

# SOUTHEAST FLORIDA

## IN THE

# THIRD SEMINOLE WAR:

## ROADS, SCOUTS AND EXPEDITIONS

### Part II

Edited with Introduction by Joe Knetsch

In the first part of this collection of documents, the three principal commanders in southeast Florida, each of whom had a long, colorful and important career in the United States Army, were introduced. These men, Justin Dimick, John M. Brannan and Abner Doubleday, proved themselves on the fields of battle and left a remarkable legacy for those who followed. But what of the other men in this correspondence? Officers such as Lieutenant Richard C. Duryea, Lieutenant Otis H. Tillinghast, Lieutenant Henry W. Closson, Major Francis N. Page, Lieutenant Stephen Dill Lee or Lieutenant F. L. Childs also appear in these pages and were both lauded and questioned by their commanders. Who were these younger, less experienced men risking life and limb in the waters of Middle River and on the edge of the Everglades?

The first named, Richard C. Duryea, played an important role in the history of Florida during the War

Between the States. His service in Florida during this conflict lasted over a year and included a significant role in the repulse of Confederate forces at the Battle of Santa Rosa Island, on October 9, 1861. This battle was key to saving Fort Pickens from Confederate control. By maintaining the Federal forces' hold of this strategic fortification, it tightened the

blockade in that sector of the Gulf. Prior to this battle, Fort Pickens suffered heavy bombardment from shore batteries near Pensacola. According to most of the official sources, Duryea served at Fort Pickens from April 1861 to May of the following year. During this time, he was promoted to the rank of captain.

Captain Duryea served in a num-

*In the Winter / Spring 1999 issue of Broward Legacy, Dr. Joe Knetsch introduced and presented a series of reports from commanding officers in southeast Florida during the Third Seminole War. In Part II of this article, Dr. Knetsch assembles the reports of a number of junior officers who led scouting expeditions through the region. In his introduction he provides biographical sketches of these men, many of whom served on other parts of the American frontier as well as in the Civil War which erupted just three years after the conclusion of the Seminole conflict. These reports, taken from the National Archives series, "Letters Received by Headquarters, Department of Florida," offer detailed, eyewitness descriptions of what would become Broward County at a time when few other sources describing the area exist.*

*As most of our veteran readers are aware, Dr. Knetsch, a former Broward County Historical Commissioner, serves as historian with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection in Tallahassee.*

ber of posts and battles during the remainder of the conflict, almost all in the South. He rose to Chief of Artillery in the Third Division of the Nineteenth Corps in the Teche Campaign in Louisiana, seeing important duty in the capture of Port Hudson, where he was breveted major for "Gallant and Meritorious Service." Duryea served as a recruiter in Michigan during the fall of 1864, but was soon transferred to the Virginia front as a colonel of the Seventh New York Heavy Artillery during the Petersburg campaign. For his service during the war, he was breveted lieutenant colonel of the regular army. His peacetime service in the post-war period included stints as an inspector of harbor improvements at Sheboygan, Wisconsin and at Grand Haven, Michigan. He was mustered out of the army in 1870, as part of the general reduction of the military at that time.<sup>1</sup>

Otis H. Tillinghast, a native New Yorker and a member of the West Point class of 1847, graduated in time to see service in the Mexican War at Santillo and Brazos. From 1848 until the outbreak of the Third Seminole War, he saw garrison duty in New York and Maryland. His only relief from this often monotonous routine was service on the Mexican Boundary Commission in 1851-52. With the outbreak of the War Between the States, Tillinghast served as the Quartermaster of the Union Department of Northern Virginia, with the rank of captain. At the Battle of Bull Run, July 21, 1861, he was mortally wounded, and died two days later, at the age of thirty-eight. As will be seen in the following correspondence, he was a quick and intelligent officer.<sup>2</sup>

The mystery officer in this correspondence is "Lt. Webber." From research in George W. Cullum's and Francis B. Heitman's works, the only candidate who fits the time period is Charles Hickling Webber. Charles H. Webber was commissioned a second lieutenant in the First Artillery on May 29, 1855. He rose to first lieutenant in 1860, just prior to the outbreak of the Civil War. By October of 1861 he had earned his captain's

rank, but a year later was dismissed from the service. No other information has surfaced at this time. However, the dismissal is unusual and surprising, coming in the midst of the war.<sup>3</sup>

Henry W. Closson, lieutenant of the First Artillery, graduated from West Point in 1854. His first service took place at Fort Yuma and on the southern California boundary survey. Throughout 1856, he served in Texas against the Lipan Indians in the Nueces and Pecos areas. In October of that year, he was promoted to first lieutenant and, early the following year, shipped out to Florida. He returned to Texas following his stint in Florida, but found himself on garrison duty at Fort Taylor in Key West at the outbreak of the War Between the States. Closson declined a captaincy in the Nineteenth Infantry, but later accepted the same rank in the First Artillery. Sent to assist in the defense of Fort Pickens, in May 1861, he was promoted to Chief of Artillery for the District of Pensacola.

The majority of Henry Closson's Civil War service centered in Louisiana and the Southwest. For his gallant and meritorious service in the Battle of Port Hudson, he received a brevet major rank. As Chief of Artillery for the Nineteenth Army Corps, he participated in the Red River campaign and saw extensive action in the Battle of Pleasant Hill. Shipping back to the Gulf Coast, he was installed as Chief of Artillery for the Mobile campaign, where he engaged in siege activities at both Forts Morgan and Gaines, which guarded the passage into Mobile Bay. For this service he was promoted to brevet colonel in August 1864. Toward the end of the war, he was sent north to Winchester, Virginia, and participated in the final battle at that beleaguered city. After the war, he remained in the service, and received the rank of full major of the Fifth Artillery in November 1876. He returned to Florida in 1876, serving briefly in Tallahassee and, more importantly, twice commanding the garrison at Fort Barrancas, west of Pensacola. Henry Closson was promoted twice in the 1880s, first to lieu-

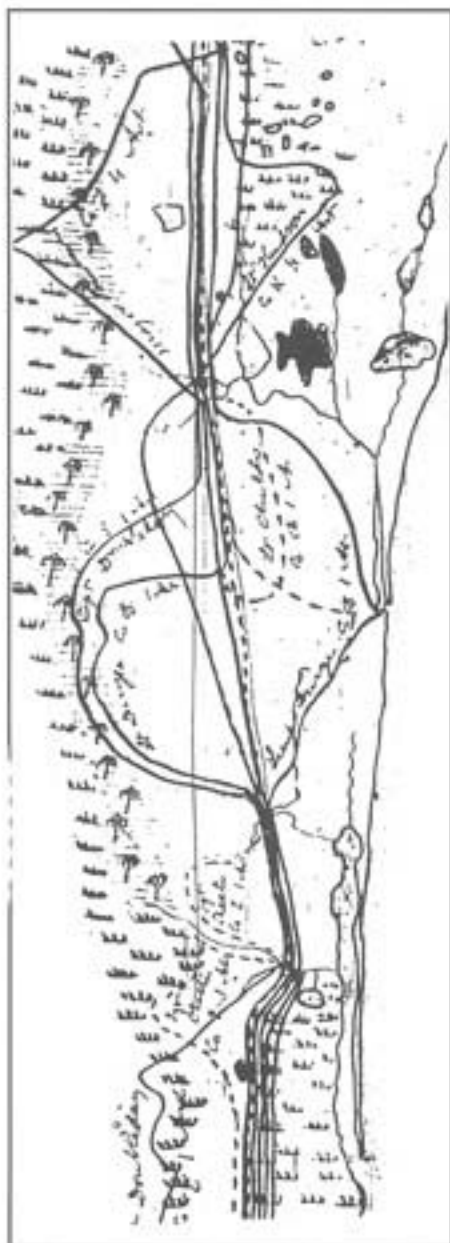
tenant colonel and, finally, full colonel of the Fourth Artillery on April 25, 1888.<sup>4</sup>

Pennsylvania-born Charles L. Kilburn was a member of the West Point class of 1842 and served in Rhode Island, Georgia and Texas prior to the outbreak of the Mexican-American War. In this conflict he fought in a number of major battles, including Palo Alto, Resaca-de-la-Palma, Buena Vista and Monterrey. Cited for gallant and meritorious conduct at Buena Vista and Monterrey, Kilburn was breveted to first lieutenant and then captain. Transferred to the New Mexico area following the war, he soon went on sick leave and later a leave of absence between 1849 and 1852. After service in New Orleans, he was promoted to captain in 1853, and found his way to Fort Brooke, Florida, when the Third Seminole War broke out. He served the entire war as Chief of Subsistence. His health required another leave of absence immediately after the war ended in 1858, and he did not return to duty until 1859, again stationed in New Orleans.

Stationed on commissary duty in Washington, D.C. at the beginning of the War Between the States, Kilburn received a promotion to major in May 1861. He served as the Chief Commissary of the Department of the Ohio, and then the Departments of Ohio, Tennessee, Cumberland and West Virginia. Kilburn's ability to get needed materials to the front earned him a promotion to lieutenant colonel, colonel and then, at the end of the war, brevet brigadier-general. He spent the remainder of his long career in the commissary service, which literally took him all over the country, including California, where, at age sixty-two, he was forced to retire in 1882.<sup>5</sup>

Lieutenant Edward McK. Hudson graduated from the Academy in the class of 1849, just in time to be sent to Florida during the Indian scare. He was stationed at various garrisons before being transferred to Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, where he served as aide-de-camp to Brigadier-General William Harney, the grizzled veteran of earlier Florida campaigns.





Portion of a map from the army's "Memoirs of Reconnaissances" compilation showing the present-day Broward County area and the routes of several of the expeditions recounted in this article. Hillsboro Inlet is at center; New River Inlet at the bottom of this map.

Monroe, Virginia, he was promoted to second lieutenant of the First Artillery and assigned to Florida in July 1856. He served with his company until 1857, when he was sent back to West Point as Assistant Professor of Geography, History and Ethics. Sent to Fort Moultrie, South Carolina, in 1859, Childs was later assigned to frontier duty at Fort Clark, Texas.

He was transferred to Fort Duncan, Texas, just prior to the outbreak of the War Between the States, when he resigned his commission to join the Confederate forces. After the war, he took up farming for a short time before becoming purser for the New York and Charleston Steamship Company from 1870 to 1878. Between 1878 and 1886 he worked as a civil engineer in the employ of the United States government, then took the position as Inspector of Customs for the United States Treasury Department.<sup>8</sup>

By far the most famous of the subordinate officers involved in southeast Florida during the Third Seminole War was Stephen Dill Lee. The Charleston-born Lee graduated from West Point in the class of 1854 and was commissioned as second lieutenant in the Fourth Artillery in July of that year. After a short tour at Ringgold Barracks in Texas, where he received a promotion to first lieutenant, he was transferred to Florida in 1856. Lee occupied the office of Assistant Adjutant General for the Department of Florida from August through September of 1857, when he was assigned the position of quartermaster for the Fourth Artillery.<sup>9</sup> Following his service in Florida, Lee's regiment was given the difficult task of assisting in the quelling of the violence in Kansas, while stationed at Fort Leavenworth. After this, he served two short tours in the Dakotas and on recruiting duty in 1859.<sup>10</sup> At the outbreak of the War Between the States, Lee joined the forces of his home state and was promptly commissioned as captain of South Carolina volunteers, serving as aide to General P. G. T. Beauregard. In that capacity, he assisted in negotiations with Major Robert Anderson for the surrender of Fort Sumter and took part in the bombardment of the fort when Anderson refused.

Receiving a commission in the Confederate Army, Lee was promoted to major in November 1861. In Virginia, he fought at the battles of Seven Pines, Savage's Station, and Malvern Hill. Taking command of the Fourth Virginia Cavalry, he received promotions to lieutenant colo-

nel and colonel. He distinguished himself in the Battle of Second Manassas and at Antietam (Sharpsburg).<sup>11</sup> At the latter battle, he held the strategic high ground at the infamous Dunker Church, where his battery of artillery did severe damage to Union troops attempting to cross the "cornfield." One of those wounded in the battle, possibly from a shell fragment fired by Lee's battery, was Brigadier-General George Hartsuff, whose attack on the "banana patch" of Chief Billy Bowlegs allegedly began the Third Seminole War.<sup>12</sup> In an additional irony of war, one of the commanders facing Lee and his compatriots in the woods north of Dunker's Hill was Brigadier-General Abner Doubleday.<sup>13</sup>

After service in Virginia and Maryland, Lee was transferred to Vicksburg, where he served valiantly against impossible odds, leading the repulse of William T. Sherman's forces at Chickasaw Bluffs and Champion's Hill.<sup>14</sup> While Vicksburg was under siege, Lee, noted for his coolness under fire, earned the affection of the city's residents and received his daily ration of buttermilk from Emma Balfour, whose diary remains an important source of information on the siege. This daily civility was unique during the bizarre events surrounding that seven month battle.<sup>15</sup> Exchanged after the fall of Vicksburg, Lee served as commander of the cavalry in Mississippi, and later, after promotion to major-general, was assigned as commander of all cavalry west of Alabama. In 1864 he was given the impossible task of trying to halt Sherman's march toward Meridian, Mississippi. In June of that year, he received promotion to lieutenant general, the youngest man, at the age of thirty, to receive such rank in the Confederate Army. He served as commander of an infantry corps under the command of John Bell Hood, in the operations around Atlanta and the campaigns at Nashville. Severely wounded in the Battle of Nashville, he refused to be removed until a proper rear-guard was organized. He returned to his unit only after the Confederate forces were in retreat into North Carolina,



Stephen D. Lee wearing the uniform of a Confederate colonel.



This portrait of Truman Seymour appeared in the November 1866 issue of *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*.

where he surrendered with General Joseph E. Johnston, another veteran of the Seminole Wars.<sup>16</sup>

After the war, Lee settled in Columbus, Mississippi, and began life anew as a planter. In 1878, with his civil rights restored, he was elected to the Mississippi State Legislature. Two years later, he was appointed first president of the newly-created Mississippi Agricultural and Mechanical College, now Mississippi State University. He was a member of the Mississippi constitutional convention in 1890, and President William McKinley appointed him a commissioner of the Vicksburg National Park in 1899. In 1904, he was elected commander-in-chief of the United Confederate Veterans, which post he held until his death, on May 28, 1908, at Vicksburg.

"Captain Seymour" in the letters is better known to Floridians as General Truman Seymour, the commanding officer of Union forces at the February 20, 1864 Battle of Olustee. The Vermont-born Seymour was a member of the illustrious West Point class of 1846, which included George B. McClellan, Thomas J. Jackson and George Pickett. Upon graduation, Seymour was assigned garrison duty at Fort Pickens, but within a year served with distinction in the Mexican War. He saw action in most of the famous battles of that war, including Cerro Gordo, La Hoya, Contreras, Churubusco and the siege of Mexico City. Seymour was twice

cited for gallant and meritorious service and breveted captain in August 1847. At the end of the war, he received his full commission as lieutenant of the First Artillery and returned to garrison duty in New York. For the next three years, 1850 to 1853, he was an instructor in drawing at the Military Academy, followed by more garrison duty at Fort Moultrie, South Carolina. Seymour saw extensive duty during the Third Seminole War. He took a leave of absence for a European tour before returning to garrison duty at Fort Moultrie, where he received his commission as captain of the First Artillery. It is interesting to note that the correspondence below refers to Seymour as "Captain," an obvious reference to his brevet rank from the Mexican War. At the outbreak of the War Between the States, Seymour was assigned to Fort Sumter and served under Major Robert Anderson, who had seen extensive service in Florida during the Second Seminole War.

Seymour's service in the Civil War included recruiting and training in New York and Pennsylvania, although in April 1862, he was assigned to the battlefield. In that year, he was given a brigade command in the Army of the Potomac, where he saw extensive and important action in the following battles: Mechanicsville, Gaines' Mill, Glendale, Malvern Hill, Second Manassas, South Mountain and Antietam. For

his service in the latter two battles, he was breveted to lieutenant-colonel and colonel. From November 1862 until March 1864 he was Chief of Staff and Artillery in the Department of the South. In this capacity he took part in numerous encounters, the most famous of which was the assault on Fort Wagner, South Carolina, where he was severely wounded.<sup>17</sup> His most controversial engagement during the war was the Battle of Olustee, where his forces were soundly defeated and suffered nearly twice as many casualties as the opposition. Dr. David Coles, who has written extensively on this campaign, has noted that Seymour appears to have been confused by the orders of commanding general Quincy A. Gillmore. Instead of merely taking the railhead at Baldwin, Florida, Seymour decided to move on to Lake City and then to the Suwannee River bridge, hoping to cut off all beef, salt and other commodities being shipped into Georgia by Floridians. At Olustee, Seymour ran headlong into the reinforced Confederate army headed by General Joseph Finegan and was rebuffed. For this stinging loss, he was severely criticized in the Northern media. He responded loudly and often to these criticisms, but was almost immediately removed from command.<sup>18</sup> In May, General Seymour was sent to Virginia where he again took part in the major campaigns of the Army of the Potomac as commander of a bri-

gade in the Sixth Corps. During the Battle of the Wilderness, he was captured by Confederate forces and exchanged in August 1864 in Charleston, South Carolina, where he was exposed to fire from Union guns bombarding the forces of General Samuel Jones. Upon his return to Virginia, he was given command of a division of the Sixth Corps which he led in the Shenandoah Valley and the Richmond Campaign, serving with distinction and valor at the Petersburg siege. For his valor and service, he was breveted major-general of volunteers and then brigadier-general in the regular army in March 1865. He took an active part in the campaign that climaxed with the sur-

render of Confederate forces at Appomattox Courthouse on April 9, 1865.

Mustered out of the volunteer service in April 1865, Seymour immediately resumed his regular army career. In October 1865, he became post commander at Fort Taylor in Key West, followed by a two-year term as commander at Pensacola. After other brief tours, he returned to Florida to command Fort Barrancas until September 1876. After a short leave of absence, he retired from active duty.<sup>19</sup> He spent his retirement with his wife in Florence, Italy, where he took up his life-long hobby, painting. He died in Florence on October 30, 1891, and was interred

in the Cimitero degli Allori. Curiously, his wife, who survived him by many years, was buried at West Point in 1919.<sup>20</sup>

The letters that follow include some written by the men whose lives have been sketched above. Like those in the first section of this article, they have been taken from the National Archives Microfilm M1084: "Letters Sent, Register of Letters Received and Letters Received by Headquarters, Troops in Florida, and Headquarters, Department of Florida: 1850-1858," Roll No. 7 (Letters Received by Headquarters, Department of Florida, Registered, A-G, 1857). A copy of this microfilm is available at the Broward County Historical Commission office.

Ft. McRae Fla  
March 21 '57

Sir

Agreeable to instructions I have the honor to report that on the 13<sup>th</sup> last a party of five officers and two Men, (& among the former the Col. Comdg.) left the battalion of the 1st & 4th Arty near New River and En Rou[te] from Ft Dallas to Ft. McRae for the purpose of finding a good crossing of the two Creeks; respectively at 3 & 4 miles from New River, & usually known as the North & South branches of Snook Creek; On Crossing New River, the party took a Course W. 1/2 N.W. for about the distance of 5 or 6 miles before reaching the 1st Creek. At this point which was very near the Everglades, the Cypress appeared to be of considerable width, and did not present a good crossing until Skirted towards its mouth, to the point at which it was intersected by Maj. Lauderdale's road; this Creek Empties into the Bay at a point 3 Ms. N.E. from old Ft. Lauderdale. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Creek presented a tolerable crossing also, when it was intersected by the road, it does not unite with the 1st Creek before Emptying into the Bay or Middle River running almost parallel with the coast; Neither of these creeks are laid down on the map and still they present two of the greatest obstacles

for wagons between New River & Ft. Jupiter; they both seem to originate from the same Cypress swamp near the everglades. Middle river is about two Ms. from the last creek and presents a good crossing.

With reference to the pioneer party which was placed under my charge at Middle river & with instructions to follow Maj. Lauderdale's road I have the honor to report that the road was generally good & having the direction indicated by the Map, except after crossing the two branches of the Hillsborro, where the crossings are laid down too far East, and the road makes Easting instead of Westing for several Miles after leaving the branches; the road also Makes much more Westing than indicated by the Map for 5 Miles before reaching Jones Creek. There is an extensive spruce forrest between the Hillsborro & Middle river, slooping [sic] towards the Coast; The road is to the west of this forrest & almost skin to it in the open pine barren. At Jones Creek a good road was found leading to McRae & the pioneer party was broken up.

I am Sir  
Very Respectfully  
Yr. obt. Srvt.

S. D. Lee  
1<sup>st</sup> Lt. 4<sup>th</sup> Art.

To

1<sup>st</sup> Lt. O. H. Tillinghast  
1st Artillery  
Actg. Adjt.  
Battalion of 1<sup>st</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Arty.

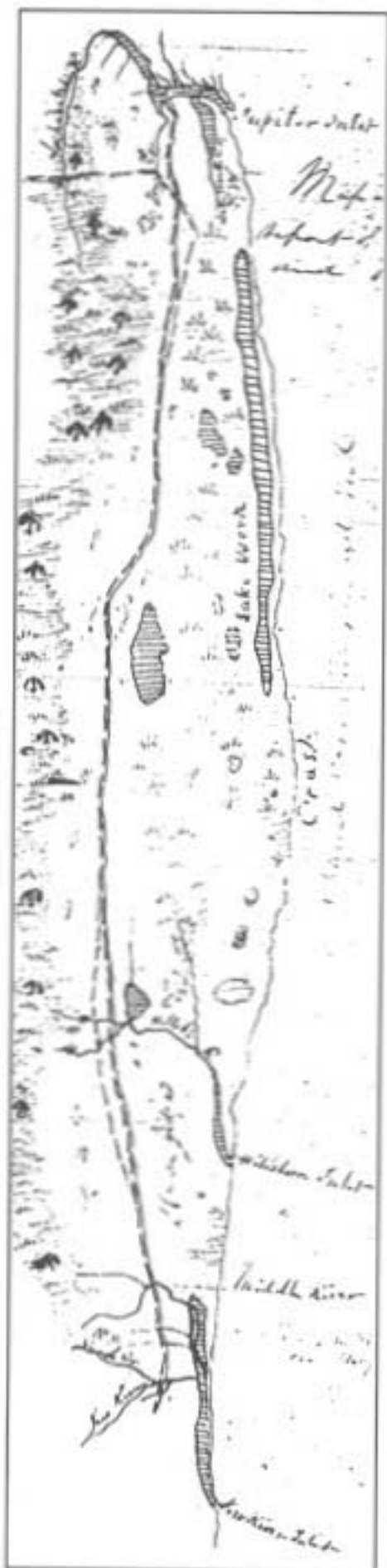
Fort Dallas Fla. April 2d 1857  
Colonel

I have the honor to submit the following Report and Topographical Sketch showing the various scouts executed by Company 'E' 1st Artillery between this post and Fort McRae.

*March 12th.* The Company consisting of Capt. Doubleday, Lieut. Closson & Lieut. Webber with 52 enlisted men left Fort Dallas, in company with Company 'B' 1st Arty. and Companies "F" & K of the 4th Arty. on the first days march the Company acted as a guard to the train accompanying and encamping with it at the River Ratonas.

*March 13th.* The Company resumed the march with the column. Col. Dimick, Dr. McParlan, myself, Lieut. Duryea and Lieut. Lee rode ahead to ascertain the best crossing place for the train over two creeks which appear to be branches of Middle River. This duty performed

**Map of Lieutenant Stephen Lee's scout from New River to Jones Creek, at Jupiter, from "Memoirs of Reconnaissances."**



we returned and encamped for the night with the other troops at New River.

*March 14th.* A great part of the day was spent in making temporary crossings over the two branches referred to. Encamped some three miles beyond on Middle River.

*March 15th.* Ordered to scout on the western side between Middle River and the sources of the Hillsborough. Took a westerly course which soon brought us to saw-grass ponds skirting the cypress; entered the cypress which puts out in spurs to the main land and connects with the Everglades. Had to wade nearly all day occasionally passing islands of pines in the marshes. Saw no Indian signs. Overtook the column at night and encamped near some ponds supposed to be the sources of the Hillsborough.

*March 16th.* Acted as guard to the train encamping with it some twelve miles from the last point.

*March 17th.* Left the column with orders to scout on the East side of the road and cross the large marsh on that side if practicable. This had previously been reported as impassible. In about a mile came upon and waded the cypress bordering the marsh and then commenced the passage. This proved by far the most wearisome toil I had ever undertaken. The men soon sank up to the middle in slimy mud and their progress became slow and laborious. I was on the point of returning but observing some small islands scattered here and there, with a ridge of pines in the distance I was induced to persevere. The saw grass assisted somewhat in obtaining a footing, but the islands even when reached afforded no firm ground, the roots of the trees being imbedded in soft mud. The men were often obliged to cross floating islands which could hardly bear their weight. In some cases they fell through and would have been drowned were it not for the prompt

assistance of their comrades. When the passage was at length accomplished, I found myself unexpectedly upon the shores of a Lake connected with several others which did not seem to correspond to any thing on the map. I waded this Lake to its northern extremity but was obliged to retrace my steps to go around a deep bay which run back and cut us off from the main land. Our labor now became, if possible, more severe, the water being deeper, floating islands more frequent and the roots of the trees imbedded in slime instead of aiding added to our embarrassment. Late in the day we succeeded in reaching a pine ridge to the north of the Lake, but it run out in the course of three miles and ended in a marsh on the borders of another Lake. We again returned, crossed a saw grass marsh and gained another pine ridge still further to the East. We travelled some six miles north on this ridge and there gained two miles to the West by which time it was so dark we were obliged to bivouac for the night, without knowing exactly in what part of the country we were, without coffee, blankets or any of the comforts provided by the soldiers and in a severe drenching shower of rain which kept the entire command awake all night. The country was a very beautiful one over which we had just passed, slightly hilly, and full of all kinds of game. It might well be a favorite of the Indians but we saw no signs of any kind. I am now convinced it must have been in the vicinity of what is called Chis village, but at the time I had no idea we were so far to the north or I should have looked for the village itself, or the remains of it. As it is, I was out of provisions the column was already nearly two days march in advance and the same swamp had to be re-crossed which had cost me so much labor on the preceding day. If my supposition is correct we must have been on the borders of Lake Worth and I saw open spaces to the right which would favor that idea, but extensive saw grass marshes lay on my right which prevented me from going still farther in that direction.

*March 18th.* Undertook the pas-

sage of the swamp which separated us from the route of the column. Passed it with the same trials and difficulties as on the previous day and caught up to the train about midnight, men very much exhausted.

*March 19th.* The Company marched as a guard to the column as far as the bridge over the Lochahatchee, where it encamped or rather bivouaced with the train.

*March 20th.* I not being well, Lieut. Closson assumed command of the company with directions to scout several miles in a Northerly direction and rejoin the train at night. He accordingly left at daylight, struck slightly East of North to Genl. Jesup's battle ground of 1837, and, then slightly West of North for about eight miles through a dry country drained by the Lochahatchee which stream was bordered with dense hammocks of pine and Palmetto. He passed two small branches, of the river running through a fertile country. He then struck South West for nine miles through a country alternating in ponds and pines. The former were very abundant some ankle and others knee deep, filled with alligators and water snakes. The pines were full of deer.

*March 21st.* The company acted as a guard to the train, preceding with it as far as Fort McRae. A guard of ten men of my company, the sick and the greater part of the waggon stopped on this side of a boggy piece of ground some four miles from Fort McRae while the remainder of the train went on and encamped opposite the Fort. I remained with the former body and was joined by Company (K) under the command of Lieut. Hudson who bivouaced with us for the night and then went on to Fort McRae.

*March 22nd.* Waiting for supplies of forage from Fort Center.

*March 23rd.* The same.

*March 24th.* The same.

*March 25th.* Commenced our return to Fort Dallas. The Company remained with the train but Lieut. Closson was ordered to scout several miles to the North and rejoin us at night. He had under his command five mounted men. They examined the country in a North Westerly di-

rection for about ten miles starting from the camp about four or five miles East of Fort McRae. He then returned in a South Easterly direction to the road which he regained about nine miles from camp. He reports the country as fertile and containing many Pine and Palmetto hammocks. He crossed Lieut. Duryeas trail twice. No recent traces of Indians were discovered.

*March 26th.* The company acted as a guard to the train, halting for the night about four or five from the Lochahatchee on the Eastern side or rather to the East and South.

*March 27th.* Scouted to the West of the road on the border of the cypress which skirts the Everglades. Were all day in the saw grass ponds cypress and pines. Saw no signs of Indians.

*March 28th.* The company acted as a guard to the train, but Lieut. Webber with five mounted men scouted on the Eastern side. One mile in an Easterly direction, brought him to the large marsh on that side, which reaches from the Hillsborough to Fort Jupiter. He skirted the edge of this crossing continual spurs of it, running in a Westerly direction. He crossed volunteer and our own previous trails but saw no indications of Indians. After travelling South some 16 miles, he struck into the road about three miles North of the Hillsborough and four South of the Encampment. He reports the country passed over a continual succession of ponds and marshes with intervals of pine woods and palmettos, most of the ponds being passable for horses.

*March 29th.* The company scouted to the West of the road and in the spurs of cypress, saw grass ponds &c. I took a Southerly course which brought me almost through the cypress to the Everglades, which appeared to be some five miles from the road. As I was very much entangled in the saw-grass and cypress I was obliged to take a due East course to get free. Caught up about a mile from the stopping place. No sign of Indians.

*March 30th.* The company marched with the train to New River,

but Mr. Webber was detached with three mounted men to scout towards the sea coast. He struck through a dense spruce thicket in an Easterly direction for three miles until he reached a marsh running North and South from the Hillsborough (at its mouth) to New River intersecting it two miles West of the house on the beach. The marsh was a mile wide with a stream through the middle. He then struck South two miles and West one mile to get around a spur of the marsh; then South West to Middle River which he was obliged to pass at the crossing made for the train. He then again turned to the East and passed through thick spruce for two miles to the borders of a large marsh, a mile North, then South West to the crossing over the first stream beyond New River. He crossed Company B's trail and a cattle trail, but saw no Indian signs. The country was high and principally covered with scrub.

*March 31st.* Ordered to scout on the Western side as far as the Everglades from New River to the Ratones. Sent Sergeant Chester with three mounted men to examine the ground between New River and Marsh Creek while I marched on the south bank of the latter stream until it ran into the Everglades some three miles from camp. I found endless pine islands and dry hammocks in the Everglades on one of which I discovered two beds made of Koontee leaves and some pieces of Koontee together with some sticks indicating an old encampment where Koontee had at one time been manufactured probably by Indians, but I should say this encampment was at least a year old. No recent trail or late sign of any kind could be discovered. I was astonished to find the water so low as to enable me to go anywhere I chose in the Everglades. Struck South until I came to the head of the principal branch of the Ratones which I followed down until it struck the road about the spot where some wells are sunk four miles from the crossing of the River. Reached the camp at Webbers creek a branch of Arch Creek.

*April 1st.* Acted as a guard to the



train and marched with it to Fort Dallas.

All of which is respectfully submitted  
To Brevet Col. J. Dimick 1 Arty.  
Abner Doubleday  
Commanding 3d District of Florida  
Capt. 1st Arty.  
Commanding Company "G"

Fort Dallas Fla  
April 2nd /57

Sir

In compliance with the directions of the Colonel, I have the honor to submit the following report & topographical sketch of the route of Company "B" 1st Artillery, from Fort Dallas to Fort McRae Fla.

With Lieut. Childs & fifty two non comd officers & privates of Co. B. 1st Arty, I left Fort Dallas on the 12th of March & moving with the train encamped on the Rio Ratonas. The following day we crossed New River, & Col Dimick, Dr. McFarland (Sic. McParlin), Capt. Doubleday, Lieut. Lee & myself, examined the country to the head waters of Snook Creek to find the most practicable

crossing of that stream. On the 14th the company moved with the train to the crossing of Middle River. On the morning of the 15th leaving Camp & Train took a North easterly direction & examined the Country to Hillsboro Inlet & thence up the Hillsboro River to the crossing without finding any signs whatever of Indians. On the following day the Company moved with the Train about ten miles beyond the Hillsboro. On the morning of the 17th leaving Camp & Train struck a due west Course, crossed the Cypress swamp & proceeded a half mile into the Everglades, examined several Islands finding them to be very small & no evidence of Indians. The Cypress swamp at the crossing was about a mile & a half wide, & the mud & water at an average depth of 18 inches, returning to the swamp took a North easterly course for about seven miles, & then due east. Came upon an old Indian encampment about two miles from the road, which evidently had not been occupied for several months, striking the road we reached Camp on the following day.

On the 19th leaving Camp about seven miles below the crossing of Jones's Creek, took a westerly course to the Cypress swamp, made an examination of two large hammocks suitable for Cultivation, then following up the border of the Cypress to the road, proceeded to the crossing

of the Lochahatchee and on the following day moved with the train about six miles beyond that river. On the morning of the 21st leaving the train proceeded on Genl Eustis route about four miles above its junction with Lieut Haine's then taking a westerly course made an examination of the large hammock indicated on the map, then taking a North westerly course struck Lake Okeechobee about 14 miles above Fort McRae, following down the hammock bordering the Lake, we found two or three old Indian Encampments, but none that had been recently occupied, finding it impracticable to cross Cahany Bay, we recrossed the saw grass prairie & taking a southerly direction reached Fort McRae March 23rd.

The Company started with the train to return to this post on the 25th. On the 26th & 27th Lieut. Childs was detached from the Company, & with a mounted party on three horses and three mules, after crossing the Lochahatchee scoured the country in the direction of Jupiter & on the east of the road leading to Fort Dallas. On the 28th the Company left the train about 18 miles south of Jones Creek & scouted on the West side of the road along the Cypress Swamp, and encamped about eight miles above the Hillsboro.

On the 29th Lt. Childs was detached from the company, & with the mounted party as before scoured the country on the east of the road & south of that River. On the 30th left the train about six miles below the Hillsboro, took a westerly course to the swamp, skirted the Cypress for about three miles, then proceeded in a south Easterly direction to New River. On the 31st marched with the Train to Arch Creek. April 1st leaving the train proceeded in a westerly direction to the Everglades & skirted along the everglades between Arch Creek & Little River. Came upon an old Indian Encampment at the head waters of Little River & another about two miles lower down, neither had been occupied for a long time. Crossing Little River at the first practicable point, proceeded on a South easterly direction reaching this post



Fort Dallas, as it appeared in the years immediately following the Civil War.

on the afternoon of the same day.

I am Sir  
Very Respectfully  
Your Obedt. Servt.  
R. C. Duryea  
1st Lt. 1st Arty.

To

Lieut. P. T. Wyman  
Adjt. 1st Regt Arty.  
Fort Dallas  
Fla.

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Head Qrs. 3rd District of Florida  
Fort Dallas August 7th 1857

Sir:

I have to acknowledge the receipt of Special Order No. 90, on the 27th July, directing me to organize a command to thoroughly scout the entire country between this and Orange Grove Haul-over, and to report that Capt. Doubleday left here on the 28th July with two Lieutenants and Eighty men, rationed with twenty days bread and fifteen of Pork, and furnished with suitable transportation and instructed to carry the order into full effect.

He returned today with his command reporting that he had fully carried out his instructions in scouting the entire country to Orange Grove Haul-Over, and that Captain Seymour not having arrived at the point of meeting, he found it necessary to hurry back in consequence of the rising of the rivers, particularly Middle River, which he would have had great difficulty in recrossing had the water risen a few inches higher; as it was he reported that the water was so high that the mules but barely touched bottom.

The Captain reports that no signs of Indians were seen by his command, his detailed report and map of his scout I will forward by the next mail. I regret to state that I was necessarily obliged to issue hard bread which had been condemned and ordered to be sold, not having any other on hand. The Captain reports that it had caused dysentery among his command. The condition of the hard bread was not known until the day

after Captain Kilburn left the post, as soon as it was known I directed the A. C. s. to require more, but his requisition could not have reached Tampa Bay until after the order for the scout was issued.

I am sir,  
Very Respy.  
Your obed't. Servant  
J. Dimick  
Bvt. Col. & Major 1 Ary.  
Comg. 3rd District

To

Major Francis N. Page  
Ass't Adgt. Gen'l., Dept. of Fla.  
Tampa, Fla.

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Fort Dallas, Florida  
August 10th 1857

Sir:

[In] compliance with your orders, I proceed to submit a report of the operations of the detachment of Comp. "B" 1st Art., in the late expedition to Orange Grove Haul-over.

On the 28th of August [July] the detachment examined the hammocks & scoured the country on the right of the road to the bay, and as far as Little River, which it crossed, examined the hammocks on the right and the one on the left, and returned to Camp on Little River.

On the 29th the detachment proceeded in the same manner to examine the country & hammocks on the left of the road, followed up the hammocks on the right and left banks of Arch Creek as far as the Everglades, and joined the train at Camp on the Ratones.

On the 30th examined the hammocks on the right of the road, all of which were on the edge of a large saw grass marsh extending nearly to the sea coast, and were more or less, except in the immediate vicinity of New River.

On the 31st crossed New River, searched the large hammock on its left bank, visited the site of Fort Lauderdale, examined a large hammock on the right bank of Snook Creek, scoured the country on the right and joined the train at Snook Creek.

On August 1st the detachment examined a series of hammocks on the right of the road extending to Middle River, crossing which it scoured the country on the left and examined hammocks as far as Camp on Aligator pond.

August 2nd. Proceeded from camp in an E.N.E. direction, crossed the Hillsborough one and a half miles from its mouth and followed it to the sea. On the right bank is a ridge of rich loam which presented the appearance of having been cultivated many years since, it is nearly a mile in length and varies from fifty to one hundred yards in width, and is the only place which the detachment visited which seemed fit for cultivation. Game was seen in great abundance in this vicinity.

The detachment followed the Hillsborough from its mouth to camp, which was near the source of the northern branch, crossing frequently from one side to the other, and searching the thickets and hammocks on the banks. The undergrowth being thick & matted the march was very fatiguing.

August 3rd. Proceeded from camp in an Easterly direction and, by crossing several narrow spurs of Sawgrass, succeeded in gaining the Spruce ridge which lies on the East of the broad Sawgrass marsh north of the Hillsborough. Crossed this ridge in a N.E. direction and struck the Little Hillsborough, which at this point was thought to be about half a mile from the Sea. To reach the river it was necessary to cross a sawgrass marsh in which the men sank to the middle & then a mangrove swamp which it was very difficult to climb through. This river is for the most part bordered by a hammock very difficult to penetrate. Followed up the river five or six miles searching the hammock at intervals. Found a mound of sand forty feet high overlooking the Sea more than half a mile distant. Endeavoured to cross the river at points one and two miles North of this, where ran through a saw-grass marsh, but found it too broad & deep. Encamped in the Spruce ridge, two miles north of this mound which marks "Orange Groves

Haul-over", the men wearied out by toilsome marching.

August 4th. Crossed the ridge in a Westerly direction, one mile and came upon the saw-grass marsh above referred to. Turned South and saw the marsh from time to time on our right for eight or ten miles. Proceeded by the shortest line to camp on Alligator pond. The men much wearied by marching a long distance over the fallen trees of the Spruce ridge under a burning sun.

On the 5th, 6th & 7th the detachment acted as escort to the train until it reached Fort Dallas.

I have the honor to be resp'y.

Yr. Obt. Svt.

F. L. Childs

2d Lt. 1st Art.

Capt. A. Doubleday 1st Art.

Comdg. Batt. of Arty.

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To

Bt. Colonel Justin Dimick

1st Arty.

Commanding the

3rd Military District of Fla.

Fort Dallas, Fla. Aug. 10, 1857

Colonel

I have the honor to report that in obedience to your orders, I left Fort Dallas on the 28th July with Lieutenants Webber and Childs and 80 men of companies "E" and "B" of the 1st Artillery to carry out Special Order No. 90 from the Head Qrs. of the Department, directing the country to be examined and the hammocks searched between this post and Orange Grove Haulover.

July 28. Marched as far as Little River with a train of five waggons and three pack mules. Company "B" examined the hammocks on the right to the sea coast and Company "E" on the left as far as the borders of the Everglades. No Indian signs were discovered. It was scarcely necessary to scout this part of the route, as it is gone over nearly every day by parties from the Fort in search of stray cattle. In order to examine the hammocks effectually the men were obliged to wear masks of mosquito netting. The stings of these

insects and the swarms of flies which beset the animals made them most unmanageable. The men had to lie down at night in a thick mangrove swarming with mosquitoes and obtained but little rest.

July 29th. Marched with the train to the Ratonas, Company "E" examining the country to the right and Company "B" to the left. No traces of Indians. Mosquitoes, as usual, very annoying.

July 30th. Reached New River examining the country to the right and left as before. Particular attention was given to a large hammock bordering the stream, but there were no marks to show that it had even been inhabited.

July 31st. Lieut. Childs was directed to take Company "B" and thoroughly scout a large hammock bordering the River on the North side. He went through it lengthwise and crossed it in every direction but without result. He came upon the remains of what is thought to be old Fort Lauderdale.

New River being about 200 feet wide and 30 feet deep presented a formidable obstacle to the passage of the train, more especially as the large raft made of empty barrels, used on a previous occasion had become utterly useless. A large rope being stretched across the stream, the waggon loads were carried over in one of the metallic bodies used as a boat. By tying a long rope to the halter of one of the animals and pulling him over all the mules followed and swam to the landing place. I then passed the running gear of a waggon by fastening a rope to the tongue and another behind in order that it might be pulled back in case any obstruction in the bottom of the stream should prevent it from going forward. It was then allowed to sink to the bottom and was hauled across without difficulty. All the other waggons bodies, bows & all were taken over in the same way. The train then continued its march as far as Snook Creek where it encamped for the night.

August 1st. The passage of Snook Creek also presented some difficulty in consequence of a quagmire on the

South side. This having been partially filled in, the mules floundered through without any great detention. The temporary bridge over the second branch of the same stream being in a very dilapidated condition gave us some additional trouble but at length we were enabled to pass it successfully. Lieut. Webber was directed to take Compy. "E" and scout to the sea coast, up towards the Hillsborough and rejoin us in camp five miles beyond Middle River. Lieut. Childs with Compy. "B" scouted between Snook Creek and Middle River and on the left of our course from Middle River to camp. The report of these officers gives many details as to the appearance of the country. Neither of them saw any Indian signs. Middle River I found to be very much swollen by the rains. Its width was 150 yards and the depth was such that the mules could hardly keep their feet without swimming. The water entered into the waggon bodies but without doing any serious injury. Encamped for the night among the spruce and pines at Alligator Pond.

August 2d. The train proceeded to the North Branch of the Hillsborough. The route abounded in wet prairies which were quite boggy in some places, spurs of cypress from the Everglades crossed the road repeatedly. Lieut. Childs with his detachment of Company "B" scouted over to the sea coast and followed up the Hillsborough to our camp, crossing and recrossing the River and examining the thickets on each side; but without discovering any signs of Indians. Lieut. Webber with his detachment of Company "E" entered into the cypress and examined the country to the borders of the Everglades, but without result. About a mile from the camp on Alligator Pond, a few poles are standing indicating the existence of an old Indian village, which apparently has not been inhabited for many years.

August 3d. The bridge over the Hillsborough being in bad order and the country beyond somewhat boggy, I left the waggon train under charge of Lieut. Webber and proceeded myself with a detachment of Co. "E" to

scout the country as far north as the Orange Grove Haulover, that is opposite to it. This duty I accomplished without seeing any Indian sign or traces of Capt. Seymour. I then returned to camp. Lieut. Childs in the mean time had been directed to take two days provisions and proceed to the Haulover itself by way of the coast. He succeeded in crossing the Southern part of the large marsh which extends North to Fort Jupiter but was unable to reach the sea coast itself in consequence of an intervening stream and marsh. He went parallel to the coast however one mile beyond the Haulover returned and stopped a short time at the Haulover and then came back by another route to Alligator Pond, exploring a large spruce & pine region and many wet hammocks which border the country in the vicinity of the little Hillsborough. He saw no Indian signs.

*August 4th.* Although the words of the Dept. order would seem to imply a meeting between Capt. Seymour and myself opposite or at the Haulover, as he had not come up I did not consider it possible to wait for him any length of time, on account of the uncertainty of his movements and my ignorance as to the time he started. There was a good deal of sickness in camp, some of which I did not well know how to treat, dysentery was increasing, the medicines for the cure of it had given out, and the heavy rains gave reason to fear that Middle River would soon be if not absolutely impassable a serious impediment to my return. I accordingly broke up the camp and retraced my steps to Alligator Pond, where Lieut. Childs soon after joined me.

*August 5th.* In order to scout the entire sea coast south to a point opposite Fort Dallas I directed Lieut. Webber with Company "E" to take four days provisions and endeavor to construct a raft from the timber on the beach and cross New River at its mouth. Finding the water of a moderate depth and the width only two hundred feet he forded it. The sharks however were very large and numerous and one man was knocked down by one, but not otherwise injured.

His command reached a point opposite the Fort after a toilsome march of two days from whence they recrossed the bay in boats sent over from the garrison. The[y] had examined the hammocks and thickets on the coast without seeing any traces of Indians. The train escorted by Lieut. Childs and his detachment reached and crossed New River on the evening of the 5th.

*August 6th.* The train marched to Little River and encamped.

*August 7th.* The train returned to Fort Dallas.

The number of sick was 16 out of 80 which is just one fifth the force. The hard bread issued to the men was sour and mouldy, there being no other at the post, and this in my opinion caused diarrhea which was aggravated to dysentery by the heat &c.

I regret exceedingly that no traces of Indians were discovered but I do not believe there is at present any Seminoles in that section of country. Our old trails were so distinct and every deer and bear track was so plain that it would in my opinion be impossible for any hunting party to be out without leaving a permanent trail in the high grass and mud of the wet prairies which are interspersed with the pines in every direction.

All of which is respectfully submitted by

Abner Doubleday  
Capt. 1st Arty.  
Commanding Battalion  
1st Arty.



## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> George W. Cullum, *Biographical Register of Officers and Graduates of the United States Military Academy*, Volume 2 (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1891), 535-36. Because Duryea was alive at the time this volume went to press it does not record a date of death. Duryea was a graduate of the Military Academy's class of 1853.
- <sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 314.
- <sup>3</sup> Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army*, Volume I (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1903; reprinted by the University of Illinois Press, Urbana, Illinois, 1965), 1012.
- <sup>4</sup> Cullum, *Biographical Register*, volume 2, 580-81.
- <sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-30.
- <sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 387-88.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-04.
- <sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 615.
- <sup>9</sup> The standard biography of Lee, Herman Hattaway, *General Stephen D. Lee* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1976), makes no mention of his service along the southeast Florida coast during the Third Seminole War.
- <sup>10</sup> Cullum, *Biographical Register*, volume 2, 585.
- <sup>11</sup> Robert McHenry, ed., *Webster's American Military Biographies* (Springfield, Massachusetts: G. & C. Merriam Company, 1978), 234.
- <sup>12</sup> Stephen W. Sears, *Landscape Turned Red: The Battle of Antietam* (New York: Ticknor & Fields, 1983), 182-88.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> McHenry, ed., *Webster's American Military Biographies*, 234.
- <sup>15</sup> Richard Wheeler, *The Siege of Vicksburg* (New York: Harper Collins, Publisher, 1991; originally published in 1978 by Thomas Y. Crowell, Publishers), 179.
- <sup>16</sup> McHenry, ed., *Webster's American Military Biographies*, 234.
- <sup>17</sup> Cullum, *Biographical Register*, volume 2, 270-71.
- <sup>18</sup> David J. Coles, "The Seymour Papers: Military-Press Conflict During the Civil War," submitted for publication, 1999. Draft of this paper was generously provided to this author by Dr. Coles, whose expertise in the Civil War is widely recognized throughout Florida.
- <sup>19</sup> Cullum, *Biographical Register*, volume 2, 271.
- <sup>20</sup> Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Blue: Lives of the Union Military Commanders* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 432-33.