

2014

Swaim Family Papers: Civil War Reports and Letters of Recommendation for a Carpetbagger

John T. Foster, Jr.



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

Foster, Jr., John T. (2014) "Swaim Family Papers: Civil War Reports and Letters of Recommendation for a Carpetbagger," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 93: No. 4, Article 6.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol93/iss4/6>

Swaim Family Papers: Civil War Reports and Letters of Recommendation for a Carpetbagger

by John T. Foster, Jr., and Nicole Brown

Yankee families became involved in Florida during the Civil War and in the Reconstruction. For example, the family of the American merchant John Jacob Astor owned a tiny railroad that connected Toco on the St. Johns River with St. Augustine; they later sold it to New York industrialist and founder of Standard Oil, Henry Flagler. The family of New York-born writer Henry James invested in a cotton plantation in Alachua County. Best known perhaps is Harriet Beecher Stowe's orange grove in Mandarin where she and her family wintered for seventeen years. The origins of these ventures remained largely unexplored as Florida documents were returned to the North, having never been seen by historians in this state. Now, as Northern libraries, historical societies, and archives place descriptions of their holdings online, it is possible to locate materials and collections that have been unexamined by Florida researchers. In 2012, Harriet Beecher Stowe's first published articles about Florida were discovered by finding issues of a Boston newspaper that scholars believed no longer existed. In another example, the availability of online resources revealed the papers of John Swaim, a founder of modern Florida. The purpose

Dr. John T. Foster, Jr., is Professor Emeritus at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. He is a frequent contributor to the *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Nicole Brown is a Visiting Instructor at FAMU. This paper grew out of Ms. Brown's interest in research.

of this article is to share something of the range and diversity of their content.¹

While Jacob W. Swaim donated the Swaim Family Papers to the New Jersey State Historical Society, the collection includes a variety of materials on other members of the family. The oldest materials belonged to Jacob's father, John Sanford Swaim, beginning with the minister's arrival in Jacksonville during the Civil War. The items from 1864 include John's letter of appointment as a missionary, his first report from Florida, and his description of a Cracker Wedding. When he came to the state, he was already fifty-eight, old by nineteenth-century standards, and his family was plagued with tuberculosis. While illness at times affected his ability to preach, it did not impair his ability to dream. He was an abolitionist with a dream that Martin Luther King, Jr. would have admired generations before King's birth. It is not surprising, then, that Swaim has been the subject of three journal articles, two in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*, and has appeared in five different books.²

When John S. Swaim moved to Jacksonville the entire state had a tiny population of fewer than 180,000 people. It was almost equally divided between African Americans and whites. The white

- 1 Travel on the St. Johns Railroad is described in John T. Foster, Jr. and Sarah Whitmer Foster, *Calling Yankees to Florida: Harriet Beecher Stowe's Forgotten Tourist Articles* (Cocoa, FL: Florida Historical Society Press, 2011), 94-97. Information about the James family came from oral communications with Sam Proctor. The Stowe articles were discovered through the joint efforts of Beth G. Burgess, Collections Manager, Harriet Beecher Stowe Center and John T. Foster. "The Swaim Family Papers" are available in Manuscript Group 1189, held by the New Jersey Historical Society. The collection is composed of 0.2 linear feet and 23 folders, including "correspondence, certificates, deeds, estate papers, and other items of the Swaim family."
- 2 See John T. Foster, Jr., Herbert B. Whitmers, Jr., and Sarah Whitmer Foster, "Tourism Was Not the Only Purpose: Jacksonville Republicans and Newark's Sentinel of Freedom," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 63, no. 3 (Winter 1985): 318-324; John T. Foster, Jr. and Sarah Whitmer Foster, "John Sanford Swaim: A Life at the Beginning of Modern Florida," *Methodist History* 26 (July 1988): 229-240; John T. Foster, Jr. and Sarah Whitmer Foster, "Last Shall Be First: Northern Methodists in Reconstruction, Jacksonville," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 70, no 3 (Winter 1992): 265-280; Canter Brown, Jr., *Ossian Bingley Hart: Florida's Loyalist Reconstruction Governor* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997); Foster and Foster, Beechers, *Stowes, and Yankee Strangers: The Transformation of Florida* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999); Foster and Foster, *Calling Yankees to Florida*; Larry E. Rivers and Canter Brown, Jr., *Laborers in the Vineyard of the Lord: The Beginnings of the AME Church in Florida, 1865-1895* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001); and Diane Roberts, *Dream State: Eight Generations of Swamp Lawyers, Conquistadors, Confederate Daughters, Banana Republicans and Other Florida Wildlife* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006).

population had three different social origins dividing them. The oldest were the Minorcans who settled in St. Augustine after the Seven Years' War (1754-1763). Second to arrive were rural farmers, or "Crackers," who drifted in from southern Georgia at the beginning of the 1820s. The third group was composed of planters who replicated the cotton plantations of the Old South in counties around Tallahassee, starting later in the same decade. Modern Florida—the world of tourists, retirees, and novel agricultural crops, such as citrus and winter vegetables—did not exist.³

With the prospect of a Union victory in the Civil War and the likelihood of African American suffrage, John Swaim realized that a small influx of Yankees to Florida could change the future of the state. Blacks combined with a few Yankees would be a political majority. A place of freedom could be created in the South. To achieve this lofty goal, the Methodist minister penned newspaper articles for the Newark, New Jersey, *Sentinel of Freedom* outlining his plan and encouraging migration. During the period of the Reconstruction, from 1865 to 1877, this prominent newspaper published sixty some letters and articles about Florida.⁴

John Swaim sought Yankee settlers, telling them that real money could be made in citrus and winter vegetables: "The chances for a young man of limited means are better in Florida than in any [other] portion of the South." In time, he shared his objective: if a few colonies of Yankees came to the state, they could help "control this 'Italy of America.'" Near the end of his efforts Swaim further elaborated: "We want to out vote" traditional Southerners "and hold them as a helpless minority." Then, he added, "we will settle 'em out. Come Kansas and Nebraska over them."⁵

At its birth, modern Florida had a lofty purpose. A new economy would help support the meaningful participation of African Americans. To that end, Swaim endorsed African Americans holding public office. He admitted that many blacks had limited education, but the minister observed that many people of color "had sound sterling common sense."⁶

For African Americans to fully participate in a democracy, they needed more educational opportunities. In 1866, John Swaim

3 Foster and Foster, *Calling Yankees to Florida*, 9-10.

4 Foster, Whitmer, and Foster, "Tourism Was Not the Only Purpose," 318-324; *Newark Daily Advertiser*, August 29, 1865; *Sentinel of Freedom*, September 29, 1868. *The Advertiser* was a subsidiary of the *Sentinel*.

5 *Ibid.*,

6 *Ibid.*, July 7, 1868.

aided teachers in Freedmen's Bureau schools in both Jacksonville and Gainesville. In 1872, he chaired the meeting that organized Cookman Institute, the state's first high school for people of color. Cookman Institute had an independent existence for fifty years before it was moved to Daytona and merged with Mary McLeod Bethune's school, eventually becoming Bethune-Cookman College. The most prominent graduate of Cookman Institute was none other than the civil rights leader A. Philip Randolph, Valedictorian of the Class of 1907.⁷

Jacksonville changed after the publication of John Swaim's articles. The town grew from a community of two thousand residents dependent upon saw mills to a city of six thousand residents with an economy based upon tourism. Change further accelerated after the famous novelist Harriet Beecher Stowe started spending winters in Mandarin and writing about the state. Following the publication of her articles in her brother's newspaper and a collection of articles as a book, she observed that twelve thousand tourists had grown to forty-thousand in two years' time. Harriet Beecher Stowe ended up writing fifty-seven published letters and articles about the state or travel to the state. A woman who helped free African Americans would have wanted a place of freedom in the South.⁸

While the instructions given to John Swaim in his letter of appointment, June 18, 1864, stated that he was to meet the needs of people "irrespective of color," he focused first on African Americans. Swaim organized a church for each race with the black M.E. Church opening in 1866, four years before a white one. In time, the former would become Ebenezer United Methodist Church and the latter became Snyder Memorial. The African American church was relocated in the 1970s and still exists while the second church suffered as people moved away from downtown Jacksonville, closing in the 1990s. In education, Swaim's activities followed exactly the same pattern; he helped to organize Cookman Institute before his family started Duval High School.⁹

His 1864 letter of appointment supplied the minister a salary of \$700 a year. Aware of the limited funds, John Swaim and his wife purchased a house large enough to board visitors and people passing through Jacksonville. These included teachers serving

7 Foster and Foster, "Last Shall Be First," 277-278.

8 Foster and Foster, *Beechers, Stoves*, 88-93; Foster and Foster, *Calling Yankees*, 12-20.

9 *Ibid.*, 277-279; "Free schools must go hand and hand with free labor," *Sentinel*, July 7, 1868.

in black schools established by the National Freedman's Relief Association and, in time, the Freedmen's Bureau. Among these educators were Chloe Merrick, who would marry Harrison Reed, Florida's first Republican governor, as well as Merrick's friends and family.¹⁰

On August 8, 1864, Swaim wrote his first report to Dr. William L. Harris, Secretary of the Mission Society. He found the small town fortified and occupied by federal troops. Conditions in Jacksonville were rough. Federal troops had occupied the community on three previous occasions before they finally stayed in early February, 1864. There had been violence aimed at Unionists who fled with the Federal forces. Southerners burned their property and Union soldiers inflicted still further damage, explaining part of the content of Swaim's report. While he didn't give the scale of the destruction it included "six blocks and twenty-five buildings." The report also indicates that Swaim had already interacted with Frances Beecher Perkins, the sister-in-law of Harriet Beecher Stowe. Of the novelist's female relatives who came to Florida in the Civil War, she was the most knowledgeable of Jacksonville. A different source, one of the army soldiers who helped Swaim, witnessed James Beecher, Frances's husband, preach when the minister [Swaim] was ill. The man who was trying to start modern Florida was connected with the famous novelist's family from the beginning of his ministry.¹¹

August 8, 1864

Rev. W. L. Harris
Dear Brother,

Since my arrival at my post and in agreement with instructions given me, I make the attempt to furnish my first report. I found the church having been reserved exclusively for religious purposes and the well disposed portion of the community by both those who claimed a membership; and they received me with great cordiality. The military also seemed well pleased, promising me all needed assistance in carrying out the purposes of my mission.

10 Edmund S. Janes to John S. Swaim, June 18, 1864, Swaim Family Papers, Folder 1; Foster and Foster, "Aid Societies Were Not Alike: Northern Teachers in Post-Civil War Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 73, no. 3 (January 1995): 308-324.

11 John S. Swaim to W. L. Harris, August 8, 1864, Swaim Family Papers, Folder 1. The destruction is also described in Brown, *Ossian Bingley Hart*, 163.

But my coming was just at the time of some important movement of the troops into the interior so that I have very few of the officers or the men at the first service on the Sabbath. I have held service but few came out in the morning. In the evening we have the house tolerably well filled with officers and soldiers not on duty and a portion of the freed people of color with which the town seemed filled. In visiting their houses I find many of them claim to be Methodists and as soon as possible I shall make an effort to gather them in to a church organization. The colored people that came [here] escaped from bondage and are much more intelligent and seem of a better class than any I had met with in other places in the department. I must as soon as I can gain proper access to them they will be found to manifest good fruit. The greater portion of the white population who were members of our church have gone off with the rebels and among the few that remain here [show] much backsliding. The loss of their property and utter dearrangement of business has terribly affected them. Driven from home by the rebel authorities without time to secure their effects. Then came back last February to find their homes desolated, furniture destroyed or stolen. A new beginning to be made in life, and nothing to begin with. I have witnessed many disheartening instances of such desolation in families once prominent in our church here. I have resolved to meet these discouragements with the best efforts I can make to bring order out of this seeming confusion. There is another class of citizens here for whom provision is to be made whose destitution I could describe. The native refugees just in and constantly coming in from the country. Poor, abjectly poor at home on their best days. Glad now to come into our lines to escape the conditions they dread so terrible. They have been compelled to leave what little they had. And here they...every day increasing, presenting a condition of squalid wretchedness I had hardly supposed possible to find. Among these poor ignorant ones more ignorant than many of their former neighbor's slaves. A terrible sickness has begun. Especially among the children...Whether we can succeed to induce these people to go to church is a question. They say they wish they could go and promise to send their children to Sunday School as soon as they get well enough to go. But it will require much labor and long patience to elevate these poor people. I have

organized a Sunday School which promises well, composed mostly of the children of the colored people.

With all the henderences [sic] of excessively hot weather and the sickness that has prevailed, we have had between forty and fifty scholars. We have no doubt the number will be more than double as soon as these difficulties pass away. I find some of the officers and some of the soldiers that kindly render us assistance as teachers besides a few of the residents of the place. The wife of Col. Beecher of the 35th Colored Troops came in yesterday and knowingly offered to take a class. Brother William Henry of the East Tennessee Conference now here as an agent of the Christian Commission has made his month's residence here quite effective and has rendered me good service by introducing me to the people and to the general work of the commission...¹²

Being respectfully in Christian bonds, John S. Swaim

When John Swaim described his plans in the *Sentinel of Freedom* for seizing Florida, he never described the potential of working with any of the state's existing white citizens. This follows a pattern that appeared in a post-war plan outlined in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*. In February, 1864, Edward Everett Hale proposed Yankee control of the state while belittling its white residents. The same attitude appeared when John Swaim married Benjamin Nobles to Catherine McCullough. Nobles was from a farm family in the Middleburg area of nearby Clay County. He and his friend, James Hewitt, were members of a unit of Federal troops, the First East Florida Cavalry. Swaim was amused by their country manners and oblivious to any potential of a working alliance with such people. Benjamin and Catherine later resettled in the Tampa area and

12 Frances's husband, James C. Beecher, also filled in for Swaim as a preacher. Justus M. Silliman, *A New Canaan Private in the Civil War: Letters of Justus M. Silliman, 17th Connecticut Volunteers* (New Canaan, CT: New Canaan Historical Society, 1984), 77-78. Articles about Stowe's first cousin, Harriet Ward Foote Hawley, and sister, Isabella Beccher Hooker, have appeared in the *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Frances spent more time in Jacksonville than either of these relatives. See Foster and Foster, "Historic Notes and Documents: Harriet Ward Foote Hawley: Civil War Journalist," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 83, no. 4 (Spring 2005): 444-468; and Foster and Foster, "In the Aftermath of the Battle of Olustee: A Beecher's Surprise Visit to Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 86, no. 3 (Winter 2008): 380-387.

lived into the twentieth century. The minister's description, a part of Swaim Family Papers, foreshadows future events.¹³

The Cracker Wedding

Dec. 17, [1864], 11 o'clock was waited upon by two young men belonging to the [First East] Florida Cavalry one of whom asked me if I could marry the other that evening. I replied that I suppose I could and then requested the names of the parties. The young man to be married said his name was Benjamin Nobles and the girl's name was Katy McCullough, that the place for the ceremony was over the bridge toward the sawmill and about 7 o'clock the hour. Having possession myself of these facts he said that young man No. 1 wanted the same thing done for him. "Very well now for your name." That I found to be John Hewitt and his girl's name Hester Allen. After dinner sometime the latter one of the hopeful boys called to let me know that he had given it up and would not be married as he had said but added "never mind I will give you the chance before long."¹⁴

After supper, coming out of the house, I found it quite dark and I did not know what difficulties I might meet. I went up to Capt. Barker's tent to seek for a pilot and protector. From him I learned that I would require the countersign. He had not received it but would go and obtain it and go with me to pass me [through the military line]. This was a great favor as I deemed it unsafe for me to go alone. The countersign could not be got at the place he called at and he said, "I will get [it from] the Sargent of the guard." And with this hope we proceeded till the picket line [?] when a stern "halt" was sounded in our ears. The Capt. answered, "A friend without the countersign."

13 Edward Everett Hale, "Northern Invasions," *Atlantic Monthly* 13 (February 1864): 245-250. Benjamin Nobles appears on the U.S. Census of 1850 as a nine-year-old and again in 1910. Swaim Family Papers, Folder 1. James Hewitt was an engineer from Louisiana.

14 The title was written by Swaim, with negative sentiments. The First East Coast Cavalry was a small Federal unit organized late in the war in Jacksonville and Hilton Head, South Carolina. "The unit served in northeast Florida. . . and was on occupation duty around Tallahassee in the summer of 1865." Record Group Number 000172, Series S 1280, Online Catalog—State Archives of Florida

“Advance,” he responded and I found the sergeant of the guard was one of his sergeants but the boy had some doubts as to any liberty he had to pass the countersign even to his Captain. But his scruples were satisfied and we were passed. Coming upon the bridge we found a portion of the planks taken up and placed as a barricade upon the other portion. This we had to climb over and then walk the strong pieces till the other undisturbed planks were gained. No other obstacles meeting us we soon arrived at the place which was once a house of some pretensions, with as to size and general appearance: fences had put in some good style and the gardens and the general surroundings were in good taste. But its owner was in rebeldom and it had been taken over to the refugee family that now occupied it.¹⁵

The groom met us on the piazza that extended the length of the front of the house. He brought out two seats that once had the appearance of Chairs. But which now imperfectly served for seats, saying, “they would be ready soon.” After some commotion and apparent confusion, he came out at the front door ... We entered the hall [which] opened into a room where [there] was a fireplace in which a light pine fire was blazing to serve for lighting, the bridal apartment. The front part of the room was occupied by a table upon which was huddled a heap of unwashed dishes, fragments of cold potatoes, and pieces of bone upon which a little meat still clung—two or three knives and forks filled out the adornment of the table. Beyond it in the corner at the left of the fireplace was a heap of nondescript fragments of cloth, but of what texture or color or what purpose it was originally fabricated one could hardly make out. At the right hand of the fireplace was the head of a bedstead once a rather elegant affair made of cherry wood, the parts of which were skillfully turned and the headboard was elaborately finished but the varnish was all off amid many signs of the dilapidation the poor broken down thing exhibited. It was burdened with a

15 Captain Barker was Edmund P. Barker in Company E, Third Regiment of the U.S. Colored Infantry. www.nps.gov/civilwar/search-soldiers.htm. He is mentioned in John F. Fannin's "The Jacksonville Mutiny of 1865," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 88, no. 3 (Winter 2010), 384. Barker used harsh discipline on black troops.

rough, coarse and very dirty bed and bedding; beneath it lay a heap of rags and rubbish that could not be described besides portions of bedroom furniture that should not be described, all in plainest view. At the foot of the bed stood a fragment of a chair filled with what had once been clothing but like other heaps of what material or for what purpose made did not appear. On the side opposite to the foot of the bed at the right hand of the door stood a "great [spinning] wheel" such as was used with us at the North some generation and a half ago. It is now time to introduce the inmates of the house. And to comment on the old lady sitting on an old low stool directly before the blazing pine fire claims the first place in the description. It is somewhat difficult to fix the age of these people for they all appear as if prematurely worn down into something like the infirmities of age but our aged woman had all the unmistakable marks [of being old]. Her hair gray—face and skin generally wrinkled—teeth gone—voice sharp and cracked—speech hoarse and quick. Cap or headdress of a coarse material and very dirty plainly made with no ruffle border except such as time had [not] effected. Two young women or girls were running about the room one cleanly dressed in new Calico with a small brown sprig or figure with a slovenly fit, no hoop to keep it up and hence dragging some two inches on the floor. Quite an attempt at a headdress was made a few black beads. In person she was of good size, well-formed—healthy in appearance. Face flat; features expressionless; eyes a little squint large and blue. The other lacked the clean, though she wore a calico dress. She was more nervous—kept constantly stirring about yet aiming at nothing. The young man was about 21 years old, short and firmly made. His dress was the soldiers blue pants and darker blue coat like those worn by the soldiers. He had been mustered into the service as one of the "First [East] Florida Cavalry" and the dress was not very much soiled. These four persons were the occupants of the room; two or three young men we saw on the porch but they had decamped or fled the premises, whatever from fear that a wedding was some dreadful Yankee institution or because they had no invitation to the coming festivities... We were all standing for the old lady occupied

all the place that [had] any resemblance to a seat. The Captain and I occupying a position by the table, resting the knuckles of one hand upon it the only contact we deemed safe for our clothing. As soon as the parties became quiet, I asked if they were ready. I directed the bride and groom to take their places on the floor. This they effected without mistake or much impediment when I proceeded with the ceremony. The bride either because she was happy or thought she was doing something very smart threw a smile ever and again into the face of the groom or over her shoulder at the girl that had taken her position before the fire. At the point in the ceremony when I directed them to join their right hands, he extended his and because he moved his outside hand, she of course put hers forward and extended her left as a consequence. "Your right hands please," said I. The mistake was rectified and the marriage rite was completed. After my congratulatory salutation [I turned] to the blank certificate [and] asked if they had ink. "No." responded the old lady with a sharp quick voice we haven't got no ink. I once got some but it wasn't wanted here and nobody here to use it on. ...It was too much bother to keep it." At the close of the ceremony the groom had made a seat of the side of the bed and the bride ... [went] to the fireplace to talk with her female companion. Not being able to fill out the certificate I said would do it a home and he could call and get it. "Yes," said he. I will call tomorrow, nodding his head and thanking me. And the Captain and I departed. As we left, the Captain said, "Do you think you did the right thing in marrying that couple? I said I have the Provost Marshall's warrant for it. I found my home safely, passing with the Captain's help the bridge without difficulty. I thanked the Captain, telling him that if I received a fee there would be paid compensation for his trouble.[?] He replied he had been more than paid—that the scene was worth a good deal in adding to his stock of knowledge; he would have material for another letter.¹⁶

The next morning the groom called and found the certificate ready. I asked him if he had ever been married before. "No, this is the first time." "Did you ever see someone married before?" "No." "Well, I had some

16 It is possible that Nobles and his family had little time to clean the dwelling.

trouble," said I, in getting there, had to call on Captain Barker and it was quite a hard time to get there and back and besides the certificate costs were something. There are expenses attending to the marriage ceremony before it is complete. "I never charge for my services but we usually have a sum given us, sometimes more and sometimes less, according to the generosity of the parties and that helps us to meet the expenses we are at. "Yes," he said, "We haven't been paid yet. I have got no money now but when we are I will make it all right with you." I presume that will be the last of the marriage ceremony except as it retains a place in my memory as one of the queer things that make up the incidents of life in this great world.

It is important to note that opinions varied among the small group that encouraged the development of modern Florida. Unlike John Swaim, Harriet Beecher Stowe saw Crackers as hospitable country people. On her second trip to Florida she visited St. Augustine by donkey cart. Slow progress on the return to Mandarin left her and her family in pine barrens at night. Stowe turned to a local farm family for help, expressing appreciation for their kindness. In subsequent publications, the novelist did not change her opinion. The person who could have forged an alliance between the emerging new economy and rural whites would have been Florida's second Republican governor, Ossian B. Hart. As a native born Floridian, Hart was very aware of both Swaim's group and local Crackers. Overwhelmed with tuberculosis, he died in office without achieving the potential of reconciliation. It is not insignificant that John Swaim spoke at Hart's funeral; both men were friends.¹⁷

John Swaim's own thoughts were influenced by a number of factors. His denomination, the Methodist Episcopal Church, had divided with southern Methodists over the issue of slavery in 1844. During the Civil War, his denomination openly supported both the Federal government and President Lincoln. In the wake of the conflict, the church endorsed the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteen amendments. It is not surprising, then, that Timothy Willard Lewis, Swaim's immediate superior, would claim that his church would have little appeal beyond people of color. The situation in

17 Stowe's account is in "Letter from Florida," *Boston Watchman and Reflector*, May 14, 1868; Brown, *Ossian Bingley Hart*, 173-175, 213.

Jacksonville was more complicated than places in the Carolinas since part of the town's citizens were Unionists who had been targets of Confederate violence. Crackers who didn't support the South's secessionist government were, at times, subjected to similar treatment. The minister's own thoughts were also influenced by the arrival of prisoners from Andersonville in 1865. Many in the worst health died in Jacksonville and John Swaim performed perhaps as many as thirty funerals.¹⁸

The Swaim papers appear to be missing important materials—one of the authors has the minister's pocket diary for 1866. John Swaim's diaries for 1864 and 1865 are not in the collection. The personal papers of Jacob W. Swaim begin at the end of his residency in Jacksonville. Of all the members of the Swaim family, he came the closest to fitting the stereotype of a "carpetbagger." He and his brothers, Thomas and Matthias, moved to Florida at the urging of their father. Thomas lived out his life in Jacksonville, running a small business and dying in 1885. Matthias died earlier, after making important contributions as the Principal of Duval High School. Jacob, on the other hand, was politically active, serving as a cashier of the local branch of the Freedmen's Savings Bank and as Treasurer of Duval County. Fitting the carpetbagger stereotype, Jacob left Jacksonville at the end of Reconstruction for a job in an insurance company in another state and then in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Jacob's observations from the Reconstruction could have been revealing since he knew Harrison Reed and attended his inauguration as governor. Such materials are not known to exist. The family papers do include the letters of recommendation that Jacob carried when he left Florida. For those who wish to subscribe to the stereotype of "carpetbagger," his letters answer the question: who would recommend such a person? The answer is significant, coming from two bankers and the Mayor of the City of Jacksonville, a Democrat elected after Reconstruction. The Treasurer of the Florida Savings Bank, J. C. Greely, wrote, "I have been acquainted with J. W. Swaim for about twelve years & have no hesitation in recommending him. A Gentleman and Christian—I know of no one in the city who if absent would be more missed as a Citizen, as a Mason and as a Christian. He is entitled to the confidence & esteem of the Public wherever he may locate." The second comes from William B. Barnett, whose family would be prominent in banking

18 Swaim's account of the Andersonville prisoners appears in the *Newark Daily Advertiser* May 30, 1865.

for generations to come, "The bearer of this, Mr. J. W. Swaim was cashier of this Bank for over one year. I always found him a very careful...man." He is "well qualified for almost any position he may accept." The last came from Luther McConihe, "Having known the bearer of this note Mr. J. W. Swaim quite intimately for about seven years, I take pleasure in certifying that he is a gentleman of excellent character and of undoubted integrity and as such I would recommend him to the favorable consideration of all with whom he may wish to sojourn." Rather than fleeing to the North in the myths of old, Jacob's next job was in Lynchburg, Virginia.¹⁹

The Swaim Family Papers offer valuable insights into Florida's past. As more historical collections are described online, it will be possible to find other important documents. This may be especially true of the Reconstruction when many records are fragmentary or missing.

19 Swaim Papers, Folder 6. The places where Jacob worked are named in the New Jersey Historical Society's description of the Swaim Papers.