A visit to Florida in the early part of the 19th Century by Mr. Wm. McChesnay, an ecologist of Philadelphia, and Mr. Thomas Say, a naturalist, was formed to visit Florida while it was yet a Spanish possession. The associates were Mr. William McChesnay, Ecologist; Mr. Thomas Say, Entomologist; Mr. George Ord, a Collector, and Mr. C. F. R. Deale, Ornithologist.

Mr. Ord and Mr. Deale, then quite young, left Philadelphia 25th December, 1817, in the usual sailing vessel for Savannah, where they were to join Mr. McChesnay and Mr. Say. At Savannah Mr. C. F. R. Deale, hearing of Mr. Deale's arrival, called upon him immediately and guided him to all places of interest in the city and surrounding country. Mr. C. F. R. Deale, noted for his zeal in Entomology and Zoology, cannot be too highly recommended. The gentlemen made the time pass pleasantly, while waiting for the rest of the party. Walking with them one day, they accidentally met Mr. Say, who had arrived the night before in a steamboat from Charleston. He conducted them to Mr. McChesnay, all delighted to meet and eager for the trip.

While Mr. McChesnay, the business man of the party, was engaging a vessel and laying in stores, Mr. Ord and Mr. Deale made good use of the time, hunting in the neighborhood, and getting many birds, which Mr. Deale preserved, and left with Mr. C. F. R. Deale until their return.

When the people learned their object — as Naturalists, to visit their

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boats were very hospitably country and learn its resources, at once offered their boats, but Mr. McElrue, invariable, declined, saying they had chartered a vessel. On leaving the city, the Merchants and Planters sent them letters to every Island along the coast of Georgia. Having learned their route, they sent word to their friends, to offer every facility to the party. This intended kindness, proved a great annoyance, for at every place they approached, invitations were sent them to come and visit. Mr. McElrue, after a test at last, that they were on a trip that did not admit of visiting and that they were only prepared for what they had to do.

Being ready they took ship. The boat contained all told, eight persons, the four gentlemen, three sailors, and Mr. McElrue, servant. They landed at Great Wassaw Island, and began shooting, to the great alarm of the inhabitants, who armed themselves with all possible speed, thinking they were outlawed negroes shooting their cattle. Mr. Deale shot one among other things, a large Baldhead Eagle. At Monitor Island, he got the large brown Blackbird (Fledga) for the first time, and was delighted with the bird. Shortly after Mr. Oel shot another.

They were charmed with Blackland Island, on which they landed. The interior was covered with beautiful groves of live Oak, and abounded with Deer, that fed on the acorns. On its banks were immense sand hills, giving fine effect to the rich dark green, glossy foliage of the live Oak. The waters of the inlets were filled with multitudes of Beautiful Medusae and other Median animals, their phosphoric light giving brilliancy to the water and nest to their evening, the days being always crowded
with enjoyment, from the various and numerous collections.

They landed on the north end of Cumberland Island and went into the interior to hunt Deer. As they were sailing around the island, they got aground, and the people sent a pilot to them (though they had one on board) and insisted on their coming on shore. Finding they could not get the vessel free in the sand, at nearly high tide, having been on shore two days, they knew they could not stand upright on deck, so they

They were taken first to Mrs. St. Simon's, by whom they were hospitably entertained, and from there to the celebrated Mansion built by Gen. Greene of Revolutionary fame—a perfect castle in dimensions but most singular in effect, being built of concrete, oyster shells put in a box of the thickness of the walls, plaster poured in and let stand until formed, made thus gradually.

The house was made, forming a very substantial dwelling. The walls being very thick, took a long while to make, especially with the slow slave labour, and getting impatient, they used it without plastering the interior as was the custom. The effect was ungracious—almost ludicrous. To sit in the vast Hall in which they dined—one elegant imported furniture, at a most sumptuous table, clothed up, and the oyster shells sticking out of the walls in every direction, in strange contrast to the elegant hospitality below. The garden and grounds was a perfect paradise, with hedges formed of lemon, groves of orange trees, roses and other flowers in full bloom, though it was January. From the top of the house, they had a view of Amelia Island, the Sea and the Alonnah at the
Same time forming a magnificent sight. Mr. Shaw was a most courteous host. With the usual Southern habit, a negro was assigned to each one immediately on their arrival. Mrs. Shaw, daughter of Sen. Greene, was a lady of great intelligence and cultivation, well fitted to dispense the refined hospitality of her luxurious and most beautiful home. Mr. Peake saw there a painting of Sully's, a copy of the father's likeness of Sen. Greene. Dr. W. Peake was the only one she painted the General from life. Their vessel being inreadiness next day, they took leave of Mr. Shaw and family. The vessel being one of the oldest, having enjoyed the friendship and visits of their Lord and Master, they saw at anchor the extensive vessels of the United States Squadron which consisted of the John Adams, Saranac, Prometheus and other smaller vessels, which reached St. Mary's in the afternoon. Mr. McBride and I went ashore. Mr. Shaw and Mr. Peake thought it prudent remaining on board. It rained all the next day. In the morning, as we were about to land, the Gentlemen, Governor of East Florida came on board and offered any service in his power. They were detained by continued rain at anchor, but St. Mary's, on the third of February, sailed for Fernandina—where they found half deserted and the other half almost in a state of starvation. None of the houses on the first were more than two stories high. They visited the graveyard, if it might be called one, just out of the suburbs of the town, according to the Spanish custom. Every grave had its cross at the head, if it was, but a stick placed in it crosswise and lashed together with an old suspender. There seemed to have been great mortality. Salladon doubt by 'Patriot' knives, the attention of the filibusters of that day was
been turned towards Florida, they had taken possession of Amelia island, under the
name of Patriotic, which they preferred to be, and threatening to release the
country from Spanish rule, had gone up to the gates of St. Augustine, not more than six months before. At that time,
the town was unoccupied and the streets muddy. The party
found their ride, two miles in diameter, to be
found to be

Their river was a great
number of Ospreys. The next day sailed thirty
miles up the river, among the vaults of birds, fishing Delicas and
Whoooping Cranes, and near the little plantation of Mr. Richards
on the west side of the river where they got a little Egret (Chimy Heron). They
sailed up the river to bowford, delivered their letters—and soon left, finding
it a miserable place, of but a few huts and the half of them without
roof or inhabitants. Before the vessel, and they sailed along the
river, found the clay bluff well timbered with Pine, Live Oak, Bay,
Coral (Magnolia Grandiflora) and various other trees. Along the banks are
a few plantations, many of them deserted or burned. They landed on one
that belonged to Mr. Craig of Savannah, there saw the finest grove of Oranges
they had yet met with—upwards of five hundred trees, many of them
almost breaking with their load of fruit. The river was about four miles
wide and water quite fresh. The next day having a fair wind that day
almost a gale reached Fort Dicatana, which they found in ruins. They
hunted all day, without seeing anyone, until near night two countrymen
came along—hearing the guns, they came to see who fired them. From
them they learned that that was the nearest point to St. Augustine—whether
it was determined to go next day, one of the men being engaged as guide -
to report themselves and present their Passport.

Mr. McElvain, one of the first works on Geology in the United
States, wishing to visit Florida to study its formation, was told he would be allowed to go on account of the road constantly making him sick,
and applying to the Spanish Consul in Philadelphia for a passport — but
that he had no authority, but would write to Spain about it. The answer
was a royal passport for Mr. McElvain and party. Continuing with this, he
had organized his small expedition — but now, from presenting it, on account of the
twenty-three miles, it was necessary to go through a country entirely unpro-
vided with accommodations of any kind. The rest of the gentlemen under
took to do it; starting immediately after breakfast, Mr. McElvain remaining
in the shop.

They passed through sloughs and swamps, frequently up to their
middle in water, the whole twenty-three miles, and saw no vestige of
habitation nor a single inhabitant. They arrived at the gates of the city
about sundown and were obliged to enter in the dark state to the seven-
or eight house, which consisted of two stories, the first containing the Guard-
house, into which they were thrown, and the offices. In the second
of the Governor
were the Governor's private apartments, who chanced to be entertaining
two British Officers that day, and the attendant, in doubt when he
announced that some strangers sought audience, represented that
they were travellers of little consideration; judging from their appearance —
as he continued at dinner, leaving the gentlemen in the guard room, where
He was born in England but raised in... Is this name correct? It does not seem like a Spanish name.

Impatience was not assuaged by the sound of enjoyment reaching them from above. After a while Gov. Burgoyne (afterwards Gen. Sir Geo.) sent for them, and they were ushered into their room, attended by a footman, into the conivial hall, where the guests were still seated. The Governor probably was annoyed by the interruption, from such unattractive visitors, haughtily demanded their business, while his guests looked patronizingly on. They stood there. Then the passport was handed him, the effect was magical. As soon as he saw the royal seal and signature, he exclaimed “Bing!” and was completely astounded, rising immediately and bowing, with many apologies for the detention, urged them to sit at dinner—which of course they declined—he insisted on their taking wine with him, and they consented to. He was profuse in his offers to serve them bowing low all the time, and did everything—following his example guest and all. They told him all they wanted was to find lodgings that they might retire to, and get rid of the load of soil the unusual travel had laden them with, and be comfortable for the night. They would come and see him in the morning. Immediately persons were sent in different directions, but no quarters could be found—until the British officers said, at their boarding house they might possibly be accommodated next day and sending they got rooms for the party. After calling on the Governor, next day, where they found, was much beloved by the people—they returned to the vessel, and sailing anchored at an eastern branch of the St. Croix river and landed on a plantation just deserted, where they hunted some time with excellent success. Landing again the next...
They morning shot as many Partridges as they wanted before breakfast. Afterwards, went ashore with a trade to dig at an Indian mound situated in the middle of a marsh in the neighborhood. It was 90 ft in circumference and 9 or 10 ft high. They dug about 7 ft in the centre of it - found three flint spear heads, a stone hatchet, a copper rod sharp at both ends, and a large bone shell of a species not found on the coast of America and probably extinct. Also, some flakes of red paint. They sailed along the shore landing at various plantations, generally deserted - gathering specimens of many kinds of birds until they came to Disto Creek where they hunted in the cane. Mr. McElvee and Mr. Ogden went up the creek to a plantation to get information - found from the jealousy of the Shawards they would be unable to go further south. Therefore contented themselves with coasting the St. John's river. The next morning Mr. Deale shot a very fine white pelican, and prepared it the following day, it weighed eighteen pounds, and from it they hunted on North Beach - to the north end of Fort George island where there was a high range of hills covered with Live Oak. The prospect from the hill was the finest they had seen in Florida. A great deal of the nearer jungle enjoyed from St. John's Bluff the highest point they had seen, the view from the top was very fine, commanding the whole country. It was here they frequently came to see the town of St. John was to be built. There was a house and a few huts, and a few boys came to the mouth of a creek just below Bow ford, and about two miles up came across the nest of an Alligator. It was in a marsh about 10 feet from the water, 3 ft high and 4 ft in diameter - the eggs about the centre.
The next day went up another branch of the river, saw number of Alligators. They continued coasting for some days and then sailed for Diclatia where they arrived about noon. Mr. Deale made a drawing of the fort. The next morning set out with Wharton and Some (of whom they had kept with them) to St. Augustine to hunt, had not been out long when they shot a fine Duck, and wounded three others, also a large male squirrel, and saw a Black Wolf, but did not get a shot at it. Returned to get dogs to hunt the wounded Deer. Mr. Ord having brought his dog, with being there, they found among the several modes of hunting deer the people practiced, which is one they call fire hunting done at night. The hunter has a wallet slung on his back filled with flint knobs or light wood, and a frying pan on his shoulder on which he makes a fire, the wood in the pan to ignite it. Thus equipped he walks through the haunt of the Deer. At night of the fire they stand still and look at it; their eyes reflect the light strongly, which makes the hunter mark whom he shot. If only wounded they are hunted the next day with dogs.

The party sailed from Diclatia down the river. One Wednesday coming anchor at the mouth of Pittsburg Creek. Mr. Ord and Mr. Deale ascended in the canoe several miles, visited at a plantation and dining with two Indians, which they saw in great numbers. Going up the creek Mr. Deale shot a Alligator with a ball in the head of an Alligator, cut the throat and laid him on the back on the bank — coming back in the evening it had so far recovered life as to turn itself, and run in the marsh some distance. He fired another ball into its head, and took it on board the vessel alive.
At night they harpooned fish by fire light; they sailed the next day, and long after dark came to anchor off St. John Bluff, in the morning heard the roar of Alligators for the first time — sailing again anchored near the mouth of the river. Mr. Ord and Mr. Deale spent the day in the canoe hunting Pelicans. The next day set off again at day break, and were surprised at the great quantity of Mud was cast on the shore. It was immense estimated that in one place for half a mile the ground was completely hidden. They thought a half mile could be walked over without breaking figure.

Mr. Mr. Clarke not wishing to go to sea again, concluded to get Amelia island in a boat that was ready to go. Mr. Gay accompanied him. Mr. Deale sunk a barrel in the sand to catch Pelicans from Mr. Ord in the meantime was fishing and caught twelve Sheeps Head of about seven and eight pounds. The equinocial storm coming, they were obliged to run up the river several miles for a harbor. When the storm abated they sailed down the Beach, saw few marine animals, and went in among the rockery in the interior hunting ducks. They amused themselves for some time with the Ospreys, their young at this season were about a foot and a half long, they carry them on their pectoral fins, sometimes are seen with them in their mouths. They frequently sand Ospreys with Medusa in their mouths, but whether they ate or only played with them could not tell. In the evening saw several flocks of Snowy Herons flying north, among them were a number of Ashen Herons. After coming about for several days, with great success, they crossed the bar and in a short time made adiction to St. John's river. Immediately after crossed the bar the wind shifted to W. and blowing directly ahead drove them...
It is better to leave out this page.

A party of men left the ship and left them in a calm, rolling sea, both becoming very sea
sick and wishing they were back in St. Thomas, but wishing fear of no
avoiding for they were drifting out of sight of land, and were frightened and
beached at the same time. The next night came in sight of Amelia
island, and the wind rising from N.E., soon ran in and came to anchor
off Fernandina about ten o'clock; just finding Mr. McElvain and Say
here—and learning they had gone to St. Mary's, sailed for that place at
change of tide and arrived before night. Found Mr. McElvain and
Say anxiously awaiting their arrival. Mr. Alden, was getting uneasy
about his business at home and took passage in a vessel that was due at
twelve next day—the day after at sunrise the other gentlemen sailed in
this shot from St. Mary's and came to anchor at the southwest of Cumber
land island before night. They visited the Shaw family; then sailed before
moon, and reached Little Cumberland Island before night. They cruised
among the islands, visiting those they had been at before, and making ac
quaintance with those they had passed in going up the Altamaha to
Darien—making collections everywhere.

On arriving at Savannah they found a great change, whole rows of stores
and houses were going up. Some of the latter were built of ably 'a composition
of oyster shells, lime sand cast in mould—' the same as Dungimm's; the
residence of the Shaw on Cumberland Island. They tried to get a pilot for
the islands between Savannah and Charleston, but failed. Mr. McElvain
decided to go in the steamer, and the two other gentlemen by sea, in the Rambler,
a parting vessel. Both left early next morning and reached Charleston in the
afternoon of the second day. They left Charleston 16th of April. Florida being a new field gave great delight to the explorers, who with their small vessel thoroughly searched its streams, shores, and swamps, for products of their different branches of science—in all of which, they made large collections, and spent a most enjoyable and delightful winter.

L Peale

Soon after they turned their faces towards the north, and arrived safely at home, enriched with abundant collections in their several departments, and having enjoyed immensely their winter trip to Florida.