

STARS

Florida Historical Quarterly

Volume 42
Number 1 *Florida Historical Quarterly, Vol 42,*
Number 1

Article 6

1963

The End of an Idyll

Robert L. Anderson

 Part of the [American Studies Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Find similar works at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq>

University of Central Florida Libraries <http://library.ucf.edu>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by STARS. It has been accepted for inclusion in Florida Historical Quarterly by an authorized editor of STARS. For more information, please contact STARS@ucf.edu.

Recommended Citation

Anderson, Robert L. (1963) "The End of an Idyll," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 42 : No. 1 , Article 6.
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol42/iss1/6>

THE END OF AN IDYLL

by ROBERT L. ANDERSON

IN THE YEAR 1687 a boat arrived in St. Augustine containing ten Negroes-eight men and two women-who had fled slavery in the English settlement of St. George to the north of St. Augustine. ¹ If this little group were not the first to flee from the practices of the English settlements of North America, they were among the first for whom documentation is available. The significance of the event is that at an early date Florida began to function as an escape-valve, as an attractive alternative to a life of servitude in the colonies to the north. It might be maintained that this was a relative freedom to which the slaves fled, since the Spaniards in Florida kept slaves also. The question may well have been one of leniency of slave codes involved since there is no record of a Negro slave fleeing from the Spanish to the English. ² Furthermore, there was an appealing alternative in the Florida forests to the vicissitudes of town dwelling for the runaway Negro. By 1736 the number who had elected the forest alternative had grown to such proportions that they had established settlements with such colorful names as King Hejah, Big Hammock, and Mulatto Girl. ³

On a more formal plane, the governor of Florida, D. Manuel Montiano, in a letter to his king from St. Augustine on February 16, 1739, announced that he had put at liberty various fugitive former English slaves and sent them "to live in the territory called Mose, half a league more or less to the north of this town, and to establish a town there." ⁴ A fort later known as Fort Moosa or Moosa Old Fort was also constructed there for their protection.

The southern English colonies were plagued with insurrections and rumors of insurrections throughout this general period.

-
1. "Dispatches of Spanish Officials Bearing on the Free Negro Settlement of Garcia Real de Santa Teresa de Mose, Florida," *Journal of Negro History*, IX (April, 1924), 151.
 2. Kenneth Wiggins Porter, "Negroes on the Southern Frontier," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXIII (January, 1948), 76.
 3. Laurance Foster, *Negro-Indian Relationships in the Southeast* (Philadelphia, 1935), 20.
 4. "Dispatches of Spanish Officials," 176.

The magnetic pull of Florida upon the slaves of these colonies was formidable. Shortly after the establishment of Mose a group of Negroes in Stono, a place some twenty miles south of Charleston, staged an uprising on September 9, 1739, a Sunday. Seizing arms, ammunition, and liquor, they set out for Florida with banners waving, drums beating, and calling out "Freedom!"⁵ Killing, looting, and burning, they continued on their way until their masters, in considerable strength, overtook them and crushed the uprising with force. The casualties were estimated at twenty-one whites and probably in excess of forty-four Negroes.⁶ Whether there was any direct connection between the establishment of the Negro plantation settlement at Mose and the Stono uprising is open to conjecture. The incident is cited merely as illustrative of the pull which Florida exerted on the colonial slaves.

The unfortunates of Stono had not reached their freedom but many others had and many would continue to do so in the years to come. Many of the runaways had made good their flight from South Carolina many years before Georgia had become a colony and generations had lived in the forest settlements, comprising an authentic "pioneer" group. Generally, they chose the finest land from the rich river bottoms lying along the Apalachicola and Suwannee Rivers where many "became wealthy in flocks and herds."⁷

These settlements remained after the settlement of Mose had been broken up and its inhabitants shipped to Cuba in consequence of Florida's transfer to England in 1763. The period of their somewhat idyllic existence was drawing to a close, however. The English period of control, cutting off the haven of St. Augustine, was brief and the Spaniards returned after 1783. They were weaker than ever, however, and this weakness prompted an attempted annexation of East Florida by the United States in 1812. That the Negroes of these settlements and towns were not blind to the potential threat to themselves in this attempt is evidenced by their direct participation as combatants against the invading forces.

The Negroes and Indians of Northern Florida had long

5. Porter, "Negroes on the Southern Frontier," 65.

6. *Ibid.*, 66.

7. Foster, 20.

adopted a *modus vivendi* and were able to dwell together with a minimum of friction.⁸ In the course of the attempted annexation of East Florida and the subsequent attack on St. Augustine, these two peoples found that they had common cause in resisting the Americans. The Indians were fearful for their lands and hunting grounds. A long series of treaties with the white man in the Southeast had made them justifiably apprehensive about what to expect. The Negroes, of course, knew with a great deal of certitude what awaited them - either a fugitive life in the pestial swamps or rendition to slavery. That the Negroes were particularly justified in their gloomy expectation was revealed by the commander of the Georgia militia (Governor D. B. Mitchell of Georgia had assumed command of the invasion forces when the original leader, General George Mathews, was dismissed in April of 1812) when he expressed hope that the Indians would side with the Spaniards since it would furnish the Georgians a pretext for entering Indian country and breaking up a Negro town.⁹ Presumably the opportunity for profitable slave selling existed as well as the opportunity just to break up a Negro town.

The Negroes, in fact, seem to have taken the lead in opting for action. St. Augustine had been put under seige in March of 1812 by General Mathews' "Patriot" forces consisting of civilian and military volunteers from Georgia and a number of residents of Spanish Florida. This force was augmented in early April by the arrival of a group of United States regulars from the military post at Point Petre, Georgia. The Indians, somewhat cowed by the Americans, had taken no action by early July of 1812 when a Negro from St. Augustine appeared at a meeting of the Indians- chiefly Paine's Indians and those known as the Alligator Hole people-and, speaking their tongue, told the assembled Indians, in reference to meetings with the Americans, "These fine talks are made to amuse you and deceive you, they are going to take your country beyond the St. Johns, the old people will be put to sweep the yards of the white people, the young men to work for them, and the young females to spin and weave for them. This I

8. Kenneth Wiggins Porter gives an expanded discussion of this relationship in "Negroes and the East Florida Annexation Plot, 1811-1813," *Journal of Negro History*, XXX (January, 1945), 9-29.

9. *Ibid.*, 17.

have heard and this I tell you.”¹⁰ The Indian Tuskegee Tustumugee added that

After the Indians heard the talk of the Negro they believed it, immediately brought off thirty-five Negroes from both sides of the St. Johns. A party went to the head of the St. Marys and killed a man who kept a store on the American side of that river, not far below Trader's Hill. . . . The Alligator Hole people and the Autotchewau people were jointly concerned in it.¹¹

The country now burst into flame as the Negroes and Indians took the field. That it was such a joint operation is evidenced by the dispatches of the time. Governor Mitchell complained that the Spanish Governor had “proclaimed freedom to every Negro who will join his standard, and has sent a party of them to unite with, and who are actually at this time united with the Indians in their murderous excursions. . . . It is also a fact that most of our male Negroes on the seaboard are restless and make many attempts to get off to St. Augustine. . . .”¹² Lieutenant Colonel Thomas A. Smith, in command of the United States regulars before St. Augustine, affirmed in a letter to Governor Mitchell on August 21, 1812, that “the blacks assisted by the Indians have become very bold. . . .”¹³ The colonel wrote in another letter of the same date to Thomas Bourke, the United States Agent at Savannah, “We are still hanging on in the old style before St. Augustine, the Indians in our rear committing depredations almost every day, and if they have an inclination can make us retire whenever they please, as our Contractor never furnishes provisions for more than four or five days in advance. . . .”¹⁴

The Indians and Negroes soon found the inclination and on September 12, 1812, they attacked and destroyed Colonel Smith's supply train and forced his withdrawal from in front of St. Augustine. These same two allies put up a stiff battle which later the

10. “Tuskegee Tustumugee to Colonel Hawkins,” *State Papers and Publick Documents* (Boston, 1817), IX, 182.

11. *Ibid.*

12. “Extracts of A Letter From Governor Mitchell to Mr. Monroe,” *State Papers and Publick Documents*, IX, 169.

13. T. Frederick Davis (ed.), “United States Troops in Spanish East Florida, 1812-1813, Part II,” *Florida Historical Quarterly*, IX (October, 1930), 111.

14. *Ibid.*, 112.

same month frustrated an attempt by Colonel Daniel Newnan and his Georgia militia to penetrate into the interior and destroy the Alachua towns.¹⁵ Newnan's forces set out on September 24, 1812, and three days later stumbled onto a group of Indians and Negroes from whom they found it difficult to disengage. They were, in fact, besieged and only after much suffering and hardship were they able to make good their retreat.¹⁶ They arrived back on the St. Johns river on October 11, eighteen days after their departure from Picolata. Newnan conceded that of his adversaries the Negroes were "their best soldiers."¹⁷

Where Newnan's forces failed, however, a combined force of Tennessee volunteers and a group commanded by Colonel Smith (he of St. Augustine) succeeded. In early February, 1813, these forces entered the Indian country and before the end of the month had made their mark. Some 386 houses had been burned, up to 2,000 bushels of corn had been destroyed, 300 horses and 400 cattle had been taken.¹⁸ In addition twenty Indians had been killed and nine Indians and Negroes captured.¹⁹ As for strategical gains as opposed to these tactical successes, "Their destructive expedition left the Indians of central Florida facing starvation, forced them towards the west coast and eliminated them as an enemy in the planned conquest of the Floridas. . . . The first step in the conquest of the Floridas was an accomplished fact."²⁰

The curtain had indeed begun to descend upon the idyllic life of the free Florida Negro. His Indian ally would fare little better than he. "Manifest Destiny" would roll over them both, the Indian relegated to swamps or to relocation, the Negro to the same swamps or to the slavery he and his ancestor had fled. The centerpiece of the whole drama would come at a fort on the Apalachi-

15. Rembert W. Patrick gives a good account of the tribulations of the Newnan force in *Florida Fiasco: Rampant Rebels on The Georgia-Florida Border, 1810-1815* (Athens, 1954), 195-225.

16. In 1931 remains of the defenses of Newnan's force were still in evidence. Their location was in the northwest corner of the southeast one-quarter of the northeast one-quarter of Section 21-10-21 near the town of Windsor in Alachua County, Florida. See T. Frederick Davis (ed.), "United States Troops in Spanish East Florida 1812-1813, Part III," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, IX (January, 1931), 150.

17. *Niles Register*, December 12, 1812.

18. Patrick, 233-234.

19. *Ibid.*

20. *Ibid.*, 235-236.

cola River a little over three years after the destructive march of the Americans in February of 1813. Events at this fort would signal the end of the idyll which began over a hundred years previously. An end which was foreshadowed and previewed in the years 1812-1813.

The role of the United States in these events concerning the fort on the Apalachicola River is on a legal par with its activities in East Florida. Both involved an invasion of the territory of another sovereign state. Whereas the character of the action in east Florida in 1812-1813 can be described as "confused," that of the action of 1816 can be described, for want of a better word, as "slick."

The so called "Negro fort," or "Blount's fort," had been erected at a site on the Apalachicola River known as Prospect Bluff by the British in the summer of 1814. It was some twenty-five miles up river from the mouth and about a mile from the store of John Forbes and Company.²¹ A Colonel Edward Nicholls was in charge of the operation.²² This same Nicholls had sent proclamations into the Mobile District for circulation among the Negroes there. These offered the Negroes free lands in the British West Indies at the conclusion of the War of 1812 in return for their services to the British.²³ These and other recruiting efforts evidently met with some success for when General Jackson forced the exodus of the British from the Pensacola area early in November of 1814, and they withdrew to their site on the Apalachicola River, included in their party were a large number of Negroes who had been collected from various places. John Innerarity of the John Forbes and Company Store in Pensacola wrote to his brother in Mobile complaining that "Coll. N. went in a Gun Boat Cutter to make all the Indians immediately commence their march for Appa. & with them he drove about 300 Negroes, women & children pressing all the Barges & Canoes for this purpose This

21. "William H. Robertson to Brigadier General Thomas Flournoy," *American State Papers: Indian Affairs* (Washington, 1832), I, 859.

22. The spelling used seems to be that which is most widely accepted. "Nicolls," "Nichols," etc., are alternates found in various documents and papers.

23. Kenneth Wiggins Porter, "Negroes and the Seminole War, 1817-1818," *Journal of Negro History*, XXXVI (July, 1951), 259.

man Coll. N. has been the occasion of the ruin of many & the abhorrence & detestation of all." ²⁴

Although the amount of "drive" necessary to get these people to depart is open to conjecture, the point is that a considerable number did leave and once relocated declined to return. The British Admiral Alexander Cochrane evidently disapproved of this action for he sent an officer in company with a Spanish Commissioner to secure the return of the Negroes. ²⁵ Their mission was not well received at Apalachicola and threats were made upon their lives when they tried to get the Negroes to return. ²⁶ However, some of the Negroes were later shipped to Nova Scotia and Trinidad. ²⁷ The exact numbers involved are not known. A British deserter put the number of Negroes left by the British when they withdrew at "between three and four hundred" who were well provided with arms. ²⁸ The exact date of the departure of the British troops from Apalachicola is not known but Colonel Nicholls stayed behind and instructed the Indians to the effect that the provisions of the treaty of Ghent nullified the land cession of the treaty negotiated by Andrew Jackson in 1814. ²⁹ This did little, of course, to the promotion of post-war amity along the borderlands. Colonel Nicholls finally left in the early summer of 1815.

The upshot of these events was that there was now ensconced in Western Florida a group of rather militant Negroes many of whom had only recently come into possession of their freedom but found it much to their liking. Their strongpoint was upon an important river and was in proximity to the "pioneer" Negroes, and those pressured out of eastern Florida, settled along the Apalachicola and Suwannee rivers and among the Mickasukie towns northeast of present-day Tallahassee. The future was rather plainly in sight for these people as the end forecast by the events of 1812-1813 was moving closer to fulfillment. They were poised

24. "Letters of John Innerarity: The Seizure of Pensacola by Andrew Jackson, November 7, 1814," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, IX (January, 1931), 129.

25. "Memorandum of A Gentleman of Respectability at Bermuda," *ASP: Foreign Relations*, IV, 552.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. "Deposition of Samuel Jervais," *ASP: Foreign Relations*, IV, 551.

29. Mark Boyd, "Events at Prospect Bluff on the Apalachicola River; 1808-1818," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XVI (October, 1937), 72.

on a powder keg the fuse of which was exposed for all to see at Prospect Bluff.

It is of interest in considering the action taken by the United States against this fort to note that practically the entire drama took place while the Congress of the United States was not in session. The first session of the Fourteenth Congress had begun in December of 1815 and ended April 30, 1816. Thus, as will be seen, all the *dramatis personae* had come on stage, performed their parts, and departed for the wings while Congress was resting from its last appearance. To suggest that this was consciously planned by those involved might be to belabor a fortuitous circumstance. Nevertheless, whether by fortuitous chance or conscious design Congress was to be presented with a *fait accompli* which, of course, is one of the most effective means known to preclude the embarrassments of any meaningful debate on a particular subject.

The fort itself had received generous publicity in its beginning. That is, it was apparently well known about and, since its investment by the Negroes, had achieved a good deal more prominence. Not only did it serve as a beacon to the discontented slaves and Indians along the borderlands but it also served well, whether rightly or wrongly, as a spring from which bubbled forth the various depredations committed by Indians and by Negroes, in a wide area. Both elements seemed to be lumped together and the fort stood as a visible symbol of both.

James Innerarity, on behalf of his company Panton and Leslie, had negotiated a cession of land from the Indians in August of 1804 which included all of the present day counties of Franklin and Liberty and a large portion of Gadsden, Leon, and Wakulla.³⁰ Later the same year Innerarity had gone to Prospect Bluff with a clerk and a few Negroes and established a store there. The store was not outstandingly successful, and besides there was that "store" (i.e., the Fort) which had been built nearby in 1814. Innerarity commented on the forlorn pass of events in a letter of August 12, 1815, which is worth quoting at length not only for its description of the situation around Prospect Bluff but also for its somewhat humorous and prophetic conclusion. He wrote:

The consequence . . . is this, Our Store is broken up with considerable loss, over & above that of our Cattle eaten by the

30. Boyd, "Events at Prospect Bluff," 62-63.

plunderers, & negroes robbed by them-our influence over those Indians dead, or expiring, & Prospect Bluff & the Lands in possession of the Negroes whom the unspeakable Villains robbed from their Allies the Spaniards of Pensacola & East Florida, & even (astounding iniquity!!!!) from the Indians themselves.

. . . when the British Admirals pressed by the representations of the inhabitants & Government of Pensacola, found that they could not without eternal disgrace Carry off the negroes, they adopted a course, that while it bore a *Shew of honour*, really was calculated & *I doubt not meant*, to perpetuate by them the miseries of the Country-They would not deliver up the Negroes; no, that could not be done without a violation of British faith!!! Which had been pledged for their freedom, but they *left* them at Prospect Bluff (after having trained them to military discipline) in possession of a well constructed fort, with plenty of provisions, & with Cannon Arms and Ammunition of every description, not only in abundance but in Profusion for their defense-report says, they have even since sent them an accession of Strength, and they are now *organized as Pirates*, have several small Vessels well armed, & some Piracies that have lately occurred in the Lakes are supposed to have been committed by them.

Although one fruitless effort has been made to regain possession, yet I despair not, the attempt will be renewed as soon as any opening presents: as a last recourse, the Lands can be sold to Americans who will settle them in spite of Indians, Negroes or English.³¹

Judging from Innerarity's account there is some basis for the assumption that the Negroes at the fort were making themselves obnoxious in the general area. Apparently there was now a Negro navy as well as a Negro fort, but little other mention is found of this fact. The point is that it would be hard to attribute the whole episode to follow (which took place in 1816) wholly to pressure of the southern slaveholders to retain and to regain property.³² Notice, however, that no mention was made of Negroes other than those at the fort. The emphasis was on the militants brought in by the British, those who were newcomers in point of time to the heady feeling of freedom. They are the focus. Such a lack of

31. "The Panton, Leslie Papers: James Innerarity to John Forbes," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XII (January, 1934), 128-129.

32. For an interesting but not unbiased treatment of the slaveholder pressure, see Joshua R. Giddings, *The Exiles of Florida* (Columbus, 1858),

distinctions in time of peace is even less likely to be made in time of war. Given the slave-state pressure, the question of whether the distinction between the Negroes at the fort and the Negro "settlers" would have been honored, had it been recognized, is another matter. The purpose here is merely to describe the end of a way of life.

Almost a year after Innerarity's letter quoted above, and just some two months or so before the end of the Congress in April, 1816, plans were set in motion on the northern side of the Florida border for bringing an end to the "menace" of the Negro fort. Under the treaty of Fort Jackson the Creek Indians had rendered up to the United States several million acres of land.³³ This land had been selected so as to separate the possessions of Spain in Florida from the Indian settlements in Georgia and Alabama, an offhand tribute, perhaps, to Florida's continuing attractiveness at the time for certain classes of southern immigrants.³⁴ At any rate, General Gaines had been assigned the task of taking possession of the new acreage, fortifying it, and protecting those sent to survey it. Under his orders, Colonel Duncan L. Clinch departed on this mission in March of 1816. General Edmund P. Gaines in the same month dispatched a letter to Andrew Jackson asking permission to build a fort on the Apalachicola close to the boundary.³⁵ This was to become known as Fort Scott. Once established it would be necessary to provision the fort, and the most logical and accessible supply route lay up the Apalachicola River past the guns of the Negro fort.

In a letter to his subordinate, Colonel Clinch, General Gaines urged haste in establishing Fort Scott saying that, "The post near the juncture of the rivers, to which I called your attention in the last month, must be established speedily, even if we have to fight our way to it through the whole nation. . . . The surveyors have commenced laying off the land to be sold and settled and they must be protected" The general went on to give Colonel Clinch an "arrangement" for supplying the fort. Clinch was to proceed down river with men and boats to meet the naval vessels

33. Charles J. Kappler, *Indian Affairs, Laws and Treaties*, 2 vols. (Washington, 1904), II, 107-109.

34. John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States*, 6 vols. (New York, 1895), IV, 430.

35. *State Papers*, 15th Cong., 2nd Session, No. 122, pp. 14, 15.

which would bring supplies up the Apalachicola to the fort. "Should the boats meet with opposition at what is called the Negro fort, arrangements will immediately be made for its destruction; and for that purpose you will be supplied with two eighteen pounders and one howitzer, with fixed ammunition, and implements complete, to be sent in a vessel to accompany the provisions." ³⁶

Judging by the supplies to be sent to Colonel Clinch, the likelihood of meeting such opposition seemed more than idle conjecture. The naval end of the pincers movement was also prepared to face disputed passage for the two supply ships involved were accompanied by two gunboats.

Thus was the foundation laid for the destruction of the fort. Earlier, on April 23, 1816, General Jackson had written to the governor of Pensacola and warned him that if the Spanish were not able to take care of the fort the United States would be compelled to destroy it in self-defense. ³⁷ That this was little more than a formal courtesy is revealed by Jackson's letter to the Secretary of War, William H. Crawford, one day later. Jackson wrote, "I have a hope that General Gaines has attended to the subject of this Negro Fort and put an end to the depredations of the banditti of land pirates. He has been left to his discretion to act on this subject, with my opinion, if certain facts can be proved against them, that their fort must be destroyed. I trust he has taken the hint." ³⁸

During the same month an apparent attempt had been made to sponsor a "native" or "local" solution to the problem of the fort. An Indian chief by the name of Little Prince had gone down the river to confer with some Seminole chiefs and the "ostensible object of the visit was to adopt measures to take the negro fort." ³⁹ General Gaines had no great faith in the Indians but did requisition three hundred bushels of corn for their rations and justified this, in face of his doubts, by saying, "It seemed to me proper to encourage them in the prosecution of a measure which I felt per-

36. "General Gaines to Colonel Clinch," *ASP: Foreign Relations*, IV, 558.

37. "General Jackson to the Governor of Pensacola," *ASP: Foreign Relations*, IV, 555.

38. *House Documents*, 15th Cong. 2nd Sess., No. 122, p. 6.

39. "General Gaines to the Secretary of War," *ASP: Foreign Relations* IV, 557-558.

suaded would, if successful, be attended with great benefit to our Southern frontier inhabitants, as well as the Indians themselves.”⁴⁰

Nothing came of this scheme, however, and the United States was obliged to prepare its own solution. Little Prince’s ardor may have been cooled somewhat by the actions of the white men in their fort-building activities. It would seem so, judging by his rather pathetic letter of April 26, 1816, to the United States authorities. Little Prince complained that

You did not tell us that you would build forts along the river-bank down to the fort. . . . We do not think it friendly for one friend to take anything from another forcibly. . . . Our friend Hawkins told us to go down to the fort of the blacks and take them out of it and give them to their masters; which we are at this present, when we heard of Jackson’s orders about building these forts.⁴¹

The Indians, of course, were to learn many such hard lessons in dealing with the white man.

The plans laid by the United States came to fruition in July, 1816. Colonel Clinch had pressed down the Apalachicola to the Negro fort and the naval expedition had appeared on the river. The fort, as was expected, showed hostility to these proceedings and its black chief, Garcon (or Garcia), heaped abuse on a surrender delegation sent by Colonel Clinch on July 23, declaring that he would sink any American vessel that attempted to proceed past the fort.⁴² Colonel Clinch was unable to storm the fort, which was well built and enthusiastically defended. Accordingly, the navy took over the task and after a few ineffectual rounds managed by sheer chance to place a preheated round in the fort’s powder magazine. The results were catastrophic. Of the over 300 men, women, and children in the fort, some 270 were killed outright by the resulting explosion and the greater part of the rest were mortally wounded.⁴³ The Negro fort had been literally and figuratively removed from Prospect Bluff.

40. *Ibid.*

41. “Talk From the Little Prince . . . To The Commander of the U.S. Forces in The Indian Nation,” *ASP: Foreign Relations*, IV, 558.

42. Dudley W. Knox, “A Forgotten Fight in Florida,” Detached from *U. S. Naval Institute Proceedings* (April, 1936), 511.

43. *House Documents*, 15th Cong., 2nd Sess., No. 119, p. 16.

The Negroes who lived along the Apalachicola, with the exception of those few who might have sought refuge in the fort, had fled the area. Commodore Daniel Patterson, who had furnished the gunboats and supply ships for the engagement, described the area around the Negro fort in an account of the action to Benjamin Crowninshield, Secretary of the Navy. He said that the Negroes "had commenced several plantations on the fertile banks of the Apalachicola, which would have yielded them every article of substance."⁴⁴ It was apparently a comfortable life which they had left behind.

Events now followed with a methodical certainty. The destruction of the fort had stirred the whole area. Border incidents occurred between Negroes and Indians on one side and the settlers and soldiers on the other. Troops from Fort Scott destroyed an Indian settlement called Fowl Town some few miles east of Fort Scott. In revenge a group of Negroes and Indians massacred a boat load of Americans on its way up the Apalachicola in November of 1817. So it went. These events brought an experienced campaigner to command at Fort Scott—Andrew Jackson. He arrived there on March 9, 1818, and shortly thereafter set off down the banks of the Apalachicola. The war was on.

The period of the Negro's Florida idyll was over. It had lasted, in all its forms, over one hundred years. Now, to use Commodore Patterson's words, "They no longer had a place to fly to."⁴⁵

44. "Commodore Patterson to Secretary of Navy," *ASP: Foreign Relations*, IV, 561.

45. *Ibid.*