead at Miami after coming to Florida in 1886 or 1887, where he grew tomatoes and pineapples. He later owned forty-three acres of which he was very proud a mile and a half up the Hillsboro River, "a finely wooded hammock with rivulets and many natural beauties to recommend it." His contract to carry the mail expired the end of June 1891. Burkhardt went on to become the mayor of West Palm Beach. He died in San Diego about 1940. We are now sailing over a perfect Garden which can be seen most distinctly in the beautifully clear water, which seems almost like air. We can see all sorts of plants of nearly every color, with Fan Coral & Rock Coral of various sizes. In and out of these fairy grottos & paths can be seen any number of curious fish,

some perfectly blue, others a Golden Yellow with two black stripes around the neck, Angel fish we saw in abundance and a long slim fish which are called "Barracouters" were also very plentiful. No sharks were visible in this fish Paradise though we constantly see them on the surface of the water. **4 P.M.** Wind S.E. and very light, New River Inlet about a mile up the beach. We passed another House of Refuge about an hour ago, [Fort Lauderdale House of Refuge] **5 P.M.** Strong Current running to North'ard. Unable to stem the tide with the light air now blowing so come to anchor, owing to the Coral Rock bottom we have now to buoy the upper fluke of the anchor in case it should foul. Taking advantage of the stop the Captain & Cook have rowed ashore in the "F.D." in search of "Turtle Fruit."—**6 P.M.** Still at anchor King and Jno [John] returned after an unsuccessful hunt. They found 23 nests in the space of a mile, but all have been opened. Have come to the conclusion the Natives suck eggs—A large four masted steamship going north showed up in the Gulfstream about an hour ago, but is now out of sight. **9 P.M.** Light wind from S.E. make sail and get underway—**9:30** Breeze freshened rapidly since we started, have taken in Gaff topsail, a nasty choppy sea getting up, are now passing North Entrance to New River, from which opening much to our disgust the mosquitos come about us in swarms. It appears that due to adverse winds it took a long time to sail a short distance and that they were forced to anchor.

10 p.m. Wind all gone, are now drifting by South Channel to New River—The "South Channel" was at this time the main inlet and shifted at various times during the nineteenth century between today's Dania Beach and Sheridan Street. The "North Entrance" was the "Indian Haulover" at Fort Lauderdale which in 1899 was dredged and became the main inlet. **10:30** Breeze at last from NW. Not strong, but enough to take us out of this Mosquito Nest.

June 23, 8 A.M. House of Refuge in sight about a mile ahead (Bis-

cayne Bay House of Refuge). This means that we are now 10 miles from Bears Cut where we enter Biscayne Bay. No wind - Breakfast at Anchor - 8:30 get underway with a two knot breeze - 10 A.M. King & myself landed on the beach & at last found a valuable Turtle Nest. We got 84 eggs. - 11 A.M. "Norris Cut" has just given us our first glimpse of Biscayne Bay. We do not enter here however, the Channel being bad - Wind from East blowing steadily - Cape Fla Light directly ahead of us, 5 miles off. Fowey Rocks Light, which marks the extreme eastern point of the Fla Reef, looms up like a little cloud to Windward. Nicknamed the "Eye of Miami," the Fowey Rocks Lighthouse was first lighted in June 1878. A painting and a model of the Fowey Rocks Lighthouse, featured at the 1893 World Columbian Exhibition, proved to be a popular exhibit. 1 P.M. are now crossing the bar into the long looked for Bay. We are leaving the Sea Buoy well to sea, & taking a short cut over the shoals, John straddling the crosstrees to pick out the best water

7 P.M. Found a fearful tide at the inside bar, which though going through the water 5 knots an hour we could barely make anything. Coconut Grove is 5 miles across the Bay, in front of which place we came to anchor about 3:30. Landed with the Dingies and called on Mr. Peacock the Post Master (who also keeps the Hotel) for our mail. Charles Peacock and his wife, Isabella, were born in England and came to Miami in 1875. By 1882 they settled in Coconut Grove with their children, Charles, Jr., Alfred, and Harry. The family ran the Peacock Inn, remembered by John Sewell in Miami Memoirs, as being a hotel with a fine reputation, as well as a general store and a boat business. Charles was a notary public, justice of the peace and at the time of this diary served as postmaster. Was disappointed, no mail for any of us - It seems the [illegible] and pouch comes via Key West & the schedule having changed the last boat missed connection. The P.M. looks for the mail boat tonight, which we hope will bring us news from



Fowey Rocks Lighthouse
(artwork by Paul Bradley).

The Pine Needle Club or Junior Housekeepers Club, organized in Miami in 1891 by Mary Barr Munroe, performing their "broom drill." The club did handwork and organized an exchange library (courtesy of Historical Museum of Southern Florida).



home. We find that there is a pretty good supply of Lumber here, though Peacock may buy ours at a small profit. Two young men have applied for passage back when we go. We are somewhat diffident as to what charge to make, but if it is worth \$5.00 to walk 90 miles with the Mail Carrier, the pleasure of sailing in the Suawancee where conversation & cooking are both so good ought to be worth about \$3,000.00

This Bay is magnificent standing on the shore at Coconut Grove & looking to East & North East, about 5 miles off one can see Key Biscayne & Virginia Key, but to the North, South and South East the line of horizon is unbroken. The water is perfectly clear. The bottom in front of this place being "Coral Sand." While the shore is not so commanding as

that of Ind[ian] River, still its pretty enough. All sorts of tropical fruit seem to thrive here. The coconut tree has to my thinking the handsomest foilage of all and looks so cool & fresh. 10 P.M. After a swim all turn in to a concert by the mosquitos.

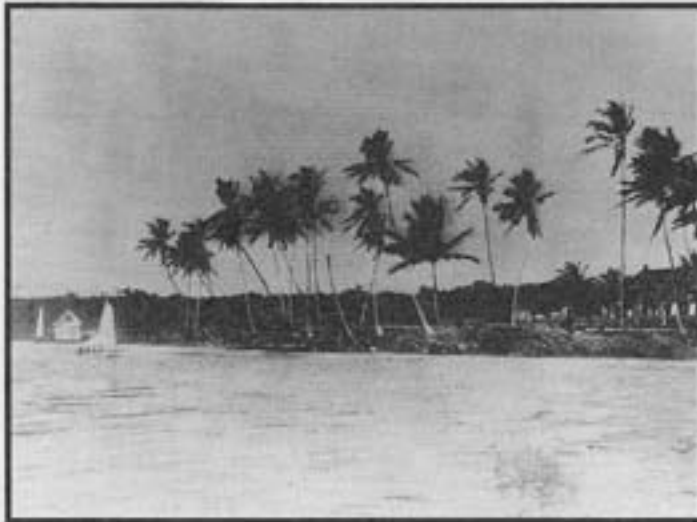
June 24th, 9 A.M. Had a visit from Mr. Aubery this morning and sold him 455 Ft. of Lumber for \$10.83. Aubery is Ingraham's spelling in the diary. During the 1890s there were Alburys living on Biscayne Bay, including Captain William J. Albury and his wife Charlotte. Capt. Albury sailed the Key West to Miami 'run' and bought land along Biscayne Bay. John F. Albury was another Conch who homesteaded on Biscayne Bay. An average of nearly \$24.00 per M. Peacock offered us \$18.00 for the lot but we declined. Learning from



Seminole Indians on the lower east coast in the early 1890s.

Fort Dallas on the north bank of the Miami River, 1890.

The former barracks buildings from this Seminole War post are on the left, and the stone officers' quarters on the right. (courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).



Mr. Aubery that there is some demand for Lumber at "Lemon City" (9 miles north of this) will sail there & try our luck. We caught a glimpse of the social side of this city yesterday when the "Pine Needle Club" of which Mrs. Kirk Munroe is President, assembled at Peacock's house. The members were all "sporting chickens" & a good many looked as though they had the "pip." *Mary Barr Munroe, born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1852, was the daughter of author, Amelia Barr. In 1883 she married Kirk Munroe, the author of numerous books, including adventure books for boys. Mary was a community activist. An early supporter of the efforts to save the Everglades, she was one of the founders of the Housekeeper's Club, of which the Pine Needles was the junior equivalent for young women. She published an early account of life in Coconut Grove in the Miami Metropolis. Together, Kirk and Mary Barr Munroe established their home in Coconut Grove as a literary and social center.* 12 M On

our way up the Bay. Mail boat not yet arrived. Will stop at Coconut Grove on our way back. 1 P.M. Brickells store at the mouth of Miami River just abreast of us, will stop there and talk Lumber, also see if he has any Limes for sale. 3 P.M. Visited Brickell place which is very prettily situated on the West shore of the Bay and South Bank of the River. Sold a Mr. Morse 100 ft 2 x 4 Lumber @ 22.00 \$2.34. *Frederick S. Morse was born in Boston in 1859 and pioneered on Biscayne Bay in 1884. A realtor and associate of the land department of the Florida East Coast Railway, Morse became one of the original incorporators of the City of Miami and served as president of the first city council. He died in 1920.* Brickell offered us 20.00 per M for all our cargo but we declined. While at Brickell's saw our first Seminoles, several Squaws, half dozen little boys & girls, a baby or two & "Big Tommy." They are about the best looking specimens of "Red Man" that I've seen being much stronger look-

ing than the Western do. Their canoes are rather a curiosity too, being a dug out bluff bow & stern on deck, but sharp on the water line. They use a very long light pole and some have a sail with ordinary gaff and boom. The squaws seem to handle the boats as well as the men. The children are really very pretty, but shy. Speaking of shyness reminds me that we have seen the much talked of Brickwell daughters, also the old lady. They are "Huckleberry's" the whole outfit. The Mama must weigh a ton & the girls could not any of them go through the city gates. *Ingraham clearly spells this name Brickwell in his diary. This description definitely does not fit the Brickell women. Therefore, this reference is obviously to female members of a Brickwell family.* Am now disposed to believe that the one whom Pacetti said never could be seen, can't get out the front door. *J. M. Hawks writes about B.C. Pacetti in The East Coast of Florida, A Descriptive Narrative, published in 1887. B.C. Pacetti owned land and a boarding house at Ponce's Park on the east side of the Halifax River about a mile north of the inlet and the Ponce Lighthouse, just north of New Smyrna Beach. As a fisherman, Pacetti was known to be without equal on the east Florida coast.* 3:30 P.M. Make sail and started out for Lemon City. Arrived there about 6 o'clock. Sold to a Mr. Harrington 300 Ft. Ceiling @ 25.00 pr. M. After supper King & myself walked to the house of a Mr. Pierce who we understood wanted Lumber. *Lewis W. Pierce was born in Marathon, Florida in 1842. His parents were Bahamians and he spent his youth in Key West, working in the sponge industry. Pierce eventually owned three boats and a dry goods store in Key West. In 1884 he purchased land in the area of Lemon City and moved there following the loss of his store in the 1886 Key West fire.* Found that the Gentleman had retired so we had our long hot walk among the Mosquitos for nothing. On arrival at the *Suwanee* find that the watch on deck has turned in, an example we mean to follow at once.

Thursday 25th Two weeks ago



View of the ocean from the Deering estate at Cutler, early twentieth century (courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).

today we left St. Aug. & ought by now to be pointed back, but must first sell our Lumber and then go to the keys & load with Pines [pineapples]. Quite a procession of Indians in their Canoes have just passed us on their way to Snake Creek. "Big Tommy" brings up the rear all alone in his canoe standing as straight as an arrow in the stern. It seems the Indians have had a big "Corn Dance" up the Miami River, and are just now returning to their homes. All the people here speak well of the Seminoles saying they are both honest & industrious. The store keeper at Lemon City says he sold Big Tommy's Squaw a few days since the finest Sewing Machine made in Chicago - a lot of Indians camped on the bank abreast

of us last night, using their Canoe sails for tents. 12M Sold balance of our Ceiling to Mr. Moffatt at 23.00 per M. There seems no further demand for Lumber here so we make sail for Cocconut Grove with a fair wind N.E. 12:30 The Key West Mail boat has just passed us, hope we will find our letters soon. 2 P.M. Cocconut Grove again. One letter for John, but none for King or myself. J's letter was from St. Aug. & dated 15th. Suppose it is the fault of the Mail service that I have not heard from home but am much disappointed just the same. 2:30 P.M. Got underway for Cutler's about ten miles South of us where we hope to get rid of the balance of our Lumber. When we will go to Key Lago [Ingraham's spelling]

A year later James Edmundson Ingraham organized and led an expedition across the Everglades from Fort Myers to Miami. Ingraham collected data relative to the feasibility of drainage and, although Henry Plant declined to participate, Henry Morrison Flagler, like Ingraham, grasped the potential for the development of the southeast coast of Florida. Formally joining the Flagler organization in October 1892, Ingraham combined his first-hand knowledge of Florida terrain from his early efforts in Florida, his transportation expertise from the South Florida Railroad years, the observations of this 1891 voyage, and probably many more journeys throughout unsettled Florida, with the resources of Flagler and the Florida East Coast Railway. [Even Mrs. Ingraham had travelled from Kissimmee to Lake Okeechobee in a small steamboat in 1890. Her brief account is in the Ingraham Collection at P.K. Yonge Library, University of Florida.] This association would shape the course of south Florida growth and development for the next three decades.

Whether sailing down the coast, traversing the Everglades, or surveying the route of a railroad, James Edmundson Ingraham brought reality to visions and dreams. By the time of his death in October 1924, he had witnessed the transformation of southeast Florida from wilderness to "boom" and had left his indelible imprint on Florida.

and take on a cargo of Pines or Slips, we do not yet know which. The cultivation of pineapples along the south-east coast of Florida, and in the Keys, provided a living for many pioneers during the last decades of the nineteenth century. The Yearbook of the United States Department of Agriculture 1895 provides an account of the "Development of the Pineapple Industry in Florida." Grown principally in the center of the state in the early years of cultivation in Florida following their introduction about 1860, by the last decades of the century most of the pineapple fields were south of Fort Pierce.



The schooner *Lillie* from Key West, loaded with pineapples, ca. 1880s or 1890s. Ingraham's reference to picking up a load of pineapples or slips at Key Largo alludes to the importance of the pineapple trade to south Florida's economy (courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).

A special note.

The Broward County Historical Commission thanks the P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History at the University of Florida, Gainesville for permission to reprint the pages from the diary, which is part of the Ingraham Collection. Special thanks are extended to Dr. James Cusick, Associate University Librarian, for his assistance.