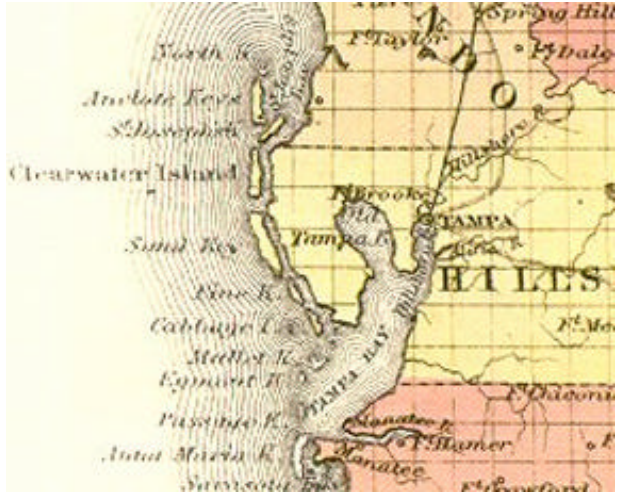


Naval Action Reports for Tampa Bay

Located on the Central West Coast of Florida, Tampa was a small seaport that was blockaded by the U.S. Navy. On several occasions, the Navy bombarded and invaded Tampa. For the final invasion, the Navy transported Army troops which raided Tampa and cause panic and destruction.

This document groups compiles various letters and reports of the U.S. Navy specific to the Tampa Bay Area. The source is: Official Records of the Union and Confederate Navies in the War of the Rebellion. These reports have been placed in chronological order. At various points this editor has inserted comments and/or clarifications for the reader. Also, names of local islands, waterways, and towns are highlighted.

Not all letters containing "Tampa Bay" are used. There are many instances which do not relate to activity at Tampa Bay. For example, a letter from a ship stationed in Havana that they were proceeding to Tampa Bay has little significance. Whereas another letter might say coaling at the pier at Tampa Bay, which means they were actually there.



Sample letter

How the letters are formatted:

Name of the ship--- U. S. S. SANTIAGO DE CUBA,
Location letter is being written, and the current date--- Key West, March 4, 1862.

Text---

SIR: I remained in Key West seven days after my last communication to the Department, of February 6, waiting to hear from the consul at Havana. Not receiving any communication, I sailed on a cruise in the gulf, taking on board an extra quantity of provisions,commanding at this place.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

Name of the sender--- DANIEL B. RIDGELY,
Commander, U. S. Navy.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES, **---Who the letter is being sent to**
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

1861

U. S. S. WATER WITCH,
Key West, July 25, 1861.

SIR: Since my last communication of June 8th from this place, I have been engaged in blockading off Mobile Bay, Pensacola Harbor, and East Pass of Santa Rosa.

I left Fort Pickens on the 18th instant and communicated with the Montgomery off Apalachicola, *Mohawk*, at St. Marks, and R. R. Cuyler, at **Tampa Bay**.

I shall remain here for a week to have some repairs done to the engine, and then proceed to Matanzas, Cuba, in obedience to the orders of Flag-Officer Mervine. All well on board, and the health of Key West is good.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. RONCKENDORFF,
Lieutenant, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. S. R. R. CUYLER,
Off Tampa Bay, Florida, August 2, 1861.

SIR: I have respectfully to inform you that in the haste of my last dispatch (No. 10) I omitted to mention that her Britannic Majesty's ship-of-war *Jason* called in here on the 13th ultimo, evidently for the purpose of ascertaining the state of the blockade, and that I communicated with her.

Lieutenant Commanding Ronckendorff has supplied me with 500 gallons water.

I have on hand water to last to the 20th instant, and coal to 1st September.

I am very much in need of a boat, those belonging to the ship being totally unfit for the service, and I have at times been unable to communicate with my sick men ashore on this account. I respectfully request that you will cause me to be furnished with a suitable one.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

FRANCIS B. ELLISON,
Captain.

Flag-Officer WILLIAM MERVINE,
Comdg. Gulf Blockading Squadron, off Fort Pickens.

AUGUST 28, 1861.
List of vessels boarded by U. S. S. Connecticut.

August 28, 1861, off Cape Hatteras, latitude 35° 7', longitude 75° 30', boarded French brig ----, from Havana for Havre; papers correct and she was allowed to proceed.

Off St. Mary's, August 31, 1861, latitude 30° 22', longitude 80° 50', boarded supposed American schooner *Aigburth*, but flying English colors, from Matanzas for St. Johns, with molasses and fruit, having a register granted at Charleston, July --, 1861, by the English consul.

Off Tampa Bay, September 5, 1861, latitude 27° 2', longitude 82° 44', spoke fishing smack from Key West, and ordered the captain aboard with his papers; papers correct and she was allowed to proceed.

Off Tampa Bay, September 5, 1861, latitude 28° 3', longitude 83° 6', boarded fishing smack *S. W. Chipman*, of Key West; found papers correct and allowed her to proceed. Also overhauled the papers of another fishing smack from Key West; papers correct and allowed her to proceed.

Off Cape San Bias, September 7, 1861, Cape San Blas bearing about N. E. 20 miles, boarded bark *Ann Elizabeth*, of Philadelphia, from Ship Island to Key West; found papers correct and allowed her to proceed.

Off Cape San Bias, September 18, 1861, boarded schooner of Key West, for Fort Pickens; found papers correct and allowed her to proceed.

On the western edge of 'the Gulf Stream, September 25, 1861, latitude 29° 47', longitude 80° 8', boarded brig *James Gray*, of Newburyport, from Manzanillo for Hamburg; found papers correct and allowed her to proceed.

This is an early Civil War letter that basically describes the coastline.

WASHINGTON, *September 3, 1861.*

SIR: The last of the memoirs we had the honor to present contained our examinations and recommendations relating to two of the six great divisions into which we have separated the Gulf coast, viz, the fifth and the fourth. It remains for us now to speak of the other four divisions, which we will take up in numerical order (see fifth memoir, dated August 9, 1861).

1. Florida keys and reefs: This portion of the coast, which commands the great outlet of the Gulf of Mexico by the course of the Gulf Stream, begins at Virginia Key, in latitude 25° 44' N. and longitude 80° 08' W., and extends to the Tortugas, in latitude 24° 37' N. and longitude 82° 55' W., at distance of 200 nautical miles. The Coast-Survey notes cover the details relating to the hydrography of nearly the whole of this part of the coast, especially those of them which refer to the keys and reefs.

Fort Jefferson, at the Tortugas, and Fort Taylor, at Key West, with certain supplementary works, will easily hold this part of the coast against any but a first-rate naval power. Subsidiary small works may be needed at a few points which will be

referred to hereafter. At Key West are stores of coal, water, and munitions of war. Water may be had near Fort Dallas, on the Miami River, Key Biscayne Bay, at Indian Key, about midway of the reef, and at Fort Jefferson, on the Tortugas.

The lights, buoys, and beacons are under the supervision of the United States Government.

The sailing directions for entering the harbors of Key Biscayne, Key West, and the Tortugas, and the anchorages of Legaré, Turtle Harbor, etc., and minor ones in the hydrographic notes and on the charts, are ample. Special directions are given for using the Hawk Channel and the outer channel between the reef and the keys, and for crossing the reef at different points; also for passing into the interior sounds.

The beacons placed by the Light-House Board are carefully described, and a special chart showing their positions is given with the notes. The tides and tidal currents, the great current of the Gulf Stream, and the winds which prevail at different seasons are briefly described.

The fortifications and the calls of war vessels passing along this coast not only insure the control of the commerce, but of the wrecking business, the admiralty courts, etc. The world is interested in having this control in the safe hands of the Government of the United States, to which the inhabitants, moreover, are generally well affected.

It is not supposed that under present circumstances a special blockading force is required here, though if Indian Key and the entrance to the Miami be occupied by small forts, which we recommend, then two or three steam gunboats should cruise constantly up and down the reef. These vessels would afford relief in case of wrecks, exercise a salutary control over the wreckers, and would be on hand in case of molestation to the coal and water stations and to lights and beacons.

2. The west coast of Florida, from Cape Sable to Cedar Keys: This is one of the most sparsely settled sections of the coast of the United States. The five counties which border the western side of the Florida peninsula contain, by the census of 1860, only 8,567 inhabitants.

There is very little communication of any sort, either from the coast or along it.

The 10-fathom curve is from 13 to 30 nautical miles from the shore. An extended flat of coral mud stretches out from 100 to 150 miles. The immediate shore is lined by innumerable islands, scattered irregularly through the bays or forming curved barriers in the general direction of the coast.

There are two beautiful bays--Charlotte Harbor and **Tampa Bay**--which by their facilities for entering and navigating offer fine opportunities for commerce, and which must some day doubtless be connected with the railroad system farther north; at present they are scarcely used.

Cedar Keys affords also a reasonably good harbor, though inferior either to Charlotte Harbor or **Tampa**. Into these harbors can be carried--18 feet into Charlotte Harbor; 21 feet into **Tampa Bay**, and into **Old Tampa** 14 feet; and 9½ feet into Cedar Keys. The depth on the bars closing these entrances varies very considerably with the direction of the wind, a northerly wind depressing the water and a southerly elevating it. The connection with Fernandina by railroad gives Cedar Keys its chief importance.

Garrisoned forts at these three harbors would probably enable the United States to retain jurisdiction over this territory, if it is desirable. One or more gunboats plying up and down the coast, with the occasional call of supply vessels, would amply suffice to maintain a blockade.

It would be convenient to establish a coal and water depot in Tampa Bay for the gunboats, in which case the Coast-Survey chart shows the best location for the purpose.

The few particulars in regard to this coast which are known are given in the Coast Survey hydrographic notes.

3. Northern division of Florida, from Cedar Keys to the Perdido: This division covers about 290 nautical miles. It has the cities of St. Marks, Apalachicola, and Pensacola within it; the bays of Apalachicola, St. Joseph's, and St. Andrew's, Santa Rosa, Pensacola, and Perdido, and the sounds of St. George, St. Vincent, and Santa Rosa.

Ocilla [Aucilla] River entrance, St. Marks River, St. George's and St. Vincent sounds and entrances, St. Andrew's Bay, and Pensacola Bay and its dependencies, have been examined by the Coast Survey, and are described in the hydrographic notes by the Superintendent, which accompany this memoir.

St. Marks, Apalachicola, and Pensacola are well-known ports for the export of cotton, timber, etc., and Aucilla River furnishes good timber.

A railroad connects St. Marks with Tallahassee, 22 miles. Apalachicola is near the entrance of the river of the same name, formed by the junction of the Flint and Chattahoochee, which brings the cotton of a large region of Georgia to this port.

The Pensacola and Georgia Railway is completed 60 miles from Tallahassee.

Though St. Joseph's and St. Andrew's bays are fine sheets of water, with easy entrances of 20 and 16 feet, respectively, they have no commerce, and the same may be said of the thinly peopled coast generally, with the exceptions which we have noted. St. Marks River entrance has 9 feet.

East entrance, or Duer Channel, into St. George's Sound has 15, or to Duer anchorage, 18 feet.

The East Pass, or middle entrance to St. George's Sound, has 15 feet upon the bar. The West, or Main Pass, into the same sound has 12 feet on its bar. The last entrance to Santa Rosa Sound had 8 feet on the bar in 1826.

Pensacola entrance is a mile wide, with a clear channel nowhere less than three-eighths of a mile wide, and with 21 feet on the bar. Aucilla River has but 5 feet on the bar, and the Perdido only from 3 to 4 feet.

In fact the blockade of St. Marks, Apalachicola, and Pensacola is the blockade of this coast. A single gunboat for each of the two first-named ports would suffice.

The narrow, crooked, and shoal passage to St. Marks might be easily obstructed by sinking a vessel in it.

Apalachicola might be converted into a cotton port if desired; the excellently sheltered bay of St. Vincent affording a fine roadstead for a fleet.

In such a case batteries could be established at the eastern and western extremities of the sound.

There is a pretty good, but sandy, road from Apalachicola to St. Joseph's Bay, about 18 miles, and onward to St. Andrew's Bay, about 30 miles farther. If an attempt were made to ship cotton from Apalachicola by this route from either of the bays, an occasional visit of a cruiser, or a small work at each of the main entrances, would arrest the movement and bring the cotton into our possession.

The military importance of this road should by no means be lost sight of.

The military and naval operations in front of Pensacola and its approaches having been determined upon, we do not propose to refer to the subject in this memoir. The operations there show how strong a position may become which has the advantage of a double defense by a fort and a fleet.

5. Coast of part of Louisiana and the whole coast of Texas, from Grande Pass, Vermilion Bay, to the Rio Grande del Norte: From Vermilion Bay to the Sabine River is about 100 nautical miles, and the coast of Texas, from the Sabine to the Rio Grande, extends about 325 miles.

The chief interest of this section centers at Galveston entrance, 55 miles from the Sabine River and 270 from the Rio Grande. Galveston entrance itself is but the analogue of Charleston, [S. C.], in its depth of water, having 12 feet at low water over a shifting bar. This chief maritime city of Texas had, in 1860, but 8,117 inhabitants and a small foreign trade. The number of vessels which arrived at Galveston in 1856, from beyond the limits of the collection district, was 269, of which 27 were foreign vessels. New Orleans is the great entrepôt which it uses, from which it is distant 280 miles by the steamer route to Berwick Bay, and thence by the Opelousas, New Orleans [and Great Western] Railroad.

There are small steamers trading from Galveston up the bay and Trinity River, and to the various rivers and bays of the coast by a precarious navigation, part of which is exposed to the dangers arising from the storms of the Gulf. An efficient blockade of Galveston is, in fact, the blockade of the coast of Texas. Of the six other entrances, one, the Rio Grande, has but 4 feet on its bar at low water, and 4.9 feet at high water; Aransas Pass, 9 feet; Matagorda, 9 feet; Brazos River, 8 feet; San Luis Pass, 8 feet; Sabine Pass, 7½ feet at low water, with a rise of tide of less than one foot and a half at the several ports.

The smooth-water navigation, to be effected by connecting the sounds by artificial means, has been begun by the State of Texas, but not completed even for the minimum proposed depth.

Three or four efficient Vessels, which can take care of themselves at sea against storms and enemies, are required for the blockade of this portion of the coast, three being the least number which it would probably be safe to trust, considering the northers and hurricanes to which the coast is exposed, and the possible presence of fevers among the unacclimated crews. One of the vessels, besides, should be of the lightest draft, free to move up and down the coast, to interrupt the small commerce carried on by the interior sounds, which are nearly continuous from Galveston to the Rio Grande. A visit to Galveston, Corpus Christi, and Aransas to recover the United States movable property seized there from the Revenue and Coast Survey services, or to obtain indemnity for the seizures, would also form [one] of the objects of such an expedition. The Coast Survey hydrographic notes which we attach to this memoir are accompanied by maps and sketches showing the general character of this coast, and giving minute information in regard to the harbors and passes. We take this occasion earnestly to recommend that a Coast Survey vessel be attached to each of the principal blockading squadrons to complete,

under general instructions from the Superintendent, the examination of such parts of the coast not yet surveyed in detail. The importance of this measure can not be overrated. Protection may readily be afforded to the surveying vessels without interfering at all with the regulations of the strictest blockade.

We have the honor to be, very respectfully, your most obedient servants,

S. F. DU PONT,
Captain, U. S. Navy, President.

A. D. BACHE,
Superintendent U. S. Coast Survey, Member.

J. G. BARNARD,
Major, U. S. Engineers, Member.

C. H. DAVIS,
Commander, U. S. Navy, Member and Secretary.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

This letter seems to be one of the earliest account of Federals using Egmont Key.

U. S. S. CUYLER,
Tampa Bay, August 17, 1861.

SIR: On receipt of your order to blockade the North East Pass of Apalachicola, our water was reduced to 300 gallons, which I endeavored to replenish from **Egmont Key** with the aid of the schooner *Appleton*.

To facilitate this movement, as well as to clean the boilers, which were represented by the engineer to be in an unsafe condition, I came into the bay and anchored near the watering place on **Egmont Key**. After obtaining a sufficient supply for present purposes, and having stopped a leak of some magnitude in one of the boilers, I was about to proceed to sea in execution of your orders (on the 15th instant) when it came on to blow very heavily from northward and eastward and in a few hours increased to a gale of great violence.

The *Appleton* parted her cables and went ashore near the **lighthouse** before I was able to render her any assistance. She was driven on the beach some 30 feet above low-water mark. After the gale abated, finding myself without means to get her afloat, which, under any circumstances, would have been exceedingly doubtful, having only my two bower anchors to depend on, the schooners anchor being lost, and deeming her of too little value to incur the delay of making what I considered a futile attempt at best, I directed her to be burned, after saving from her everything of any value, sails, spars, etc., and she was totally destroyed to prevent her falling into the hands of the rebels.

The gale was one of great violence, commencing at N. N. E., and terminating in about thirty hours with the wind at S. S. E., with a heavy sea. I regard it as providential that the ship rode it out in safety, with only two anchors of 1,800 pounds each, and her chains, respectively, 1½ and 1 3/8 and about 90 fathoms with a scope of 75 fathoms on one and 45 fathoms on the other. I would respectfully call your attention to the insufficiency of the ground tackling of this vessel; a ship of over 1,200 tons, with an immense surface exposed, with anchors and chains that are ordinarily used for a gun brig or schooner.

We had three anchors on leaving New York; a light one of 1,500 pounds was slipped off **Tampa Bar** some weeks since when anchored in 4 fathoms of water near the bar, and as the buoy did not watch I could not recover it.

I can not, sir, close this dispatch without an expression of my opinion as shown from the above facts, as well as from others that are obvious to every professional man, of the inefficiency of this vessel for war purposes, and I feel it the more to be my duty to represent this to you, as I have been informed that the enormous amount of \$180,000 is asked for her by her owners.

It would be an imposition upon the Government, for they would not get an equivalent in any use to which they might apply her, unless it were as a transport.

She is a fine ship for the purpose for which she was originally intended, sails tolerably fast, and consumes but little coal, going 10 and 11 knots with a consumption of about 12 tons per diem.

To increase her speed would, of course, require a larger amount of fuel.

But as for an efficient war steamer, no amount of money expended on her would make her available.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

FRANCIS B. ELLISON,
Captain.

Flag-Officer WM. MERVINE,
Commanding Gulf Blockading Squadron.

Report of Major Bowen, C. S. Army.

HEADQUARTERS FORT BROOKE,
Tampa, Fla., October 16, 1861.

DEAR SIR: After my complimentary regards, permit me to report for your orders 13 prisoners of war, captured under my command on the 10th and 11th of this month, being the crew of the sloops *William Batty* and *Lyman Dudley*, sailing under the American colors (stars and stripes), with papers from Key West, with license to engage in the fishery on the Florida coast and supply the Key West market with the same. The sloops are of the first class, well rigged, and in good order. One measures 65 15/95 tons; the other, 56 80/95 tons.

The sloops have been duly turned over to the prize commissioner legal prizes to the Confederate States, and the prisoners are detained in safe custody for your disposal; and in consequence of the inconvenience and difficulty of subsisting troops at this post, I hope you will order the prisoners to be sent to some other place or disposed of in some other manner as soon as practicable.

With deep regret for your ill health, and with due regard to your orders, I am, sir, most respectfully, yours, etc.,

W. L. L. BOWEN,
Major, Commanding Military Forces, Tampa Bay.

Brigadier-General JOHN B. GRAYSON,
Commanding Middle and East Florida,

The sloops *William Batty* and *Lyman Dudley* are, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the property of William H. Wall & Co., of Key West. They have been seized at **Tampa Bay** by the military for sailing under the Federal colors and with papers from Key West. Having been in the employment of Messrs. William H. Wall & Co. for several years, I know them to be true Southern men, and have largely aided the Confederate cause.

William Pinkney, one of the firm, has taken the United States oath under duress on the island, but signed the ordinance of secession. The permission for their vessels to sail under the Federal flag is only to keep him from seizure and imprisonment.

CHAS. ANTONIO.

1862

U. S. BARK KINGFISHER,
Tampa Bay, January 21, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to report my arrival at this point on 16th instant, and the delivery, pursuant to your orders of 6th, of a rifled 20-pounder Parrott gun, with equipments, munitions, etc., as received, to U. S. gunboat *Ethan Allen*, having previously run down to Pass

l'Outre and delivered, as directed, three old guns and a quantity of scrap iron to the U. S. steam gunboat *Mercedita*.

On the evening of the 8th, 9 miles N. E. of Chandeleur light, we brought to the U. S. schooner *Maria A. Wood* by firing a shot across her bows, in consequence of her being unable to answer our signals or show any by which she could be recognized, when she sent a boat with an officer, who reported that they had no night signals on board.

On the afternoon of the 12th, on our passage hither from the Passes, we made a large steamer to the S. E. standing toward us, and, tacking ship, gave chase to windward, and, the breeze favoring, we brought her under our lee, the ship being cleared for action, and ordered her to stop the engine. On sending a boat on board she proved to be the transport *Philadelphia*, from New York, 30th ultimo, via Key West and Tortugas, with army officers and supplies for Fort Pickens, having no signals on board.

On the afternoon of 15th, off Cedar Keys, fell in with U. S. S. *Florida*, Commander J. R. Goldsborough, who sent for me on board to notify me of the raising of the blockade of Nassau, New Providence, by the *Flambeau's* having to leave for a supply of coal and the probable escape of the Confederate steamer *Gladiator*, having arms for the rebels, with destination for Cedar Keys, off which it was Commander Goldsborough's intention to cruise for some time in hopes of meeting her. At

noon of 20th the lookout at the light-house on **Egmont Key**, at which a vigilant watch is kept by the *Ethan Allen*, signaled a sail in the offing to the S. E. some 3 leagues distant, on which Captain Eaton immediately sent two of his boats in pursuit, and as early as practicable notified me of the fact, requesting my cooperation, I therefore lost no time in dispatching two of our boats, one with an officer and 6, the other with an officer and 11 men, all well armed, to assist.

The boats of the *Ethan Allen*, having nearly an hour's start, reached the chase some ten to fifteen minutes before ours and boarded her, but, without waiting for our boats (which had pulled out 6 leagues) to come up, the officer boarding gave chase to a boat containing the supercargo and five men from the prize, which was making for and succeeded in escaping to the shore, when our boats, being unable to hold way with her, put about and returned to this vessel. I enclose copy of a note(*) from me to Acting Master Henry Allen, in charge of the expedition, calling for his report of the circumstances, and also copy(*) of his report.

The prize was brought in this morning by Acting Master Stephenson of the *Ethan Allen*, and proved to be the Confederate schooner *Olive Branch*, of Jacksonville, burden 42½ tons, from Cedar Keys 9th instant, for Nassau, New Providence, with cargo of 160 barrels (5,440 gallons) spirits turpentine, valued at about \$8,700, and the vessel at \$1,200 to \$1,500 more.

The captain reports that at the date of his leaving there were three other vessels ready to sail, all laden with spirits turpentine and bound for Nassau, their aggregate cargoes amounting to about 900 barrels.

He reports the whole country as greatly distressed by the blockade; coffee, \$1; tea, \$2 per pound; pork, \$60 per barrel, and other articles in proportion, and extremely difficult to procure at even these prices. The fortifications on Sea Horse Key he reports abandoned, and all persons capable of bearing arms sent off to Fernandina. His crew were shipped at \$50 per month, and his mates at \$75 and \$70. Altogether the country is, by his representations, in a deplorable condition.

January 27, 8 a.m.--As we were preparing to get underway at noon of 25th, after being windbound for the previous three days by a hard westerly gale (which left the bar so rough as to be impassable for twenty-four hours after it died out), the *Ethan Allen* signaled two strange sail in sight to the S. E., coming down from **Tampa**, and also for me to repair on board for consultation. On my doing so, Captain Eaton informed me that he had intelligence warranting the belief that the vessels formed part of an expedition fitting out at **Tampa** as a coast guard, and requested my cooperation in cutting them out, and also in making a reconnoissance of a fortification said to have been erected near the mouth of the **Manatee River**, about 2 leagues from the ship to the S.E. Under the circumstances I considered it my duty to accede to his wishes, and returning on board my own vessel, mustered the ship's company, and after briefly explaining the nature of the proposed expedition called for volunteers, when every man threw up his hand, and three such cheers were given as satisfied me that the hearts of my crew were all right, and they fully responded to the confidence I had always felt in their ability and readiness to meet any emergency. At 8 p.m. I dispatched the first, second, and third cutters, in charge of Acting Master J. H. Hallet and Master's Mates J. E. Whiteside and C. E. Sloan, with 35 men, fully armed, the whole under charge of Mr. Hallet, with written instructions to act in concert with an equal number of boats and men from the *Ethan Allen*, in charge of Acting Master Stephenson. Acting Assistant Paymaster Blakeman, at his urgent request, accompanied the expedition and would, I am confident, with his coolness and knowledge of military tactics, have rendered valuable assistance in organizing the men had it proved necessary to land in presence of an enemy. Master's Mate James S. Williams, though under suspension for having been found asleep on his watch while in charge (as duly reported to you), was also allowed, on his pressing request, to join the expedition.

I am constrained to express my regret that the immediate results of the expedition were by no means commensurate with the scale on which it was organized. The boats returned last evening, having found no armed vessel nor any enemy on shore, after capturing the sloop *Mary Nevis*, of **Tampa**, of about 12 tons burden, engaged in carrying the mails, freight, and passengers between **Fort Brooke**, **Manatee River**, and the intermediate points, with a woman and child only on board, the one man forming her crew having run her ashore and taken to the bush. They also burned the temporary barracks erected on a mound near the beach, lately occupied, according to parties on shore, by a troop of 115 or 120 cavalry, with one gun mounted on wheels. I can not but regard the expedition, however, as likely to have a useful result, both in familiarizing the men with such service and by impressing the enemy with a sense of the efficiency of the blockade and thoroughness of the preparation on our part to meet and repel any attack they may have the means of making.

That such a movement as has been reported has been, and may yet be in contemplation, I think evident, from one of the persons conversed with at the **Manatee** landing, having enquired whether the vessels had been attacked the night previous, and given as a reason that those inshore thought they had heard firing in our direction, remarks that would hardly have been made but for a knowledge of the existence of some purpose and means of making an attack.

I enclose copy of my instructions to Acting Master Hailer (of which a counterpart was furnished to Acting Master Stephenson) and his report to me of his action thereupon.

I leave this morning for the cruising ground designated in your orders of 6th instant, and hoping ere long to be able to forward a more gratifying report from the *Kingfisher* than the present, have the honor to remain,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

Jos. P. COUTHOUY,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Flag-Officer W. W. McKEAN,
Commanding Gulf Blockading Squadron.

U. S. BARK KINGFISHER,
Tampa Bay, January 27, 1862.

SIR: In pursuance of your orders, I, at 8 p.m. of the 95th, left the bark *Ethan Allen* in charge of the first, second, and third cutters, with 40 men all told, fully armed, in company with three boats from the *Ethan Allen*, under charge of Acting Master Stephenson, and pulled inshore to a point about 3 miles above **Manatee River** and lay there until about 4 o'clock next morning; then we pulled carefully up the bay. At daylight saw a sloop coming down the bay; we started in chase of her and got within a mile of her before they discovered us; she then hauled up on the wind to the N.W. The *Ethan Allen's* boats made sail in his wake after her, and the *Kingfisher's* boats pulled to the windward to cut her off on the next tack; the first and second cutters had gained on her so much that he was obliged to run her ashore to avoid his being taken by our boats on the one hand, or those of the *Ethan Allen* on the other, at the mouth of **Little Manatee River**. The *Ethan Allen's* boats, having sails, got alongside first, the *Kingfisher's* boats being so far to windward; we then put all the boats ahead of her and pulled her off. Then we came down alongshore, taking a good look into all the bays and inlets as far as **Great Manatee River**, up which we proceeded about 2 miles, then land[ed] to reconnoiter. We took a look at what we supposed to be a fortification when we left the ship, but it proved an old Indian mound and barracks that had been lately occupied by troops, to which we applied a match and burned to the ground. We did not see any signs of military force, but were told that there had been 116 cavalry there but four days previous, but they had left the place for good, being unable to get enough for their horses to eat. We did not see any vessels there at all, but captured three small boats. We saw only half a dozen persons about the coast, two of whom were females, and the whole had a wretched and poverty-stricken appearance; then returned on board the ship at 7 p.m. last evening;

very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOSEPH H. HALLET.
Acting Master.

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Jos. P. Couthouy,
Commanding U. S. Bark Kingfisher.

U. S. BARK ETHAN ALLEN,
Tampa Bay, January 18, 1862.

SIR: On the 14th instant the steamer Florida came off this port for the purpose of delivering me a description of the Gladiator. She grounded on the shoal outside which makes out from **Egmont Key** for a distance of 3 miles or more and remained on shore for ten hours. I rendered him all the assistance in my power, sending all my boats out to him, and afterwards, at his request, got underway and proceeded out to within a mile of where he was and took on board a quantity of his shot. The next day he towed me into my former position in the bay, and sailed soon after for Cedar Keys.

The *Kingfisher* arrived here yesterday, the 17th instant, with a rifled gun for me, which is indeed very acceptable. She intends remaining here for wood and water. I notice that he is supplied with the navy code of signals similar to those which were taken from me at the South West Pass.

January 21.--I have just taken the schooner *Olive Branch*, of and from Cedar Keys, bound for Nassau, New Providence, with a Confederate register, flag, etc. His cargo consists of 160 barrels spirits turpentine, and, with the vessel, will be valued at about \$11,000. From the captain I have obtained the following information: The schooners *Fanny*, *Stag*, and *Anna Smith* were loaded with spirits turpentine and ready to sail. The *Stag* is a vessel of 200 tons and carries 600 barrels. There are five fishing smacks still at Cedar Keys, two of which are schooners and three sloops. The battery on Sea Horse Key consists of two guns; the garrison was removed thence some time since to Fernandina, but a portion of it has since returned. I learn also that the expedition, of which you notified me by the *Kingfisher* as fitting out at Cedar Keys and Tampa, is not in a forward state of completion, and it is very doubtful if it is to amount to anything at all.

The supercargo and three men belonging to the schooner escaped on shore as soon as he saw our boats coming and took away with him all letters.

The captain of the schooner informs me that on the day I took him he was chased for several hours by a brigantine, which went about the moment he sighted land. I was not aware that there was a United States vessel in the Gulf answering that description, and think she must have been a rebel armed vessel. The captain represents her to have been of about 160 to 180 tons, but says she was not near enough to him to give a particular description of her.

The *Fashion*, which I took off here, was daily expected back at Cedar Keys, and this proves that he was not bound to Key West, as he stated. In connection with the *Kingfisher* I sent an armed expedition to the town of **Manatee** to capture any vessels there might be at that place and to reconnoiter the position of the fort or battery said to be there. I had understood that this town was the rendezvous of the coast guard which was fitting out, and was desirous of breaking it up by taking away from them the material for carrying on such an enterprise.

They succeeded in capturing only one vessel, the *Mary Nevis*, a sloop of 12 or 15 tons, the mail and passenger boat between **Tampa** and **Manatee**; and being fast and of good capacity, I intend to retain her for a dispatch and wooding boat. The captain and owner of her ran ashore and made his escape with the mail. The expedition then landed at **Manatee**, but found no one there but the usual inhabitants.

February 12.--The steamer *Connecticut* arrived here the 9th instant, and sailed immediately after supplying me with fresh provisions. I have to acknowledge the receipt by her of your favor covering circulars etc.

Mr. J. E. Whithurst came off to this ship on the 6th instant, claiming protection from the Government, and stating that he was in fear for his life from the secessionists at **Tampa**, for the reason that he refused to join the Army and had expressed his intention of fighting for no flag-but the one he was brought up and had always lived under.

His statement is very interesting and is to the following effect: He resides some 8 or 10 miles from **Old Tampa** on the shores of the bay. Some thirty-eight of his neighbors and friends who reside within a circuit of 6 miles around him are Union men, and have positively refused to render any aid to the secession cause, for which reason they have suffered every possible persecution and have lost much of their property.

He has taken much pains when at **Tampa** to ascertain everything that would, in his opinion, be of any value or service to me. According to his statement, there are two 12-pounders and two 6-pounders mounted in battery there, and a force of 200 or 300 men. He knows just where to lay his hands upon the lanterns, machinery, and 500 gal. Ions oil, which were taken there from the light-house.

The shipping lies about 1 mile above the town, and consists of seven or eight schooners and sloops and one steamer. It would be a very easy matter to capture the town of **Tampa**, destroy their battery, and retake the Key West fishing vessels, as well as the material belonging to the light-house. The greatest hardship prevails there, and the troops are very cowardly, running at the slightest provocation, and all of them are so thoroughly alarmed at the taking of Cedar Keys that the appearance of a vessel off there would be followed by the entire desertion of the town. A vessel drawing 12 feet of water can lay up quite close to the town. I should be very glad if you would take into consideration the above facts, as it would occupy but a short time with a steamer of moderate draft to tow me up into position, which would not be so easy of accomplishment without. But in case it is not convenient to spare a steamer to assist me, I would be very glad of permission to do the best I could myself, and have no doubt I could effect considerable. Provisions of all kinds are scarce and high in **Tampa** and throughout Florida, and large numbers of the people are beginning to become disgusted with so hopeless a struggle. I should have said that Mr. Whithurst gave me some very timely information in regard to a trap that they intended at **Tampa** to lay for my boats by means of a sloop and several boats.

February 13.--I yesterday dispatched a boat with an officer and ten men to the dwelling of a Mr. Girard, who lives on the seashore outside of the bay, and at a distance by land of 8 miles from the house of Mr. Whithurst.

This man is the former pilot at this place and has resided here for some twenty-five years and ran a steamer from here to Indian River and Key West in the Indian War, so that he has an intimate knowledge of all the channels and of the whole bay, and states that he can take this ship with ease within 1½ miles of the town, which he readily volunteered to do at any time that I should send for him.

Acting Master George W. Frost, who was the officer I sent in charge of the boat, witnessed himself the utter destitution which prevails among the people in the country.

I should have mentioned that the schooner *Olive Branch* was sent to Key West for adjudication for the reason that she was very deeply loaded, and it would have been only wasting life to have attempted to send her north.

I remain, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. B. EATON,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Flag-Officer W. W. McKEAN,
Commanding Gulf Squadron.

U. S. GUNBOAT ETHAN ALLEN,
Tampa Bay, March 7, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to hand you enclosed a copy of the report of Acting Master G. W. Frost, in charge of the expedition to **Clearwater**, giving the details of that affair. The sloop formerly named *Atlanta* is one of those captured, and I have dispatched her to Key West in charge of Acting Master A. Weston for the reason that the weather the past few days having been very stormy, I fear the *Rhode Island* has gone by this port without stopping, in which case there would be no opportunity of communicating with you for nearly a month.

This sloop is of good capacity, and I think will carry any stores that you may have to send, and I have ordered Mr. Weston to report to you and await your orders.

I send also on the sloop Mr. Girard and Mr. Griner, both of whom are Union men, concerning whom I wrote to you, and who have requested me to be allowed to go to Key West to make a representation to you of the state of affairs in this part of Florida. They have been very hardly treated by the rebels, and been compelled, through their persecutions, to leave their homes, and both of them rendered efficient service to Mr. Frost in the expedition above referred to.

The schooner *Spitfire* and sloop *Caroline* I propose to sink in the **Passage Key** Channel [Inlet], which is a small passage navigable for vessels drawing 8 feet water on the south side of the bay, and which these vessels will block up.

The boy, H. M. Kidder, whose case I wrote you about per *Rhode Island*, I did not send to you, and I await your orders in his case, not feeling authorized to send him to you without orders.

I send you per this opportunity the reports and requisitions required, and also the usual reports for the month of February.

I remain, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. B. EATON,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Flag-Officer W. W. McKEAN,
Commanding Gulf Squadron.

U. S. BARK ETHAN ALLEN,
Tampa Bay, February 21, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to report that in accordance with your orders I left this vessel on Monday, the 17th instant, with the sloop *Mary Nevis*, the second cutter in tow, and the following persons: Mr. George A. Faxon, surgeon's steward; Mr. J. E. Whitehurst, the Union refugee; and 10 additional picked men, well armed. My intention was to proceed immediately to **Clearwater Bay** [Harbor], stopping at Mr. Girard's house, which is situated about one-half the distance there, to secure his services as a pilot.

At 6:30 p.m. I reached **Bayes Pass**, near the house of Mr. Girard, but on account of the heavy surf, which prevented a landing, was compelled to await daylight.

By 12 m. of the following day I succeeded in obtaining Mr. Girard, and immediately got underway for **Clearwater Bay**, off which I arrived at about 5:45 p.m. and hoisted a rebel flag, that my object in coming there might not be suspected by the people on shore.

In standing into the channel, which is very narrow and extremely difficult of access, except to a person who is well acquainted with the passage, the sloop grounded, and it being ebb tide and rapidly falling dark, I left Mr. Faxon, Mr. Whitehurst, and one man in her, and with the remainder in the second cutter proceeded into the bay. I found there at anchor the schooner *Spitfire*, of **Clearwater**; the sloop *Atlanta*, of Cedar Keys, and either in the employ of or owned by the rebel Government; and the sloop *Caroline*, of Bayport. There was no person on board either of the vessels, and I captured them without difficulty. As soon as I had got my men distributed on them, I got them all underway and proceeded to sea. In going out of the bay the *Spitfire* and *Atlanta* grounded, but were got off at the next high tide without injury. By 6 a.m. all the vessels were out clear and proceeding down the coast with a fair wind, the *Mary Nevis* having been got afloat by those I left on her the previous night.

At 10 a.m. Wednesday I arrived at **Bayes Pass**, and the wind having increased into a fresh gale, with a very rough sea, I took the vessels in for safety.

The *Mary Nevis* grounded in going in, which caused her to leak badly. After anchoring inside, and mooring the vessels together, I landed Mr. Girard, the pilot, and at 4 p.m. took off Mr. Whitehurst's family (consisting of 8 persons), one Spaniard, and a man by the name of Arnold, a violent secessionist, whom I took prisoner while he was spying round Mr. Girard's house. During all of Thursday we had strong gales from the southward, with a very heavy sea, rendering it dangerous to make the attempt to reach the ship, as all the vessels were without ballast.

About noon I sent three men with Mr. Girard in the sloop *Caroline* inside of the keys to the ship for provisions, and at 5 p.m., the wind moderating, got all underway and stood out of the pass. There still being a heavy surf on the bar, the *Mary Nevis* grounded, striking heavily. I sent men to her assistance and ran two anchors out into deep water to attempt to haul her off, and after using every exertion to save her, and staying there until the next high tide, she bilged, and finding any further delay useless, I took from her everything of value and then set fire to her that she might not fall into the hands of the rebels.

After seeing her burned to the water's edge, I again got underway and stood for the Northwest Channel with a fair wind. Arrived at the ship at 4 p.m. and landed Mr. Whitehurst and family on **Egmont Key**, with their baggage.

I can not close my report, sir, without referring to the untiring and unceasing devotion of my men. They worked day and night for four days with a will and a purpose that showed how much in earnest they were. Mr. Girard, too, the pilot, showed himself to be a true man, and by his ready willingness to do anything in his power, proved his loyalty to the Union. We were bountifully supplied by Mr. Griner, another Union man, with such provisions as they had to give us, and had it not been for their kindness we should have suffered from want of food, of which I took but three days' supply.

I remain, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant.

GEO. W. FROST,
Acting Master and Executive Officer U. S. Bark Ethan Allen.

Actg. Vol. Lieut. Comdg. W. B. EATON,
Commanding U. S. Skip Ethan Allen.

U. S. GUNBOAT CAYUGA,
Off Tampa Bay, March 22, 1862.

SIR: Considering the impossibility of towing you against the westerly gales which have prevailed and are likely to prevail during this month, and finding your schooner capable of taking care of herself, I have concluded to give you ten days' provision additional and leave you to your own resources. You will take the greatest care of your provisions and water, and should bad weather continue to retard your passage you will put the men on short allowance. Should you be blown on the Florida coast, and be in distress, you can communicate with any of the blockading vessels which are stationed at all the ports along the coast. I rely on your zeal and energy to get your vessel to her destination without unnecessary delay, and wishing you a speedy passage,

I am, respectfully,

N. B. HARRISON,
Lieutenant, Commanding.

Acting Master's Mate C. H. POST,
Schooner Isabel.

U. S. FLAGSHIP NIAGARA,
Key West, March 11, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to report my arrival at this place on the morning of the 10th instant. I transferred to Flag-Officer Farragut the command of the western division of the Gulf Blockading Squadron on the 21st ultimo, and on the 3d instant left Ship Island, with the *Water Witch* in company, and proceeded to the anchorage off Mobile, where I was joined by the steamer *Huntsville*, and from thence proceeded to Apalachicola, at which place the U. S. S. *Mercedita* and the prize steamer *Calhoun* were to have been ordered by Flag-Officer Farragut to meet me, but they failing to arrive, after remaining two days, I came on to this place. I have since learned that Flag-Officer Farragut was unable to leave Ship Island for the Mississippi, where the *Mercedita* and *Calhoun* were stationed, at the time he expected.

I was desirous of looking in at St. Marks and Cedar Keys on my way here, but owing to the nonarrival of the *Calhoun* was prevented from doing so, the great draft of water of this ship making it impossible to get nearer than 15 or 18 miles to either place.

Previous to leaving Ship Island I dispatched the steamer *Cuyler* to examine St. Andrew's and St. Joseph's bays, and a thorough examination of both harbors was made by Lieutenant Commanding Winslow, but no vessels were discovered in either.

When off Mobile I dispatched the *Water Witch*, with instructions to her commander to run down the coast from St. Andrew's and join me off Apalachicola, and I am happy to inform you that near St. Andrew's Bay he fell in with and captured the schooner *William Mallory*, of Mobile, from Havana, with an assorted cargo, bound to a Confederate port. Shortly afterwards meeting with a severe gale, she parted company with her prize, and for some hours was in great danger of being lost, but fortunately succeeded in reaching this place, where I found her on my arrival. The prize schooner has not yet arrived.

I forward by this mail a copy of a report received from Commander Walker, containing the information that a laden steamer succeeded in escaping from his vessel and entered Barataria. Had the *De Soto* been provided with a large boat mounting a howitzer she might have been captured or destroyed.

When in communication with the gunboat *Sagamore*, off Apalachicola, learning from Lieutenant Commanding Drake that his launch would carry it, I furnished him with a 12-pounder boat howitzer from this ship; and I also furnished Lieutenant Commanding Howell, of the *Tahoma*, stationed at Cedar Keys, with a small prize schooner, mounting a howitzer.

I have received communications from Lieutenant Commanding Eaton, commanding the bark *Ethan Allen at Tampa Bay*, from which I learn that several Union men residing in that vicinity have come off and claimed the protection of the Government, having been driven from their homes and families by the rebels; also that a boat expedition from his ship, sent to *Clearwater Harbor*, resulted in the capture of the schooner *Spitfire* and the sloops *Atlanta* and *Caroline*. The *Spitfire* and *Caroline*, being old and leaky, and not worth sending in for adjudication, he proposes to sink them in a small 8-foot channel, on the south side of the bay. The *Atlanta* will be useful to him as a tender, and I shall authorize his keeping her for that purpose.

The steamers *South Carolina*, *Huntsville*, and *Water Witch* are now at this place, engaged in making such repairs as are necessary to enable them to make the passage to the north, and I am hourly expecting the arrival of the *Mohawk*, which vessel I have ordered here for a similar purpose. I deeply regret the necessity of reducing so largely the steam force of this squadron, but it is unavoidable, as, if these vessels are kept longer on the station, they would in all probability, in a short time, be unable to reach a Northern port. As it is, I shall detain the *Water Witch* until about the 1st of April, as I do not consider her fit to encounter a gale of wind.

The steamer *Cuyler* is now here making some slight repairs to her engines, but will, I hope, be in readiness for sea tomorrow. I shall dispatch her to Havana, to take in a supply of water, as there is none to be had here. From thence she will proceed to cruise near Cape San Antonio, in order to intercept any vessel that may attempt to return from Havana to a Confederate port, or that may have run the blockade bound to Havana.

The crew of the privateer *Beauregard*, now in prison at this place, I shall send to the North in the steamer *Rhode Island*. The crews of the various prize vessels have been disposed of in accordance with the instructions contained in your letter of January 15, 1862.

I transmit herewith a list showing the stations of the vessels composing the Eastern Gulf Squadron.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. W. McKEAN,
Flag-Officer Commanding Eastern Gulf Squadron.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. BARK ETHAN ALLEN,
Tampa Bay, April 13, 1863[2].

SIR: I have the honor to report the arrival on the 8th instant of the U. S. schooner *Beauregard* with orders to cooperate with me if I should deem it advisable to make a demonstration at this point. In coming into the bay the *Beauregard* grounded and I sent two boats to her assistance, so that they were enabled to get her off without difficulty.

Yesterday I sent the *Beauregard* over to *Point Pliney [Piney Point?]* to shell out a company of soldiers who were stationed there to watch our movements and signal to the town. A few shells drove them away and a force was landed, and the barracks, consisting of log huts, destroyed.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. B. EATON,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Flag-Officer W. W. McKEAN,
Commanding Eastern Gulf Squadron.

U. S. BARK ETHAN ALLEN,
Tampa Bay, April 14, 1862.

SIR: Yesterday I went on board the *Beauregard* with my boat's crew and proceeded up the bay to within 1½ miles of **Tampa**, sounding out the channel and laying down a few buoys, and finding plenty of water to float the ship.

I sent a flag of truce in charge of Acting Master G. B. Stephenson inshore with the following communication to the commander of the forces there.

Mr. Stephenson met Major Thomas, the commander, who came off in a boat and who gave him a reply, with which he returned to the schooner, and I got underway and returned on board my vessel. I enclose full copies of the correspondence.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. B. EATON,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Flag-Officer McKEAN

Notification for surrender of Tampa and subsequent first bombardment.

U. S. SCHOONER OF WAR,
April 13, 1862.

SIR: I demand in the name of the United States the unconditional surrender of the town of **Tampa**, Fla., together with all munitions of war and ordnance stores contained therein.

If these terms are not complied with I will give you twenty-four hours to remove all women and children to a proper distance and then proceed to bombard the town.

I have the honor, sir, to be, your obedient servant,

WM. B. EATON,
Lieutenant, Commanding, U. S. Navy.

To the COMMANDING OFFICER OF FORCES
STATIONED AT **TAMPA, FLA.**

APRIL 13, 1862.

Your note of to-day's date, demanding the surrender of the fort at **Tampa**, I have the honor to acknowledge. In reply I would respectfully state that I can not accept the proposition to surrender, though, for the sake of humanity, I accept your terms in regard to the removal of the women and children.

Lieutenant [Acting Master G. B.] Stephenson will express my apology for this manner of replying to your note. I left the shore without preparing for such an occasion.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. B. THOMAS,
Major Commanding.

Lieutenant WM. B. EATON,
U. S. Navy, Commanding.

U. S. BARK ETHAN ALLEN,
Tampa Bay, May 6, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt per *Rhode Island* of your favor(*) of the 23d ultimo, and regret that my design of commencing an attack on **Tampa** did not meet your approval, but I would say in justification of my course that the threat to bombard the town was an inadvertence and should have read "fort" or "battery," which, however, laid directly

in front of and afforded protection to the town. I had the best of information from parties who had but a short time before been there and had made their escape that the women and children had all been removed from the town and that most if not all the property holders were strong secessionists.

You will, I have no doubt, overlook the error in judgment which I made, on taking into consideration the fact that I have been here with my vessel nearly six months, and after a long period of necessary inaction I was naturally anxious of giving my officers and men an opportunity of showing their mettle, and affording them the chance which they so much desired of doing something, if ever so little, toward crippling the enemy, and

I remain, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. B. EATON,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Flag-Officer W. W. McKEAN,
Commanding Eastern Gulf Squadron.

U. S. FLAGSHIP NIAGARA,
Key West, April 23, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your communication of the 5th instant, authorizing me to leave the affairs of the squadron in charge of the senior officer and return to Boston in this ship in the event of my feeling unable to remain a month or two longer.

Although my position (for reasons stated in my letter of the 19th instant) is a painful one, I shall not, in the present situation of our country, avail myself of your permission to leave my station, unless compelled to do so by physical inability to perform its duties. I hope, however, that the *San Jacinto* will be dispatched at the earliest moment the exigencies of the service will permit.

I have received, by the *Rhode Island*, your communication of the 31st ultime in reference to the violation of the blockade at Charleston and the constant trade between that place and Nassau; also your communication of the 26th ultime, enclosing copy of a letter from J. Cunningham & Co. in reference to small vessels from Mobile and New Orleans. Although no longer responsible for the blockade west of St. Andrew's Bay, yet should you comply with my request for three or four fast steamers to replace those sent home for repairs, I am of opinion that many, if not most, of the vessels which escape from the westward could be intercepted before reaching Havana and that the traffic between Charleston and Havana and Nassau would not be carried on with quite so much impunity as it is at present.

I will here state that I have received a communication from the commander of the gunboat *Huron*, requesting that I will cause the mails for that vessel to be returned to Port Royal, as Flag-Officer Du Pont has decided to attach her to the squadron under his command.

From reports received from the commanders of the various blockading vessels and from deserters who have come over, I learn there is a strong Union feeling in west Florida, kept under only, by want of arms and means of resistance to the secession party. In my communication of the 3d instant I informed you that I had applied to General Brannan for men to occupy Apalachicola, Cedar Keys, and **Tampa**, and could he have furnished them I would have immediately taken possession of those points. One thousand men would, I think, be sufficient to occupy those places, and, in my opinion, their occupation would have a good moral effect, and would also enable us to protect the Union inhabitants, who have been shamefully ill-treated by the rebels in several instances. The commander of the *Ethan Allen*, at **Tampa Bay**, has now upward of 25 men, women, and children (who have been driven from their homes) under the protection of his guns upon **Egmont Key**, and has been obliged to ration them from his ship to prevent starvation. The officers and crew of this ship, the *Kensington*, and other vessels in the harbor have taken up a subscription for their benefit, and I shall dispatch a vessel in a day or two with supplies for their relief, as I understand that the women and children are in a very suffering condition, not only from want of proper food, but clothing.

I transmit herewith a copy of a communication, received this day from Brigadier-General Arnold, at Fort Pickens, requesting my cooperation to take possession of Pensacola, with a copy of my reply thereto.

Acting Master Holbrook has reported and will be assigned to duty as captain of the port, in compliance with your order of the 22d ultimo, which was received by the *Rhode Island*. As he will require a boat and boat's crew, I shall fit up one of the prize schooners as a guard vessel for his accommodation, and this arrangement when completed will enable me to dispatch the *Wanderer* as a cruising vessel. I therefore request that a paymaster and assistant surgeon may be ordered to her by the earliest opportunity. I have also to request that six master's mates may be sent out for duty in the squadron.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. W. McKEAN,
Flag-Officer, Commanding Eastern Gulf Squadron.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. S. R. R. CUYLER,
Tampa Bay, Fla., Sunday, May 4, 1862.

SIR: have the honor to report the arrival of the *Cuyler* at this place this afternoon. The court will convene on board to-morrow morning, and its proceedings be brought to a close at the earliest practicable date.

A small schooner of 26 tons (the *Jane*, of Nassau) was captured yesterday about 40 miles S. S. W. of **Tampa Bay**, having left Nassau the 24th ultimo bound to Matamoras; her proximity to the coast in connection with the fact of a quantity of pig lead on board afforded strong presumption of an intent to violate the blockade, while the recently acquired register with other papers indicated a merely collusive and fictitious transfer of the vessel, formerly the *José Ton*, of New Orleans. She will be dispatched to Key West to-morrow in charge of Acting Master T. Wright, who is instructed to report to you on his arrival. As the schooner had scarcely accommodations for the prize crew it was fortunately in my power to send all the party found on board down to Key West to-day on board the *Beauregard*, which was accidentally met just off this place under orders to proceed to Key West.

On Thursday we chased a large side-wheel steamer four hours along the coast of Cuba, but she succeeded in slipping into Bahia Honda under English colors. Just as we were getting within the range of our Parrott gun a few projectiles were thrown ahead of the steamer, but a due regard to the neutral jurisdiction of the Spanish Government as we approached the coast obliged us to cease firing.

With much respect, I am, your obedient servant,

FRANCIS WINSLOW,
Lieutenant, Commanding.

Flag-Officer WILLIAM W. McKEAN,
Comdg. E. Gulf Squad., U. S. Frigate Niagara, Key West, Fla.

U. S. S. R. R. CUYLER,
At Sea, May 8, 1862.

SIR: Herewith is transmitted a list of the officers and men entitled to a share of the proceeds of the schooner *Jane* and cargo, recently captured by the steamer under my command in latitude 26° 52' N., longitude 83 08' W., about 40 miles S. S. W. of **Tampa Bay**.

When first discovered the schooner was steering to the northward (toward the coast of Florida) with the wind about W. N. W., but on the approach of the *Cuyler* her course was changed to the southward and westward and an English ensign hoisted. On examination, an English register, recently issued at Nassau, was produced with a clearance from that port for Matamoras. The crew list describing the nationality of the party on board was not officially authenticated by any port officer, and there was no manifest of the cargo. The name of James Lyons, the nominal owner, was inscribed on the crew list as mate. The supercargo, and probably real owner of the vessel and cargo, acknowledged himself an American by birth with a family residing at Montgomery, Ala., and the master is believed to have family at **Tampa**. There was therefore every probability of a collusive transfer of the vessel, formerly the *José Ton*, a New Orleans centerboard schooner, of about 26 tons. Her proximity to the coast of Florida (about 200 miles from her natural course to Matamoras), in connection with the pig lead composing part of her cargo, afforded the strongest presumption of an intent to violate the blockade, and is believed to justify the seizure of the vessel, which has been sent to Key West for adjudication.

With much respect, I have the honor to remain, your obedient servant,

FRANCIS WINSLOW,
Lieutenant, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Tampa Bay, September 3, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to report that on the 26th August, ultimo, while three of the refugees who have been for some months, at the light-house on **Egmont Key** under the protection of the United States were on the main land endeavoring to

procure potatoes, beef, etc., from their own farms near **Old Tampa** for the support of themselves and families, two of them, John and Scott Whitehurst, while shoving from the shore in their boat were barbarously set upon by guerrillas, and Scott Whitehurst was immediately killed and John Whitehurst mortally wounded. The latter had strength enough to pull the boat out of fire, then fell and laid two clays in the boat exposed to the rays of an August sun, and was at last discovered by another refugee named Clay and brought to this place. The third man, named Arnold, is supposed to have been murdered during the day.

All these men were Union men, and only a short time ago John Whitehurst offered to raise a company of loyal Floridians if he could be assured it would be accepted.

I sent a boat and recovered the body of Scott Whitehurst and buried it. John Whitehurst died last night, and was decently interred by us this morning. His dying request was that his three little sons should be received into the United States naval service. I have no vacancies for them, but will take them on board and ration them (which I shall be obliged to do under any circumstances) until I receive permission to ship them, which I am confident will be granted. The boys are quite young--the eldest, I should think, about 12 years of age, the youngest about 7 or 8.

These guerrillas are scouring the woods, looking after deserters and conscripts; they rob, murder, and steal indiscriminately, if the reports of the refugees are to be credited; Union men they threaten to hang, and do shoot, as we have lamentable proof.

It is said that every man capable of bearing arms has been forced to join the rebels in this part of Florida.

No vessel has attempted to run the blockade at this port.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. C. HOWELL,
Lieutenant, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES.
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Cedar Keys, October 14, 1862.

SIR: I have the honor to report that I arrived at this place on the 4th of October, instant, having touched at **Tampa Bay** and delivered the dispatches with which I was charged.

I found the U. S. S. *Somerset* at anchor off Depot Key. A boat was sent to me to report that in an attack on some salt works 15 men of the *Somerset*, under the executive officer, had been fired upon from a house, in front of which two or three women were walking, and from whose top a large white flag was flying, and 7 of the 15 wounded. The force was obliged to return without accomplishing all their work. I determined to fit out a strong expedition--to send men enough to overcome all opposition.

The rebels here needed a lesson and they have had it.

I respectfully refer you to Lieutenant-Commander Crosman's report for particulars. In the two expeditions between 50 and 60 boilers were destroyed. The houses were burned on account of the treacherous use made of them on October 4. Credit is due Lieutenant-Commander Crosman, in charge of the combined expedition, and to Acting Master and Executive Officer Dennison, of the *Somerset*, in charge of the *Somerset's* boats, and to the officers and men of both vessels for the successful issue. A large amount of property was destroyed and not a man was injured on our side. It is said that the salt works destroyed were capable of making 150 bushels of salt per diem.

I have the honor to enclose the proceedings of two summary courts-martial. The sentences are light enough, in my judgment.

The weather for the past week has been very bad. It is now quite cool and the weather still unsettled.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. C. HOWELL,
Commander, U. S. Navy.

Rear-Admiral J. L. LARDNER,
Commanding U. S. Squadron, Key West.

U. S. FLAGSHIP ST. LAWRENCE,
Key West, Fla., December 24, 1862.

SIR: In compliance with your orders from the Navy Department, you will proceed in the *Circassian* to **Tampa Bay** and relieve Lieutenant Howell from the command of the U. S. gunboat *Tahoma*.

Lieutenant Howell will hand over to you all orders and circulars appertaining to your duties on the blockade. You will be vigilant in maintaining the blockade and use all your energies in making captures of vessels of the enemy and those engaged in breaking the blockade.

Send to the Secretary Navy, through me, a complete list of your officers, made up to the 31st day of December.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Lieutenant-Commander A. A. SEMMES.

1863

U. S. S. TAHOMA,
Key West, Fla., January 15, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to inform the Department of the capture by this vessel in **Tampa Bay** of the rebel sloop *Silas Henry*, on the 8th instant, under the following circumstances:

At daylight discovered a vessel ashore on the southeastern side of **Tampa Bay**, between 4 and 5 miles distant. Weighed anchor immediately and steamed toward her. Approaching, discovered she was on fire. Sent boats, found her abandoned, and put the fire out. She proved to be loaded with sea-island cotton. The hull of the vessel alone escaped material injury. I have turned the cargo and hull over to the judge of the United States district court at this place.

I enclose a list of the officers and crew on board this vessel at the time of capture.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. A. SEMMES,
Lieutenant-Commander.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

FLAGSHIP HARTFORD,
New Orleans, January 29, 1863.

SIR: On the 16th instant a two-masted iron steamer, walking beam engine, was seen about 15 miles from **Tampa Bay**, running in. She hoisted rebel colors.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,
Rear-Admiral.

Acting Rear-Admiral THEO. BAILEY,
Commanding Eastern Gulf Blockading Squadron.

U. S. FLAGSHIP ST. LAWRENCE,
Key West, April 21, 1863.

SIR: I have to report the following: On the 27th ultimo, as the bark *Pursuit* was lying off **Gadsden's Point** in **Tampa Bay**, on blockade, a smoke was discovered on the beach, and shortly afterwards three persons made their appearance, waving a white flag. Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Randall, in command of the *Pursuit*, supposing them to be escaped contrabands or others, wishing to communicate with the vessel, sent a boat in, in charge of Acting Master H. K. Lapham, with a flag of truce flying. On the boat nearing the beach, two of the parties were seen to be clothed in female apparel, with their hands and faces blackened, and one of them appeared to be overcome with joy, exclaiming, "Thank God! Thank God! I am free." On the boat touching the beach, the female dresses were thrown off, and it then became evident that they were white men, disguised for the purpose of decoying the boat on shore. Immediately afterwards about 100 armed men arose from the bushes around about and demanded the surrender of the boat, which being refused, they fired a volley of musketry

into her, wounding the officer in charge and three of the crew. The fire was returned by the boat's crew, some firing and the rest hauling the boat off until they were out of range. As soon as the firing commenced, the *Pursuit* was sprung and her battery brought to bear, and four shells fired amongst the rebels, but probably without effect.

The gunboat *Tahoma*, arriving at **Tampa Bay** the next day, her commander having been informed of the treacherous conduct of the rebels, ordered the *Pursuit* down the bay, and proceeded with the U. S. schooner *Beauregard* up to bombard the town. It blowing a norther at the time, it was impossible to do anything more than to try the range of the *Beauregard's* rifle, which was done with satisfactory results. On the 2d instant, the commander of the *Tahoma*, while returning to his vessel from a closer inspection of the battery, had three shots fired at him. The *Beauregard* was then sent as near the battery as was possible, and both vessels commenced firing on the town, hitting some of the houses, but what other damage was done could not be ascertained. I herewith enclose the acting assistant surgeon's report of the wounded on board the bark *Pursuit*.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. East Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. BARK PURSUIT,
Off Gadsden's Point, Tampa Bay, March, 27, 1863.

SIR: I am obliged to report an act of shameful treachery committed by the rebels under a flag of truce. The circumstances are as follows: Last night, at about 10 p.m., a small fire was discovered on the beach at **Gadsden's Point**, which bears N. ¼ W., 2 miles distant. Supposing it to have been made by escaped contrabands who were desirous of coming to the ship, I was about to send a boat; but on further consideration I deemed it more prudent to wait until daylight. In the morning no signs of anyone could be seen on shore. About noon, however, a small smoke was discovered on the beach, and three persons were seen waving a flag of truce. It being evident that they wished to communicate with the ship, I sent the first cutter with an armed crew, under charge of Acting Master Henry K. Lapham, who pulled toward them with a white handkerchief flying as a flag of truce. On nearing the beach two of the persons were found to be clothed in female apparel; their faces and hands were blackened, and one of them appeared to be overcome with joy, wringing her hands and repeatedly exclaiming, "Thank God! Thank God! I am free" As soon, however, as the boat touched the beach it became evident that it was a white man in disguise, for he threw off a shawl and picked up a musket. At this signal about 100 men arose from ambush and demanded the surrender of the boat. Mr. Lapham replied, "Be honorable. Respect the flag of truce." They again said, "Will you surrender?" Mr. Lapham replied, "No; never." Whereupon they fired a volley of musketry, severely wounding Mr. Lapham and three of the boat's crew. The fire was returned and two of the rebels were seen to fall (one of those in female costume). Mr. Lapham ordered the crew to jump overboard and keep the boat between them and the shore, which they did, some of the wounded assisting in dragging the boat, while the others continued to fire until the ammunition became wet. As soon as the rebels fired on the boat I sprung the ship, fired four shells among them and sent the third cutter with Acting Assistant Surgeon H. K. Wheeler to assist the sinking boat. The wounded are all on board receiving the most careful attendance and the surgeon's report of casualties will be forwarded to you by the first opportunity.

I beg leave to state that I witnessed the whole affair, and deem it most miraculous that any of the boat's crew should have escaped, as the rebels were no less than 100 in number, and not over 30 yards distant from the boat. She could easily have been captured were it not for the cool and determined manner in which she was defended. The only comment that I can make on the conduct of Mr. Lapham and the boat's crew is that they have proved themselves to be truly brave men.

Regretting my inability to communicate more briefly a faithful detail of the events, I have the honor to remain,

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. P. RANDALL,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Acting Rear-Admiral THEODORUS BAILEY,
Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron, Key West, Fla.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Tampa Bay, May 15, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you of the capture by this vessel, on the 5th instant, of the schooner-rigged boat called the *Crazy Jane*, in latitude 27° 43' N., longitude 82° 56' W., **Egmont Key light-house** bearing S. E. by E. 1/2 E.

She had no name painted on her. No papers or flag were found on board. The character of her cargo--turpentine and cotton--and the place of seizure, show her business. The crew claim to be British subjects, but fail to produce any evidence thereof.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. A. SEMMES,
Lieutenant-Commander.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Tampa Bay, June 4, 1863.

SIR: The Fort Henry having captured a sloop boat called the *Isabella* and started her for Key West, and she having commenced to leak very badly, so much so as to render her unseaworthy, I have hauled her up here and send now by the *Hendrick Hudson* an old man taken in her, who is unwilling to land here to starve, as he says.

The sloop (and cargo which was damaged) is not worth the expense of a trial, even if she could be gotten to Key West.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. A. SEMMES,
Lieutenant-Commander.

Acting Rear-Admiral T. BAILEY,
Commanding Eastern Gulf Blockading Squadron.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Tampa Bay, Florida, June 8, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you of the capture by this vessel near **Tampa** of the schooner *Statesman*, loaded with cotton, on the 6th instant, under the following circumstances:

Extract from log book, June 6, 1863:

From 8 to meridian. On passing **Gadsden's Point** discovered a schooner lying close to **Tampa**; ran as near as possible, when three armed boats were sent, in charge of Executive Officer Harris, Acting Master Moses, Acting Ensign Mendall, and Acting Master's Mate Koehler, to take possession of her. When within half a mile of the schooner a rifled gun from the enemy's battery at **Tampa** opened on the boats, throwing its projectiles over and near them, and kept up firing until the schooner was boarded and taken possession of without injuring anybody, though several shot struck within a few feet of the boats. Got the schooner off by means of kedging, towing, and using the sails under a sharp fire of a fieldpiece of the enemy planted on the beach near the schooner, which was soon silenced by a few shell from the Parrott gun.

She had no flag or papers. Her name on the stern was partially covered with paint.

I enclose a list of the officers and crew of this vessel at the time of capture. I will send the prize to Key West.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. A. SEMMES,
Lieutenant-Commander.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. FLAGSHIP MAGNOLIA,
Key West, June 13, 1863.

SIR: The following list shows the position of vessels belonging to this squadron with whom you will communicate after leaving this port: *Sagamore*, Charlotte Harbor; *Tahoma*, **Tampa Bay**; *Fort Henry*, Cedar Keys; *Stars and Stripes*, off St. Marks; *Somerset*, East Pass St. George's Sound; *Part Royal*, West Pass St. George's Sound; J. L. Davis, St. Joseph's Bay; *Roebuck*, St. Andrew's Sound.

Besides these there are the following with whom you may fall in and whom you will in that case supply with fresh provisions, etc.: *Sunflower*, cruising northward of Tortugas; *Fox*, cruising off **Tampa Bay**; *Two Sisters*, cruising off Bayport; *Huntsville*, cruising at large.

Respectfully,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant WM. B. EATON, *U. S. Navy,*
Commanding Steamer Circassian.

U. S. SCHOONER JAMES S. CHAMBERS
At Sea, Lat. 27° 15', Long. 83° 20', June 18, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to make the following report, viz:

On the morning of the 18th instant, when about 30 miles to the west of Charlotte Harbor, Fla., a sail was discovered to the west of us, about 9 miles distant, steering north. I directed my course for her, seeing which she changed her course directly from us. After a seven hours' chase we came up with her and sent an officer on board. She proved to be the schooner *Rebekah*, and, as appears by her papers, owned by a British merchant in Havana. The captain reports that he was bound for Matamoras. She has but a small amount of cargo on board, consisting of liquors, etc. When we boarded her **Tampa Bay** bore N. E. by E., distant 30 miles. My reasons for making the capture are, first, she being found so far from the route to Matamoras, and also the course she was steering when first discovered, and afterwards evidently trying to escape from us. I dispatch her for Key West, in charge of Acting Master's Mate William J. Eldredge, with a prize crew of 6 men. I retain one of the crew of the schooner on board this vessel, and I shall improve the first opportunity of sending him to Key West.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

LUTHER NICKERSON,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Tampa Bay, Florida, June 22, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you of the capture of the English schooner *Harriet* by this vessel about 10 a.m. the 18th instant, in latitude 28° 04' N., longitude 89° 57' W., in 3½ fathoms of water, **Anclote Keys** bearing N. by E., distant about 7 miles.

The *Harriet* was discovered shortly after daylight, the 18th instant, and chased to where she was captured, all possible measures, except running ashore, being resorted to avoid capture.

The captain acknowledged to me that he was trying to run the blockade.

I enclose herewith a list of the officers and crew of this vessel.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. A. SEMMES,
Lieutenant-Commander.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Tampa Bay, Fla., June 22, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to inform you of the destruction of the English schooner *Mary Jane* at 2 p.m. the 18th instant, she having been run on the beach on a small key near **Clearwater Harbor**, in latitude 28° N., longitude 82° 53' W., by her captain, to avoid seizure by this vessel.

I send by the prize schooner *Harriet* all that portion of the cargo of the *Mary Jane* that was saved. A large portion of it is damaged.

I enclose herewith a list of the officers and crew of this vessel.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. A. SEMMES,
Lieutenant-Commander.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES.
Secretary U. S. Navy, *Washington, D. C.*

U. S. FLAGSHIP MAGNOLIA,
Key West, June 26, 1863.

SIR: After leaving this port, you will communicate with the following vessels belonging to this squadron: *Restless*, at Charlotte Harbor; *Tahoma*, at **Tampa Bay**; *Wanderer*, at Tampa Bay; Fort Henry, at Cedar Keys; *Stars and Stripes*, off St. Marks; *Somerset*, at East Pass, St. George's Sound; Port Royal, at West Pass, St. George's Sound; J. \$. Chambers, West Pass, St. George's Sound; J. L. Davis, at St. Joseph's Bay; Roebuck, at St. Andrew's Sound.

You will be pleased to deliver to each of these vessels their mails and to furnish them with the usual supplies.

Besides those already enumerated you may possibly meet the following: *Annie*, cruising near Quicksand Passage; *Rosalie*, tender to *Restless*, Charlotte Harbor; *Stonewall*, tender to *Tahoma*, **Tampa Bay**; *Two Sisters*, tender to *Magnolia*, off Bayport; *Fox*, tender to *Dale*, cruising; *Sagamore*, cruising; *Hendrick Hudson*, cruising; *De Soto*, cruising.

In which case you will be pleased to furnish them also with supplies.

Respectfully,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant EDWARD CONROY, *U. S. Navy,*
Commanding Steamer Union.

U. S. FLAGSHIP TAHOMA,
Key West, August 16, 1863.

SIR: I have information that the steamers *Alabama* and *Nita* sailed from Havana on the 12th, with a view of running the blockade, probably at Mobile, but possibly between **Tampa Bay** and St. Marks; also that the steamers *Montgomery* (formerly *Habanero*), the *Isabel*, the *Fannie*, the *Warrior*, and the *Little Lily* were nearly ready for sail, with like intent. Furthermore, that the *Isabel*, which sailed on the 7th, has undoubtedly gone either to Bayport, the Waccasassa, or the Suwanee River. You will therefore keep a sharp lookout for any of these vessels, and capture such as come within your reach.

Respectfully,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Acting Rear-Admiral, Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blkdg. Squadron.

Lieutenant-Commander EDW. Y. McCAULEY, *U. S. Navy,*
Commanding Steamer Fort Henry.

U. S. FLAGSHIP TAHOMA,
Key West, August 20, 1863.

SIR: You will take charge of the prize steamer *James Battle* and fit her out for a three weeks' expedition, the object of which is to scour the coast between **Tampa Bay** and St. Marks, where it is believed one or more steamers (diverted from the direct trade with Mobile by the increased difficulties of running the blockade in that direction) are now engaged in landing and receiving cargoes for the rebels. You will take for the outfit of the *Battle* such officers, men, arms, stores, etc., as the *Tahoma* can furnish and make requisition for the rest, keeping in view the fact that you can receive reinforcements from the Huntsville, with which vessel you will communicate at **Tampa Bay** and deliver to her the provisions and stores which form the ostensible object of sending the *Battle* up the coast.

The details of the expedition must necessarily be left to your own discretion, merely cautioning you that its success will depend upon your preserving the utmost secrecy and also upon the rapidity of your movements along the coast, as the results of a previous affair of the same sort were rendered comparatively small by the ease with which the land communication of the rebels was made to outshine the slow progress of the boats. You will, therefore, during the passage up the coast, devote your attention mainly to the capture of any vessels you may find, leaving the attack upon towns or batteries (if any such should present themselves to you and if you should deem it prudent and expedient to make such attack) until your return. You will use all the dispatch consistent with the objects of the expedition to return to this place.

You will please deliver to the Fort Henry one of the rifled 12-pounder fieldpieces furnished to the Battle for this expedition before returning, together with a field and boat carriage, all the implements complete, and all the ammunition you can spare from what will then remain on board.

Should you find an opportunity for carrying out the object of this expedition more effectually by so doing, you will at your discretion apply to Lieutenant-Commander McCauley for the cooperation of his tender, boats, and men, or will take them temporarily either from the Huntsville or the *Stars and Stripes*.

Respectfully,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Lieutenant-Commander A. A. SEMMES, *U. S. Navy*
Commanding Gunboat Tahoma.

Raid on Tampa, the "Battle of Ballast Point."

U. S. FLAGSHIP SAN JACINTO,
Key West, October 24, 1863.

SIR: I have to report the destruction of the blockade-running steamer *Scottish Chief* and of the sloop *Kate Dale*, in **Hillsboro River**, by an armed expedition from the U. S. gunboats *Tahoma* and *Adela*.

Having learned that these vessels were loading with cotton and about to sail, and being apprehensive that by reason of their light draft they would escape the blockading vessel, I sent Lieutenant-Commander Semmes to Tampa Bay to destroy them. It was planned between myself and Captain Semmes that he should, with the *Tahoma*, assisted by the *Adela*, divert attention from the real object of the expedition by shelling the fort and town, and that under cover of the night men should be landed at a point on old **Tampa Bay**, distant from the fort, to proceed overland to the point on the **Hillsboro River** where the blockade runners lay, there to destroy them. This plan was successfully carried out, but not without a considerable loss.

On the 16th instant the *Tahoma* and *Adela* ran in abreast of the batteries and shelled them slowly during the day; the firing was in an unusual degree accurate and precise. At dark, as soon as the moon went down, a force consisting of Acting Ensigns J.P. Randall and J. G. Koehler, with 60 men from the *Tahoma*, and of Acting Ensigns Strandberg and Balch and Acting First Assistant Engineer [George M.] Bennet, with 40 men from the *Adela*, and Acting Master's Mate Crane and Mr. J. A. Thompson, guides, was landed at **Ballast Point**. The expedition was under the immediate command of Acting Master T. R. Harris, executive officer of the *Tahoma*. The line of march was quietly taken up for the river, under the guidance of Mr. J. A. Thompson, who, being too ill to walk, was borne in a litter. A march of 14 miles (rendered circuitous by the necessity of avoiding houses, creeks, etc.) brought the party before daylight to the river bank. As soon as it was light the vessels were discovered on the opposite bank; the force was thereupon moved to a point opposite where they lay, and those on board brought under aim of the rifles and ordered to send a boat, which they did. A detachment thereupon was sent to bring over the vessels and to make prisoners of those on board. At this time two men succeeded in escaping from the vessels, who carried the alarm to the garrison. The vessels meantime were fired effectually and the force thereupon set out upon its return. Encountering an armed party near the beach, a charge was made, and two rebels made prisoners. The beach finally was safely reached without loss, and pickets were stationed and the party rested, waiting the arrival of the boats, then being dispatched from the *Tahoma* and *Adela*. While so resting, word was brought that a detachment of cavalry and one of infantry was advancing; the party was formed to resist an attack, and the boats having arrived the embarkation commenced. While this was proceeding the rebels opened fire. The first and second divisions, with 7 prisoners, proceeded in an orderly manner to the boats; the third division (spread out, that the rebels might not fire into a mass) returned the fire energetically and with great coolness and bravery. The *Adela* meantime shelled the woods (in which the rebels were concealed and from which they fired) with shrapnel. The first and second divisions having embarked, the rear guard, on receiving the order so to do, followed. This rear guard stood nobly to their post, protecting the retreat under an extremely severe fire from a concealed enemy--loading and firing with the coolness of target practice, and finally leaving quietly at the word of command, bearing with them their wounded. The rebels were under the command of Captain (late U. S. Senator) Westcott, and were so-called regulars.

The retreat to the boats was admirably conducted by Acting Master Harris, and the expedition throughout was characterized by a disciplined courage on the part of both officers and men. The force suffered severely at the beach, and both courage and discipline were called for. Our loss was as follows:

Killed.--James Worrall, seaman, *Tahoma*; John Roddy, seaman, *Adela*; Joseph O'Donnell, seaman, *Adela*.

Ten were wounded (including Acting Ensigns Randall and Koehler), two seriously. Five were made prisoners.

In reporting these losses Lieutenant-Commander Semmes observes:

I regret sincerely our loss, yet I feel a great degree of satisfaction in having impressed the rebels with the idea that blockade-running vessels are not safe, even up the **Hillsboro River**.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. East Gulf Blckg. Squadron.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Tampa Bay, Fla., October 20, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report for your information:

Upon our arrival here, on the 13th instant, finding that the steamer *Scottish Chief* and the sloop *Kate Dale* were loaded with cotton and ready to run the blockade, I had to change the place of landing a force from **Old Tampa Bay to Ballast Point**, about 5 miles below the town of **Tampa**.

On the 16th, the *Adela* in company, we went abreast of the batteries and shelled them at our leisure. The practice with the 200-pounder Parrott was beautiful, but the fuzes acted badly. While in this position, with a view of deceiving the rebels, I placed some stakes to the northward and eastward, as if intending to land there. This had the desired effect, for that night quite a force was sent there to oppose a landing. Toward 4 o'clock in the afternoon I backed off into deeper water and at dark received on board officers, men, and boats from the *Adela*. As soon as the moon went down this vessel was moved abreast of Ballast Point, and a force of 100, exclusive of officers and guides, was landed.

When the boats returned I moved about midnight abreast of the batteries again. The following morning, at daylight, we fired the heavy rifle gun, simply to keep the rebels busy.

For the details of the expedition on shore I respectfully refer you to the report, herewith enclosed, of Acting Master [T. R.] Harris, the executive officer of this vessel, who was in command.

I am satisfied from the way in which the vessels were scattered about the river that more could not have been accomplished.

The *Adela* having signaled me about noon, the 17th, that our force was on the beach, I sent boats to take them off as soon as possible.

From the testimony of witnesses I feel assured that the most effectual means were adopted by Acting Master Harris for the protection of his command.

The officers and men mentioned in the enclosed report of Acting Master Harris constituted a rear guard, and according to verbal reports behaved nobly.

Those not particularly mentioned remained in line of battle until ordered to their boats.

Acting Master's Mate [H. A.] Crane and Mr. J. A. Thompson, guides, did their duty well, though the latter had to be carried in a litter a long time.

The march to the river and back, I am informed, was made in good time and very quietly. The escape of two prisoners from one of the vessels burned was the only thing that showed the presence of our force.

The morning of the 18th I communicated by flag of truce, meeting Captain [John] Westcott, the commander at **Tampa**, from whom I learned the condition of the men left on shore.

We have in our possession 2 prisoners of war and 5 blockade runners (one of them severely wounded), all of whom, except the wounded man, I send by the *Honduras*.

The vessels destroyed were of light draft, not over 4 feet, and would have probably eluded me.

Our total loss is as follows:

Killed.--James Worrall, seaman, *Tahoma*; John Roddy, seaman, *Adela*; Joseph O'Donnell, seaman, *Adela*.

Wounded.--J. P. Randall, acting ensign, Tahoma; J. G. Koehler, acting ensign, Tahoma; Jonathan Murray, boatswain's mate, Tahoma; Henry Palmer, coxswain, Tahoma; William Curtin, ordinary seaman, Tahoma; George [H.] Fitzgerald, ordinary seaman, Tahoma; Nicholas Lund, ordinary seaman, Adela; John Hannibal, quarter gunner, Adela; Charles H. Dodge, steerage boy, Adela; Frederick Klasson, carpenter's mate, Adela.

Prisoners.--John Collins, master at arms, Tahoma John McDonald, seaman, Tahoma; John Hilton, ordinary seaman, Tahoma, wounded; Thomas Donnelly, fireman, Adela.

But five of the wounded, including the one taken prisoner, need medical treatment, and only two of them have serious wounds.

I regret sincerely our loss, yet I feel a great degree of satisfaction in having impressed the rebels with the idea that blockade-running vessels are not safe even up the **Hillsboro River**.

October 22.--I communicated by flag of truce again this morning with the view of getting Mr. Crane's family, whom Captain Westcott intended to send to me, but for some reasons they didn't come. I send by the Honduras three refugees received by flag of truce. Boys, McKnight and Spencer, sent some time since to the Huntsville, were landed. The enclosed private letters (except the one to Judge Whit-worth, which was captured on board one of the vessels destroyed) were received by flag of truce.

I enclose a list of prisoners. The man Mobley is a druggist and consumptive. They are very anxious to get him back, and the surgeon who met me on Sunday intimated that probably General Finegan might propose an exchange. Nothing heard from General Finegan yet. Craig, the blockade runner, has been trying for two years to get out of the county, and begs not to be sent back. I enclose the report from the captain of the *Adela* also medical officer's reports.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

A. A. SEMMES,
Lieutenant-Commander.

Acting Rear-Admiral THEODORUS BAILEY,
Comdg. East Gulf Blockading Squadron, Key West, Fla.

Report of casualties on the U. S. S. Tahoma.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Tampa Bay, October 20, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to report the following casualties, which occurred to the officers and men under your command during the engagement of the 17th instant:

Killed.--James Worrall, seaman; body not recovered.

Severely wounded.--J. P. Randall, acting ensign. Wounded in two places--one, a rifle ball, having passed completely through the neck immediately below the lower jaw, wounding several small arteries and the external jugular vein of the right side. The other, evidently a buckshot, entering the right arm and lodging in the biceps muscle. Doing well.

Jonathan Murray, seaman. A rifle ball, entering the posterior portion of the right buttock and passing obliquely upward through the glutaeus muscles and making its exit near the anterior superior spinous process of the ilium.

John Hilton, ordinary seaman. A rifle ball, entering the upper portion of the side of head and passing out near the place of entry.

William Curtin, ordinary seaman. Rifle ball, striking him on the right shin just above the ankle joint and splintering the bone slightly.

Slightly wounded.--John G. Koehler, acting ensign. Spent ball, striking him on the left leg near the knee, bruising but not breaking the skin.

George H. Fitzgerald, landsman. Flesh wound of the index finger of the right hand.

Henry Palmer, coxswain. Spent ball, striking him on the side near the spine.

All of the above wounded, I am happy to say, are doing well.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. H. GUNNING,
Assistant Surgeon, U. S. Navy.

Lieutenant-Commander A. A. SEMMES,
Commanding.

U. S. GUNBOAT TAHOMA,
Off Tampa, October 18, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to make the following report of an expedition, under my command, made a few miles into the interior of Florida, which resulted in the capture and burning of the steamer *Scottish Chief* and sloop *Kate Dale*, both loaded with cotton and ready to run the blockade.

The force landed consisted of Acting Ensigns J.P. Randall and J. G. Koehler with 60 men from this vessel, and Acting Ensigns Strandberg and Balch and Acting First Assistant Engineer Bennet, with 40 men from the U. S. S. *Adela*, and Acting Master's Mate Crane and Mr. J. A. Thompson, guides, all well armed and supplied with three days' rations.

At 11 p.m., October 16, having quietly landed on the western shore of the bay in six boats, I took up the line of march for the **Hillsboro River**, carrying along a small boat to be used in crossing the river or any creek should it be necessary to do so. I avoided the roads and houses as much as possible so as to prevent discovery. After marching 4 or 5 miles we were obliged to abandon the boat, she delaying us too much, and I had her concealed about a quarter of a mile from our trail. After this we moved along very rapidly under the direction of our excellent guides, and reached the banks of the **Hillsboro River** about 4 a.m. October 17, having marched about 14 miles. Having stationed lookouts, the party lay down till daylight. Shortly after daylight we discovered the steamer and sloop on the opposite side of the river about 9 miles above us. The force was immediately moved to a point opposite where they lay and those on board ordered to send a boat to us. When the boat reached [us] I sent Acting Ensigns Randall and Balch, with a suitable number of men, on board of the vessels, where they made prisoners of all except two, who escaped on the **Tampa** side. Hauling the vessels over, I fired both effectually.

The other steamer having been represented to me as being 5 miles farther up the river, and too far gone to be repaired, and the schooner *Neptune* being sunk in the river near **Tampa**, I determined not to attempt any more, and immediately took up the line of march for the beach, hoping to get there before the garrison in the town of **Tampa** could be alarmed. No one was encountered until near the beach, when a scouting party was discovered in citizens' dress, on foot and armed, and upon whom we immediately charged, capturing two. Having reached the beach and placed out a picket guard, we halted and rested. Very soon the picket guard informed me of the presence of a party of cavalry lurking about the woods, upon which information I ordered the party to be prepared for a fight should the rebels attack us before our boats, then approaching, could arrive. When the boats had neared the beach, and I had ordered all but about twenty, including officers, to embark, the rebels opened a sharp fire with their rifles on the boats and those left with me on the beach, which was returned for fifteen or twenty minutes.

Finding that the enemy, concealed by the brush, had the advantage of position, that nearly all of those ordered to the boats had embarked, and that those with me were suffering severely, I retreated to the boats, bringing off all but 6, 1 of whom was killed in the water and 5 who fell into the hands of the rebels, 2 of them being severely wounded. (One of these wounded died the following morning in the hospital at **Tampa**.)

I would respectfully call to your notice the gallant conduct of Acting Ensigns Randall and Kochler, Acting Master's Mate Crane, Boatswain's Mate Jonathan Murray, Captains of forecastle John Black and William Larkin, Master at arms John Collins, Quarter Gunner Thomas Brooks, Captain top Douglas Thompson, Seaman Arthur Ulmer, Ordinary seamen William Curtin, John Hilton, and John Roddy, of the *Adela*, mortally wounded, and Landsman James Heenan. There were also a few men of the *Adela* whose names I do not know who were all that I recollect being on the beach.

The total loss amounts to 3 killed, 6 wounded, 4 prisoners. One of the latter was severely wounded. A prisoner captured by us is also wounded.

It being necessary for the boats, crowded as they were, to move off a short distance to avoid the fire of the enemy, some of the arms were lost.

I am pleased to state that all concerned remained in position until they were ordered to embark.

The force of the enemy was between 70 and 80 men, 40 of whom were cavalry, all under the command of Captain Westcott, as we afterwards learned by a flag of truce from the commanding officer at **Tampa**.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

THOS. R. HARRIS,
Acting Master and Executive Officer.

Lieutenant-Commander A. A. SEMMES,
Commanding U. S. Gunboat Tahoma.

U. S. S. ADELA,
Tampa Bay, Fla., October 19, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to report that on the morning of the 16th instant, at 9 a.m., moved up with the vessel under my command (in obedience to instructions) to within 9,000 yards of the battery at **Tampa**. At 9:15 a.m. opened fire on the battery and town with my 20-pounder rifle and rifled howitzer. Eliciting no reply from the battery, fired at intervals until 4 p.m., when, in obedience to signal made, dropped alongside the *Tahoma* and sent three boats in charge of First Assistant Engineer George M. Bennet, Acting Ensigns F. A. Strandberg and Edward Balch, with 40 men, armed and equipped. Having obtained permission from yourself, on the morning of the 17th at 8 a.m. proceeded toward the western shore, of the bay in order to get my vessel nearer the battery, but unfortunately run aground and was unable to get off. At 10 a.m. espied our forces returning to the beach, and immediately made signals to that effect. In a few moments descried rebels, in the woods opposite this vessel. Commenced shelling the woods with shrapnel, the rebels still moving toward our party on the beach. Continued covering our party as well as possible until all gained the boats but few, on whom the rebels made an attack. At 2 p.m. the boats from the vessel returned, bringing the party belonging to this vessel, together with the wounded.

I regret to report that two men, Thomas Donnelly, fireman, and John Roddy, seaman, are missing. Joseph O'Donnell, ordinary seaman, mortally wounded (since died); Nicholas Lund, ordinary seaman, dangerously wounded; John Hannibal and Frederick Klasson, slightly wounded. Three prisoners taken sent on board your vessel.

I have the honor to be, sir, with much respect, your obedient servant,

LOUIS N. STODDER,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Lieutenant-Commander A. A. SEMMES, *U. S. Navy,*
Commanding U. S. Gunboat Tahoma.

U. S. S. ADELA,
Tampa Bay, Fla., October 19, 1863.

SIR: I beg leave to make the following report of those killed and wounded belonging to this vessel in the affair of the 17th instant:

Killed.

1. John Roddy, seaman.
2. Joseph O'Donnell, ordinary seaman.

Wounded.

1. Nicholas Lund, ordinary seaman; musket shot through abdomen.
2. John Hannibal, gunners mate; flesh wound over abdomen.
3. Charles H. Dodge, ship's steward; contusion of shoulder.
4. Frederick Klasson, carpenter's mate; slightly, in mouth.

Respectfully, etc.,

WILLIAM GALE.
Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. Navy.

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant L. N. STODDER, *U. S. Navy*

List of men captured October 17 by a force from the U. S. gunboat Tahoma.

Taken from steamer Scottish Chief.--W. J. French, F. W. Cox, Charles M. Craig, W. L. Black.

Prisoners of war.--C. J. Mobley, Vincent Leohardy.

A. A. SEMMES,
Lieutenant-Commander.

U. S. FLAGSHIP DALE,
Key West, October 28, 1863.

SIR: Your report of the expedition sent by you beyond **Tampa**, for the purpose of destroying the vessels in **Hillsboro River**, has been received and the affair duly represented to the Navy Department.

The plan of operations seems to have been arranged with skill and judgment, and to have been executed with coolness and bravery; and I have to congratulate you and the officers and men under your command, more especially Acting Master Thomas R. Harris and the landing party under his charge, upon the handsome manner in which this brilliant little affair was executed. The lesson taught to the rebels by this expedition, that their movements can be watched and thwarted by the daring of our seamen, even when carried on at a distance of several miles up a river whose mouth is protected by a fortified town, is of no small importance, and is calculated to depress them in proportion to the audacity and discipline displayed by our men.

I regret exceedingly that your success should have been attended by the loss of even a few of the brave men composing the expedition, and that others are yet suffering from wounds received in conflict with the enemy; but it does not appear that a different result could have been expected, and I am too confident of the temper of the men in this squadron to suppose that they would hesitate at any exposure which may be required of them. I am highly gratified at the reports of the steadiness and discipline under fire exhibited on this occasion.

You will be pleased to read this communication to the officers and men of your vessel at general muster. A similar letter will be sent to the *Adela*.

Respectfully,

T. BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Lieutenant-Commander A. A. SEMMES, *U. S. Navy*,
Commanding Gunboat Tahoma.

U. S. SCHOONER TWO SISTERS,
Key West, November 4, 1863.

SIR: In accordance with orders received from Captain Temple, desiring a report of every cruise, I have the honor to submit the following report:

I left Key West September 28 and proceeded up the coast. On the 30th anchored in **Tampa Bay** and communicated with the steamer *Adela*. October I proceeded to sea cruising; on the 4th spoke the tender *Annie* on a cruise, and proceeded to the northward in company. At 4:30 p.m., Bayport, bearing S. S. E., 20 miles distant, saw a sloop standing along to the southward in shoal water, on St. Martin's Reef. Made all sail in chase, the sloop hauling his wind as soon as he saw us, running inshore; chased her until we were in 7 feet of water, gaining on her rapidly. Finding the water too shoal, I immediately armed the boat and sent her in chase, in charge of Acting Master's Mate J. A. Montague. Night setting in, however, he lost sight of her in the darkness and she escaped, although he continued the chase in every available direction until midnight.

On the 6th anchored at Cedar Keys to make necessary repairs on sails; lay there until the 9th, when, taking the Fort Henry's second cutter, with an officer and crew, proceeded on a cruise down the coast.

On the 10th, having anchored off Bayport, just in sight of the land, I took the *Fort Henry's* boat and proceeded in to reconnoiter the coast in the vicinity of the town. When within 3 miles of the town saw a boat coming out containing 2 men, who evidently mistook us for a small blockade runner. I ran for them, intending to capture them if possible, but they ran for the battery, not letting us get within musket range of them. Having accomplished my object of coming in, I returned to the vessel.

On the 11th, sent a boat ashore on **Anclote Keys** to reconnoiter the coast in the vicinity of **Anclote River**. Discovering nothing, I proceeded down the coast, and on the 13th dispatched both boats, in charge of Acting Master's Mates Hancock and Montague **into Clearwater Harbor** to reconnoiter the mainland inside the keys bordering that portion of the coast. They proceeded along a range of 10 miles of coast, discovering no vessels or evidences of breach of the blockade at that place. A party of about 30 men, armed, were observed in the bushes watching their movements, but as I had ordered them not to land, unless for some necessary purpose, no attack was made. The next day I beat down the coast **until Tampa light-house** was in sight, at which point I communicated with the U. S. schooner *Sea Bird*, and returned with her to an anchorage off **Anclote Keys**. On the 15th assisted in the capture of the steamer *Mail*, the particulars of which I have given in a former report. On the morning of the 16th anchored in Cedar Keys. On the morning of the 18th received the mails and stores for the fleet from the U. S. S. Honduras, having received orders from Lieutenant-Commander McCauley, commanding the - Fort Henry, to deliver them at their several destinations. Proceeded on this duty, communicating with the *Stars and Stripes*

off St. Marks the 20th; the *Sagamore* at East Pass on the 21st; the *Somerset* and J. S. Chambers at the West Pass on the 22d; the *J. L. Davis* at St. Joseph's on the 23d, and the *Restless* at St. Andrew's on the same day.

On the 24th started on my return to Cedar Keys, and having received the mails from the *J. L. Davis* in passing, arrived at Cedar Keys on the 26th, sending the mails by the *Sea Bird*. On the 30th sailed for Key West to accompany the *Fort Henry*, and render assistance if necessary, but as she started ahead of us, on account of calms, we saw no more of her.

On the 1st November communicated with the *Tahoma* at **Tampa Bay**, and the *Sea Bird* off **Sarasota**. On the 3d arrived in Key West, having experienced much bad weather during the cruise, and having received some injuries, rendering a few repairs necessary.

Respectfully,

CHAS. H. ROCKWELL,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Acting Rear-Admiral T. BAILEY,
Commanding East Gulf Blockading Squadron.

DECEMBER 2, 1863.

MY DEAR GENERAL: Mr. Enoch Daniels, a refugee from the mainland near Charlotte Harbor, arrived here to-day for the purpose of consulting you with reference to raising a volunteer force to occupy and conquer the country between Charlotte Harbor and **Tampa Bay**, from which section of the rebel State about 1,500 head of cattle are furnished weekly for the supply of the rebel army in the field.

Mr. Daniel hopes, if you think well of his adventure, to organize recruits among the refugees at present in Key West, who will be required to be mustered into the service, armed, equipped, and rationed, and a small body of regular volunteers, say 100, well commanded as a nucleus. If you think well of his proposition, I will endeavor to furnish the required transportation to Peace Creek or Charlotte Harbor, and the protection which can be afforded by the neighboring blockading vessels.

Begging you to hear his story and judge of its feasibility,

I remain, general, your obedient servant,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Acting Rear-Admiral, Comdg. East Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Brigadier-General [D. P. WOODBURY].

U. S. FLAGSHIP DALE,
Key West, December 16, 1863.

SIR: Brigadier-General Woodbury has commanded the organization of a company of refugee rangers, intended to operate on the mainland in the vicinity of Charlotte Harbor and **Tampa Bay**, in conjunction with some regular troops and under his own immediate orders. Some 25 or 30 men are already enlisted and placed in charge of Lieutenant Meyers, of the Forty-seventh Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers. This detachment is sent up in the *Sunflower* to be landed on one of the islands in Charlotte Harbor (Useppa Island is considered the best for their present purposes), under your directions, with a view to obtaining further recruits from the refugees and other inhabitants of that vicinity, and to await there the arrival of the general, or orders from him.

You will therefore render them every assistance in your power and protect them with your guns and all the force under your command, if necessary.

Respectfully,

[T. BAILEY,]
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant I. B. BAXTER, *U. S. Navy,*
Commanding Bark Gem of the Sea.

U. S. S. SUNFLOWER,
Tampa Bay, December 26, 1863.

SIR: I have the honor to report the capture, by the above steamer under my command, of the Confederate sloop *Hancock*, from Havana, bound into Crystal River with salt, borax, etc.

I took her on the 24th instant, just out of sight of **Egmont (Tampa Bay) light-house**. Previous to boarding him he had thrown his chart and rebel flag overboard, but [I] found in the captain's valise his contract with the owner for the performance of the voyage from Crystal River to Havana and back to a Confederate port.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDW. VAN SICE,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. S. SUNFLOWER,
Tampa Bay, December 26, 1863.

SIR: On the 24th instant, while lying at anchor under **Egmont [Key]** in company with the *Tahoma*, made a sail in the offing; got underway, in obedience to signal, and ran out. She proved to be the schooner *Sea Bird*, coming in. Made another sail off to the westward, gave chase, and shortly over-hauled her, just out of sight of the light-house. She proved to be the sloop *Hancock*, from Havana, bound into Crystal River or any Confederate port. Her cargo consists of some 20 sacks suit and 3 barrels of borax, some little rum, etc. Previous to my boarding him he had thrown his chart and rebel flag overboard, as he afterwards acknowledged. On searching the captain's valise I found his contract with the owner to perform the voyage from Crystal River to Havana and back to a Confederate port. She carried to Havana 3,100 pounds sea-island cotton. There are three persons on board, namely, Fredk. White, captain; Bartholomew Blanco, seaman, and Edward Walker, passenger. You wished me to capture one of the pilots in this neighborhood. I think you will find a pretty good one in the person of this Fredk. White, the captain of the sloop.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD VAN SICE,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Acting Rear-Admiral T. BAILEY,
Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron, Key West, Fla.

1864

U. S. SUPPLY STEAMER UNION,
Tampa Bay, January 22, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the capture of the Confederate steamer *Mayflower* by this ship under the following circumstances:

The *Mayflower* ran out of **Tampa Bay** on the night of the 13th January. We discovered her on the afternoon of the 14th (while on our voyage from Charlotte Harbor to the blockading vessels at **Egmont Bay**) secreted inside of **Sarasota Pass**. Having put my ship in a position to cover our boats cutting her out, I immediately sent in three boats. Our first shell from a 20-pound Parrott caused the crew of the *Mayflower* to hoist a white flag. Acting Ensigns George F. Wilkins and M [arcus] Baird took possession and brought the prize out at once, she having steam up and ready to run out, bound to Havana with 75 bales of cotton. The *Mayflower* is a very old and almost worthless vessel. Not judging it prudent to send her to sea alone, I took her in tow and brought her in smooth water at **Egmont Bay**, leaving her there with an officer and prize crew on board to await my return. The cargo of cotton having been for more than twelve months on board, the bagging and lashing were found to be entirely rotten. As the *Mayflower* was making a great deal of water, I took the cotton on board this ship for the better preservation of it. The cotton is of the best quality and the loss of it and the vessel will be badly felt by some of the prominent rebels in that part of Florida. The captain and 2 engineers escaped in one of the steamer's boats; the 10 remaining persons on board were taken prisoners.

Most respectfully,

EDWD. CONROY,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding U. S. S. Union.

Acting Rear-Admiral T. BAILEY,
Commanding Eastern Gulf Squadron, Key West, Fla.

U. S. S. SUNFLOWER,
Tampa Bay, March 28, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the capture of the sloop *Josephine* (formerly the *Kate Dale*), with 7 bales of cotton (6 sea island and 1 upland), from **Tampa**, bound to Havana, in Sarasota Sound, on the 24th instant. The particulars are as follows: Having learned that she was about ready to start from **Tampa**, I sent an expedition to **Sarasota**, consisting of the schooner *Stonewall*, Acting Master H. B. Carter; the armed cutter of this vessel, and the armed launch of the bark *J. L. Davis*, the boats going inside, under command of Acting Ensign George C. Campbell, and the schooner outside, both to meet at Sarasota, the object being to intercept and capture the sloop and to make a reconnoissance for salt works. She was taken as above by the armed boats of the *Stonewall* and this vessel, the launch of the bark *J. L. Davis* being in signal distance at the time of capture. I beg to enclose herewith the report of Acting Master H. B. Carter, and at the same time wish to commend the zeal and vigilance displayed by Acting Master H. B. Carter and Acting Ensign George C. Campbell in accomplishing the most important object of the expedition.

Before the boats got to her the captain and pilot got ashore and escaped. The three persons found on board I send down. They were interested in the cotton and acted very well at the time of the capture, having prevented the captain from setting fire to her, although the kindling wood was already laid and they had plenty of time to have set her on fire and made their escape before the boats got to her.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD VAN SICE,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Acting Rear-Admiral T. BAILEY,
Commanding Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron, Key West, Fla.

U. S. SCHOONER STONEWALL,
Tampa Bay, March 28, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to submit the following report: At 10 a.m., 23d instant, got underway and stood out the S. W. Channel. At 1:15 p.m. passed **Longboat Inlet**. In consequence of the heavy sea on the bar, could not communicate with the boats, but sighted them. Stood on down the coast, wind N. N.W. At 4:30 p.m. came to anchor outside the bar at Sarasota Inlet. At 4 p.m. the launch and cutter came out of New Cut [Pass] and stood for the 'schooner, wind E. Communicated with Acting Ensign G. C. Campbell; gave him orders to go inside and camp; through the night fresh breezes from east.

Thursday, March 24, at 8:30 a.m., boats stood out the channel to sound; found plenty of water for the schooner. Got underway and stood in, and anchored abreast the fish houses. Acting Ensign G. C. Campbell, the pilot, and myself went in the boat to sound up the bay; found plenty of water. Went back to the schooner and got underway. Gave orders to Acting Ensign G. C. Campbell in the launch to go ashore at the fish houses to camp--would set signal when wanted launch. When abreast of Whittaker's house, owing to the tide falling, schooner grounded. Blowing fresh from S. E., but no sea on. At 12:30 p.m. lookout reported a sloop standing down the bay. At once started two boats in chase, in charge of Acting Master's Mate John A. Fleming, of this vessel. At 1:15 p.m. made signal for launch. At 2 p.m. launch got alongside; sent her in chase of the sloop when Acting Ensign G. C. Campbell spoke the sloop: found that Acting Master's Mate John A. Fleming had taken her. She proved to be the sloop *Josephine*, from **Tampa** for Havana, with 7 bales of cotton. The captain and pilot escaped by jumping overboard, taking the spyglass and rebel flag, leaving 3 men on board. At 4:30 p.m. launch returned to the schooner. At 5 p.m. the prize anchored close to schooner; left Acting Master's Mate John A. Fleming and cutter's crew in charge of prize; through the night strong breezes from S. E. Friday, March 25, at 2:30 a.m. schooner floated; ran out a kedge, hauled her into 2 fathom's of water, and came to anchor. At 9 a.m. wind shifted to W. S. W., with heavy rain. At 11:30 a.m. weather clearing; Acting Ensign G. C. Campbell in the launch and myself in the cutter, proceeded to land. At 11:45 a.m. landed under cover of howitzer, threw out pickets, and reconnoitered about 2 miles in the rear of Whittaker's house. Seeing nothing suspicious, returned to the boats and proceeded to the schooner. At 2:40 p.m. got underway with boats in tow and came to anchor abreast fish houses, the prize astern; sent the launch ashore to camp; through the night fresh breezes from west. Saturday, March 26, at 4:15 a.m., wind Shifted to N. W., blowing strong; got underway and stood down close to the bar; came to anchor; through the night strong breeze from north. Sunday, March 27, at daylight moderating; sent word to Acting Ensign G. C. Campbell to have all ready to start up the bay when the cutter returned; got underway, sent cutter ahead to sound, got halfway across the bar, when schooner grounded; ran out a kedge and hauled the schooner off; a sail in sight standing down the coast. At 11:30 a.m. spoke U. S. S. *Sunflower*; went on board and reported to Acting Master Ed. Van Sice. Expended three rounds of howitzer ammunition. I would beg leave to state that I received every assistance from Acting Ensign G. C. Campbell in forwarding the object of the expedition.

Very respectfully, you obedient servant,

H. B. CARTER,
Acting Master, Commanding U. S. S. Stonewall.

Acting Master ED. VAN SICE,
Commanding U. S. Sunflower.

U. S. S. HENDRICK HUDSON,
Key West, April 14, 1864.

SIR: I have to report that on the morning of the 21st ultimo, just before daylight, a schooner was discovered about 2 miles distant from us. Running down for her immediately, and maneuvering to speak and ascertain her character, her captain suddenly luffed across my bows, and in spite of all I could do to prevent it, by backing and using the helm, I struck the schooner directly amidships, sinking her in about three minutes. All the crew were saved excepting one man, who, in a fright, jumped overboard and drowned before I could lower a boat to pick him up. In the collision the stem of this vessel was slightly damaged. I learned the following particulars concerning the schooner from the captain and crew: Schooner *Wild Pigeon*, 37 tons, from Havana, bound to any Confederate port on the Florida coast. Assorted cargo, rebel papers, and a rebel flag on board. As all on board claimed to be foreigners, I put them ashore about 40 miles from **Tampa**, first searching them and taking all their money with the exception of the amount allowed by the court, and recommended them to seek the protection of their respective consuls. The damage done my stem made it imperative on me to go to the nearest place for repairs, which was **Tampa Bay**, and after concluding the work I again went to sea. One of the blockade runners being a carpenter, I retained him to assist in the work, and brought him to this place, as a witness in the case. The money taken from the prisoners, which consisted of \$726, Confederate money, 4 doubloons, 1 half, 1 quarter, and 1 eighth doubloon, and \$3.18 in silver, I have turned over to the prize commissioner and taken his receipt for the same. I will also add that three of the men taken were captured in endeavoring to run the blockade in the *Laura*, and that this was at least their second attempt.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHARLES J. McDOUGAL,
Lieutenant- Commander, U. S. Navy.

Acting Rear-Admiral THEODORUS BAILEY,
Commanding Eastern Gulf Blockading Squadron.

U. S. SUPPLY STEAMER UNION, *April 27, 1864.*

SIR: I have the honor to report the capture of the English schooner O. K. (a noted blockade runner) by this ship. The O. K. was from Havana, bound to any port on the coast of Florida where she could get in. We captured her between **Tampa Bay** and Charlotte Harbor, coast of Florida. The captain of the O. K. tried to escape by running into shallow water. She is loaded with an assorted cargo--medicines, spirits, cotton cards, etc.--all of but little value, excepting the depriving the rebels of their use. The O. K. was sent to Key West, Fla., for adjudication, in charge of Acting Ensign George F. Wilkins.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD CONROY,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Comdg. U. S. S. Union.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. S. SUNFLOWER,
Tampa Bay, May 8, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report that on the arrival of the steamer *Honduras* on the 4th instant, with General Woodbury and troops on board, for the purpose of making a raid on **Tampa**, in obedience to your circular, I immediately took steps to cooperate with the naval force here under my command. On the afternoon of the 4th instant I went up to **Tampa** with Captain Bowers, U. S. Army, to communicate, to ascertain the strength of the place, returning the same night. On the 5th instant, after transferring two companies of the colored troops to the bark *J. L. Davis*, I took her in tow and towed her up to **Gadsden s Point**, the *Honduras* with the balance of the troops coming up in the afternoon. I then organized a naval party (consisting of 54 men from the three vessels, Acting Ensign J. H. Cox, of the *J. L. Davis*, Acting Master's Mate W. J. Crosby, of the *Honduras*, and Acting Master's Mate S. E. Willits, of this vessel, all under command of Acting Master William Fales) to land with the troops and assist in the capture of the place. After getting them all on board the *Honduras* we proceeded up the bay as far as practicable and succeeded in landing all before daylight. At 7 a.m. the place was taken

possession of, capturing some 40 prisoners, the naval force capturing about one-half, which were turned over to the army, and a few minutes after 7 the Stars and Stripes were hoisted in the town by the navy.

I have also to report the capture of the sloop smack *Neptune* and a quantity of cotton, estimated at about 55 bales, by the naval force. Before closing this report I desire to make mention of the cheerful and assiduous cooperation of Acting Masters William Fales and J. H. Platt. Acting Master Fales led his party into the town on the double quick, capturing several prisoners, wounding 2 who were trying to get away.

Acting Master Fales speaks in high terms of praise of the conduct of Acting Master's Mate S. E. Willits, and also says that both officers and men behaved very well.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWD. VAN SICE,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Acting Rear-Admiral T. BAILEY,
Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron, Key West, Fla.

U. S. S. SUNFLOWER,
Tampa Bay, May 8, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the capture of the sloop smack *Neptune* and a quantity of cotton estimated at about 55 bales, by the above steamer under my command, the bark *J. L. Davis*, Acting Master William Fales, commanding, and the steamer *Honduras*, Acting Master J. H. Platt, commanding, on the morning of the 6th instant at **Tampa**.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDWARD VAN SICE,
Acting. Master, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES.
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. FLAGSHIP DALE,
Key West, May 14, 1864.

SIR: While engaged in the duty of communicating with and supplying the vessels of this squadron under orders from me, a copy of which is herewith enclosed, the U. S. supply steamer *Union* captured on the 14th of January, near **Tampa Bay** and within the limits of my squadron, the Confederate steamer *Mayflower*, with 75 bales of cotton. Subsequently, on the 26th of April, while engaged on similar duty and acting under similar orders, the *Union* captured between `` and Charlotte Harbor, within the limits of this squadron, the schooner O.K., engaged in an attempt to run the blockade. Both of these vessels have been condemned.

I would request that the Fourth Auditor be instructed to apportion to me the amount allowed by law to the commanding officer of a squadron in such cases.

Very respectfully,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. East Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. S. ARIEL,
Key West, June 13, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report that in obedience to orders I proceeded to cruise between **Tampa Bay** and Homosassa River. On May 25, in **Clearwater Harbor**, boarded an army boat containing 10 men belonging to the Second Florida Regiment, under the command of Sergeant M. M. Edwards, who was under orders to proceed to various places on the coast to protect and bring off several refugee families. Wishing to acquaint myself with some of the prominent localities of my cruising ground, I embraced the opportunity of so doing by accompanying the detachment. We landed at **Clearwater** and learned that the rebels were obstructing the Homosassa River. I determined to proceed there, and at my request the sergeant accompanied me (as it did not conflict with his orders). On May 27, off **Anclote Keys**, spoke the schooner *Two Sisters*. Informing Acting Master Chatfield where I was going, he kindly lent me the assistance of Acting Ensign Montague, 6 men,

and his boat to assist me. I proceeded across St. Martin's reef, on my way, leaving the *Two Sisters* at Chassahowitzka beacon.

On May 28, at 5:20 a.m., made a small sloop under sail, standing inside of an island to the northward of Chassahowitzka River. I sent two boats to intercept the sloop, which they succeeded in doing, but not until the crew had set fire to her and escaped; but the fire was promptly extinguished by Acting Ensign Montague before it had done any damage whatever.

The sloop proved to be the *General Finegan* (Madge), from Crystal River to Havana. The cargo consisted of 5 bales (2,028 pounds) of sea-island cotton and 2 barrels of turpentine. The sloop's papers, a small mail for Havana, a rebel flag, and several other articles, of which I enclose a list, were found on board. The *Two Sisters* being only 15 miles distant, I sent the sloop in charge of two men to remain there until I returned.

On May 28, at 5 p.m., arrived at the mouth of the Homosassa River and anchored. At 8 p.m. I went up the river with 3 boats and 25 men to reconnoiter and find the channel; succeeding in doing so. On the 29th, at daybreak, I got underway with the *Ariel* for Tiger Tail Island, which is situated about 10 miles from the mouth of the river. When within about 2 miles of that place, a rebel flag was observed flying. I sent the army boat ahead to reconnoiter, while I followed slowly with the schooner. When the boat was within about 600 or 700 yards of where the flag was flying, two boats containing about 8 or 10 men each, pulled off in great haste. The army boats pursued them and fired at them, when they ran their boats on the beach and escaped to the woods; we obtained the boats.

Landing on the island I took possession of the rebel flag, a small quantity of ammunition, a small brass one-pounder, and some other articles, of which I enclose a list. About 100 yards from where the rebels had been was the residence of Ex-Senator D. L. Yulee, which was unoccupied at the time.

I found about 150 piles, intended for the obstruction of the river. They were about 12 or 15 feet long, and sharp at one end. There were also a quantity of them at a point about 2 miles from the mouth of the river.

I set fire to them all, also to the buildings where the rebel flag was flying. But, sir, I have to add that the flames spreading rapidly, communicated themselves to Mr. Yulee's residence, and it was burned to the ground.

I got underway and proceeded to rejoin the *Two Sisters*, meeting her on May 31, off Bayport beacon.

Acting Master Chatfield informed me that the prize sloop he had considered unseaworthy, and she was leaking badly, so he took the cargo out and sank her.

I took the cargo from the *Two Sisters* and bring it to this place for adjudication.

On my way down I stopped at several places to gather up refugee families and their effects, who were on their way to Fort Myers. I omitted to mention that on my way to Homosassa River, several refugees who intended going to Fort Myers willingly joined me in the expedition.

The officers and men whom I had the honor to command deserve great praise for their energy and efficiency.

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Rockwell sent on board for passage to Key West; Acting Master's Mate W. H. Howard, and Acting Master's Mate C. A. Edgcomb (under arrest). I also bring the mails from **Tampa** and Charlotte Harbor.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES J. RUSSELL,
Acting Master, Commanding Schooner Ariel.

Captain THEODORE. P. GREENE,
Commanding -Flagship San Jacinto.

U. S. S. SUNFLOWER,
Tampa Bay, June 7, 1864.

SIR: Having ascertained the locality of some salt works on the bay belonging to a Mr. Hooker, I went up abreast of the place with the steamer on the 2d instant, sent three armed boats ashore in charge of Acting Master William Fales, and entirely destroyed the works, which were very fine ones, consisting of four very large kettles and large furnaces; also destroyed a quantity of salt. On the approach of the boats the men employed at the works all left but one.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

EDW. VAN SICE,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Acting Rear-Admiral T. BAILEY,
Comdg. East Gulf Blockading Squadron, Key West, Fla.

U. S. FLAGSHIP DALE,
Key West, July 23, 1864.

SIR: You will at 3 p.m. this day take in tow the brig *Kodiak* and the schooner *Argus Eye*. You will, when off **Tampa Bay**, cast off the *Kodiak*, leaving her to make the best of her way into that port (with such dispatches as you may have in charge for that station). You will proceed at once with the *Argus Eye* in tow to St. Marks, and coal the vessel at that station, assisting with your own men, if necessary, to give dispatch. When the vessel at that station is coaled you will proceed to East Pass and deliver from the *Argus Eye* what coal the vessel at that station requires. You will therefore proceed to West Pass and discharge the remainder of the cargo of the coal schooners as the commanding officer of the vessel at that station may direct. The schooner being discharged, you will again take her in tow and proceed to **Tampa Bay**, casting her off when off that port and leaving her to make her way alone to Key West. You will proceed with the *Sunflower* under your command and report to the senior naval officer at **Tampa Bay**. Should there be lumber at West Pass ready for shipment, the officer in charge of the blockade at that port is ordered to send it down by the *Argus Eye*, and you will render such assistance in shipping it (as also in coming the various vessels) as you may be able. You will, on your return to **Tampa Bay**, report to me in writing, giving me the dates of your arrival at the several ports above indicated and the length of time you are detained, and the quantity of coal discharged at each. The commanding officers at the different stations have been ordered to give all possible dispatch in the matter.

Respectfully,

T. BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. East Gulf Blkdg. Squadron.

Acting Master E. VAN SICE, *U. S. Navy*,
Commanding U. S. S. Sunflower.

U. S. SCHOONER ARIEL,
Tampa Bay, Fla., July 25, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report that, in obedience to your orders, I proceeded to cruise between **Tampa Bay** and Cedar Keys. Stopping at Fort Myers to procure a pilot, I received a communication from Captain J. W. Childs, commanding officer at that post, requesting the means of transporting some 250 troops to a point convenient to Bay-port. Meeting the schooner *Sea Bird* off **Anclote Keys**, I requested Acting Ensign Robbins to accompany me to Point Arrassa [Punta Rasa] to assist in that service. Stopping at **Tampa Bay**, I requested the assistance of Captain Chandler, of the *Huntsville*, who immediately dispatched the schooner *Stonewall* to Point Arrassa [Punta Rasa] for the same purpose. The three schooners took on board 260 troops, Captain J. W. Childs being in command of them. We proceeded to **Anclote Keys**, the sloop *Rosalie* taking part of the troops from the *Stonewall*. On July 7 we landed them on the north side of the **Anclote River**, the *Stonewall* and *Rosalie* returning to **Tampa Bay**. The expedition left for the purpose of making a raid on Brooksville and then falling back on Bayport. I was to meet them at that place on the 12th instant. Captain Childs and 8 men being unable to march, remained on board the *Ariel*.

On July 10, in company with the *Sea Bird*, I proceeded to Bayport; the *Sea Bird*, being unable to get in that place, anchored about 4 miles off. I ran up within 100 yards of where the battery had been located and anchored at 5 p.m., observing some few men retreating from the town by the road.

I then dispatched Acting Ensign Bacon under a flag of truce to demand the surrender of the town, if he found anyone there, or to take possession of it if they had evacuated it. At 6 p.m. Acting Ensign Bacon returned and reported that the male inhabitants had all fled, and that there were five or six families residing there, and also that there were also a few bales of cotton on the wharf ready for shipping. Acting Ensigns Robbins and Dunderdale arrived at this time with ten men. I immediately dispatched them on shore and requested Captain Childs to picket the road with the six soldiers who were fit for that duty.

I then proceeded on shore and examined the town, visiting the families, whom I found greatly frightened, but having no knowledge of the expedition that was operating against **Brooksville**. The two guns which I had expected to find there had been removed to **Brooksville** for some time. Eleven bags of cotton ready for shipping I took possession of and commenced getting it off that night. There was also some 20 or 30 bales of cotton that were lying loose in a building formerly used as a schoolhouse, and 32 bales, ready packed, on the road about 1½ miles from the town. There were also some large scows and a number of small boats there, but no blockade runners. The people assured me that but two vessels had run the blockade

from that place for the last five months. Four contrabands that were there placed themselves under my protection. Stationing extra pickets, with strict orders not to enter a house or molest anyone, I waited until morning. On the 11th at 7 a.m. our military forces entered Bayport, when I withdrew my pickets, and they took possession of the town. I requested a detail of soldiers from the commanding officer for the purpose of bringing all the cotton off with me, which I could have done in the large scows that were there. The detail was furnished me, but in the meanwhile all the cotton near the place was fired by the soldiers, although the commanding officer had assured me that he would protect it and assist me to remove it from the place.

On the 11th at 5 p.m. the military wishing to evacuate the place, I took 60 men on the *Ariel*, besides the cotton I had on board, and transferred them to the *Sea Bird*. On the 12th the sloop *Rosalie* arrived, and not coming inside, I sent 40 men to her for transportation to Fort Myers.

Before leaving the place I destroyed the building used as a customhouse, also all boats and lighters. On the morning of the 13th we succeeded in removing the troops from Bayport, arriving at **Anclote Keys** on the same day.

Leaving the cotton at **Anclote Keys** we proceeded to Tampa Bay, and at that place transferred all the troops and prisoners to steamer I returned to **Anclote Keys** to bring the cotton and arrived at **Egmont Key** with it this day.

Acting Ensigns Robbins, Bacon, and Dunderdale, and the crews of the *Sea Bird* and *Ariel*, are entitled to much commendation for their untiring energy throughout this affair.

I also bring two deserters from the rebel army, who have taken the oath of allegiance and wish to join the Second Florida Regiment.

Respectfully, your obedient servant,

JAMES J. RUSSELL,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Acting Rear-Admiral THEODORUS BAILEY,
Commanding East Gulf Blockading Squadron.

The Brooksville Raid.

U. S. SCHOONER (TENDER) SEA BIRD,
Tampa Bay, Fla., July 25, 1864.

SIR: In obedience to the orders of Captain T. P. Greene, commanding U. S. S. *San Jacinto*, dated the 21st of June, I proceeded to sea on the 22d ultimo. On the 26th I communicated with Acting Master J. J. Russell, commanding tender *Ariel*, and received from him orders to accompany him to Punta Rasa for the purpose of conveying troops from that place to a point near Bayport. I immediately got underway and arrived at Punta Rasa on the 28th ultimo, in company with the tenders *Ariel* and *Stonewall*. July 1 received on board 110 troops, including officers. I then got underway and proceeded to sea. Arrived at **Anclote Keys** on the morning of the 5th instant. At 5 p.m. the same day the schooner *Stonewall* and the sloop *Rosalie* arrived, the *Rosalie* having taken on board part of the troops from the *Stonewall*. I then got underway and ran inside the key, and on the morning of the 8th instant landed the troops above **Anclote River**.

The object of the expedition was to make a raid on **Brooksville** and then to fall back on Bayport. After landing the troops I then stood up the coast, and on the 10th instant, in company with the *Ariel*, stood in toward Bayport and anchored about 4 miles from the town, not being able to get nearer on account of the shallowness of the water. Taking 10 men (armed) in the boat and with Acting Ensign C. F. Dunderdale, pulled in toward the town. In the meantime the *Ariel* stood in and anchored within 200 yards of the landing. Pulling alongside of the *Ariel*, Captain Russell informed me that he had sent Acting Ensign Bacon to reconnoiter under a flag of truce. He soon returned with the information that all the male portion of the inhabitants had left, leaving only the women and children, consisting of four families. On landing we found 11 bales of cotton near the landing, which was sent on board the *Ariel*, together with four contrabands captured in the town. We also found a large quantity of loose cotton in an old building, and about 32 bales in another building at about a mile and a quarter from the landing place.

On the morning of the 11th instant the troops came in and took possession of the town. The commanding officer detailed a party of men to assist in getting the cotton to the landing, but before we arrived at the place where the cotton was stored the buildings were set fire to and all the cotton destroyed.

On the 13th instant took on board 119 troops and 5 officers and proceeded to **Tampa Bay**. There we transferred them to the steamer *Ella Morse*. The contrabands were sent to the U. S. S. *Huntsville* by order of Lieutenant-Commander R. Chandler.

After watering ship I proceeded to my cruising ground and there cruising until the 25th instant, when I proceeded to **Tampa Bay** to intercept the *San Jacinto*.

I am, yours, most respectfully,

E. L. ROBBINS.
Actg. Ensign, U. S. Navy, Comdg. Tender *Sea Bird*.

Acting Rear-Admiral THEODORUS BAILEY,
Commanding East Gulf Blockading Squadron.

Admiral Bailey being sick, Key West with yellow fever, the EGBS moves its headquarters to Tampa Bay.

HDQRS. EAST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON,
Naval Warehouse, Key West, July 27, 1864.

SIR: In my letter of June 19 (Nos. 195, 196) I stated to the Department that indications had forced me to the conviction that we were to have a season of yellow fever at this port. My worst fears have been more than realized, and for more than two months the disease has held its course without abatement and is now as virulent as at any time. The season of epidemic lasted in 1862 nearly till the 1st of November, and there seems no reason to believe that it will disappear sooner the present year, except it shall have exhausted all the material for disease before that time.

I propose to detail to the Department the course the epidemic has taken and the measures that I have adopted to save harmless the vessels of this squadron from its effects.

It was evident that the first precaution to be taken was to get the vessels away from Key West, the center of the disease, as quickly as possible, and the second to provide some other port than this for coaling purposes. Within forty-eight hours of the sailing of the *Tioga*, accordingly, the harbor was cleared of all vessels except such as must remain, viz, the guard schooner, the ordnance ship, and the tug. The *Huntsville* was sent to **Tampa Bay**, and I directed Lieutenant-Commander Chandler to proceed at once to erect a wharf at which the vessels could coal and a hospital that could be used in case of need, capable of accommodating 30 patients. Fortunately the lumber was at hand, it having been cut at West Pass and St. Andrew's Bay by the blockading vessels. Piles were sent up, and a pile driver, and Mr. Lane, a professional wharf builder. Lieutenant-Commander Chandler entered upon the work with vigor and in three weeks a wharf was built of the most substantial character, at which two vessels can lie at a time, and with a depth of water of 4 fathoms. The hospital has also been completed and equipped. All this has been done at a very inconsiderable expense.

I have sent the coal vessels up to discharge and the steamers of the squadron (except those at St. Marks and St. George's Sound, which coal at West Pass) are directed to coal at **Tampa**. Meantime, while this work has been progressing at **Tampa**, the yellow fever has been raging at this post with a violence that has exceeded that of 1862, or I believe of any previous year. The vessels that have been detained here perforce have suffered severely. The steamer *Nita* was under repairs that rendered it impossible for her to get away. Every person on board but two officers has been taken ill of the fever and so far some ten or more have died. On the ordnance ship *Dale* I believe every person has been taken excepting Commander Handy and a boatswain's mate. The executive officer, Acting Ensign Joseph A. Denman, the master's mate. Robert Wisner, Acting Master Miller H. Johnson (on board under arrest), and Surgeon's Steward Purcell, the only officers excepting the commanding officer living on board, were taken and all died. I lost also four of the barge's crew who were on board, and others of the *Dale's* crew also died. The *Wanderer* had but three men; all were taken; one died; the others are in a critical condition. The guard schooner *Eugenie* has also lost perhaps one-fourth of her men. On shore the sickness and mortality have been even greater. The provost-guard of 45 men has lost more than half its number, and the mortality among the citizens and refugees has been alarmingly great. A [most every unacclimated person on the island has been attacked. I myself had the disease in a severe form, as did also Mr. Zeller, the fleet engineer, Mr. Bowman, the secretary, Passed Assistant Surgeon [W. R.] Richardson, the quartermaster, all the servants, and indeed every person attached to these headquarters but one. Of these, only two have died, Dr. Richardson and the printer's assistant. The doctor was attached for general duty to the *Dale* and lived at these headquarters. He was taken the fourth day after his arrival and died the third day after his attack.

The mortality on the island I am told has reached as high as 12 to 15 in a day. I concluded early in the progress of the disease that it would be best for me to remain at this station, It is the only one from which the movements of the squadron can be properly directed or communication kept up with the North. I have accordingly remained, causing those vessels that needed to communicate with me to anchor at Sand Key and sending out the tug *Marigold* to them. I believe the well-being of the squadron has not in the least suffered. The *Roebuck* has been stationed as a storeship at **Tampa**. The coal vessels have discharged there and the communication with the squadron, by means of the *Honduras* making her regular trips, has been uninterrupted. Meantime, in spite of every effort, the fever has manifested itself on several of the vessels. The *Huntsville* has had from 20 to 30 cases. Her sick list for to-day shows 14 cases, and those assuming a more malignant type

than the previous ones. I can spare this vessel as well now as a fortnight hence. A portion of her shaft is being forged at New York and must be nearly ready, so that a week or two sooner or later is not of importance, as she would necessarily go north to receive the machinery. I am, however, very sorry to part with the *Merrimac*. I am advised, however, by the surgeons, and my own observation of the nature of the disease and its intensity, this season confirms their advice, that unless the vessel goes north every person on board will in all probability have the disease and very many must necessarily die. I have therefore concluded that in the interests of humanity the vessel should be sent north. She has lost so far but one officer--Acting Third Assistant Engineer Thomas Cunningham---but several of them are now sick, there being at present 8 cases in all, as appears by the surgeon's report enclosed with another communication on this subject.

The other vessels in which the disease has appeared are the *Honduras*, the *Iuka*, the *Marigold*, the *Honeysuckle*, and the *San Jacinto*. Deaths have occurred of officers and men on these vessels. When I last heard from the *San Jacinto* she had had but four cases, of which but one had terminated fatally--that of Lieutenant Tecumseh Steece, who died at sea on the 15th of July. I trust that no more vessels will have to go north. The blockade of this coast shall be preserved at all events, whatever the sickness. The squadron is much crippled, and its cruisers that have served to break up in so great a degree the commerce between Mobile and Havana, but the coast is as thoroughly blockaded as at any previous time and the squadron as effective to prevent all egress and ingress.

I enclose herewith a diagram showing the position of the hospital and coal wharf erected on **Egmont Key, Tampa Bay**.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. East Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *July 29, 1864.*

SIR: As soon as the U. S. brig *Sea Foam* is ready for sea direct her commanding officer to proceed with her to **Tampa Bay**, the present headquarters of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron, and report to Acting Rear-Admiral Bailey, who will give orders respecting the distribution of the cargo of the *Sea Foam*. When the cargo shall have been discharged or distributed, the *Sea Foam* will return to Boston.

Very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of Navy.

Rear-Admiral S. H. STRINGHAM,
Commandant Navy Yard, Boston.

Admiral Bailey being sick, the EGBS moves its headquarters to Tampa Bay.

U. S. S. SAN JACINTO,
At Sea, off Sandy Hook, August 12, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report that I have availed myself of the permission accorded in your favor of the 19th of July to return north for the purpose of recruiting my health.

Before leaving Key West I turned over the command of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron to Captain Theodore P. Greene, in compliance with the directions of the Department.

The chief engineer of this vessel reports that certain repairs are needed to the machinery which could not have been made at Key West with safety during the prevalence of the epidemic. This ship has had 27 cases of yellow fever while cruising off Mobile and lying at **Tampa Bay**. Fortunately the type of the disease was mild, but would doubtless have assumed a severe form had I permitted the vessel to enter the port of Key West. I am happy to be able to report to the Department that but one death has occurred on board, that of Lieutenant Steece, and that there have been no new cases and no deaths for about three weeks.

Before the vessel returns to her station it will be necessary to renew a portion of the crew, there being some 45 on board whose terms of service expire by the close of the present month.

My address is Oyster Bay, Long Island, N.Y., where I shall await the further orders of the Department.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

THEODORUS BAILEY,
Acting Rear-Admiral.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *August 1, 1864.*

SIR: On the 3d instant proceed with the U. S. S. *Circassian* on another trip to the West Gulf Blockading Squadron.

The headquarters of the East Gulf Blockading Squadron have been removed to **Tampa Bay**, where you will communicate with Acting Rear-Admiral Bailey. You can stop off Key West, not within 3 miles of the place, and send in by pilot boat any passengers and mails you may have for that point. Do not, however, send in your boats or receive anything from the shore.

Communicate with all the stations of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron going and returning, as usual.

You will not touch at Port Royal either on your outward or homeward passage. Return to the port of Boston.

Use every precaution and safeguard against contracting fever on board your vessel, and give particular attention to its sanitary condition.

Very respectfully,

GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant H. CHURCHILL,
Commanding U. S. S. Circassian, Boston, Mass.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *August 17, 1864.*

SIR: On the 20th instant proceed with the U. S. supply steamer *Admiral* on another trip to the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron.

The headquarters of the Eastern Gulf Squadron have been removed to **Tampa Bay**, where you will communicate with Captain Theodore P. Greene, temporarily commanding the squadron, or the senior officer present, and deliver any passengers or mails for that point. Do not go near Key West.

Communicate with all the stations of the Western Gulf Blockading Squadron, going out and returning, as usual. You will not touch at Port Royal either on your outward or homeward passage. On your homeward passage, touch at Hampton Roads and forward your mails to the Department via Baltimore.

Use every precaution against contracting yellow fever on board the *Admiral*, and give particular attention to the sanitary condition of the vessel.

Enter New York on your return.

Very respectfully, etc.,

GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of Navy.

Acting Volunteer Lieutenant W. B. EATON,
Commanding U. S. S. Admiral, New York.

U. S. S. CONNECTICUT,
Hampton Roads, Va., August 23, 1864.

SIR: I hereby report the arrival here of this steamer under my command from the Gulf. Getting short of coal, not having sufficient to reach Boston, I have been obliged to stop in here to replenish, after completing which I shall proceed to Boston, in compliance with orders from the Department dated July 25.

The boilers and machinery of the *Connecticut* are now in such a condition that it is difficult to make a correct estimate as to the quantity of coal required to run long distances. With smooth water, I find that she will make steadily about 8 knots an hour through the 24, burning 25 tons of coal in that time, and falling off gradually all the time. Returning, when under steam and sails, she has occasionally made 9½ knots.

In obedience to the Department's order I delivered the three drafts of men for the three different squadrons, viz, 200 for the South Atlantic Squadron, 225 for the West Gulf Squadron, and 225 for the East Gulf Squadron.

On the passage out I stopped off Key West and by the pilot boat communicated with the senior naval officer there (Captain T. P. Greene) as to the points to deliver the men for that squadron, which was duly arranged and agreed upon.

I then continued on to the West Gulf Squadron, which I found had got inside and anchored in Mobile Bay. Saw and communicated with the admiral and delivered the 225 men for that squadron.

Admiral Farragut expressed himself as having sufficient men, and spoke of sending some of those which I took to the receiving ship at Pensacola.

I then proceeded and delivered the 225 men for the East Gulf Squadron to vessels at five different points, viz, St. Andrew's, St. Joseph's, St. George's, Cedar Keys, and **Tampa Bay**, as directed by Captain T. P. Greene, senior officer of the squadron.

One vessel at **Tampa Bay**, bark *Roebuck*, has the yellow fever, but good health prevails on board of all the other vessels. The yellow fever has very much abated at Key West, and very few deaths occur there now.

I am gratified to state that there have been no signs of yellow fever or sickness on board of the *Connecticut*, and all are well in the general sense.

I brought 85 men from the different vessels of the East Gulf Squadron whose terms of service had expired. None were taken from those vessels which had had the yellow fever this year. Most of these brought north are three-year men who are entitled to and anxious for their discharge.

Seven officers from the different vessels of the East Gulf Squadron came [as] passengers in the *Connecticut*, a list of whom is herewith transmitted.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

JOHN J. ALMY,
Commander and Senior Officer Present.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

FLAGSHIP HARTFORD,
Mobile Bay, August 29, 1864.

SIR: I desire to call the attention of the Department to another instance of an interference with one of the supply vessels of this squadron on her passage here.

The captain of the *Bermuda* had received orders to stop at **Tampa Bay** simply to deliver over a draft of men intended for the East Gulf Squadron; but when there he was ordered by the senior officer in command, Commander Shufeldt, to supply his vessels with beef and vegetables, and the *Bermuda* was boarded by boats from those vessels for that purpose.

Aside from this unauthorized appropriation of supplies intended for my squadron and the detention of the vessel, the still greater wrong was done in endangering the safety not only of the officers and men of the *Bermuda*, but of this squadron, by infection from yellow fever, which at that time existed on one or more of the vessels at **Tampa Bay**.

The *Bermuda* arrived here on the 23d instant, but with such a short supply of beef and vegetables that it was out of my power to send her to the coast of Texas, where the ships are in much need of the latter to avoid scurvy.

May I request the Department to give instructions that under no pretense shall any vessel destined for this squadron be intermeddled with at any of the intermediate points.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

D. G. FARRAGUT,
Rear-Admiral.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington.

U. S. S. HENDRICK HUDSON,
Tampa Bay, September 20, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the following: On the evening of the 16th instant Acting Master J. J. Russell, commanding the tender Ariel, attached to this vessel, having heard of the whereabouts of some cotton belonging to a notorious blockade running shipper by the name of David Hope, organized an expedition for its capture, which was entirely successful. The cotton, between 4,000 and 5,000 pounds, was about 5 miles from Yellow Bluff, inland, and to bring it to the beach Mr. Russell pressed the horses and wagons of the country people in service. No opposition was made, and the cotton was brought away without accident, I shall send it to Key West for adjudication as soon as practicable. I herewith enclose a list of officers and men entitled to share in the proceeds of the capture.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHARLES J. McDOUGAL,
Lieut. Comdr. U. S. Navy, Comdg. U. S. S. H. Hudson.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

U. S. BARK ROEBUCK,
Portsmouth, N. H., September 28, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the arrival at this port of the U. S. bark *Roebuck*, under my command, and in obedience to orders received from Captain Theodore P. Greene. U. S. Navy. I would respectfully submit a detailed report of the sickness (yellow fever) which has prevailed on board this vessel.

July 21, having been relieved at Indian River Inlet by the U. S. schooner *J. S. Chambers*, in obedience to orders I proceeded with the *Roebuck* under my command in tow of U. S. transport *Hussar* toward Key West, where we arrived July 24 at 7 a.m. Anchored 3 miles outside the fort. At 10 a.m. the U. S. tug *Marigold* came down to us, bringing orders for me to come on shore, and not to have any other communication. Having two small prizes in tow, the next morning, in obedience to orders, took the officer and two men, who were among the captors, up to the prize commissioners; the same afternoon received on board 10,000 feet of hemlock lumber; at 8 p.m. received orders to get underway and proceed to Tampa Bay in tow of the U. S. S. *Honeysuckle*. Up to this time the bark was remarkably healthy, not having a man on the sick list for four days previous.

The same night we left, about 12 or 1 o'clock, two men were attacked, and before night again we had 6 cases. On the 28th we arrived at **Tampa Bay**, with 9 more cases of fever on board. I immediately went on board the U. S. S. *San Jacinto*, Captain Theodore P. Greene, for medical assistance, there being no medical officer on board the bark. Captain Greene immediately sent assistance and all care taken of the sick; the officers and crew continued to be taken down, from 1 to 5 every day, and at one time we had only 5 men and I officer not on the sick list or able to do duty. A few days after the *San Jacinto* left the U. S. S. *Hendrick Hudson*, Captain McDougal, senior officer of the division, [arrived]. He immediately rendered me all assistance; everything was done that possibly could be to check the infection, but impossible. Some of the crew, after returning on board convalescent, were taken the second time. A medical survey was held on the bark, and September 12th we received orders to proceed to Portsmouth, N. H.

On the morning of the 13th we were towed to sea by the U. S. S. *Sunflower*, and proceeded on our way. On the 13th one new case of fever; 14th, three of the nurses, who had been at the hospital tending on the sick all through the worst stages, were taken down with the fever, and on the 21st one of them died. All the clothing of the officers and men that have died has been destroyed. Everything in the way of disinfectants has been used that could be.

Copperas dissolved in water has been turned down the pumps, peak, and run, and the vessel smoked throughout every morning with red hot bolt dipped in tar. Vessels containing chloride of lime and others of the copperas have been plentifully distributed about the ship.

I am, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

WM. L. MARTINE,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. S. HENDRICK HUDSON,
Tampa Bay, October 23, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the capture of the English schooner *Lucy*, with an assorted cargo, by the U. S. schooner *Sea Bird*, a tender to this vessel, the circumstances of which are as follows:

On the morning of the 21st of October, while the *Sea Bird* was cruising off Bayport, a sail was discovered and chase given. The stranger evincing no disposition to heave to, fire was opened on him and he finally, seeing the hopelessness of his case, ran ashore, and all hands, with the exception of one man, took the only boat belonging to her, deserted her, and pulled for the shore, closely pursued by an armed boat from the *Sea Bird*, which, however, was unsuccessful in their attempt to capture.

On boarding the vessel she was found to be the English schooner Lucy, from Bahia Honda, with an assorted cargo, and cleared for Matamoras. I send the schooner in charge of a prize crew to Key West for adjudication, and with her all the papers, etc., found on board, together with the one man, who, unfortunately for himself, was too drunk to escape to the shore with the remainder of the crew. The capture was made in latitude 28° 20' N., longitude 82° 55' W. I herewith enclose a prize list of those entitled to share in the capture.

I am, respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHARLES J. McDOUGAL,
Lieutenant-Commander Comdg. U. S. S. H. Hudson.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

OFFICE OF THE PRIZE COMMISSIONERS,
Key West, November 3, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the arrival at this port, on the 29th ultimo, of the British prize schooner Lucy, captured on the 21st October, off **Tampa Bay**, by the U. S. schooner *Sea Bird*, Acting Ensign E. L. Robbins, tender to the U. S. gunboat *Hendrick Hudson*, Lieutenant-Commander Charles J. McDougal, commander.

The schooner was first seen by the *Sea Bird*, lying at anchor, and before she could get to her the crew, except one man, had left in the boat. The man found on board this schooner reports that the captain had been murdered after leaving Havana.

The cargo has been discharged, and I beg leave to send you herewith an inventory of the same.

I have the honor to be, your obedient servant,

R. W. WELCH,
Prize Commissioner.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. S. NITA,
Tampa Bay, Fla., October 24, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the capture of the schooner Unknown, under the following circumstances, viz:

At 8:30 a.m. of this day, being off **Clearwater Harbor** in 4½ fathoms water, discovered a schooner at anchor close in to the land.

Headed the ship for her, and soon discovered a boat containing two or three persons pulling toward the mainland. At the same time discovered a smoke arising from her, forward and aft.

At 9:30 a.m. anchored near her, and sent two armed boats (furnished with water buckets) in charge of Acting Ensign P. Pease to board her. He soon subdued the fire. No person was found on board and no papers of any kind. An English ensign was the only thing found by which her nationality could be judged. The crew escaped.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. B. SMITH,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

HDQRS. EASTERN GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON,
Key West, Fla., November 14, 1864.

SIR: I have received a report dated November 12 from Acting Volunteer Lieutenant R. B. Smith, commanding U. S. S. *Nita*, of an expedition sent to destroy rebel salt works in **Tampa Bay**, in which one man was wounded and captured and

five men supposed to have deserted. I presume these men straggled from the party sent on shore and were captured by the rebels. Such expeditions must of necessity be left to the discretion of commanding officers at the blockaded ports, and are too frequently, I fear, undertaken without due caution and without regard to consequences, in hope of doing something to bring themselves prominently into notice.

I take occasion to bring to the notice of the Department the fact that at this time all the vessels on the blockade are commanded by volunteer officers, and I have no vessels commanded by regular officers of the Navy, except those employed to cruise after blockade runners.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. K. STRIBLING,
Actg. Rear-Admiral, Comdg. Eastern Gulf Blockdg. Squadron.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C.

U. S. S. NITA,
Tampa Bay, Fla., November 12, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to make the following report: On the 10th instant I proceeded up this bay on a reconnoissance in order to ascertain the cause of many fires in the vicinity of Gadsden's Point and Old Tampa Bay. Having received from the *Hendrick Hudson* Acting Master Alex. Wallace and 10 men, and the weather being thick and rainy, on the 11th instant I advanced nearly to the head of Old Tampa Bay and landed there. Finding no indications of any movements on the part of the enemy in that direction, I scouted for some distance inland and gave the order to return on board. The weather at this time was very thick and rainy. On mustering the shore party five of the *Hudson's* men were missing, and as I kept my position all night and made signal from time to time, as well as sending several boats in quest of them, it is to be presumed that they have deserted. Early on the morning of the 12th instant I proceeded slowly down the bay, and when near Rocky Point discovered evidences of quite extensive salt works a short distance inland. I anchored as near the shore as possible, and dispatched a force in charge of Acting Masters Partridge and Wallace to reconnoiter. They found the water so shoal as to oblige them to leave the boats and wade for some distance in order to reach the shore. The necessary pickets having been thrown out, they advanced through a dense undergrowth and swamp in the direction of the salt works, but after they had proceeded some distance a body of horsemen were seen from the masthead of this ship, endeavoring to cut them off. A gun was immediately fired and a recall set, and Mr. Partridge ordered a retreat. The picket on the right, Francis Lupke, seaman, by a direct disobedience of the orders given him, came out in the open ground and was wounded and captured. With this exception, the whole party reached the boats in safety and returned on board. During the return of my force I caused the bushes to be shelled vigorously, and believing that my force was too small to effect the destruction of the salt works, I returned to this station. The works are quite extensive and belong to the rebel Government. It is my intention to attempt to destroy them this week.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. B. SMITH,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Rocky Point is off the east end of current day Courtney-Campbell Causeway (SR-60).

U. S. S. NITA,
Tampa Bay, Fla., December 23, 1864.

SIR: I have to report that on November 12, 1864, during a reconnoissance of a set of salt works at **Rocky Point**, Fla., Francis Lupke, seaman, having been stationed as a picket in a bunch of bushes on the right of the place of landing, and having exceeded his orders and advanced into an open plain beyond his post, he was captured by the enemy, having been slightly wounded. I learn that he is at present held at **Brooksville**, Fla., and has the liberty of the camp.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

R. B. SMITH,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy.

HDQRS. EAST GULF BLOCKADING SQUADRON,
Key West, Fla., December 3, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the destruction of a set of salt works on **Rocky Point, Old Tampa Bay**, by detachments from the *Nita*, *Stars and Stripes*, *Hendrick Hudson*, and the tenders *Ariel* and *Two Sisters*.

The expedition was made at the instance and under the orders of Acting Volunteer Lieutenant R. B. Smith, of the *Nita*, and was in every respect a complete success, resulting in the demolition of seven large boilers and everything of value connected with the works, without a single casualty on our part.

I enclose a copy of Acting Volunteer Lieutenant Smith's report, and take this opportunity to recommend that officer to the Department for his zeal and energy and good judgment manifested in this enter-prize, which was conceived with clearness and executed with order and dispatch.

I have the honor to be, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

C. K. STRIBLING,
Acting Rear-Admiral, Commanding East Gulf Squadron.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D.C.

1865

U. S. BARK RESTLESS,
Charlotte Harbor, Fla., January 20, 1865.

SIR: I have the honor to report my arrival at this place Monday, the 16th instant. I found the schooner *Ariel* here from **Tampa Bay**, with refugees for Fort Myers. Having no means of transportation at my disposal but the ship's boats, I accordingly armed and manned the first cutter next morning and sent them down under charge of Acting Ensign Alex. Hinckley.

The first cutter returned to-day (20th) and Mr. Hinckley reported to me that the captain of the schooner *Matchless*, lying at Point Rosa [Punta Rasa ?], informed him "that about 12 miles to the northward of Cape Roman he passed the wreck of a schooner with her mainmast gone and foremast broken, and that night he saw a large fire ashore."

The wreck I concluded to be that of the schooner *Annie*, which left Key West for this port about two weeks ago. I again and immediately armed, manned, and provisioned the first cutter, under charge of Acting Ensign Alex. Hinckley, to ascertain if my surmises were correct, and, if so, to render assistance or succor to those of her survivors that might need it.

Captain [Jonathan W.] Childs, commanding post at Fort Myers, informs me of his intention of sending a party across to Cape Roman.

Hoping my action in this matter may meet with your approval,

I remain, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

H. B. CARTER,
Acting Master, Commanding.

Acting Rear-Admiral C. K. STRIBLING,
Comdg. East Gulf Blockading Squadron, Key West, Fla.

U. S. SHIP INO,
Tampa Bay, Fla., January 31, 1865.

SIR: I have the honor to report the capture of a boat loaded with cotton and 12 barrels of sugar on the 27th instant, under the following circumstances: Having received information from reliable persons that a certain rebel agent residing on the **Manatee River** had Government stores on his premises, I accordingly proceeded on board tender *Ariel* and one armed boat's crew up the **Manatee River**, with the design also to destroy a small salt work.

At the mouth of said river captured a boat loaded with cotton, which was the property of a rebel army officer named Maloney, of which circumstance I had previous information. After the capture of the boat, proceeded to the residence of one called McNeal, who being then absent, I proceeded to examine his premises and found 12 barrels of sugar, which his wife affirmed belonged to the rebel Government, and which, with the captured boat, I brought to this vessel. For more minute particulars I would refer you to my reports(*) of the expedition.

The captured sugar and boat I will forward the first opportunity to Key West, Fla.

Enclosed please find a prize list, signed by the paymaster of this vessel and myself.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

CHARLES A. FRENCH,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. S. ISONOMIA,
Egmont Key, Tampa Bay, Fla., May 10, 1865.

SIR: I have the honor to report the capture of the English bark *George Douthwaite*, of South Shields, England, Captain George Davis, on the 8th instant, off the Warrior River, west coast of Florida, loaded with sugar, rum, wool, ginger, and mahogany, from Jamaica, West Indies, twenty-two days out, under the following circumstances: On the morning of the 8th instant, while cruising under slow speed between the rivers Steinhatchee and Aucilla, at about 6 a.m., sighted a strange sail bearing N. N. W. by compass, heading N. by W. $\frac{1}{2}$ W., under fore and aft sails, with the square sails clewed up. We were steering N. W. by compass in $3\frac{1}{2}$ fathoms of water, land in full view; gave chase, and at 7 a.m. beat to general quarters and fired a blank cartridge from 30-pounder Parrott, being then about 2 miles distant from the chased vessel, which was heading for the land, but hauled head offshore soon after and set the foresail and foretopsail. At 7:30 a.m. passed under his stern and found her in 15 feet of water; seat the executive officer and armed boat's crew on board to take charge, and to send the captain with his papers on board this vessel. She had one boat in the water alongside and the launch hoisted out and hanging by the yard tackles ready for lowering, with no colors hoisted, but having the English ensign on a ratlin on the starboard mizzen rigging, after I had asked where his flag was.

I hailed him twice to heave to and shorten sail, but he did not until our men had got on deck and ordered them to shorten sail and began to do so themselves. When I asked him what he was doing inside the blockade, the captain said he was bound for London and had grounded at 4 a.m. that morning, and that he did not know where he was or how he got there. At 8 a.m. it carne on stormy, and an S. S. W. gale setting in I sent the captain on board, and ordered the prize master to make sail and follow me. I then ran for St. Marks for a harbor of safety for this vessel and the prize, where we anchored at meridian in 19 feet of water, and the prize anchored soon after near this vessel. On the morning of the 9th instant, being short of coal and being fine weather, at 5 a.m. I took the prize in tow and started for **Tampa Bay** with prize master and two men on board in charge of prize, and safely anchored her in this bay. At 8 a.m. the wind was S. S. E. and S. W. swell setting in, the men were employed in unbending and repairing sails and otherwise putting the vessel in order to proceed to Key West with the first slant of wind. I send all the officers and men to Key West in the vessel, 12 in number. I am informed that the second officer of the prize is acquainted on this coast and has sailed from St. George's Sound before the war. The captain asked one of our men when they boarded the vessel where the river Steinhatchee was. One of the crew has sailed out of Apalachicola since the war, as he told two of our men that he knew me when I was on board the *Port Royal*, blockading Apalachicola. I send Acting -Master James F. Alcorn and 5 men in charge of the prize, and Acting Master [and] Pilot N. Thrift from the U. S. S. *Honeysuckle* to pilot the vessel to Key West.

Very respectfully, your obedient servant,

L. D. D. VOORHEES,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding U. S. S. Isonomia.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. S. BERMUDA,
Navy Yard, Philadelphia, September 8, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report the arrival of the U. S. supply steamer *Bermuda* at this port.

The *Bermuda* sailed from Philadelphia August 11, at 4 p.m., and from the Capes on the 12th, at 1 p.m., and has communicated with all vessels of the West Gulf Squadron (as far as New Orleans) both going and returning.

Arriving at **Tampa Bay**, I communicated with the senior officer and left draft of men for East Gulf Squadron, from thence I proceeded to Mobile Bay; arriving at which place, I communicated with Rear-Admiral Farragut, receding orders to supply all the fleet at that place and proceed to Pensacola. Arriving at Pensacola, I left draft of men for West Gulf Squadron and paymaster's stores. Touching again at Mobile, I received orders from Rear-Admiral Farragut not to go farther south than New Orleans, being but twenty-four hours behind the *Circassian* and my provisions at this time almost exhausted.

Arriving at New Orleans, I communicated with the senior officer, delivering paymaster's stores and receiving sick and discharged seamen for the North.

Touching again at Mobile Bay on my return, I received orders to proceed to Pensacola for sick and discharged seamen, from thence to proceed north.

Arriving at Hampton Roads, I communicated with the senior officers, leaving all mails and dispatches from the various vessels of the West Gulf Squadron.

I have the honor to be, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

J. W. SMITH,
Acting Volunteer Lieutenant, Commanding.

Hon. GIDEON WELLES.
Secretary of the Navy, Washington, D. C.

U. S. S. SHENANDOAH,
Key West, Fla., October 30, 1864.

SIR: I have the honor to report that I took in a supply of coal at **Tampa Bay** and left that port on the 6th instant.

I cruised in the Gulf Stream, from the Bahamas to the Florida shore, down the Providence Channels, and around Abaco.

On the 21st instant, at 8 a.m., the east end of Abaco bearing S. 60 miles, we discovered a blockade runner, a large paddle-wheel steamer, painted white, with two smokestacks, distant about 12 miles. We chased her all day, and at dark we had shortened the distance to within 4 four or 5 miles.

I regret to say she escaped in the darkness.

I arrived here on the 26th instant, and shall take in a supply of coal, and will cruise in the same vicinity on my way back to report to the commanding officer of the North Atlantic Blockading Squadron for duty.

I am, respectfully, etc.,

DANL. B. RIDGELY,
Captain, U. S. Navy.

Hon. G. WELLES,
Secretary of the Navy, Washington.
