

# CHASING SHADOWS

## A history of Franklin County commerce: Part 3

*The following is an excerpt from the Pensacola Daily News, Feb. 14, 1890. Over six weeks, Chasing Shadows will publish this piece in its entirety. Apalachicola was a remote destination in 1890 and difficult to reach except by water but it had much to recommend it, as we can see here. Thanks to Mark Curenton Apalachicola's premiere local historian for unearthing this gem.*

### FRANKLIN COUNTY. A TALE OF TWO CITIES.

*Lovely, Prosperous, Thriving Apalachicola. ITS BIRTH, GROWTH, FALL AND RISE. From Poverty to Affluence. From Wealth to Indigence, From Penury to Prosperity, the Place has Run the Gamut. ITS PEOPLE AND THEIR BUSINESS. The Story of Carrabelle Briefly Related, Etc., Etc., Etc.*

#### Steamboat Lines

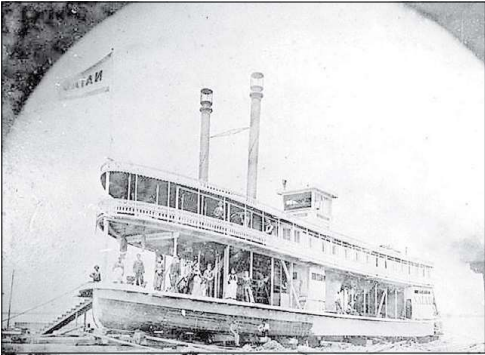
During the extensive cotton days of the port, before and after the war, regular steamship lines were established and in successful operation between this port, New Orleans, New York and European ports. The river steamers numbered at one time more than a score, carrying a large quantity of cotton to this place from the interior of Georgia and Alabama, returning with requistees of merchandise, supplies and materials brought hither by the steamships for the use of the extensive territory whence the cotton was obtained. In the rebuilding of the factories, railroads and other structures after the war, these river boats were very successfully employed, but the completion of the railroads did away with the necessity of transportation by river of the cotton shipments for foreign countries, and the river interests, with those of Apalachicola, suffered in consequence thereof.

Those steamboats presently plying the river are the Pactolus, Naiad, Milton H. Smith, Fannie Hearn, Wm. D. Ellis, Lotus No. 2 and Miss Haynes. These boats navigate the Apalachicola, Flint and Chattahoochee Rivers, a distance of several hundred miles from Apalachicola, connecting with various lines of railroad adjacent to and crossing these rivers, carrying all classes of freight to and from all eastern, northern and western markets.

Their connection for Apalachicola are made at Chattahoochee, Fla., the terminus of the F. C. & P. system and the P. & A. of the L. & N. system; also, at Bainbridge, Ga., a terminus of the S. F. & W. R. R. system, and at Columbia, Eufaula and Gordon, Ala., and Fort Gaines, Ga., with the Central Railroad of Georgia. The head of navigation for these boats is Columbus, Ga., where various railroad connections are also made. Some of these boats arrive at Apalachicola daily. Their connections with these various railroads are illustrative of the manner in which passengers and freight get to and from Apalachicola.

#### Railroads

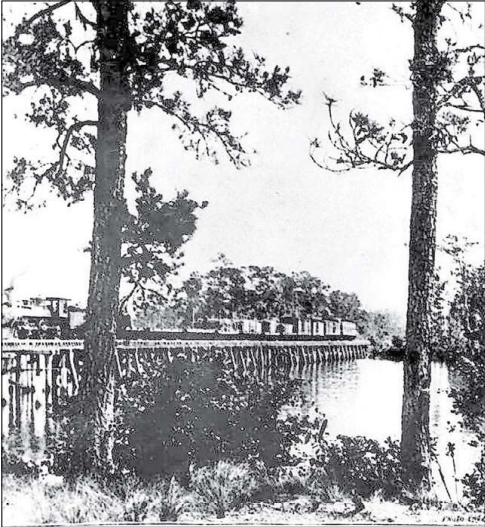
The first railroad was built a few miles above this town, from the Apalachicola River at Iola, Calhoun County, to St. Joseph's, a town on the



The Naiad drydocked in Apalachicola circa 1885.  
[PHOTOS FROM STATE ARCHIVES OF FLORIDA]



The John G. Ruge home circa 1895.



Carrabelle, Tallahassee & Georgia Railroad train crossing the Ocklocknee River bridge circa 1895.

gulf coast, about twenty miles west of Apalachicola, which road was abandoned when the town of St. Joseph was depopulated, owing to the visitation of cholera and yellow fever and the superior inducements and advantages of Apalachicola, then at the beginning of her prosperity. Since that time the place has been without railroad facilities, the nearest approach to its possession of such being the railroad now undergoing completion from Tallahassee to Carrabelle, a point a few miles below the city and easily accessible by water.

#### The Churches

The churches of Apalachicola are provided over by talented ministers of the gospel, and are well-supported, a fact speaking well for the general morality of the place. St. Patrick's Roman Catholic is presided over by Rev. Father Mathew Gardiner; the Methodist by Rev. Mr. Tompkins, minister; the Baptist by Rev. Mr. Trice, pastor. Trinity Episcopal Church is at present without a rector. The colored population is represented by three churches; Methodist

and two Baptist.

#### The Schools

The schools of the county are as good as any in the state. School No. 1 is at Apalachicola, with an enrollment of one hundred and twenty-five pupils. Miss A. E. King teaches the higher and Miss Ethel Kilbourne the primary departments. School No. 4 is at Carrabelle. Schools Nos. 2 and 3 are the colored schools and are located, the former at Apalachicola and the latter at Carrabelle. Dr. W. T. Marler is the Superintendent of the public schools of the county.

#### The Press

The press is well represented by the Apalachicola Times. Editor Johnston is alive to any enterprise that is feasible to the promotion of Franklin County's interests and his well-merited efforts are reaping numerous and continued success.

#### Secret Orders

The Secret Orders are represented by the Masonic and Knights of Honor Lodges, one of each. The former was originally



George Norton Kilbourn, born Feb. 2, 1842 in New York state and died 1917. was commander of the Apalachicola Masonic Lodge.

Magnolia Lodge No. 3, one of the oldest in the state. It is now Franklin Lodge No. 6. It was again reorganized in 1886, as Franklin Lodge, on account of the decrease of active membership. W. D. Archer is W. M.; E. B. Smith, S. W., and Rev. Mr. Tompkins, Chaplain. Franklin Lodge, K. of H. No. -,287, was organized November 8, 1886, and now has twenty-two charter members. The present officers are F. T. Robinson, D. T.; J. W. H. Wood, V. D.; A. W. Grant, A. D.; George A. Stephens, Reporter; F. W. Ordway, Treasurer; Rev. T. W. Tompkins, Chaplain; George A. Gedler, Guide; Charles Lichtenfeldt, Sentinel; John H. Shipke, Guardian; E. B. Smith, Sitting Past Director; Robert Knickmeyer, Grand District Deputy Organizer.

#### The City Officers

The city officers are Mayor, H. C. Hicks; Dr. M. T. Alexander, President; F. M. Stearns, Dr. W. T. Marler, R. G. Baker, and Henry Hutchinson compose the city council.

#### The County Commissioners

The county commissioners are O. P. Durant, President; John G. Ruge, John W. Wakefield, C. H. Smith and Charles M. Butterfield. The boards are composed of energetic, reliable and progressive gentlemen, by whom the affairs of the city and county are conducted in an intelligent manner. The financial affairs of the county are in a very gratifying condition, its paper being worth its face value. The efficient Clerk is R. L. Harrison, and the Sheriff is E. M. Montgomery.

#### The Telegraph Line

Operated by the Apalachicola and Marianna Telegraph Company, from Apalachicola to Marianna, it is managed by Editor Johnston.

#### The Timber Supply

The supply from which the new material for Apalachicola's mills are drawn, is not alone practically inexhaustible, but characterized by trees of the very largest growth. This fact enables timber manufacturers to enter into contract for cargoes of the very largest average sizes, any quantity of which may be procured. About 60,000,000 feet of timber was exported last year, and large quantities of shingles were also sent abroad. In addition to cypress and pine, there are oak, ash

and cedar in abundance.

The timber is located upon navigable streams, tributary to the Apalachicola river, and can be brought here at all seasons of the year, and at small cost.

#### Entrances and Clearances of Vessels

for the year ending July 11, 1889, are as follows: Entered 95 vessels, having an average tonnage of 43,000. Cleared, 97 vessels of 44,000 tons; estimated number of small vessels and steamboats arrived and departed, of which no official record is kept, 598. Estimated tonnage, 75,000. Number of vessels employed in Apalachicola Bay, 67; value of exports to foreign countries, \$175,000; coastwise, \$550,000; shipped inland, \$150,000; estimated value of coastwise and river steamers, of which no official record is kept, \$700,000; estimated value of domestic shipments, \$1,300,000. Mr. John E. Grady was Collector of Customs since 1885, until quite recently, when he was succeeded by W. B. Shephard, an appointee of the present administration.

#### The Harbor Entrances

The harbor entrances are everything that can be desired. East Pass is almost land-locked. It has a depth of 18 1/2 feet of water on the bar. West Pass has 14 feet of water on the bar. During the cotton days of Apalachicola in 1865-6, as many as 10 vessels have been in the bay at one time.

#### Climate

The climate at this point is equal to that of any other point of the state, the soil being dry, free from any surrounding swamps, or marshes. The mortality has always been unusually small. The city has been free of any epidemic since 1841 except some small pox in 1866, brought here by colored troops the previous winter. A strict quarantine has always been observed at this port, the present

#### Board of Health

Being composed of young and energetic man, who are alive to the necessity of the prevention of any epidemic and careful as to the general health of the city and county. The board is composed of the following named gentlemen: Dr. J. D. Rush, President; Robert G. Baker, Secretary and Treasurer, and John G. Ruge, C. H. Lind is Port Inspector.

#### Health

Of course every town claims to be the healthiest in the world, etc., and for this reason we dislike to say anything about the health of Apalachicola. We therefore append the following official record as taken from the City Clerk's books, and rest the case with the assurance to every reader of this article that we have never yet seen or heard of a community that could equal Apalachicola for health.

**Deaths from Dec. 1, 1888, to Dec. 1, 1889: 56**  
**Under 3 years: 18**  
**Over 50 years: 13**  
**Non-residents: 6**  
**Paralysis: 3**  
**Unnatural causes: 3**  
**Natural cause from 3**