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## St. Joseph, An Episode of the Economic and Political History of Florida

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## ST. JOSEPH, AN EPISODE OF THE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL HISTORY OF FLORIDA

### PART II

We must now retrace our steps and consider the rivalry between the towns of St. Joseph and Apalachicola after the Lake Wimico and St. Joseph Railroad began business in September, 1836. While the preliminary work for the development of St. Joseph as a rival to the parent city was being so successfully carried out, the supporters of the latter place were not idle. At the beginning of 1836, the Apalachicola Land Co. donated \$20,000 to be used to deepen the western channel and the harbor, thus permitting all vessels to come within seven miles of the city and those of a maximum draught of twelve feet, to the wharves. At the same time the company gave \$1000 to the city for purposes of general improvement, and \$5000 to defray the expenses of filling up the hollows and grading the streets.<sup>66</sup> In order to counteract the influence of the energetic *St. Joseph Telegraph*, the officers of the company financed the establishment of a new paper, the *Apalachicola Gazette*, and engaged as editor and ostensible proprietor, one of the ablest veterans of Georgia journalism, Cosam Emir Bartlett, mentioned above, who had for several years been in the publishing business in Columbus.<sup>67</sup>

Consequently the fall of 1836 found the rivals ready for a bitter commercial war. The records for the years 1836 to 1841 are too meagre to be entirely

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<sup>66</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, March 10, 1836.

<sup>67</sup> Many of the original documents of the transactions between Bartlett and the Apalachicola Land Co. are still in existence and are now in the possession of his granddaughter, Miss Josephine Bartlett.

satisfactory to anyone interested in the struggle. The outcome of the rivalry in the winter of 1836-1837 seems to have been a decided victory for the older town, although St. Joseph may have fared better than is apparent. Our only source of information is the partisan *Gazette*, no copies of the successor of the *Telegraph*, the *St. Joseph Times*, of this winter having survived. According to the Apalachicola paper, eighteen steamers were plying between that town and Georgia,<sup>68</sup> an increase of three or more over the preceding year.<sup>69</sup> The total number of vessels that arrived between November 1, 1836, and January 31, 1837, amounted to 115, while during the same time in the preceding year the number had been only forty-eight.<sup>70</sup> The malicious *Gazette* announced with great glee in its issue of December 31, 1836, that two steamers were aground in the Lake Wimico channel.

The promoters of St. Joseph realized the disadvantages under which they were laboring. With a spirit that is not surpassed by any modern business firm who is willing to scrap costly machines for more modern ones, they decided to construct a new railroad from the town to the Apalachicola River at Tennessee Bluff, where the town of Iola was soon to develop.<sup>71</sup> This new road would have two advantages over the old one, the treacherous Lake Wimico would be avoided, and the transportation distance between St. Joseph and Georgia would be considerably less than between Apalachicola and Georgia-Iola being twenty-eight miles from the new town and seventy from the old one-while the Lake Wimico route made St. Joseph more distant from the cotton fields than Apalachicola. The Saints never wasted much time

<sup>68</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, February 11, 1837.

<sup>69</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, March 17, 1836.

<sup>70</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, February 11, 1837.

<sup>71</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, April 15, 1837, et al.

translating their plans into deeds. By the end of August, 1837, the *Times*<sup>72</sup> announced that \$50,000 had been paid to Mr. Chaires, the contractor, and that ten miles of the railroad had been graded and the requisite timbers prepared. However, there was no possibility of the completion of the work for the season of 1837-1838.

It is truly remarkable that such an undertaking should have been prosecuted at the very time when the financial depression of 1837 was affecting both nation and territory. The Florida banks were hard hit, and the chief institutions, like the Union Bank of Tallahassee, suspended specie payment in May.<sup>73</sup> However, despite these adverse conditions, the Apalachicola, not to be outdone by their rivals, had planned an ambitious building program. The *Gazette* announced in March that there were now completed or in process of construction, 2000 feet of continuous brick stores on Water Street, - each three stories high, and eighty feet deep.<sup>74</sup>

This year is also memorable for the first visitation to St. Joseph of one of those tropical gales that at recurring intervals sweep upon the coast from the Gulf of Mexico. The hurricane hit Apalachicola on August 30 and then passed inland. The center of the storm was apparently to the east of St. Joseph, a fact which caused the city to escape with less damage than the older town. The estimated loss at Apalachicola was first put at \$200,000, which was, however, later reduced to \$50,000. At St. Joseph, a three story building, belonging to a Capt. Leslie of New York, was razed to the ground, as well as several smaller houses. The damage to the wharf was very slight. Thus it seemed that the fickle goddess of na-

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<sup>72</sup> In the *Pensacola Gazette*, September 9, 1837.

<sup>73</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, June 3, 1837.

<sup>74</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, March 18, 1837.

ture at last favored the Saints rather than their rivals.<sup>75</sup>

The first contemporaneous description of the new town by an eye witness also dates from 1837. Cosam Emir Bartlett, leaving his editorial sanctum at the end of May, ventured into the enemy's lair, where he was well received. On his return to Apalachicola he published his impressions in his paper. He declared, "The devil himself is not half so ugly as he is sometimes painted, and the Saints are pretty clever fellows after all." He found that they had erected some neat, snug houses, and "kept things nice and comfortable". Bartlett seemed to be particularly impressed by the fact that they had ice-naturally a great luxury in those small towns of the lower South.<sup>76</sup>

The second season of commercial competition between the cities, the winter of 1837-1838, found Apalachicola retaining her supremacy, although her rival's efforts to divert trade were much more successful now than in the preceding year. While the Saints were exporting more than 30,000 bales of cotton,<sup>77</sup> the total shipped by the older town exceeded 50,000.<sup>78</sup> St. Joseph was undoubtedly making inroads upon Apalachicola's prosperity, but in doing so, the railroad company was compelled to lower its freight rates to such an extent that the income was barely sufficient to meet operating expenses, and no dividends could be declared on the original investment.\* The question seemed to be which town would be willing to endure the cutthroat competition the longer.

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<sup>75</sup> Accounts of the gale are found in the *Apalachicola Gazette* of September 2 and September 16, and in the *Pensacola Gazette* of September 9, in an article from the St. Joseph Times.

<sup>76</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, June 3, 1837.

<sup>77</sup> *Pensacola Gazette*, June 30, 1838.

<sup>78</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, May 31, 1838.

<sup>79</sup> *Pensacola Gazette*, June 30, 1838.

During this season and the following summer, the construction of the railroad to Iola progressed, so that there was hope of its completion by September. This, however, could not be realized, and the town was compelled to wait a year longer. The inhabitants succeeded in obtaining a new outlet in May or June, 1838, when a highway was completed from Georgia through Marianna and St. Joseph to Apalachicola. As the Times said, "One of the great obstacles to the prosperity of our place, was its difficulty of access by land. This is now removed, and we already find the advantages from it, in the market carts, and pleasure parties which impart substantial comfort and gaiety to our city". The town had the additional satisfaction of knowing that Apalachicola had been outwitted, for the road as at first projected by the National Government was to run to that city without touching St. Joseph.<sup>80</sup>

Another interesting description of the town by a Florida publisher has come down to us from this year. In June, 1838, Benjamin D. Wright, of the *Pensacola Gazette*, visited the place, and published in the issue of June 30 an account that deserves to be quoted at some length.

A hasty visit to this rising city, enabled us the other day, to take a birds-eye view of its growing importance. The enterprise of its citizens has certainly forced it forward with a rapidity which could *scarcely* have been looked for. We say "forced it forward" because everything which has hitherto been done at St. Joseph has required an actual *outlay* of capital, and as yet they can hardly be said to have received the slightest return. . . . . The present railroad is *six* miles long and does not seem to have been constructed with great skill or accuracy. Its inequalities are in some places considerable, though nowhere so great as to prevent the locomotive to surmount them with facility. . . . .

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<sup>80</sup> *Pensacola Gazette*, June 16, 1838.

The town has an air and aspect of newness, that is scarcely to be seen anywhere else. The space which is covered (or rather which is scattered over) by the town is large, the streets are wide, the squares numerous, and many of the lots, especially those owned by persons abroad, are unoccupied; so that most of the buildings have an appearance which cannot be otherwise so well described as by saying that they all seem to be standing out of doors. Nevertheless there are some very pretty residences, and not a few large and commodious houses for business. Among the latter is the Mansion House, kept by the public's diligent and worthy servant Armstrong. In some of the onomies he may be less *au fait* than those who have consumed their lives in toiling up "the hill when [sic] Fame's proud temple shines afar," but in the science of gastronomy, he is hard to beat. Others may eat to live; but that is not in the philosophy of mine host. He not only lives to eat, but he very soon puts everybody about him upon doing the same thing. In short all the comforts that can be reasonably desired await the wayfarer at the Mansion House.

Wright concludes his article with a statement showing the great interest that the city was creating throughout the entire territory. He declares that he publishes his account so that he will not need to repeat the information a hundred times, for "scarcely an hour passes, that some one does not tax our endurance by same questions about St. Joseph".

The town was undoubtedly increasing in population, but one must not imagine that it was very big. Wright's phrase that the houses seemed "to be standing out of doors" is accurate; this is proved by the results, of an official census held in the spring of 1838, which showed that Calhoun County had a population of only 1,645, of which 532 were colored. There were only 260 voters in the county. These figures, small as they are, do not compare unfavorably with those of Franklin County, which had, in the same census, 1890 white inhabitants, 176 colored people, and 262 voters.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, July 12, 1838.

Thus supposing a more rapid increase in the population of St. Joseph, we may believe that the towns were about equal in size as the third season of competition, the winter of 1838-1839, approached. Unfortunately, complete statistics for this season are not available. Apalachicola's exports decreased so that only three-fourths as many bales of cotton were shipped as the year before.<sup>82</sup> It is believed that St. Joseph's trade decreased proportionately, for there is no suggestion anywhere that the city 'savored a great commercial victory.'<sup>83</sup>

During this winter, the work on the St. Joseph and Iola Railroad was pushed steadily on. It was completed sometime during 1839. Although the exact date of the opening cannot be ascertained, it was probably as late as October, for the advertisement appearing in various numbers of the Times,<sup>84</sup> announcing its opening, is dated October 28, 1839. Even before the completion of the railroad, the restless Saints were turning to a new project, or rather to an old one of 1835, the construction of a canal from Lake Wimico to the Bay. The vigilant *Gazette* of February 2, announced the project in these terms: "Our friends of St. Joseph have already become convinced that the new railroad to Iola will not answer their purpose. It is about to share the fate of the old road to the Depot - being thrown by in disgust. They now talk of beginning anew, and digging a

<sup>82</sup> See the files of the *Apalachicola Gazette* of the first six months of 1838.

<sup>83</sup> The reason for the sharp fall in the exportation of cotton from this region was undoubtedly the poor cotton crop, - a general condition. The entire United States crop for the season 1838-1839 amounted to 1,360,522 bales, which was only about three-fourths as many as were raised during the preceding season. (See C. W. Dabney, Jr. : *The Cotton Plant*, Washington, Government Printing Office, 1896, p. 41.)

<sup>84</sup> For example, the issue of September 26, 1840.



canal from their bay to the Apalachicola River". This canal was presumably never begun.

The population seems to have been increasing fairly rapidly at this time. The number of voters who expressed their preference at the constitutional election of May, 1839, amounted to 283,<sup>85</sup> twenty-three more than were enumerated in the census of the preceding year, and about seventy more than went to the polls in the same election in Apalachicola.<sup>86</sup>

St. Joseph was again visited in 1839 by a prominent Florida journalist, Samuel S. Sibley, of the *Floridian* of Tallahassee. He, like Bartlett and Wright in former years, published an account of the city in his paper.<sup>87</sup>

We made a trip a week or two since to the cities of Apalachicola and St. Joseph. Embarking at St. Marks on board a steamboat, we first visited the city of "Granite pillars" going through St. George's Sound. South Cape, which we passed, is a dangerous place for vessels coasting between St. Marks and New Orleans or the other ports westwardly. . . . . Apalachicola is a proud specimen of American enterprise. It is we think if it has good luck, destined to be one of the finest cities on the gulf. The merchants are business men.

We went the inland passage from Apalachicola to St. Joseph. This is a beautiful place. If the canal is dug to it contemplated before Apalachicola gets the start too much, it may outstrip its rival, With its two railroads, one to Lake Wimico the other to Iola, there may, however, be some doubt. But it is a pleasant city. The best place we think to establish the Florida University we have yet seen. We may be partial-but we were brought up near salt water<sup>88</sup> and we like fish and oysters mightily. We can't speak too highly of the citizens of that place. Their city is the seat of hospitality, kindness and liberality. We would not say less of the citi-

<sup>85</sup> Quincy Sentinel, February 19, 1841. (Gov. Reid's report to the Legislature.)

<sup>86</sup> *Apalachicola Gazette*, May 11, 1839.

<sup>87</sup> *The Floridian*, August 17, 1839.

<sup>88</sup> Sibley was raised in Bridgeton, New Jersey. See Knauss, op. cit., p. 61.

zens of Apalachicola so far as our short visit would permit us to form an opinion.

During the fourth season of competition, the winter of 1839-1840, a new locomotive was put into operation on the Iola Railroad.<sup>89</sup> This was the last big investment made by the Saints, so far as we know. The lion's share of the bumper cotton crop of the season was shipped from Apalachicola. Of the almost 105,000 bales exported from this region, more than seventy per cent, 72,232 bales to be exact, were sent from the wharves of the older city.<sup>90</sup>

The results of this year's rivalry were the death blow to St. Joseph's aspirations for commercial supremacy. Much wealth had been lavishly spent by the promoters in laying out the city, in erecting warehouses and wharves on the bay, on Lake Wimico and on the river at Iola, in constructing thirty-six miles of railroad, in purchasing at least three locomotives and in dredging the bay and the lake. A long continued and able campaign of publicity had been conducted. All political wire pulling that was humanly possible had been attempted. Inducements to settlers and business men had been made with unusual farsightedness. Churches, schools, well-kept public houses with ice-cold drinks, and a good race track had been established.<sup>91</sup> It may be safely said that the founders of St. Joseph had done practically everything possible to make their venture a success, but all in vain. The handicaps of nature proved too great. The financial resources of the Saints were about ex-

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<sup>89</sup> St. *Joseph Times*, February 12, 1840.

<sup>90</sup> The Commercial *Advertiser* (of Apalachicola), October 24, 1840. The paper claims that the statistics were obtained from<sup>91</sup> the customs collector's office.

<sup>91</sup> The race track, which has not been hitherto mentioned in this article, is referred to time and time again in the papers. Thus, the many sided Gautier is the secretary of the Race Track Course, according to the St. *Joseph Times* of August 4, 1840.

hausted; and the heyday of their strongest allies, the banks, had long since passed. New causes of worry were beginning to disturb both cities. The western Georgia cotton belt was about to be connected with the Atlantic coast by rail, and the river above the Florida boundary was no longer as navigable as it had formerly been.<sup>92</sup>

A letter written by Charles Downing, the Florida territorial delegate in Congress, shows how nearly the city was at the end of its resources in 1840. It also enables us to get another glimpse of the town.<sup>93</sup>

The next place I would designate for a courthouse and jail is St. Joseph's situated on a bay, second to none on the Gulf of Mexico except it be to Pensacola. It is connected by railroads with the important river of Apalachicola. These railroads have been constructed by individual capital and enterprise which has exhausted the means of the citizens, and left nothing for public buildings. It is a place of great and increasing commerce, foreign and domestic; and the shipping lists weekly published in the public journal of the place, containing a large proportion of vessels from foreign ports, would astonish you, when told that the city could number but three or four years from its first establishment. Even to you, sir, who are accustomed to the magic growth of the western towns, this would seem, a still more rapid creation. Without a bank,<sup>94</sup> to make it a bubble, without a back country yet filled up, without a river, pouring the produce of the country above into its market, with a rival town at the mouth of the river from whence it draws its internal commerce, it has by its splendid bay and the noble enterprise of its citizens overcome these many obstacles to its prosperity and now stands with its tall masts on one side, and its smoking engines and groaning cars on the other, ready and able to "go ahead" in the race of competition with the most forward.

<sup>92</sup> St. *Joseph Times*, November 7, 1840.

<sup>93</sup> News (of St. Augustine) May 1, 1840. The contents of this letter may not be reliable, since Downing naturally would be tempted to so color his account that he would have the best chance to persuade Congress to help St. Joseph.

<sup>94</sup> This was literally true at this time, but Downing avoids *mentioning* the town's *connections* with banks.

St. Joseph approached its fifth and last commercial season in an almost hopeless frame of mind. There was one little item of cheering news. The opening of a new passenger route from Charleston, South Carolina, to Mobile and New Orleans by way of the town was announced for October, 1840. This would bring transient visitors to the place every second day from the populous Atlantic seacoast and might be the forerunner of better things. However, the hope was vain.<sup>95</sup> Before long, rumors began circulating that the residents of the older city were going to buy out the chief promoters of the town. In fact, the *Apalachicola*, the only paper of this locality of which a fairly complete file for the winter of 1840-1841 is preserved, definitely announced the purchase. The transfer of ownership probably took place, but the lack of corroborating evidence prevents us from being absolutely certain on this point. The paper's statement may have been simply a piece of propaganda to harm the younger city, but this seems hardly probable, since the days of insidious attack on the rival had ended about a year earlier.

What hope could the future now hold for the settlers and property owners of the town? Many, had invested in real estate, and numbers of people had built their homes here. The commerce of the place would not be sufficient to support the inhabitants. Apparently a decision was reached to encourage summer visitors and thus make the city an early Pablo Beach for Middle Florida. This seemed to be an easy task, since the bay had always been noted for its beauty and its cooling sea breezes, and its climate was re-

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<sup>95</sup> See Seymour Dunbar: *A History of Travel in America*, Indianapolis, 1915; Vol. III, p. 971. The route ran from Charleston to Brunswick, Georgia, by steamboat; from Brunswick to Tallahassee by post coach; from Tallahassee to St. Marks by railroad; and from St. Marks to Lake Wimico by steamboat.

puted to be the healthiest in the South. Hence, we find gathered here in the summer of 1841 some of the leading people of the territory. St. Joseph had laid aside its role as a commercial metropolis and appeared as an attractive pleasure resort.

However, all hopes were soon to be utterly crushed.

"For the angel of death spread his wings on the blast;  
\* \* \* \* \*

And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill".

This summer will always be remembered in the traditions of Florida, as the time when the dread scourge, yellow fever, reached its most malignant form in the annals of the territory. St. Joseph was hard hit. It is not known how many persons died there, but thirty-seven deaths occurred between the middle of June and July 30,<sup>96</sup> and many more must have been added after that time, since the plague continued to rage with unabated fury for almost two months longer.

Other places, notably Apalachicola, had as high a mortality, but in no other town were so many eminent inhabitants stricken. The wife of former Governor Duval, whose early romance and marriage are so sympathetically portrayed by Washington Irving,<sup>97</sup> succumbed on July 14.<sup>98</sup> The fever seemed to single out for its victims the representatives to the St. Joseph Constitutional Convention of 1838. The other Calhoun County delegate, Richard C. Allen,<sup>99</sup> and the wife and sister of George T. Ward,<sup>100</sup> one of the delegates from Leon County, passed away. The publish-

<sup>96</sup> *The Florida Sentinel* of Tallahassee, September 6, 1841.

<sup>97</sup> In his *The Early Experiences of Ralph Ringwood* in *Wolfert's Roost*.

<sup>98</sup> *The Florida Sentinel*, September 20, 1841.

<sup>99</sup> *Star of Florida* (of Tallahassee), August 18, 1841.

<sup>100</sup> *Pensacola Gazette*, August 7, 1841. Governor Reid, the delegate from St. John's County, and his daughter died in Tallahassee. (See *Pensacola Gazette*, July 17, 1841).

ers and their relatives were also targets of the deadly epidemic. One of the best stylists in the Florida newspaper world, Joseph B. Webb, the proprietor of the *Florida Journal*, which had succeeded the *Apalachicola Gazette*, caught the disease in St. Joseph and died before he reached home.<sup>101</sup> Dr. E. R. Gibson, who had been associate editor of the *United States Telegraph* of Washington, D. C., between 1832 and 1835, and had been living intermittently in the territory as newspaper publisher and public official since 1823, also fell before the onslaughts of the destroyer.<sup>102</sup> Samuel S. Sibley, the former editor of the *Floridian*, who had just moved to St. Joseph, lost his wife in the great epidemic.<sup>103</sup>

With high and low, free and slave, thus relentlessly mowed down, it occasions no surprise to learn that people fled from the dangerous vicinity. Very few ships entered or left the beautiful bay. The town was practically isolated and almost depopulated, so that only 500 people were left on August 25.<sup>104</sup> According to one report, no physician remained in the place.<sup>105</sup> The newspapers of both Apalachicola and St. Joseph suspended publication, the former temporarily and the latter permanently.<sup>106</sup> As if nature wanted to emphasize her abhorrence of the place, a severe gale swept down upon it in September. The details of its violence and the damage wrought are entirely lacking, although the storm is mentioned by some of the Florida papers.

<sup>101</sup> *Florida Sentinel*, September 3, 1841.

<sup>102</sup> *Floridian*, September 11, 1841.

<sup>103</sup> *Floridian*, August 7, 1841

<sup>104</sup> *Florida Herald*, of St. Augustine, October 29, 1841, from an article in the *St. Joseph Times*, August 25.

<sup>105</sup> *Pensacola Gazette*, August 21, 1841.

<sup>106</sup> West, in his pamphlet on Old St. *Jo*, has an interesting but imaginative account of St. Joseph during the epidemic.

When the cooler weather of the autumn months at last checked the devastation of the plague, life and business in the older town assumed its normal aspect, but the glory and prosperity of St. Joseph were gone forever. The most remarkable result of the calamity, besides the complete ruin of the town, was the tradition that gradually developed that the gallant city had been a place of utter wickedness. One can guess how the legend arose. Here there had been a flourishing place, which had been crushed in a most striking manner, as if by divine wrath. The superficial analogy to Sodom and Gomorrah, and other wicked Biblical cities, was so apparent, that the temptation to use St. Joseph as an object lesson to worldly minded, amusement loving persons, could not be resisted. However, the town did not deserve the appellation of "the wickedest place in the United States" any more than other cities along the Gulf coast. It had its race track and its public houses where alcoholic liquors were imbibed in quantities ; the sailors coming from all quarters gave it a rough element; but there is absolutely no evidence that it was in any way abnormal in this respect. The publicity organ of its bitter rival, the *Apalachicola Gazette*, not once hinted that it was steeped in vice and degradation. In fact, all contemporary accounts praise the industry and liberality of its inhabitants. Some of the most cultured people of the lower South lived here, and long afterwards one of them, the mother of R. J. Moses, wrote the following in an almost mystical strain: "St. Joseph in ruins is more dear to my heart than any spot of more worldly grandeur, so peaceful, so healthful, it seems as if its very repose led me nearer to my God, so free from conventionalities and restraints, so gloriously stamped by the Finger of God".<sup>107</sup> R. J.

<sup>107</sup> This is in the possession of J. C. Yonge, Pensacola.

Moses himself wrote that St. Joseph "had as generous and whole-souled a population as is to be found anywhere".

There still remains the sad duty of the historian to record the events after the final tragedy. Naturally real estate values collapsed. Mr. Moses bought the house for thirty-seven dollars and fifty cents, that he unsuccessfully attempted to rent four or five years previously for six hundred dollars per annum. He later sold this house, with the dwelling that had cost him \$4,000, and his father's residence valued at \$2,000, for seventy-five dollars. The inhabitants could not meet their financial obligations, and the banks were compelled to foreclose the mortgages. But the mortgages were practically worthless, since real estate had depreciated so much in value, with the result that the struggling Union Bank alone lost \$150,000.<sup>108</sup> The banks attached all slaves belonging to the 'unfortunates, as well as their lands.

Some of the inhabitants, seeing complete poverty staring them in the face, took their movable property, including the colored people, and attempted to escape to Texas, which did not as yet belong to the United States. A notable example of this was the unfortunate editor of the *St. Joseph Times*, Peter W. Gautier, Jr., who had been living since September, 1841, in the vicinity of Marianna, cultivating, according to a contemporary report, peas and philosophy.<sup>109</sup> Accounts of his flight are found in almost every paper published in Florida at the time. Extracts from two of them will be sufficient.

<sup>108</sup> See Brevard, op. cit., Vol. I, pp. 215-216. It is a source of much regret to the author of this article that he had no opportunity to examine the journals of the United States House of Representatives for these years, as they are known to contain information on the Florida banks and St. Joseph.

<sup>109</sup> *Florida Sentinel*, November 19, 1841.



The ex-Editor of the St. Joseph Times has to use our vernacular "sloped"-G. T. T. [Gone To Texas]. Last week a Colonel Milton, a gentleman of notoriety in New Orleans, Mobile and Columbus, by some achievements in matters of honor, gallantry, etc., arrived here [i. e., Apalachicola] in the steamer James Y. Smith and chartered a Schooner for Texas.-The Reverend Mr. Peter W. Gautier, Sr., and his son, the ex-Editor, arrived about the same time in St. Joseph. The schooner proceeded there, and took fifty-three negroes on board a part, as is said, of the movable assets of the Union Bank, together with the Editor, the old gentleman and Col. Milton.<sup>110</sup>

It is said a portion of the black population of a quondam editor of West Florida are missing, and that he has changed his motto of "In medio tutissimus ibis" to that of Absquatulandibus rapidus Texibus. Adieu to peas and philosophy.<sup>111</sup>

Thus ended the career of one of Florida's most talented and promising young men.

Hardly any records of St. Joseph for the year 1842 have survived. The *Florida Journal* of Apalachicola in its issue of May 21 says: "St. Joseph with her artificial resources and beautiful Bay, has sunk into an everlasting commercial sleep."<sup>112</sup> Of course the railroads went bankrupt, and some time during this year, or the one immediately following, the rails were removed to be used to build a road in Georgia.<sup>113</sup>

The dismantling of the town occurred in 1843. The residents of Apalachicola bought the deserted houses, tore them down, shipped them by water to their city and erected them there. Issue after issue of the *Commercial Advertiser* announces the arrival of vessels laden with building material from the dying

<sup>110</sup> Copied from the *Florida Journal* in the *Pensacola Gazette*, February 12, 1842, and the News of St. Augustine, February 26, 1842.

<sup>111</sup> *Florida Sentinel*, February 4, 1842.

<sup>112</sup> *Pensacola Gazette*, May 28, 1842.

<sup>113</sup> According to the *Apalachicola Times* of August 28, 1926. What the source of this statement is cannot be ascertained; but' its accuracy is quite probable.

town. The most interesting item is found in the issue of August 12.

The schooner *Phrenologist* arrived at our port from St. Joseph, on Tuesday last, bringing part of a large house, about to be erected on the corner of Commerce and Center Streets by our enterprising citizen, Capt. H. F. Simmons. This building was formerly used as a hotel in St. Joseph, in her palmy days, but will soon be helping swell the tide of prosperity for Apalachicola. This bringing houses from St. Joseph and erecting them here seems to be the work of magic "Adzakly." <sup>114</sup>

The election returns of 1843 indicate how the population of the town had dwindled. St. Joseph cast nineteen votes for the delegate to Congress while Apalachicola cast two hundred and fifty-two. <sup>115</sup> A year later only sixty-seven votes were polled in the entire county. <sup>116</sup> In March, 1844, the territorial legislature gave official recognition to the decline of the town, by passing a bill entitled, "An act to alter and change the present County site of Calhoun County". <sup>117</sup> The few people still living at the place were visited and inconvenienced by another terrific gale in September, 1844, when considerable damage was reported. <sup>118</sup>

Nobody knows when St. Joseph became a real "Deserted Village", when only "yon widowed solitary thing" was left, as "the sad historian of the pensive plain". It is certain that everything of value was gradually removed. Even the chimneys were torn down during the War for Southern Independence to make vats for evaporating salt. <sup>119</sup> Thus, at last, prac-

<sup>114</sup> This article was reprinted in the *Pensacola Gazette* of August 22, 1843. The *Commercial Advertiser* of July 29 and September 2, 1843, also mention these activities.

<sup>115</sup> *Florida Herald* of St. Augustine, June 5, 1843.

<sup>116</sup> *News of St. Augustine*, February 15, 1845.

<sup>117</sup> *1844 Acts*, p. 46.

<sup>118</sup> *Commercial Advertiser*, September 9, 1844.

<sup>119</sup> From the journal of R. J. Moses.

tically nothing except the cemetery was left of the little city whose inhabitants had so bravely and with such bold enterprise defied nature and man in unequal competition.

JAMES OWEN KNAUSS .

**[Author's Note-**Despite the apparently complete documentation of this article, the reader must be warned against the belief that the last word on St. Joseph has here been said. No definitive account of any historical event can ever be given, but this article does not even approach definitiveness. Many sources of St. Joseph material were not used. Two that are known to exist may be noted: the papers of the Apalachicola Land Co., some of which at least survive but are inaccessible, and the journals of the United States House of Representatives. While the latter were unfortunately not available when I was writing, they formed a partial basis of some secondary sources that I used. Other sources doubtless exist which have not yet been located. For instance, copies of old Columbus, Apalachicola and St. Joseph newspapers may be hidden away in some attic or chest. Particularly valuable would be the issues from 1833 to 1842. All letters, diaries and journals which touch on St. Joseph and Apalachicola of this period should be preserved. Public spirited citizens of Florida would make the State and its historians their debtors if they would locate and preserve such material, publishing the fact of their existence in this **QUARTERLY**.

Since the publication of the first part of this article, the author has learned that in July or August, 1897, there was published in **The Tallahasseean**, of Tallahassee, an article on St. Joseph written by Robert Ranson. He has not been able to locate a copy of this newspaper. Mr. Ranson, now living in Miami, writes that he obtained a large part of the information for the article from Captain \_\_\_\_\_ Cook, who lived in St. Joseph when the town was flourishing. It is unfortunate that no copy of this paper seems to have survived.]