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NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

A Polish Jew on the Florida Frontier
and in Occupied Tennessee:
Excerpts from the Memoirs of Max White¹

by

Richard E. Sapon-White

In the late 1850s, few young Jews recently arrived in the United States from Poland chose to live in Florida. Fortunately, one who did, Max White, wrote his memoirs of those years, leaving us a remarkable, personal account of life on the Florida frontier as well as a description of his visit to Union-occupied Tennessee during the Civil War.

White's account is impressive for several reasons. First, he experienced the South as an outsider. As such, he was able to observe and record events without the biases of those caught up in the issues of the day. He had his own convictions, of course, but by and large kept them to himself, perhaps because he recognized that these views often differed from those around him. His opinions about sport hunting and, more importantly, his negative view of slavery could stir up very strong emotions against him.

Second, his narrative goes beyond recording observations to incorporate his moods and fears. He nearly jokes about the terror of the coming yellow fever epidemic, referring to it as Mr. Yellow Jack, "a grand old visitor." He stands in awe of his own calm in the face of rampant violence, and reports his depression on being swindled by a casual acquaintance. By providing this evocative account, the reader is given more than a dry retelling of events. White's memoirs provide a living, breathing sense of those critical times.

Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, personal accounts of Tampa and Key West prior to the Civil War are few in number,

especially those providing the perspective of recent Jewish immigrants. His brief encounters with notables of the day, including Winfield Scott, Andrew Johnson, and Judah P. Benjamin, also add to the value of the document.

Max A. White was born Avraham Mordechai Weiss in Kalisz, Russian Poland, on March 16, 1835.² The son of a tailor, he was apprenticed to a tailor at a young age. According to his memoirs, his impending conscription into the czar's army prompted his family to leave Kalisz around 1851. After living in Hull and London, England, for about three years, he sailed to the United States, arriving in February 1854.

Applying the skills he learned as an apprentice in Poland, White worked as a tailor and clothing storeowner throughout his life. Like many other Jewish immigrants, his early business ventures involved his immediate and extended family, including his father, uncles, and an uncle's brother-in-law. Although many young immigrant entrepreneurs began their careers as peddlers,³ Max started work in the United States as a tailor, selling the suits he made to shop owners, first in New York and then in Boston. After earning enough to pay back his Uncle Fishel⁴ for his steamship ticket, he set to work earning enough to bring his siblings, father, and stepmother from England. Because Max's two uncles preceded his arrival in the United States, they were able to provide him with the financial and social support that enabled him to adjust to life in a new country. Some Jewish families, such as Salomon and Nathaniel Guggenheimer of Lynchburg, Virginia, also skipped peddling as an initial step toward business success, because they arrived in the United States with sufficient funds to begin businesses.⁵

From his arrival in the United States until the 1890s, White sought places where business opportunity seemed best. He wandered to Boston, New York City, Tampa, Key West, Memphis, Baltimore, and Rochester, New York, and eventually settled in Newark, New Jersey, in the 1890s.

In terms of religious observance, White wrote of the importance of keeping kosher and his search for a synagogue where he could attend weekday morning services while visiting another

city. He often referred to famous rabbis, the Talmud, and the *Tanach*. He was an early member of the Rochester Jewish community from the late 1860s to the mid-1880s. In the 1908 addendum to his memoirs, he mentioned that his son arranged for him to stay at kosher hotels on at least two occasions. Although he described himself as “not religious,” he clearly was well educated in Jewish law and lore and, at least in his later years, adhered to Orthodox practice.

White was married to Anna Lewin (or Lewine) in 1862. He fathered six children: Rose, Henry (also known as Harry), Jacob, Joseph, Gussie, and Lazarus. About 1890, while living in Rochester, Anna and Max began to quarrel, mostly over religious issues. According to Max, atheism and anarchism “took root in her,” and she refused to keep a kosher home any longer. Emma Goldman also lived in Rochester during this period while she worked in the garment industry and read the anarchist newspaper *Die Freiheit*.⁶ Possibly the same factors influencing Goldman also impacted Anna. Certainly, Anna’s animosity to religion influenced her children, as Max bemoaned that in later years his children were “not religious.” Max and Anna finally separated in 1894 despite efforts by their older children to have the two reconcile. After leaving his wife, White moved in with his widowed sister, Cecilia, in Newark. He died there in 1919.⁷

Several of Max White’s children achieved prominence in their fields. Henry (born 1867) may have learned the tailoring trade from his father. Rather than going into business, he became active in the needle trade unions, serving as general secretary of the United Garment Workers of America from 1896 to 1904, and editing the *Clothing Trade Weekly* and similar publications for many years.⁸

Max’s youngest, Lazarus (1874–1953), was a noted civil engineer and first president of the American Society for the Technion. Where Max still had great reverence for Jewish tradition, Lazarus exhibited the distance from such roots that the children of immigrants often show (perhaps not surprising given his mother’s attitudes about religion). He became a trustee of the Society for Ethical Culture. Lazarus was an inspector with the Army Corps of

Engineers in 1897–1898 in Key West. During the Spanish-American War, he worked on the construction of a gun and mortar battery there. Coincidentally, he was about the same age that his father had been during the latter's 1860–1861 stay in Key West. It is not known if Lazarus had any choice in being sent to Key West. Later, he went into business with John D. Rockefeller's nephews, forming the engineering firm of Spencer, White, and Prentis. The firm built foundations and underpinnings around the world, including renovating the foundation of the White House in the early 1950s.⁹

Joseph (1870–1921) was an engineer and inventor who also showed an affinity for the Society for Ethical Culture.¹⁰ Joseph's daughter, Margaret Bourke-White (1904–1971), was one of the most famous photojournalists of the twentieth century. By marriage, Max White was also the great-uncle of the American composer Richard Rogers.¹¹

About the Memoirs

In the introduction to his memoirs, Max White explained the circumstances under which they were written. After leaving Kalisz, he kept a diary for more than thirty years. At some point, however, his wife disposed of his writings, thinking them "so many old papers in a trunk." Encouraged by his children, he decided to record the history of his life. With an apology for forgetting specific dates, White wrote more than two hundred pages, beginning with stories about his grandparents and parents, and ending with his situation in 1896. He followed with an addendum in 1908. Appended to the memoirs are a number of essays on religious themes as well as short biographies of his father and two uncles.

The location of the original manuscript is unknown. However, Lazarus White's son, Robert Emelin White¹², and daughter, Felicia Gossman¹³, have photocopies, as does the American Jewish Archives.

Following are two excerpts from Max White's memoirs relating to time that he spent in the South. The first¹⁴ records events from December 1857 through the spring of 1861. During this time,

Max lived in Tampa and Key West where he operated clothing stores and struggled to deal with such frontier hazards as yellow fever, mosquitoes, outlaws, and economic panics. During this period, he was in partnership with his paternal uncle, Fishel White, and Fishel's brother-in-law, Samuel Cline. According to White, his return north was not prompted by the onset of the Civil War, but rather by a monetary dispute with his uncle. Advertisements in Tampa's newspaper, the *Florida Peninsular*, mention Samuel Cline, Phillip White, and W. C. Brown, but not Max White.¹⁵ Although his account of the enterprise makes him seem to be an equal partner, he may have actually been in a subordinate role. All of his future business ventures, according to the memoirs, were pursued without other family members.

The second excerpt¹⁶ relates his other sojourn in the South. This included a brief visit to Nashville and then a stay of a few months in Memphis, presumably during the summer of 1862 just after Union forces had taken over the city.¹⁷ Although brief, it is included because he writes of his audience with his fellow tailor, the military governor of Tennessee and future president, Andrew Johnson. Here, as elsewhere in his memoirs, White displays no interest in the war. His only interest is in business and whether or not it is good. This probably reflects the fact that, as an immigrant, he still felt outside American society. Its conflicts only provided a backdrop for the true focus of his life, making a living. This attitude stands in contrast to those Jewish families who had lived in the South for some time, many of whom were active in civic life and became staunch supporters of the Confederacy.¹⁸

The excerpts are written in broken English with little regard for proper punctuation or capitalization, and include novel spellings for many words. Nevertheless, White's word choice reflects the flowery language one might expect in a nineteenth-century educated man's writings. Although self-taught in the language, White clearly was well-read. He cited or quoted such works and authors as *Robinson Crusoe*, Shakespeare, and Goethe. Undoubtedly, his reading interests influenced his use of language.

Historical Settings

Florida in the mid-nineteenth century was a sparsely populated frontier state. In 1860, it boasted a population of 140,424, including 2,981 in Hillsborough County (where Tampa is located).¹⁹ The state's small population engaged in a variety of agricultural pursuits including cattle grazing in the pinelands surrounding Tampa, the soil being too poor for raising many crops.²⁰ The state as a whole, and Tampa in particular, struggled against a number of obstacles to settlement and economic development. Max White made note of many of these during his years in Tampa.

Foremost among the factors hindering development was Tampa's isolation from the more populous markets in the northern part of the state. Roads were few and poor, and no rail line was built to Tampa until 1884.²¹ Efforts to build such a railroad, however, began as early as 1853. Tampans tried to persuade Florida's senator, David Yulee, to support a western terminus at Tampa for a proposed rail line across Florida. Yulee, a Jew by birth, kept quiet his plan to construct the line to Cedar Keys, where he had extensive land holdings. Arranging financing for construction dragged on for years, but the final straw came in November 1858, when Yulee's designs became public. Tampans reacted by burning him in effigy in the courthouse square.²² White makes no mention of this event. It may have occurred when he was recuperating from yellow fever and had other things to worry about.

A second impediment to development was the series of wars with the Seminole Indians (1817-1818, 1835-1842, and 1855-1858). As a result of the First (1817-1818) and Second (1835-1842) Seminole Wars, many Seminoles had been deported to Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). Some, however, refused to leave their villages in Florida, especially southern Florida, where many continued to hide in the Everglades and surrounding areas. As white settlers continued to encroach on Seminole villages, tensions rose leading to armed conflict. The Seminoles were led by Chief Holatter Micco, known to the army as Billy Bowlegs, hence the other name

*Map of Tampa Bay and south Florida circa 1860.
The map shows the extensive wilderness in south Florida
when Max White lived in Tampa and Key West.
(Courtesy University of Tampa Press.)*

for the third Seminole conflict: the Billy Bowlegs War. Most of the conflict occurred much further south than Tampa. Tampa nevertheless served a crucial function in the war since it was the site of Fort Brooke, established in 1824 for the protection of settlers. The fort was home to the largest force of soldiers at the beginning of the war and served as a major supply depot.²³

The Tampa community supplied the army with food, clothing, and munitions, and served the social needs of soldiers and volunteers. The presence of the war was, therefore, a contradiction of sorts. It provided an economic base for the locals, including attracting businessmen like White, but also negatively influenced the settlement of the region. While some, such as Max White and his business partners, saw the conflict as a business opportunity, few saw the economic danger in relying on the presence of the soldiers and the flow of federal funds. When the war ended in 1858 and soldiers were discharged from duty, the town collapsed economically. Its social fabric was in shambles. White's recollections reflect this change when he comments that "business quietened down" and his partner had to seek another locale for trade.

Tampa became a lawless town and was filled, according to White, with "outlaws gamblers roughs robbers cutthroats & lewd women." A significant cause of this social problem was the absence of pay for those volunteer troops in the service of the state. When the militia forces were mustered out of the army in March 1858, at the end of the Third Seminole War, only the volunteer companies in federal service received compensation.²⁴ With so many unemployed, armed, young men on the streets, crime including theft rose considerably. As a reaction, a vigilante group was organized, the Regulators. White himself was pressed into service. He patrolled the streets at night even though he had never held a gun in his life. Although the Regulators' patrols were supposed to restore the rule of law and order, violence perpetrated by the vigilantes themselves soon caused a reign of terror in town.²⁵

The Regulators' rule continued through 1858 until the advent of a yellow fever epidemic. Yellow fever, nicknamed yellow jack, visited the inhabitants of the southern United States periodically

during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When rumors of the arrival of yellow fever spread among the local populace, White exhibited the typical response: he deserted the town. Records of the day state that the town was nearly empty during the epidemic except for the ill and those caring for them. Its victims tended to be male adults, skipping over the very young and old, as well as female adults, a pattern that White confirmed. African Americans tended to have a lower morbidity rate as a result of some genetic resistance to the disease. White claims to have contracted the illness twice, once in Tampa in 1858 and again in Key West in 1860. He was extremely lucky to have survived since the mortality rate from the disease was usually very high.²⁶

Key West stood in sharp contrast to Tampa. Key West's economy was founded on fishing and wrecking. The establishment of Fort Taylor on the island in 1845 ensured a flow

*From the Florida Peninsular,
February 26, 1860. (Courtesy
Special Collections, University of
South Florida Library.)*

of federal funds that also helped to sustain local merchants. So long as ships continued to wreck on the surrounding keys and the fort operated, the local economy blossomed. The cosmopolitan population of the city included "Englishmen, Bahamans, Irish, Dutch, Swedes, Norwegians, Hindoos, Russians, Italians, Spaniards, Cubans, Canary Islanders" and others in numbers great enough to make Key West the largest city in the state for many years.²⁷ In addition to being a military post and a thriving port, the city housed the United States District Court for the Southern District of Florida. This made it a good home for lawyers such as Ossian Bingley Hart, later the governor of Florida during Reconstruction.²⁸

White and his business partner Cline were enumerated in Key West in the 1860 census as merchant tailors born in Russia and housemates of the U.S. District Attorney, John L. Tatum.²⁹ Tatum was active in local politics, serving as secretary at a meeting of local Democrats on May 23, 1860, and speaking in favor of secession from the Union at a meeting at the county courthouse on December 12, 1860.³⁰ Whether he ever discussed issues with his housemates is unknown, because White's concern seems to have been business only. On this subject, White repeatedly comments on how good business was in Key West, whether he was selling the clothing shipped to him from New York or hawking watermelons he had brought from Tampa. Mark A. White, as the census takers recorded his name, had a personal estate valued at \$500.³¹

Nevertheless, there were hazards in such a thriving, bustling community. In addition to the wealthy merchants and lawyers, there was a constant parade of sailors with their "bibulous lifestyle and less-than-strict morality."³² Also, unscrupulous persons could easily take advantage of greenhorns like White, and, indeed, White describes just such an encounter with a swindler.

Since Memphis fell to Union forces on June 12, 1862, it can be deduced that White's visit to Tennessee took place that summer. At the time, Andrew Johnson was the military governor of Tennessee. White recounts almost nothing of the war being conducted in or around the state. His only interest is his lack of business success during the few months that he lived there.

The Hillsborough County Courthouse (built 1855) was a center of activity when Max White lived in Tampa. (Courtesy University of Tampa Press.)

During the war, there was an influx of northern Jews into Memphis and Nashville, including Union soldiers and merchants. The Jewish merchants catered to the needs of the occupying militia. In 1863 as many as fifteen sold uniforms and military clothing in Memphis. There were also several grocers.³³ White stayed in Memphis only four months, bemoaning that he was too late to compete with those already established there. He probably left prior to General Grant's Order Number 11, which sought to expel Jews as a group from the Department of Tennessee (which included parts of Tennessee, Kentucky, and Mississippi).³⁴

During his years in Florida, White mentions only one other Jew aside from his business partners. This is not surprising, given that Florida's Jewish population was very small and mostly unorganized during the antebellum period. At the time that Florida achieved statehood in 1845, less than one hundred Jews lived in the state, most of them in the north. Even as Jewish immigrants from Europe arrived in Florida in the aftermath of the 1848 European revolutions, most settled in northern communities such as

Pensacola, Jacksonville, and Tallahassee. The first Jewish institution in the state, and the only one prior to the Civil War, was the Jacksonville Hebrew cemetery, founded in 1857.³⁵

The Jewish presence in southern Florida dates to the period of the Seminole Wars in 1835–1842 and 1855–1858. Jewish soldiers fighting in those wars included Leon Dyer, David Camden de Leon, Samuel Noah, and Abraham Charles Myers. Fort Myers was named after Abraham C. Myers by his future father-in-law, Major General David Emanuel Twiggs. Both Myers and De Leon went on to serve in the Mexican War and the Confederate Army.³⁶ In terms of permanent Jewish settlement in Tampa, Brown mentions only Emmaline Ouentz Miley living near Tampa in the antebellum era.³⁷ The most prominent Jew during the second quarter of the nineteenth century was David Levy Yulee, Florida's first senator and the first United States senator of Jewish descent. His sugar plantation was situated near the Homosassa River, about sixty miles north of Tampa.³⁸ Tampa's first congregation was not founded until 1894.³⁹ Similarly, a significant Jewish presence in Key West dates to the late 1880s, during the great influx of eastern European Jews.⁴⁰

Although it is hazardous to draw conclusions on the basis of negative evidence, it would appear that Max White encountered few Jews in Florida and that any observance of Jewish ritual was done by himself. He states that he was not religious (and perhaps in those youthful days he was not) in spite of his obvious commitment to kashrut and daily prayers later in life. According to White, his partner, Samuel Cline, was "irreligious" and evidently spoke out against observance; the possibility that he joined White in any holiday or Sabbath celebrations seems remote.

Jewish life in Memphis was somewhat more established, with Congregation B'nai Israel having been founded there in 1853.⁴¹ Again, White makes no mention of other Jews during his stay in Memphis, either because he did not participate in communal activities or because he did not choose to note them.

While perusing the following excerpts from Max White's autobiography, the reader should keep in mind the rootlessness of single male Jewish immigrants during the mid-nineteenth

century. Virtually self-selected by the processes of immigration and migration, these young men, with their inclinations toward business derived from their European backgrounds, contributed to the development of the United States by filling important economic niches. Always seeking the places that promised the greatest opportunity, they exhibited both geographic and economic mobility, along the way forming as well as breaking partnerships often with extended family. They took risks, some more than others, because for them the American frontier provided freedom, hope, opportunity, adventure, and a new life, albeit one founded on the old. White's memoirs make these daily experiences come alive as few documents do.

*Max White's Memoirs: Tampa and Key West, 1857-1861*⁴²

September 1857 after keeping the store a few months that memorable year came a great panic all the Banks failed and the paper money was hardly worth anything.⁴³ and we could not do any business and it was the first Panic that we ever heard of So we thought we will all be starved to death So partner Samuel Cline said there is nothing else for us left to do but to go South. and he ... knew that not far from St. Augustine Fla. where he lived before there is a city by the name Tampa Fla. and there is war with the Indians and people doing good business there – and to keep from starving in this terrible Panic althoug[h] we was afraid to go there on account of that much dreaded yellow fever. –but business is business and to die of starvation is something to be dreaded too! So we finally made up our minds to go. Partner Cline and I to go South with the Clothing and uncle to stay in N.Y. and if we will sell we will send uncle the money and he will manufacture other Clothing and send it to us we two were not married. So we packed up our Clothing in boxes and put them aboard a sailing vessel a schooner and we two went on the same schooner. So in December 1857

Off we went sailing and left Mr. Panic and starvation behind. it was fine beautiful sailing sometimes a little rough but did not mind that. only that Captain of that vessel was the most volger man. he called me his girl passenger because of my feminine appearance having smooth face and I looked younger than I actually was I was

then 24⁴⁴ years old and I run away when he begun to speak so vulgarly and he said to my partner he will bet any amount of money that I am a girl in mens Clothes. and used to relate of what cruelties he inflicted on sailors with such satisfaction and that he even threw a sailor over board. It made me and my partner shudder the Lord forbid to be in such company

December 27, 1857 we arrived in Key West Fla. a new scene appeared before me in mid winter as warm and bright as north in mid summer and such pleasant warmed. and such clear brightness and such busy thriving little Town. I was Enchanted with that Isle. I felt like one of those individuals of which I read in the Arabian nights stories with those Enchanted beautiful Isles.

what say you, I said to my partner, let us stay right here and not go to Tampa. I think we can do good business right here it looks to be such a lively little business place. "what" says my partner this place is a regular yellow fever nest! he will not stay here for all the money in the world. So the next day we sailed for his great Tampa. and the following morrow we arrived in Tampa. and a different Scene appeared before my young Eyes. gloom of glooms. Oh what a Change. – it seemed to me like going into a dungeon I did not like that place at all, at all but for business you must do a great manythings they all say. Well we are here and we started a clothing store and business was rushing and for all that I did not like to stay there not for all the money in creation. I felt so terrible lonely. but in a few weeks I got somewhat used to it – and such a wild sights. there was war, war war with the wild Indians. and the white people were much wilder than the Indians. in the whole Town was not quite 500 inhabitan⁴⁵ but there was out-laws gamblers roughs robbers cutthroats & lewd women all congregate to cheat the poor ignorant volunteers and soldiers out of their money. and such rough Floridian crackers and Georgeon hoosiers as they call them were employed as volunteers⁴⁶ and when they got paid off about 150.00 for every 6 months they thought they have an inexhaustible treasure but in a few days it would be all gone in horseracing in gambling in drink and in evry thing that is bad. fighting with those long bo[w]ie knives and shooting with pistols. Several times walking in the streets I was caught right amongst them shooting and slashing at each other with those bo[w]ie knives and I looked on.

and strange to say I never got excited in the least. one time a man came in my store and picked himself out a suit of clothes amounting to 30.00 and he said you will trust me for a few days. Says I my dear man I don't know you – you might be very good but I don't know you. out comes pistol. and I was not excited in the least and keped my hands in the pants pockets and looking defiently in his face. so he quickly run away. and I asked the man that was in store. what is the matter with him that he run away so suddenly. and they said because you had your hands in the pockets and looking so defiently so he thought you have a revolver in your pocket and I showed the men that I have none. and we had a good laugh. and what more he was a brave Captain of th[e] Floridian volunteers. at last it grew so bad with those outlaws that the citizens had to form themselves into a vigilant comm[ittee?] which they called Regulators. Yes Regulators. and what you think of that, and I had to be one of those Regulators. I could not regulate myself nor the Regulators themselves could regulate themselves. however I had to be a Regulator. and I had to patrol once a week a whole night with a gun on my shoulder and I never had any fire arms in my hand before. and could not hit a house if I would take aim at it so I had to do things of which I never dreamt of. but I never had the occation to use any fire arms. and one time when I rouse in the morning and looked out of the window I saw a long tall man hanging on a tree he was Regulated for Ever. and as many was regulated ... we made money for a short time. but when we were there about 3 months the war came suddenly to an End.⁴⁷ the Government compromised with the Indians each Indian is to get \$600.00 and the Indians did not want to take any other mony but Silver Dollars. now is a party which don't want silver : men woman and each child must get \$600. in Silver Dollars and must go out West in the Indian reservation for Ever. the name of the tribe Semenoles and the name of the Chief Billy Bowleg the whole tribe was not a thousand souls men women & children and made the Government so much trouble had 3 years war with them and cost the government many millions of Dollars.⁴⁸

So the army of volunteers and soldiers was discharged. and everything pertaining to it went with it and quietened down. and business quietened down also and my partner said he must go and look for a nother business place. and I stay here until he finds a better

business place and so he went. we done considerable business but nothing like before. the good business kept on only 3 months if that business would have kept on 3 years we would be rich. So I was left alone business slow so I occupied my spare time to study English reading and writing of which I knew very little then. So another 3 months rolled around and I was quite accustomed to the place. And would not change for N.Y. to be a tailor there in N.Y. the tailoring world was no world for me any more although I loved to work at the tailoring whenever I got a chance to get a custom suit to make in my store. I had cloth for custom suits and I made quite considerable of it. but I would not like to be a tailor north. I thought it is worst than Slavery. yes, reminding me of slavery at that time Emancipation of Slavery was little thought of. although I did not like the Slavery of the black people in the South. I thought they are better of than the poor working people north. I expressed myself in favor of Emancipation of Slavery so I got myself in great trouble I almost got killed for it before I found out how strong they were for Slavery of the Negro.⁴⁹

and now I was living quite contentedly peaceably and serenely. and I was thinking of my father⁵⁰ and sister⁵¹ in Boston. and of my brother⁵² in London Eng. So I wrote a letter to my Esteemed father and sister and one letter to my brother in London Eng. Encouraging him to come to America as I did 2 years previously wrote to him that I want to send him money to come and he did not want to come I wrote him here is a great big wide extensive country here he can work himself up that he need not work all his life time at the tailoring as I am not working at the tailoring. as he also was a tailor. I was at that time 23 years old and my brother Isaac 18 years old and that letter had a great effect on him. that in 2 years after that letter he came to america too.⁵³ And staid in N.Y. city all his life time and after a good many years became quite wealthy.

now I will return to my previous subject where I was living in Tampa Fla. quite contentedly peaceably and serenely. So all at once a report. Yes a great report came and what of that report. You will soon hear what was reported around Town must not tell so suddenly for fear you might be overjoyed. Yes it was reported that a grand old visitor is comming. Yes he is comming. and by that grand Tyrانىous name Mr. Yellow Jack. So Mr. Yellow Jack is comming and he Y.J.

wants to do some business too. but the people did not care to do business with Mr. Y. Jack. So a good many want to leave the Town and let Mr. Y. J. do business by himself. and I thought so too. to go away from my business for a while until Y.J. has paid his visit and was satisfied to his heart's contend and left the place.⁵⁴ So I with a company of nice fellows hired a nice little schooner to go to some of those Floridians beautiful Enchanting Islands.

So off we went Sailing Sailing Sailing. From one Isle to the other Isle. O Isle Isle Isle Isle most beautiful Isles and Enchanting Isles. All occupied by the most beautiful winged Inhabitence. And also by the most homely and most ugly ones too. all born Americans. Such as I would never dream of. if I would see those birds in a dream I would say what funny birds I have seen in my dream. of the most beautiful Birds were the Pink Flamingos⁵⁵ walking around those Isles like an army of English Soldiers. and of the most ugly ones is the Pelicans and the men in our schooner would follow those Pink Flamingos around those Isles for a good many days. to get a shot at them to kill some of them to take them home as a great prize but those beauties was as wise as they were beautiful. and none of the men could get one of those beauties. So they were mad and I was glad. but dare not let them know it. but those ugly homely wistful looking Pelicans they did not bother at all.

and we kept on sailing one early morning the ever Southern Sun shining brightly but not in the least too hot we came to a large spacious bay round as if made with a compass. in the middle an Isle also round as if artificially made full with winged inhabitence. no human being ever lived there for many miles around since the world was created to mar the beauty of it. I was enchanted. appeared to me as it were the portal to Paradise. and I heard a mighty strong roaring comming from a short distant. So I asked what is that roaring and they said it is the sea the tide rushing in so I said would very much like to go there and see how it is and what causes it to make such a thundering noise and they went with me. we sailed out of the bay and we came to an open sea fringing with a broad beach and we wend a little ways out the open sea. we dared not venture very far out in our little craft. So we turned back. I said to the men I would like to stay on the beach a little while and they complied with my wish and rowed me

to the shore as near as we could and I rolled up my pants and pulled off my shoes and Jumped in the surf and waded about 10 feet and I reached the beach. I said to my companions you can sail around for a few hours I will walk around the beach by myself and I noticed that they have no desire to stop there So they saild away out of my sight and I walking along the beach alone and observing the Sea.

and when I became Somewhat tired I sat down on the beach about 15 feet from the water edge and amused myself looking of the rushing of the tide.

and as I was sitting there quietly. there came out of the Sea myriads of beautiful little crabs all of one color pink and all of one size and the shape of them I never saw before they were in the shape of little tables with 4 legs walking little pink tables I thought myriads of them and fairly made, a pink border around the white sandy beach and danced quadrill like or Jiggs quick movements forwards & backwards without ever turning around and seemed to indicate we are happy with our lot & with our habitation! Yes. that is more than we humankind can show of

And I sat there musing & musing watching those nice little creatures and observing the beautiful scenery until my companions come back for me. but after a while it struck me if those men would not have come back. . .I would have to be another "Robinson Crusoe". . .but like everything Else in this world good and Evil. Since Adam & Eve ate from the Tree that is good & Evil. So it is with every thing else good mixt with evil. but some has mixt in a little to much Evil.

So like everything Else in this world it had its great Evil and drewback. there was those little birds what they call by that beautiful petname mosquitos that tickles you to death I have visited and seen the most beautiful Islands with fine houses on it abandoned and given over to those little pests.

we were out about 4 weeks and we hardly could endure it any longer on account of mosquitoes. and as we heard of no yellow fever being there so we turned back. and we came to Tampa there was no yellow fever as yet. So we were in good hopes that it will not come. but in a few weeks it commenced to rage at a fearful rate! people dropping of like flies in autumn north. and all youngmen and young-women. it remin[d]ed me of the Cholera⁵⁶ in the old country. and I

kept on well for a goodwhile and I was most sure that I will Escape it. but one time I begun to feel a little pain around my Eyes. and as I was walking in the Street I met a Doctor and I said doc, what is the matter with me. and this Doctor looked at me and said go to bed I will come around in a little while. it is not much but you must take care any how. and Strange to say I was not frightened in the least. I was not in the least afraid of death. I had not the least fear for myself. but I went to my boardinghouse and went to bed. and in a little while the Doctor came and tended me and got a good old negro to tend to me and I got the fever in the grand old style vomiting and dierhea. and when the Doctor came again I said to the doctor Doc will I kick the bucket. and the Physician said don't fear you will get over it and I begun to feel worse and worse. and I said to the negro, Oh I feel so bad. And the good old negro said I believe you I believe you Oh massa massa massa. – and wept

in about 3 weeks I recovered and when I thought that I was strong enough I went out of bed but I was so weak I could not stand upright. So the good old negro had to lead me around for another week. and when I got quite strong I commenced at my business again. but some of my best customers of which some were also my comrades were laying under the Sod! I done considerable business but I was woefully missing those good comrades and splended customers no more such good customers and such fine comrades! and I thought I would rather have died than they. truely and conscientiously for I thought they have more to live for than I. they were rich good and handsome youngmen!

but especially youngmen to quickly forget of what the Earth covers up. that was in the month of November 1858. and the months rolled around to slow for me. So in the month of January 1859 I went to New Orleans to see if I can do some business there but did not give up my business in Tampa but left it in care of a trusty man and went to New Orleans and I was in New Orleans a little over a month could not do enough business there. but I got a bargain there. on auction a great Book the History of the World by Choch.⁵⁷ I can say that Book cost me over a hundred Dollars in Expençe I had on it. and lent it to a relative and that relative lent it to his relative and so it got lost I was sorrow for it. going back to Tampa on a steamer I had the

satispection to get the acquaintance of that Grand Old General Gen. Windfield Scott⁵⁸ he was at that time 80 years of age and a grand looking man Even at that age at that time he was the pride of the nation but now forgotton he was tall Erect and a well built man and I had the honor to seat almost opposite at the dinner table. and the General handed a dish to a lady. And the young lady says to the General ah ha the General is throwing Eyes yet on ladies So the Gen. answerd. I was always kind to the ladies if I was rather hard on men.

So I settled down in Slow Tampa again Slow in everything Except in yellow fever and time creeping slowly on and So another 4 months passed out of sight.

And as I was seating on the front of my store steps gazing up and down on the Empty Sandy Streets, and again to the Sky, and the Sky was very clear, and looking across the Gulf of Mexico, I almost could percieve a Ray of the bright Southern Sun falling on my first Enchanted Isle by the name Key West that very same Isle of which I had the occation to speak of once before. quick as lightning I resolved to go to my first Enchanted Isle So I hired a little schooner and packed Clothing in trunks and went sailing to my first Enchanted Isle Key West. I and the owner of the little Craft, and a steep breeze was blowing and the Gulf of Mexico was pretty rough and you ought to see us bobbing up and down like a little Speck Every minute you would think we are ingulfed and that is the last of us. but I Enjoyed it immensely immensely and we arrived safe and sound. *and people on the wharf watching us with dread they said* and I obtained a nice little Store with a pretty little garden in the rear, and the Bananas growing into my back door. and what more business beyond my Expectation. and O how I gathered together those Golden Eagles and Spanish Doubloons until it was to heavy for me to carry in a belt arou[n]d my body. and in a few weeks I sold out all the goods I had. and went back to Tampa to fetch all what is saleable in Key West although Key West is not far from Tampa must have different clothing in Key West in Key West is much warmer and dryer brighter weather. for instance I and a great many others was dressed in white the whole year around vest pants & coat all white. I did not suffer much from the heat. So I went back to Tampa to fetch other goods and sent all the money to my uncle in N.Y. and filled the trunks again with clothing

and went again the second time to my first enchanted Isle. Key West in the same little vessel with the owner of the little craft. and as I was on the wharf I saw a farmer with a lot of watermelons. and I was in good mood I said to the farmer, how much you want for your lot of watermelons says the farmer if you take the whole lot I let you have them very cheap there is 200. I let you have them for 20.00 they ar[e] very large. all right says I put them aboard this vessel and I will help you and we did and I gave him a Golden Eagle 20.00. that is 10¢ each large and small. I had some Idea that watermelon is dear in Key West. I got from 50¢ to 75¢ a piece I made over \$100.00 on that little fun. I arrived Safe and Sound the Second time to my Enchanted Isle to gather more of those Golden Eagles and those Spanish Doubloons. but not dreaming for whom I was gathering that gold—and all these tim[e] my partner Samuel Cline as I stated before left me to take care of the business alone and also to fight the Yellow Jack alone he would not stay there over one summer not for all the money in creation but he did not mind it in the least of me staying there. And he was scuring around the whole U.S. to find a place of business and could not find any and lost money Enough and I was living on my Enchanted Isle very peaceably and gathering old the gold I could possibly gather. and Spending as little as I almost could. my whole Expenche was 5.00 or 6.00 per week and I was perfectly satisfied but as usual something happened to break my peace: there came in my boarding house a man with his arm in a sling. he said he came from Havana Cuba, that he fell on the steamer and brook his arm and said he is a wholsale Tobacco merchant of maiden lane N.Y. and must stay in Key West until his arm is cured. and he stayed there about 4 weeks and got well aquinted with me as he also was an Israelite and as Israelites then and there was very few. and I thought he was a mighty fine fellow and refind Educated man and what he said was the perfect truth. and he saw I have a good deal of money although I never showed him any and kept the money concealed of everybody but was saying how hard it is to get a draft, and in Key West was only gold no paper money. and my very stingy Partner when he was together with me the first 5 months he always sent paper money in letters, and there was only one other way to sent by Adams Express and he said that cost to much. Only after when my partner came to

Key West the first money he sent 200.00 in a letter and was lost and never heard of it that what you have of being to stingy. So I was saying how hard it is to get the money down to N.Y. So that N.Y. maiden lane Tobacco merchant said he can give me a draft. So I said give one of 500.00 *I don't know how come to say that he should give me a draft of \$500.00* I had about me about 1500.00 in gold. and I can tell you it is pretty heavy to carry it about you so he relieved a little me of my burden *I had that gold in a belt around my waist* and the next day I did not see him any more. then I knew what is up but it was to late. he went off with the steamer. and at that time only once in two weeks a steamer came and left. So I had to wait two weeks and by that time he can be in H. – and would not like to follow him there. I took it quite hard but I ought not for I could make five hundred Doll. easier then than now five Doll. But I was just begining to make a little money. well he was not the only one. but the others was more in a business like way. well I soon got over that Swindle. and in a month after I went to New York to tell my two partners what can be done in Key West and what kind of Clothing should be manufactured for that peculiar place. and staid in N.Y. about a month and paid a visit to my Esteemed father and sister in Boston. After that everything ready I and one of my partners S. Cline started for my first beloved Enchanted Isle.

So off we went, and I thought I will dream a better dream. and I will stay on the Isle a good long time. Until we make a good handsome fortune. Very little did we know then what a fortune is. if would mention Ten Thousand Dollars or the highest Twenty Thousand we would exclaim

Fabulous Fabulous Fortune!

when will we ever come to that. never no not I. not one of us not one of our relations or even one of our acquaintance and so we are like one awoke from a dream first I thought if I could only be a Tailor a Tailor O a good Tailor, a fine Tailor. A great Tailor. then I will be Alexander or Maximilian the Great. and now I awoke and it is a bad and sad dream! No no a thousand times no. I do not like no I don't want to dream that dream again not for the whole world. and so we go on dreaming until we dream no more!

and I thought now I will dream a better dream. I traveled now in great magnificent Steamer with great Dining Saloons! O Lord where

am I. And what am I. Aladin with the wonderful Lamp. Even if I had Aladins wonderful lamp I would not know to wish such splendor. And Such. Yes such Edibles!! And the good genii by my side inquiring of me what I only wish with such courtesy and complements. So that I was revolving in my mind whether that genii knows to whom he is speaking to. maybe genii thinks he is speaking to a English Lord or to a German Graf or to a Polish Nobleman maybe Genii is a better man than I. and it distresses me to see a superior bow before an inferior. or even before his Equal I think I will let him know that I am only Maxy a simple tailor. but before I had time to tell him, he disappeared. but in a second appeared again and sating before me all the good and great things with great courtesy and complements and I was thinking when I was a little boy I was wishing for Aladins wonderful lamp. So I would give one rub and a genii will appear and bring me all I whis [sic]. but now I found out that I don't need Aladins wonderful lamp all I need to ring the American Golden Eagle. One Squack of her will have more effect than all the singing birds in all creation.

And we were steaming along grandly in 5 day we arrived at our destination. to soon, good things don't keep on long, but my Enchanted Isle looked as Enchanting to me as Ever and the Gulf of Mexico like a great mirror shining in the Southern pleasant winter sun.

Now I and partner started a big Clothing Store. A big Store for Key West not for N.Y. and settled down for a good long time not for Ever. And business was flowereshing.

So that winter passed away almost like in Paradise so sweetly peaceably and serenely. and no wife to bother my life only to paddle my own canoie and even thinking nor dreaming of one that was good dreaming if it would only continue so for Ever and Ever.

But the summer. The summer is not so pleasant. First a little to hot the heat I could endure tolerably well. Then comes those nice little birds what they call them by that beautiful pet name mo[s]quito a little different mosquitoe than the northern mosquitoe. they call them gallon nippers some times they have to make a big Smoke in the house in order you should be able to eat your meal I could over come that too then comes the third plague. yes the third plague of which the hardhearted Pharaoh King of Egypt could not endure. that was his

tenth plague the slaying of the firstborn death. So it is down South the yellow fever! as I said several times before that my partner would not stay over a summer not for all the money in creation. So he went to N.Y. in the month of August. it is always safe to stay south till August. So my good partner went and I remained. and sure enough I got it again but in a milder state than I had it in Tampa Fla. in two weeks I was well again.⁵⁹ in October my partner came back. I had no great love for him but I never had any harsh words with him. he was a honest fellow enough but he was very selfish and irreligious although I must confess I was not religious myself but I could not bear to hear any speak against religion. So I staid again with my partner that winter and the next summer and my partner went again to N.Y. and I remained. but that summer I did not get the Yellow Jack or the Yellow Jack didn't get me. one of the two. I was not in dread of the fever in the least. I somehow was hardhearted I was not afraid of death. And I would have stayed with him a good many years if it was not for one thing. my father moved from Boston to N.Y. and my brother came from London, Eng. to N.Y. and my father wrote to me that he needs a little help of me and my brother needs 50.00 to buy a sewing machine and I wrote to uncle he shall give it to them. and my uncle answered me which was all my aunts selfish will every word of it. that my father don't need it. and my brother is so bad. which I knew it was not so. So I got so mad that I resolved not to stay there any longer. and suddenly desolved partnership and left for good.⁶⁰

I was to settle with my most confedintial uncle in N.Y. and I had a hard battle with my uncle before I could get a couple of thousand Dollars. Which I ought to get it least five thousand.

My uncle and partner kept on the business and kept a clerk on my place. and as partner never would stay over a summer there and had to trust the whole business to the clerk so the clerk was selfish enough to take enough for himself in one year that he could start a business for himself and another with the same result. but when I was with them I can swear that I did not take the least thing or money such a thing never even entered my mind I considered all is mine and all theirs as we were like one person. but when they did not let me give my father & brother a few miserable Doll. It grieved me and I thought if I cannot do with my rightful hard earned money and which I

risked my life then it is time to quit and uncle after several trials with strangers sent there his own son 22 years old and when his son was there but 3 weeks he contracted the yellow fever and died!

So they did not keep on the business much longer in Key West and moved away from there entirely. Uncle's partner thought they were rich enough to do business in N.Y. City. they ... made there about one hundred thousand Dollars and put up a wholesale Clothing warehouse and bought properties and lost and lost at his warehouse and at the properties and lost all in a shorter time than he made it and died very poor and so fate has it!

[Following his return to New York City, White became engaged to Anna Lewin. A short while later, on hearing of business opportunities in the occupied areas of Tennessee, he decided to head to Memphis.]

Max White's Memoirs: Nashville and Memphis, 1862

Although my future father in law said business is no object. yes business business is the greatest object So I bought up cloth and manufactured ready made clothing to go South to sell them there so as to gather together those green backs as they called the mony then, that took me about 2 months. at that time was the Southern rebellion and Nashvill Tenn. and Memphis was just captured by the northern army and because those Cities were blockaded a long time. So I and a good many others thought like good and charitable people they will be sadly in need of all kind of goods. So we charitable merchants hurried up with the greatest of speed to reach them and I was not fast enough when I came there they didn't need my Charity any more. those Cities was overflowing with those Charitable merchants. and I could not get a suiteble place or store to distribute my undesirable Charity. So I and a bad many others couldn't do much in Nashvill. So I want to go to Memphis Tenn, and I had to get a permit from the Governor. at that time was Governor Johnson afterwards President Johnson. and as he also was a Tailor⁶¹ So I was tribly honored to speak to first to a "Tailor" Second to a "Governor" and third to a "President." and I spoke with him privately in his parlor I wanted he should give me a permit to go to Memphis it was in the war time and

had to have a permit at that part of the country but he did not give me a permit to go to Memphis he said to me in 2 or 3 days you all will be allowed to go there without permits. there was soldiers guard in front of his house and and even inside in his parlor. I did not like Nashvill it looked dull and gloomy to me in a few day I went to Memphis without a permit I staid in Memphis about 3 months I liked Memphis very much a very lively city rather a little to hot but I didn't mind the heat much I would have settled there but could not get a suitable store. So I sold my Clothing in wholesale and made some profit. and I was absent about 4 month from my apparently beloved bride and strange to say my heart did not crave any for my Kalah/bride. And I returned to N.Y.

Max White's Memoirs: Nashville and Memphis, 1862 (Marginalia)

Pres. Johnson was a tailor in his young days and had no litrary education but his wife was highly educated and from her ... he received his litrary education. He was a smart man. I heard him speak publicly a good many times one man was calling out from the crowd when you was a tailor did you make your work as good as you are making speeches. And he answered when I was a Tailor and put on a patch on a pair of pants I made it as good as could be made and another thing of what he said I well remember that was in 1863 in the time of the rebellion he was speaking of one senator of La. . . . Benjamin at that time Sec. of State of the Southern Confederacy and then Gov. Johnson of Tenn. was speaking most ashamedly about Senator Benjamin being a Jew that traitor . . .of Judas Iscariot that . . .Christ a man stood at the side of me remarked he is down on the Jews ⁶²

NOTES

¹ The editors thank Canter Brown Jr. for his assistance in locating and obtaining the images that illustrate this article. The map on page 99 and picture on page 103 appear in Canter Brown Jr., *Tampa: Before the Civil War* (Tampa, 1999) and *Tampa: In Civil War and Reconstruction* (Tampa, 2000).

² This and all subsequent information about White and his family is based on internal evidence in his memoirs unless otherwise noted.

³ Cf. Philip and his father, Abraham Samuel Dzialynski, in Jacksonville, who were peddlers in the 1850s. Canter Brown Jr., "Philip and Morris Dzialynski: Jewish Contributions to the Rebuilding of the South," *American Jewish Archives* 44 (1992): 517-539.

⁴ Fishel (Phillip) White, brother to Max's father David S. White (born c. 1820, Kalisz, Russian Poland; died 1893, New York City).

⁵ Richard Hawkins, "Lynchburg's Swabian Jewish Entrepreneurs in War and Peace," *Southern Jewish History* 3 (2000): 45–81.

⁶ Candace Falk, Stephen Cole, and Sally Thomas, "Emma Goldman: A Guide To Her Life And Documentary Sources," <<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/Goldman/Guide/chronology6900.html>>

⁷ Robert Emelin White to Richard E. White, January 1977.

⁸ Henry was lauded for his union activities by Jack London in *War of the Classes* (Chicago, 1905), 15. *Who's Who in America* (Chicago, 1908), 2037.

⁹ *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography* (Clifton, NJ, 1891–1984), v. 47, 440–441.

¹⁰ Vicki Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White: A Biography* (New York, 1968), 7.

¹¹ R. E. White letter.

¹² The author thanks Robert E. White for lending a copy of the memoirs that serves as the source of this transcription.

¹³ Goldberg, *Margaret Bourke-White*, 371n.

¹⁴ Pages 68–91 in the original manuscript.

¹⁵ Phillip White is undoubtedly Max's uncle, Fishel. *Florida Peninsular*, January 2, 1858; February 12, 1859; December 17, 1859; January 14, 1860. The author thanks an anonymous reviewer for calling his attention to these citations.

¹⁶ Pages 101 to 102 in the original manuscript.

¹⁷ John S. Bowman, ed., *The Civil War Almanac* (New York, 1982), 102.

¹⁸ Robert N. Rosen, *The Jewish Confederates* (Columbia, SC, 2000).

¹⁹ *Population of the United States in 1860* (Washington, DC, 1864), 54.

²⁰ John Solomon Otto, *The Southern Frontiers, 1607–1860: Agricultural Evolution of the Colonial and Antebellum South* (New York, 1989), 105–106; 113–114.

²¹ Canter Brown Jr. "Tampa and the Coming of the Railroad." *Sunland Tribune*, 17 (November 1997): 13–18.

²² *Ibid.*, 14.

²³ James W. Covington, *The Billy Bowlegs War: 1855–1858, The Final Stand of the Seminoles Against the Whites* (Chuluota, FL, 1982).

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁵ Canter Brown Jr., "Politics, Greed, Regulator Violence, and Race in Tampa, 1858–1859," *Sunland Tribune* 20 (November 1994), 26.

²⁶ John H. Ellis, *Yellow Fever and Public Health in the New South* (Lexington, KY, 1992), 31.

²⁷ *Population of the United States in 1860*, 54.

²⁸ Canter Brown Jr., *Ossian Bingley Hart, Florida's Reconstruction Governor* (Baton Rouge, 1997), 68 ff.; Jefferson B. Browne, *Key West: The Old and The New* (Gainesville, 1973), 78, 174.

²⁹ Population schedule for Key West, Monroe County, Florida, 1860 U.S. Census, 387 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M653, roll 108); Records of the Bureau of the Census, Record Group 29; National Archives Building, Washington, DC.

³⁰ Tatum served as district attorney from March 1, 1858, to April 5, 1861. Browne, *Key West*, 91, 130, 211.

³¹ Population Schedule for Key West, p. 387.

³² Brown, *Ossian Bingley Hart*, 71.

³³ Rosen, *Jewish Confederates*, 262–263.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 265.

³⁵ Henry Alan Green and Marcia Kerstein Zerivitz, *Mosaic: Jewish Life in Florida* (Coral Gables, FL, 1999), 10, 12

³⁶ Green and Zerivitz, *Mosaic*, 10; Rosen, *Jewish Confederates*, 91-93.

³⁷ Canter Brown Jr., *Jewish Pioneers of the Tampa Bay Frontier* (Tampa, 1999), 8-11.

³⁸ Brown, *Jewish Pioneers*, 11-16; Leon Hühner, "David L. Yulee, Florida's First Senator," in Leonard Dinnerstein and Mary Dale Palsson, eds., *Jews in the South* (Baton Rouge, 1973), 52-74.

³⁹ Mark I. Greenberg, "Tampa Mayor Herman Glogowski: Jewish Leadership in Gilded Age Florida," in Mark I. Greenberg, William Warren Rogers and Canter Brown Jr., eds., *Florida's Heritage of Diversity* (Tallahassee, 1997), 66.

⁴⁰ Browne, *Key West*, 170.

⁴¹ Rosen, *Jewish Confederates*, 29.

⁴² The excerpts presented here are an exact transcription, including all punctuation, spelling, and capitalization errors. White rarely used capitals at the beginning of sentences, but does capitalize occasional words within sentences. At times, it is difficult to tell whether or not a word was meant to be capitalized, since certain letters (such as "s") seem to be consistently capitalized when they appear as the initial letter of a word. I have attempted to be consistent in transcribing such initial letters as lower case unless they occur at the beginning of a sentence.

Words that are divided by hyphens at the ends of lines in the text have been reunited in the transcription. White only rarely indented his paragraphs, but in the transcription I have taken the liberty of indenting in those instances where it seemed appropriate. To make the text more readable, bracketed spelling corrections have occasionally been made.

Because transcription was made from a second-generation photocopy, a few words were illegible and are represented by ellipses. Marginalia exist on some of the pages but were illegible and most have not been transcribed. The one exception to this is the marginalia relating to Andrew Johnson, which appear after the second excerpt. White also added headings to the top of most pages, reflecting the subject matter on each page. These have not been transcribed. In three places in the text, White added comments between lines. These have been transcribed in italics following the sentences above which they were written.

⁴³ The Panic of 1857 began in earnest on August 24 with the announcement of the failure of the New York branch of the Ohio Life Insurance and Trust Company. George W. Van Vleck, *The Panic of 1857: An Analytical Study* (New York, 1967), 64. By the end of September, interest rates had risen to 24 percent and one hundred fifty banks failed in Pennsylvania, Maryland, Rhode Island, and Virginia in the last four days of the month alone. Charles P. Kindleberger, *Manias, Panics and Crashes: A History of Financial Crises* (New York, 1989), 128.

⁴⁴ White was actually 22.

⁴⁵ Tampa's population numbered about 500 in 1853, with a "pre-Civil War high of 885." Brown, *Tampa and the Coming of the Railroad*, 13-14. Brown also estimates that Tampa may have contained "upwards of 1,000 inhabitants" in 1858. Canter Brown Jr., *Tampa Before the Civil War* (Tampa, 1999), 148.

⁴⁶ Florida governor James Broome organized companies of volunteers in January 1856 to supplement federal troops. By March, south Florida had two hundred and sixty state troops in federal service, plus another four hundred men in state service, as well as eight

hundred federal troops. The volunteers were poorly disciplined. In 1856 Secretary of War Jefferson Davis complained that "volunteers when mustered into service take advantage of their organization to indulge in idleness, intoxication and lawless depredation upon those they were supposed to protect." When so-called boat companies (each outfitted with a flat-bottomed boat) were organized in 1857, an eyewitness referred to the men as "a sorry-looking set of rag-a-muffins." Covington, *Billy Bowlegs War*, 37-38, 54, 65-66. White's term for some of the volunteers, "hoosiers," is used in the sense of "an ignorant rustic."

⁴⁷ The Third Seminole War was declared officially ended on May 8, 1858. See Covington, *Billy Bowlegs War*, 80.

⁴⁸ There are varying accounts of the monetary arrangements negotiated with the Seminoles. Peters records that the payment was sixty-five hundred dollars for Holatter Micco, one thousand dollars apiece for subchiefs, five hundred dollars for each warrior, and one hundred dollars for each woman and child. Covington states that Holatter Micco was offered five thousand dollars plus another two thousand five hundred for cattle he lost, plus payments for warriors, women, and children as above; no mention is made of subchiefs being offered any separate amount. The Seminoles demanded to see the payment in cash and the army's chief negotiator agreed to such. This probably explains White's mention that they wanted to be paid in silver dollars. White's estimate of the number of Seminoles deported is inflated. Only 165 traveled to Oklahoma. Virginia Bergman Peters, *The Florida Wars* (Hamden, CT, 1979); Covington, *Billy Bowlegs War*, 78-79.

⁴⁹ White may have witnessed a relatively less-harsh type of slavery in Tampa and Key West than what was commonly found elsewhere in the cotton-farming South. In Key West, slaves were allowed to hire themselves out on their own time. In Tampa, "whites and blacks often worked side by side and, at times, worshipped together." A white man might even live openly with a black woman, as was the case with Tampa City clerk William Ashley and Nancy Ashley. Brown, *Ossian Bingley Hart*, 108.

⁵⁰ David Solomon White (born c. 1810, Kalisz, Russian Poland; died 1881, Newark, NJ).

⁵¹ Tzirl (Cecilia) White Abrahams (born 1837, Kalisz, Russian Poland; died 1925, Newark, NJ).

⁵² Isaac White (born 1840, Kalisz, Russian Poland; died 1903, New York, NY).

⁵³ The immigration of the White family in stages was typical of many Jewish immigrants to the United States during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chain-migration consisted of older siblings or fathers migrating first, then sending for or encouraging spouses with children, younger siblings, more distant relatives or landsman to follow suit. Avraham Barkai, *Branching Out: German-Jewish Immigration to the United States, 1820-1914* (New York, 1994). Max's uncles arrived in the United States first, followed by Max in 1854, Max's father, stepmother, and sister around 1860, and Max's brother around 1862. The author's personal files show that other White relatives from Kalisz continued to arrive in the United States until at least 1871.

⁵⁴ There had been a previous outbreak in Tampa in 1853. The one described here began at the end of September, 1858, subsiding somewhat by mid-January, 1859, with some lingering cases still being reported at the end of that February. Tampa's board of health did not realize it may have abetted the outbreak by recommending that dry ponds around town be filled with water, thereby encouraging the growth of the local mosquito population. Brown, *Tampa Before the Civil War*, 148-150. It was not until 1881 that Carlos Finlay proposed the mode of transmission of the disease, via the bite of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes,

although proof came much later when Walter Reed and colleagues conducted their experiments in Cuba in 1900. Margaret Warner, "Hunting the Yellow Fever Germ: The Principle and Practice of Etiological Proof in Late Nineteenth-Century America," *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 59 (Fall 1985): 361–382.

⁵⁵ Since sightings of flamingos along the west coast of Florida during the mid-nineteenth century were rare, either White's sailing took him south to Florida Bay, where flocks of flamingos are known to have migrated seasonally from the Bahamas, or what he saw were not flamingos. White's trip presumably took place in late summer or early autumn, coinciding with the time when flamingos were in greatest concentration in Florida Bay. If, however, his journey did not go as far south as that, it is possible that the birds he saw were roseate spoonbills. Spoonbills were (and are) mistaken for flamingos due to their pink color and water-related lifestyles. See Robert Porter Allen, *The Flamingos: Their Life History and Survival*, (New York, 1956), 39 ff.

⁵⁶ Earlier in his memoirs, White mentions that his mother, Golde Shamell Weiss, and uncle, David Shamell, died in 1848 in a cholera epidemic in Kalisz.

⁵⁷ Efforts to identify this author and title have been unsuccessful. It might be George Alexander Cooke's *Modern and Authentic System of Universal Geography*, published in several editions in the United States in the early nineteenth century. It has a subtitle that includes "a complete and universal history and description of the whole world."

⁵⁸ In January 1859, Scott had headed south to escape the rigors of northern weather. He spent two months in Franklin, LA, with his nephew and grandnephew and visited New Orleans and other towns. "In the spring he was back in New York..." Charles Winslow Elliott, *Winfield Scott: The Soldier and the Man* (New York, 1937), 664.

⁵⁹ Since it is generally accepted today that those who have had yellow fever develop a lifelong immunity, White may have misidentified this supposed second bout of the illness.

⁶⁰ Although Florida had seceded from the Union in January 1861, the presence of Fort Taylor, which was in Union hands, was a major deterrent to the pro-Confederate populace from participating on the side of the Confederacy. In April 1861, Major William H. French arrived with troops from Texas to ensure that the island would remain in federal hands. Commerce with the north continued throughout the war. See Browne, *Key West*, 90 ff. This might explain how White was able to head back to New York City when he wanted, without concern about crossing lines between warring parties.

⁶¹ Hans L. Trefousse, *Andrew Johnson: A Biography* (New York, 1989), 25 ff.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 414. Trefousse reports that Johnson referred to Judah P. Benjamin as belonging "to that tribe that parted garments of our Savior and for his vesture cast lots" and as "a sneaking, Jewish, unconscionable traitor." Benjamin had been senator from Louisiana before the war. He then held a series of positions in the Confederate cabinet, including secretary of state. Bowman, *Civil War Almanac*, 44.