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It takes old friends a long time to get you there

Timothy Lawrence 1953-1979

Kenneth B. Sherouse Jr. 1925-1999

Ronald Fierro 1955-2010

Dr. Brian Peterson 1942-2019

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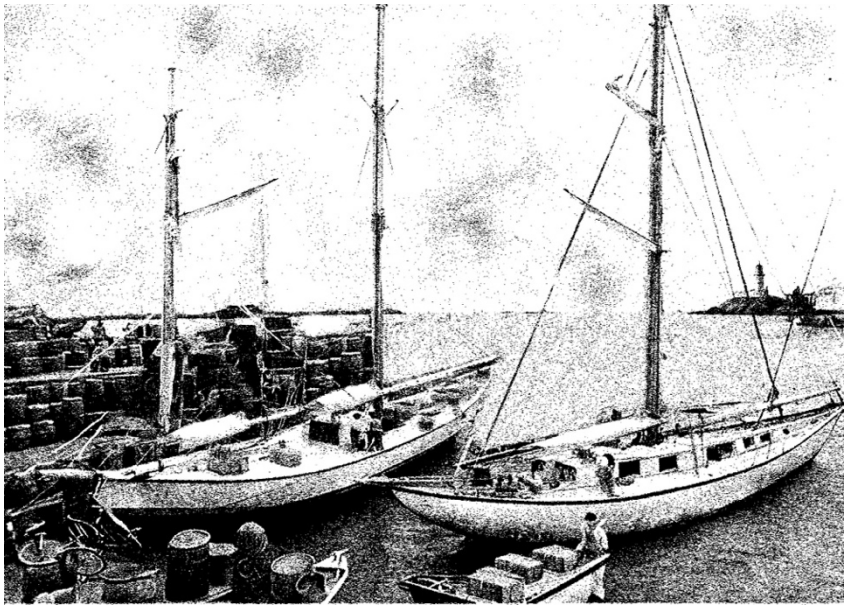
Jhon García Barbosa nearly memorized the text and gave valuable advice concerning composition and editing; his enthusiasm was motivational. Barbosa, a wordsmith and artist, translated this tome into Spanish and also is responsible for the cover and line-drawing artwork.



*“Smugglers loading in Nassau”*

# PRELUDE

# THE GOOD OLDE DAYS OF RUM RUNNING

Young Cap'n Roland

Nassau,
New Providence Island
Colony of the Bahamas
British West Indies
April 6, 1923

The Volstead Act, which prohibited our nation's greatest pastime, drinking, passed in 1919. The grand experiment of bolstering American morality would prove to be a disaster to many, and a boon to the few bold and daring picaresque figures that took advantage of the opportunities available. Some frown on using terms such as *bold* and *daring*, they were breaking the law, were they not? All societies use formal and informal sanctions to encourage its members to exhibit behaviors (actions) that fall within certain acceptable parameters but these parameters are usually somewhat malleable and their application is often arbitrary depending upon the members' status and rank. So then, who is to say these (and others that followed them) were not bold and daring men, possibly even good and kind men.

Young Cap'n Roland was at the wheel of a frayed but sturdy old Bahamian sloop. The ex-sponger, in stark contrast to the Bristol fashion schooner ahead of her, looked like a floating menagerie. There were crates of chickens; a goat; a slightly bigger than suckling pig comically variegated with black and pinkish spots; two hawksbill sea turtles on their backs, flippers tied across their chests; and large rectangular straw containers, woven to leave diamond shaped openings, with the most astonishing assortment of pale blue heads inside. Anyone seeing them for the first time was almost certainly taken aback. The live terrestrial crabs, "white crabs" in Bahamian parlance, had been de-legged to make them less mobile, easier to transport, and now their truncated bodies' glaring eyes stared out and

their rheumy mouths sported a small bib of ephemeral bubbles; with each breath one was born and one or two flittered away, as the crabs' wondered about their fate.

A coal-black boy, with the prodigious moniker, Amadeus Leviticus Balfour, lay belly-down on the Abaco pine deck with his head just inches from one container. His arms at his sides in a posture only a child can hold for more than a moment; dry salt visible in his kitchen hair on the nap of his neck and across his slim shoulders, skinny ashlashy legs protruding from frayed denim, the bottoms of his feet the same color as the faded canvas sails. Amadeus stared back into their eyes, dozens of indiscernible lidless eyes and the sun coming up high now and they couldn't squint or wear straw hat and he wondered if they knew the crab next to them and what must they think of the women that had done this to them and could they get seasick as he once had before he was big and did their missing feet send a pain like the old rummy, Cocky Rooster's, did. What would Preacher Bethel say if a boy were dumb enough to ask him about, what whitecrabs' think'n?

Amadeus played a game. He started to assign different thoughts, feelings, and motivations to individual crabs. Some complained of missing their lowland tunnel-homes and their crab families; others spoke of the indignity of their incarceration; a few admitted to being afraid; still others wanted a drink; and finally, one old crab mouthed out to him through the bubbles: "Please just wipe my mouth and let me die with a little self-respect." After a few minutes of this game their eyes no longer had that indiscernible sameness. They took on a beseeching quality that he couldn't explain and the boy realized what a horrible pastime he'd created.

When they'd no stories they all looked alike, but now… At some level young Amadeus realized that empathy and imagination could be a horrible thing; God surely did work in mysterious ways. And, he recollected, as far as these crabs were concerned, he must work in some fucked up ways. Then in a prescient moment Amadeus assuaged his newfound emotions; *God never gave a body a hurdle that could not be borne, maybe all this pain and suffering would bring some goodness to them and if the crabs found Jesus then their tribulations would be worth every bit of the horribleness*. One side of his face screwed up as he thought about what Preacher Bethel's reaction to his solution might be. Stories, trouble.

Amadeus was born in 1909 at the furthest western fringe of New Providence Island. Seventeen long-miles on tortuous roads, west of downtown Nassau, the old Clifton Plantation, raised up in the old-no ancient-slave quarters with their nearly two-foot thick stone walls and shiny new tin roofs. Grammy said good thatch, the way they'd been, was better but he kinda liked the sound of the rain. The new tin roofs were in stark contrast to the numerous old walls from the great-house ruins and the old-field walls. Amadeus wondered about all of the men and women it must

have taken to build those walls, and the way that the stones were cut and fitted together by hand so tightly that very little mortar was needed, and none was used on the field walls. It was a process that he knew to be terribly time consuming and backbreaking. There certainly was no shortage of stone from the seaside cliffs, but to break it out and tote it about sure wore a body out.

Young Balfour was barely big enough to carry his own lunch when, in 1920, the Deveaux heirs sold Clifton to Frederick Kipp, a textile manufacturer. Kipp bought much of the land in the western end of New Providence. Kipp grew vegetables mainly because the land could no longer sustain the Sea Island cotton, he had so wanted to grow. Amadeus got his first job the year after the sale planting little saplings of "winter pear." He and his family planted 2,000 winter bearing avocado trees that had just this year yielded their first fruit, an abundant crop. He loved the taste but he loved even more being able to move to the city, Nassau, and search for more excitement and opportunity, and now he had it. After Mummy passed, he'd been worked like a rented mule; his newfound life under the white clouds and star strewn firmament was a step closer to heaven than he ever thought possible. On land the only thing even a little exciting was digging up funny old pottery shards when they were planting, and wondering what people had been out there before them.

Looking out hard off the port bow he could see the high ridge running out to the far west end of the island. High up of the furthest point lay the fire scorched ruins of the old great house and the still solid slave quarters. He'd loved sitting up there, the top of the ruins his aerie, and gazing upon the ocean's emerald dance, the white petticoats lifted by the liberating breeze. The ever-changing kaleidoscope was a lure calling him before he even recognized it for what it was; his eagle's nest now fearlessly at the top of the mast and the same dancing whitecaps soothed and rocked him and no more rocky soil to till over: hands aching. He loved his new life and he felt of his captain in a way he had not felt towards anyone since they'd laid his Mummy down in the seaside graveyard in Adelaide.[1]

It was odd putting his mother in the ground next to where the lavender periwinkles grew in the sandy soil and laying fresh cut red hibiscus over her and them flowers already waning in the sun by the time all the old folks were done talking. The tincture of the flowers, of Mummy, the world, all not as it should be, was disorienting. Maybe they should not have killed the hibiscus; the periwinkles were alive and growing in the ground. His old

[1] Gulita Balfour (1858-1967) had twelve children. They and their children spread over the islands of the Bahamas and beyond. Still active at well over 100, she was the matriarch of Adelaide Village, on New Providence, for decades. Amadeus and Willy would eat her cooking and listen to her tales.

Grammy sat, arms poking out of her pelisse, hands worrying, looking at her daughter in the open-box. Amadeus stood behind her, his back to the sea, a reflection of a lost past casting a shadow forward upon the elder.

Grammy kept him for a while but in the end she saw he needed to leave. When he'd pawed around the docks asking about work, Cap'n Roland was one of the few men that would look him in the eye and the only one that asked his name. When he'd heard *Balfour* he insisted upon hearing how he'd come by it, so Amadeus told the captain the story of his people and Mummy dying and about his leaving the west end of the island.

"My Grammy put me with Grandpa, who didn't often talk to me much, but he sat me down before I left. 'Amadeus, don't forget where your people come from. My father, Omingo, come straight from Africa, on the ship *Rosa*, with 157 others, and landed in Nassau in 1831. He wasn't much older than you at the time. My name is Mitchell Balfour and your Grammy is Gulita; Balfour was the big-man running these islands back in a time and my daddy said, 'Not often you get to pick a name, choose one people respect.'"[2]

Amadeus elaborated, "Our people started the village of Adelaide but I was borned over to Clifton because Mummy was working there."

That was the first time the captain had reached over and rubbed his head. He did it a little bit hard so as to shake it back and forth but it didn't bother him none.

"Amie," it was also the first time he'd called him that, "I need a boy of your certain size. I would judge you to be five-feet tall (he was not) and nearly 90 pounds (he was). A boy your size is the best high in the rigging and down in the bilge, yes, I sorely need a boy your size. Now, here's the catch, I can only afford to pay you two bits a day, no work and no pay on the Sabbath. Can you afford to work for those wages?" The captain had a look on his face when he ended his offer.

Amadeus would have worked for his grub alone, not believing his good fortune, his chest nearly burst with pride upon receiving his first pay. The captain had put cash money in his hand and told him "Good job Amie." It was the first time he'd ever held hard money. He squirreled away a mason-jar bank in the far reaches of the bilge where no one else could reach.

Roland knew that Amadeus loved hearing the old stories of the Clifton Plantation. The boy had confided in him that one of the few breaks from the heat and monotony of life out on the fringe of the island was hearing the old folks pass down their histories.

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[2] The British outlawed the Atlantic Slave Trade (the trade itself, not slavery) in 1807 and several ships with human cargo were taken to Nassau for disposition. Gov. Carmichael-Smyth settled those from the *Rosa* (1831) in the new Village of Adelaide, created for them. See Rosanne Adderley's *New Negroes from Africa*.

Grants of Crown Land, conveyed in the 1780s, to William Lyford, Thomas Ross, Louis Johnston, and John Wood eventually became the 1,200-acre Clifton Plantation. These Loyalists from the southern colonies did their best to recreate an unsustainable way of life, and worked their slaves to exhaustion; near the end of the century John Wood built the Clifton great house as testament to their endeavors and lived in it until cotton farming became unprofitable. The soil, like many of the humans, just wore out.

By 1802 it was over, these men that had left the promise of, or more correctly had not believed in the promise of, the fledgling United States of America and left it for the security of the British Empire; John Wood and Louis Johnston (brothers-in-law) gave up farming and went back to the United States: Ross and Lyford went dead. By 1820 William Wylly owned much of the land in western New Providence and was of a slightly different bent than many, and a realist, he allotted two days a week for his slaves to tend to their own works and allowed them every other Saturday to cart it to market.[i]

One hundred years later, the good sloop *Conchy Joe* was in the pineapple trade, Eleuthera had the best in the world, and exported more than any place in the world, before the soil got used up.

On this day, she'd have drawn a smile at any dock in the Caribbean and more than a little envy from many considering her cargo of delicacies on deck and stowed under it: topsides, besides the livestock, there were barrels of salt beef and freshwater lashed to her rails; below, smoked hams, sacks of grits, rice, flour and fresh limes, onions, tomatoes, goat pepper, and other produce filled the spaces.

The *Conchy Joe*, easily stood out from the more numerous sponging sloops because of her deck cargo and lack of sponge dinghies. There was a niche market that this vessel and her crew were able to fill just fine. The shrewd young captain was acting on an old principle, infamously perfected in the triangular nature of the main Atlantic maritime trade of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the slave trade: make a profit on every leg of a voyage. Back then a ship left England full of trade goods, made for the coast of Africa and bartered for a hull full of humans and headed west, after unloading the Africans, the rum headed east: since it took nearly thirty pounds of sugar to make a bottle of rum it was much easier to ship in its liquid form.[3]

Cap'n Roland was determined to head west if he had to beat into the wind all the way across the Great Bahama Bank to do it. To the west lay the *Dreamland*. Kenneth Butler, JD Simpson, J Finley, and J DeGregory of

[3] Eric Williams (1911-1981 Trinidad) earned a scholarship to Oxford, and received his PhD in 1938. His *Capitalism and Slaver*y (1944) was a seminal contribution to Caribbean research.

Nassau, kept a specialized hundred-foot scow, without power or sails, permanently moored just northeast of the low lying and nearly deserted North Cat Cay, to serve as a warehouse for several thousand cases of liquor. The aptly named *Dreamland* had lighting and refrigeration, and a crew of four whites and seven blacks.

When not loading and unloading vessels, or preparing meals, the black Bahamians' main duty was to sew the bottles into "hams," the standard package of the day: five bottles sewn individually, horizontally, into a hemp bag. It cushioned them, was easy to handle, easier to toss if necessary, and it floated.

In early 1918, Roland was dirt-poor, soon to be twenty, living in a small (at over 1000 people it was quite large by Bahamian standards) out-island settlement: The Current, on the northwest tip of Eleuthera. The Current was aptly named as the settlement sat at the edge of a natural channel between Eleuthera and the neighboring Current Island and with every tidal change the water flew through the cut at an astonishing rate. Roland was one of many children of the settlement's Methodist minister and his wife. When he'd been born pineapple was king, 700,000 dozen were being exported each year, but each year of his life had seen a decline in the yield and the writing was on the proverbial wall.

The young adventurer moved to Nassau later that year hoping for an opportunity-at what he wasn't sure-praying the hustle of the big city would produce some largesse. It was the same feeling that pushes folks out of rural communities and pulls them into cities all over the world. With the end of the Great War the always-precarious Bahamian economy had plummeted. Sponge prices dropped and the demand for rope made with the local sisal all but dried up. The Out Island life was slow; Nassau was the place to be, especially now that one had to pass a literacy test to try and get into the States, though that test didn't worry Roland.

When Prohibition began, smuggling and opportunity were synonymous. Roland was an excellent sailor and went into the business as a first mate; when his alcoholic captain slipped on some conch-slime and broke his hip the mate took over the vessel. He then took his earnings, and his honor, and bought the more seaworthy, *Conchy Joe*, and, would soon after buy others.[4]

This put young Roland in a very interesting position, sociologically speaking. He was a young Bahamian man of color, just a little color to be sure, "near-white" in the local parlance. Though he could almost "pass" due to his light complexion, the insular nature of the mostly poor-white social structure dictated that he was not white because shading alone did

[4] *Conchy Joe* is a slang term for the poorest and most ignorant of white Bahamians, most typically from the Out Islands. However, context and tone of deployment determine the degree of severity, from the outright pejorative to a self-deprecating fraternal tone used within the group or amongst friends.

not determine one's race. However, he read and traveled, and was well on his way to becoming wealthy; these were also important factors in the somewhat fluid determination of race.

Roland made his way across the deep waters of the Northwest Channel towards the Great Bahama Bank. A pod of hundreds of spotted porpoises was visible in the distance; the animals spied them at the same time and the frisky mammals altered course to intercept the plodding vessel. They closed the mile or so rather quickly and drew a bead on the bow of the boat. Some came in close and turned briefly and swam with the sailboat while the others swam past. Smaller than their grey cousins, Roland only saw these animals in deep water.

North of Andros, passing the Joulters Cays off the port beam, dark came as a curtain drawn, and he relaxed. Off in the distance, to the south, he made out the flickering light of several fires. Those would be the cooking fires getting started at Red Bay, the old settlement at the north end of Andros Island; *they had more white crab, landcrab, around there than they'd ever be able to eat*.

He called out for his mate to take over the helm and went below, and finding a lantern overhead, struck a lucifer, adjusting the flame. He always carried a satchel in which were various reading materials, and his tools of navigation. Onboard he used it to hold down the equipment on his chart table. Roland found the clippings from *The Nassau Guardian*, in a series that chronicled the last 100 years of Bahamian history; they'd been running some short pieces. He'd found something interesting about them and torn them out, a few blurbs on Andros, the settlement of Red Bay in particular. They had run a copy of an old story from the defunct *Bahamas Royal Gazette* and when he saw his copy's ratty condition, he realized he'd been carrying it around for a while now. That was only because of not getting the chance to visit North Andros yet, but he was going to when he had a little more time. Life was rush, rush, rush, at the moment. He had seen the fires from Red Bay before, and seen some of the men sailing back and forth to Nassau. All in all, they managed to stay isolated even though they were fairly close to the hustle and bustle. Some folks liked their space though; he knew that to be true enough. He read the piece again.

> *Chief Kenadgie, of the Red Stick Creeks, arrived at New Providence Island, Bahamas, via dugout canoe on September 29, 1819, accompanied by several others, including an interpreter described as "an Indian of mixed blood." The interpreter may have been Abraham, a Black Seminole who often negotiated on behalf of the Seminoles when dealing with English speakers. They complained to the British that their people in Florida were being doggedly tormented, and that "their greatest enemies were the Cowetas …who having made terms with the Americans were set*

*upon them to harass and annihilate their tribe. We are at war with all of those to the north." They received sustenance and cheer from the British stationed there.*

Roland felt he knew the very basics of the story of the "Black Seminoles." He had read a few articles and talked to some folks in Nassau that had grown up hearing stories of them. It was amazing to him that they could cross the Gulf Stream in canoes, though he'd been told some of the craft were large enough to hold twenty men. Runaway slaves from Georgia and even some from the sea islands of South Carolina had made their way into north Florida in the 1790s and early 1800s. The people in charge, it flip-flopped between Spanish and British, were amenable to them being there because they made life a little more difficult for the Americans to the north. They had been of some help to the British in the fight for New Orleans, in 1815, and this further infuriated the Americans.[5]

Roland understood that the negroes were justifiably terrified of the idea of being captured, making them fight with desperation. What else besides dread and desperation could make folks travel from Cape Florida to Andros in canoes? He was headed to Cape Florida now, in a seaworthy vessel, but he never took a moment of it lightly. It was well over a hundred miles from Andros and a lot could happen. Desperation.

*The governorship of the new Florida territory fell to Andrew Jackson. One of his earliest communications with Washington, written on April 2, 1821, concerned the disposition of the Red Stick Creeks and maroons at and below Tampa Bay. Jackson urged that these groups should be ordered into Georgia to settle among the Creeks there. As the American government pondered Jackson's request, events unfolded that brought things to a head. Powerful men in Georgia contracted the Coweta Chiefs Charles Miller, William Weatherford, and the mulatto Daniel Perimaus. They were to lead about two hundred Coweta warriors to capture all of the "renegades" they could encounter.*

[5] The British attacked New Orleans to gain access to the Mississippi Valley. The entrance of British troops into the Gulf of Mexico in the autumn of 1814 prompted Jackson's arrival at New Orleans on December 1, 1814. Later that month a fleet of 50 British vessels made a surprise landing east of New Orleans. Over 2000 British troops walked across the swamps to the banks of the Mississippi just below New Orleans. Jackson, with the help of the French pirate Jean Lafitte, won the decisive battle on January 8, 1815. Jackson's forces suffered only 71 casualties while inflicting more than 2000. Though the defeat caused the British to return to England, the battle had no effect on the war. Peace terms had already been agreed on in the Treaty of Ghent, signed on December 24, 1814; at the time of the battle, however, the USA Senate had not yet ratified the treaty.

Roland could hear the slapping on the hull and his men on the tackle; he leaned involuntarily with the slight shifting of the rigging and felt the trim of his boat as though it were his own body as she moved through the short bank chop. He kept a running log in his head, even as he read and pondered. He knew where they were and would let his men, and Amadeus, know that he was satisfied with their attention to detail. He went back to his reading.

> *The expedition surprised and fell upon the inhabitants of the Pease Creek frontier. Arriving first at Angola, the attackers captured about 300 of the inhabitants, destroyed the plantation, and set fire to all of the houses. Proceeding southward, the party captured several others, and arrived at the Spanish fisheries around Pointerras Key in Charlotte Harbor on June 17, 1821. Many of the settlements in the path of the Coweta expedition were broken up. Indians and Africans fled in all directions, mainly working their way to the coasts and south. On the west coast some escaped in their canoes around the point at Cape Sable and made their way south to Tavernier Key. Soon word came down that there was another group that was forming on the east coast at Cape Florida. Groups of people of every conceivable mixture arrived. They were man, woman, and child, both family units and in their groups. They were of African descent of a bearing and purity seen only marching off the dank ships of passage and there were some mixed with Choctaw, Red Sticks Creek, other Creek, and some few Cherokee. A covenant between those parties and the wreckers was reached. They carried about 250 freedom seekers to the Bahamas on over a score of the wreckers' sloops. Several of the younger men paddled their canoes.*[6]

As Roland read of those men of a hundred years before his admiration for the courageous refugees from Florida grew. A trip to Andros was in order; he would have to make time for the short trip from Nassau. He felt comfy couched in the corner and reading, being on the Bank was a good thing. Though his keel only cleared the sandy bottom by a few feet in places, there were few obstacles between here and their destination, at least

[6] Cargo ships, lacking lighthouse beacons to guide them at night, would often crash upon the reefs. These cargoes were salvaged by wrecker captains and crews and sold to Nassau merchants. James Mott, commanded one of these ships, the *Sheerwater*. Mott reportedly facilitated the escape of a large group of Black Seminoles. The Cape Florida Lighthouse came into operation in 1825 and Fowey Rocks Lighthouse in 1878.

not coming up from the seafloor. The young captain felt most comfortable out at sea. It was surprising how many Bahamians, even sailors, didn't share in his feeling of comfort at sea. Some didn't even know how to swim, not that he had any plans to swim tonight, but still, he felt good being on the water. That was his grandfather's doing, he knew. He'd learned so much from him. Not only to sail but how to load a vessel and feel her trim and posture, to sense how hard she was working in any given sea condition. He could feel the efficiency of a vessel through her timbers and thought nothing of it, but he knew from experience and not a little frustration that few men could.

Gramps had made the point more than once that every little thing mattered at sea; he was not at all shy about telling how he'd learned that himself as a youngster up in the rigging of a stockade runner slipping into Charleston Harbor with weapons, lead, and gunpowder, and racing back out under cover of darkness with the hold full of, and the deck stacked with cotton that was bound first for Nassau and then on to the mills in England.[7]

That war ended in 1865 and for the most part the years since then had been lean ones in the Bahamas. It sure was a different world than back in Gramps' time but it was funny how this part, the boat part, had stayed the same, or nearly so. Great Britain controlled untold wealth and had put up some magnificent lighthouses but that was more to help those captains in the Atlantic trade than out of any concern for the locals. Anyway, he thought, *it sure is better taking a drink over to a thirsty man than running guns in for them to kill each other with. Those damn Americans are more than just a little crazy.*

He lay on deck for an hour and while marveling at the river of stars overhead checked the consistency of their course; he then oversaw the change at the wheel, ordering a tweak to the heading. He knew to go below and get some rest now when the conditions were kindly.

Later, as the lights of the *Dreamland* were espied, he rose from his slumber; those lights reinforced in him a belief that he was better on the water than most men. He would not come out and say it but he felt it, he knew it. By very early the next morning he was planning his approach, positioning his vessel so that making his way alongside the large craft ended with the *Conchy Joe* turning into the wind and losing all headway just as she reached, laying close alongside.

There was a fortune, and not a small one, in booze aboard the hulk and the *Conchy Joe* had the rising sun behind her. Roland's view was fine, with the ephemeral paleness of first light at his back, but the crew of the *Dreamland* was edgy. The watch had been up all night overseeing the

[7] See Peter T. Dalleo, "A bold captain, a swift steamer, and a noiseless crew: Admiral Samuel Dupont, Privateers, Blockade-Runners and the Bahamas." in *Journal of the Bahamas Historical Society.*

loading of the motorboats coming over from Miami. Very few vessels approached from the east and the sailboat was silhouetted against the sky, those aboard the *Dreamland* had the dawn sun in their eyes. It was possible they could be freebooters trying to pull a slick move.

The two guards shuffled behind their redoubt, under the canopy erected to keep the high sun off and the night dew out. Roland knew them to be Englishmen. He'd seen them drunk with their teeth out on a dirty table and thought they were two of the ugliest of God's creations, certainly the ugliest two fuckers he'd ever seen side by side and that was saying something. Neither was overly bright and at this hour neither could be expected to be overly pleasant. One guard was tall and slim, one thick bordering on porcine; each cradled one of the new M1921-A Thompson sub-machine-guns. They were sleek guns with a straight magazine sticking down. The guns looked terrible and modern, wholly capable of laying down enfilade. The guards' poor looks were somewhat compensated for by their excellent marksmanship. Roland could not imagine that many ladies, on that reference alone, would be inclined to dance with them. No Charleston. Not to worry, they were more the card playing and lowly-whore running type anyway. The particular weapons in their hands took advantage of what had proven itself to be a very powerful and reliable round; they were loaded with new .45 caliber Automatic Colt Pistol rounds that propelled a Full Metal Jacket bullet. These rounds had a well-deserved reputation for leaving people feeling poorly and since the hulk was so heavily laden and low in the water, she provided a very stable firing platform. Regardless, in the years she was moored out there no one succeeded in any funny business even though a few tough crews from Florida made funny business their stock in trade.

Roland, having lain his vessel gently alongside, relaxed a little and his crew made her fast under the watchful eyes of the dreadful sure-shots. The hulk's captain hailed him from down below, his pleasant voice wafting up, "Come aboard, and welcome aboard Roland on this fine morning, I'm shaving, give me a few moments please and I'll see to our accounts."

The damn English, Roland thought, they were crazed with their little social antics and formalities. He did however admire the furry pale man's ability to float out here on the edge of the earth for two months at a time. The entire crew of the *Dreamland* roused itself and was buoyed to see the bountiful cargo aboard the little *Conchy Joe*. Their own booze cargo may have been worth a fortune but the sight of good grub overjoyed their bellies. A stomach full of decent food was one of the few things to enjoy out on the bank. Nearly all of the colored men had been spongers in the past, living in near slave-like conditions, they knew what real hardship was all about. They were grateful for this opportunity to advance their place.

Down below the British captain sat on his throne, a small water-barrel with an open end and a butt-board on top, waiting for his bowels to move.

The lack of fresh fruit and vegetables had him terribly bound up and he was thankful for Roland's appearance. Reaching past the *Time* magazine to the stack of *Scientific American* journals he briefly reflected on how his recent diet of conch and cheese had left a miasma in his cabin that needed airing.

The August 1922 issue held him in thrall while he tilted one buttock slightly hoping to ease passage. He reread an article arguing against the viability of using moving-film (even on the eve of sound) to help explain Einstein's new theory of relativity to the general public; the nexus being that a compendium of tools was called for.

*This must be what giving birth is like*, he thought, a little light headed from the strain, and looked about for the strop to sharpen his straightedge. He might as well follow through on his shaving story if this mission were ever completed.

The loading commenced as the crews swept over the sloop's deck and went down into the hulk with arms full of edibles and came up with the bottle sacks. Cap'n Roland enjoyed the banter amongst the two crews, their jesting pidgin a cacophony waking the waves, and moved easily between the black Bahamians and the Englishmen and the white Bahamian accountant with his pencil and paper. Cap'n Roland supervised the exchange of cargo, the offloading and the loading of his vessel in a sure and calculated way. He was aware of how and where the additional weight would affect the sea handling characteristics of his vessel and loaded her with a keen eye. Not long into the transfer the stout guard, wearing the kepi, bitched to no one in particular, in his funny accent, "Why'd ya bring hawksbill turtles? We ain't making pretties, why 'intya bring a big greeny?"

Roland promptly retorted without missing a beat, "My god man, ain't you got no broughtupcy? You surely would be a bitch'n if you was hanged with a new rope." Both crews' laughter rang out over the morning waters and a few took this opportunity to curse each other as if this breach begged another. The hard work went faster with some merriment and the size of the hulk provided a good lee and the clear shallow waters were calm and the transfer went along smoothly.

Afterwards, he went into the hulk's innards to go over the tally-up with Captain Bannister. Stepping from the bright sunlight he made his way down a companionway into a dim, cramped, almost tavern-like area with a table holding stacks of books and a few bottles on a gadrooned tray; ham, sweet-peppers, and tomatoes sat next to it. Roland suspected they hadn't been onboard more than an hour. Glancing about at the bookshelf covered walls above the crenellated wainscoting, the dark wood of which seemed to have taken on the same dim hues and odors as the cabin, Roland walked over to look at the titles and noticed the small oriental on the deck with its loose selvage and obvious wear. As he strode over he made out Bannister, backlit by a porthole, sitting at his desk on a hard little chair next to an overstuffed