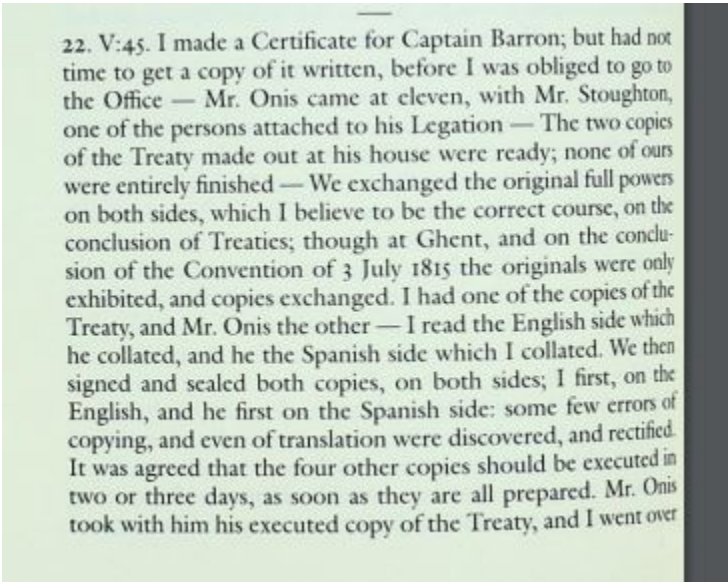


# Theater with a Mission (TWAM)

## Script Development FLORIDA for SALE, 1819

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

from Diary to Drama



22. V:45. I made a Certificate for Captain Barron; but had not time to get a copy of it written, before I was obliged to go to the Office — Mr. Onis came at eleven, with Mr. Stoughton, one of the persons attached to his Legation — The two copies of the Treaty made out at his house were ready; none of ours were entirely finished — We exchanged the original full powers on both sides, which I believe to be the correct course, on the conclusion of Treaties; though at Ghent, and on the conclusion of the Convention of 3 July 1815 the originals were only exhibited, and copies exchanged. I had one of the copies of the Treaty, and Mr. Onis the other — I read the English side which he collated, and he the Spanish side which I collated. We then signed and sealed both copies, on both sides; I first, on the English, and he first on the Spanish side: some few errors of copying, and even of translation were discovered, and rectified. It was agreed that the four other copies should be executed in two or three days, as soon as they are all prepared. Mr. Onis took with him his executed copy of the Treaty, and I went over

extract from *John Quincy Adams Diaries 1779-1821*, ed. David Waldstreicher

extract from Scene One of *Florida for Sale*

*library of John Quincy Adams, US Secretary of State*

*LCA = Louisa Catherine Adams (born 1775)*

*JQA = John Quincy Adams (born 1767)*

LCA Next year, dear friend,  
we should host the ball honoring George Washington's Birthday!  
That could set the stage for electing John Quincy Adams as President in 1824!

JQA Mrs. Adams ...

LCA My dearest friend?

JQA This day, February 22, 1819,  
is perhaps the most important day of my life.

LCA The Florida Treaty?

JQA The Florida Treaty – signed this morning.  
Mr. Onis came at eleven.

I had one copy of the Treaty, and Mr. Onís the other –  
I read the English side (which he collated),  
and he read the Spanish side (which I collated).

We discovered, and rectified,  
some few errors of copying, and even of translation.  
We signed and sealed both copies, on both sides.  
Then I delivered our copy to President Monroe  
and took the Treaty to the Senate.

LCA Yes – Mr. Fromentin, the Senator from Louisiana, told me  
the Senate received your Treaty with “universal satisfaction.”

JQA Its prospects are propitious and flattering in an eminent degree –  
Shall I read you what I’ve been writing about the Treaty, in my diary?

LCA Please do, dearest friend.  
I delight in hearing you read.

Necessarily at the center of her world was her husband, the more so  
because her children were so often displaced and absent, and she was  
more consistently a wife than a mother. Later in life, she would offer  
a portrait of him, lightly disguised as “Lord Sharply,” in her incom-  
plete roman à clef, *The Metropolitan Kaleidoscope*, written in 1827. It  
is worth a full quotation:

Lord Sharply was a man of outstanding talents; and great acquire-  
ments. He was the creature of Art rather than Nature. He had filled  
many high Stations most honorably and with great satisfaction to  
the Nation and Government he represented. His knowledge of  
mankind was vast formed however more from Books than from the  
actual and enlarged Study of man; which led him often to shock  
their prejudices and wound their feelings; dangerous things to trifle  
with, as prejudice is often the predominating impulse of their ac-  
tions. His mind was stored with Classical and polite literature, and  
his every thought might be said to *teem* with learning. His taste had  
been cultivated in the best schools of modern refinement. Persever-  
ingly laborious, there were few things too difficult for him to  
achieve, and the natural coldness and reserve of his manners defied  
the penetration of the most indefatigably prying curiosity, to dis-

extract from *Mrs. Adams in Winter* by Michael O’Brien

extract from Scene One of *Florida for Sale*

LCA “Perseveratingly laborious –  
the good of the Country your constant aim ...”

I’ve been scribbling, too –  
a novel about life in our nation’s capital.  
Would you like to meet a character I’ve just created?

JQA Yes, indeed, Mrs. Adams –  
I delight in hearing you read.

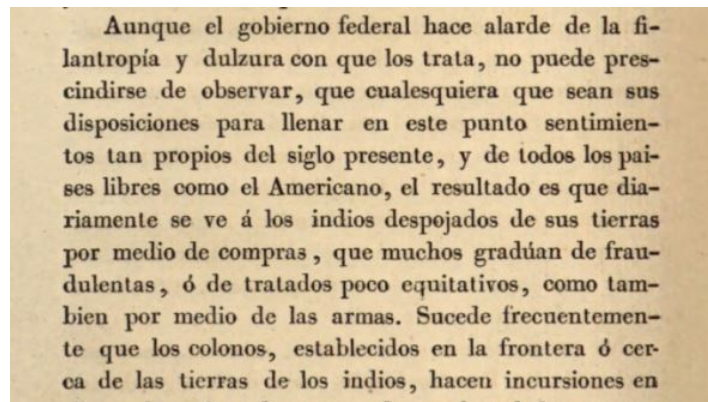
LCA “Lord Sharply” is his name.  
Here’s how I describe him:

“Lord Sharply was a man of outstanding talents –  
Perseveratingly laborious,  
he had filled many high Stations  
with great satisfaction to the Nation.  
But he viewed mankind as the medium  
through which the great plans he formed  
for the welfare of his Country  
were to be matured.  
The good of his Country was his constant aim.  
Only those who were the most constantly in his society could sometimes observe  
the flashing of his eye,  
and the tremulous motion of his lip,  
conveying some faint idea of the volcano that burnt within –”

He’s based on a character from real life –  
do you recognize the original?

JQA I don’t think so, Mrs. Adams. Is he someone we know?

LCA Think on it, kind sir –  
someone matching my description  
may yet spring to mind.



Aunque el gobierno federal hace alarde de la filantropía y dulzura con que los trata, no puede prescindirse de observar, que cualesquiera que sean sus disposiciones para llenar en este punto sentimientos tan propios del siglo presente, y de todos los países libres como el Americano, el resultado es que diariamente se ve á los indios despojados de sus tierras por medio de compras, que muchos gradúan de fraudulentas, ó de tratados poco equitativos, como tambien por medio de las armas. Sucede frecuentemente que los colonos, establecidos en la frontera ó cerca de las tierras de los indios, hacen incursiones en

extract from Luis de Onís *memorias*, 1820

extract from Scene Two of *Florida for Sale*

*Drawing room of Ambassador Onís,  
near 1 in the morning of 22 February 1819:  
CO = Federika Christina von Mercklein, the Ambassador’s dead wife  
LO = Luis de Onís y González-Vara, the Spanish Ambassador*

- CO *Sits, opens her book, and reads softly:*  
 “Aunque el gobierno federal  
 hace alarde de filantropía y dulzura con que los trata,  
 el resultado es que diariamente se ve á los indios  
 despojados de sus tierras ...”
- LO *off left, singing*  
 Tengo fé en el despertar de España:
- CO *joins in*  
 por siglos y siglos, ante gente estraña,  
 siempre invicta fué.
- LO *enters*  
 Cristina! Mi amor?  
 I could have sworn I heard your voice ...  
 La voz mas dulce del mundo ...  
 Silenced now.
- My love, it's done.  
 The great work that I came here to do –  
 to this nuevo mundo whose fevers sapped your life –  
 The Florida Treaty, signed today [hoy firmado]!
- CO ¿Y los indios?  
 ¿”despojados de sus tierras  
 por medio de tratados”?
- LO They're calling it by our names, Cristina:  
 El tratado de Adams y Onís,  
 Y probará, mi alma,  
 una obra digna de tu nombre.
- CO “No siempre se les hace justicia!”
- LO What have I won?  
 I've saved Nueva España for España, mi vida –  
 the Western boundary I've negotiated  
 confirms Tejas y California  
 as indisputably Spanish.  
 The most opulent and desirable provinces in North America remain:  
 Tierras Españoles.
- CO “Queda la mejor parte de sus tierras  
 adjudicada á los Estados-Unidos.”
- LO I've saved our treasury, too –  
 bankrupted by Napoleon.  
 Saved it from an endless procession  
 of unpayable land claims.

The US gets Las Floridas –  
But they also get all of Florida's debts.

CO “hacen incursiones en ellas,  
y les privan de sus ganados,  
y de todo lo que pueden haber á las manos!”

LO And I think I've saved our Treaty from rejection.  
Ten years of hard labor, Cristina!  
A decade of diplomacy  
in an alien land that's killed you  
and made our children *estrangeros en su propia patria*.  
But I've made sure los americanos will eagerly adopt this Treaty.  
La Florida sells herself –  
“the topographical situation of the country,  
the fineness of the climate,  
the fertility of the land” –  
and “bear in mind,  
that the Americans have a passion for  
frequently abandoning one piece of land for another,  
and for always preferring new lands to old.”

THE PROCTORS—ANTONIO, GEORGE, AND  
JOHN

BY ROSALIND PARKER

(Read November, 1943)

This is the story of three generations of a Negro family in Tallahassee—of Antonio, George, and John Proctor. Concerning Antonio, Juan de Arredondo y San Felices, Spanish auditor of war, attested in St. Augustine in 1816, “This man is not one of the ordinary mulattoes of the place.” Later we find a roster of Florida's prominent men testifying to the same effect. What was said of Antonio could, with equal truth, have been remarked of his son and grandson.

According to an account of his life in the *Florida Sentinel* of July 3, 1855, Antonio Proctor was born a slave in Jamaica about 1743. “It is known as a historical fact,” said the paper, “that he was at the battle of Quebec, on the 13th Sept. 1759, some 96 years ago. His recollection of that event was clear and distinct. He was there in the capacity of a body servant to an English officer, and was sixteen years of age, or *more* . . . He was subsequently engaged in the same capacity though under a different officer, during the early period of the Revolutionary war, between this and the Mother Country. He was in the vicinity of Boston at the time the tea was thrown overboard, and afterward at the battle of Lexington . . . Just here there is another wide gap in his history, which we are unable to trace.”

Long before the change of flags in 1821, and probably before 1800, Antonio became the property of the Indian trading firm of Panton, Leslie & Co., which employed him as an interpreter. In this capacity, states a memorial of 1848 in his behalf, he acquired “a great knowledge of the Indian character and language and had great influence over the Florida Indians.” The Spanish authorities also used him as an interpreter. During the War of 1812, when Florida was attacked by the Patriots and their Indian confederates, Antonio was officially credited with having done “much to pacify the province.” In return for his services, Governor José Coppinger in 1816 granted “the free mulatto,” Antonio Proctor, 185 acres of land situated in the uncultivated orange grove about five miles from St. Augustine.

extract from Tallahassee Historical Society journal article about the Proctors

extract from Scene Three of *Florida for Sale*

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

AP = Antonio Proctor, free black citizen and property owner

GP = his son George

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! Mijo!

GP *offstage*

Sí, papa?

AP Come write 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, little soldier [soldito]?

GP To defend the free blacks of Las Floridas!

AP I see ... Good instinct, son, but bad timing –  
History has stolen a march on you.  
El Gobernador Coppinger tells me that  
a Treaty's just been signed,  
ceding Las Floridas to los Estados-Unidos.  
Time to lay down your rifle,  
and take up the pen.

GP Por qué, papa?

AP “Para qué,” mijo.  
To write me a letter.

GP Who to, papa?

AP “To whom,” George.  
To His Catholic Majesty Fernando VII [Fernando el séptimo] of Spain  
and to President James Monroe of los Estados-Unidos.

GP Ready, papa – fire away.

- AP    Hombres honrados – Men of Honor:  
 My name is Antonio Proctor.  
 I am a free African citizen of La Florida.  
 I have won my liberty and my property  
 with signal service to both your governments.  
 Rey Católico, my name is in your records:  
     Juan de Arredondo y San Felices, your auditor of war,  
     has reported me  
     “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.
- Mr. President, I was present for the Boston Tea Party  
 and afterward at the Battle of Lexington.  
 Then, a British soldier called himself my master,  
 but then as now my love for freedom made me love your Revolution.  
 To speed the spread of freedom, I have blessed both your countries with my  
 “great knowledge of the Indian character and language  
 and great influence over the Florida Indians.”  
 Time out of mind, your representatives have chosen me  
 for skilled diplomacy –  
 to act as your translator, interpreter, and Indian agent.  
 They have sent you written testimony that I have  
 “rendered you, and your countries, most essential benefits,  
 from my usefulness with the Indians,  
 my prudence and good sense.”
- Now I petition you, honorable heads of honorable states:  
 Protect every one of my hard-won privileges, rights, and immunities  
 as Florida changes hands.  
 Hear reason! Do me justice!  
 Antonio, or Tony, Proctor
- GP    “Antonio, or Tony, Proctor ...”  
 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.
- GP    Were you really at the Battle of Lexington, sir?
- AP    Yes, George. I’ve fought for freedom many ways.