Christopher Legge (Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago), James Toutant Proctor [American planter in Fiji], Ts., carbon, bound, pp.1-27.

n.d.
PMB Copyright Notice

All rights reserved

The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau has copied this archive and made it available to PMB Member Libraries and individual researchers purely for the purpose of safeguarding the archival documents and for making them available for non-commercial research, study and private enjoyment. The archive may include culturally sensitive materials. The archive should not be altered or used in ways that might be derogatory to the custodians of the documents and knowledge.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the copyright holder.

The copyright holder retains all literary, artistic and intellectual property rights for material in this collection. It is the responsibility of the user to determine any copyright restrictions, obtain written permission and pay any fees necessary for the reproduction or proposed use of the materials.

The PMB has made all reasonable efforts to contact the original copyright owners of these papers. In the event, however, that any community or community representative feels aggrieved by the copying and distribution of these papers, the individual or community is invited to contact the Bureau on email: pambu@anu.edu.au in order to resolve the matter amicably through mutual discussion.
JAMES TOUTANT PROCTOR
NOT TO BE REMOVED FROM THE LIBRARY.

***

JAMES TOUTANT PROCTOR

***

COPY OF A PAPER PREPARED BY CHRISTOPHER LEGGE OF THE FIELD MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY, CHICAGO

Original Draft on File 650/1 of the British Residency Information Department.
JAMES TOUTANT PROCTOR

James Toutant Proctor made his living in many ways, as a railroad man, tobacco planter, and coffee planter. His most notable work was as a recruiter of men and slaves. He is best known as a notorious recruiting agent in the Pacific coast and labor trade. He did little to help a biographer as he only wrote when forced to do so. One letter of apology survives, composed to obtain release from forced confinement on a warship. His only recorded utterance was made as one of his victims lay dying - a time he would be expected to say something. His character is shown in a series of brief glimpses provided by others.

Proctor and his twin brother Stanley, who died in infancy, were born on January 30, 1816, probably on the Plott's plantation home. They had an older brother, born in 1814, and a younger brother and sister. The plantation was near the southern shore of Lake Borgne, which is actually an arm of the Gulf of Mexico. The locality is part of the Mississippi delta and is a network of bayous and marshlands with higher plateaus suitable for cultivation.

Both the father, Stephen Richard Proctor II, and the mother Elodie Toutant non Bourgogne belonged to Louisiana's sugar plantationocracy. She was of aristocratic French and Italian descent. One ancestor, a Huguenot named Silas, led an unsuccessful revolt against Edward I. He fled to France and changed his name to Plott. There were outstanding military figures in both families. Stephen's grandfather, Thomas, born in County Longford, Ireland, emigrated to Philadelphia. A carpe in the beginning, he became during the Revolutionary War, Colonel of the 4th Regiment of Continental Artillery and fought with distinction at Brandywine and in other engagements. As a lieutenant, he helped to crush the Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania in 1794.

About 1799 he secured a large land grant from the Spanish government of Louisiana. Proctor Point, jutting into Lake Borgne, appears on the modern map. It seems, however, that the development of the land covered by this grant was done by his successors and that most of his time was spent in Philadelphia where he died.

Thomas' son, Stephen Richard I, served as a captain of a dragoon regiment in the War of 1812. He died in 1811 and was buried near his plantation. Later the body was moved to the Charlotte National Cemetery, close to the scene of the battle of New Orleans in which he had fought under Andrew Jackson.

One of Elodie's brothers was Pierre Gustave Toutant Bourgogne, the most glorious of the Confederate generals who became the symbol of Southern gallantry. He fought at one time or another in every theater of the war.

In 1862, the two plantations of Stephen Richard II and his widowed mother, had between them a total of 1,500 acres under sugar and Indian corn. They owned 230 slaves.

* * * *

In January 1862, the Louisiana State Seminary and Military Academy opened at Alexandria with Colonel William T. Sherman as its Superintendent. Proctor entered for the second term. There were about a hundred cadets and of these at least four were his cousins; two, Rene and Ernest, were Bourgogne's sons. In a letter to Sherman, written in July, Bourgogne said "Should young Proctor have need of any money I will send him some, for his father and family have gone to the Virginia Mountains for the summer so he is to go next term". Sugar prices had been excellent since 1856 and it is not unlikely that a trip to these fashionable places had become an annual event in the life of this family.

Sherman was a conspicuous success as Superintendent, but being a firm believer in the preservation of the Union, felt obliged to resign when Louisiana seceded in January 1861. A number of the staff wrote "about half or more of our cadets were Creoles and people of mixed origins and some never lived". Referring to February 20th, the day Sherman left, he said "he had every man and boy of us who remained that morning at the Academy went into the Confederate Army except two who entered the Union Army".

The Civil War began on April 12th when Fort Sumter, at the entrance to Charleston harbor, was bombarded into surrender by artillery commanded by Beauregard. The cadets gradually took themselves off from the Academy and when Proctor and his cousin Harri did so early in May, only a third remained.

Beauregard was living in an aura of glory, and was frequently referred to as the "Hero of Sumter" and the "Great Creole". The Southern Carolina Legislature granted him the privilege of sending two pupils to the Military Schools of the state and he chose his son Harri and Proctor. They entered the Arsenal in Charleston in January 1862. Proctor's desire must have been to get into active service as soon as possible. In August, he and several other cadets took themselves off to Columbia without permission where a battle was being raised. Pressure was somehow brought to bear upon them and they returned to the Arsenal. He again left the same month in November, just in time to fight in the bloody first battle of the whole war. This was at Fredericksburg, half way between the opposing capitals of Washington and Richmond. The battle was fought on 13th of December on the heights above the town. Some of the enemy was broken and rolled back by the devastating fire of Confederate artillery and advanced riflemen. "It is well that war is so terrible" remarked General Robert E. Lee, as he watched the carnage, "or we would grow too fond of it."

In February 1863, Proctor was promoted to be a 2nd Lieutenant in the 1st Carolina Infantry Regiment for "distinguished valor and skill". This was followed by his commission, effective from January 13th. Unfortunately the details of the promotion which won him this promotion from the records cannot be found. They probably perished along with so many other Confederate records. This famous regiment was one of five which formed a brigade, first known as Gregg's and after Gregg's death at Fredericksburg, as McCown's.

---


Thomas History of the South Carolina Military Academy 1893 pp. 114 and 126.

Soon after the battle, the brigade went into winter quarters together with other components of "Stone wall" Jackson's corps where it remained for four months.

Proctor is not heard of again until the early morning of May 3rd, the second day of the battle of Chancellorsville, known as "Lee's Masterpiece". The day before, Jackson's corps of fifteen battalions had made its great outflanking march and in the two remaining hours of daylight, its six leading battalions had surprised and routed the right wing of the Union Army. Whilst reconnoitering the same night, Jackson had been mortally wounded by the mistaken fire of men of a North Carolina regiment. J.E.B. Stuart had succeeded to the command and launched a vigorous attack at sunrise. Within an hour, owing to casualties, Col. D.H. Hill, the fourth ranking officer, found himself in command of McCown's brigade.

In his report, written after the battle, he said: "... From him (Col. Edmunds) I did not receive any orders as he was, I report to say, soon severely wounded, as likewise my gallant young subaltern Lieut. James W. Proctor (Company B, First Regiment), when I had just before detailed to act as his assistant adjutant-general, and who, after a very few minutes of duty, lost his leg."

Proctor's cap of bitterness must have been Allied. Though barely 17 years of age, he had been in the thick of the fighting in two outstanding Confederate victories. Now he would have to content with a less active role. The army records say that he was transferred to the Heavy Artillery Regiment between the end of June and the end of August 1863 and carried on the muster rolls of his company until retirement on April 6, 1864. The term "retirement" here is puzzling. If his active service ceased it would only have been for a brief period. This regiment was stationed on the South Carolina coast with headquarters at Charleston where Beauregard conducted the defence of the city from September 1862 until April 1863 when he left for the more urgent task of holding Petersburg, the key to Richmond. It is likely that Proctor left with him.

---

5 Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. Ch. XXXVII, pp. 904 - 905.
Both as the cradle of the rebellion and as a strategic port, Charleston was an important objective of the Union forces. Strenuous attempts were made to capture it by land and by sea. All failed. The minutes of a Confederate Veterans Association when Proctor applied for membership in 1893, say that he served under General Hardee in the Carolinas campaign. Trying to stop Sherman in his March to the Sea, Hardee had a totally inadequate force. He evacuated Savannah in December 1864 and Charleston the following month and retreated to join the Army of Tennessee under J.E. Johnston with Beauregard as second in command.

At the surrender at Greensboro, North Carolina, in April, Proctor was sent to obtain the paroles of the staff. Sherman recognized his old pupil and showed much sympathy over the loss of his leg. Patting him on the head he remarked "... But you were always a wild boy, you know; you would never take care of yourself."

Still a Lieutenant, James appears as an Ordnance officer in a list of staff and detached officers serving at Beauregard's headquarters at Greensboro on May 1. Beauregard collected all the Louisiana soldiers and they departed for New Orleans together. It was impossible to conceal the identity of Beauregard. This remnant of a defeated army took on the appearance of a triumphant progress. A vast crowd welcomed them at the end.

Proctor must have settled down quickly to the serious study of law as he was admitted to the Louisiana bar in May 1867. A New Orleans directory of 1870 lists the law firm of Kennedy, Chiapella and Proctor. He must, however, have left New Orleans that year, as in August he embarked at Melbourne, Australia, on the S.S. Alhambra for the Fiji Islands. A.B. Brewster, later to become Governor's Commissioner for the provinces of Colo North and

---

7 "Military operations of General Beauregard" — Alfred Roman, Vol. II, p. 573
New York, 1884
8 "Military Figure in Bronze" in "Swords and Roses" — Joseph Hergesheimer 1923
Coles East, was a fellow passenger and wrote that "he was very popular from the gaiety and charm of his manner and the way he sang French chansonnets".  

Of the 170 passengers for Fiji about forty were assisted by the Polynesia Company formed in Melbourne in 1868 for the purpose of exploiting the cotton possibilities of the islands, resulting from bargains with "King" Cakobau.

It is not known whether Proctor left for Australia with the intention of going on to Fiji. General George Latham, a Virginian, who was U.S. Consul at Melbourne until September 1869 was one of this company's principle promoters. It is unlikely, however, that Proctor was one of its protégés as he did not settle in one of the areas which it was seeking title to.

The young Earl of Pembroke and Dr. George Kingsley, (brother of the author of Westward Ho!) his private physician, met Proctor early in November, a few days after their yacht had been completely wrecked at Nukubasaga islet. The Earl wrote sketches of a number of pioneering types, not at a Levuka hotel. Of Proctor he said "...That little fair-haired young fellow is a relic of the American war - literally a relic, as one leg has been left on the field that saw Stonewall Jackson's death; but he stands on the other like a game cock, and it takes but ten minutes acquaintance to like him, and twenty to be sure he will make his way".

James entered into partnership for cotton growing with a man named Julius Carr and went to Sydney to buy horses, implements and provisions. He returned on March 14th on the 170 ton brig Kastrel. On the night of the 20th, before the cargo had been unloaded, the vessel was tossed onto the beach and damaged beyond repair. A report of the Lands Titles Commissioner in 1881 said "Carr and Proctor" had intended cultivating on a large scale, but the greater part of their plant and goods were lost in Levuka.

9 King of the Cannibal Isles, p. 177
10 Fij i and the Labour Trade Temple Bar, Vol. XXXVI, 1872
11 The Fiji Times, March 15th and 22nd, 1871
harbour during the great hurricane of 1871".

Despite this disaster, the partners managed to make a start the following month. The place chosen was on Viti Levu, ten miles west of the Ba River, near the break in the hills known as the "Leuteka Gap". Here a tract of 1500 acres had been purchased from the native owners, ten years earlier by J.A. Carr Hunter, and two others. The three divided it equally by lot. They had intended to raise sheep, but gave up the idea. It seems probable that Julius Carr was in some way related to Hunter.

There were three villages on the land. Carr and Proctor settled near Beaviravi. For neighbours they had William DeCourcy Ireland and his brother Richard at Taumai and John Hall James at Teddau. Ireland, a lawyer, had been a society man in Melbourne. James was a young Englishman who had been growing cotton in the district since 1869. Fortunately, he kept a diary and wrote letters to his family in England. Parts of these have been published. 12

On the second Sunday in July, an event occurred which horrified the white population. Sykes and MacIntosh, partners in cotton growing at Ransawi, were going up the Ba River to shoot ducks when they met a party from the Navasula tribe. Some of these had worked on their plantation. One man wanted to handle a double-barrelled shotgun and as soon as it was in his hands, he shot both partners dead. The bodies were taken to Yandu, a village of the Qaliyalatine, another inland tribe, and there eaten. The villagers doubtless shared in the feast. A punitive force of natives was slowly being organised by the Cakobau Government, which itself had only come into being the previous month, when the Ba settlers took matters into their own hands and called for white volunteers for an expedition. One hundred and fifty, from all parts of the islands, volunteered. Before the appointed day (August 22nd), the Government and British Consul denounced the venture and less than half the number turned up at Varoko. Some,

12 Letters from a Planter in Fiji: Edited by R.A. Derrick
including Ireland, were disappointed that so few had answered the appeal and were in favor of abandoning the project, but men from distant parts were unwilling to return home without action being taken and they won the day. The settlers formed an alliance with Seceleke, a Ba chief, which gave a semblance of legality to the expedition. Brewer, then a lad of 16, was in the Suva contingent. He gave an amusing account of the trials and tribulations of the expedition in his two books "The Hill Tribes of Fiji" and "King of the Cannibal Isles." Together with G.H. Moleseley Marten's diary, they are the main sources for the following account. Proctor was elected "General." He and Cooper, the second in command, also a Southerner, were the only Americans in the "army" which consisted of 55 whites, 130 Ba allies and 100 imported laborers. Proctor rode a horse and was the only man mounted. Much to his annoyance, the settlers marched off singing "Marching Through Georgia." At noon on the second day, Nathumba, a Kaliyaliina village came in sight and several envoys approached to inquire the reason for the expedition within their territory. When told that the surrender of the murderer of the two white men was demanded, they replied that nothing was known of this matter and suggested that as the day was well advanced and it was beginning to rain heavily, food and shelter would be provided. They were told that they were lying, that they must know of the crime and that the village would be attacked. The envoys retired and another party came forward to perform the "bolobolo", a ceremony of challenging the enemy before battle. The trespassers were taunted and told that the stone ovens were hot and that they would be eaten for supper. They offered splendid targets, but the Ba chief explained to the "General" that it would be against the rules to shoot. When they returned to the village, Proctor dismounted and, supported by an ax on each side, gave the signal to advance. A deep and rocky gorge separated the attackers from the villagers who set fire to their buildings and dispersed, but not before a volley had been fired amongst them. Proctor gave the order to retire as it was necessary to find a camping place before dark. Some of the men protested as they were eager to occupy the village. This would have been fatal. He
repeated his order and when the protests continued, offered to resign. The majority loudly dissented. A general retreat ensued, the "army" was kept under fire until it halted for the night. Air was poor as with one exception, the guns were old, trade "gazepes".

Next day the pursuers had vanished and the "army" marched back to Ramau. Brewster found the weight of a hundred rounds of Snider cartridges hard to bear; Proctor, noticing his distress, carried his rifle and comforted him by saying that he himself was only fifteen when he fought for the Confederacy.

After Proctor made a speech and received three cheers, the "army" was disbanded.

It seems that the Baka allies led the expedition to the first Qaliyalalina village as this conforming with their ideas of vicarious justice and absolved them from a longer march into the greatly dreaded Nacutuilla country. Marsham’s and Brewster’s accounts vary as to the casualties. Marsham says that the Nacutuilla people afterwards admitted that three of their men were killed and forty badly wounded when the village was fired on. Brewster says that no one was killed, only one Nacutuilla man was wounded during the retreat and that Proctor’s cork leg was broken during the advance.

Early in February 1873 a greater tragedy occurred a few miles further up the Baka River. Burns, a cotton planter, his wife, their two children and eighteen Tana labourers were massacred. This outrage was carried out by the people of Karara who had no connection with the two tribes involved in the earlier murders. The settlers’ confidence in the Colobau Government had not increased, and when they learned that it was sending an expedition of native troops under Major Fitzgerald "an elderly and most unmilitary looking man", indignation ran high.

On 13th February, a letter signed by De Courcy Ireland and fifteen others including Proctor was given to the Warden of Tavua requesting him to board the vessel bringing the troops and to tell Fitzgerald to withdraw them. The letter concluded
"If in spite of this warning, Major Fitzgerald should determine to
effect a landing, we are prepared to resist by force of arms".  
Meanwhile, the troops had landed but Fitzgerald heeded the warning
and re-embarked with his troops. Dr. Brower, the U.S. Consul, on
the advice of the Government's Chief Secretary, J.B. Thurston,
wrote to Proctor, "cautioning and advising him against engaging
in any warlike expeditions against the interior tribes there may
be in opposition to or without the sanction of the Government," 13
The Government troops were ordered back to Ba and landed on
March 6th, entrenching themselves in the village of Saguna. The
Ba rebel settlers reinforced by others from elsewhere, mustered
in a nearby church, and an uneasy truce prevailed until the arrival
of H.M.S. Dido. Captain Chapman handled the situation well. He
oversewed the settlers but obtained an understanding whereby they
would be permitted to co-operate with the Government forces in
punishing the murderers. De Courcy Ireland and White, another
ringleader, were deported to Sydney on the warship.

Towards the end of April a notice was circulated among
the local settlers which read "The Major intends to attack (Kasawa)
on Monday next and invites anyone who is fond of shooting to
accompany him". It is not known whether Proctor accepted but he
certainly indulged in his fondness for shooting the previous
month and without even having to leave his compound. On March 21st
Ratu Isikeli, Governor of the Ra and Yasawa Provinces, forwarded
statements by two Fijians to R.S. Symonston, the Secretary of Native
Affairs; one said that a teacher took turtle shell to Proctor to
sell. Proctor refused to buy, and when the man pleaded with him
got a gun and shot him in the foot as he was running away. The
other said that Proctor had made known that anyone from Senkara
village would be shot if he came on his property. A man related
to Tui Ba was walking along the public track near Proctor's house.
Proctor, who was on horseback, drew his revolver and without saying
anything shot him in the shoulder. Markham, who had moved to the

13 Letters Brower to Thurston, letter dated February 14th, 1873
locality had noted in his diary in February the previous year that
he had heard that Proctor had shot a Fijian in the leg.

Carr and Proctor received a letter from Swanston on March
23rd whilst Marcham was visiting them. It said "In carrying out
the plan for preventing future trouble between the whites and
natives in this district, the townspeople of Raviravi, a native
town on your property, will be immediately removed to Seguru and
this town abandoned". A similar letter was received by De Courcy
Ireland in respect of Tavara and probably by James in respect of
Teidamu. Carr replied on behalf of himself and his partner saying
that they were quite willing for the villagers to remain on their
property and that in their opinion no public benefit will come
from their removal. The natives themselves he said were most
anxious to remain on their present terms. Captain Harding
reported at the end of the month that when he came with his troops
and destroyed the two villages, Carr and Proctor presented them-
seves with rifles and protested on the grounds that the houses
were on their land and that Proctor was an American citizen.
Teidamu was probably destroyed at the same time, as James in a
letter to his mother dated 3rd April, wrote "The Government talk
a great deal about subduing the mountaineers, but the only thing
that I have found them to do is to burn one of my towns and take
all the natives away, for which I shall enter an action against
them if I can see any chance of making anything out of it; for
these people used to come over here to work, and paid me their
rent (not much value, about three pounds a year); but it was their
being there, all willing and ready to work, for I shall want them
when the cotton picking comes on, and I depend so much on them as
they were fond of me".

After Karawa was taken and burnt, the troops moved against
Sabato which had been in league with it. Marcham noted on May
22nd that Proctor intended to go with them.

James became ill and went to New Zealand or Australia for
about a year in January 1872, leaving Proctor to run his plantation.
In November 1873, he wrote to his father saying "Proctor was inclined to be extravagant and as I did not agree with it he has left me ..... I am now in partnership with Mr. Marsham". "Carr and Proctor" according to the finding of the Land Titles Commission in 1881 (Report 1040) "had at times between 70 and 80 acres under cotton, but in 1874 when they gave up they had lost everything and owed the firm of Hennings Bros. £1500." Proctor probably left Fiji early in 1874. Marsham mentions in September 1873 that he is going to America, and the following January that Carr had left Fiji.

In October 1874, the Royal Humane Society sent its bronze medal to the Admiralty for presentation to Proctor who had been awarded it for a rescue which had taken place in June the previous year. The Admiralty forwarded the medal to E.L. Layard, who after the Deed of Cession, had been appointed Administrator of Fiji. Layard forwarded it to the British Consul in San Francisco as Proctor was then living at La Laguna, Rancho, Santa Barbara, California. In the accompanying letter, dated 7th April 1875, Layard said "In working out of Viti Levu Bay H.E. gunboat Alacrity ..... struck upon a coral patch - there being much wind and sea at the time. Both boats were lowered for the purpose of carrying out an anchor, in which purpose they were sunk at some distance from the ship and of the two only one came again to the surface. Several of the seamen could not swim and there was not another boat to assist them. In this emergency Lieut. Callaghan and Mr. Proctor (who was a passenger) gallantly jumped overboard and by their exertions saved all but one man. The gallantry of Mr. Proctor deserves especial recognition inasmuch as he labours under the loss of a leg". The medal followed him back to Fiji and he at last received it from Sir Arthur Gordon at Levuka in March 1876. It is ironic that one who was to become so infamous as a "blackbirder" should have performed this humane act from a ship which had been built for the express purpose of suppressing "blackbirding".

After an absence of over a year, concerning which nothing is known, Proctor re-appears in the South Pacific again, to make
a fresh start as a copra trader in Rotuma.

F.S. Whitcombe, who lived for some years in Rotuma wrote that he learned that Proctor had spent a short time on this island, but finding the competition from two traders who were firmly established, too strong, moved to Wallis and Futuna. Philippe Viel has given a full account of "L'affaire Proctor" in his article "James Toutant Proctor Commercant a Wallis et Futuna".

Proctor arrived in Futuna during 1875. A letter testifying to his good character written by Mgr. Odin, who had been Archbishop of New Orleans for nine years when he died in May 1870, greatly impressed Bishop Baleillon and his priests. He established stores at Futuna and also at Wallis with a Mr. Jimison as his agent. In his schooner he carried copra from these two islands to Fiji and his business began to prosper.

According to accounts given by the priests, he returned from Fiji in April 1876 and after looking for a girl for his concubine at Wallis he went on to Futuna where he arrived in a hostile frame of mind against the Mission. The only reason to account for his anger which the priests could suggest was that he was not paid in English money for the passages of some natives. On the evening of April 21, Proctor went to the church and waited until a service had ended. When Father Quiblier came out he punched him on the head. He was seized by a native but before being overpowered, he attempted to fire twice at the Father. The caps snapped, but the pistol failed to go off. The Chiefs wanted to have Proctor shot, but the Bishop intervened. He was confined in a hut and his leg taken away. He remained confined and repentant until the French warship Vice arrived on July 1. Commandant Riviere was pressed for time. He obtained a report from Quiblier and had Proctor taken on board. During the voyage to Levuka, Proctor ate at his table. Proctor composed

14 Letter published in Pacific Island Monthly, Dec. 1948
15 Published in the Journal de la Societe des Oceanistes, Dec. 1963
a letter to Bataillon. The following translation of which was later published. It is the nearest approach to a literary composition of Proctor’s which has come to light.

"On board of the Vire, Levuka, July 5, 1876.

"My Lord, I come to express to your Lordship all my regrets for the violent action in which I indulged towards one of your missionaries, under the influence of a belief that I was contradicted. It is not necessary to affirm to you that my intention had never been to make an attempt upon his life. It was only when thrown on the ground, and when I thought my existence to be in danger, that I tried to make use of weapons. I hope, my Lord, you will grant me a full Christian pardon.

"I hope, when my business will call me again to Fortuna and Wallis Island in those counties whose laws I respected and will respect, my relations with the mission will not suffer from the fact which is now passed.

"In consideration of these feelings which I express with sincerity, the commander of the Vire decides, under his responsibility (the commercial relations between both parties being absolutely reserved) that the affair, which took place in Fortuna the 21st April, 1876, is settled, and he sets me quite free at Levuka.

"The witnesses to this letter I willingly make choice of, are M. the Consul of the United States and M. the Commander of the Vire. In that capacity they sign with me.

I am, with deep respect,
My Lord,
Your most obedient servant
James Proctor
The Consul of the United States:— The Commander of the Vire:—
C.W. Drury, U.S. Vice Consul H. Riviere

"Owing to the difficulty I experienced in using my right hand, the Commander of the Vire consented to write this letter for me. James Proctor”. 16

16 Viel had not seen the original letter. For his article he re-translated this translation back into French.
William Diaper, who probably not Proctor in Fiji gives
reasons in an account of the incident, written about fourteen years
later. Proctor probably supplied the details. "... Proctor
had taken to himself a female partner, without the consent of the
'nero', not thinking it necessary, as she was a half-caste
daughter of a former trader -- a European Portuguese, by, I believe,
a Samoan mother, and so, if so, both father and mother foreign to
the island, in consequence of which fact, the priest had no
earthly control whatever over her, neither had he over Proctor,
but yet he must be meddle-making according to their craft, and so
he went to their house to drag the woman away by force. He was
accompanied by his Kanaka-synidons, and after insisting in the
most imperious language, which most of these people know so well
how to assume upon all such occasions! -- Proctor objected, giving
all the reasons, and dared them to enter his house, but still all
to no effect. They rushed in, headed by the priest, and, by his
orders, laid violent hands on the woman".

On July 16th Proctor and Consul Druzy set off in a small
ketch for Wallis. On arrival three letters were sent to the
mission; one from Riviere said that he had released Proctor for
the good of the Mission and that he doubted whether he had really
tried to kill the priest, and two from Proctor, the one already
mentioned and another in his own handwriting demanding damages for
the wrongs done to him. The Bishop was absent and the priest in
charge denied these claims and said the matter could only be
decided by the Bishop. Proctor found that his agent had decamped
with money and goods to the value of £400. The ketch went on to
Futuna and Druzy called a meeting of the chiefs at Proctor's house.
He spoke sternly to them. Whilst admitting that Proctor had
arrested in slapping the priest, he said that this did not justify
then in ill-treating him. The chiefs admitted that he had not
tried to shoot the priest and put all the blame for the ill-treatment
onto their spiritual advisers. A second meeting was held at which

17 "Cannibal Jack", published 1928
Drury explained that in view of the injuries inflicted on Proctor, the length of his confinement, the loss of business he had experienced and the expenses he had been put to to obtain redress, he considered it to be his duty to impose a heavy penalty to prevent such an occurrence ever happening again to an American citizen. They would have to pay damages to the extent of $15,000. It was agreed that this would be paid by supplying 35 tons of good copra every four months. The value of a ton to be $40. The pair returned to Levuka, and the Fiji Times published an account of the trip on August 12th. This concluded by saying that the newspaper had been informed that the Mission had consented to pay half the damages awarded.

The amazement and indignation of the Bishop and his priests can be imagined. Vigorous protests and appeals on behalf of the Futumias ensued. Finally, in February 1877, Hamilton Fish, then U.S. Secretary of State, entirely repudiated Drury's award on the grounds that his consular jurisdiction did not extend beyond Fiji.

Bishop Ellroy succeeded to the diocese of Central Oceania on Bataillon's death in April. He sent a copy of Proctor's letter written on board the Vio to the Fiji Times. His accompanying letter said that he believed that it had had some influence on the decision. Both letters were published on September 1, 1877.

Some time before June 1877, Proctor established himself at Sasum Bay on Malakula in the New Hebrides, five miles north of Port Sandwich. On the 21st of that month, W.B. Giles, a passenger on the brigantine Bobtail Nag called on him. He wrote "He was engaged like us in recruiting labour, but for the German Firm of Hademann & Co., who at this time were opening several trading stations in these Islands... He had put up a strong palisade around the main building as a protection against any attack that might be made by the Kondoms, and inside the house, a couple of savage looking bulldogs were chained up. There were several white men living with him and about fifty foreign boys, all of whom he had armed with guns, with which they practised shooting.

18 Hademann & Co. traded from Levuka, Fiji.
at a target put up on the beach, so that in case the Mallicollos natives approached with any evil designs they would meet with a warm reception." 19

In April 1878, Robert Glissen, a successful sandalwood and coffee planter on Efate, reported, "On the evening of 23rd January last, Mr. James T. Proctor of the cutter Ringdove came out in his boat to see me, remaining for the night. Next morning found that eleven of my Api (Epi) labourers had absconded with the boat". He goes on to say that they went for a spree and that eight of them were massacred by local natives for no apparent reason. The boat was hidden near a village. He did not know whether Proctor had recovered it. 20

Not long after this incident, malaria fever and a hurricane caused Proctor to take refuge at Apia, Samoa. The Presbyterian Mission ship Dayspring anchored in Susun Bay on August 10th and Rev. Thomas Neilson wrote, "An American named Proctor had been here, but had left. There had been a hurricane, which had destroyed most of the native food, and sixteen men out of twenty-eight belonging to other islands, who had been working for him, had died of starvation. Besides this, he had been fighting with the natives, and had killed three of them. They all expressed great dislike of him .... He had the spirit of a slave-driver, and was a curse wherever he went." 21

The Samoan Times gives the information that Messrs. Proctor and Cullen and 33 natives arrived at Apia from the New Hebrides on September 21 on the schooner Mary Anderson. Proctor was then employed by J.C. Godfrey and Sons.

When Peter Cullen, a kidnapper of the worst reputation was murdered by natives on the south coast of Malekula in 1883, the authorities decided that a punitive expedition was not warranted.

---


20 Vol. 33, Records of C. in C. Australian Station of H.M.

Proctor sailed again for the New Hebrides in January 1879 in another labour ship, and he began a four year association as a recruiting agent with the Zweigniederlassung der Deutschen Handels und Plantagegesellschaft für Südseeinseln zu Hamburg, the successor to Goddefroy. The firm was colloquially referred to as the D.P.H.G. or the long handle firm.

In October 1882 John Higginson, a Noumea businessman, founded the Compagnie Caledonienne des Nouvelles Hebrides. Donald McLeod who had been in the group since 1870 sold his land to the company and became its local manager at Havannah Harbour, Efate.

Sometime between the founding of the C.C.N.H. and early in March 1883, when he "purchased" the Caledonia, a 58 ton schooner from McLeod, Proctor left the D.P.H.G. to serve with the C.C.N.H. His schooner had been built in New Zealand and the question of its sale to Proctor led to much correspondence.

J.B. Thurston, Assistant High Commissioner for the W.P.H.C. wrote, "Doubts were entertained as to the nationality of the vessel, for, whilst the law of the U.S. forbade a foreign-built vessel receiving American nationality, the vessel was generally believed by people connected with the New Hebrides to be McLeod's property, and to be sailing under American colours simply for the purpose of evading the Pacific Islanders' Protection Acts." 22

According to H.E.L. Frisby, 23 Proctor claimed land at Observation Point, Port Sandwich. He gave presents to the people and got them to build a house on the land, telling them that it would be for his white manager who would trade in copra. Later, on the night of April 13th, 1883, members of the crew from the Caledonia and from the Energy and Roderick Dhu, two other labour vessels, captured natives from Childers, a village on the Brúkraine

22 Letters to Rear Admiral Tryon dated 10th September 1885.

23 Frisby left the writer some notes which he had made in Noumea during the 1939-45 world war. He did not record their sources which were French and mainly old newspapers. The writer has been unable to obtain information of the incident he mentions elsewhere.
River. Three natives were killed. More were taken from two other small villages and the three vessels sailed off with twenty-eight "recruits". One of the crew of the Caledonia was killed by fire from the shore. On board, a bill of sale for the land was drawn up and witnessed by the half-Greek mate, George Pacio, and the "recruits" added their marks to the document.

A few days later Captain Bartholomew Gaspard of the C.C.N.H. arrived at Port Sandwich, saw the house and heard of the raid. He returned to Efate and told Proctor that the land had already been acquired by the C.C.N.H. Proctor replied that he had the title deeds and would have to be paid for them.

When the Fiji Labour schooner Albatross was at Port Sandwich, Malekula, on November 24th, George Wright, Government Agent, wrote in his journal, "Found the people rather timid. They say a vessel has been there about three months ago, which took some boys (they say stole them). They said it was a Niuena vessel with a man with one leg, another one said it was the "Caledonia" (McLeod's vessel), which is, I believe, sailed by Proctor, who has lost a leg; some of the people say the boys were taken to Sandwich; another says they were taken to Aoba. (McLeod, I am informed, has stations or plantations on both of these places)."

"His (Proctor's) recruiting methods ... were exposed when, in about June 1883, a Fiji Labour vessel landed at Suva a Malekula man who had sworn off to her in Havannah Harbour. Inquiry in Suva, confirmed when the man was returned to Malekula by another Fiji ship, showed that he, with four other men and seven women, had been kidnapped by Proctor and disposed of by him to McLeod. He, in particular, had come to the boat to buy tobacco, when a shot was fired into the water to distract his attention and he was dragged aboard". 24

At the end of August, Stanley James was a passenger on the Caledonia from Efate to Tana. He had adopted the name of

---

Reference notes by Fiji Agent-General of Immigration WPHC Inward Correspondence, General, no. 257 of 1884.
Julian Thomas when he emigrated to America a dozen years before. Much of his writing was done under the pseudonym of the Vagabond. He and Proctor had met in 1878, when he went to New Caledonia as a special correspondent of the Sydney Morning Herald to report on a native revolt. On this, his second visit to the S.W. Pacific, he was sponsored by the Melbourne Argus. Although no recruiting was done on this voyage, the labour trade was one of the subjects he had undertaken to write about. During the three or four days they were together, Proctor turned on all of his charm and James considered him to be a fine Southern gentleman who had been maligned by missionaries and government officials alike. In his book, "Cannibals and Convicts" he praises Proctor's handling of the vessel and consideration for her crew. Proctor drew his attention to the fact that he went ashore unarmed and that the natives came on board without fear. Proctor was indignant because some Tana men who had been taken to Samoa and Hawaii on a three year agreement to work on German plantations had not been returned after working four years.

After James had spent about three weeks on Tana, the Caledonia returned on September 21st. Instead of the stars and stripes she flew the tricolour and he was disappointed to find that Gaspard had replaced Proctor as captain. Back in Sydney, he met Fazio who had refused to sail under a French skipper and mourned the departure of Proctor. He said, "If he comes back again I will go mate with him for less wages than anyone else".

James says nothing about the reasons for Proctor's sudden replacement or where he had gone. Perhaps McLeod had dismissed him because of his land dealings.

Early in December, Commander W.A.D. Acland had the ship inspected at Savannah Harbour. He wrote, "... She has been strongly suspected of unlawful kidnapping, and I have information that she has altered her rig, and that she has been disguised in different ways, and has flown three different flags during the

25 Published in 1886
present year - during which time she was under the virtual control of one man, McLeod - I hope I have justified my course in causing her to be boarded".

"Captain Proctor, whose proceedings when in command of the Caledonia were open to grave suspicions in matters connected with the labour trade, is, I believe, now in Sydney".26

Gaspard, who was in command at the time of the boarding, said that the C.C.M.H. had bought the Caledonia on September 8th and changed her name to Ernestine on November 23rd.27

The main reason for disguising the vessel was to deceive possible recruits into thinking she was a Queensland or Fijian labour vessel as they preferred working conditions in those places than elsewhere.

Proctor returned to Samoa and was re-employed by the D.H.P.G. Early in July 1885, the Upolu, in which he had worked during his past period with this company, returned to Apia with recruits from the New Hebrides, some of whom knew English, having served one or two periods in Queensland. A number complained that Proctor had made them drunk on shore. Later, when they came to their senses they found that they were at sea. They were next forced to sign contracts at pistol point. Dr. Steubel, the German Consul, held an inquiry and directed that twelve of them be returned to their villages and that Proctor's employment as a labour agent be terminated forthwith. Thereupon Proctor immediately returned to the C.C.M.H.28 and probably left Samoa for good.

Little information has been found concerning the Samoan periods of his life. Charles Reid, an old resident of Apia said

26 Letter to Commodore J.E. Erskine dated 10th December 1883.
27 Letter to Sir G. William Des Voeux, Acting High Commissioner W.P.H.C.
28 Acting Deputy Commissioner Churchward's dispatch of July 14th 1885, to Assistant High Commissioner WPHCMF130/1885, and Note from German Ambassador in London to F.C. dated April 6th 1886.
in a letter to H.E.L. Friday, which was written some twenty-five years ago, that he married there and went to New Zealand for reasons of health. Reed gave no details.

John Cromer in his book 29 says that Proctor, two married couples and two single men brought by him were given passages on the Helena to Queensland from Port Havannah. The Helena, a labour vessel made trips from Bundaberg, her home port to the S.W. Pacific. Cromer gives no dates for this trip but from facts mentioned in other parts of the book, it must have taken place at the end of 1885 or beginning of 1886. Proctor got tired of staying on board and went ashore in the recruiting boats. At Bina Harbour, Malaita in the Solomons he annoyed Cromer by talking in the Fijian language to a crowd of natives some of whom had worked in Fiji. Cromer says, "It was more attitudinizing to use that tongue, and moreover nonsensical, for it was liable to cause misunderstanding. If one were unable to speak to the natives in their own language, then beche-de-mer which alone was spoken in the Queensland plantations, should have been used". Five men from the crowd to which Proctor had been speaking, each armed with a musket, walked off into the bush. Proctor, possibly jokingly said that they had gone off to bring two recruits. Cromer felt that they were up to no good. Later as the two boats were going along the coast, they were fired on and three crewmen were slightly wounded with buckshot. Cromer says, "Proctor was quite unharmed, unfortunately I thought, for a peppering might have helped to remove some of his cocksureness."

The Helena carried Berkshire pigs to help in obtaining recruits as this breed was very popular. At Alite Harbour, a man was carrying a pig across his shoulders when another with a two handed club struck him in the small of the back, breaking the spine and killing him outright. The murderer had apparently acted on a sudden impulse. After glancing at the body of his victim, he ran off. Cromer drew his revolver and was about to shoot him but

on second thought changed his mind. On the Helena when he told
the story there was divided opinion as to what he should have done.
Proctor, as one would expect, thought that he should have shot the
man.

Douglas Rannie, author of My Adventures among South Sea
Cannibals, wrote an unpublished account of a cruise of the Queensland
labour vessel Fearless. Here also no dates are given, but as he
refers to an event which occurred in 1888, the cruise must have
taken place later. The Fearless reached Malaita and after visiting
Soqah (Suu) went on to the next anchorage Hai-da-kai (Nairokai).
"And here" he says "we found the French schooner 'La Marie' recruiting
labour for New Caledonia, and trading in firearms and ammunition.
In the person of her recruiting agent, I found a very old friend and
acquaintance, Captain Proctor ... He was a short, fair-haired man,
turning grey, with a keen blue eye with a merry twinkle in it, as
he was the soul of humour ... We returned with Proctor on board
La Marie, and spent a convivial evening on the French vessel. As
it was futile to compete with a vessel trading in firearms, the
Fearless cleared out early the next morning."

Drenster, Romilly, Cromer and Rannie all tell yarns about
Proctor's 'artificial limb. Cromer's and Rannie's are similar.
They purport to be eye witness accounts. The main difference is
that in Cromer's, the incident happened in Ambrym and in Rannie's
on Malaita. The story is that Proctor calmly sticks a knife into
his cork leg. Thereupon a native standing behind him, wishing to
test his strange immunity from pain, jabs a knife into his other
leg and as a result Proctor jumps into the air.

Attached to a report made by the captain of H.M.S. Cordelia
in December 1891 is a list of colonists in the New Hebrides.
Proctor is mentioned as living at Longangua on the north coast of
Aoba. What he was doing is not recorded.

---

30 Manuscript now in the possession of his son, Mr. D.A.H. Rannie of
Brisbane, Queensland. It was seen by Mr. Robert Langdon in
August 1967 when he was assistant editor, Pacific Island Monthly.
In the main report he says, "The Australian New Hebrides Co. have opened a store at Vila (Efaté Island), and can undersell the French, but have only just started."

Proctor was in charge of this store when in the late afternoon of December 26th, 1892 a woman customer came in. Proctor attempted to rape her, according to her story. She eluded him, and ran off to tell Harry Wastuga, a New Hebridean, who worked for the company, what had happened. Harry thereupon went to the store and apparently rebuked Proctor. Proctor picked up a Winchester rifle and fired at him but missed. He ran up the hill with Proctor in pursuit and made for the manager's house. He begged for mercy but Proctor shot him as he reached the verandah. Hugh Roxburgh, the company's agent was on the S.S. Croyden anchored in the harbour at the time and watched the drama through his binoculars. He went ashore and found Proctor sitting on the store verandah with a furious look on his face. He was holding three Snyder rifles. "I have shot a native" he said. "He is dead by now or might be. I shot him right through the middle. I reserve my defense for the American Government. I am not going to be set upon any longer. I have been set upon too long. I don't want anyone here to interfere with me or question me." He then raised one of the rifles in a menacing manner. Roxburgh went up to the manager's house, arriving just before Harry died.

Proctor barricaded himself in the store and it was not until the next day that he was captured. It was probably only his American citizenship which saved him from a lynching. He was put in irons and taken on the Rockton to Fiji. Besides a trunk with clothes and papers he only had a sovereign and a few shillings and francs.

Two letters were sent to the High Commissioner, one from 23 local residents. It said that they were in danger of their lives with Proctor at large. They believed that he was under the

31 Captain H.T. Grenfell to High Commissioner, 8th December 1891.
32 December 27th, 1892, WPGC MP 3/1893.
influence of liquor when he shot a native without provocation. The other from Roxburgh said that Proctor is being sent in custody and he prays that the High Commissioner "will deal with the matter as the interests of justice may demand". He concluded "Mr. W.J. Neens, bookkeeper of the company and Miss Menzies are the principal witnesses". It is not known whether they also were passengers.

When the Rockton arrived in Fiji on January 3rd, 1893 the High Commissioner, Sir John Thurston, gave it as his opinion that as Proctor was an American citizen, he was not amenable to a British Court of Laws. The fact that he had murdered the servant of a British subject on the premises of a British subject did not affect the issue. The Chief Judicial Commissioner, Sir Humphrey Berkeley confirmed this opinion.

Thurston next inquired of A. St. John, U.S. Commercial Agent, whether he had any authority to deal with Proctor and if so, whether he would exercise it. St. John replied that he had none. He said that Proctor intended to leave for the U.S.A. at the first opportunity.

W.H. Burns, U.S. Commercial Agent, New Hebrides, who was in Fiji at the time, reported the matter to his government on January 28th. He said, "Proctor has left here with the view of visiting Washington to represent his case at the Department of State".

Burns arrived at Vila at the end of April. His full report, dated 15th May, contained the following forceful, if cumbersome, paragraph, "that this shooting affair of Proctor's had had a wide circulation in the Press of the Colonies and that action by our Government is looked forward to in this case if the honor of our National flag is of consideration in the South Pacific and if neglected most probably that either England or France or both who are interested in these islands, will find ways and means to fling


34 January 4th 1893 WPHC M.P. 6/1893
the insult in the face of our Government and at no distant date if
action in this case is neglected". In the meantime the Attorney
General had answered the Secretary of State's inquiry as to whether
Proctor could be prosecuted for the murder in the U.S. Courts.
His opinion was "since the New Hebrides were under the domain of
no civilized power, except that Great Britain has some jurisdiction
over them through a High Commissioner and that the islands are not
within the jurisdiction of any consular officer of this government
... his answer was in the negative". 35

In November the U.S. Vice-Commercial Agent, Fiji, informed
the High Commissioner that the State Department wished to know
Proctor's whereabouts and if he had returned to the New Hebrides
or Fiji, whether he could be detained. 36

Thurston replied that Proctor had left Fiji for Auckland
on January 10th and had there joined an American barque about a
week later bound for New York. He concluded that if he returned
to the S.W. Pacific "... I think arrangements might be made by
the Naval Commander in Chief for Proctor's detention on board one
of Her Majesty's ships and removal to any place within the limits
of the Australian Station, whence representatives of the U.S.
Government might be prepared to take steps for his removal for
trial." 37

Proctor never returned to the Pacific and had probably been
in New Orleans for about seven months when this letter was written.
It is unlikely that he bothered to visit Washington. September 1st
1893, the date of the minutes of the Veteran's Association,
previously referred to, is the earliest known date that he was back
in the "crescent city".

The family plantation had been sold soon after he first
went to Fiji — a sheriff's sale on behalf of a bank. His older

35 May 8th 1893 (Record Group 59 Misc. Letters Part 1, 1903)
36 November 4th WPHC MP 271/1993
brother and sister had both died in 1878, possibly victims of the last great yellow fever epidemic in New Orleans, which carried off over four thousand. His parents died in the course of the next decade. Beauregard had just died — in February 1873. There were doubtless many relatives, war veterans and other friends, however, anxious and able to assist in rehabilitating him. His cousin Rene was a judge and General F.T. Nicholls who had lost a foot at Chancellorville and an arm in another battle had recently been appointed Chief Justice of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

In April 1895, Proctor married Anna nee Ogden, widow of Andrew K. Brown. Her family included prominent citizens of New Orleans, particularly in legal circles. Proctor's obituary in the "Daily Picayune" says that he had been engaged to her many years before, but that the engagement was broken off. Possibly this was one of the reasons why he left America.

The same obituary, which is dated May 16th 1900 also says,

"James T. Proctor, a Confederate veteran who had a romantic and heroic history, passed away yesterday morning ... His death has been expected for several days, and the family and his friends, the old soldiers, have watched at his bedside and done all that they could, to relieve his sufferings and to comfort him in his last hours. The funeral will take place this morning ... from the St. Louis Cathedral .... Very little is known about Mr. Proctor's life while absent from the United States, but he returned to New Orleans about 1893 and was employed as a clerk up to the time of his death. He has been for four years employed in the clerks office of the Civil District Court .... Mr. Proctor was a very quiet man, and like all brave men, very modest and retiring".