

## DURFEE'S DIARY

In the early years of the nineteenth century there lived on St. Simons Island a man by the name of **R. Durfee**. **Durfee** kept a diary which has been preserved through all these years and which was at one time a part of the collection of **Charles Spalding Wylly** who gave it to his friend, **Emma Postell Shadman (Mrs. W.H. Shadman)**.

**Capt. Wylly** told **Mrs. Shadman** that as a boy he remembered **Mr. Durfee**, who was then an old man living on Sapelo Island.

A part of this diary is given here:

1805

First its here necessary to mention one Great Object I had in View in undertaking this Voyage Was as follows—When I left N. York to find some means of employment Whereby I might get a small Sum of money to provide myself with a humble Cottage on my return on Long Island. The next Place the Winter being so severe, Such as had not been known for a number of years That I resolved in my own mind to change climates in expectation of finding a Warmer One. And particularly my brother mentioning to me that he thought I might get employment. But according to my determination I embarked on the Schooner Franklin. My brother was at this time captain and was bound to Savannah, the capital of Georgia. We set sail from one of the Wharf's of the City of N. York, Tuesday, February the twelveth day of 1805. The Weather began to be more moderate than it had been for a long time and there was not so much danger from the ice as had been which prevented vessels from sailing for sometime. With a fine wind and that being fair in about six hours our Pilot left us off the Hook. The wind and weather still was favourable; and nothing very particular occurring untill we came up with Cape Hatteras except our passengers was sea sick. There was three whose names are as follows: **Doctor Grayham, John G. Snead** and a German. It was Night when we got up with the Cape, the Wind blowing then fresh and dark. In attempting to pass the part called the Swath, not a great distance from the light house we was not able to judge of the proper distance from to be kept at this time. The vessel struck three times on this place, Which was most severely felt by all on board, for at the rise and fall of the sea she would touch bottom, but fortunately not so as to hinder her from going over. This indeed was an alarming situation. The passengers made the best of their way upon deck, While I remained in my birth to receive such a fate as the Providence of God would design. My great anxiety was about my brother. We found ourselves safe over. What great reason We had to be thankful to thee Almighty Preserver of mortals.

After leaving the Cape the morning was pleasant and wind favourable. We had a great run this day. In the meantime passed Cape Look Out. Nothing worth mentioning till night. This night we found ourselves in four fathom of water. We immediately altered our course. Not without some uneasiness by several on board this was supposed to have been the S.E. Point of Fryng Pan Shoals. Towards the middle of the following day, a Pilot came along side, the master of which informed us that we was then a little to the North of Charleston bar Which agreed with an observation made on board. We continued sailing along the coast, favored with good wind and pleasant Weather. The next morning saw the shoals of Tybee; here my brother thought best to go over the bar without the loss of time in waiting for a Pilot. We soon got safe over without any difficulty. By this time the Pilot came on board, but soon Dropt anchor in consequence of the wind all dying away together with the current setting us directly on the south breakers, While I took this opportunity of taking a rough sketch of Tybee Light House, with a part of the land as then appeared at a distance of four or five miles. By this time there was a small breeze; the Pilot gave orders to get under way. However, did not pass Tybee as soon as I expected but it was late in the evening. (Tybee is situated at the mouth of Savannah River and is about 17 miles from thence to the City). Notwithstanding we did not arrive untill the morning and then came to opposite the city this being on Sunday February the 24th. As there was no business to be done on this day we improved our time the best we could by going on shore.

Previous to this **Snead** had left us and gone on to St. Simons but according to contract we had to sail in a few days for that island. After discharging some freight here belonging to a merchant in this city.

I now take the liberty to mention what befell our German Passenger. The second evening of our being there he was so unfortunate as to lose his money which was about one hundred and fifty dolls, out of his pocket. This was inclosed in a small box. It was well known that he was intoxicated the same evening on leaving the vessel in company with one of his countrymen. He returned late at night and in the morning missing the money He was greatly Distressed. He said he was in a strange place without money or friends, but as it happened the succeeding day he found some employment.

But in regard to myself I did not get the employment I expected for the Gentleman had Already engaged another person.

So that in my then present situation I had no Alternative left me but to continue on with my brother. By this time our business being completed and everything ready for Sea, We left Savannah on the 2nd of March and on the same evening got as far as Tybee once more there came to anchor. By daylight we was under way and got safely over the bar. In the meantime the Sun arose in its Splendour and with a gentle breeze. We shaped our courses for St. Simons. This morning had the good luck to meet with a fishing boat who had taken our Yawl Boat in tow (that the preceeding evening we had lost; which we obtained by paying five dolls.)

On the fourth in the morning discovered the breakers off St. Simons; but the weather was too heavy to venture. (**Mr. Conkling** was somewhat acquainted with these. He thought it best to stand off for two hours.) We then hove about and stood out for two hours or upwards. By this time it was clear. We soon veered ship and stood in towards the shoals or south breaker with a stiff breeze. The same evening got safe to anchor at the Bluff near the S. end of this island. Here we had to wait untill the morning, and then go to Brunswick for doctor **Crawford** came passenger who had previous to our leaving Savannah Put on board eight negroes and other articles for his brother who was a planter there.

This evening my brother, **Conkling** and the Doctor went on shore merely to pass away the time but I had to stay on board on the account of my having the toothache not only then but I had suffered most Severely the Whole of the passage insomuch that I scarcely could take any Nourishment (and not a little in mind). These returned again in about an hour and with nothing very particular to relate. In the morning we made a movement for Brunswick and was not more than two hours sailing that distance. We dropt anchor again, but let me observe that I see nothing there to invite a Stranger on shore so that I never went on shore at this time.

My brother made very dispatch possible to discharge the freight to be landed here, and on the following morning returned to the island of St. Simons and came to anchor at the bluff, as before.

This day was the first of my landing on this island. With my brother and **Mr. Conkling**, we stopped about an hour at one **Mr. Wilson**, who kept a publick house at the bluff. By this time the tide suited for us to proceed to the old town so called. Without loss of time we went directly on board and got under way.

While on our passage there we ran afoul of a schooner laying at anchor not far from old town and carried away her Gibb boom, which afterwards caused some dispute; however, at last was settled but not without my brothers paying 10 dolls. We soon came to anchor oppsit the town. The original name of this town is Frederica and is nearly in Latitude 31°15, it is one of the first towns built in Georgia, and was founded by **Gen. Oglethorpe**. The fortress was regular and well constructed, chiefly tabby walls and some brick.

(Tabby work is a composition made of oyster shells and mortar, and is durable.) There are part of the walls to be seen at the present day, but the town is now in ruins. However there has lately been built one or two stores and about the same number of dwelling houses. The river is on the west side. You have an extensive view of marshes from the town. We remained here about a day and a half, in the meantime landed part of the cargo. We then had to proceed round the North end of this island near the Plantation that **Mr. Sneed** then occupied, and there deliver the remaining part of our cargo. Before we sailed **Sneed** put on board a negro man for a Pilot for my brother nor **Mr. Conkling** was acquainted with the way, particularly my brother. And so agreeable to this contract we got under way once more. It being night and dark, through the ignorance of the Pilot, we got into the rong creek, which caused much trouble; for in getting out again the evening after we ran the vessel aground on a mud bank, and there with the great fall of the tide, we came near oversetting, insomuch that the topmasts almost touched the water. All hands had enough to do to hold on the starboard side of the vessel as she was then on the Larboard Beam ends. We remained din this situation untill a quarter flood, which was the principal part of the night. However, we had the good luck to get off at high water and found the right Creek by the light of the sun. I give this the name of Alligator Creek as we found them so numerous there. Our Sailors amused themselves by shooting some of them. We made very little progress this day till evening , Then got as far as the North End, or Point, and came to anchor nearly opposite to one **Mr. Coupers**. This gentleman has a large plantation there and is a Tolerable Pleasant situation. Notwithstanding its being a late hour, my brother and **Conkling** went on shore at this plantation and **Mr. Couper** let them have some refreshments to bring on board. They soon returned again. Just about daylight we got up anchor but in half an hour or thereabouts ran aground on a sand bank not many miles from the Point. Here we was detained till the next high water before we got off this bank.

However, this afforded us an oportunity of procuring a boat load of oysters. These oysters are excellent in general, but not very Large. So let me observe that these creeks are not without their good properties as

well as ill ones. They likewise abound in fish, such as mullet of a superior quality, and sheephead, also drum fish of a large size, bass, trout, whiting and crabs.

Likewise some of the bad qualities which are to be met with everywhere here, such as sand-fly, or a small species of gnat, Mosketioes, these are insufferable sometimes, as I well know, particularly at this time. What makes it so tedious and difficult in sailing around this island is you have to go such a round about way through extensive marshes, full of small creeks. Indeed the inland navigation between this island and Savannah is much the same. By this time it was high water. We had no difficulty in getting off this bank, and about sun set arrived at our Place of Destination, or the Village Landing, Which is on the E. side of the island. Here we ran in close to the edge of the bank and made fast. This bank answered for a wharf. We found ourselves somewhat fatigued by this time and soon after supper retired to rest untill morning but did not then hurry ourselves till we had made a hearty breakfast of oysters to go shore as it was some distance to walk to **Mr. Sneads**. This was a fortunate circumstance for when my brother and myself came there, **Snead** and his wife was not at home as we was informed by one **Mrs. Moore** then housekeeper. We had nothing more to do but to return on board. It was about midday when we got back to the vessel.

The sailors was busy getting ready to receive a Cargo of live oak timbers on board, as soon as the remaining part of our freight was discharged. **Mr. Conckling**, the mate, was employed in making sails for the yawl boat. In the meantime I amused myself in ketching fish. This evening and the next day I caught a fine drum fish of a middle size and at the same time my brother went as far as Frederica and when he returned **Mr. Snead** accompanied him on board. Shortly after this came **Mr. Harrison**. **Mr. Snead** had agreed that **Mr. H.** should have part of the corn my brother had brought on freight for him. **Mr. H.** sent his boat with his overseers and four of his negroes. They remained here all night. The next day delivered the corn to the overseer and likewise **Snead** received the principal part of everything on board the Franklin belonging to him. He disputed a little with my brother about some articles that had received damage on the voyage but at last thought best to comply.

The same evening we went to his house and took supper agreeable to his invitation and at this time I was introduced to **Mrs. S.**

After supper my brother, **Conckling** and myself returned on board as I preferred being with my brother. About one day after this time my brother began to reload with the live oak. Thus while our affairs was going on in the same time **Mr. Snead** was making some preparations to invite a few of this neighbours and acquaintances to come to his house and there spend a social evening and to partake of such as he would provide. However it did not take place until the fifteenth of the month. Previous to this, my brother, **Conckling** and myself was requested to come early and partake of a good dinner. We did not fail to be there at the time appointed. Also **Mr. Harrison** and **Mr. Kanady** came soon afterwards. However, the remainder of the Company did not arrive here Till the dusk of the evening and Amongst the rest came **Mrs. Harrison** with her two daughters and her Son **John**.

The eldest daughter of **Mrs. H.**, her name was **Mary**. **Mary** excited my attention the Whole evening and upwards in Such a manner, Let me Observe, that I soon found means to inform myself Who this young lady was that I might have an opportunity of becoming acquainted with her. Who should the young person be that I made inquiry of but a young man by the name of **Kanady** who lived in the same house with her mother as an overseer (a young man that I very readily became familiar with which hereafter proved friendly); and whom I esteemed; he very politely satisfied my curiosity, and in the meantime one **Doctor Jones** to amuse the ladies and make the time seem more agreeable played a number of tunes for the company to dance after on his Violin he had then brought for that purpose. Altho I refused to Join them in this amusement yet I enjoyed an agreeable Night, as well as the evening; Likewise betook of a good supper. This was the most agreeable part to me however. (Note: The common name given here to this kind of amusement is called a hop.) And the sun arose in its usual Spelndour before anyone took their departure for home.

In the meantime we bethought ourselves that it is now time to be on board the vessel, however, they Persuaded us to Stay and refresh ourselves by taking some breakfast. For my own part I had no objection. Also the niece of **Mr. Page**, a Planter at the s. end of this island remained here to breakfast and one or two others. Soon after breakfast we returned on board the Franklin.

I endeavoured to divert myself by taking a sail in the Yawl Boat with **Conckling**, which by this time was in complete order; notwithstanding, I Still retained **Mary's** looks in my mind. What was Still Worse for me and perhaps the Cause of my falling into so great an error at this time was in some degree owing to this she was recommended to me in such a manner that I really Supposed her to be a Second Virginia.

It so happened that in a day or two **Mr. Harrison** came on board and very Politely insisted on my coming

to their Plantation and there to take dinner with his mother and sisters. Likewise my brother and **Conckling** received an invitation about the same time. Such a favourable opportunity as this, reader, was by no means disagreeable to me.

[EDITOR'S NOTE—The **Harrisons** lived at *Oatland*. Under date of Dec. 10, 1788, **James Harrison** purchased from **Rebecca Bruce** and **Elizabeth Moore** the tract of land “originally granted to **John Arskins** on St. Simons Island, bounded northeast by lands of **William Harris**, southeast by salt marsh, and on all other sides by vacant lands”. This was the tract known as *Oatlands* and is now the property of **F.D.M. Strachan**.]

The day appointed was on Sunday. I must Acknowledge that I thought the time long that I had to Wait. When Sunday came I did not delay the time nor forget to remind my brother and **Conckling** of their engagement. After breakfast we got in readiness. (**Conckling** was naturally of a jovial turn of mind.) He had something to say. On our way stopped at **Mr. Sneads** about an hour and then one **Mr. Hightour** accompanied us there (as at this time he made **Sneads** house his home and was little short of being a merryandrew). On entering the house I was for the first time introduced to **Mrs. Harrison** and in particular to **Mary**. **Mary** treated me with the respect due a stranger and likewise **Mrs. Harrison**. They provided an excellent Dinner in a short time and we spent an agreeable day. In the meantime I gained the good will of the old lady.

On taking our leave they give us a second invitation; we came back as far as **Sneads** and there took a dish of coffee, then returned on board. While at **Mrs. Harrisons** it was hinted to her that I had thoughts of remaining on the island until my brother returned from N. York and if it suited then to continue longer. She readily declared her wish by saying that she hoped I would, **Mary** here did not remain silent, but seemed Pleased and give her approbation in saying something to the same purpose and shortly after this her brother was urgent that I should remain on the island; not only this but but {sic} he said to me that he thought I had better come and live with him at his mother's house. I then told him I would consider on it, and we parted at that time.

This undoubtedly would have given me an Opportunity of being in company with **Mary** but for some Private Reasons that God alone knows that I declined going there.

I now stop here and return to our affairs on board the Franklin. Removed from the Village Landing about a mile south of this into another Creek to take some timber that was there to complete the Cargo. This was attended with some trouble. My brother was obliged here to borrow a Flat and then load the Flat and then Carry it a half mile and then to reload on board the Franklin.

The same day we got here, the day before mentioned, **Mr. Hightour** paid us a visit. He was remarkable fond of fishing to pass away the time; went with him in our Yawl Boat some distance from the Place where we then was but we had no success, returned again after fatiguing myself in skulling the boat against wind and tide for half a mile. **Hightour** continued here until next. He likewise informed us that **Mr. Harrison** was then employed in providing for the same company that was at **Sneads**. This was to fulfill a promise he had made when at **Sneads**.

In the meantime my brother and **Conckling** was making every dispatch possible to leave this Creek but did not get ready until Friday the twenty-ninth of March, nor then till late in the afternoon. On leaving this Creek I give it the name Live Oak Creek. In an hours time came to anchor near the mouth of the Village Creek.

On this evening the company met at **Mrs. Harrisons**. As we had all received an invitation some days before this my brother and **Conckling** got ready and went but let me Observe that I preferred to remain on board the Franklin for several reasons; soon after they was gone the Steward brought the Supper in the Cabin agreeable to my orders and not long after before I lay down in one of the births and gave my mind up to Serious reflection until midnight and about that hour came up suddenly a thunder gust Which was severe for a short time.

I cannot but notice here that one of our sailors whose name was **George**, he was soon on deck and called hands to their duty; by that means prevented the vessel from going on shore. Likewise this said **George** was one of our best sailors on board the brig **John** in my West India voyage but while on shore he is not to be depended on that is he will take a drop too much.

About sunrise **George** hove up anchor according to his orders received from my brother; but directly after my brother, **Conckling** and **Hightour** came on board they related to me everything that had passed since they left. Likewise informed that all there thought it singular or odd that I did not come, particularly **Mary** and they appeared to be satisfied with this night's amusement. And at this time the wind and tide were both favourable by which means we made tolerable headway towards the North End. However, at last was

obliged to come to anchor and wait for the next tide. Here we improved this opportunity by going in the boat a short distance and there in a little time Loaded the boat with oysters and soon returned again. I cannot but remark that these oysters was better than any we had found before.

And it was nearly four o'clock before the flood tide answered. We then got up anchor. However the wind was light. **Hightour** officiated as Pilot at this time but as it happened we soon ran aground on some mud bank but in an hour or less time got off and came to anchor for this night; and in the meantime refreshed ourselves with a good supper of oysters and Soon after turned into our births and about daylight hove up anchor again; and in Less than an hour was at the North end of St. Simons island opposite **Mr. Coupers**. Here I must notice that I requested my brother to set me on shore, as I declined going any further. He said he had no objection. He then ordered two hands into the boat. I bid them all goodby; and in two minutes landed on the beach. I now felt at a loss what to do. Whether it was best to stop at **Mr. Coupers** or not as they were intirely strangers to myself. However, at last ventured to the house and as soon as I came there one of the servants invited me to come into the hall and wait untill **Mrs. Couper** or some of the family got up. I then went in and took a seat but it was not long before a young lady came into the hall and took a seat also; she spoke to me very politely and was remarkable sociable. (Note: This was on Sunday morning.) In the meantime preparations was going on for breakfast under this young lady's directions. She politely said to me that I had better stay and take breakfast. I readily consented to this, but it was nearly two hours before breakfast came on the table; then came **Mrs. Couper** out of her apartment. After the usual compliments passed on such occasions she took her seat at the table and the remainder of the family was called. She likewise asked me to take a seat at the table. I then took a seat with the rest (but it so happened that **Mr. Couper** was not at the present time).

As soon as breakfast was over **Mrs. Couper** went into another room, and the rest of the family elsewhere as they was then getting ready to go as far as the south end of the island. And I was told that all the horses was then in use. I then immediately set off without any ceremony. I had about three or four miles to walk as I was then going to **Mr. Sneads**. On my way I stopped at **Mrs. Harrisons**. At this time I found the old lady alone and almost the first word she said to me was as follows, are you now concluded to remain on the island or not. I replied that I believed I should. She then told me that **Mary** and her sister was gone as far as **Mr. Sneads** on a visit. She likewise said to me that I better take a walk there and see them and without hesitation I immediately set off and in a quarter of an hour reached **Mr. Sneads**, this distance being very little short of a mile. On entering the house I was again introduced to the ladies, particularly the niece of **Mr. Page**, or **Miss Stevens**. I now take the liberty to say that **Miss Stevens** is quite an accomplished young lady, free and sociable in her manners. After dinner the Ladies amused themselves by Looking at some pieces of Paintings drawn by me. They paid me this compliment in Saying that these pieces was well done. **Mary** requested me to draw a piece for herself. This I did agree to with Pleasure and not Long afterwards Presented her with several pieces, and one in particular representing Seraphic affection. This she said that she never would part with. The same evening **Mary** returned home **Miss Stevens** accompanied her thither. And nothing very particular worth mentioning untill Tuesday.

At this time the Franklin had got as far as Frederica on her way to the bluff and there to stop and wait. My brother in the meantime landed at Frederica in the Yawl Boat on business; Also to see me, In the afternoon came to **Mr. Sneads**. I was very impatient to see him on several occasions. Towards sunset we took a walk as far as **Mrs. Harrisons**. Here we spent an agreeable evening and returned to **Sneads**, and in a little time after retired to take repose as we had to rise early. And we did not fail for we was up by sunrise and likewise **Mr. Snead** as he was going as far as the bluff with us; and immediately after breakfast us three set off; and in a half hour reaches Frederica, but did not get ready to leave there until ten or eleven; then my brother and myself went in the Yawl boat and **Snead** went by land. We was full an hour if not more before we got alongside the Franklin and not without some difficulty which I do not choose to trouble my reader with.

**Mr. Snead** came on board the Franklin soon after us. By this time everything was in readiness for sailing. **Mr. Snead** desired **Conckling** to set him on shore, without saying anything to my brother or even waiting for me as he well knew that was to remain on the island. Not only this but I had previous to this made an agreement with him to board at his house at three dolls per week; indeed, this was his own offer. At this time my brother was a little angry on the occasion. In the meantime it gave us an opportunity of talking over our own affairs; and likewise he give me all the money that he could spare at this present time, which was about four dolls, as he said I might stand in need of.

By this time **Conckling** returned with the boat and **Hightour** as he was going a few miles further with them; I now had my things put into the boat, which consisted of two small trunks and a box I kept my

paints in. I then took my leave of those on board and in a few moments more was on the Landing but I did not take my final Leave of my brother until next morning; now my brother went back to the vessel, and they got under way immediately but shortly after ran aground and continued in this situation until sunrise. About eight in the morning my brother came on shore at the bluff and Likewise **Conckling** to get a fresh supply of water before they went over the bar.

But now let me observe that when my brother took his leave of me this was a trying moment indeed and not easily described. These are some of my thoughts at the present time. Am I to be left in a strange place without friends and but little money, depending entirely on my own slender abilities.

After my brother was gone I followed the vessel with my eyes as long as I could see her—ah! with a throbbing heart I now returned to on **Mr. Wilsons** who at this time kept a publick house here. **Mr. Wilson** and his wife treated me kindly nor did they charge me with a cent for the time I remained with them. (Note: the Franklin sailed on the 3 day of April and bound to N. York from St. Simons.)

I cannot omit one thing, that is just before my brother took his departure from me he said to me that I must do as I thought best—go or stay behind. I then said to him that I had left some of my things at **Mr. Sneads** in particular all my paintings and that I had now concluded to stay at least until he returned. The same day I left the bluff to return to **Mr. Sneads** and was obliged to walk, not being acquainted with the way I had to go; however I set off alone the distance was about seven miles I had to walk or thereabouts; and many parts of the road was exceeding wet at this time insomuch that I had to wade in several places I came to.

Likewise I stopped at the first house on my way that I came to here got directions how to proceed and in two hours or less got safe to **Mr. Sneads** but I felt fatigued both in body and mind. And many times have I since to my sorrow repented that I ever consented to remain on this island but the best resolution we can take is to suffer with Patience what we cannot alter and pursue without repining the road which Providence Who directs everything has designed for us.

I now think I proper to mention that during the time I resided at **Mr. Sneads** I will say I was treated with both Politeness and kindness in particular by **Mrs. S.** She always befriended me as far as it was in her power.

On the second day of my being here **Hightour** returned; he Also informed me that the Franklin was gone over the bar and that he was landed at the s. end of the island. (We now take leave of the Franklin at present.)

I now have to relate my more immediate concerns at this time for in the preceeding month I had made a proposal to become a teacher of a school as there was one wanted and here I must observe that the only means left me to support myself was this to pay my board, &c. In this I found no great difficulty but soon succeeded in a tolerable manner. **Mr. Snead** and **Mr. Harrison** acted their part for me; Likewise some others. **Mrs. Harrison** agreed to send her youngest daughter so that on the 9th of April 1805 I commenced teacher on St. Simons Isle but not without many ill conveniences. In the first place the school house was out of repair and in the second I had to walk a mile and a half, morning and evening, bad or good weather; often exposed to the hot sun. This was not the worst of it for the greatest part of the time I went without eating anything from eight or nine o'clock morning until late in the evening.

But with the blessing of God I endured this with patience and a degree of fortitude beyond my expectations for six months. But I must add that moderate exercise is a great means of preserving health in this climate as I have been taught by experience.

About nine days after my coming to live with **Mr. Snead** another Party met at **Mr. Shearwood's** in Frederica and here they enjoyed themselves equal to any of the former ones. They kept it up during the whole night. Likewise received an invitation to join them in this kind of diversion but did not except of it, Altho **Mary** was there. At this time aforementioned alone at **Sneads** as he and his wife both went. Shortly after they was gone I retired to my bed in hopes of taking some repose, but in this I was disappointed and too soon found myself Sleepless and never closed my eyes this night. Such being now my condition that it required indeed great patience and resolution during the time that I resided here.

I cannot omit mentioning that while I remained on this island I had several bravadors to guard against Who privately and meanly did all they could to prevent my going to **Mrs. H.** by making evil reports to **Mary** in particular but the before mentioned young man befriended me so far as to caution me against them Which afforded an opportunity of escaping from their designs in some degree but it must be supposed that my being a stranger there that these things would prove detrimental, and indeed they did operate against me, not only in regard to **Mary**, but many other influences which will appear hereafter.

While I was thus engaged in my daily calling and not many leisure hours, yet, I found means to address **Mary** with a poetical piece that I made choice of at this time but I shall not trouble my reader with it here,

only that the last part of these lines hinted a wish to possess her on the most honourable terms. These lines certainly met with her approbation. However, this circumstance led me into greater errors perhaps for it led me into greater encouragement and hopes of success Where before I dare not indulge such a hope. And likewise I did not fail in going shortly after to see her and was received with looks of cordial welcome. I sat myself down and enjoyed several hours in conversing with **Mary** for at this time her mother and sister were both from home on a visit to a neighbor's house and not long after I got here **Mr. Harrison** and a certain mischief maker took a walk to the same house that **Mrs. H.** was then at. This give me some uneasiness as I knew this meddlers tongue could not remain silent for long, and so it fell out, for towards the close of the day **Mrs. Harrison** returned home but not in a very good humor. But let me observe that I did not remain Long without knowing the cause for she immediately related to **Mary** what she had heard that I had said about her; but **Mary** took my part so far as to contradict whatever this person had said and I knew within my own mind that nothing had been said about her While she was absent yet I was dissatisfied and did not remain long here after this affair, but set off to go to my lodgings and on the way was caught in a shower of rain and at the same time met with **Mr. H.** on the way home. He insisted that I should go back with him but I begd to be excused and so we parted for the present and I soon got back to **Sneads**. By this time the said mischiefmaker had returned and we soon after retired to our partment, as we slept in the same room together in general. However, he said but little to me or I to him. This night as I was somewhat wet I made hast to get to bed but was apprehensive that I should take cold for here I cannot but observe how careful a person ought to be in regard to getting wet or being exposed in the rain. However, I did not receive any harm. In the morning I arose early and after breakfast went about my daily calling and its now time to say something about my brother.

One day I was employed in teaching a gentleman by the name of **Hadlock** who kept a store at Frederica and was likewise Postmaster came riding up to the door and hand me a letter. The contents of this letter was of utmost (Note. This gentleman was an acquaintance of mine). importance to me.

This was from my brother dated Savannah June the second 1805. He mentioned that the Franklin was cast away about the first and Totally lost on the south breakers off Tybee bar on the return. Part of the cargo was saved and let me observe that **Mr. Conckling** was at this time captain. And Likewise my brother came passenger in some other vessel to Savannah from N. York. This was a terrible blow to me at this time indeed. Here at once I was disappointed in not seeing my brother; not only this but of the means of getting away from this island.

Towards sunset I returned to **Mr. Sneads**. It would be vain to attempt describing to you my feelings at this time but it was the cause of my spending many weary days and sleepless nights.

On the same day that I received my letter from my brother I received one for **Snead** which my brother had wrote to him. This in consequence of some money that my brother lent to **Mr. Snead** when he arrived at Savannah fro N. York but the amount I do not know at present.

The next letter that I received from my brother he was then at St. Marys. He tells me in this letter that he was bound to N. York in a few days And that I should hear from him soon. But the Providence of God orders things quite different from our expectation as will appear hereafter.

I now hav to relate the loss of **Mr. John Harrison, Mary's** brother, whose loss I sensibly felt. He was sick about a week with the pleurisy as supposed and died on the sixteenth of June. I was at his mother's house at the time of his death and set up that night and remained here until the following night. Then went back to **Sneads** to take some repose and be in readiness against the next day to attend at the funeral of my friend **Mr. Harrison**. Captain **Snead** did honour him as far as it was in his power by burying him under arms as **Mr. Harrison** was Lieutenant under him. I likewise attended as a mourner and wore crape tied around my arm as a mark of respect not only this day but for several months afterwards.

I returned home to **Mrs. S.** and Next day attended to my own affairs as usual with hopes of hearing from my brother. In the meantime I drew a piece as a Memorial and presented it to **Mrs. Harrison** which give her Some Satisfaction. However, I cannot but remark that after the death of **Mr. Harrison** affairs took a different turn there for the worse.

What I am now about to write might be thought by some to be simple yet it serves as amusement for myself.

Shortly after the death of **Mary's** brother I took the liberty to write to **Mary**, which were as follows: **Miss Mary**, I feel myself interested in your concerns and I could not refrain from a sympathizing tear at the loss of your dear brother Who was so friendly to me in every respect. Let not Sorrow make Too deep an impression on your innocent mind But may indulgent Heaven grant you a Protecting Angel to hover around and cheer each solitary hour of grief. Believe me your friend and well wisher, **R. Durfee**

At this time also I sent **Mary** a bunch of flowers drawn by my own hands with lines **Miss Mary**, I present you these Flowers, relying on your friendship to accept of them and if you do not return them, &c. I employed a negro boy to carry the same. This was in the morning. So on my return to **Sneads** at evening The same pieces of writing together with the flowers was again handed to me by a young woman then living at **Sneads**. But how great was my surprise still greater on reading the answer. I retired immediately into my room and to give vent to my disappointment and mortification, more Particularly at this time. However, at last co great was my surprise still greater on reading the answer. I retired immediately into my room and to give vent to my disappointment and mortification, more Particularly at this time. However, at last concluded to write once more and that for the last time, which was as follows: **Miss Harrison**, I wish to have a fair and just understanding with you since I have been so unfortunate. **Miss Harrison**, recall to memory the contents of the Note that I wrote to you And the hasty manner that you returned them and with such an insulting answer, but I have reason to believe you did not write it but in the meantime I have reason to doubt your friendship. You knew that part of these lines were designed to shew how much I took a part with you in the loss of your brother. This circumstance, Miss, deprives me of every future hope and you know the principal motive on which I still visit you. Believe me Your friend **R. Durfee**

This letter I sent to **Mary**. Not many days had passed before I made some discoveries relating to this affair. I had reason to suspect a certain person living in the same house with me. Indeed this was confirmed by the young woman then living in the house. Her name was **Margaret Nutting**, as a proof of this mean action. Whereas I think a person of any honour would never be guilty of such a thing as this. However, I leave my readers to judge as they think best.

I then called on the young man living with **Mrs. Harrison** whose friendship I might rely on at this time and was fortunate enough to meet him not far from the house. And he positively assured me that **Mary** never had been guilty of such a thing as this.

In about two hours I came back to **Sneads**. The next day towards evening I revisited **Mary**. She treated me in her usual manner. She likewise said to me that there was some ill-minded person Who wished to make a disturbance and she then said it was her intention to treat me well and always would be glad to see me. Her mother repeatedly said the same thing to me. After spending a tolerable agreeable evening I returned to **Sneads** a little more reconciled than I was.

I now notice that **Mr. Snead's** brother, **Tilman**, Previous to the death of **Mr. Harrison** came up from the country near Augusta, G.A. to live with his brother **John** and assist him as he was about setting up a store or entering the grocery line at Frederica about three miles from his place of residence. I still with **Snead** continued. However, I must observe that in a short space of time this business relating to the store was given over and everything removed to the plantation where they then lived to the great surprise of everyone here. For my own part I shall not pretend to say what was the cause.

It is now time to return to my own affairs. **Mr. Hightour** was a fellow boarded in the same house most of the time I remained with this family I was treated with kindness and respect. They seemed to enjoy life. I spent many agreeable evenings when I returned from my business. They had several parties of pleasure during my stay with them.

On the first of November discontinued the employment I then was in and on the fourth went to Frederica to board with **Mr. Hadlock** Who kept a store and the Post Office and boarded at **Mr. James Shearwood's**. It was by his request that I came here. In the meantime **Mr.** and **Mrs. Snead** took a journey up the country but left a housekeeper. **Mr. H.** intrusted me with his business. During his absence, he went to Savannah, I made out tolerable well. **Mr. Hadlock** agreed to pay my board. He was gone a fortnight. He then returned with a fresh supply of goods.

Soon after this I declined staying longer with him. However, I still continued with **Mr. Shearwood** and instructed his two daughters in drawing and writing until December the second and on that day returned to **Mr. Sneads**. They returned previous to this. **Mr. Snead** brought one of his sisters, an agreeable young woman. I have omitted. **Miss Susan Snead** left here for Savannah to a boarding school about March and soon after a dispute took place between **Snead** and **Hightour** about settling the crop of cotton, having planted together. I shall not trouble my readers with the whole affair.

While I lived with **Mr. Snead** I took a likeness of himself and wife and brother. After this, the last February I received an invitation from **Mrs. R. Wright** living about two miles from **Sneads**. I accepted of her invitation and on Monday March 31 came to live with **Mrs. W.**

Not long after my leaving **Sneads** one evening by some accident his dwelling house took fire. At this time there was a considerable cotton in the upper loft. In a short time the house was burnt down with the cotton but most of the furniture saved. Himself and family removed to Frederica or old town. I was really

sorrowful for their misfortune. **Mrs. Snead** visited **Mrs. W.** several times and **Susan Snead** returned from Savannah and came to spend the day once or twice. **Mrs. W's** daughter was about the same age. **Miss Snead** left this island and returned home to her mothers. This was the last time I saw her. She bid me farewell.

At this present time while writing I am scarcely able to sit up the day, being at **Mrs. Wright's** on Friday, August 17th. I was attacked with a most severe fever which confined me to my bed in an upper room nearly a fourth part of a year.

On the third day of my illness I was seriously alarmed for nothing but the prospect of death Presented itself to my mind day and night. I have desired the Almighty's aid and assistance for my disease seemed to resist all medicines at this time. On the fourth day it Proved to be remitting fever but of an inflammatory kind and dangerous. It continued without much intermission for a long time and I also had a most severe ague attending this fever sometimes twice in one day. In the meantime this good lady **Mrs. W.** afforded me all the assistance in her power. She provided everything needful and allowed me one or two boys to wait on me during my illness. One slept in my room at night. I cannot omit mentioning that it appeared to me that I was directed there by the generous hand of the Providence of God. May I ever live under Thy Almighty care the remainder of days, Particularly should I survive.

I was so fortunate as to gain the good will and friendship of **Mrs. W.** **Mrs. W.** after some time and difficulty procured for me some Peruvian bark. After taking three or more doses of this it seemed to check the ague but the fever still continued without little abatement. However, it was a month or more before I recovered so as to sit up a few moments but soon again had a relapse.

By this time I was intensely discouraged. How many sleepless nights and with what anxiety have I waited in expectation to hear the crowing of the fowls. This is some consolation to a sick person. Does not the cock that crows bid us hope in the darkest hour before day. I here observe one thing. When the mind is discomposed how difficult it is to affect a cure of any disease.

I had some cause to think I never should recover at all.

I made several attempts to sit up on my bed but failed in this I was so feeble and this increased the Palpitation of heart and other Symptoms then it obliged me to lay down again. Thus in this situation I remained for a length of time then I made out to put on my clothes and sit on my bed a short time. Then **Mrs. Wright** thought it best to have me removed down below in a bed room more convenient for her and myself. This soon revived my spirits. Yet I could put on my clothes and sit up most every day. How many sleepless nights I have endured in this illness and never closed my eyes.

During some weeks after my being removed down in this apartment a Physician residing on this island called to see **Mrs. W.** and advised me to make use of this medicine—one teaspoonful of cream Tartar and one of sulphur. This I took every evening and a dose of barks in the morning. I soon found relief but many things seemed to prolong the time of my final recovery so as to be able to walk out.

I cannot but mention here the advantage of studying **Doctor Buchanan's** Family Physician and other Authors.

1806

I had scarcely been out of the doors before I was unjustly fined 3 dolls and 50 cents for not attending muster. Here I leave every person of feeling to judge where this was right or wrong. This circumstances was on the 20th of May. After my recovery I continued teaching **Mrs. W's** daughter drawing and her two sons Writing. While I lived with **Mrs. Wright** most of the Time was Treated with Attention and respect. I enjoyed myself tolerably well, particularly before my illness.

I spent my leisure hours in improving the garden with the assistance of a negro boy. This was amusement and healthy employment. **Mrs. W.** was a religious woman and by her request I was employed many evenings in reading moral and religious books. This made the time more agreeable. I remained with **Mrs. W.** about a year. I have not detailed in full.

1810, being at this period living at **Francis Hopkins, Esq:** I received a friendly letter from **Mrs. Rebecca Wright** wherein she solicited me to return to St. Simons and that she would employ me again. However, I declined going but it was not for want of respect for this worthy friend but previous to my leaving there some trifling misunderstanding took place between us. But I wrote her a few lines: I feel it a duty of respect to write you Altho you have thought I was Undeserving of that honour. But I am conscious I have never injured you but still deserve well of you and now entreat you to continue your friendship Toward me for Neither Time nor distance will the least change that duty of gratitude which I owe to you for the many obligations which I received from your hands, &c. I also informed her I was engaged for the present, &c.

(Note: Previous to my leaving **Mrs. Wright's** my friend **Mr. Hadlock** was taken ill and died. According to his own request I read prayers over him at the grave).