



# Violet Pinckney, Antebellum Period

Check out the articles below to learn more about Violet's life and her connection with her son.

# African American Mothers of St. Augustine

## Violet Pinckney

By Charles A. Tingley  
February 2022

What's in a name: family heritage; sense of self? In Alex Haley's epic *Roots*, his lead character Kunta Kinte struggled to retain his African name and cultural identity against the oppression of American slavery. His master insisted under pain of the whip, that he should be called Toby.<sup>1</sup> An African American in the 19<sup>th</sup> century often went by several names during his or her life. Since the enslaved were often recorded in official documents under the master's name, surnames would change with a change of ownership. Also, names changed with an alteration of status from enslaved to free or for free women, upon marriage.<sup>2</sup> An enslaved woman going by the name of Violet Fane was first noted as belonging to Capt. Ephraim Kirby Smith, U. S. Army in January and February 1839.<sup>3</sup> His father was Joseph Lee Smith, a former Federal Judge in St. Augustine.<sup>4</sup> From September till December of 1842, a slave named Violet was working for Lieut. Alexander Conte Hanson Darne at Fort Fanning, Florida.<sup>5</sup> Fort Fanning was a small garrison guarding a crossing on the Suwannee River during the Second Seminole War. It was abandoned in 1843. She was described as having a light complexion and standing five feet tall. She probably was leased by Lieut. Darne from the Smith family. She returned to the Smith household in St. Augustine in early 1843. When Violet was 16 or 17 years old, she gave birth to Aleck (known later as Alexander Hanson Darnes, MD.)<sup>6</sup> She later had a daughter named Lucinda Earl whose son lived with her in the 1880 and 1890s. There is the distinct possibility that Aleck's father was Lieut. Darne. It is also possible that either Ephraim Kirby Smith or his father Joseph Lee Smith sired Aleck due to a strong family resemblance. By the time of the 1850 Census, she is 26 years old

---

<sup>1</sup> Haley, Alex. *Roots, the Saga of an American Family*. New York: Gramercy Books, 1976. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Facing History and Ourselves. "Changing Names." Accessed February 1, 2022.  
<https://www.facinghistory.org/reconstruction-era/changing-names>.

<sup>3</sup> Personal correspondence with Walt Bachman by the author, November 22, 2019. From the U. S. Army Paymaster's Reports concerning officers' pay vouchers for their servants from Record Group 217, Box 497, Pay 19 & 54. Settled Accounts, U. S. National Archives and Records Management Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>4</sup> Parks, Joseph Howard. *General Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954. 6-9.

<sup>5</sup> Personal correspondence with Walt Bachman by the author, November 22, 2019. From the U. S. Army Paymaster's Reports concerning officers' pay vouchers for their servants from Record Group 217, Box 649, Pay 80. Settled Accounts, U. S. National Archives and Records Management Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup> 1850 U. S. Census of Florida, Schedule 2: Slave Inhabitants, City of St. Augustine, County of St. Johns, FL, 889.

# African American Mothers of St. Augustine

## Violet Pinckney

By Charles A. Tingley  
February 2022

What's in a name: family heritage; sense of self? In Alex Haley's epic *Roots*, his lead character Kunta Kinte struggled to retain his African name and cultural identity against the oppression of American slavery. His master insisted under pain of the whip, that he should be called Toby.<sup>1</sup> An African American in the 19<sup>th</sup> century often went by several names during his or her life. Since the enslaved were often recorded in official documents under the master's name, surnames would change with a change of ownership. Also, names changed with an alteration of status from enslaved to free or for free women, upon marriage.<sup>2</sup> An enslaved woman going by the name of Violet Fane was first noted as belonging to Capt. Ephraim Kirby Smith, U. S. Army in January and February 1839.<sup>3</sup> His father was Joseph Lee Smith, a former Federal Judge in St. Augustine.<sup>4</sup> From September till December of 1842, a slave named Violet was working for Lieut. Alexander Conte Hanson Darne at Fort Fanning, Florida.<sup>5</sup> Fort Fanning was a small garrison guarding a crossing on the Suwannee River during the Second Seminole War. It was abandoned in 1843. She was described as having a light complexion and standing five feet tall. She probably was leased by Lieut. Darne from the Smith family. She returned to the Smith household in St. Augustine in early 1843. When Violet was 16 or 17 years old, she gave birth to Aleck (known later as Alexander Hanson Darnes, MD.)<sup>6</sup> She later had a daughter named Lucinda Earl whose son lived with her in the 1880 and 1890s. There is the distinct possibility that Aleck's father was Lieut. Darne. It is also possible that either Ephraim Kirby Smith or his father Joseph Lee Smith sired Aleck due to a strong family resemblance. By the time of the 1850 Census, she is 26 years old

---

<sup>1</sup> Haley, Alex. *Roots, the Saga of an American Family*. New York: Gramercy Books, 1976. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Facing History and Ourselves. "Changing Names." Accessed February 1, 2022.  
<https://www.facinghistory.org/reconstruction-era/changing-names>.

<sup>3</sup> Personal correspondence with Walt Bachman by the author, November 22, 2019. From the U. S. Army Paymaster's Reports concerning officers' pay vouchers for their servants from Record Group 217, Box 497, Pay 19 & 54. Settled Accounts, U. S. National Archives and Records Management Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>4</sup> Parks, Joseph Howard. *General Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954. 6-9.

<sup>5</sup> Personal correspondence with Walt Bachman by the author, November 22, 2019. From the U. S. Army Paymaster's Reports concerning officers' pay vouchers for their servants from Record Group 217, Box 649, Pay 80. Settled Accounts, U. S. National Archives and Records Management Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup> 1850 U. S. Census of Florida, Schedule 2: Slave Inhabitants, City of St. Augustine, County of St. Johns, FL, 889.

# African American Mothers of St. Augustine

## Violet Pinckney

By Charles A. Tingley  
February 2022

What's in a name: family heritage; sense of self? In Alex Haley's epic *Roots*, his lead character Kunta Kinte struggled to retain his African name and cultural identity against the oppression of American slavery. His master insisted under pain of the whip, that he should be called Toby.<sup>1</sup> An African American in the 19<sup>th</sup> century often went by several names during his or her life. Since the enslaved were often recorded in official documents under the master's name, surnames would change with a change of ownership. Also, names changed with an alteration of status from enslaved to free or for free women, upon marriage.<sup>2</sup> An enslaved woman going by the name of Violet Fane was first noted as belonging to Capt. Ephraim Kirby Smith, U. S. Army in January and February 1839.<sup>3</sup> His father was Joseph Lee Smith, a former Federal Judge in St. Augustine.<sup>4</sup> From September till December of 1842, a slave named Violet was working for Lieut. Alexander Conte Hanson Darne at Fort Fanning, Florida.<sup>5</sup> Fort Fanning was a small garrison guarding a crossing on the Suwannee River during the Second Seminole War. It was abandoned in 1843. She was described as having a light complexion and standing five feet tall. She probably was leased by Lieut. Darne from the Smith family. She returned to the Smith household in St. Augustine in early 1843. When Violet was 16 or 17 years old, she gave birth to Aleck (known later as Alexander Hanson Darnes, MD.)<sup>6</sup> She later had a daughter named Lucinda Earl whose son lived with her in the 1880 and 1890s. There is the distinct possibility that Aleck's father was Lieut. Darne. It is also possible that either Ephraim Kirby Smith or his father Joseph Lee Smith sired Aleck due to a strong family resemblance. By the time of the 1850 Census, she is 26 years old

---

<sup>1</sup> Haley, Alex. *Roots, the Saga of an American Family*. New York: Gramercy Books, 1976. 214.

<sup>2</sup> Facing History and Ourselves. "Changing Names." Accessed February 1, 2022.  
<https://www.facinghistory.org/reconstruction-era/changing-names>.

<sup>3</sup> Personal correspondence with Walt Bachman by the author, November 22, 2019. From the U. S. Army Paymaster's Reports concerning officers' pay vouchers for their servants from Record Group 217, Box 497, Pay 19 & 54. Settled Accounts, U. S. National Archives and Records Management Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>4</sup> Parks, Joseph Howard. *General Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954. 6-9.

<sup>5</sup> Personal correspondence with Walt Bachman by the author, November 22, 2019. From the U. S. Army Paymaster's Reports concerning officers' pay vouchers for their servants from Record Group 217, Box 649, Pay 80. Settled Accounts, U. S. National Archives and Records Management Administration, Washington, DC.

<sup>6</sup> 1850 U. S. Census of Florida, Schedule 2: Slave Inhabitants, City of St. Augustine, County of St. Johns, FL, 889.

and may have had another child since the census enumerates both a ten-year-old boy and a four-year-old girl in the Smith house (now the St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library).<sup>7</sup> The girl might be Violet's daughter Lucinda. Violet who had been born in Charleston, South Carolina, used the name Violet Pinckney after Emancipation. There was another enslaved woman living with the Smiths. "Aunt Peggy" had been Edmund Kirby Smith's wet-nurse and in 1850 she was 50 years old.<sup>8</sup>

Violet's young child Aleck was taken from her in 1847. To serve as a valet to Lieut. Edmund Kirby Smith, U. S. Army during the Mexican War. The use of children as servants in a theater of war was not unusual at that time. He went on to serve in that role on the Mexican Boundary Expedition; at Jefferson Barracks, Louisiana; at Governor's Island, New York; at the U. S. Military Academy, West Point, NY; and on the frontier in Texas.<sup>9</sup> He continued working for the Smith family till 1867.<sup>10</sup>

Frances Kirby Smith (the mother of Edmund & Ephraim) "loaned" Violet to her niece Kate Putnam Calhoun (1831-1866) in 1860. Kate was a recent widow for the second time with small children. She had married two of Senator John C. Calhoun's sons. Her second husband William Lowndes Calhoun died in September of 1858 greatly in debt. His plantation "Brier Thicket" was auctioned by the Sheriff along with its contents. Kate had wanted to purchase Violet but Edmund would not have it. Edmund told his mother, "I will in all probability die an old Bachelor & I am able to support all the old family negroes if necessary."<sup>11</sup> Violet went with the penniless Kate to live with her mother-in-law (Senator Calhoun's widow Floride Bonneau Calhoun 1792-1866) in a cottage called "Mi Casa" at Pendleton, South Carolina.<sup>12</sup> While there, Frances Kirby Smith wrote Edmund and Aleck that she had sent Christmas presents to Violet. Kate was sickly so Violet would have cared for the young Calhoun boys. When Violet returned to St. Augustine, Frances remarked in a letter to Edmund that the strict discipline given Violet by the Calhouns, "...subdued her and she is now a staid, faithful servant."<sup>13</sup> Obviously, something traumatic had occurred. In January 1861, at the beginning of the Civil War, Frances wrote to Edmund, "Tell Aleck that I have just heard that his mother is in Charleston and well." This is the last documentation of Violet till

---

<sup>7</sup> Tingley, Charles. "Another Invisible Man: Alexander H. Darnes, M.D." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 3, Winter 2016: 480.

<sup>8</sup> Parks, Joseph Howard. *General Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954, 101.

<sup>9</sup> Personal correspondence with Walt Bachman by the author, November 22, 2019. Mr. Bachman has compiled a database of U. S. Army servants prior to the Civil War.

<sup>10</sup> Tingley, Charles. "Another Invisible Man: Alexander H. Darnes, M.D." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 3, Winter 2016: 491.

<sup>11</sup> Parks, Joseph Howard. *General Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A.* Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954, 101.

<sup>12</sup> Lander, Ernest McPherson, Jr. *The Calhoun Family and Thomas Green Clemson: The Decline of a Southern Patriarchy.* Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1983. 177-178.

<sup>13</sup> Tingley, Charles. "Another Invisible Man: Alexander H. Darnes, M.D." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 3, Winter 2016: 482.

she moves in with her son in Jacksonville in the 1880s. Aleck returned to St. Augustine a couple of times in 1861 and 1862 but he does not mention reuniting with his mother.<sup>14</sup>

The reunification of African American families after the Civil War was often difficult. As far as is known Violet Pinckney and Alexander H. Darnes may have lost track of each other. Aleck attended Lincoln University in Chester, Pennsylvania beginning in 1870. He received Bachelor's and Master's degrees from that school and then furthered his education at the Howard University Medical Department. After his graduation in 1880, he returned to Florida and started a medical practice in Jacksonville (the first in Florida by an African American). At first, he lived in a boarding house but in 1883 he built a ten-room house at 117 Ocean Street in downtown. By 1885, his mother and Lucinda's son Alexander H. Earl (1868-1925) were living with him. The family attended Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. Violet would have come in contact with many of the leaders of Jacksonville such as Rev. Samuel Darnell (President of the Cookman Institute), Rev. Daniel A. Paine (the most senior Bishop of the A.M.E. Church), a young James Weldon Johnson and his brother John Rosamond Johnson, Bishop T. M. D. Ward, Rev. J. B. L. Williams, Rev. S. H. Coleman (the Grand Master of the Prince Hall Masons of Florida), the writer T. Thomas Fortune who mentioned her son in his New York newspaper columns, the leaders of the Prince Hall Masons where her son was an officer, and the faculty of Edward Waters College and the Florida Baptist Institute. Dr. Darnes never married so his mother probably kept house for him.<sup>15</sup> By 1893, his nephew married Meta Dudley so there was another woman in the home. In the early 1890s, Dr. Darnes invested in property at Pablo Beach, Florida (today's Jacksonville Beach). He built a bathhouse with changing rooms directly on the ocean. This business was managed by his nephew Alexander Earl. Violet Pinckney spent the summer of 1893 at the beach due to ill health. The sea air being the only available respite from the heat of a Florida summer. She stayed at the "Certain Cottage," one of the two boarding houses catering to African Americans at Pablo Beach. In early August, the newspaper reported on a ladies' picnic party at Burnside Beach, just north of Pablo, including Mrs. Violet Pinckney, Mrs. Alexander Earl, and Mrs. Lucy Certain, the proprietress of the Certain Cottage. This summer idyll came to an abrupt end late in August when a tropical storm raked the north Florida coast. The guests at the Certain Cottage and the Grand Union Hotel took refuge in Darnes' bathhouse. Many took the train into Jacksonville the next day quite shaken from riding-out the storm. Alexander Earl continued to run the bathhouse till the end of the bathing season in October. It is unknown if his grandmother stayed at the beach or returned downtown. In late January 1894, Dr. Darnes became seriously ill and died on February 9<sup>th</sup> surrounded by his family. The outpouring of respect and grief was so great that his funeral was the largest in the history of Jacksonville to that date. Over three thousand people attended at Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. The Masonic fraternity was in charge, Dr. Darnes having been an officer in that organization. The newspaper noted, "He idolized his mother..." In the

---

<sup>14</sup> Tingley, Charles. "Another Invisible Man: Alexander H. Darnes, M.D." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 3, Winter 2016: 486-508.

<sup>15</sup> Tingley, Charles. "Another Invisible Man: Alexander H. Darnes, M.D." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 3, Winter 2016: 491-496.

condolence resolution from the faculty and students of Edward Waters College where he had been the physician on-call, they deeply sympathized with his grief-stricken mother.<sup>16</sup>

Violet Pinckney did not survive long after her son's death. Dr. Darnes died without a will so a probate attorney was appointed by the court to settle his estate. His properties were heavily mortgaged so his mother and nephew were not able to hold on to them without his income as a doctor. Her exact date of death is unknown but the executor recorded paying the bill for her cemetery plot and funeral the first week of June 1895. She was laid to rest near her son in a nameless grave in Old City Cemetery in Jacksonville.<sup>17</sup>

---

<sup>16</sup> Tingley, Charles. "Another Invisible Man: Alexander H. Darnes, M.D." *Florida Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 94, No. 3, Winter 2016: 505-506.

<sup>17</sup> In Re Estate of A. H. Darnes, Deceased, May 22, 1894, County Judge's Court, Duval County, Florida, File No. 567.



---

Another Invisible Man: Alexander H. Darnes, M.D.

Author(s): Charles A. Tingley

Source: *The Florida Historical Quarterly*, WINTER 2016, Vol. 94, No. 3, 500 Years of Florida History—The Nineteenth Century: 1800 to 1870 (WINTER 2016), pp. 476-508

Published by: Florida Historical Society

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24769280>

---

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

*Florida Historical Society* is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The Florida Historical Quarterly*

## Another Invisible Man: Alexander H. Darnes, M.D.

by Charles A. Tingley

The term “invisible man” has become a cliché for the evaporative effect of the Jim Crow Era on African American men and women and the memory of their lives.<sup>1</sup> This article is the story of one such man of great stature who became invisible. What started as the search for a young slave boy named Aleck turned into the re-discovery of Dr. Alexander Hanson Darnes, who was taken as a teenager to a U. S. Army cavalry post in the West, went through the Civil War as the personal valet of Confederate General Edmund Kirby Smith, gained freedom through Emancipation, sued for his right to vote, took a medical degree, stood up for equal rights on public transportation, and served the community as Florida’s first African-American physician.

The rebirth of Alexander Darnes occurred in 2001 in a project by the sculptor Maria Kirby-Smith. She approached the St. Augustine Historical Society with the concept of creating a memorial to her great-grandfather Edmund Kirby Smith in a life-size, bronze statue at his birthplace, the Segui-Kirby Smith House in St. Augustine, which serves as the Society’s research library. However, she did not want to commemorate her ancestor’s U. S. Army or Confederate Army careers. Instead, she proposed creating a sculpture reflecting his post-war years, when he was a much beloved math

---

Charles Tingley is the Senior Research Librarian at the St. Augustine Historical Society Research Library.

- <sup>1</sup> Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (New York: Random House, 1980), 3, Robert Casanello, *To Render Invisible: Jim Crow and Public Life in New South Jacksonville* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2014).

professor at the University of the South and father of eleven children. Also, she wanted to feature two people in the sculpture, Kirby Smith and his valet, known as Aleck.

The first question the Society's executive director posed to Maria Kirby Smith was, "Who was Aleck?" The sculptor explained that he was a slave in the Smith household, also born and raised in the Kirby Smith House, and mentioned in her great-grandmother Cassie Kirby Smith's privately published reminisces, *All's Fair in Love and War* (1945).<sup>2</sup> As Library Manager, I was tasked with finding enough biographical data on Aleck to convince the Society's Board of Trustees that his inclusion in the memorial was appropriate. More than enough material was found and I discovered a fascinating man who led me on a fifteen-year quest through family papers, newspapers, and other source materials.

While much of the material in *All's Fair in Love and War* is inaccurate family tales, it is correct that Aleck became a doctor in Florida.<sup>3</sup> However, histories of Jacksonville written in the twentieth century never whisper the name of Darnes.<sup>4</sup> Although the medical profession in Duval County is lionized in three books, Darnes' name appears only once in one footnote.<sup>5</sup> Darnes was in plain sight to anyone who checked the Jacksonville City Directories for the 1880s and 1890s. His name appears among Howard University alumni, the largest historically black medical school.<sup>6</sup> Yet he was somehow missed in *The Medical Profession in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Florida: A Biographical Register* (1996) by E. Ashby Hammond.<sup>7</sup> His eyewitness account of the Civil War was overlooked by at least three historians who mined the Edmund Kirby

2 Personal conversation with Taryn Rodriguez-Boette, July 2, 2015.

3 Cassie Kirby Smith, *All's Fair In Love and War or The Story or How a Virginia Belle Won a Confederate Colonel*, (Nina Kirby-Smith Buck, 1945), 37.

4 T. Frederick Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513-1924* (Jacksonville: Florida Historical Society, 1925); Richard A. Martin, *The City Makers* (Jacksonville, FL: Convention Press, 1972); James Robertson Ward, *Old Hickory's Town: an Illustrated History of Jacksonville, Florida* (Jacksonville: Florida Publishing Co., 1982).

5 Webster Merritt, *Hundreth Birthday, Duval County Medical Society, 1853-1953* (Jacksonville, FL: Duval County Medical Society, 1954); Marian J. Rust, *The Healers: a History of Health Care in Jacksonville, Florida 1791-1986* (Jacksonville, FL: The Memorial Health, Education and Research Foundation, 1986); Webster Merritt, *A Century of Medicine in Jacksonville and Duval County* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1949), 154 [footnote].

6 Daniel Smith Lamb, ed., *Howard University Medical Department: A Historical, Biographical and Statistical Souvenir* (Washington, DC: R. Beresford, 1900), 162.

7 E. Ashby Hammond, *The Medical Profession in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Florida, a Biographical Register* (Gainesville: George A. Smathers Libraries, University of Florida, 1996).

Smith Papers for biographies of the general, although it appears with other tributes at the time of Kirby Smith's death.<sup>8</sup> Apparently these authors chose not to see him. Darnes' invisibility was complete. Darnes is not unique among many disappearing African Americans. Just to name two north Florida examples, Sitiki (aka Jack Smith) and Anna Jai Kingsley have recently been given their rightful place in history after being lost for a century.<sup>9 10</sup> This article will attempt to put flesh on his bones just as his life-size bronze statue makes him visible at his childhood home.

The first recorded mention of the slave boy who would become Dr. Alexander H. Darnes seems to be a letter dated February 1<sup>st</sup> 1845 from Judge Joseph Lee Smith to his son Cadet Edmund Kirby Smith at West Point. The judge wrote, "Your servant boy Alex thrives rapidly and will be a useful waiter for you in a year or two - when you graduate...."<sup>11</sup> Surviving documents only partially reveal information about Alex's parents. His mother was Violet Pinckney/Fane, a slave in the Smith household. She is referred to as a slave of the eldest of the Smith children, U.S. Army Captain Ephraim Kirby Smith, as early as 1839. In that year, with the Second Seminole War waning, Captain Ephraim Smith was reassigned from Florida to Fort Winnebago, Wisconsin, and he left Violet in the charge of his parents.<sup>12</sup> Aleck's exact date of birth is difficult to determine. In the Slave Schedule of the 1850 U. S. Census, Mrs. Frances Kirby Smith is recorded as having but one male slave, a 10 year-old, mulatto boy, thus born in 1840.<sup>13</sup> However, Alexander

8 Arthur Howard Noll, *General Kirby-Smith* (Sewanee, TN: University of the South Press, 1907); Joseph Howard Parks, *General Edmund Kirby Smith, C.S.A.* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1954); Robert L. Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy, the Trans-Mississippi South, 1863-1865* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972).

9 Sitiki, *The Odyssey of an African Slave*, Patricia C. Griffin, ed. (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2009).

10 Daniel L. Schafer, *Anna Madgigine Jai Kingsley: African Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2003).

11 Joseph Lee Smith to Edmund Kirby Smith, February 1, 1845, Kirby Smith Papers, Southern Historical Collection UNC, Chapel Hill, NC, reel 2.

12 Personal correspondence with Walt Backman by the author, October 26, 2012. For this information, I have to thank the great generosity of Walt Backman of New York for sharing his years of research in the National Archives combing the U. S. Army Paymaster's Reports concerning officer's pay vouchers for their servants from Record Group 217, Entry 516, Settled Accounts, Army Paymasters, Box 497, U. S. National Archives and Records Management Administration, Washington, DC.

13 1850 U. S. Census of Florida, Schedule 2: Slave Inhabitants, City of St. Augustine, County of St. Johns, FL, 889.



This photo is the first in Dr. Darnes' carte de visite photo album. It is presumed to be his mother Violet Pinckney ca. 1890. Original photo in the possession of the author. It was presented to him by David Earl, great-nephew of Dr. Darnes.

Darnes' 1894 obituary says he was about 48, yielding a birth date ca. 1846.<sup>14</sup> The 1880 U. S. Census gives his age as 32, thus placing his birth about 1848.<sup>15</sup> And finally, the 1885 State Census yields a birth year of 1850.<sup>16</sup> All these post war data appear to be wrong, given Joseph Lee Smith's statement that Alex was born before 1845 and the information from Frances Kirby Smith to the census taker that Alex was born ca. 1840.

The identity of Alex's father is not recorded. According to the 1880 Census, Alex's father was born in Maryland. He may, therefore, have been the son and namesake of Second Lieut. Alexander Contee Hanson Darne (1819-1907) of Darnesville, Maryland.<sup>17</sup> A. C. H. Darne, an 1841 graduate of West Point, was stationed in or near St. Augustine during his brief military career. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of May 1842, he was at Ft. Picolata, 18 miles west of St. Augustine, and by August, he was at Ft. Shannon at today's Palatka. After spending from September 1842 to July 1845 in southern Florida, he was posted to Ft. Marion in St. Augustine in July of 1845.<sup>18</sup> Lieut. Darne resigned from the army on September 10, 1845 and returned home.<sup>19</sup> Thus he was in the right place at the right time to be the biological father of Violet Pinckney's child.<sup>20</sup> This conflicts with Mrs. Smith's account of Alex being born ca. 1840. There is also a possibility, due to Darnes' strong resemblance to the brothers Ephraim Kirby Smith and Edmund Kirby Smith, that he was biologically a Smith.<sup>21</sup> The only two Smiths who could have been his father were Ephraim, who was Violet's master, and old Judge Smith (Edmund was away at school the whole time). Because of the inconsistencies between various records, the identity of Darnes' father remains conjectural.

Aleck, as he was usually called by the Smiths, was frequently mentioned in family letters in the 1850s when he was in his teens. In September of 1856, for example, Edmund wrote his mother, "I

14 *The Evening Telegram* (Jacksonville, FL) Feb. 13, 1894.

15 1880 U. S. Federal Census, Jacksonville, Duval County, FL, 591.

16 1885 Florida State Census, Jacksonville, Duval County, FL, 725.

17 Photo of tombstone, Chestnut Grove Cemetery, Herndon, Fairfax County, Virginia, <http://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSI=man=1&GScid=49777&GRid=15827931&> (accessed March 2, 2016).

18 Database: U.S., Returns from Military Posts, 1806-1916, *www.ancestry.com*.

19 Thomas H.S. Hamersley, *Complete Army Register of the United States: 1776-1887*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: T.H.S. Hamersley, 1880), 393.

20 Dumas Malone, ed, *Dictionary of American Biography*, Vol. 8 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932), 231.

21 Personal conversation with David Earl, Darnes' great nephew, April 2003. (See: photos provided to the author by David Earl illustrating this article.

hope Alec is in good hands. I wish he could be taught to cook and to make himself useful generally as a bachelor's servant."<sup>22</sup> From April to October of 1856, he accompanied his master Captain Edmund Kirby Smith with the U. S. 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry, "Jeff Davis' Own," to Ft. Mason in Texas.<sup>23</sup> The cavalry unit's officers were hand-picked by Secretary of War Jefferson Davis to keep the Kiowa and Comanche Indians in check.<sup>24</sup> Aleck was Smith's slave and personal attendant for the next nine years.

The Smith family correspondence continues to make references to him throughout the 1850s and into the 1860s. "How does Aleck get on?" Mrs. Smith wrote her son at one point. "And does he keep his equilibrium in the midst of [illegible] events. Do remember us all to him and say we feel as if he had a great trust confided to him. I hope he has been faithful in his care of you. I do not think the poor boy is blessed with a brilliant [illegible] but he is affectionate & attached to you."<sup>25</sup> In 1859, Edmund reported that Aleck, "grows prodigious in stature and laziness. He is as slow as he is long legged."<sup>26</sup>

In December 1859, writing from Camp Colorado, Texas, Smith noted, "Aleck sends his love to his Aunt Peggy [the eldest of the Smith slaves and Edmund's nurse] and wants her to write him."<sup>27</sup> In January, when Edmund was ill his mother inquired, "I wish old Peggy was with you, how she would nurse you up—is Aleck good for anything?"<sup>28</sup>

22 Edmund Kirby Smith to Frances Kirby Smith, September 1, 1856, Kirby Smith Papers, Southern Historical Collection UNC, Chapel Hill, NC, reel 1.

23 Personal correspondence of Walt Backman with the author, October 26, 2012, Paymaster's Reports concerning officer's pay vouchers for their servants from Record Group 217, Entry 516, Settled Accounts, Army Paymasters Box 1484, U. S. National Archives and Records Management Administration, Washington, DC.

24 "Second United States Cavalry," Handbook of Texas, <http://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qls03>, (accessed February 1, 2016).

25 Frances Kirby Smith to Edmund Kirby Smith, undated (sometime in the 1850s), Kirby Smith Papers, reel 1.

26 Edmund Kirby Smith to Frances Kirby Smith, August 15, 1859, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 2. U.S. Army officers were paid by the government for a prescribed number of servants depending on their rank. Vouchers for \$7.00 to \$8.00 per month plus \$2.50 per month clothing allowance and rations were submitted to the Quartermaster. The paper trail created is an excellent way to track the movements of officer's servants, who in the case of Southerners were usually enslaved men & women.

27 Edmund Kirby Smith to Frances Kirby Smith, December 1859, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 2, pg. 4.

28 Frances Kirby Smith to Edmund Kirby Smith, January 11, 1860, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 2.

Some letters suggest homesickness in Aleck, as well as some tensions between Mrs. Smith, Peggy, and Violet at home. Edmund wrote to his mother, "Aleck seems rejoiced at the prospect of leaving Texas, dissolution [of the Union] will be to him a God send if it carries him back to Augustine that negroes paradise, the Ultima Thule of all Aleck's aspirations. God bless you all in these trying times is the prayer of your son."<sup>29</sup>

But in November, still in Texas, a frustrated Edmund added, "Make Peg write to Aleck or write yourself a few lines for her & give him some news of his mother. I almost feel like voting for Lincoln when I see families broken up and children so completely separated from their parents."<sup>30</sup> "How is Aleck?" asked Mrs. Smith in December. "Do tell me about him. I sent his mother some [Christmas] presents by [way of] Kate [Putnam Calhoun, the child of Mrs. Smith's sister]. I have just sent Peggy to Fernandina—hired to a Mr. Swan. I shall get \$6 a month for her, that is if she is disposed to work & behave herself. She has been loafing about the last five or six months, doing nothing, a perfect nuisance."<sup>31</sup>

Aleck's mother Violet, meanwhile, had been sent to Pendleton, South Carolina, to serve Kate Putnam Calhoun at the country estate of the late Senator John C. Calhoun, her father-in-law. Kate wanted to buy Violet from Edmund but he would not hear of it. Mrs. Smith observed that the strict discipline given to her by the Calhouns had "...subdued her and she is now a staid faithful servant."<sup>32</sup>

With the outbreak of the Civil War, Aleck spent the next four years among Confederate troops. References to him in correspondence are thin. Just after Florida seceded from the Union, Mrs. Smith included in a letter, "Tell Aleck that I have just heard that his Mother is in Charleston and well."<sup>33</sup> Aleck, meanwhile, was accompanying Smith, now a colonel in the Confederate infantry under Gen. Joseph E. Johnston, to Harpers Ferry.<sup>34</sup> Writing

29 Edmund Kirby Smith to Frances Kirby Smith, January 28, 1860, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 2.

30 Ibid., November 10, 1860, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 2, pg. 3-4.

31 Frances Kirby Smith to Edmund Kirby Smith, December 13, 1860, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 2. The criticism of Peggy's behavior may have marked frustration with her, as masters frequently described the deliberate work slow-downs of slaves as laziness.

32 Parks, General Edmund Kirby Smith, C. S. A., 101.

33 Frances Kirby Smith to Edmund Kirby Smith, January 31, 1861, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 2.

34 Parks, General Edmund Kirby Smith, 126-128; Edmund Kirby Smith to Frances Kirby Smith, June 31, 1861, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 2.

from Winchester, Virginia, Smith informed his mother, "I have long since dropped trunks... my wardrobe is carried on my back... Aleck & the horses complete the list."<sup>35</sup> On July 19<sup>th</sup>, Mrs. Smith replied, "How is Aleck in these times? Tell him he is often spoken of by us in the hope that he sticks close to you...."<sup>36</sup>

These sparse references give only hints of Darnes' life during his youth and his war-time experiences. His own autobiographical account of his life with Edmund Kirby Smith came decades later, written at the request of Smith's widow in the summer of 1893. Being an extensive account, and a fairly rare type of memoir, it is included in its entirety here.

*An humble attempt to say something to the memory of General Edmund Kirby Smith. He was a generous, virtuous, Christian gentleman. A brave soldier with a benevolent turn of mind and heart of a nobleman. As a private servant, I was brought up by his Mother from my early childhood. She was as good and kind to me as she could be. When he took me from home to serve him, he always kept me near him and took me nearly everywhere he went. I was trusted with everything he had until he got married. His keys, private letters, and papers were always in my care. I had to look often [to] his comfort and welfare as a servant. He always trusted me with full confidence in every respect in my position and relation to him as a servant. A good and happy relation always existed between master and servant to the day of his death. I had a good opportunity to see and know much of this good and most excellent gentleman in his private as well as in his public life. I speak truthfully when I say he was no slave to any habit whatever that was not good. I never heard him make use of any vulgar word in my life. Never saw him under the influence of alcoholic stimulant. Never knew of him taking any part in any game for money. Never saw him in combat with any individual but once with a member of his Company who was so much under the influence of liquor that he did not know much about what he was doing and cared less.*

*This soldier was disorderly violent and resisting being placed under the guard. He drew his pistol on the General and threatened*

35 June 24, 1861; One of his campaign trunks survives in the collection of the Smithsonian Institution, [http://www.civilwar.si.edu/soldiering\\_chest.html](http://www.civilwar.si.edu/soldiering_chest.html), (accessed February 1, 2016).

36 Frances Kirby Smith to Edmund Kirby Smith, July 19, 1861, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 2, pg. 6.

*to shoot him if he came near but the soldier did not stop and the General followed after him. This state of things looked very desperate to me. I took-out to his quarters as fast as I could to get his pistol for him but before I could get back the whole company, nearly, had turned out and arrested [the soldier]. This man was court martialed and sentenced to serve out his time of enlistment at hard labor away from his company and fulfill all payment and dues. On returning to his post, the General wrote to the authorities at Washington and had the sentence removed and the man restored to his company. The soldier's name is Alexander, Company B, 2<sup>nd</sup> Cavalry. No one expected to see anything like this done so soon.*

*I will mention a few circumstances to show the kind and friendly relation between master and servant. When he first returned to his command [from Florida] and I was with him, the sight of the soldiers and their equipments and the horses were grand to me in every respect. I had never seen anything like it before. I was delighted with everything. I would follow him everywhere he went: the soldier's quarters, and the stables. I would follow him on the parade grounds. One afternoon he was not feeling well but I did not know it. The bugle blew and the company turned out. I did not see him come out as usual. I called him supposing he was sleeping and told him that the company had turned out and it was time for him to get up or he would be late. He said, "I am not feeling well and will not go out." I hastily asked if he wanted anything. "No," was the reply. I went on the parade ground as I had done when he was there. The men in the ranks saw it, but the Orderly Sergeant did not. When the roll call was ended, he turned quickly, saluted and reported the company all present before he detected what he was doing. I need not say, the men had a great laugh. Strange to say yet it is a fact, he allowed me to learn sense by my experience. He never flogged me but once, which was brought about in this way. I took care of his quarters and kept them clean and in order as a duty. I had done so on this day and closed them in the usual order of doing. He went out. I went after a pail of fresh water for which I had to go some distance. While I was gone, he came in the house with a young dog and was training him in the room. I did not know anything of it and opened the door to go in. The dog saw his chance and gladly took to the door and out. I was taken in the collar and flogged. This came upon me like a flash of lightning. I did not know and could not understand why I was being punished. I would say as best I*

could, "I ain't done nothing! I ain't done nothing!" until he said, "Yes, you have! You opened the door and let the dog out!" I felt so bad over the circumstances that I took leave of absence without permission for two days. On my return, he spoke very kindly to me but I was thinking that death was better for me, and said to him to kill me, that I did not want to live. I am proud to say he never laid the weight of his hand on me for anyone, not even for his own wife. I don't know that she ever wished him to do so. She is a most excellent lady who loved everything that belonged to the General even his dogs. I had done things that I thought sure I would be punished for my thoughtless neglect. One evening the General called me and gave me a prescription to go and have filled for one of his children, a baby not two years old. I went to the dispensary and saw the doctor in charge who told me to tell the General that he had tried to get the medicine but it was not to be had in the place. I never will forget this. I very foolishly instead of going and informing the General about the medicine, I went five miles out in the country to a dance and frolic. I did not come to my senses until after twelve o'clock at night when an officer and several men came in where I was and said he wanted General Smith's boy. This put a dampness on the party and I was marched to town under guard and kept there in the guardhouse until afternoon the next day. I made up my mind that I would be punished because I knew that the child was sick and I had failed to do my duty, but to my great surprise, I never heard anything more of the matter.

He always provided a horse and equipments for me. He never allow[ed] anyone to use them. I was very proud of it and took a good degree of pride in taking care of them. I was allowed to keep them repaired just as I did his own that he used. I took special pride in keeping his sword, shoes and equipments bright and in good order. I went nearly everywhere he did [and I was] with him during the war until near the end. I was separated from him longer then than I ever was. I was on the battlefields with him at the first Bull Run battle on Sunday, July 21<sup>st</sup>. Saw both armies at that point of the field and saw the men firing on each other but the firing got so hot and heavy that I took to a fence for protection and as soon as convenient I got back to the rear. My bravery was not very much at this time. I had never seen anything like it before and did not like much to be so near. I never saw the General any more that day until after night when I was shown where he was by one of his staff officers. I saw him laying on a bed on the floor and

[he] appeared to be unconscious from a sever[e] wound. I did not feel so bad after seeing that he was living as I did before. [Since] I had been told at General J. E. Johns[t]on's headquarters that he was killed on the field. I saw them bring General Bee from the field dead: he was killed. I knew they had been near each other and when I saw this, I [was] made sure that General Smith was [also] killed and it broke me down completely. I stayed at these headquarters knowing that I would learn the facts about the General sooner here than anywhere else and he belonged to General Johns[t]on's army. My expectation was realized when the officer came and showed me where to find him. Soon as he was able to stand the travel, he was taken to a country residence where everything was comfortable and plentiful as possible. He recovered fast and soon got well enough to travel. He had me to this country residence with him. He went to Lynchburg, leaving me to take care of his things. Soon, he sent for me to come to him at Lynchburg. He was staying with a friend in that [city] and about to get married. I did not know anything of it. Soon after I came, several of the ladies staying in the house called me in where they were, and one of them pointed out Mrs. Clay and asked, "Do you like her? What do you think of her? She is the General's wife." As I was not able to know, I simply replied that I did not know. He got married to a most excellent lady in this city and came home to Fla. with his wife to see his Mother and relatives. He brought me with him and on his return to the Army, he carried [me] with him. I was with him at the battle near Richmond, Ky. Saw the men shooting each other down on both sides. The fields were clear and opened. I could see all the movements of the troops. Was with him at the battle of Sabine River, Ark. This was a bad place and a bad and hard fought battle, yet he was successful and drove the Union troops back to Little Rock. The battle on Red River near the City of Shreveport: [I] did not see so much of it while going on but was on the field. The Union troops were here also defeated and driven down the river. Now comes a change in things and conditions which separated us for the first time for any length. He sent his wife and two children down the Red River on a Union transport to go to her home. This act looked very strange to me at the time. Soon the General called me and told me what he wanted done, that I should come to him in Texas and bring his things and horses. He left Shreveport and as soon as it was known by the soldiers that he had gone it looked as if every man of them was looking out for

himself and taking everything they could lay hands on. I took his horses from the stables to the house where I slept and was successful in keeping them and his things. A few days after the General had gone, he sent me a written order saying, "You let Mason have the black horse. It will be alright." I could read enough to know the General's handwriting and his name whenever I saw it. I felt very proud over receiving such an order by an officer, and thought much of it as being a grand thing. I kept this order in an old-fashioned carpetbag with my clothing. About this time confusion and disorder seemed to reign supreme. I waited day after day thinking the General would tell me to come to him in Texas, but before I heard anything from the General all of his officers had left and could not tell me what [to] do or anything about him, and I was much perplexed not knowing what to do, and hearing all kinds of reports, and the Union Army would occupy the city in a day. I did not know what to do with the horses I had and his things. I was burdened with care and no little uneasiness. The Union troops came and occupied the city. I did what I thought [best] to keep his horses and things. I got no relief from my anxiety and troubled mind until General Buckner of Ky. and one of General Smith's Staff Officers, came from Galveston by Union transportation. Seeing these officers was a great relief. The first transport leaving Shreveport this officer left on it. I got him to take the favorite horse on the transport with him hoping he would take the horse to New Orleans and keep him for the General. This transport, a large one, was to take the troops to New Orleans, and [was] filled to its fullest capacity. I was to go with all the General's things. When about thirty miles from Shreveport at night, the transport sprang a leak and sank. [This was the steamship *Kentucky* that sank June 9, 1865]<sup>37</sup> Many of the soldiers were drowned and all the animals on board: this favorite horse with them. In a few days General Buckner took me with him on a small boat to New Orleans where I met Colonel William Seldon [sic], the brother-in-law of General Smith. Who now lives in Washington[:] a noble, big-hearted gentleman. He took care of me with the General's things. I should say I took charge of the Colonel for so I did. We took a government transport from New Orleans to Fortress

37 "DISASTER ON THE RED RIVER.; Sinking of the Kentucky 200 Lives Lost," *New York Times*, June 25, 1865, <http://www.nytimes.com/1865/06/24/news/disaster-on-the-red-river-sinking-of-the-kentucky-200-lives-lost.html> (accessed February 1, 2016).

*Monroe. Up to this time, I had not heard one word of the General and did not know where he was. I was successful in keeping all things in my care until we got to this point. In making changes to land from the large steamer to a small one, someone stole my carpetbag with the order I had for the horse which I thought so much of and intended to keep it as it was the first writing that I ever got from the General's hand direct to me. I had more than I could manage and the men on the boats looked as if they did not care to handle these things because they could see to whom they belonged. This loss I regretted much. I was successful in getting to the General's wife's home with all of his things safe that were in my care. There I remained several months employed and could hear from the General at times which was a great satisfaction to me. When his wife told me that the General would be home today, I was delighted at the thought of seeing him again. I went to the depot and waited for the train to come with him. As soon as I saw him come off the train, I went to him and put my arms around him. I was glad to see him again. Whenever General Smith came to a place where I was he always looked me up and would see me before he left. Glad am I to have the opportunity to say this much in kind remembrance of him. It would be needless to say more of his life, for he is too well known to the people of this country. Though dead in body yet his works and services speak louder than any words can tell and will live as long as this great American country lasts: yes, will be told to generations yet to be born. Agreeable, Modesty, Simplicity, Sincerity, Morality, these qualities of heart and mind he possessed. A noble good man. Lay down thine arms bold soldier. Thy work is nobly done, rest peacefully from thy toils till thou shall be called to receive thy glorious crown.*

*I would feel ungrateful if I failed to make mention of his sister Mrs. Frances Webster who was a most excellent and Christian-hearted lady who pitied the unfortunate condition of this part of humanity. She first learnt me the alphabet and how to read before the War. I was fortunate enough to find her in Baltimore. She kindly allowed me to come to her house on Thousand Street [sic. Townsend Street] at nights and would...[the letter ends]*<sup>38</sup>

Darnes' recollections can be fitted into what is known about Edmund Kirby Smith's career during the war. As the memoir

38 Alexander H. Darnes to Cassie Kirby Smith, A few days after July 8, 1893, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 5.

indicates, Kirby Smith married Cassie Selden in Lynchburg, Virginia, shortly after the Battle of First Manassas. In 1901, Cassie Selden Smith recalled, "Aleck wept bitterly when the General told him he was to be married..." and she continued, "...I thought he was always jealous of me...."<sup>39</sup> Aleck traveled with the newlyweds to St. Augustine. There, Mrs. Smith "was eager to hear all the war news and stories of Edmund's experience, but in his modesty, he would tell nothing, and it was to Aleck she turned for information. He never tired of telling of his 'Marse Edmund's' deeds of bravery. Aleck had saved for 'Old Miss' the blue flannel bloody shirt which he had taken off his General when he was removed from the battle field [sic] at Manassas."<sup>40</sup>

In the winter of 1865, months before the end of war, Cassie Kirby Smith and the children Caroline, born 1862 and Frances, born 1864) retreated home to Lynchburg from Edmund Kirby Smith's headquarters in Shreveport, Louisiana. It was Aleck who handled their move. Nina Kirby-Smith Buck later recounted in 1945, "Aleck being a smart negro and true to the promise given to his 'General,' in some way obtained passage for them on a boat going up the Mississippi river. Of course Mother went 'incognito'..." When a Union officer on board discovered their identities, he forced the captain to put the Smiths and Aleck off the boat immediately. "Here again faithful Aleck met the situation..." He obtained, "...a wagon and a mule, taking them all into a nearby town where he secured tickets on the railroad to Virginia."<sup>41</sup> Somehow, Aleck then returned to Shreveport in the early summer of 1865 to witness, as his memoir says, the final days of the Confederate Department of the Trans-Mississippi.

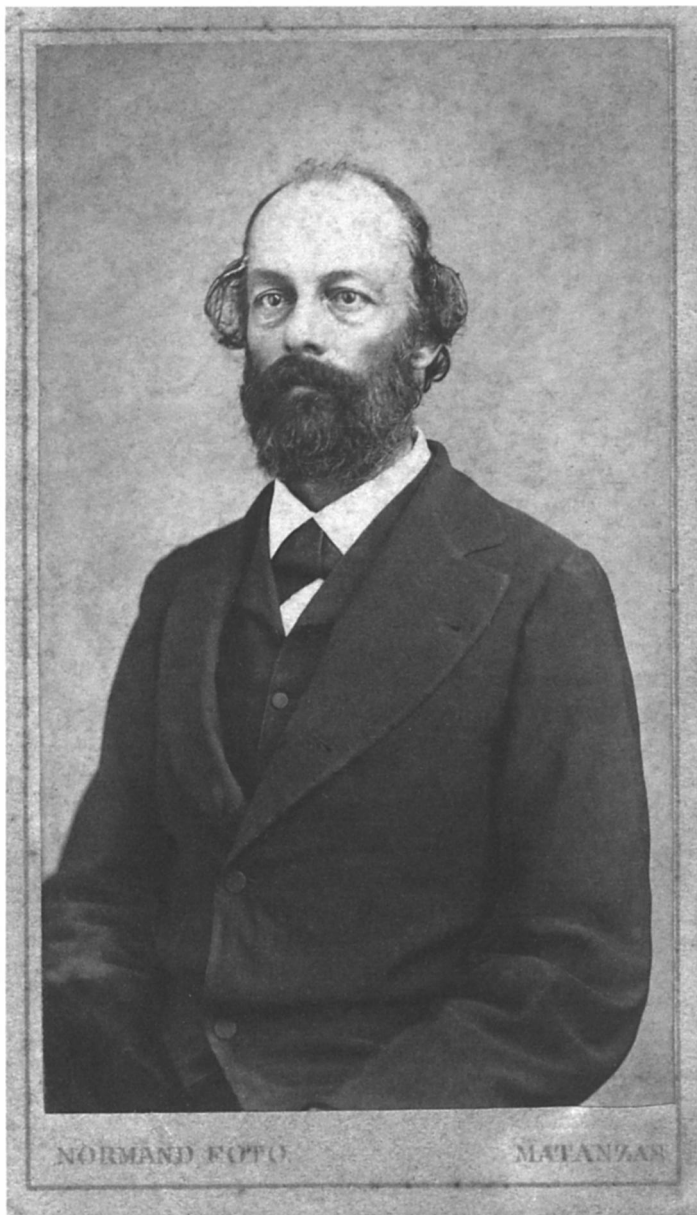
At the close of the war, Edmund Kirby Smith fled to Mexico and eventually to Cuba. Aleck was in Lynchburg, Virginia, with Cassie Selden Smith and the children. Frances Kirby Smith was with friends in Brooklyn, New York and told her daughter-in-law, "I hope Aleck is with you and ready to follow your fortunes—remember me to him."<sup>42</sup> While waiting to hear the conditions of his parole at Matanzas, Cuba, Edmund Kirby Smith wrote to his

39 Cassie Kirby Smith, *All's Fair In Love and War*, 21 (Also on pg. 21, Mrs. Buck says that Aleck was given his freedom by General Smith but there is no other evidence of this.)

40 *Ibid.*, 26-27.

41 *Ibid.*, 35-36.

42 Frances Kirby Smith to Cassie Selden Smith, August 17, 1865, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 4.



Edmund Kirby-Smith taken in 1865 while he was in exile. He gave the photograph to Darnes as a gift of appreciation as stated in a letter dated October 4, 1865. The photographer was J.H. Normand, 44 Coteras, Matanzas, Cuba. The original photograph is in the possession of the author. It was presented to him by David Earl, the great-nephew of Dr. Darnes.

wife, "I enclose you a photograph for Aleck. I think it is a duplicate of the one I sent to you. I wrote to Aleck enclosed in one of my letters to you—was it received tell him I expect soon to return... and that he has fulfills [sic] his trust in taking good care of my wife & children."<sup>43</sup>

Aleck remained close to the Smiths during 1866, even as he was making the transition from enslaved laborer to freeman and wage earner. "We have seen Aleck two or three times," Edmund Kirby Smith heard from his sister. "He seems to try hard to please Mrs. Miller. I believe she is satisfied with him. He is perfectly faithful and devoted to you & begged me to say to you that he hoped you would come on soon. It seems that the poor fellow lent all his money \$50 in gold to a colored man in Lynchburg who has not repaid it to him, and Mrs. Hare thinks will not do so—perhaps you & Mr. Booker might aid him in receiving it. I have forgotten the man's name but could easily ascertain it from Mrs. Hare."<sup>44</sup> A few days later, Edmund Kirby Smith, now staying in Baltimore, Maryland, with his sister, wrote to Stephen D. Yancey of Richmond, Virginia, who responded, "In regard to Aleck, I will be glad to employ him, and you can tell him that if he wishes it, he can come at once to Richmond, I will give him ten (10) dollars per month, the wages usually allowed house servants here, and will endeavor to make him comfortable as long as he remains with me."<sup>45</sup>

Aleck must have spent much of the next few years in Baltimore because there are numerous photos of African American associates taken by Baltimore photographers in his collection of *carte de visites*.<sup>46</sup> His departure from the family seems to be recorded in a letter from Mrs. Smith, writing from her daughter's new home in York, Pennsylvania: "Aleck has had bad colds; seemed very sad and dejected at parting—seems to cling to us as *one of us*."<sup>47</sup>

But at this point, life was changing for Aleck, leading to his emergence as a college educated professional. He began his quest

43 Ibid., probably October 4, 1865, Kirby Smith Papers, reel, pg. 3.

44 Frances Smith Webster to Edmund Kirby Smith, February 6, 1866, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 4, pg. 3-4.

45 Stephen D. Yancy to Edmund Kirby Smith, February 26, 1866, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 4.

46 Collection of Darnes' photos given to the author by David Earl, his great nephew.

47 Frances Smith Webster to Edmund Kirby Smith, York, Penn., April 13, 1866, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 4. Did the formerly enslaved Aleck experience what today would be called Stockholm Syndrome or did he consider himself part of the Smith family?

for a higher education in the Preparatory Department of Lincoln University, Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1870.<sup>48</sup> Enrolled as Alexander H. Darnes, the future Dr. Darnes was among 31 men and boys from all over the country: from San Francisco, California to Dokesville in the Choctaw Nation. He was assigned to Room 5, Ashmun Hall, where he lived for the next five years.<sup>49</sup> The tuition at that time did not exceed \$150 per year and there was scholarship aid available.<sup>50</sup>

The course of study that year consisted of two sessions. In the first, Geography, Arithmetic, English Grammar, and Latin Grammar were studied. In the second session, the first three classes were continued but the Latin course was changed to using a Latin Reader. Darnes continued in the Preparatory Department the following year, which was normal.<sup>51</sup> In 1872, out of a total enrollment in the Collegiate Department of 94, the Freshman Class in addition to Darnes had 37 men, two of who were from Liberia.<sup>52</sup> Classes included English Composition, Physical Geography, Greek Grammar and later Greek Reader, History, Algebra, and Latin class concentrated on reading Caesar.<sup>53</sup> Darnes progressed through his sophomore year in 1873-74 with thirteen classmates and was a junior the following year with only eight classmates.<sup>54</sup> His further

48 Lincoln University was established in 1854 as the Ashmun Institute. It prided itself in being the oldest college for persons of color in the world. "Here the despised *Negro* was welcomed to the advantages of Collegiate training." <http://contentdm.auctr.edu/utls/getprintimage/collection/lupa/id/537/scale/83/width/921.14>.

49 Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Lincoln University, 1870-1871, 14. <http://www.lincoln.edu/node/1340/special-collections-and-archives/digital-collections/library-%E2%80%93lincoln-university> (Accessed February 15, 2016).

50 Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Lincoln University, 1872-73, 7. <http://www.lincoln.edu/node/1340/special-collections-and-archives/digital-collections/library-%E2%80%93lincoln-university> (accessed February 15, 2016).

51 Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Lincoln University, 1871-72, 22. <http://www.lincoln.edu/node/1340/special-collections-and-archives/digital-collections/library-%E2%80%93lincoln-university> (accessed February 15, 2016).

52 Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Lincoln University, 1871-72, 11. <http://www.lincoln.edu/node/1340/special-collections-and-archives/digital-collections/library-%E2%80%93lincoln-university> (accessed February 15, 2016).

53 The Fourteenth Annual Catalogue of Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, June 1871, 15. <http://www.lincoln.edu/node/1340/special-collections-and-archives/digital-collections/library-%E2%80%93lincoln-university> (accessed February 15, 2016).

54 Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Lincoln University, 1873-74, 8. <http://www.lincoln.edu/node/1340/special-collections-and-archives/>

courses while at Lincoln were a very classic 19<sup>th</sup> century education: Latin and Greek authors, Trigonometry, Physiology, Logic, English Literature, Astronomy, Chemistry, Geometry, and lectures in the connection between Science and Religion.<sup>55</sup> Darnes retained many of his college text books to his death.<sup>56</sup> He graduated with an A. B. degree in 1876.<sup>57</sup> He received his M.A. degree from Lincoln in 1879.<sup>58</sup>

While at Lincoln University, Darnes was one of 25 students named in a case over voting rights. The case hinged on a point of law concerning whether a student was a resident of the political jurisdiction of his college or at his parent's domicile. The court eventually ruled that if a student had attained his legal majority, had no property, and had no desire to return to his former residence then he could establish his legal residence at Lincoln University. He was therefore eligible to vote in Lower Oxford Township elections. The court ruled that 10 of the 25 defendants, including Darnes, were eligible to vote in the contested election in 1875. This changed the outcome of three of the five local races, in which the votes of Lincoln students put three candidates into office.<sup>59</sup> In a historic irony, students at Lincoln again faced attempts at voter suppression in the 2008 Presidential election.<sup>60</sup>

Darnes continued his education at the Medical Department of Howard University in Washington, DC in the fall of 1876.<sup>61</sup> Until the 1960s, the vast majority of black medical students attended Howard University or Meharry Medical College in Tennessee.<sup>62</sup>

---

digital-collections/library-%E2%80%93lincoln-university (accessed February 15, 2016).

55 Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Lincoln University, 1873-74, 15. <http://www.lincoln.edu/node/1340/special-collections-and-archives/digital-collections/library-%E2%80%93lincoln-university> (accessed February 15, 2016).

56 County Judge's Court, Duval County, Florida, File No. 567, In Re: Estate of A. H. Darnes, Deceased, May 22, 1894.

57 Lincoln University, College and Theological Seminary, Biographical Catalogue, 1918 (Lancaster, PA: New Era Printing Co., 1918), 15.

58 Lamb, *Howard University, Medical Department, Washington, D. C.: A Historical. Biographical and Statistical Souvenir*, 162.

59 *Oxford Press*, October 1875, Chester County Historical Society from Lincoln University of PA, Langston Hughes Memorial Library, Special Collections.

60 The polling place was removed from campus to a small community center several miles away. Students had to wait hours in the rain to cast their ballots. See <https://www.aclu.org/news/lincoln-university-students-and-chester-county-residents-settle-lawsuit-charging-racial> (accessed February 15, 2016).

61 *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Howard University from March 1876 to March 1878* (Washington, DC: W. M. Stuart, Printer, 1978), 6.

62 Thomas J. Ward Jr., *Black Physicians in the Jim Crow South* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2003), 3.

The Medical Department received Federal funds and operated the Freedman's Hospital (often spelled Freedmen's).<sup>63</sup> It was coeducational as opposed to Lincoln University and persons of all races attended.<sup>64</sup> Fellow student T. Thomas Fortune commented, "It was easy to enter Howard University in those days, back in 1877. The school was young, and those who entered it had plenty of zeal for learning but little preparation."<sup>65</sup> Darnes, however, was well prepared, as his course of study showed. Students took lecture courses on "Hygiene, Morbid Anatomy, Microscopy, Diseases of Women & Children, Diseases of the Nervous system, Diseases of the Chylopoietic System, and Medical Electricity." This last class may account for the battery found in his office after his death.<sup>66</sup> There was a \$5.00 additional fee for dissection.<sup>67</sup> Darnes lived on 7<sup>th</sup> Street, NW near Grant Avenue and attended medical school from 1876 until his graduation on March 2, 1880.<sup>68</sup>

While Darnes was an intern at Freedman's Hospital, an incident involving him drew the attention of the press. A letter in the newspaper promoted the removal of Dr. G. S. Palmer as chief surgeon. The complaint revolved around his treatment of a white drunk with more care than a black man with serious health issues. The black man was Henry R. Otey, a Howard student. His brother Charles N. Otey was a Howard Law School alumnus, Class of 1876, who taught at both Howard University and Howard High School.<sup>69</sup> The letter writer comments, "The honor and praise belong to Dr. Darnes, who like the 'good physician,' watched and cared for Mr. Otey. He went forward without the aid or request of any one, and administered to his every want, staying with him night and day."<sup>70</sup>

63 Ibid., 4

64 *Catalogue of the Officers and Students of Howard University from March 1876 to March 1878*

65 T. Thomas Fortune, *After War Times, An African American Childhood in Reconstruction-Era Florida*, ed. Daniel R. Weinfeld (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2014), 54.

66 County Judge's Court, Duval County, Florida, File No. 567, In Re Estate of A. H. Darnes, Deceased, May 22, 1894.

67 Lamb, *Howard University, Medical Department, Washington, D. C.: A Historical. Biographical and Statistical Souvenir*, 36-37.

68 *Boyd's Directory of the District of Columbia*, 1879, 267

69 Testimony of Charles N. Otey, January 30, 1880. U. S. Senate, Reports of Committees of the Senate of the United States, 1879-80 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880), 110.

70 "Dr. Palmer, Reasons for his Removal," *Peoples Advocate* (Washington, DC), July 10, 1880, 1.

Darnes graduated with fourteen others, including one woman and a man from Canada, at the tenth annual commencement of the Medical Department of Howard University on March 2, 1880.<sup>71</sup> An observer in the audience at Lincoln Hall that night noted that the exercises were enjoyable and interesting. The music, provided by Donch's orchestra, was good and the floral tributes were plentiful. Rev. W. W. Patton, D. D., the president of university, conferred the degrees. Dr. Waterman F. Corey of Fairfield, Vermont was the valedictorian.<sup>72</sup>

The newly minted doctor arrived in Jacksonville, Florida, in 1880, no later than May 31st when the enumeration of the census ended.<sup>73</sup> He lived in a boarding house with nine other persons, all white. Felix Valdez Delgado, a cigar maker, and his family from Cuba appear to have run the boarding house that was also home to two unmarried young men and two unmarried young females from the American South.<sup>74</sup> The *People's Advocate* of Washington reported in November, "...it may be gratifying to his host of friends in this city [Washington] to note Dr. Alexander H. Darnes ... has located in the growing city and hung out his shingle. Although but a short time has passed there, Darnes has gained the confidence and esteem of his fellow citizens, and it may be added enjoys comparatively a large successful and lucrative practice. The skill [&] ability of the young doctor had already received the applause and commendation of the white Medical Fraternity of Jacksonville."<sup>75</sup>

James Weldon Johnson (born 1871) later recalled, "When I was perhaps ten years old a strange being came to Jacksonville, the first colored doctor. He practiced there a number of years and made a success, but he had a hard uphill fight. Few were the colored people at the time who had the faith to believe that one of their own knew how to make those cabalistic marks [in Latin] on a piece of paper that would bring from the drugstore something to stand between them and death. Dr. Darnes made himself a big chum of Rosamond [brother to James Weldon Johnson and his musical collaborator] and me, and we liked him tremendously. He constantly brought us some odds and ends so much prized by boys.

71 *The Washington Post*, March 3, 1880, 4.

72 *Weekly Louisianian* (New Orleans), March 13, 1880, 4.

73 Darnes' original headstone read "arrived in Jacksonville, Fla. Oct. 1880."

74 1880 U. S. Federal Census, Jacksonville, Duval County, FL, 591. This census was taken between June 1, 1879 to May 31, 1880. Darnes may have known some Spanish having been raised in St. Augustine and having lived in Texas.

75 "Howard's Shining Lights," *Peoples Advocate*, November 27, 1880, 2.

He once gave us fifty cents apiece for learning the deaf and dumb alphabet within a given time. I suppose he merely wanted us to feel that we had done something to earn the money; for I couldn't see even then what practical benefit this knowledge would be to us. We did, however, for a while get some amusement out of trying to communicate to each other in sign language. But best of all, Dr. Darnes was an enthusiastic fisherman, and he opened up a new world of fun and sport by teaching us how to fish."<sup>76</sup>

By 1882, Darnes lived in his own house at 21 West Beaver Street. Like so many nineteenth-century doctors, he maintained his office in his home with hours of 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. and 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.<sup>77</sup> In 1883, he built a new home at 117 Ocean Street in downtown Jacksonville. The street numbers have been changed so this address was then between Beaver and Ashley Streets on the west side of Ocean Street. It consisted of two stories; ten rooms with halls and cost \$2,500.<sup>78</sup> In 1885, his 55-year-old mother Violet Pinckney was living with him.<sup>79</sup>

Jacksonville was struck by a smallpox epidemic in March of 1883. The outbreak lasted until June, by which time 60 persons had died of the disease out of the 180 known cases.<sup>80</sup> The first case was said to be a black sailor from New Orleans. Mortality was higher in the African American population in disproportionate numbers to the white community due to a lower percentage of vaccinated persons. Vaccination depots were established in five locations including the city council rooms.<sup>81</sup> Extreme and frequently pointless measures were used in attempts to stop the spread of the disease. Dogs and cats in the homes of victims were killed.<sup>82</sup> Doctors and nurses were required to bathe in disinfectant upon leaving the "Pest House" created by the Board of Health to house people with smallpox.<sup>83</sup> The city was quarantined from the outside world.

76 James Weldon Johnson, *Along This Way: The Autobiography of James Weldon Johnson* (Westminster, UK: Penguin Books, 2000 [original copyright 1933]), 41. Had Dr. Darnes learned to appreciate sign language in Washington living so close to the Columbia Institution for the Instruction of the Deaf and Dumb now Gallaudet University?

77 Wanton S. Webb, *Webb's Jacksonville Directory 1882*, 75.

78 *Florida Times-Union*, (Jacksonville, FL), November 3, 1883, 1.

79 1885 Florida State Census, Jacksonville, Duval County, FL, 725.

80 Merritt, *A Century of Medicine*, 138.

81 *Ibid.*, 132.

82 *Florida Times-Union*, June 8, 1883, 4.

83 Merritt, *A Century of Medicine*, 132-133.



Dr. A.H. Darnes, ca. 1885. The original photograph is in the possession of the author. It was given to him by David Earl, Dr. Darnes' great-nephew.

Darnes labored amidst this hysteria and his good work was noted in his obituary.<sup>84</sup>

In 1882, Darnes witnessed an ugly incident in the treatment of Bishop Daniel A. Payne (1811-1893), the most senior bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church and founder of Wilberforce University. The bishop was wintering in Florida and writing a history of his denomination. Darnes himself was an active member of Mt. Zion A. M. E. Church, one of the largest black congregations in Jacksonville. On February 25, 1882, Darnes was headed to Fernandina by rail to attend the East Florida Conference of the A. M. E. Church. His party included two female Stanton Institute teachers, and he invited Bishop Payne (who had a half-fare ticket, a common courtesy to ministers) to accompany their group. A new railway had opened the previous summer making the trip faster and safer than by steamship. While Jim Crow laws concerning segregated public transport were on the books, their enforcement was spotty. The day before, Rev. Daniel W. Culp of the Laura Street Presbyterian Church had been forcibly removed from the train of the Fernandina & Jacksonville Railroad due to his race. Payne later recalled asking the doctor if there would be trouble due to race. Darnes replied that he did not think so. Also in their coach was Rev. Samuel Darnell, (a white man and the President of the Cookman Institute, precursor of Bethune-Cookman University), with whom the Bishop was engaged in conversation when the conductor appeared. Conductor Livingston told the elderly Bishop that blacks were not to use the first class coach and that he must move to second class. The Bishop refused to move saying, "before I'll dishonor my manhood by going into that car, stop and put me off." He was removed from the train at the Panama Park, five miles north of downtown Jacksonville, and had to walk in heavy sand in the heat with a twenty-seven-pound bag back to Jacksonville. The conductor later told the editor of the *Florida Daily Times* that he had not tried to eject Dr. Darnes along with the bishop because he was a "powerful young man."<sup>85</sup>

Dr. Darnes and company continued to Fernandina and reported the outrage to the conference. Complaints were quickly sent to the superintendent of the railroad, who wrote the conductor to retrieve Bishop Payne and bring him to Fernandina. Due to the over-exertion of "shanks mare" (Payne's term), the 71-year-old

84 *The Evening Telegraph* (Jacksonville, FL) February 14, 1894, 3.

85 *Daily Florida Union*, Jacksonville, FL, April 6, 1882.

bishop declined the offer.<sup>86</sup> As might be expected, this incident became a cause celeb for months. Darnes wrote a letter to the editor of the *Florida Daily Times* to tell his account of Livingston's treatment of Payne, noting that some white passengers backed the conductor and that it "made things look very bad in that car for a few minutes." He further stated, "...the colored people have Southern friends who do not and will not approve of any such unfairness."<sup>87</sup> The *New York Times* published a story in March concerning a related protest rally at Bethel A. M. E. Church in Manhattan, which resolved, "That we denounce the spirit of proscription and prejudice which doggedly follows persons of color everywhere in this country, but especially in certain of the ex-slaveholding States of the South contrary to the spirit of liberty and justice and the most recent amendments of the Constitution of the United States and we announce our firm purpose to agitate and contend until there shall be in this country for which we have suffered, bled, and fought, a practical acknowledgement of the civil as well as political equality of all men."<sup>88</sup>

The events proved to be a great embarrassment to the businessmen of Florida when an account was published in London. Sir Edward J. Reed had recently purchased 2,000,000 acres of central Florida land from Hamilton Disston and wanted to attract British entrepreneurs to invest in a tropical paradise without a blight of racial discord. As a result, Bishop Payne was afforded not only the courtesy befitting his office for the rest of his stay in Florida, but also complimentary first class tickets on all the railways.<sup>89</sup> He appears to be the exception to Jim Crow's ever tightening grasp. In 1886, the *Florida Times-Union*, not a paper noted for sympathy to African American causes, ran a long letter to the editor called, "A Colored Man's Complaint: Alleged Bad Treatment of Negroes on a Popular Railroad," in which D. V. Hill explains, "...the bad treatment imposed on colored passengers of the Jacksonville, Tampa, & Key West Railway Company because you [the *Florida Times-Union* editor] have not the least conception of the inhuman, even brutal, treatment the colored people have to encounter if they dare to

86 Daniel A. Payne, *Recollections of Seventy Years* (Nashville, TN: A. M. E. Sunday School Union, 1888), 286-289. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/church/payne70/> (accessed September 30, 2015).

87 *Florida Daily Times*, (Jacksonville, FL), April 12, 1882, 4.

88 *Florida Daily Times*, (Jacksonville FL), April 5, 1882, 1.

89 Canter Brown Jr., "Bishop Payne and Resistance to Jim Crow in Florida during the 1880s," *Northeast Florida History*, 2 (1994), 23-39.

attempt to ride anywhere else save in the apartment assigned to persons of color.”<sup>90</sup>

Darnes was also active in the fight against the yellow fever epidemic that broke out in Jacksonville in 1888. Dr. Neal Mitchell diagnosed the first case in a visitor who had arrived by way of Tampa, where the infection had been noted in 1887. Patients suspected of having the disease were quickly sent to Sand Hills Hospital, which had been constructed three & a half miles north of the city as a “Pest House” in 1883. By early August, panic had forced hundreds to flee Jacksonville, only to find shelter refused to them in Waycross, Georgia, and elsewhere. Jacksonville was quarantined. Refugees attempting to leave were forcibly placed in Camp Perry at Bourgogne on the St. Marys River for ten days to prove they were not infected. Another refugee camp was later established called Camp Howard. Trains bypassed the city, the U. S. Mail was fumigated with sulfur, and the Clyde Steamship Co. discontinued service.<sup>91</sup>

One useless attempt to remove the disease was to fire cannons in the street on the theory that the concussion would dispel the fever microbes from the air.<sup>92</sup> The Great Yellow Fever Epidemic ended with the first cold weather. On November 26, 1888, the first freeze of the winter occurred. On December 5<sup>th</sup>, the last death was reported, and on December 15<sup>th</sup>, the Board of Health lifted the quarantine. All told, out of the 4,704 cases of the disease, there were 427 deaths (324 white and 103 black).<sup>93</sup> Its cause and proper treatment was still unknown. The theory that the disease was carried by mosquitoes advanced in 1881 by Carlos Finlay, a Cuban physician, was ignored.

Darnes was commended for his role in treating patients upon the occasion of the dedication of a new surgical amphitheater at Howard University, where he was invited as a special guest. *The Evening Telegraph* remarked: “He has stood by the citizens of Jacksonville during two epidemics, smallpox in 1883 and yellow fever in 1888, and is now highly thought of and appreciated by the citizens, white and black of Jacksonville, and we know that he was employed by the county authorities and gave good, efficient service and general satisfaction in the time of trouble. This school [Howard

90 *Florida Times-Union*, (Jacksonville, FL), October 2, 1886, 4.

91 Merritt, *Century of Medicine*, 148-161.

92 Davis, *History of Jacksonville, Florida and Vicinity, 1513 to 1924*, 182.

93 *Ibid.*, 184-185.

University] is well represented in Jacksonville in the person of Dr. Darnes. Dr. Darnes is recognized by the members of the profession in this city and he highly appreciates it."<sup>94</sup> Despite the recognition of his contemporaries, when the history of these epidemics was written in 1949, Dr. A. H. Darnes' contribution was diminished to one reference in a footnote.<sup>95</sup>

Over the next several years, Darnes' stature in the community continued to grow. By 1889, Alexander Hanson Earl, his twenty-nine-year-old namesake nephew, came to live with the doctor and his mother on Ocean Street.<sup>96</sup> In an article titled "Rambles in the South, Remarkable Change in the Attitude of People Toward Professional Men," T. Thomas Fortune noted, "Passing on to Jacksonville, Fla., I found Dr. Alexander H. Darnes, who studied medicine at Howard University when I was a student there. He has a splendid practice, all that he can do. His standing with his professional brethren, since his heroic work in the yellow fever epidemic, is of the most satisfactory character. Indeed, it is just such a man of Dr. Darnes' learning and industry should have. He has accumulated a fine property, to which he is adding every year, including some seashore property at Pablo Beach [now Jacksonville Beach], the Coney Island of Florida."<sup>97</sup> Darnes had also invested in land in the new African American community of Sweetwater, which was located along the new Jacksonville, St. Augustine, and Halifax Railway a couple of miles north of Bayard in southern Duval County.<sup>98</sup>

In the 1890s, there was a reunion of Darnes with members of the Smith Family, and it may have been when Edmund Kirby Smith and his daughter Bessie visited Jacksonville and St. Augustine in March of 1890.<sup>99</sup> They were the guests of Judge A. Doggett in Jacksonville and John Dismukes in St. Augustine. Dismukes, a banker, had purchased the old Smith house at 12 Hospital Street (now Aviles Street) from Edmund Kirby Smith and his sister's heirs.<sup>100</sup> In

94 *The Evening Telegram*, January 27, 1893, 4.

95 Merritt, *Century of Medicine*, 154.

96 Wanton S. Webb, *Webb's Jacksonville Directory* (Jacksonville, FL: Wanton S. Webb, 1889), 79. <http://archives.ancestry.com/Discoveries/PfRecord?siteid=1&collectionid=4863&recordid>

97 T. Thomas Fortune, "Rambles in the South, Remarkable Change in the Attitude of People Toward Professional Men," *New York Age*, May 24, 1890, 2.

98 In Re Estate of A. H. Darnes, Deceased, May 22, 1894. County Judge's Court, Duval County, Florida, File No. 567.

99 Alexander H. Darnes to Cassie Kirby Smith, A few days after July 8, 1893, Kirby Smith Papers, reel 5, 17.

100 *Florida Times-Union*, March 16, 1890, 4; March 18, 1890, 2.

any case, Darnes was given at some time, two cabinet card photos: one of the General's wife, autographed "Kind remembrance, yr [sic] friend, Cassie S. Kirby Smith" and the other a late-in-life photo of the General with long white beard and in full Confederate uniform which was personally inscribed, "With the esteem & affectionate regards of your old Master and friend, E. Kirby Smith."<sup>101</sup>

1893 was a year full of activity for Darnes. Miss Lucy Moten (Howard University, class of 1870), who since 1883 was the Principal of the Miner Normal School of Washington, DC, visited Jacksonville. Darnes took her on a day trip to St. Augustine, which was reported in the *Evening Telegram* by Robert Zeigler, "We tip our hat to Miss Moten and can say she could not have been in better hands than the doctor's, for St. Augustine is his old home and he is always made welcome by the citizens there."<sup>102</sup> Later that spring, Miss Moten was appointed one of the vice presidents of the National Education Association, which sponsored a world's congress on education at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago. The *Evening Telegram* reported, "There is a physician [A. H. Darnes] in the city who is mighty proud of this appointment. He must be little interested."<sup>103</sup> The reporter may have been implying some romantic interest between Darnes and Moten: neither married. Later, Miss Moten furthered her education at Howard University, obtaining a medical degree and having a long, distinguished career as an educator. Upon her death in 1933, she bequeathed \$51,000 to Howard University that today funds the Lucy E. Moten Fellowship for undergraduate study abroad.<sup>104</sup>

Darnes had been an officer in the Free and Accepted Masons since his time in Washington.<sup>105</sup> There, he was Grand High Priest of the Royal Arch Chapter while in the Grand Lodge of Florida, he was Deputy Grand Master the year before his death. In January 1893, from the 9<sup>th</sup> till his return by the 16<sup>th</sup>, he attended the Grand Lodge meeting in Pensacola. His fellow Masons on that trip included Riley Robinson, Frank Williams of Jacksonville, former Congressman Josiah Walls, Revs. Waters, Parker and Femster of Gainesville, R. S. Mitchell of Fernandina, Rev. Gaines of Palatka,

101 Collection of the author, given to him by Darnes' great-nephew, David Earl.

102 *The Evening Telegram*, January 6, 1893, 4.

103 *The Evening Telegram*, April 3, 1893, 3.

104 <http://www.coas.howard.edu/lucymoten/> (accessed February 15, 2016)

105 *The Evening Telegram*, February 14, 1894, 3.

Rev. Samuel Henry of Deland, H. M. Emerly of St. Augustine, and many others. One hundred and ten lodges were represented.<sup>106</sup>

In May of 1893, in time for the Memorial Day holiday, Darnes opened a bath house directly on the Atlantic Ocean in Pablo Beach a few blocks south of the railway station. It was managed by his nephew, A. H. Earl.<sup>107</sup> There were at least two boarding houses in Pablo Beach catering to African Americans: the Grand Union Hotel and the Certain Cottage.<sup>108</sup> Violet Pinckney, who was not well, must have stayed at the Certain Cottage with her son paying the bill.<sup>109</sup> Churches such as Mt. Zion A. M. E. organized Sunday School picnic train-excursions to the beach beginning on May Day. "It is always pleasant at Pablo, and one can not fail to enjoy it."<sup>110</sup> On May 22 nearly 1000 members and 1,400 children from Mt Zion, A. M. E. Church spent the day at the beach.<sup>111</sup> "Pablo is surely a delightful place, and many of our best [African American] people are spending the summer there."<sup>112</sup>

Amidst caring for his patients, Darnes found time for amusements of his own. At a church picnic in East Riverside in mid-July, "Dr. Darnes was the cook and did very well, too. The doctor was mighty gay with all the ladies ... and the boys will kinder (sic) have to look after him. Games of different kinds were indulged in and all came away satisfied with their day of pleasure."<sup>113</sup> In early August, the newspaper reported on a ladies' picnic party at Burnside Beach, just north of Pablo, including Mrs. Violet Pinckney, Mrs. Alexander Earl, and Mrs. Lucy Certain, the proprietress of the Certain Cottage.<sup>114</sup>

Disaster struck the beach communities of St. Augustine, Mayport, and Pablo Beach in late August 1893 in the form of a tropical storm or hurricane. A church was blown down on Amelia Island. As the wind raged, shaking the Certain Cottage and the Grand Union Hotel, the guests took refuge in Darnes' bath house. Many pleasure seekers returned to Jacksonville the next morning as

106 Ibid., January 9, 1893, 4, and January 16, 1893, 4.

107 Ibid., May 20, 1893, 3.

108 Ibid., August 21, 1893, 3.

109 In Re Estate of A. H. Darnes, Deceased, May 22, 1894, County Judge's Court, Duval County, Florida, File No. 567; A. H. Darnes to Cassie Selden Smith, July 23, 1893, Kirby Smith Papers, 2.

110 *The Evening Telegram*, April 22, 1893, 3.

111 Ibid., May 23, 1893, 3.

112 Ibid., August 21, 1893, 3.

113 Ibid., July 14, 1893, 3.

114 Ibid., August 5, 1893, 3.

frightened people.<sup>115</sup> “Commodore” Earl closed the bath house for the season and returned to his uncle’s home downtown the first week of October.<sup>116</sup> He stored a case of men’s bathing suits there.<sup>117</sup>

The year 1893 also marked the passing of Edmund Kirby Smith. He died on March 28, 1893 in Sewanee, Tennessee. News reached Darnes sometime later. A note of condolence, written by the doctor to Smith’s widow, has apparently been lost. But during the summer of 1893, Darnes corresponded with Mrs. Smith at least four times. He regretted that he did not know of Edmund Kirby Smith’s death in time to attend the funeral. He chatted about family, both his and hers, enquired about her children’s health, and noted that his Mother wished to be remembered to the family.<sup>118</sup> He stated, “I greatly appreciate your good will toward me in welcoming me to your home at any time. I always thought such [time] to be in my favor. I shall try to come next fall if possible. O[h], how often the General has told me to come, which I regret that I did not do before.”<sup>119</sup> This correspondence culminated in a seventeen-page autobiographical account of his life as reproduced above.<sup>120</sup>

In the fall of 1893, Dr. Darnes was attending as usual to his patients such as Rev. S. H. Coleman of Bethel Baptist Church and Mrs. Fannie Turner.<sup>121</sup> On January 22, reporter Robert Zeigler wrote that he was dangerously ill from an unspecified cause.<sup>122</sup> His “Among the Colored People” column in the *Evening Telegram* was unusually complete in his reportage of Darnes’ final illness. The next day, the Masonic community came to assist Darnes and family.<sup>123</sup> The death-watch bulletins remind one of those for a king.

115 Ibid., August 28, 1893, 3.

116 Ibid., October 6, 1893, 3.

117 In Re Estate of A. H. Darnes, Deceased, May 22, 189, County Judge’s Court, Duval County, Florida, File No. 567.

118 A. H. Darnes to Cassie Selden Smith, July 8, 1893, Kirby Smith Papers, 1-2.

119 A. H. Darnes to Cassie Selden Smith, July 19, 1893, Kirby Smith Papers, 2.

120 Kirby Smith Papers, reel 5. “I have written what I have written with all my heart and the statements are all true and honest. Allow me to say if you think what I have written will honor the name and memory of General Smith, I will be glad to have you publish what I have written.” Mrs. Smith sent Darnes’ manuscript to the editor of the *Confederate Veteran Magazine* under her title, “A Servant’s Tribute to Gen. Kirby-Smith.” It was never published and it ends mid-sentence so there was at least one lost page. Mrs. Smith’s lightly penciled editing remains on Darnes’ original manuscript. To her credit, she only changed a few grammatical flaws.

121 *The Evening Telegram*, October 18, 1893, 3; October 26, 1893, 3.

122 Ibid., January 22, 1894, 3.

123 Ibid., January 23, 1894, 3.

On January 31, "Dr. Darnes was resting a little better this morning, although he is still quite ill."<sup>124</sup> The report of February 3<sup>rd</sup> states, "Dr. Darnes passed a very bad night yesterday and was quite feeble this morning; his friends are very uneasy about him and regret that they cannot see him. Still, as it is the instructions of his physician for him not to receive visitors. It is hoped that the doctor will still pull through all O.K."<sup>125</sup> Alexander Hanson Darnes died on Friday, February 9, 1894 at midnight in his home on Ocean Street from a protracted illness.<sup>126</sup> The Masonic fraternity was in charge of his funeral. *The Evening Telegram* carried a lengthy account of Darnes' funeral:

*The largest number of people ever gathered within the walls of any church in this city was at Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church yesterday to attend the funeral of Dr. A.H. Darnes, deceased. Long before the appointed time for the ceremonies to begin, people could be seen coming from every direction wending their way towards the church, and by 1 o'clock p.m. the church was already crowded, a small space being reserved for the members of the Masonic fraternity. The deceased stood high in the estimation of the people of the city, both white and colored, and was one of the most prominent colored masons in America. The funeral was under the auspices of the Masonic fraternity of the city and the state. Prominent masons from different parts of the state were present. Among whom were H. W. Chandler, R. S. Mitchell, E. J. Alexander, Wade Wood, and others.*

*The procession started from the parlors of undertaker Clark on Forsyth Street and was led by the Union Coronet and Excelsior bands, both of which played sacred music. The Knights of Archer and other masons were under the command of M. McDonald and State Grand Master Rev. S. H. Coleman, all attired in full regalia and made a credible appearance much admired by everybody. On entering the church, the procession was led by E. L. J. Banks and John Anderson. The body was enclosed and embalmed in a beautiful rosewood casket trimmed with large bar-silver handles, and in the center of the casket were engraved the words: 'At Rest,' and on the foot of the same was a Masonic emblem. On the top laid the sword of the deceased.*

124 Ibid., January 31, 1894, 3.

125 Ibid., February 3, 1894, 3.

126 Ibid., February 10, 1894, 2.

*The floral offerings were many. Among them were two beautiful crosses made by Mrs. Nora Smith and Mrs. Jake Young, also some excellent geraniums by Mrs. J. H. Keene. In the center of the altar were seven candlesticks all burning during the exercises but one. Rev. J. E. Lee officiated, and eloquently did he speak from the first chapter of Joshua, and said that he wished he had time to explain the possibilities of men of our race such as Dr. Darnes, who now laid cold in death, but who had lived a useful life and died a Christian. He also read a letter of regret from Right Rev. Bishop T. M. D. Ward that he could not attend the funeral of his physician. Rev. J. B. L. Williams and S. H. Coleman also spoke highly of the deceased, they being with him in his last hours. The Rev. J. R. Scott read the ritual services. Just at this time two pigeons flew to the top of the church and remained there. Some of the people present said that t'was angels that came to guard the soul borne to heaven. In the pulpit sat the Revs. W. G. Stewart, W. J. Salmond, Jeffrey Grant, J. R. Howard, and J. F. Elliott. The choir surely sang some beautiful selections, suitable for the occasion, which was admired by all. Dr. Darnes, the deceased, was about 48 years of age, and had been a popular practicing physician in this city for about 16 years, and rendered valuable services during the small-pox and yellow fever epidemics. He leaves an aged mother, also a brother and a nephew. He idolized his mother, and according to the words of the scripture, he must be in heaven.*

*The family has the sympathy of friends. The pallbearers of the funeral were E. M. Williams, M. H. Decourcey, Eli Dilworth, Par-ris Wilson. Frank Williams, and J. M. Watson all of the masonic fraternity. The internment was in the old city cemetery, and the body was followed there by a procession of people. The ushers at the church were Romneus Devaughn, Richard Bacon, and John Preston. At least 3,000 people attended the funeral.<sup>127</sup>*

After his death, tributes continued to be heaped upon Dr. Darnes. On February 14<sup>th</sup>, resolutions from the students and faculty of Edward Waters College were published saying to the effect that the much beloved college physician was always ready to respond to a call and a faithful and able practitioner had been lost. The faculty and students deeply sympathized with his grief-stricken mother and relatives and they "extend to them the hand of condolence."<sup>128</sup>

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., February 13, 1894, 3.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., February 14, 1894, 8.

Later in the month, there were ceremonies at the Jacksonville campus of the fledgling Florida Baptist Academy (today's Florida Memorial University, Miami) to distinguish key persons and churches responsible for the success of the school. "The late Dr. A. H. Darnes who gave the first twenty-five dollars toward the school" was honored with a tree planted in his memory.<sup>129</sup> A final tribute in the year of his death occurred at the annual meeting in Orlando of the Colored State Medical Association. "Memorial services were held in honor of Dr. A. H. Darnes, deceased, formerly of this city [Jacksonville]. Dr. Smith in his eulogy spoke feelingly of Dr. Darnes as the first colored physician of the state, and of his heroism through two epidemics, and his trials, all of which made the road easier for the younger physicians. Eulogies will be made at every meeting of the association in honor of Dr. Darnes, deceased." Dr. Gunn of Tallahassee, who is sometimes given credit for being the first black to have a medical practice in Florida, was present at this meeting honoring Dr. Darnes.<sup>130</sup>

Since 2002, the author has made several presentations on the entwined lives of Darnes and Smith in Bartow, Jacksonville, Venice and St. Augustine. Darnes has been recognized in new books such as *Florida's Pioneer Medical Society, A History of Duval County Medical Society and Medicine in Northeast Florida* by Leora Legacy (2012) and *Remembering Neighborhoods of Jacksonville, Florida, Oakland, Campbell's Addition, East Jacksonville-Fairfield, the African-American Influence* by Mary F. Mungen Jameson (2011). In 2013, the Kirby-Smith Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans replaced his damaged headstone with a new, larger one with a new inscription.<sup>131</sup> He even has a Wikipedia page (accessed February 15, 2016). On November 8, 2003, A. H. Darnes, M. D. came forth from ectoplasmic existence when the sculpture group entitled *Sons of St. Augustine*, depicting Dr. Alexander H. Darnes and Prof. Edmund Kirby Smith, was unveiled to an appreciative crowd of St. Augustinians as well as members of the Earl and Kirby-Smith families. The statues were funded by Mrs. Edmund Kirby-Smith, III. Originally, the sculptor

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., February 23, 1894, 3.

<sup>130</sup> *Jacksonville Evening Times-Union*, November 21, 1894, 8 (The author is greatly indebted to Dr. Canter Brown for finding this key data). The first three African Americans to practice modern medicine in Florida may have been the black physicians serving in the U.S. Colored Troops during the Civil War specifically at the Battle of Olustee and the Union occupation of Jacksonville.

<sup>131</sup> Dan Scanlan, "Restoring a piece of Jacksonville history," *Florida Time-Union*, May 25, 2013, B-1.

Maria Kirby-Smith conceived of showing Smith leaning over a seated Darnes teaching him. With fresh insight into their complex personal relationship and the new knowledge of Dr. Darnes' significance to the medical community, that pose was no longer appropriate. The figures stand today as affectionate old friends of equal stature greeting each other after a long time apart. That day, Kirby-Smiths and Earls also met each other after a long separation: reunion was the theme of the day.<sup>132</sup>

---

132 Lisa Miller, "'Sons of St. Augustine' sculpture unveiled," *St. Augustine Record*, November 9, 2003, A-1 & 3.