

ANOTHER FILLIBUSTERING EXPEDITION

A Large Force of Men, Arms and Ammunition Gets Away From New River Inlet

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Rumors of an expedition leaving New River on Wednesday evening reached here yesterday and needless to say the officials who have been so much on the alert to prevent such things at this point were flying around trying to learn from whence the rumor came, so as to keep out of the way and not interfere with the good work.

The advices received by the *METROPOLIS* were from a reliable source and to the effect that a large cargo of arms, ammunition and men arrived by rail at New River on Wednesday noon. By means of a small boat, the cargo was taken to a point near the inlet and put aboard a steamer, the name of which was not revealed, though a telegram received here Tuesday was to the effect that the steamer *Dauntless* had stealthily slipped out of Savannah and was suspected of having gone on a trip to Cuba.

The fact that New River has been looked upon as a splendid place for such a purpose is generally known. From the discovery a few days ago of a cargo of coal on Lignum Vitae Key by a special agent of the Government, any rumor of an expedition is regarded with significance. The particulars as to the number of men

Nineteen ninety-eight marks the centennial of the Spanish-American War, the short conflict which placed the United States in the undisputed position of a world power. Proximity to the battlegrounds of Cuba made Florida an especially significant training and launching point for United States troops. Jacksonville, Miami, and especially Tampa hosted contingents of troops and served as supply centers during the war, giving the state national and international publicity.

Even before the United States government actively intervened in the war, Florida played a significant part in Cuba's revolution against Spain. American sympathy for the Cuban revolutionaries ran high, Cuban agents were active in the United States, and despite Washington's official position of neutrality, "filibusterers" smuggled large quantities of munitions from Florida into Cuba in the years immediately preceding America's entry into the struggle. Perhaps the most famous filibusterer was Napoleon Bonaparte Broward, the future Florida governor for whom Broward County was named. Other smugglers also operated out of Florida inlets, including New River. This account of one such expedition, with the apparent complicity of the Florida East Coast Railway, appeared in the *Miami Metropolis* in May 1897, less than one year before the U.S. entered the war.

and the extent of the cargo could not be learned though it is considered that it was as large as any that has left the coast of Florida.

The general public knows little of the discovery of 75 tons of coal on one of the Florida Keys, but in spite of the secret and mysterious trip of an official to the Keys on Wednesday night week, his errand soon leaked out and is now gossip on our streets.

A telegram was received in March by an official here to the ef-

fect that 75 tons of coal had been purchased by the Cuban Junta, to be delivered to fillibustering steamers from some convenient point on the Florida coast. This was the only clue Special Agent of the Treasury Hambleton had, and it is supposed that he went to work on the case. Later he located two box cars loaded with some kind of freight at New River. These were watched until one disappeared very suddenly and for awhile the officials were mystified and their daily visit to the depot upon

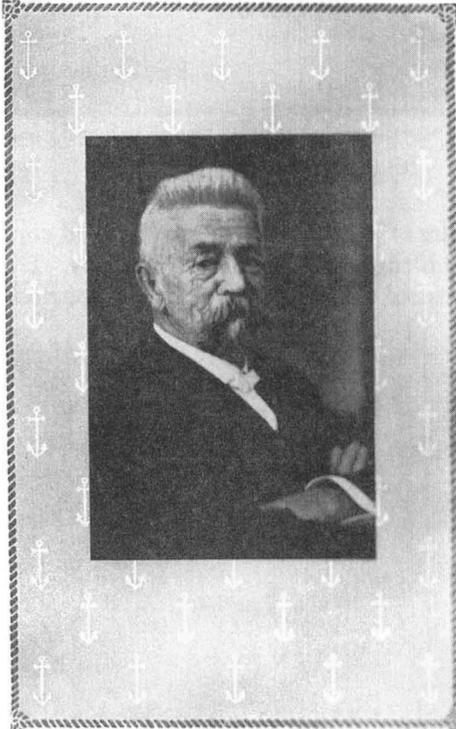
arrival of the freight became noticeable. Finally the plans of the promoters of fillibustering became known to them, and a man was stationed at New River. This seemed to check things and the car was brought to Lemon City and sidetracked. Here it was found by Mr. Hambleton who kept a daily watch upon it. Later a canal steamer was suspected and came to Miami for a day or two. Finally it left and so did the officials, who chartered the "Pri-

vateer" late Wednesday night. Several days were spent circulating leisurely among the keys. When in the neighborhood of Lignum Vitae Key the canal boat was discovered. She was boarded and the coal was found. The official took charge and went to Key West and placed the little vessel in charge of the custom officials. Previous to the seizure of the vessel, a huge stack of coal in stacks was found in a thick hammock on Lignum Vitae Key.

The officials arrived on the City of Key West Wednesday morning.

For awhile the unsuspecting public was uneasy for fear something had happened to them, as they had not been known to leave in such a mysterious manner before.

A monstrous special train of 15 cars was known to have left Jacksonville a few days since bound south. It never reached Miami. It is supposed this train carried the munitions of war to Ft. Lauderdale.



Below, the tug *Dauntless* outruns a U.S. Navy cruiser. At left is the tug's captain, "Dynamite Johnny" O'Brien (both from *A Captain Unafraid*, courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

