AMBUSH ON THE NEW RIVER

An Indian ruse endangers the lives of over 100 men at Fort Lauderdale and gives the area its first national recognition in 1839

Introduced by Broward County Historian Cooper Kirk

[*Editor's note: This article, as well as one on the Pine Island Skirmish (April 1977), are the by-products of Dr. Cooper Kirk's remarkable research into the life and times of Major William Lauderdale. In a future issue we plan to give a fuller account of Dr. Ellis Hughes' stay on the New River.*]

With the possible exception of the American Civil War, the Second Seminole Indian War (1835-1842) molded the life of Floridians more than any other nineteenth century event. The common pattern of life east and south of the Suwannee River to Key West was completely disrupted. Westward to the Perdido River settlers fared little better. South, from the New River to the keys, mainland settlements were destroyed and not re-established on the pre-war scale for almost half a century.

At the United States military fort on New River named Fort Lauderdale, on September 27, 1839, ocurred a dramatic event not typical of the Indian wars as a whole. Professedly friendly Indians set in motion a ruse designed to massacre the approximately eighty soldiers and thirty marines stationed at the isolated and distant fort. An Indian success would have rivalled the ambush of Major Francis L. Dade and his command in December 1835, the atrocity which began the Indian war.

Two popular versions of the attempted massacre, one by an officer participant and the other by a Florida newspaper editor, are the subject of this issue's documentary feature. Both accounts follow the main outlines of the official record written by First Lieutenant Christopher Q. Tompkins, Third Artillery, commandant of Fort Lauderdale. Although officially responsible for the safety of the fort, Lieutenant Tompkins was ably assisted by Commander Isaac Mayo and Lieutenant John A. Davis, United States Navy, and First Lieutenant T.T. Sloan, United States Marines, who commanded ships and naval units at New River.

The shorter version is taken from the *St. Augustine News*, October 25, 1839, reprinted in the *Army and Navy Chronicle*, October 31, 1839. Established in 1838 by Peter Sken Smith and Daniel W. Whitehurst to promote Whig party principles, the *News* was generally more a purveyor of sensationalism than its arch rival, the St. Augustine *Florida Herald*. Most articles and editorials were written by Whitehurst, who had served in the Indian war as a staff officer for Brigadier General Joseph M. Hernandez, a commander of the East Florida militia. Thus, his interest in and knowledge of military affairs came naturally. Whitehurst depended on the ship captains who entered St. Augustine harbor enroute to and from southern military posts like Fort Lauderdale for much of his information about the war. After the Indian war Whitehurst became a prominent and well-respected medical doctor in Key West.

The longer of the articles was printed in the *Niles National Register*, November 9, 1839. From its inception in 1811, this combination magazine and newspaper was probably the most respected news organ in the United States. It was noted for its relatively unbiased and comprehensive reporting of news and cultural affairs. After the death of its founder and editor Hezekiah Niles in April 1839, relatives sold it to Jeremiah Hughes of Baltimore, Maryland, in October of the same year.

Stationed at Fort Lauderdale since its re-establishment in February 1839, Hughes' son, Assistant Army Surgeon Ellis Hughes, found life almost unbearably miserable at the lonely outpost surrounded by Indians. Educated in classical and liberal studies in addition to his medical training, the twenty-six year old Dr. Hughes had few outlets for his frustration other than writing in his journal in various languages, including English, Hebrew, Latin, Greek and the modern romance tongues. Loneliness increased his alcoholic consumption until it threatened to destroy him professionally and socially.

The doctor's pent-up emotions found an outlet in the long October 5th letter which he penned to his father in which he detailed the events of late September. As his father stated in a note above the letter, the letter to the editor "was not written with the least idea of its publication, or with the knowledge that he, to whom, it was addressed, was editor of the *Register*." Through this familial happenstance Fort Lauderdale received its first national recognition.

Dr. Hughes' description of New River topography, flora and fauna matches those of many travelers and military men who visited the area from Hillsboro River to New River Inlet. It was nearly impassable due to incessant flooding, murky lagoons, thickly matted mangrove swamps, vicious alligators, and stinging and screeching insects. While black interpreter George, a slave on rental to the military, provided the essential information on the ambush and escape route, Dr. Hughes gave it the vehicle of expression. Unusual for his day, Hughes furnished a medical description of the bodies of the deceased and describes the interment ceremonies common to the Florida war.

The accompanying map shows the location of the original Fort Lauderdale built in March 1838 at the forks of New River where the Indians set up the ambush. The next fort eastward was an interim fort occupied by the military from February to August 1839. Before the end of September the army had built and occupied a permanent fort on the beach where Bahia Mar recreation center is now located.

THE MILITARY SITUATION IN BRIEF

With the military unable to subdue the hostile Seminole and Mickasuky Indians slated to be shipped west of the Mississippi River, the United States Congress voted in April 1839 to appropriate five thousand dollars in an attempt to negotiate a settlement with the Indians. Wishing to impress upon the Indians the importance which the government attached to the negotiations, the War Department hastily dispatched the Commanding General of the Army to conduct negotiations. After reaching Florida, Major General Alexander Macomb requested that Lt.-Colonel William S. Harney, Second Dragoons, then headed for south Florida, bring a prominant chief to the peace parley set for Fort King (near Ocala) in early May 1839.

After a few wily maneuvers with the Indians congregated on the headwaters of New River, Colonel Harney persuaded Sam Jones (Arpiaka), chief of the Mickasuky tribe, to announce that he had selected Chitto-Tustenuggee (Snake Chief), a Seminole, as his successor and chief negotiator for the Fort King conference. Without confering with the Indians in middle and north Florida, Chitto proclaimed himself the head chief of all the Indians in Florida. At Fort King General Macomb and Chitto negotiated a treaty which called for the Seminole and Mickasuky Indians to remain in Florida on land located on the Gulf coast south of the Caloosahattchee River. General Macomb then proclaimed the Indian war in Florida at an end. Shortly thereafter, Sam Jones made public his determination to abide by the settlement reached by his successor.

By early July 1839 Colonel Harney had established a trading post on the banks of the Caloosahattchee River. This wilderness outpost, operated by civilians, provided the obedient Indians with American goods. Hardly had the trading post be opened for business when disaster struck. A large band of hostile "Spanish Indians," who had not been a party to Chitto's negtiations, struck the thinly protected post and killed the American operator, his employees, and fourteen of Colonel Harney's soldiers. While this act of betrayal signaled a return to war to most Americans, Chitto and Sam Jones loudly disclaimed any knowledge of or participation in the massacre and steadfastly asserted that they were in favor of the Macomb treaty and friendship. In the face of these protestations of fidelity and amity, Dr. Hughes and the army detected treachery of the deepest hue in the ambush ruse of late September. They were convinced that the Indians had planned to lure the garrison to the

Indian campground under the pretext of a dance, massacre them, and then overpower the guards left to tend the fort.

More so than the celebrated chieftain Osceloa, Sam Jones personified the Indians' hard-core opposition to removal to the Arkansas Territory. Under his leadership the Mickasuky Indians, driven from their traditional residence along the upper St. Johns River by the Army, fled to New River and environs to reap the food and fiber available for the taking. On many occasions Sam Jones publicly avowed he would never be taken alive from his new southern homeland.

The customary description of Sam Jones was given by white contemporaries who, unfortunately, relied upon second and third hand reports when not resorting to fabrication. Apart from his conferences with Colonel Harney and Lieutenant Tompkins, the Mickasuly chief never entered into negotiations with whites where his physical attributes and demeanor could be minutely observed. Thus, the description of Jones by Assistant Army Surgeon J.H. Baldwin who attended those conferences must be given more than the usual credence. He determined that Jones was between fifty-five and sixty years old, very thin, and of medium height, with perfectly white hair. Very tense in his speech and mannerisms, Jones' exaggerated hand motions were meant to drive home his points. Observers came away from this conferences convinced of Jones' sincerity and honesty. His later actions, however, might have belied them.

First Lieutenant John T. Sprague, aide-de-camp to General Macomb at Fort King, has left a clear description of Chitto and his associate in the journal he kept when he accompanied the general on his peace mission. Sprague noted that Chitto was "a full blooded Seminole, about thirty-five years of age, five feet seven inches high, full round face and a remarkably well formed athletic person; very dignified in his manners, and his remarks and observations indicate him as something above mediocrity. His dress is a common cotton shirt, his legs bare, and around his head is tastefully arranged a red silk handkerchief." The lieutenant's description of Ochee Hadjo, Chitto's associate at the peace conference, was derogatory. "The boy who accompanied him here, is a stout dark-looking well-built fellow, careless and stupid in his habits and not much inclined to talk even when spoken to. His name is O-chee-Hadjo or Mad Nuts and brother of a distinguished chief call [blank] or Blue Snake, and is probably twenty years of age. His dress is merely a common cotton shirt. With all his imperfections, he is considered a young man of some considerable importance."

While these powerful leaders profusely professed undying friendship and a wish to live in peace with Floridians, the military remained apprehensive. Could the warriors of the Seminole and Mickasuky tribes be controlled by leaders whose actions often contradicated their words?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

American State Papers, Military Affairs, III.

Army and Navy Chronicle, October 31, 1839.

Florida Herald (St. Augustine), July 11, 1839; April 25, May 15, 1840.

Floridian (Tallahassee), April 25, 1840.

Journal of Ellis Hughes, February 1839 to April 1840, Univeristy of South Florida, Tampa.

James Owen Knauss, *Florida Territorial Journalism* (Deland, 1925), 44-55.

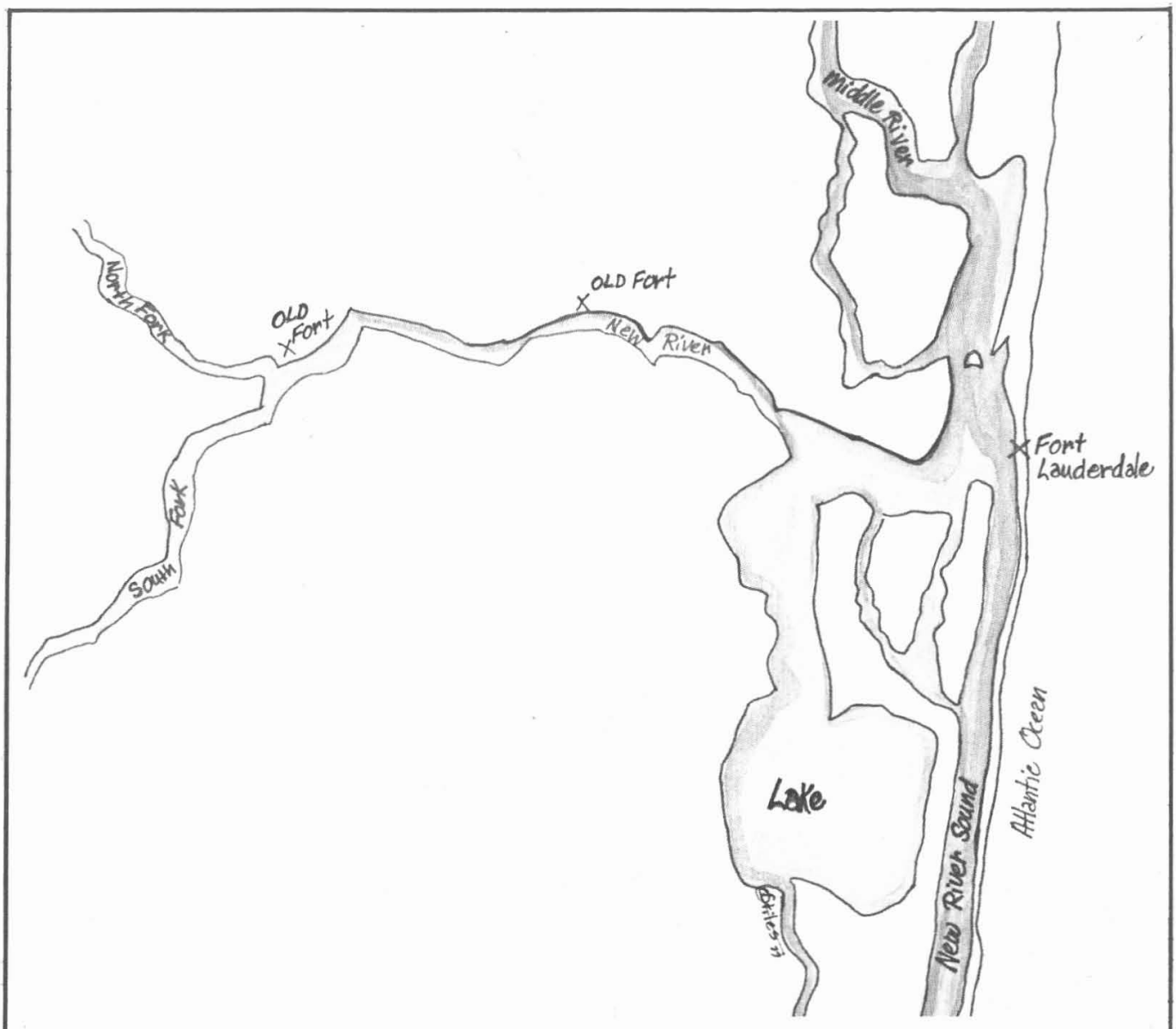
John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole Indian War 1835-1850* (Cambridge [Mass.], 1957), 268-270.

Niles National Register, August 24, 1839; October 31, 1840.

John T. Sprague, "Macomb's Mission to the Seminoles; John T. Sprague's Journal Kept During April and May 1839," Frank F. White, Jr., ed., *Florida Historical Quarterly,* XXXV (1956), 130-193.

St. Augustine News (Florida), November 3, 1838; July 9, 1839.

(The following two articles are reproduced exactly as they appeared when published in 1839. No attempt has been made to edit or alter them in any way. - - Editor.)



This map, reproduced from an 1870 Surveyor General's examination of the New River region, indicates the locations of the several forts maintained by the military during the Second Seminole War.

in a menacing position, without firing. This drove me down to a beach, when the sufferings of my feet becoming unbearable, I tore off part off my shirt and wound it round them, and then went through the night walking on this beach, the Indians still continuing near me, until about 11 o'clock the next day, when I fell down on the sand completely exhausted. Shortly after the two Indians that I first saw came up to some trees close by, and were joined by others. I expected they would shoot me, but said to them, 'why do you wish to hurt me; whenever any of you come to our camps we treat you well, and when we take you prisoners, we never harm you.' By this time I became dizzy, and fell senseless, where I lay unconscious for a long time, though the sun was broiling hot.

"When I came to myself again, the Indians were gone, and I saw no more of them. I attributed my delivery to Sampson, who liked me, and I think must have prevailed on the Indians not to murder me, for I know no other reason. I then went on till I came to a river, down which I walked some distance, to hide my trail, and then crossed over and went up into a tree, where I passed the night fighting mosquitoes, which were so thick that if I did not fan them off, they would light on my face and fill themselves with blood faster than I could slap my cheeks with my hands. In the morning I continued on to the coast, and found myself, instead of being on a beach, among a number of Mangrove islands, where finding the difficulty of getting on beyond my strenth, I returned again. (Mangrove Islands, or Keys, are small banks of sand near the coast covered at high tide, on which mangrove bushes grow; between them are wide channels. The bushes grow so dense as to be nearly impervious, and from the roots an immense number of sharp-pointed sprouts stick up, which makes walking through them like walking on spikes, especially for a man without shoes.) I now endeavored to go back again up the Carloosahatchie, hoping that some vessel would put in. After fourteen days wandering I laid down beside a fresh water stream, where I remained four days, when I heard the noise of the steamboat coming, and by wading out was seen and taken on board; never was a man so happy as when I saw that boat approach.

"The wounded Dragoon who ran ashore with me, had laid quiet near a stream close by, without my knowing it, and was also brought off. He then looked in much better condition than myself, but has since died of the wound he received in the thigh on the first attack. I had nothing to eat but *raccoon oysters*, which sometimes washed ashore, (a lank, watery thing which grows in clusters,) and had only a stump of a penknife to open them; on the last day I had nothing but *fiddlers* (a species of crab not much larger than good sized spiders) they were horrid bitter, but I eat them down like raisins. Had not the vessel providentially arrived, I should not have survived 24 hours longer. I am confident that Sandy Perryman, the negro interpreter, was not among the dead as was reported."

THE FLORIDA WAR.—So much has been said and written upon the subject of the Indian difficulties in this Territory, that we fear the public mind has been wearied into an apathy and mistrust of those whose especial duty it has been made to close them; and given way to the sentiment that the Indians are unconquerable, or at best the war is not worth the cost of its prosecution. Either of which conclusions, would be of disservice to the efficiency of our arms or the policy of our Government. Experience has amply shown that systems heretofore pursued have failed of their object, and with the difference of a diminished enemy, we are where we were three years ago. Nor is this all—as their numbers decrease, a more indomitable courage seems to supply their want of force, and thus have we to contend against men, alike unregardful of the humanities of life, and fired by a zeal which finds no extinguishment but in death. As it is no longer a question, whether the Indian is to abide in Florida or be forced to a removal Westward, we conceive the readiest and most expeditious method to be pursued, will claim from the Government a degree of attention second only to the accomplishment of the object intended. From the past, we may gather some practical lessons for future guidance. The first and primary consideration will therefore be, to let the operations assume definitively the character of war; war uninfluenced by any consideration short of speedy and unconditional surrender; and in no future time to be controlled by diplomatic arrangement, under the erroneous and mistaken sympathies of a Treaty. Bring into the field a hardy and active race of men, embody them as light infantry, and offer as inducements for this service, a bounty of land of this fertile country, and give a liberal reward for *every Indian taken, dead* or *alive*. Let the period of enlistment be for the war; and let the appointment of Officers be by the Government, with a reference to their *known efficiency*, aptitude for service, and capacity for the endurance of severe privation. A body of men thus brought together, under the rigid discipline of military life, and kept in continued movement as *light troops*, will certainly be enabled to accomplish results which have thus far failed, not from any lack of courage among our men, but from several causes operating to their want of efficient action.

One remark may be made, the correctness of which will meet, we think, with general approval; that is, the large number of permanently absent officers, materially affects the efficiency of their commands. To this we add the stimuli presented in the shape of bounty as well as reward holden out, by the *capture* or destruction of the enemy, will not fail in its beneficial influences. This *corps*, it is not intended, should preclude the use of other arms of the service, but by their co-operation in such sections where other troops are inoperative, thus unite in the accomplishment of peace. It is well known that for 60 miles south of New river are the favorite grounds of the Indian; and that from the rocky character of the country, as well as the everglades, the use of horses is completely precluded. The adaptation therefore by arms, capacity for fatigue, and the hope of reward, will infuse a spirit of zeal which will work results, unexpected as they are to be desired. Canoes of a light draft and manned by a portion of such force, will be enabled to act in the *Pai-hai-okee*; and, from the lightness of their structure, will be swift in pursuit, as well as readily transportable from stream to stream. Thus the South will be kept free from the enemy, and be effectually excluded from their *Coontee* grounds and the water courses.

The other arms of the service, operating in other sections, with equal hope of reward, will, we think, speedily bring about a termination of hostilities, and give to Florida the quietude of peace.

These opinions are not hastily hazarded, but are the result of an observation of events, and predicted on the experience of those who are well qualified to form them. Among those who have had their full share of exposure in this Indian war, as whose activity and untiring exertion entitles them to the fullest admiration of our country, is Col. HARNEY, who, we are pleased to find, co-operates in the belief that such a corps, rendered thus available, would be a most effective adjunct, if not the most efficient troops, that can be brought into the field.—*St. Augustine News, Oct.* 25.

SAM JONES.—The professions of regret which this Indian had expressed, for the murder at Caloosahatchie, have passed away like a "summer cloud;" and in the place of having delivered up the murderers, as agreed upon, we find his band organizing a scheme for the destruction of Fort Lauderdale, and which,

happily for the prudence of its officer, Lieut. TOMPKINS, would have been fully accomplished. Partial as its operation was, it has been sufficiently demoniac to exhibit their unabated thirst for blood, and settle, forever, all questions as to their sincerity for peace and the entire fallacy of any policy intended for their subjugation, short of the most retaliating measures. *Sam Jones*, it is not yet ascertained, was of the party who fired upon Lieut. TOMPKINS' men—he having gone, as he said, to Caloosahatchie in order to obtain *three privates*, who he stated had escaped on the attack made on the trading house. This may be a *ruse* on his part, in order to avoid the well-merited punishment which must follow, for this second act of treacherous murder, under all the semblances of a perfect peace. On the demand made by Col. HARNEY, that he should deliver up *Ahosepatacke*, *Assonhadjo*, *Chikika*, *Billy Bowlegs*, *Oklahamico*, *Striped Beaver*, and 14 others, to be dealt with at pleasure; he readily acceded, and entered into the measure as one which would exhibit his disapprobation of their conduct, and evinced his sincere desire for a close of the war. The appointed time arrived, and, as usual, excuses were abundant for his want of fidelity in complying with his engagements. On the 27th of Sept. *Chitto Tustenugge*, (the one whom Gen. MACOMB made a treaty with,) *Catchachopka*, and *Okee Hadjo* invited Lieut. TOMPKINS, in command of Fort Lauderdale, to witness a *ball play*, at the old pickets, distant about two miles from the site of the present Fort. This invitation was, however, not accepted; and they became very solicitous that he should visit them, accompaned by his command, as well as Lieut. Davis, U. S. Navy, in order to have "a dance." George, the negro interpreter, and privates Hopkins and Boyce, Company K, 3d Artillery, were permitted to go, and with orders not to remain long absent. On reaching the pickets *Okee Hadjo* snapped his rifle at George, who immediately fell into the river, when a heavy firing commenced from the pickets. The interpreter swam up the stream and secured himself among the mangroves, laying with his face but partially out of the water, whilst the process of search was being made for the bodies of himself and the soldiers. Hopkins, though mortally wounded, made his way down the river, and Boyce, it is supposed, was drowned; no marks of violence being found on his body, on its recovery the next day. The Indians were outrageous, and *Chitto Tustenugge* upbraided them, in the most violent manner, at their careless fire—he told them they should have waited until the whites had commenced dancing and then fell upon them. The women were loud in their rejoicing at the supposed death of the Interpreter, and were in perfect ecstacy at this feat of treachery. At 11 o'clock, Lieut. TOMPKINS becoming uneasy at the absence of his men, Lieut. DAVIS volunteered with his boat, and Lieut. T. accompanying, they proceeded up the river, and discovered private Hopkins standing in the water wounded. He was taken into the boat, and all farther search proving fruitless, the boat returned to the Fort. The Indians then abandoned the old pickets, and are now probably at the head waters of the *Miami*. Hopkins died the next day; George, the Interpreter, succeeded in eluding observation, and the next morning reached the fort. This act was not the sudden freak of passion—but was cool and deliberately planned with all of the foresight of the Indian, in order to make the sacrifice more complete. Their seeming friendship, with many officers, would have called up any feelings but distrust—and the fact that they were *in pickets*, and necessarily anticipated that the men, should they come, would be without arms, shows how entire they intended their work to be. *Chitto's wife*, too, used the suasive eloquence of her sex, but unfortunately for the age of gallantry, it was unheard, and fell upon the ear unheeded.

We have been particular in detailing the above incidents—a bare recital is all that we intend. Murder after murder—Indian treachery and the white man's confidence, are in such continued opposition that we are at a loss in accounting for the one as the other. What is to be the result of this abuse of confidence, on the part of the Indian, we know not—one thing is certain, *a war to extermination* must be followed, if the Government expects to quell them, and give a peace to this unfortunate Territory.—*Ibid.*

From the Boston Atlas, Oct. 29.

NAVAL MEMORANDA.—Last week was quite a busy one at the navy yard in Charlestown. Friday, in particular, was quite a bustling day. On Tuesday, the frigate Constellation was taken out of the dry dock to make room for the steam frigate Fulton, which arrived there on the same evening. The Constellation is of the second class of frigates, rating 36 guns, and is pierced for 48, viz: 28 long eighteen pounders on her gun deck, and 20 thirty-two pound carronades on her quarter deck and forecastle—the same size as the old frigate Congress, and the ill-fated Chesapeake. She was launched in 1797, and is consequently 42 years old at this time, and is of beautiful proportions, her model being much admired while in dock. She is the same vessel which, in 1799, under the gallant Truxtun, captured the French frigate L'Insurgente, of 40 guns and 417 men, and early in the next year gave chase to La Vengeance, a large French ship, of 54 guns and upwards of 500 men, which, after a close and desperate engagement of nearly five hours, struck her colors, but was afterwards enabled to effect her escape during a squall. These reminiscences, so little remembered, or in fact scarcely known to the rising generation, struck us forcibly the other day, as we witnessed her gliding from the dock, completely renovated and once more floating gracefully upon the bosom of the deep. She is now as good as new, her lower timbers proving perfectly sound, and her upper works having been entirely rebuilt.

On Thursday, the Fulton was hauled from the stream into the wharf, just below the dock, preparatory to being taken in the next day. She is about 1000 tons, and without exception, the oddest looking fish we ever set our eyes on; the model of her bottom is nearly the same, stem and stern, being very sharp, which gives her the appearance of being what the sailors call very lean in the bows; so much so, that we should think that in a heavy sea, she would be nearly buried. The officers speak well of her, as a rapid, easy boat in smooth water, 14 knots being frequently got out of her; but in rough weather, she is both unsteady and unsafe; in fact, she was not built for a sea-boat, but merely intended for harbor defence. She had a fair trial of speed with the Great Western a few months since, on one of her outward passages, and ran 14 miles to her ten! More than half her armament is left on shore on Sandy Hook, so that at present she has only four guns mounted, viz: one long sixty-four, two long thirty-two's, and one six pounder, with a full complement of 158 officers and men. The sixty-four pounder will throw a long elliptical shot or shell of 86 pounds weight. The large cannon, cast a month or two since at Alger's foundry at South Boston, is at least double the size of this gun, and will throw a round shot of some 130 or 140 pounds weight, and an elliptical shot or shell of about 200 pounds. These may not be the exact weights, but they are sufficiently near for our present purposes. A raking shot from either of them would prove an ugly customer. The weight of this new gun, when cast, and before being bored, was 19,645 lbs., or nearly ten tons. The boring probably abstracted something like 20 per cent, perhaps more, but this is merely guess work, leaving the gun, in a finished state, to weigh 14,500 pounds, or upwards o seven tons. The length of the gun is about 10 feet, and the diameter of the bore ten inches.

On Friday, between 10 and 11 A. M. the water was let into the dry dock. At half-past 11, it was level with the water outside. About 12, the gates were

Callaway, to the chair, Stephen T. Dunklin, of Washington, and Mr. Mellon, of Marion, vice presidents. John B. Coalter, of St. Charles, and two others, the names our informant does not recollect, acted as secretaries. The convention closed its labors on Tuesday evening.

"Every thing went forward with the utmost harmony, and but one spirit and one feeling appeared to animate the crowd. Every one determined to make one vigorous and concerted effort for the regeneration of the state, and to die in the last ditch before giving up the principles for which they contend. From all the representations made, we have no doubt but a thorough and efficient organization of all the whigs will now be made throughout the state, and that they will present such a front as has never before been witnessed in this state.

"The official proceedings will in due time appear; at the hour of writing this they have not arrived in the city. The following are the nominations of the next August election, they will be hailed with pleasure and supported with entire unanimity by all the friends of reform throughout the state, and that they will be elected, we entertain no doubt, if all will now but do their duty.

For governor.
JOHN R. CLARK, of Howard.
For lieutenant governor.
JOSEPH BOGY, of St. Genevieve.
For congress.
THORNTON GRIMSLEY, of St. Louis.
WOODSON J. MOSS, of Clay.
For electors of president and vice president.
SAMUEL C. OWENS, of Jackson.
PHILIP COLE, of Washington.
JOSEPH C. BROWN, of St. Louis.
STEPHEN CLEVER, of Ralls.
For delegates to the whig national convention.
URIEL WRIGHT, of Marion.
WM. N. CAMPBELL, of St. Charles.
LOGAN HUNTON, of Louis.
WM. H. RUSSEL, of Callaway."

MICHIGAN.

The Detroit banks have suspended, and their example will probably be followed by all the others throughout the state. In a notice published, signed by H. K. Sauger, cashier of the Bank of Michigan, and John B. Welles, cashier of the Farmers' and Mechanics' bank, in behalf of their respective boards of direction, it is said—

"The ordinary business of these banks will be conducted as usual without interruption; and their notes will be received by each other for all purposes: No distinction will be made between the notes of the branch and home offices.

"It is not designed that this measure shall affect, unfavorably, the rates of exchange for bills upon the Atlantic cities; on the contrary, the banks will endeavor to afford reasonable facilities for converting the currency, and to promote, by all the means in their power, the purchase and shipment of the surplus produce of the country.

WISCONSIN.

Progress of emigration.—We have been shown a letter addressed to gov. Dodge, says the Winconsin Free Press, from a merchant of Buffalo, N. Y. to whose care have been consigned 200 families, consisting of 1,000 persons, and who proposes placing them in this territory, provided they can be suitably accommodated. They left their homes, in Russia, on account of certain religious dissentions. [*N. Y. Star.*

It is stated in the Peoria Register that 200 Russian families, flying from religious persecution at home, are about settling in the territory of Wisconsin.

The Prussian emigrants at Buffalo.—These emigrants continue to excite attention; and their prolonged stay in our city has led some to think that they would remain during the winter, and become a tax upon us. No fears of that kind need be entertained. The party now here are from Prussian Silesia, and number about 700. In a few days they expect to be joined by 300 more, next spring by 1,200, and during the next summer by perhaps 1,000 or 2,000 of their countryman, making in all not less than 3,000. They are Protestants of the Lutheran church. A new organization of the religious establishment in Prussia having been affected, the king ordered all his subjects to join it, threatening certain penalties for non-conformity. Imprisonment, confiscation of property and prosecution in various forms, were the consequences to the recusants. Finding they could no longer retain their homes in comfort, numbers of the old school, among whom are those now here, petitioned his majesty, for permission to quit the country. After more than a year of fruitless exertion, they were at last allowed to depart; and with lighter hearts than they had experienced for many years before, they left their land forever, knowing that, afar off, there was another land in which they could worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences.

We learn that Mr. W. A. Thompson, hardware merchant of this city, who acts as their agent, has been put in possession of a sum of money sufficient to place them on their lands in Wisconsin, and feed them for eight months, if necessary, independent of the original purchase of the soil.

The greater part of them will leave this week for Milwaukie. We congratulate Wisconsin on the prospect of this valuable addition to its population, and to our city it is a matter of no small moment to have the west field up with such hardy, industrious settlers. [*Buffalo Com. Adv.*

IOWA

The following account of the vigorous growth of the youngest territory of the union, and its flattering prospects as regards the future, is copied from the paper published at Burlington (Iowa) by the original title of "the Hawkeye," under date of October 17:

"*Our territory.* All who feel interested in the prosperity of this infant territory, cannot be otherwise than gratified to see the great number of emigrants who are rushing into it from all quarters. Every steamboat that stems the great father of waters to this and the points above us comes laden with this kind of produce from other countries, and from other states. They are pouring in upon us, by the way of northern and eastern Illinois, in such numbers that the shore opposite this place almost continually presents the appearance of a large army with its prancing steeds and heavy baggage wagons, notwithstanding the steam ferry-boat is continually thinning its ranks. We are informed by travellers that the leading roads from Ohio and Indiana are crowded with emigrants, all bound for Iowa. Had we no other than selfish feelings, we should bid them welcome, for their coming will add not only to the numerical strength, but to the wealth of the territory. But we welcome them on another account. We sincerely believe that their condition, and the condition of their families, will be bettered. There is land enough and to spare.

"The whole territory is now full of strangers. Our city has become a perfect Gotham, as emigrants from every state, and, in fact, from every civilized country on the globe, are flocking in clouds to our place."

FLORIDA.

The following letter to the editor was not written with the least idea of its publication, or with the knowledge that he, to whom it was addressed, was editor of the Register—But as it furnishes later intelligence from the immediate point where WAR or PEACE was to be decided upon, and contains a faithful and practical illustration of the FLORIDA WAR, so far as it goes, we offer that alone as our apology for inserting it; having omitted several paragraphs, however.

Fort Louderdale, October 5, 1839.

Chitte Tuskenuggee, some time back, said to us, "I am now sitting by the great waters pread before us, and in its presence I say I shall stand by my word at Fort King, if all my people abandon me to myself." "I shall never again raise my hand against the white man," said Sam Jones, "for I am old now, and what can an old man like me do."—Yet the other day, when two soldiers and the interpreter visited their camp, Sam Jones' son, Sponge, and Chitte's younger brother, Ochee Hadjo, were the first who fired upon them. I will detail to you a few of the circumstances connected with this rupture of the last hope of peace.

On the 7th of Sept. col. Harney delivered his last talk to the Indians here, demanding life for life!—They required four days to consider upon it. At the end of four days, Chitte Tuskenuggee and Plyhelattah came in and delivered their reply. "Sam Jones would have come with them but he was drunk. They required thirty-three sticks [days] to collect all the Indians around our post, at which period Wild Cat would also be here, and all the peaceable Indians, and they would then all concert measures against the hostiles."

Col. Harney and capt. Mayo having departed, we all awaited here patiently the end of the thirty-three days. Meanwhile the Indians continued to visit us daily—saying that they had a great camp up the river, where their numbers were constantly increasing. On the 26th lieut. Davis, of the navy, erected a flag-staff on the beach. During the evening, after dusk, Chitte and two or three warriors came down in their canoes to visit us. We sat at the foot of the flag-staff, and there chatted and enjoyed the evening breeze and the sight of the surrounding surf. Chitte said "they all intended, to-morrow night, to have a ball-dance up at their camp—but on the next night after, there would be a still greater one. "Sam Jones," said he, "had gone over to see after the hostile Indians, and was expected back shortly." He was going to remain in camp with us during the night, and wished to give us a slight dance in our own camp. Accordingly he, with his half dozen warriors, gave us a dance, during which, much to his astonishment, a rocket was sent up into the dark sky. They continued their dance as if nothing was occurring; Chitte himself, however, stepped out and stood regarding it *akimbo*. Another rocket was then sent up, and then a blue light, afterwards a brass four pounder discharged, and as it grew late I retired to bed, and shortly after our camp was all quiet. After midnight we were awakened by a war whoop, but the excited youth was quickly secured by his Indian comrades, who tied his hands behind him and hushed him up. When a warrior gives the war whoop, he is considered as delivered over to the furies and is about to commit any freak of hostile feeling. Next day they repeated their invitations to all the officers to visit their camp. During the day I told the interpreter to hold himself in readiness to canoe me up to the grand ball-dance, of course, if permitted. During the day Chitte appeared to be in fine spirits, laughing and talking. In the evening, at dusk, George, the interpreter, and two soldiers were sent up with a gallon of whiskey, and to say that the officers would not come that evening. It was left optional with them to go or not, but no one entertained suspicions of their intentions. Ten—eleven—twelve o'clock came, and neither returned to camp, although they had been ordered to be back early. Meanwhile I supposed they had become intoxicated, or had been persuaded to remain till morning, or that time flew faster than they were aware of in their enjoyments, and therefore I went to bed. At four, lieutenant Tompkins became extremely uneasy—lieutenant Davis proffered his boat, and at five they both went up the river. Approaching the spot of the Indian camp, they could perceive no indication of a fire or of human presence. "Here," "come here," "here I am," moaned a voice from the dark shaded bank. On rowing thither, the soldier Hopkins was discovered in the water, where he had concealed himself. "I am wounded," said he, "and they have killed George and Boyce." The boat hastened back to camp. Hopkins estimated their number at 300 warriors; (much too high probably.) He lingered six hours and then died. The ball had passed from the pit of his stomach through the abdomen, and lodged at his left hip, about an inch deep, whence it was extracted. On the 28th, the day of his death, we followed him, arrived at his grave, and listened to the funeral service from the sergeant—and the "dust to dust," and at the end of the third farewell, discharged—the flag, which had hung at half mast, again ascended to the peak.

At breakfast, an expedition up the narrow river to recover the bodies lost was suggested—but lieutenant Tompkins considered it as yet, imprudent. Lieutenant Sloane volunteered to go with three marines; lieutenant Davis replied, if any one went, he was the one to go. When not lamenting the fate of a dying soldier, or paying the last tribute to his remains, we were all day speculating upon the tragedy of the past evening Hopkins had partially led us to believe that the most friendly warriors were massacred. I ascended the flag staff and saw a crow careering in the sky above the scene. Possibly Chitte was deluded by his own people and they had killed him. Possibly he had been awed into passiveness. Possibly he was one of the actors. No previous incident could be recalled to assure us of any treachery on his part; he had partaken so liberally of the white man's favors, or bribery, if they would so construe it.—Hush! was that a distant halloo? It must have been an owl or some bird. "I heard that cry again;" said another voice shortly after. But nothing certain could be detected, and our commander thought it far more discreet to keep the men concentrated in camp. During the night of the 28th we were all on the alert, slept as before the peace, with our arms at our side, and ears open. On the 29th the question was repeated. "Did'nt you hear a distant cry?" It could not be again detected. If there had been a halloo, "it might have come from some refugee friendly Indian," thought Davis—but still all was uncertain. At 9 o'clock a soldier remarked, "what a large alligator is that yonder?" "Let one have the glass to see it," said a corporal.—"It looks like a man." And an alligator too, near it—"the soldier's dead body," called out another.—A boat was sent out for it. "Boyce's body is floating down the river" went from mouth to mouth, and lieut. Davis hastened to recover it. A cry came instantly after, from the other side the thick mangrove swamp, and the naked eye could discern in relief, from its variegated thickets, the form of a black man. "George is alive!" I hastened into another boat, and, with the sergeant and lieutenant Sloan, crossed over immediately and took him in. He was without a wound, but exhausted with excessive fatigue and long peril, and I listened with wrapped attention to his details, which we got in more connected form on bringing him back to camp. Boyce's body was taken up and found without a wound. He was drowned either by fatigue, by the grass, or by fright—his head and neck swollen with blood, and bluish purple in color. At 12 o'clock we followed his body to its grave with the funeral march, and, standing armed, listened again to the "I am the resurrection and the life." All our feelings assumed the seriousness of tragedy; and the liability of an attack, or of a treacherous murder, was considered as again more imminent to each life. No one felt as if *he* might not be clandestinely scalped.

On the 30th, all hands were employed in contracting the opened piquets, so as to form a perfect rectangular enclosure with a block house at three of its angles—the three guns were placed in order to

sweep the most assailable points, and all were left in a state of precaution and alertness. George said that he had no suspicion of any treachery when he went up in the canoe with the two soldiers. He landed just below the old piquet, shook hands with some of the Indians, and asked "where is Tuskenuggee?" "Go up yonder to that fire." As he passed by the picquet he saw it filled with Indians stark naked, whispering and chatting, all armed, and no women, and as he was about to enter it, one of them pushed him back; saying, "Tuskenuggee is up yonder," pointing to a fire. "Have you brought the whiskey?" said one Indian. "Yes," said George. "We don't want it now, we can do without it," cried Tuskenuggee. "Have the officers come?" said another. "Yes," replied another voice. "Yes."—"Now for it," cried another Indian, and as George turned his eyes back with his heart giving way, he saw Sam Jones's son Sponge, and Chitte Tuskenuggee's brother, Ochee Hadjo, each with his rifle aimed. He caught Hopkins' trowsers, and, hastily saying, "follow," plunged sideways into the river. Hopkins thought that both George and Boyce were shot, and throwing away his pail of whiskey as also his knife, so that it might not be used to scalp him, plunged into the river, after receiving a mortal wound. Boyce was drowned, and how soon after we know not. A general fire took place at the instant that they plunged in. Hopkins and George both represent the whole woods as lighted up and rolling with a semi-circular fire.—They continued it afterwards at random into the river, so as to assure their deaths. George, like an old Indian, swam up the river, instead of down, and reaching a projecting branch on its margin, a short way above, waited hour after hour with his nose only above the water. The Indian canoes were paddling in every direction. He heard Sam Jones' voice crying out * * * * He heard Tuskenuggee say "that canoe of their's, its just what I wanted." "I told you," said Tyger, "that you ought to have put men on the other side of the river, then we would have had them." "Why didn't you all wait," said Tuskenuggee, "'till we got them clear up into the camp, we might then have sliced them up to our taste." For two hours one or two canoes were employed in ferrying them over now to the south bank, some ascended the river, and many, he could not tell how many, strolled away from the piquet to the north and north east. George still was afraid to move. Presently Chitte came along, with Tiger and one or two squaws, who had remained on the field with them till the rest were gone. The squaws were chatting and laughing, George trembled for his fate, the canoe approached him, he felt its ripple—its paddle passed an inch or two from his nose. One of the laughing squaws remarked as she was passing, "I think that interpreter is dead—for he fell sideways into the river as if he was wounded;" and appeared to be delighted at his fate—"he was so swongo" (proud) said she.

Tigor and Tuskenuggee only went up a short distance to the other side and made a small fire. When Davis and Tompkins went for Hopkins, they and the last Indian within his hearing were gone. He heard their oars but so indistinctly that he still thought they were Indians. "Well, oh my Lord, this place will not do for me," said George—so he swam just before day break one hundred yards or so up the river to a thicket of high grass, whose extent afforded some further security. Here he remained for two or three hours after day break—perceiving by hearing and sight no Indian—yet he feared to stir a step. He now dragged himself for three hours like a terrapin up the long gulley, which forms the bed of the long saw grass, until he got due north from the piquet and at its termination—he then pulled himself tremblingly and hastily through the palmettos of the pine barrens, for one or two hundred yards, till he reached the next gulley of high grass. Dreading detection every instant, he turned his eyes to look and saw at a considerable distance an Indian making after him at full speed. George plunged into the deepest part of the intricate gulley, fled as fast as he could until it became more and more intricate and heard the Indian coming, "like wild cattle after him." 'Oh my God, what shall I do?" He dodged at right angles to his line of flight, and raising his head above the water, saw the Indian off of his track. Pursuing this course three or four times he eluded him until he came to a rivulet, this he swam—and got now into the Mangrove swamp, through this he pulled and pulled, on all-fours, impeded at every inch by bushes, briars, pits, knots, roots, stumps, vines, branches, &c. &c. Climing, twisting, turning, hanging, sinking, &c. &c. till he reached another rivulet. Here he rested. The alligators were too thick. He dragged himself up a branch—the water dripping from his clothes, the mosquetoes allowed him no sleep—and here he remained all the second night. He hallooed however, when he first arrived there, as he heard the hammers of our camp borne to him by the breeze, but the noise of the surf drowns all noise for us coming from up the river. "The Indian wants to kill me, the white man does not care for me," thought George after hallooing a long time in vain. Changing his position slightly in case the Indian might have heard him, he now lounged away the night with the mosquetoes. At day break looking up he saw two mocassin snakes hanging over his head. "I dont mind you" said he, and hearing the oars of a boat at day break he hallooed again and again—but their sound died away and he almost gave himself up to despair. Well said he, if I stay here these Indians will scalp me, and I'd rather the alligators to catch me than that they should. The dark rivulet was literally black with them. He saw one or two right in his path. Looking to the right was a monstrous large one, and on the left several with their flat mouths crunching some kind of water reeds. He tied his jacket sleeves around his body to bear his arms, and putting the handle of his belt knife in his mouth plunged in and landed on the opposite side—one alligator immediately on his right and another on his left. He then recommenced his labor, and by 10 o'clock having threaded the rest of the Mangrove Swamp and crossed in all four black alligator rivulets he reached our sight. Oh how glad I was to cross over to bring him back. "Oh God said he, you would not believe what I have passed through." He remained exhausted and sick for two days, and is now again well as ever without a wound. He thinks the Indians will depose or despise Chitte for not having got a single scalp. He thinks they had two hundred or two hundred and fifty warriors up there, and "if you ever catch Chitte gentlemen you must give him to me, for I don't think you can keep my hands off from shooting him." On the 28th early, two soldiers and two sailors were despatched express, per sail boat to Key Biscayne, to put them on their guard there, and from lieut. Davis, to order up lieut. Handy of the navy, who arrived here the next morning.

We have been utterly blocked up by the weather for two weeks, and I know not how long it will yet continue. I wrote a letter for George, the interpreter, this morning to his master, and would give it to you *verbatim* but it is too long. The first Indians who fired the other day, were Arpiueka's son, who some time back received me seemingly more cordially in their camp than did any other one of the Indians, and Chitte's brother, Ochee Hadjo. The man who pursued George so inveterately was the old fellow whose sick daughter I had visited in his own camp, at that time he had but little friendly feelings for us. Chitte Hadjo was also no doubt one of the main actors—a handsome Greek statue of a man and who was my guide to his camp.

October 7, 1839. Nothing new—occasionally a nocturnal startle amid the hurly of the rain and wind. Drenching torrents and high wind from the east since the first—and the whole coast north and south whitened with the foam breaking and rolling sixty feet over the sandy shore. They keep a constant roar, and if any unfortunate vessel is wrecked on the coast, its fate is pitiable, and its crew meet almost a certain cruel fate. The billows look grand and the sea rages with the storm. Two vessels glimmered in the mist off here to-day—struggle hard sailors, for if these breakers catch you, you are gone. The coast is generally lined with a parallel shoal, one-quarter of a mile off from shore, where another line of white foam forms and all between the two lines is boiling white.

SUSPENSION OF SPECIE PAYMENTS.

From the New York New Era.

Has pay day yet come? Ever since the bank panic of 1834, our trade and commerce have been subjected to frequent and most disastrous fluctuations. At one moment every thing would be prosperous. We sailed before the wind with a flowing sheet. At another, we are suddenly "aback," and ruin to some and distress to more come like a thief in the night. All the calculations of legitimate trade were disappointed, and the fair dealer found himself defeated and ruined, whose every reasonable expectation promised success.

A knowledge of the cause of the evil is necessary, in order to discover and apply the remedy. On one side, it has been urged by designing and crafty politicians, that it is justly attributed to the measures of the general administration, and its overthrow, the remedy suggested. On the other side it has been urged that it is the necessary consequence of an inflated and extravagant credit, and that the only remedy was to be found, in a return to our former industry and economy. Let facts determine which is the correct assumption.

In the fall of 1834 occurred our "great fire," which caused the destruction of $18,000,000 of property. This was so much out of existence, wasted, litterly scattered to the four winds of heaven. We were scarcely rich enough to have such a vacuum unfelt. There were very many whose all was consumed; yet none failed, except insurance offices. Persons in trade who were made bankrupt by this disaster, instead of stopping business, took advantage of the universal sympathy in their favor, used the credit they had left and plunged into business and into debt deeper than ever, in the hope of thus making up the deficiency. The calamity did not pay their debts, but it postponed the pay-day to a more convenient season.

Before that day arrived, the unregenerated spirit of speculation swept across the country. Every body was becoming suddenly rich. Villages and cities sprung up in the wilderness. Houses and lots became more profitable than fine gold. And wild and unproductive land became suddenly an inexhaustible mine of wealth. All who had money or credit plunged headlong into the stream. The farmer, the manufacturer and merchant instead of paying their debts bought lands. The country merchants bought lands and paid the city merchant, as well for his old debts as for his new purchases, in this new currency, extended his debts both as to time and amount, upon the strength of valuation, which deceived himself as much as his creditors. How much property was consumed by this "fire," how great was the abstraction of means from active pursuits by this destructive element, no one can tell. Some faint idea of it, however, can be formed from the following statement of the public lands sold during three years.

In 1834	4,658,218	acres for	$6,099,981
In 1835	12,564,478	"	15,999,804
In 1836	20,074,870	"	25,167,833
Total—37,297,566			$47,267,618

We could scarcely spare near $50,000,000 from active business and invest it in lands which were then entirely unproductive, and which could not be made productive, even of interest on the investment in four or five years, nor of a return of principle until the next generation. We had not that surplus capital in the country. A large vacuum was thus made in our means. It must be supplied in some manner, and at some time. Pay day must come, and as the land could not yield the pay, it must be procured somewhere else.

But this is not all. In our commercial operations we were scarcely less extravagant.

The following table will show our imports and exports for a series of years:—

	Imports.	*Exports.*
1824	$80,549,007	$75,986,657
1825	96,340,388	99,535,388
1826	84,974,477	77,585,322
1827	79,484,068	82,324,827
1828	88,509,824	72,264,686
1829	74,492,527	72,358,671
1830	70,876,920	73,849,508
1831	103,191,124	81,310,583
1832	101,629,266	87,176,943
1833	108,118,311	90,140,433
1834	126,521,332	104,346,973
1835	149,895,742	121,693,577
1836	189,980,035	128,663,040
1837	140,989,217	117,419,376

From this, it appears that up to 1831 our exports and imports were about even. We paid our debts as we went along. We produced enough to pay for those things which we wanted to buy of other nations. We balanced our accounts with the world.—We were independent and happy.

But then the game began. We imported more than we exported, and we ran in debt for the balance, or if we paid it, we abstracted so much capital from the country. This process, in time, would exhaust our means, unless we had some Aladdin's lamp to make good the deficiency. The game went on. Our means did become exhausted; but with the true spirit of the gambler, we played for deeper stakes, so that during the years 1834, 5 and 6, which were so prolific with us of all sorts of speculation, our imports exceeded exports $111,693,519! For that amount we incurred a foreign debt.

So that when the spring of 1837 came upon us we had in the short space of three years

Burned up	$18,000,000
Invested in unproductive lands	47,267,618
And incurred a foreign debt of	111,693,519
Making a total of	$176,961,137

which had either been abstracted from active business or for which we were in debt.