



Zaira Kabibi

Bert Mitchell

FLORIDA for SALE, 1819

a THEATER with a MISSION living-history performance
based on first-person perspectives from 200 years ago

SCENE THREE

*Antonio Proctor's cabin,
in an orange grove near St. Augustine*

*Antonio Proctor (AP, historically in his 70s, here in his 30s)
& his son George (GP, historically nearing the age of 21, here as a pre-teen)*

- AP *enters center, singing*
Yankee Doodle went to town,
A-riding on a pony,
Stuck a feather in his cap
And called it ... Spanish Tony.
George!
- GP *reenacting the Battle of Bloody Mosé / in military drill*
Ready ... aim ... fire!
- GP Mijo!
- GP Sí, papa?
- AP Come read me a letter.
- GP Sí, papa – in a minute ...
- AP Ahora mismo, mijo – march!
- GP Sí, mi capitán – marchamos!
Enters marching to this song:
“Todos los buenos soldados
Que asentaren a esta guerra ...”

AP Where are you marching, Sargento [sergeant]?

GP To defend the free blacks of Las Floridas!

AP I see ... Good instinct, son, but bad timing –
History has stolen a march on us.
In St. Augustine,
Governor Coppinger told me that
a Treaty has just been signed:
a Treaty that sells Las Floridas to the United-States.
Time to lay down your rifle,
and take up the pen.

GP Para qué, papa?

AP To make sure this paper says
what I told the notary in St. Augustine
I wanted it to say.

GP Who's it to, papa?

AP To His Catholic Majesty Fernando VII [Fernando el séptimo] of Spain
and to President James Monroe of the United-States.

GP Ready to read, papa.

AP Fire away.

~~~~~

GP Hombres honrados – Men of Honor:

**AP Good start.**

GP My name is Antonio Proctor.

AP Afirmado.

GP I am a free African citizen of La Florida.  
I have won my liberty and my property  
with signal service to both your governments.

AP Preciso. Proceed.

GP Rey Católico, my name is in your records, repeatedly:  
Juan de Arredondo y San Felices, your auditor of war,

has reported me  
*Antonio quotes the commendation with George*  
“un hombre de bien / extraordinario de San Agustín”  
and Governor José Coppinger has rewarded my efforts to  
“pacify the province” with 185 acres of orange grove.

**AP Best oranges anywhere. Gracias, mi Rey.  
Now to President Monroe ...**

Mr. President, I was present for the Boston Tea Party  
and afterward at the Battle of Lexington.  
*George pauses, impressed*

Really? You were at the Battle of Lexington ...

AP go on!

GP Back in those days, a British soldier called himself my master,  
but then as now my love for freedom made me love your Revolution.

AP debajo del Rey, ninguno ...

GP Representatives of both your governments  
have chosen me for skilled diplomacy  
with Native tribes –  
to act as your translator, interpreter, and Indian agent.  
Officials at Panton, Leslie, & Co.  
have sent you written testimony that I have

*Antonio cites the commendation with George*  
“rendered you, and your countries, most essential benefits,  
from my usefulness with the Indians,  
my prudence and good sense.”

They have praised my  
*Antonio speaks the quote with pride*  
“great knowledge of the Indian character and language  
**and great influence over the Florida Indians.”**

*Antonio’s voice joins and eventually overpowers George’s*  
Now I petition you, honorable heads of honorable states:  
Protect every one of my hard-won rights, // and privileges, and immunities  
as Florida changes hands.

~~~~~

AP Hear reason! Do me justice!
Antonio Proctor ... /

GA also known as Spanish Tony.

scripting his X on the parchment

AP Amen – to this I affix my sign.

GP Do you think they'll listen, papa?
Venceremos?

AP Sí, mijo. Toca su honra.
We've told them the truth.
And truth endures through time.

hero-worshipping

GP Were you really at the Battle of Lexington, sir?

AP Yes, George. I've fought for freedom many ways.

GP I'm ready to fight for freedom, too, papa!
sings

“Men if you want to make history
And win fame in the fierce fight that's coming ...”

AP Times are changing, son.
Time to change our tune.
Try this one:

*Antonio lines out the song in English for George,
who repeats in Spanish (taking over at the end of the verse)*

AP Yankee Doodle went to town

GP Floridano viajó

AP Riding on a pony

GP Montado sobre un burro

AP Stuck a feather in his cap

GP Con pluma en sombrero

AP cantó ...

GP “a Treaty's coming!”

AP Bien cantado, mijo –

BOTH say this line, George first and then Antonio

“The Florida Treaty's coming!”

AP God send us a Treaty full of reason, justice, and truth
[un Tratado que tenga razón, verdad, y justicia]!

TABLEAU

© Ben Gunter 2021

Source: Rosalind Parker, "The Proctors – Antonio, George, and John"
(read November, 1943)
Apalachee: the Publication of the Tallahassee Historical Society, vol. 2:
1946, 19-29.

Ben Gunter

Yan-kee Doo-dle went to town
Flo-ri-da-no vi-a jó mon-ta-do so-br'un bur-ro
rid-ing on a po-ny

5
con plu-ma en som-bre ro a trea-ty's com-ing the
stuck a fea-ther in his cap can-tó

10
Flori-da Trea-ty's com-ing!