



Wreck of the Ship *General Oglethorpe* - 1802

BY ROBERT MAC KAY¹

EDITED BY CHARLES F. MILLS

ISAILED from Charleston on the afternoon of Sunday, the 31st January 1802, in the Ship *General Oglethorpe*² (Plate 9), William Patterson,³ Master, for the Havana, intending to touch off Tybee Bar to take on board the Captain who had gone round to Savannah, and to receive some Slaves to insure our admittance into the Havana, of which we were rather doubtful though the Ship was only in ballast; the wind was at N.E. and under reefed Topsails we ran the distance by midnight and lay to; at daylight the weather was thick and threat'ning and blowing fresh;— at 8 o'clock we made the lighthouse and discovered two Pilot-

¹ This narrative (the original is owned by the editor) was written by Robert MacKay (Plate 10), a Savannah, Georgia, merchant, one of the owners of the ship *General Oglethorpe*.

² The *General Oglethorpe* was built by Colonel John Patterson at St. Mary's, Georgia. Colonel Patterson (1753-1801) was a well-known Philadelphia shipbuilder whose yard adjoined that of Joshua Humphreys. When Humphreys began the construction of the frigate *United States*, Patterson's yard apparently was taken over and Patterson moved with his family to St. Mary's to follow his profession there. The *General Oglethorpe* was described by MacKay in a letter to his wife dated 20 February 1801 at St. Mary's. 'On arriving here this day about 1 o'clock, I was presented with a view of the most beautiful & superb object I ever beheld in my life—in fact words are entirely out of question to describe the new Ship; to form any idea you must see her. She was launched at a little before 12 o'clock on Wednesday, & went in the water without sustaining the smallest injury although her weight was so great as to crush the ways to atoms as she passed over them.'

The oil painting of the *General Oglethorpe* illustrated in connection with this account (Plate 9) is an excellent example of the early work of Robert Salmon, a British artist who came to Boston in 1828, and painted in this country thereafter. Although it is unsigned, the canvas bears all the identifying marks of the artist's style. Only one or two of Salmon's paintings earlier in date, have been found, and these are English ships. This view shows her off the English coast on what was presumably her maiden voyage to a foreign port.

In a period when marine painting was approaching a set and standardized form—the hard and linear profile ship portraiture subordinating all elements of the scene to the vessel itself—this oil proves that the seascape unified and whole could be a work of art. Although Salmon has placed his three views of the *General Oglethorpe* in accordance with the accepted formula of his time (broadside, bow, and stern) his study of cloud and wave structure is as seriously considered as the anatomy of the vessel itself. Long before his time the masterly suppleness of hand and fine laying on of pigment, shown by such as the Dutch school of artists had vanished, but Salmon retained enough of their breadth of vision to make a fine spacious picture. Acknowledging his touch to be rather crisp and tight, his edges sharply defined rather than blended, it is yet no small compliment to say that his color and design are superb, and his management of the composition as a whole, is assured and commendable. Even a few ship paintings of such quality do much to leaven the run-of-the-mill stuff which many of Salmon's contemporaries turned out so abundantly.

³ William Patterson was the son of John Patterson. He commanded several Southern vessels and eventually became master of a constant trader between New York and Liverpool.

Boats coming out, in one of which we supposed was Captain Patterson and the Slaves, but in this we were disappointed, when we immediately determined to carry the ship in and having taken on board a Pilot, by 11 O'clock we were at anchor above the Lighthouse. Mr. James Broadfoot of Charleston, who was a passenger on board, and myself went to Savannah in the Pilot Boat, and met Captain Patterson on the river, who went down with the Slaves and took charge of his Vessel. I did not get up to Savannah until dark, when we were just in time to meet a very agreeable party at a dance at Mr. Meins.⁴ On Tuesday morning, after breakfast, Mr. Broadfoot and myself returned to the Ship, it was calm and we could not go to sea.

The wind was fair on the morning of Wednesday, the 3rd February and with a fine breeze from the Westward we crossed the Bar, and at 12 o'clock found we had made twenty seven miles on an E.S.E. course. Several vessels went to sea with us but from the *General Oglethorpe's* very fast sailing we soon lost sight of them. We had fine pleasant weather with light breezes and at midday on the 4th had made 101 miles on S.E. course. We had then very light airs and at 12 o'clock on Friday the 5th were in latitude 27 39 North and by reckoning in Long. 76 40 West. Captain Patterson then thought it proper to alter his course which he did to fly east and at 6 o'clock in the evening, conceiving from the log we had diminished our latitude to about 27 30, we hauled up SSE intending to run until midnight under easy

[two pages missing]

with thunder and lightning, the sea breaking over the wreck tremendously and threatening us with instant dissolution. At this time (I imagine from the rise of the tide) she righted and Mr. Frazer, the Second mate, informed me there were five feet of water in the hold; relying on the immense strength of the vessel I was in hopes she had not met with much injury, and as she was upright, if the gale did not increase, we might yet save her. The water in the hold was, I supposed, from some of the Punchions which might have bilged when the ship lay on her beam end, and as I found the people were uneasy I went into the hold and tasted it, but found it salt, and as the quantity increased I was now convinced the rocks had made a hole somewhere in her bottom and that she must be inevitably lost. All hands were immediately employed in getting the loose spars over the side under the lee to form a raft, on which we might at daylight save our lives, and provisions enough to subsist on some of the keys until we could get off. Before midnight she again fell on her larboard

⁴ Meins was Robert MacKay's partner.

beam and beat most violently. The gale continued to increase and when the clouds cleared away a little we imagined we could see land not more than a cable's length off. The yawl was hanging over the stern and Mr. Broadfoot and myself had a fifteen gallon cask of water, some bread, a few bottles of wine and porter, a quadrant, compass, spy glass, etc., placed in her and as nothing more could be done before daylight and we felt ourselves much fatigued, I laid down in my stateroom and slept a little. On awaking I found two or three feet water under my berth and the chairs and trunks all afloat in the larboard side of the cabin. I had a small portmanteau which I filled with a change of linen for Broadfoot and myself, placed in it all our letters and papers, the ships papers, etc., and sent it on deck, and having done this he and I climbed to the starboard stateroom which the water had not reached and there slept for half an hour longer. The approach of day was awaited with much anxiety and the intermediate time employed in getting some water and provisions lashed on the deck so as to place them on the raft as soon as we could see. Daylight at length appeared and presented immeasurable horrors to our view. The reef, on the outside of which we were, was more than a mile wide, the sea was rolling over it in tremendous breakers as far as we could see. The land which we had flattered ourselves was so nigh was several broken rocky keys with mangrove bushes on them and the nearest six miles distant. It was now agreed to dispatch the boat in search of a passage through the reef so that the raft might be immediately towed on shore if the gale did not abate. Most of the things Broadfoot and I had put in the boat were taken out, and the mate, four hands and two slaves went away in her. With some difficulty she got through and having reached the nearest key left the two slaves, the keg of water, quadrant, Moore's Navigator⁵ and a compass and a little after 9 o'clock arrived on board. The gale did not moderate at all, it further increased and at 8 o'clock we cut away the mizzen mast, but still it was the opinion of everyone that it would subside at midday. It was therefore determined that the boat should make another trip ashore, leave some of the slaves and return to take away the raft when the weather was better. Supposing this was agreed to, I did not think of leaving the wreck myself, and ordering as many slaves to be put on board as the boat would be safe with, went for my portmanteau intending to send it with them. While I was engaged in getting it from under some things which in the confusion had been thrown with it on the side of the Companion, Mr. Broadfoot came to me and whispered that the people

⁵ *The New Practical Navigator . . . The first American from the thirteenth English Edition of John Hamilton Moore . . . revised by a skilful mathematician [Nathaniel Bowditch]. Newburyport [1799].*

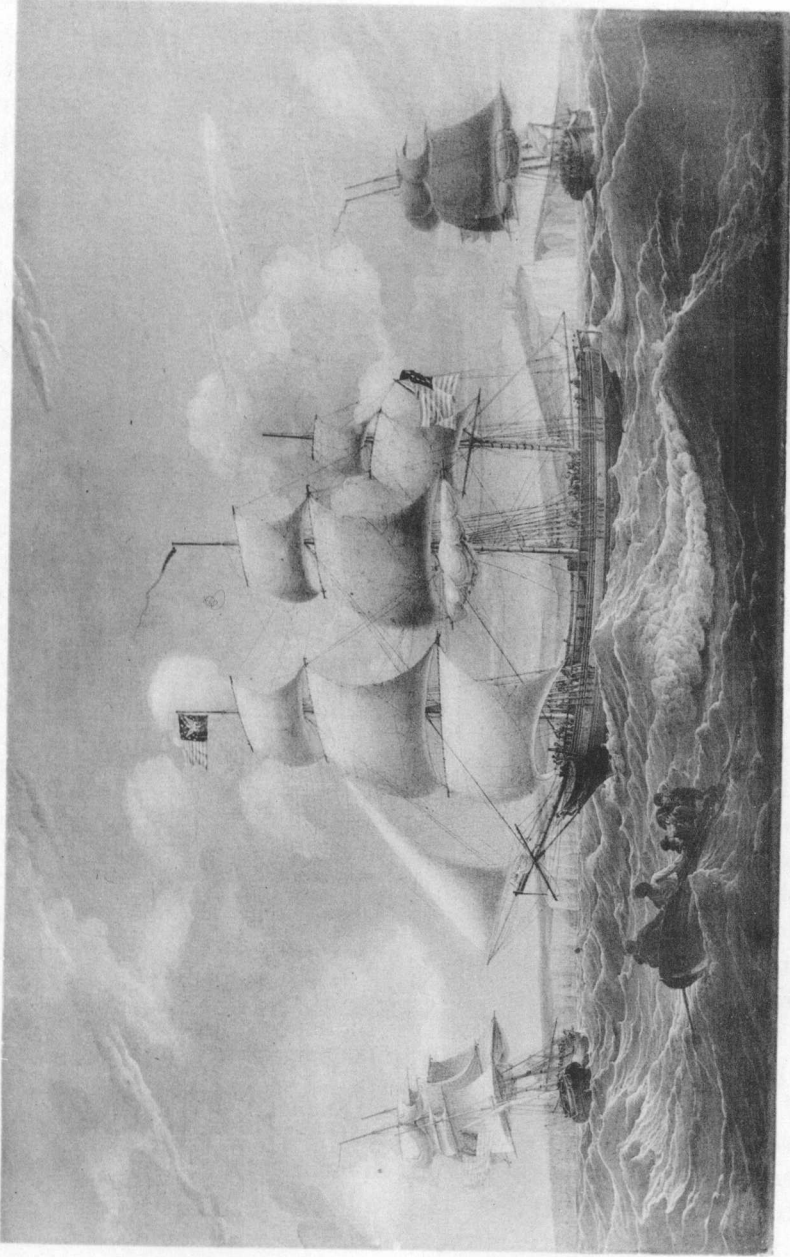
were determined to push off with the boat without the slaves, and added 'if you have any desire to save your life, go now, the boat will never return.' I fortunately took his advice. He and I snatched each of us a blanket which had luckily been brought out of the cabin and without speaking to anybody slipped over the ship's bottom and got on board. My servant, John, was standing on the raft and followed me, Captain Patterson then came on board and we left the ship. During the whole of the night our Captain appeared to have given himself up to despair. He made use of no exertion, took no command upon himself and gave no advice. I spoke to him often, but he gave stupid answers and seemed only concerned for his own safety. He wanted to go ashore in the boat the first trip, but I positively objected and he acquiesced. It is, however, an extraordinary occurrence and worthy of remark that about 2 o'clock in the morning, when death was staring wildly in our faces and nothing but a ship built of the materials and strength of the *General Oglethorpe* could have withstood the sea and rocks she was beating among, the Captain ordered one of the hands into the cabin to take down two handsome looking glasses which were there for fear they should be broken. This wise order was obeyed, and the glasses in a few minutes shared the fate on deck which they were so carefully brought from the cabin to avoid. The Captain, however, proved that he was not entirely deprived of recollection for he brought ashore with him a suit of his best clothes and several changes of linen.

We got through the reef after striking several times and though we expected to find smooth water within were much disappointed for the current setting against the wind made such a short quick sea the boat could scarcely live. When we had left the wreck about 20 minutes, a thick black squall came up and blew so fresh we thought it impossible to reach the shore. However, after three hours hard exertion and when the men were nearly exhausted, we got under the lee of the highest key and a short while after landed. There was now so much sea and the wind so much increased that a possibility of the boat returning to the wreck was entirely precluded. She was now rolling from side to side with every revolution of the breakers, and at dark to our utter astonishment she still held together, but we were all of opinion that the persons left on board must have been washed away or drowned in a very short time after we had left them. As we were ignorant of the spot we were upon and the length of time we might be kept without relief, it was necessary to economize our provisions and water. I immediately took an account of them and found they consisted of:

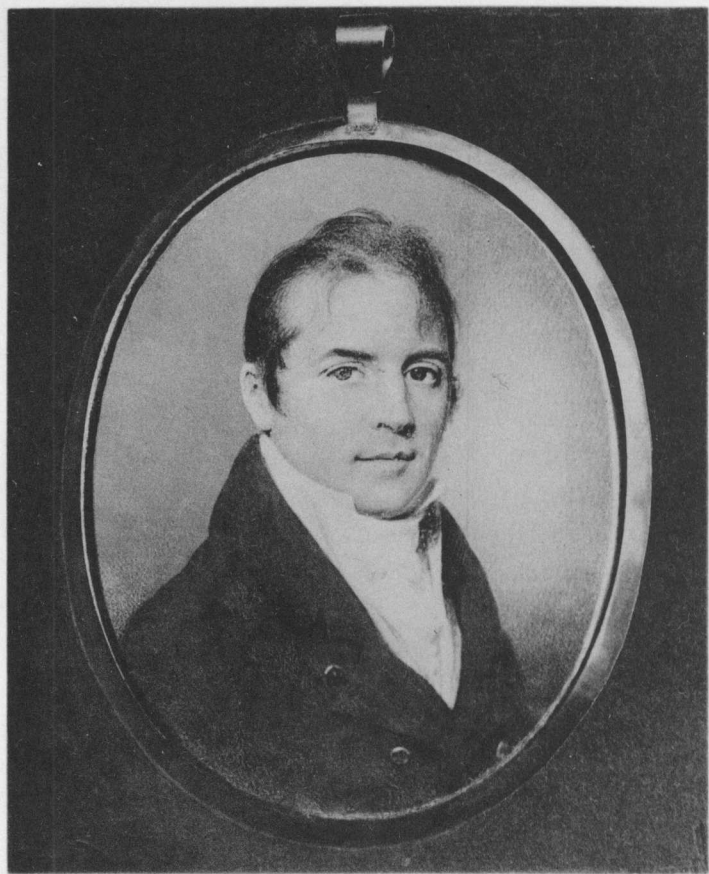
One keg of water containing 15 Gals.)
 One “ “ “ 2 “) 17 Gals. Water
 22 Bottles of Porter
 14 “ of Port and Madeira Wine
 3 “ of Brandy and
 1 “ of Gin
 3 Bacon Hams
 2 Venison “ and about
 20 pounds of bread, half of which was wet with salt
 water in getting it ashore.

To live on this we found our number to be fifteen persons, viz: Capt. Patterson, Mr. Broadfoot, Mr. Putnam the mate, Archibald Atkinson an apprentice, Nicholas Powers, Andrew Wheafer, Robert Wilson, James Fowler, John Broderick, George [], Peter seamen, John my servant, two slaves and myself. The key we were upon afforded no fresh water and only a very few small shellfish, which we found very salty. We therefore limited ourselves to a teacupful of water and an ounce of bread for the 24 hours, a teacup having been by accident put on the boat among the other things. We found the remains of several small wrecks that had been washed ashore on the key, and having collected several large piles in different parts, at dark we set them on fire and kept them up all night in the hope that a wrecker anywhere in the neighborhood might discover us and come to our assistance. I had put in my portmanteau a pair of pistols and gunpowder for the purpose of giving us fire, but these being lost, we were at first fearful that we should be without the power of obtaining it, but luckily Broadfoot had put a small power flask and two flints in his pocket. With the assistance of these, a large knife and a little oakum cut from the end of the boat's pointer, we soon made a light. I had a pocket handkerchief which was converted into tinder and a shell supplied the want of a tinder box. In the evening, having made a large fire among the mangrove bushes, we laid down round it and had just fallen asleep when Broadfoot alarmed us all with the cry of an alligator being among us. We soon discovered this to be the effect of a dream and having got over our fright, which he felt in a stronger degree than any of us, we again composed ourselves to sleep. It blew heavily all night but on the morning of Sunday, the 7th, the wind had abated considerably. Some time before daylight we kept an lookout for the ship, but she was to be seen no more. She had gone to pieces in the night and the only vestige we could discover was the wreck of one of the masts playing among the breakers, the rigging having got entangled among the rocks.

Conceiving the fate of our unfortunate companions now decided be-



*Ship General Oglethorpe
Oil painting by Robert Salmon owned by Charles F. Mills*



Robert MacKay (1772-1816) of Savannah, Georgia

*Miniature by Edward Greene Malbone
owned by Charles F. Mills*

yond a doubt, we had to deplore the lot of Mr. Joshua Frazer of Charleston, our Second Mate, a young man of good family, a good seaman and possessing the most pleasing manners. With him were ten of the crew and thirteen slaves, making in all twenty-four persons.

Betwixt 7 and 8 o'clock on the morning of the 7th, having embarked our stores and ourselves, we rowed along the south side of our key and two others about the same size, when to our great joy we discovered a schooner standing to the eastward, from under a large key to the southward of us about ten miles. We immediately landed and made a large smoke, and in hopes of attracting their notice hoisted a table cloth (which our bread had been tied in, and which we converted into a sail) by way of flag, she at length tacked toward us and we fondly hoped our endeavours to make her discover us had been successful, but to our disappointment and to our very great mortification after she had weathered a point of reef saw her stand out to sea. At 11 o'clock we took our allowance with a small piece of ham to each and stood to the South for the island the schooner had come from in expectation of meeting with inhabitants. We had to row against a strong current and reached just such another inhospitable spot as the one we had left about four in the afternoon. The place we landed we have since found was the division betwixt Great and Little Abaco and had we have gone to the Eastward should have fallen in with inhabitants or wreckers in a day or two. But unfortunately for us, in crossing the sound we discovered a large body of smoke bearing S.W. of us and conceiving it to be on Abaco we bent our course to the Westward and having coasted along Little Abaco about six miles slept in a little rocky cover where there was not a green bush to lay down upon and absolutely nothing but a bit of sharp rock. Having passed a most uncomfortable and restless night in a dew that felt as heavy as rain, on the morning of Monday the 8th we continued our route for the smoke, having got round the West end of Little Abaco, which we still supposed to be a more Northerly key, we found the water very shoal and it was with a vast deal of trouble we got over it, being obliged, very often to jump over and lighten the boat. We passed several keys to the East of us and at 12 o'clock having taken our allowance we made the land on which the smoke was and highly elated soon expected an end to our difficulties. There was not a breath of air stirring the whole of this day and the sun so powerfully hot that many of the men's faces were blistered. At 3 o'clock we got into a small rocky cover on the Grand Bahama, as it afterward proved, though we then conceived it Great Abaco, but found it so shoal we could not approach within a mile of a landing place. We therefore continued our

route a few miles farther to the Westward, and got into a snug bay with a salt water creek running into it. The smoke appeared to be about six or seven miles off and Capt. Patterson, Mr. Putnam and four others agreed to set out immediately in search of it. We furnished them with two days allowance of bread, ham, two bottles of water and one of Porter, and they left us, both parties in high spirits at the hopes of relief. In the evening we found a brackish pool of water of which we drank heartily, but it was rather too salty to allay our thirst.

Mr. Broadfoot and myself examined our stores, and were sadly mortified to find that some scoundrels among us, with all our care and vigilance, had made shift to use four bottles of wine and two of Porter. We were led to suspect Wilson and Fowler of this theft as they had been boat-keepers the two preceding nights, but with all our exertion could not fix it upon them. However, the strictness observed afterwards and the severe threats thrown out against the thieves should they be discovered, produced good effects as we met with no more losses in this way, but were unlucky enough to break two bottles of wine and one of Porter.

Having made a large fire we laid down to rest with the pleasing hope of good news from our travellers and a speedy end to our sufferings. But the morning of Tuesday the 9th ended our hopes as the travelling party returned with their faces, hands and clothes torn to pieces with their attempts to force their way through the impenetrable brushwood they met with. Capt. Patterson informed us they had gone about two miles along the shore of the creek, when finding it carried them too much to the Westward, they endeavoured to cross the island in a Southerly direction, but having in vain attempted a passage until quite worn out with fatigue they were obliged to return. Some of the people began now to despair of falling in with inhabitants and proposed steering to the Westward that by crossing the Gulf Stream we might in time reach St. Augustine. With a small boat and fifteen persons in it, I was confident of the imminent danger attending the attempt, as well as I was convinced of the certainty of meeting with vessels or inhabitants could we get on the South side of Abaco, and with a great deal of difficulty at length with a strong support from Broadfoot I gained my point and we turned our head to the Eastward. We coasted along the North side of the island and night not producing a place we could land upon we ran the boat among the roots of a mangrove point and then made fast for all night.

Wednesday the 10th, we pursued our way to the Eastward but found the water so shoal were obliged to make a great deal of Northing to get round it. The east end at length appeared when we found it was the

Grand Bahama and not Abaco we had all this time been coasting along, and having come a distance of near sixty miles from the smoke, discovered that we had been within a very short space of the Gulf Stream, a discovery which we were truly fortunate in not making when there, as the men would undoubtedly have persisted in their resolution of going to Florida. This day we had an observation for the first time since we had been in the boat and found our latitude to be 26 40 N. We had a great deal of trouble in getting down the East end from the numerous sand banks we met with, and about 4 o'clock P.M. landed on a small sandy key thickly covered with trees where we remained all night. Here we got some conks,⁶ the first we had seen, a few small crabs and three crayfish, all which came very opportunely for the men were more worn out and exhausted and despaired more than they had done since we left the wreck. Some of them, before we landed, proposed making a hearty meal of what provisions were left and then starve or trust to Providence for more. Wil-son was at the head of this—we, however, found means to over-rule his motion. In the course of this day we had several times been deceived with the appearance of a large bird standing on the distant sand banks, mistaking it for a vessel in the offing, of which it had the most exact resemblance, and once we chased it for three or four miles, when having come within a short way of what we thought a small sloop, it took wings and flew away in the shape of an immense large crane.

During the night we had showers of rain with thunder and lightning, and at 6 A.M. of Thursday, the 11th, we left the first hospitable key we had met with. The weather was dark and squally and about seven it came on to blow so hard we were obliged to seek for shelter on another key under our lee where we got ashore when it rained and thundered tremendously. With our tablecloth sail we were enabled to catch about two gallons of water, which we put into our cask and allayed our thirst from wringing our clothes which afforded a very plentiful supply for the day.

If I can accuse myself of low spirits during the time of our sufferings, it was while we were on the first land we made at leaving the wreck when I most sincerely lamented the fate that had deprived twenty-three of my fellow creatures of existence, and a fate I had so narrowly escaped myself—and this morning, standing on a barren rock, with no other shelter from a most tremendous storm than Heaven's Canopy, cold, hungry and

⁶ Mr. William J. Clench, Curator of Mollusks, Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard College says 'the "conk" is without question *Strombus gigas* Linne which is very abundant in the Bahamas today and still is a very important item of food there.'

shivering at the appearance of my miserable companions, had the thoughts of home not always been first in my recollection, I should have wished one friendly flash to close the misery I scarcely expected to survive. The afternoon of this day, however, cheered up our spirits. At 3 o'clock the sun made his appearance, the clouds cleared away and we had fine weather. A small shark having got into shallow water on a sand flat near us, three of the men were fortunate enough to take him. This with a few conks furnished us a tolerable meal, and at seven o'clock A.M. on Friday the 12th, though blowing very fresh, we embarked and stood to the Eastward. We had scarcely cleared the point of the key we left when we discovered a brig lying to on the outside of a reef which the sea was breaking over. She appeared to be about three or four miles off to the Westward and we steered directly for her applying all our strength to the oars and hoisting our tablecloth by way of flag, but every exertion was thrown away, for we had just with imminent danger got through the reef when not discovering us she made sail and left us. Thus a second time we had the mortification to be deprived of relief when so near at hand. This had a sensible effect upon our men who despaired now of our being saved in spite of all our endeavours to keep their spirits up. There was too much sea going and the wind had increased so much we thought it imprudent to attempt again to cross the reef and we stood away for the South side of the Grand Bahama, where we found a snug little bay and there spent the day. We also got as many crayfish as we could eat, which was, of course, devoured very voraciously. At 1 o'clock on the morning of Saturday, 13th, we left the bay with good weather and steering about seven leagues. Here we took our daily allowance and having rested until near 12 o'clock continued our route for a large key which we could just discover to the Eastward. This we hoped was the Western part of Abaco and having rowed about six leagues reached it before sundown. As we approached this key there was a large rock at the East end which had exactly the appearance of a house. We could see the door, windows, outhouses, etc., and imagination even painted people walking about the yard. I acknowledge I was never so much deceived before. It was a sad disappointment for after enjoying in anticipation a comfortable supper, we were obliged to sleep away the recollection of being hungry on a miserable sand bank that did not even afford us a shell fish or a single drop of brackish water.

Sunday, 14th. We departed at 2 o'clock in the morning and having doubled the S.W. point of the key found it was not Abaco as we imagined. We therefore continued our course to the Eastward and at daylight could see no land but that we had left. We, however, went on and soon made

several keys on one which we landed at 11 o'clock and found some shell fish, of which we ate heartily and collected some to carry with us. At 1 o'clock we left this key which was the smallest of three that were together, and went to the largest about two miles off. Capt. Patterson, two of the people and myself landed on the North side of this and ordered the boat to meet us on the South side. The day was exceedingly hot and our walk though not more than a mile across the island was a very fatiguing one from the thickness of the brushwood we had to pass through. We tasted an immense number of salt water puddles in hopes of finding a little fresh. This increased our thirst to a degree I had never experienced before. When near the South side, in passing through a little swamp, we discovered naked foot tracks, which appeared to have been recently made. This had a very contrary effect on us from that which Robinson Crusoe felt at a similar discovery on the island of Juan Fernandes. Instead of alarming it inspired us with fresh hope and spirits. It was the first trace we had seen on any of the keys of their ever having been visited by human beings, and we were immediately led to suppose that this must be a resort for wrecking or turtling vessels and consequently a probability of our deliverance near at hand. We pursued our walk out of the swamp and when near the sea shore observed a small beaten track through the bushes. On approaching it our happiness was compleat to find at the end of it a fresh water spring. Those only who have been in similar situations can judge of what we felt at this discovery. To describe the emotions it occasioned is beyond the power of words. Suffice it to say I thought every wish I had was gratified, and I am convinced beyond the possibility of a doubt that I would much sooner and with more satisfaction have resigned my life than the first draught of water I took from the spring. When I had drank as much as I could swallow, I ran to the top of the highest rock and made signs to the boat of our good fortune. The oars were never more vigorously plied. In a short time our companions joined us and I am sure I never saw a happier group. From the East point of the bay we were in, we discovered the Island of Abaco which we were now sure of from its extent, as we knew there was no key so large on the whole bank except the Grand Bahama, which we had left. The shell fish which we brought from the last key we here cut up into small pieces and boiled in fresh water by way of soup, which having made a hearty supper of we laid down round our fire as usual and had a comfortable nights rest. In the morning we left a memorandum of our having been at the spring, in a bottle, and at three o'clock steered for Abaco which was about seven leagues off. There we arrived at 12 o'clock on Monday the 15th and procured a meal of crayfish. Here we

slept and at 1 O'clock A.M., Tuesday 16th, set out and coasted along the South side of Abaco. At 11 o'clock having come about ten leagues, we landed on a small point and having found a supply of conks sat down with them to our usual allowance of water and pittance of mouldy bread. Before one o'clock as we were embarking to pursue our route for the Hole in the Wall on the fourth point of Abaco, from which we judged ourselves about 20 miles, Jack Broderick discovered a sail to the Westward. We were at first of opinion that it was one of the large cranes which had deceived us before, but recollecting there were no sand banks in that direction for these birds to alight on, it was decided that we should make for the sail. To cheer up the men and give them strength for a hearty pull at the oar, a bottle of wine was divided among them. It happened, fortunately, to be perfectly calm, and in three hours we were alongside the Schooner *Ranger* of Charleston, Thomas Bennett, Master, owned by Messrs. Alex and John McChire, from Havana bound to New Providence. From Capt. B. we received the greatest hospitality and attention who, on our approaching his vessel, observing the length of our beards and lank appearance of our visages, immediately imagined we had been starving for some time, and to prevent our being injured by indulging too freely our appetites at first, he had everything eatable put out of sight and delivered us small quantities at a time and often. We found Capt. Bennett had not more than ten gallons of water on board, but we fell in with a brig the next morning, the captain of which supplied with a sufficiency to carry us to Nassau, where we arrived at sundown on Wednesday, the 17th February. From our friends in Nassau, Broadfoot and myself received the most marked attention and after a few days care and good living felt tolerably recruited.

Before we reached the shore after leaving the wreck of the *General Oglethorpe*, the gale had increased so much we were unanimously of opinion that the persons must have perished who were left on board. It however happened otherwise for a wrecker some days after found five of them on two keys a few miles from where we landed, and two of them having arrived at Nassau on the 1st March they gave me the following account—The gale was so severe they soon saw the impossibility of the boat's return and determined to remain with the wreck as long as she would hold together in preference to trusting to the raft which they thought could not get through the reef, and when the ship began to roll from side to side they lashed themselves in the chains with the ends of the lanyards which were left hanging in the Dead-Eyes when the masts were out away. In this situation they were when they saw the slaves drown without a possibility

of assisting them and one of the men, soon after having got his arm broke in the chains, was also drowned. The fore-castle parted as they supposed about 1 o'clock in the morning and floated away and soon after the star-board side of the deck lifted up from the timbers. When the stump of the mainmast also went adrift, Mr. Frazer, the 2nd mate, Bob Davis an apprentice, and Green got on the mast and when it was about 20 yards from the ship the cook, who was an excellent swimmer, attempted to reach it, but was drowned in a breaker and in a very short time the others were seen to perish. When this happened the remaining five were hanging to the starboard quarter gallery which still stood upright, though the upper deck was then gone; and the after part of the lower deck separating they got on it and having drifted about on it for 24 hours at last landed on Carter's Key a few miles to leeward of where we were cast away. The wreckers informed them the Key we were first on was Fish Key. They were seventeen days before they were taken off, but had been supporting by eating shell fish, the Seven Year Apple which they found in abundance, and got some water from the Wild Pine⁷ of which they also ate the root or stock and found it to allay their thirst. Many pieces of the wreck drifted on shore while they remained and among other things a barrel of pork. They suffered most for want of fire and clothing as the nights were very cold and the sun exceedingly hot.

Their finding water in the Wild Pine was a most remarkable instance of the bounty of Providence, for without this little supply they must have perished. I take notice of this because on every key we landed I examined the Wild Pine and invariably found them dry.

⁷ Mr. Clench thinks the "wild pine" refers to a wild pineapple. This was common in the West Indies and was first noted by Columbus in 1493 on the island of Guadaloupe. The pineapple during the eighteen hundreds was a very important commercial product in the Bahamas and had probably been imported long before 1800 into the islands if it actually didn't occur there in a wild state prior to that date. In *Sturtevant's Notes on Edible Plants*, he mentions its readiness to run wild from cultivated seed plants. It is the only fruit that would serve as a source of water. Wherever they grow they are referred to as "pines" and the Spanish word is just *piña*. This is the only logical answer to the reference of "wild pine." This certainly could not refer to the Bahama Pine, a long-leaved pine tree that occurs only on Andros, Grand Bahama, the Abacos and New Providence Islands. All of the remaining islands in the Bahamas are without this tree.