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"A GANG OF PIRATES": CONFEDERATE LIGHTHOUSE RAIDS IN SOUTHEAST FLORIDA, 1861

by RODNEY E. DILLON, JR.

In July of 1861, three months after Confederate gunners opened fire on Fort Sumter igniting the Civil War, a distinguished group of United States Army, Navy, and civilian officials met in Washington, DC. These men, Flag Officer Samuel F. DuPont, Commander Charles H. Davis, Major John G. Barnard, and Superintendent Alexander D. Bache of the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, had been appointed by the Navy Department as a blockade board to study the geography and topography of the southern coastline, the state of Federal naval resources and manpower, and the strategic and tactical plans necessary to make President Lincoln's frequently ridiculed blockade of the Confederate States a reality. Meeting throughout the summer and early fall, the board prepared a series of reports giving detailed descriptions of the Confederate shore and recommending the division of blockading forces into sections. Commenting on the southern Atlantic coast of Florida in their July 26 report, the board dismissed the region with the statement that it "can hardly be said to be inhabited, and is of no great consequence except as a convenient place of resort for pirates."¹ Although this statement reflected the common perception of southeast Florida during the mid-nineteenth century, events would soon prove it notably shortsighted.

The report was certainly correct in describing the region's condition of settlement. Less than 300 people made their homes along the coast south of Cape Canaveral. Over 200 of these

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1. Third Report of Conference for Consideration of Measures for Effectually Blockading the South Atlantic Coast, July 26, 1861, U. S. Naval War Records Office, *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion*, 27 vols. (Washington, DC, 1894-1927), series 1, XII, 201-06 (hereafter cited as *ORN*).

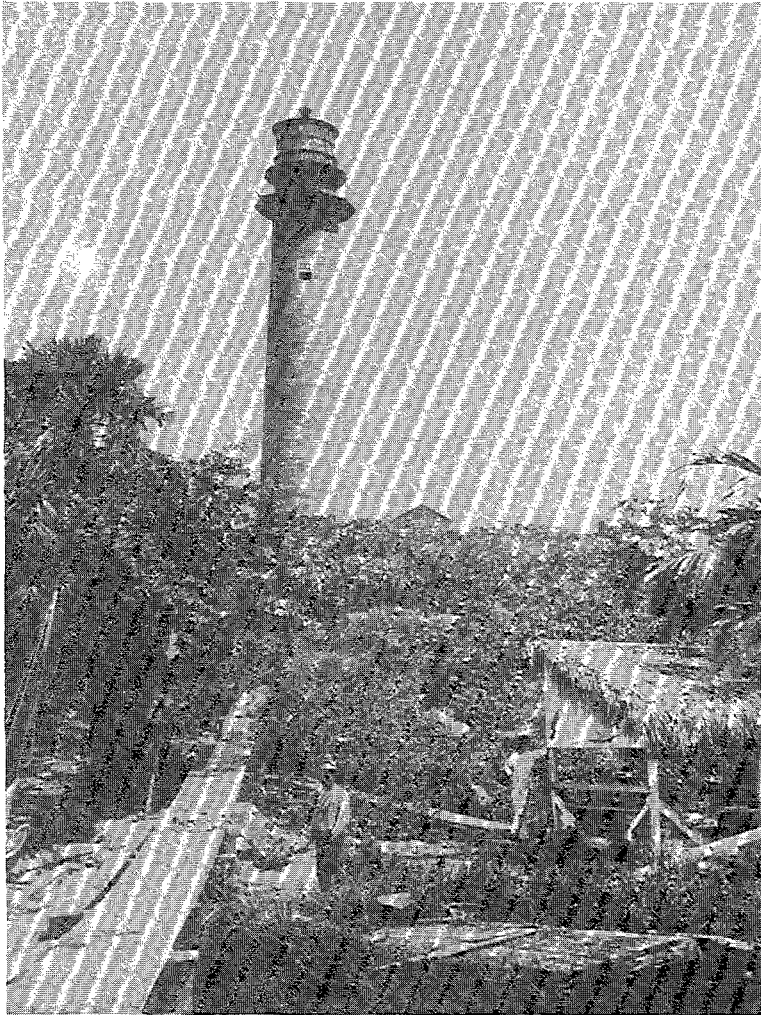
resided in small communities and isolated homesteads scattered from the Indian River Inlet to south of the St. Lucie River. They were known collectively as the "Indian River settlements." An additional group, estimated at some thirty people, clustered along the Miami River and Biscayne Bay.²

Of far greater value to both Union and Confederate authorities than these tiny frontier settlements were southeast Florida's two Federal installations, the imposing lighthouses at Jupiter Inlet and Cape Florida. In addition to serving as bastions of Federal authority in an otherwise hostile territory, these structures were of vital importance to navigation in a region that, despite its sparse population, formed the boundary of a busy shipping route. Bordered by the deep waters of the Gulf Stream, the southeast Florida coast lay directly adjacent to the natural sea lanes followed by ships sailing between northeastern and European ports and the Caribbean, the Gulf of Mexico, the South Atlantic, and ultimately Cape Horn and the Pacific. Southeast Florida's few residents also depended on nautical means of transportation. Living on a thin strip of dry ground between the ocean and flooded marshlands to the west, they had become, by necessity, adept at sailing their small craft along the coast and the inland waterways and through unmarked, shifting inlets.³

Although southeast Florida waters were important shipping lanes throughout the early and mid-nineteenth century, they were also extremely dangerous. The same deep waters that brought ships close to shore provided ample opportunities for careless navigators to beach their vessels on the abrupt

2. Manuscript returns of the Eighth U. S. Census, 1860, population schedules, Brevard and Dade counties, on microfilm, University of Florida Library, Gainesville (hereafter cited as Eighth U. S. Census); Mrs. A. C. Richards, "Reminiscences of the Early Days of Miami," *Miami News*, 1903, clippings in Agnew Welsh Collection, Miami-Dade Public Library, Miami; U. S. War Department, *Memoir to Accompany a Military Map of the Peninsula of Florida South of Tampa Bay* (New York, 1856), 7-9; Lieutenant J. C. Ives, "Military Map of the Peninsula of Florida South of Tampa Bay" (New York, 1856).

3. Charles M. Brookfield, "Cape Florida Light," *Tequesta* 9 (1949), 11; Charles W. Pierce, "On the Wings of the Wind," typescript in the collection of the Historical Society of Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach, FL, 1; George Winston Smith, "Carpetbag Imperialism in Florida, 1862-1868," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 27 (October 1948), 103-04.



Jupiter Lighthouse about 1883. Reprinted from *Tequesta* 20 (1960). Original in the Palm Beach County Historical Society Collection.

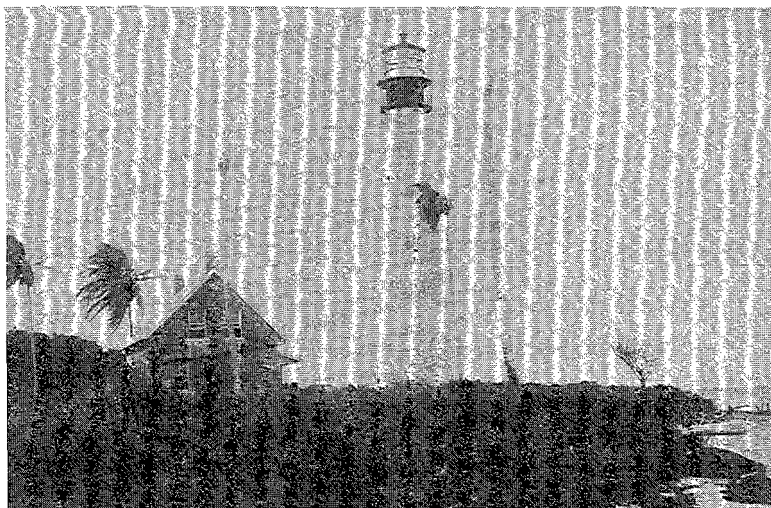
shoreline. Treacherous, submerged coral reefs also lay offshore, hugging the coast closely from Hillsboro Inlet south to Biscayne Bay, where they emerged as the Florida Keys and continued southwestward into the Straits of Florida. Violent storms often swept the sea and adjacent land as well. So prevalent were

hazards to navigation that salvaging shipwrecks was a major economic activity for the residents of the south Atlantic coast and the Keys.⁴

In an effort to minimize navigational hazards, the federal government had, as early as 1825, constructed the lighthouse at Cape Florida on the southern tip of Key Biscayne at the entrance to Biscayne Bay. Despite hurricanes and a devastating Indian attack during the Second Seminole War, the white-painted brick tower continued to mark the entrance to the bay and warn ships away from the reef at the outbreak of the Civil War.⁵ Reconstructed in 1846 to repair extensive damage from the Indian attack, and renovated to a height of ninety-five feet in 1855, the Cape Florida lighthouse stood alone on Florida's south Atlantic shore until 1859 when a 105-foot tall red brick tower was completed at Jupiter Inlet. Designed by army engineer Lieutenant George Gordon Meade, who was soon to gain fame as the Union commander at the Battle of Gettysburg in 1863, the new light tower was capped with a beacon "of the First Order," visible for eighteen to twenty-seven miles and first illuminated on July 10, 1860.⁶

When Florida seceded from the Union on January 10, 1861, the fact that the Jupiter and Cape Florida lighthouses were the only Federal installations on or immediately adjacent to the mainland of the lower peninsula was not lost on the area's few settlers. Although southeast Florida lay far from the scenes of political turmoil and military mobilization which characterized much of the nation, residents nevertheless eagerly awaited news from the outside world and vigorously discussed current events. Most, regardless of their places of origin, considered themselves

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4. "Wrecking in the Florida Keys," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* 18 (April 1859), reprinted in *Broward Legacy* 6 (Winter/Spring 1983), 2-10; *New York Times*, January 9, 1861; Jefferson B. Browne, *Key West the Old and the New* (St. Augustine, 1912; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1968), 162, 165; Stuart D. Ludlum, comp., *Exploring Florida 100 Years Ago* (Utica, 1973), 41-43.
 5. Dorothy Dodd, ed., "'Volunteers' Report Destruction of Lighthouses," *Tequesta* 14 (1954); 68-69; Brookfield, "Cape Florida Light," 6-11; Richards, "Reminiscences of Early Days," *Miami News*, 1903 clippings.
 6. Brookfield, "Cape Florida Light," 11; Dodd, "'Volunteers' Report Destruction," 68-69; Bessie Wilson DuBois, 'Jupiter Lighthouse,' *Tequesta* 20 (1960), 6-8.



Cape Florida Lighthouse about the turn of the century. Reprinted from *Guide to Florida Lighthouses*, by Elinor De Wire (Pineapple Press, Sarasota, 1987). Original in the National Archives

loyal to the state of Florida and to the nascent Confederate States of America.⁷

Throughout the winter and spring of 1861, state authorities and enthusiastic secessionists seized a number of lighthouses and navigational aids along the southern coast. The opening of hostilities at Fort Sumter on April 12, and Lincoln's blockade proclamation seven days later, accelerated this process. On Florida's north Atlantic coast, the Confederate commander of St. Augustine's Fort Marion ordered the lighthouse there extinguished. Despite some protest from local shipping interests, the city's customs collector and former mayor, Paul Arnau, led a group of men across the Matanzas River to Anastasia Island, where they dismantled the beacon. Arnau also directed the keeper of the Cape Canaveral light to darken his structure,

7. W. Dean Burnham, *Presidential Ballots, 1836-1892* (Baltimore, 1955), 322, 324, 328; Richards, "Reminiscences of Early Days," *Miami News*, 1903 clippings; *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the People of Florida Begun and Held at the Capitol in the City of Tallahassee on Thursday, January 3, A. D. 1861* (Tallahassee, 1861; reprint ed., Jacksonville, 1928), 35; *The Acts and Resolutions Adopted by the General Assembly of the State of Florida*, 10th sess. (Tallahassee, 1861), 165-67.

which he did by removing the lamps and machinery and burying them on his orange grove near the Banana River.⁸ By the end of April, the string of south Florida lights between Jupiter Inlet and the Dry Tortugas were reported to be the only beacons remaining on the Confederate coast between Chesapeake Bay and the Rio Grande. Although the five lights in the Keys were difficult to reach from the mainland and were carefully watched by Union naval forces headquartered at Key West, pro-confederate south Floridians felt assured that either the state or the Confederate government would soon dispatch an agent to oversee the extinguishing of the unprotected lights at Jupiter and Cape Florida.⁹

As spring passed into summer, no emissary arrived, and area settlers grew increasingly impatient. This was particularly true of those along the Indian River, which formed a natural inland water route from Jupiter Inlet to the St. Johns River region and other more populous areas of northern Florida. At Jupiter, assistant lighthouse keeper August Oswald Lang, a German immigrant, repeatedly urged head keeper Joseph F. Papy to take matters into his own hands and shut the installation down. Although frequently professing his loyalty to the Confederacy, the Florida-born Papy stubbornly refused to take action, claiming that he was awaiting orders from the proper authorities. Perhaps, as his fellow south Floridians suggested at the time, he was also unwilling to sacrifice his government pay and provisions— which were rare commodities on that distant frontier. Or, as later writers have observed, pride in the powerful new light that he had supervised since the first of the year may have compelled Papy to remain at his post.¹⁰

8. "Report of the Lighthouse Board" (November 26, 1861). *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of Finances*, Sen. Exec. Doc. 2, 37th Cong., 2d sess., 203-04; George E. Buker, "St. Augustine and the Union Blockade," *El Escribano* 23 (1986), 2; Thomas Graham, *The Awakening of St. Augustine: The Anderson Family and the Oldest City, 1821-1924* (St. Augustine, 1978), 92-93, 102, 267; Harriett Carr, *Cape Canaveral, Cape of Storms and Wild Cane Fields* (St. Petersburg, 1974), 19-21.

9. "Report of the Lighthouse Board," 204; Dodd, " 'Volunteers' Report Destruction," 68.

10. Dodd, " 'Volunteers' Report Destruction," 68-69; James Paine to Christopher C. Memminger, October 10, 1861, photocopied letter in Historical Society of Palm Beach County, West Palm Beach; Mary Collar Linehan, "German First to Live on Palm Beach," *Update* 13 (November 1986), 3; DuBois, "Jupiter Lighthouse," 7; Eighth U. S. Census, Monroe County.

On August 9, 1861, exasperated by the apparent disinterest of higher authorities and by Papy's refusal to cooperate, Lang abruptly resigned his position and departed the lighthouse and the sturdy coquina structure that served as a house for the keepers. He journeyed northward forty miles to the home of James Paine, a settler of strong Confederate sympathies who lived near the Indian River Inlet. After considering Lang's dilemma, the two men resolved to extinguish the light themselves, by force if necessary. Fragmentary evidence indicates that Paine had been contemplating a raid on the lights south of the Indian River for some time before Lang's arrival, and he had been encouraged to proceed by Paul Arnau, the St. Augustine customs collector who had overseen the darkening of northeast Florida's lighthouses earlier in the year.¹¹

Within one week of his departure, on August 15, Lang returned to the Jupiter lighthouse accompanied by Paine who bluntly informed keeper Papy of the purpose of their visit. When Papy demanded to know under what authority Paine and Lang were acting, Paine replied that "we came as Citizens of the Confederate States, to discharge a duty to our country," adding that "our acts would meet the approbation of our Government."¹² Then, as Papy stood helplessly by, the two "citizens of the Confederate States" proceeded to render the facility unusable. Mindful of the cost and the potential value to the Confederacy of the fragile mineral lamps, French-made lenses and prisms, and the precision ball bearing rotating mechanism, Paine and Lang were careful not to damage any of the equipment, methodically removing only enough of the machinery to disable the beacon. They secured the dismantled parts, along with miscellaneous tools, paint, and oil, in a locked storage area on the lighthouse property.¹³

Encouraged by the success of this bold action, Paine and Lang considered the possibility of a similar raid on the Cape Florida lighthouse. While they discussed the feasibility of a trip

11. Dodd, "Volunteers' Report Destruction," 69; Paine to Memminger, October 10, 1861; *Charleston Courier*, September 24, 1861; DuBois, "Jupiter Lighthouse," 6-7.

12. Paine to Memminger, October 10, 1861.

13. *Ibid.*; Dodd, "Volunteers' Report Destruction," 68-70; DuBois, "Jupiter Lighthouse," 5-7.

to Key Biscayne, they were joined by Papy's second assistant, a recent arrival from the Fort Meade area named Francis A. Ivy, and by two additional men. Ivy and the two others agreed to accompany Lang to Cape Florida, a treacherous journey of approximately ninety miles over land and water. Paine stayed behind.¹⁴

Beginning their journey on foot, the four men passed the red sand dunes that stretched along the coast south of Jupiter Inlet, and skirted the shores of Lake Worth, the long, slim, freshwater lake running parallel to the ocean beach for over twenty miles and separated from it only by a strip of land averaging less than one-half mile in width. By keeping to the beach, the travelers were able to avoid the numerous swamps, sawgrass marshes, and palmetto thickets that made inland travel so difficult.¹⁵ Walking the open beach, however, exposed them to "a burning Sun and drenching rains," which they endured, as they later reported, "with a very scant allowance of food."¹⁶ After passing the Orange Grove Haulover, with its large grove of wild orange trees, and Lake Boca Raton, where a one-time inlet to the sea had been blocked by shifting sands, the four Confederates encountered the first serious obstacle to block their paths—the swift-flowing Hillsboro Inlet. Although contemporary reports do not specify how the four-man raiding party crossed this hurdle, they may have waded over at low tide or improvised a raft from the abundant vegetation that grew along the inlet's banks. As they proceeded southward, they faced, and crossed, an even more formidable barrier at New River Inlet before reaching Biscayne Bay where they procured a small sailboat. They set sail down the broad bay under cover of darkness and arrived at Key Biscayne late on the night of August 21.¹⁷

14. Paine to Memminger, October 10, 1861; Dodd, " 'Volunteers' Report Destruction," 68-69; Linchan "German First to Live on Palm Beach," 3; Eighth U. S. Census, Hillsborough County.

15. U. S. War Department, *Memoir to Accompany a Military Map*, 11-13; Ives, "Military Map."

16. Dodd, " 'Volunteers' Report Destruction," 69.

17. *Ibid.*, 68-69; U. S. War Department, *Memoir to Accompany a Military Map*, 13-19; Ives, "Military Map." An excellent description of the problems encountered in crossing the inlets between Lake Worth and Biscayne Bay before bridges or ferries were installed can be found in Pierce, "On the Wings of the Wind," 376, 436-38.

The Confederate party had been informed that the Cape Florida lighthouse keepers were armed, instructed to protect their station with force if attacked, and "had repeatedly boasted that they would defend the Light to the last."¹⁸ In confirmation of these reports, Lang, Ivy, and their two companions reached the lighthouse at midnight to find the two keepers ensconced in the tower with the iron door below bolted and locked from the inside. Clearly unable to gain possession of the lighthouse by force, the raiders settled upon a simple ruse to accomplish their mission. One of the four, acquainted with the Minorcan head keeper, Simeon Frow, and knowing that he was daily expecting supplies from Key West, hailed him with the message that he had news from the island city. This approach brought Frow and his assistant scurrying down the tower to unfasten the door, only to find themselves confronted by four armed men waiting in the darkness.¹⁹

As he and his companions examined the lighting mechanism, August Lang recommended destroying the parts that they could not take with them in their small boat. Proximity to Federal strongholds in the Keys precluded any possibility of holding and defending the property and thus discouraged the raiders from attempting to conceal the machinery on Key Biscayne. Accordingly, they smashed the lenses and reflectors, then removed the three lamps and burners along with two muskets and two Colt revolvers which had belonged to Frow and his assistant. The keepers themselves vigorously asserted their loyalty to the Confederacy, despite their earlier boasting that they would protect the light with their lives. James Paine later wrote that scarcity of room in the raiders' small boat more than this professed change of loyalties saved the two men from being taken into custody. Apparently, the four Confederates made most, if not all, of the journey back to Jupiter in their sailboat since Paine later wrote that they had traveled only ninety miles of the roughly 180-mile round trip on foot.²⁰

18. Dodd, "Volunteers' Report Destruction," 69.

19. *Ibid.*, 68-69; Paine to Memminger, October 10, 1861; Charleston Courier, September 24, 1861; Lighthouse Appointments, record group 26, National Archives, Washington, DC; Manuscript returns of the Ninth U. S. Census, 1870, population schedules, Dade County, on microfilm, University of Florida Library.

20. Dodd, "Volunteers' Report Destruction," 69; Paine to Memminger, October 10, 1861; "Report of the Lighthouse Board" (October 16, 1866),

After their departure, keeper Frow quickly shed any pretense of Confederate sympathy and set out for Key West in a small dinghy. Upon his arrival, he related his account of the raid to Union officials and to the correspondent of the *New York Herald* who relayed the news to the North. Frow claimed that the assailants had identified themselves as "The Coast Guard," led by "Captain Arnou [Arnau?] of St. Augustine." This assertion seems to indicate that the raiders were acting with the advice and cooperation of the St. Augustine customs collector, a supposition reinforced by the fact that James Paine was acquainted with Arnau and did, in fact, seek his advice concerning the deposition of the lighthouse equipment in the weeks following the raids. Frow's statement also raises the possibility that Arnau himself may have been one of the two unidentified men who accompanied Lang and Ivy to Cape Florida. Other statements made by Frow, however, weaken the credibility of his account. He reported, for example, that on August 26, while en route to Key West, he had seen the lighthouse raiders sailing southward toward the Carysfort Reef lighthouse, when, in reality, they had returned to Jupiter.²¹

When the raiding party returned, they stored the articles confiscated from Cape Florida on the Jupiter lighthouse property. Keeper Papy they "turned away" as "not the proper person to be in such a responsible position."²² Papy gathered his family together and sailed for Key West where he had resided before taking the keeper's job at Jupiter. Shortly after his compatriots rejoined him, Paine wrote a report to Florida Governor Madison Starke Perry that detailed the lighthouse raids and solicited the governor's approval. This report, signed by Paine, Lang, and Ivy, also requested Perry's decision on the final deposition of the lighting equipment stored at Jupiter and expressed fears of a Union attack on the facility. "As it is most likely that the enemy will undertake to retaliate [sic] by destroying the Light and property," Paine wrote, "we would suggest that a Guard be Sent

Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of Finances, House Exec. Doc. 4, 39th Cong., 2d sess., 219.

21. *Charleston Courier*, September 24, 1861; Buker, "St. Augustine and the Union Blockade," 2-3.
22. Dodd, "'Volunteers' Report Destruction," 69; Paine to Memminger, October 10, 1861.

to protect it, or if not, instruct us to have the property moved to some safe place." The arms captured at Cape Florida, he added, "will be much needed at Jupiter in case of an attack."²³ Paine also informed Perry that he had taken the liberty of placing Lang in charge of the Jupiter lighthouse. After completing the report, he set out for Tallahassee to deliver it to the governor in person.²⁴

The lighthouse raids did not long escape the attention of Union naval authorities. Federal Commander T. Augustus Craven of the steamer *Crusader* wrote Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles from New York harbor on September 6, 1861, shortly after returning north from blockading duty in the Florida Keys. Evidently basing his report on information provided by former lighthouse keeper Frow, Craven described the damage to the southeastern coastal lights by "a gang of pirates from St. Augustine." Although he erred as to the origin of the raiders, he accurately described the removal of the lighting apparatus from the Jupiter tower and the destruction of the lenses at Cape Florida.²⁵

While deploring the darkening of these two vital lights, Craven expressed greater concern for the safety of the lighthouses at Carysfort Reef and Sombrero Key which guarded the submerged outer reef off the upper Keys. Although his anxiety echoed Frow's inaccurate belief that he had seen the raiders traveling south toward Carysfort Reef, Craven's concern for the reef lights was thoroughly justified. These beacons, erected in the 1850s sat atop steel frame towers anchored in the coral and designed to withstand both hurricane winds and the relentless battering of the waves. In addition to being considered engineering marvels, they guarded one of the most dangerous sections of the reef, past which Union ships had to navigate when sailing between Key West and northern ports. Unsure of the size or intentions of the "gang of pirates" striking south Florida's lighthouses, Commander Craven recommended "early

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23. Dodd, " 'Volunteers' Report Destruction," 67-69; Richards, "Reminiscences of Early Days," *Miami News*, 1903 clippings; Eighth U. S. Census, Monroe County.
 24. Paine to Memminger, October 10, 1861; Dodd, " 'Volunteers' Report Destruction," 69.
 25. T. Augustus Craven to Gideon Welles, September 6, 1861, *ORN*, series 1, XII. 207.

measures for the security of the Reef Lights,” specifying that a small, light-draft steamer stationed in the vicinity could “effectively prevent further acts of violence.”²⁶

Salmon P. Chase, Federal secretary of the treasury, whose department included the United States Lighthouse Board, seconded Craven’s recommendations. Quoting a report by the lighthouse inspector for the lower Atlantic coast, he wrote Welles on October 11 that “a small vessel not drawing over eight feet of water” should cruise Hawk Channel between Cape Florida and Sombrero Key to protect the reef lights.²⁷

The Union Blockade Board added their voices to the call for strengthening the northern military presence in southeast Florida. Although it is doubtful that the news of the lighthouse raids had reached them by the time their September 3, 1861, report was issued, the board had somewhat belatedly come to the conclusion that they had seriously underestimated southern Florida’s importance in their July report. Accordingly, the September report sought to rectify the situation by advocating a strict blockade of the state’s lower east coast and even recommending the military occupation of Indian Key and the mouth of the Miami River.²⁸

In the meantime, the Confederate lighthouse raiders, far from being in a position to launch raids against the formidable Keys lights, were having difficulties deciding how to secure the equipment already in their custody. When Paine presented his report to Governor Perry in Tallahassee, the governor ordered him to transport all of the dismantled lighthouse machinery to St. Augustine, and there present it to the commander of Fort Marion where it could be properly guarded. Leaving Tallahassee, Paine traveled to St. Augustine to confer with collector Arnau before returning to the Indian River. His long trek home convinced him that the arduous journey northward would damage the fragile lenses and precision machinery which he had taken such care to protect. Therefore, on October 10, he

26. Ibid.; Love Dean, *Reef Lights, Seaswept Lighthouses of the Florida Keys* (Key West, 1982), 23, 47-52, 61-69; *Charleston Courier*, September 24, 1861.

27. Salmon P. Chase to Welles, October 11, 1861, *ORN*, series 1, XII, 216.

28. Second Report of Conference for Consideration of Measures for Effectually Blockading the Coast Bordering on the Gulf of Mexico, September 3, 1861, *ORN*, series 1, XVI, 651-52.

addressed a letter from his Indian River home to Confederate Secretary of the Treasury Christopher G. Memminger asking Memminger's "opinion and decision."²⁹

The secretary's reply, if any, is unknown. And while Paine sought advice and debated his course of action, his Jupiter storehouse was becoming increasingly vulnerable. Throughout the second half of 1861, as the Confederate government amassed large armies in the upper South to meet invading forces from the northern states, Florida officials lamented that their state was being abandoned. Even these officials worried more about the safety of populous ports such as Fernandina, Pensacola, and St. Marks than about south Florida's lonely shores. As early as September 13, 1861, Brigadier General John B. Grayson, commanding all Confederate troops in middle and east Florida, informed the war department in Richmond that "Florida will become a Yankee province unless measures for her relief are promptly made."³⁰ By the end of the year, Tampa remained the Confederacy's southernmost military outpost. On the east coast, no southern troops were active below St. Augustine.³¹

With no resources for defense, and with Union naval forces directing greater attention to the southeast Florida coast, Paine, Lang, and their companions recognized the folly of leaving the lighthouse apparatus at Jupiter. Sometime in late 1861 or early 1862, they removed the items and carefully concealed them in the wilderness nearby. According to local tradition, the hiding place was a palmetto hammock near the shore of Lake Worth Creek, a narrow, winding stream that flowed into Jupiter Inlet from the south.³² Theirs was a wise and timely decision. Major Federal offensives in Tennessee in the spring of 1862 escalated the withdrawal of Confederate troops from Florida. In March, John Milton, who had succeeded Perry as governor the previous

29. Paine to Memminger, October 10, 1861.

30. John B. Grayson to Leroy P. Walker, September 13, 1861, U. S. War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, 1880-1901), series 1, VI, 276 (hereafter cited as *OR*); John Milton to Stephen R. Mallory, October 2, 1861, *ibid.*, 287; Milton to Jefferson Davis, October 18, *ibid.*, 291.

31. John E. Johns, *Florida During the Civil War* (Gainesville, 1963), 56-57.

32. Bessie Wilson DuBois, "Two South Florida Lighthouse Keepers," *Tequesta* 33 (1973), 41; DuBois, "Jupiter Lighthouse," 8.

October, protested that the effect of these troop reductions was "to abandon Middle, East, and South Florida to the mercy or abuse of the Lincoln government."³³ As Confederate garrisons withdrew from the state's northeast coast and the St. Johns River region, Union invaders quickly exploited the situation. Fernandina fell on March 5, 1862, St. Augustine on the eleventh, and Jacksonville on the twelfth. In southeast Florida, blockaders began maintaining regular patrols of the coast.³⁴

Although Federal blockading activity increased in both frequency and efficiency as the war progressed, the darkening of the lighthouses no doubt encouraged and facilitated the blockade running trade in southeast Florida. Jupiter Inlet, with its access to the sheltered Indian River route northward, gained particular notoriety as a blockade running center. By the end of the war, a total of eleven blockade running vessels had been captured entering or leaving the inlet—a figure unsurpassed in south Florida except by the Indian River Inlet. No statistics record the number that passed through unmolested. The darkened lighthouse itself was reported to have been used by local Confederates as an observation and signal tower, flashing prearranged torchlight messages to waiting blockade runners when no Federal ships were present.³⁵

Still stunned by the bold raid on the light the previous year, the Federal lighthouse service reported in 1862 that the Jupiter "tower and lantern" had both been destroyed. Union sailors patrolling the area knew otherwise, and, in July, Lieutenant James H. Spotts, commanding the United States schooner *Wanderer*, reported that despite the absence of lights, the structure

33. Milton to Judah P. Benjamin, March 5, 1862, *OR*, series 1, VI, 402; Robert E. Lee to James H. Trapier, March 1, 1862, *ibid.*, 405.

34. William Watson Davis, *The Civil War and Reconstruction in Florida* (New York, 1913; facsimile ed., Gainesville, 1964), 150-61; Johns, *Florida During the Civil War*, 62-66; Welles to James L. Lardner, June 10, 1862, *ORN*, series 1, XVII, 263; William P. Randall to Welles, June 23, 1862, *ORN*, series 1, XVII, 267; Lardner to Welles, July 9, 1862, *ORN*, series 1, XVII, 286.

35. James A. Henshall, *Camping and Cruising in Florida* (Cincinnati, 1884), 81; Stanley L. Itkin, "Operations of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron in the Blockade of Florida, 1862-1865" (master's thesis, Florida State University, 1962), 198.

and its remaining machinery were "in good order."³⁶ On February 12, 1863, a Federal shore party from the blockade steamer *Sagamore*, composed primarily of pro-Union Florida volunteers, discovered a blockade runner's cache of salt, as well as sails, tools, and "a lot of articles pertaining to the lighthouse" near Jupiter Inlet. Since local tradition maintains that Captain James A. Armour, a New York native who resided on the Indian River during the war, discovered the hidden lighthouse parts, and since Armour was a Union sympathizer who served as a pilot aboard the *Sagamore*, he may have been a member of this landing party, and the "lot of articles" may have included the actual illuminating apparatus. If this were the case, Union authorities may have felt that reilluminating the light while hostilities continued would invite a second raid because the beacon remained dark during the rest of the conflict.³⁷

The extinguishing of the Cape Florida light did not open the Biscayne Bay region to large-scale blockade running. Since bay area blockade runners had no practical way to convey their goods north once they landed, they confined their inbound cargoes to supplies needed by settlers at the tiny Miami River settlement. The darkened light on Key Biscayne, however, concealed a greater hazard to Federal navigation than that at Jupiter. With no warning to guide ships away from the reefs south and east of Cape Florida, these reefs, astride the main shipping channel to Key West, claimed a number of Union vessels. In February 1862, Brigadier General John M. Brannan, newly appointed commander of the Union Department of Key West, optimistically informed the Lighthouse Board that he would be able to protect the Cape Florida light by the end of the month and that he intended to station a guard there.³⁸ The following April, a detachment from the Forty-seventh Pennsylvania Infantry, stationed at Key West, accompanied a party of civilian carpenter-

36. DuBois, "Jupiter Lighthouse," 7; Lardner to Welles, July 26, 1862, *ORN*, series 1, XVII, 292.

37. Henry A. Crane to Earl English, March 4, 1863, *ORN*, series 1, XVII, 372; DuBois, "Two South Florida Lighthouse Keepers," 41.

38. Richards, "Reminiscences of Early Days," *Miami News*, 1903 clippings; John M. Brannan to W. B. Shubrick, February 6, 1862, U. S. Army Continental Commands, Department of Key West, letters sent, 1862-1863, record group 393 National Archives, (hereafter cited as Department of Key West).

ters to Cape Florida in an attempt to repair the lighthouse and prevent additional shipwrecks. They found the damage there too extensive for their limited resources to remedy.³⁹

With Federal efforts to guard and repair the lighthouse proving futile, the reefs bordering Biscayne Bay remained a dangerous impediment to shipping. Two notable wrecks in the area took place within one week in early January 1863 when two large Union troopships ran aground. One, the *Lucinda*, snagged between Long and Triumph reefs, was freed by a passing blockade vessel. But the other, the *Sparkling Sea*, grounded on the north point of Ajax Reef and was abandoned as a total loss.⁴⁰ By the end of 1863, the Federal Lighthouse Board purchased replacement lenses, reflectors, and lamps, and shipped them to Key West to be stored until "it may be found safe and prudent" to install them at Cape Florida.⁴¹

Although Federal naval expeditions operated freely along Florida's southeastern coast during the final years of the war, and occasionally visited the lighthouses, no further repair efforts appear to have been made until the conflict ended. Confederate naval officer and blockade runner John Taylor Wood, who accompanied southern Secretary of War John C. Breckinridge down Florida's east coast during his escape to Cuba in June 1865, noted passing the "destroyed" light at Jupiter Inlet. Later that same year, the Lighthouse Board dispatched an agent to south Florida "with instructions to use every exertion" to reilluminate the two lights.⁴² In January 1866, over six months after Florida's last Confederates had laid down their arms, Temple Pent, a Bahamian-born Biscayne Bay resident who had served

39. Lewis G. Schmidt, *A Civil War History of the 47th Regiment of Pennsylvania Veteran Volunteers* (Allentown, 1986), 127.

40. L. Ronstein to F. Z. Heebner, January 11, 1863, Department of Key West; English to Welles, January 10, 1863, *ORN*, series 1, XVII, 349; William J. Schellings, ed., "On Blockade Duty in Florida Waters, Excerpts From a Union Naval Officer's Diary," *Tequesta* 15 (1955), 67.

41. "Report of the Lighthouse Board" (October 31, 1863), *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the Finances*, House Exec. Doc. 3, 38th Cong., 1st sess., 153-62.

42. John Taylor Wood, "Escape of the Confederate Secretary of War," type-script copy of an article in *Century* 25 (1893-1894), 8, in P. K. Yonge Library of Florida History; "Report of the Lighthouse Board" (October 26, 1865), *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the Finances*, House Exec. Doc. 3, 39th Cong., 1st sess., 197.

as keeper of the Cape Florida light in the 1850s, was reappointed to that position. The light shone again on April 15. James Armour, the Indian River Unionist who had recovered the lamps, lenses, and machinery from the Jupiter light, helped repair that beacon, and was appointed assistant to keeper William B. Davis when the installation reopened on June 28, 1866.⁴³

From the perspective of over a century, the southeast Florida lighthouse raids appear as a footnote in the state's illustrious Civil War history. Nevertheless, by assisting the efforts of blockade runners to supply the beleaguered Confederate States, by hindering Federal navigation, and by drawing men and vessels away from more vital theaters of action, James Paine, August O. Lang, Francis Ivy, and two men whose names have been lost to posterity did their small part to prolong the struggle. In doing so, they proved that even a "convenient place of resort for pirates" had a role to play in the great conflict.

43. Lighthouse Appointments, record group 26, National Archives; Eighth U. S. Census, Dade County; DuBois, "Two South Florida Lighthouse Keepers," 41; DuBois, "Jupiter Lighthouse," 8-9; "Report of the Lighthouse Board" (October 16, 1836), *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the Finances*, House Exec. Doc. 4, 39th Cong., 2d sess., 219.