

the panther under the floor. He raised a puncheon which had not been nailed fast and killed him with the footadz. The only panther ever known to be killed before or since with a footadz.

Laura and the baby were badly bitten and clawed by the panther but soon recovered. She later married Billy Hair, son of Calvin Hair, an Indian fighter. I knew her personally. She died in 1923 at Hen Scratch, the place made famous by Steve Turnbull of the Miami Herald. She was buried in the Whidden cemetery four miles south of Highlands Hammock near Sebring, in Highlands County. One of her daughters, Ida, who married Henry Collier, now lives in Lake Placid, as do many of the grandchildren.

1955

Albert DeVane

Tampa Tribune

Can't help it - just have to tell you the story about the two young men who were exploring the Everglades when suddenly a huge, fierce Florida panther leaped out of the bushes. Both men took off running, but after a short distance, one young man stopped to put on his running shoes. The other young man in amazement asked, "Why in the world are you putting on your running shoes? Don't you know you can't outrun that panther?" The other man quietly answered, "I don't have to. All I have to do is outrun you!"

Part Two

INTRODUCTION TO PART II

This part of the book of some Florida history and stories about Lake Winder and the Upper St. Johns had a strange beginning. Several years ago, I wrote and published the book "I Never Had Enough Money To Leave Town". The title came from a number of people, all from out of state, who would ask me, "Where are you from?" It would always irritate me some, so I would answer, "From right here." They would act surprised, so I always followed with, "because I never had enough money to leave town."

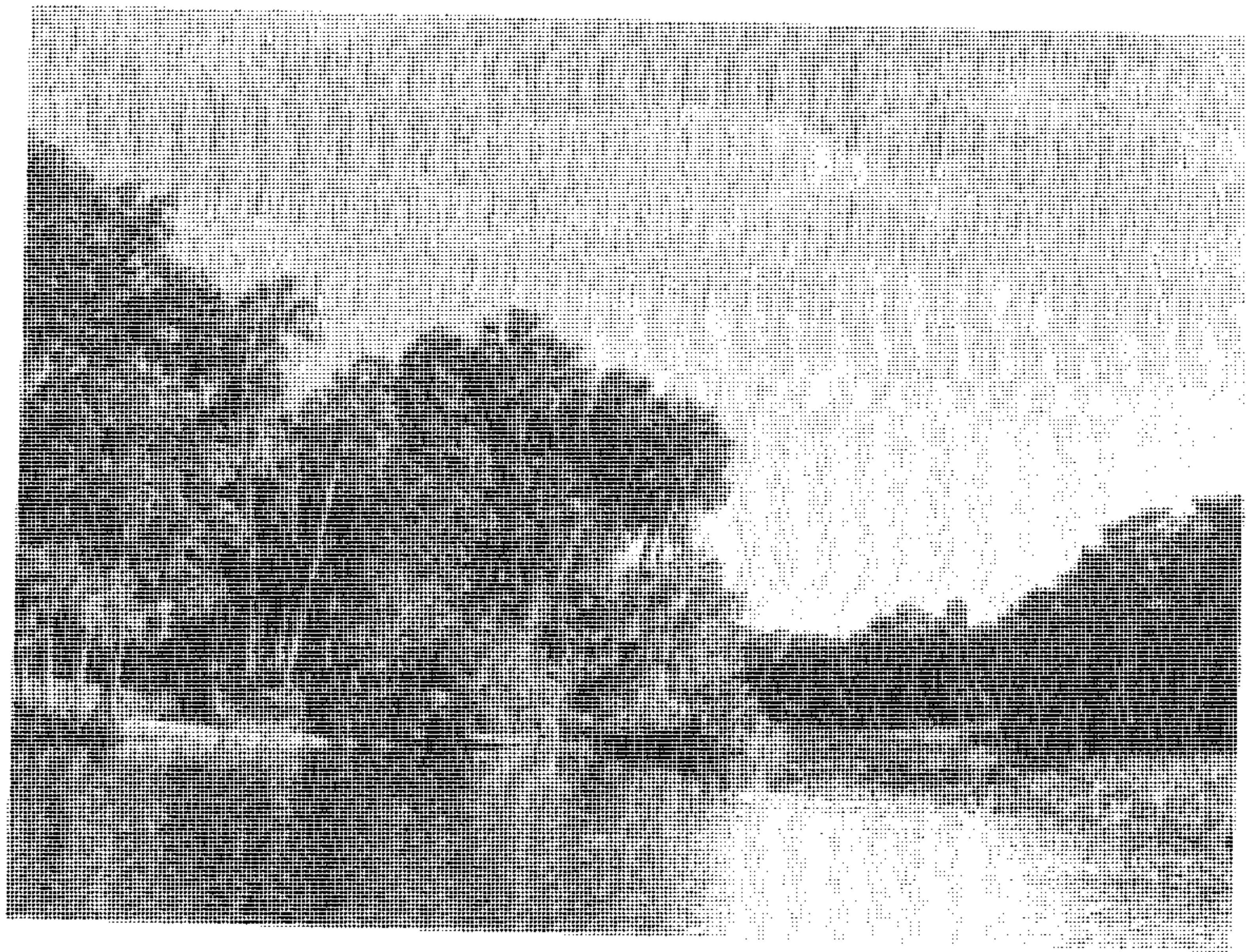
Anyway, the book was a collection of short stories; one was Lake Winder Fifty Years Ago. The editor of the Florida Wildlife magazine, Mr. Dick Sublette, received a copy of my book. I subsequently spoke with Dick on the phone about printing that story in his magazine. Dick asked me for some pictures of the Bumby house and some history about the place. I did not know at that time the Bumby house had any history. I thought only the house builder and Bumby family and friends knew about the house until I began to search for and dig up history around the area. The more I dug, the greater the history unfolded, until I just had to put it all together in this fascinating story about Florida, and Lake Winder, and the Upper St. Johns. I owe Dick Sublette a large measure of gratitude for his request. If the reader of this book enjoys the stories in just a small measure, what I have enjoyed in solving some of the mystery of the area's early history, then this book will be a great success.

For whatever reason, historians have skipped putting together the history of the Lake Winder area and its great importance to our local history. I've spent hours in libraries and Historical Societies trying to put together the historical significance of the Savage Trading Post and U.S. Post Office at the Bumby place and put into perspective what the Upper St. Johns River was and is, where it comes from, and what it is to me - what it has meant to me in my lifetime. It was really several historians who have furnished me with the information needed to put the story together. I will acknowledge them separately; for without their knowledge, I would have been unable to appreciate and share with you what happened "before my time" on Lake Winder.

THE RIVER OF MANY NAMES

Years ago someone wrote about the St. Johns River, "To the South lies the first great river in North America to be discovered by white men. Called by the Indians Illaka, by the French Rivere de Mai, by the Spanish San Mateo and San Juan, and by the English St. Johns. Holding from the beginning a prominent place in Europe's American adventure, it has a recorded history of over four hundred years. Claimed under the sovereignty of more nations than any other great river in the world, it has seen unfurled the flags of Spain, France, England, the Republic of Florida, the Southern Confederacy, and the United States."

The beginning of the St. Johns River is astounding. Now imagine, if you will, that you are standing on Hwy 60 just south of Lake Blue Cypress - a distance of about 15 miles



The Beautiful St. Johns River
Photo by Steve Vaughn

west of Vero Beach. Now just imagine the road standing before you 30 feet above sea level. This road is perfectly smooth and runs 315 miles north to Jacksonville. Now suppose you have a small ball in your hand that is perfectly round and perfectly smooth, and you give it a good roll. That ball, only 30 feet above sea level, would roll until it rolls into the Atlantic Ocean at Jacksonville. Incidentally, by the time the river has run 65 miles north, it is only 5 feet above sea level. Now just imagine you travel 40 miles further west to the Kissimmee River flowing south into Lake Okeechobee. Imagine there is a road to the south, this time 41 feet above sea level, and again you roll a ball - less hard this time. The ball would then travel about 80 miles to Lake Okeechobee at a slightly higher speed.

Remember, the St. Johns River flows north as does the Nile. Very few rivers of the world flow north.

The St. Johns River is an old river. Deposits of Anastasia coquina date the river's beginning back to 125,000 years ago. Relic beach deposits constructed during the past sea level heights stands are separated by swales previously occupied by shallow lagoons. When the sea level dropped, these lagoons became valleys as streams eroded the sands and clays creating this coast parallel river system. So began the St. Johns River. Florida has been covered by water and emerged several times, you know. No one has any idea how old the St. Johns really is. The River may be a result of an old coast line from the period of the Ice Age. It is my belief after studying several old maps, that thousands of years ago, the St. Johns River began just above Lake Okeechobee. One old map shows the river starting about

70 miles north of the lake in a slough. In years past, canals and then Hwy 60 destroyed the river's early areas.

To best understand the character of the Upper St. Johns, you would have to read Fred A. Hopwood's book "The Rockledge, Florida Steamboat Line"(1992). It is just plain amazing to see how much history of Brevard County and Upper St. Johns was shared with us by Fred A. Hopwood. I called him many times, and he never hung up on me!

The St. Johns River rises from the level, wide, marshy, treeless plains in Indian River County west of Vero Beach. The "M" canal drains much water out of Lake Blue Cypress into the swampy area as it enters Brevard County north of Fellsmere. The river varies greatly in size - overflowing its ill defined banks in times of flooding and nearly going dry when rains are scant. The river may go from 30 feet wide to 2 miles wide. I note now that the depth of the river is not only affected by rainfall but by the water that is allowed to flow out of the man-made canals. As I said before, in a flood stage, the river in some parts is nearly 2 miles wide, and it is very difficult for a boater to find the channel. For the most part, the river averages about 4 to 5 feet deep with the turns in the river having holes mostly 10 to 20 feet deep. There are virtually no inhabitants along the first 80 miles of the river because of the unstable marsh areas. The river is a true water storage area. However, there is a large settlement of homes with dug canals on the east side of Lake Poinsett. There are a few small dwellings on the north side of Lake Poinsett. From there the next small settlement of homes is about 40 miles north at what is known as the Hatbill area near Baxter Mound

about 8 miles south of Puzzle Lake, and that's it except for the Fish Camps at the four highway crossings. I consider the north end of Lake Harney as the end of the floodplains and the Upper St. Johns, as the river takes on a new character as it flows north out of Lake Harney. There for the first time, high banks can be seen on parts of the river. These are the first high banks on the River.

Now that you have some picture of the river's characteristics, it is fitting that I go back in time to see who lived here and hunted and fished on this often changing body of water.

I recently spent several months gathering historic information about the St. Johns River and published a small book entitled "The Early History of the St. Johns River. I would like to jot down just a few notes from this book:

Up to 10,000 years ago, prehistoric animals in great abundance walked its banks for thousands of years. The first people who used the River were the Paleoindians – over 12,000 years ago. Then came the Archaic Indians about 8,000 years ago. Then came the Calusa, Timucuan, etc. The Seminoles used the River at this point. Very few of the Archaic Indians were alive in the early 1700s. In the early 1500s hundreds of Spanish used the River (mostly from Jacksonville to St. Augustine). The French used it for only a few years in east Florida, then the British and, of course, the white settlers. After all this came the era of the steamships in 1827. Following that came the ferry crossing and later the railroads which ultimately took most of the commerce from the River by 1900.

LAKE WINDER, FORT TAYLOR, AND THE SAVAGE TRADING POST

A river like the St. Johns River, rich in an amazing variety of life, had to be an attraction of great interest to our earliest people - going back to 12,000 years ago. As I mentioned before, these people would have been descendants of the Asian nomads who migrated here across the Bering landmass. We have evidence that the Melbourne Man lived near the river 6,000 years ago and mounds or middens along the river indicate men lived along there at the time of our earliest people - with artifacts dating back 7,000 years. The Windover Man (the first Brevardians) most likely had used the river for over 1,000 years between 7,000 to 8,000 years ago. At a later date several tribes of our early Indians used the St. Johns River - principally the war-like Ais.

During the 2,500 years before the arrival of Europeans, other distinctive tribes such as the Timucuan and Jeaga must have used the river. In 1565, Spain made her first successful attempt to possess Florida, and for the next 244 years, the Spanish dominated Florida; and it was during this period hundreds and hundreds of cattle, pigs, and some horses escaped or were set free. These animals flourished along the St. Johns River.

Records show that each Spanish soldier brought 100 sour root orange seeds with him to the New World. The Spanish seem to have favored the sour orange. The soldiers and then the Indians spread these seeds around Florida. Not only did they bring the orange seeds, but with the

introduction of domestic animals, they set the stage for the early white settlers - most important factor. Toward the end of the Spanish influence, both Seminole Indians and white settlers began to ply the waters of the river for furs and food and cattle.

Now I come specifically to the area of the Bumby Camp on the south end of Lake Winder. Near the Bumby Camp there was a natural sandbar that formed a half ring across the south end of the lake. Just north of the entrance of the South River, this sandbar became the crossing place for cattle and people, as it was the best river crossing for many, many miles in either direction. Probably in the late 1700s a trading post of sorts was used by both the white settlers and the Seminole Indians for several hundred years. It was probably about 1850 when the Savage Trading Post was built. River traffic was confined to small boats until the era of the steam propelled boats (which comes later).

I suspect that the Bumby Camp area was a busy place for trading prior to the Second Indian War. The Second Indian War temporarily brought an end to trading. That War started in 1835 and lasted until 1842 and brought a whole new history for the area. As you know, the forts were built about a day's march apart, so the weary soldiers would have a place to camp in safety each night. As you look at the history of these forts, soldiers sure were far from safe! As the Indians retreated further and further south toward Lake Okeechobee, the forts were abandoned. The fort built by the large Indian mound at the Bumby Camp area was called Fort Taylor. It was established in January of 1838 soon after Fort Christmas and Fort

McNeal. The location was on the southwest side of the Lake. (This location was also the end of the old military trail). If you know anything about the upper St. Johns area, you know it must have been just plain "Hell" for the soldiers who were forced to march down that river to establish Fort Taylor.

Fort Mellon in Sanford was the jumping off place for soldiers marching or for boats to reach the regions of the upper St. Johns. I want to share with you some of the information I discovered about this 100 mile march to Fort Taylor from Sanford. Can't you just see some General in Washington who never had been to Florida, had never seen any mud, palmettos, or rattlesnakes, or alligators, issuing an order, "You will take one hundred dragoons and their horses along the St. Johns River down to Fort Taylor. Use the river road."

The following will give you some idea what these poor men - dressed in wool uniforms and boots that were not made for water and mud suffered as they slowly made their way south along the river for days. They could only move about ten miles per day.

The following paragraphs about Fort Taylor were extracted from "The Second Seminole War" by Dr. Mahon:

"It is indeed doubtful if U.S. ground forces endured harsher field conditions anywhere (than Fort Taylor). Protracted service in the humidity, the rank growth and the darkness of the Florida swamps took the sunshine out of a man's life. Cypress knees, mangrove roots, and



Soldiers surveying the site of Ft. Taylor. January 25, 1838

sawgrass tortured the foot soldier. Too much water, and the lack of water, made his life a torment. There was marching in water from ankle-to-armpit deep, hour after hour, with no chance to dry off, not even at night. Men slept in their clothes, often including boots, for four months running. When mules could not pull the wagons through the mud, the men on foot had to drag them. Surgeon Perry wrote, "Our position here (Fort Taylor) is indeed melancholy. After each rain we resemble Noah on the top of Mt. Ararat. Clouds of crows and blackbirds then hover around, waiting for the waters to subside, to resume their daily vocation of picking up corn. Turning your eye to the earth you then behold a score of glandered and sore backed mules! Now a mosquito buzzes in your ear, and next a flea bites you between the shoulders." At other times there were periods of draught so severe that the marching troops could find nothing but stagnant water to drink, and the temperature fluctuated wildly. The same soldier might shuffle along in 102 degree heat that killed mules in one

season, and shiver all night from 30 degree cold in the next.

We are "almost eaten up by fleas, ants, cockroaches and almost all manner of vermin," said Captain Joseph R. Smith. Far more dangerous, of course, were snakes; and the army trampled its way through areas where even the Seminoles would not live because of the rattlers. Once, feeling a leg heavier than the other, a soldier glanced down to see a large rattlesnake caught by the fangs in his pants leg. (Yet, strange to tell, if snake-bite killed and crippled men, the written record does not mention it so much as one time). There are also records of men fighting over a dead man's boots, as theirs had rotted off.

Cut by sawgrass, made raw by insects bites, now and again feeling dizzy from dysentery and fever, the common soldier in Florida (at Fort Taylor) lived in a world which had no horizons. He had little relief to hope for."

Another officer wrote, "Our march from Fort Mellon to the southern portion of Florida was marked by a great destruction of the finest horses that I have ever seen. Our Regiment suffered a great loss - one that I fear will not be made up in some time."

At this point, I am inserting an additional story about the hardships of these poor soldiers. I gathered several accounts of a battle fought way south of Lake Winder on Lake Okeechobee for illustration:

"The Battle of Okeechobee was the greatest battle American soldiers ever fought with Indians. The battle was fought on Christmas day of 1837. The soldiers marched from Tampa to Kissimmee River and Fort Gardner, then south to Okeechobee and the battle. They marched at an average of 20 miles a day through unexplored country without benefit of roads or guides.

They had to build their own bridges over numerous creeks and rivers, cut their way through pine forests, hack their way through swamps and hammocks. They laid down branches and palmetto leaves to assist their artillery through sand pits, all constituting a march unequalled by any army including Hannibal's march over the Alps. This passed within a mile of the Great Masterpiece and the new location of Fort Clinch.

On Christmas Eve of 1837 the night was very cold and windy, and the men slept on the ground unprotected. Next morning, Christmas Day, the soldiers started on their march again and after going a few miles they saw two Indians on horseback. One was captured and the other escaped.

The captured Indian told them there was a large number of Indians ready for battle a short distance ahead. Colonel Taylor put his army in motion but had to abandon his artillery and wagons due to the rough terrain. The army advanced over a sawgrass swamp for a distance of three quarters of a mile. This was difficult because the sawgrass was five feet high and the mud two feet deep.

Ahead of them they could see a long row of trees, and 50 feet in front of these trees the Indians had cut down all

the grass and cleared the view, and when the troops entered this cleared area the Indians opened fire. They had better guns than the American army because they had been trading with the Spanish and Cuban fishermen.

Col. Thompson was shot in the abdomen, in his breast and the third bullet went through his chin and neck before he fell. Lt. Van Swearingen was shot in the lower face and he raised both hands to his neck and fell.

An Indian hiding in the branches of a tree shot and killed Lt. J. P. Center. Col. Benter, who was in charge of the Missouri Volunteers, was killed by a bullet that passed through his body and through the arm of his son, who was standing by his side.

Every officer in one company was killed, and in another company only four men were left. The hand-to-hand fighting lasted from 12:30 to 3:30.

On Christmas Day before crossing Kissimmee River, Col. Taylor left his son, who was his supply officer, with the artillery troops and they constructed Fort Bassenger. This was east of Sebring, where State Road 700 (sic) crosses the Kissimmee River.

After the battle the dead and wounded were carried to a place which is known as Pine Island today. The wounded were carried on improvised stretchers made by suspending hides left by the Indians between two poles. They were brought to Fort Bassenger, then on to Fort Gardner (near the site of the Great Masterpiece) and Fort Brooke at

Tampa. All the dead and wounded were gathered except one private of the 4th Infantry. His body was found later."

(O) note: The Seminoles lost only twelve men.

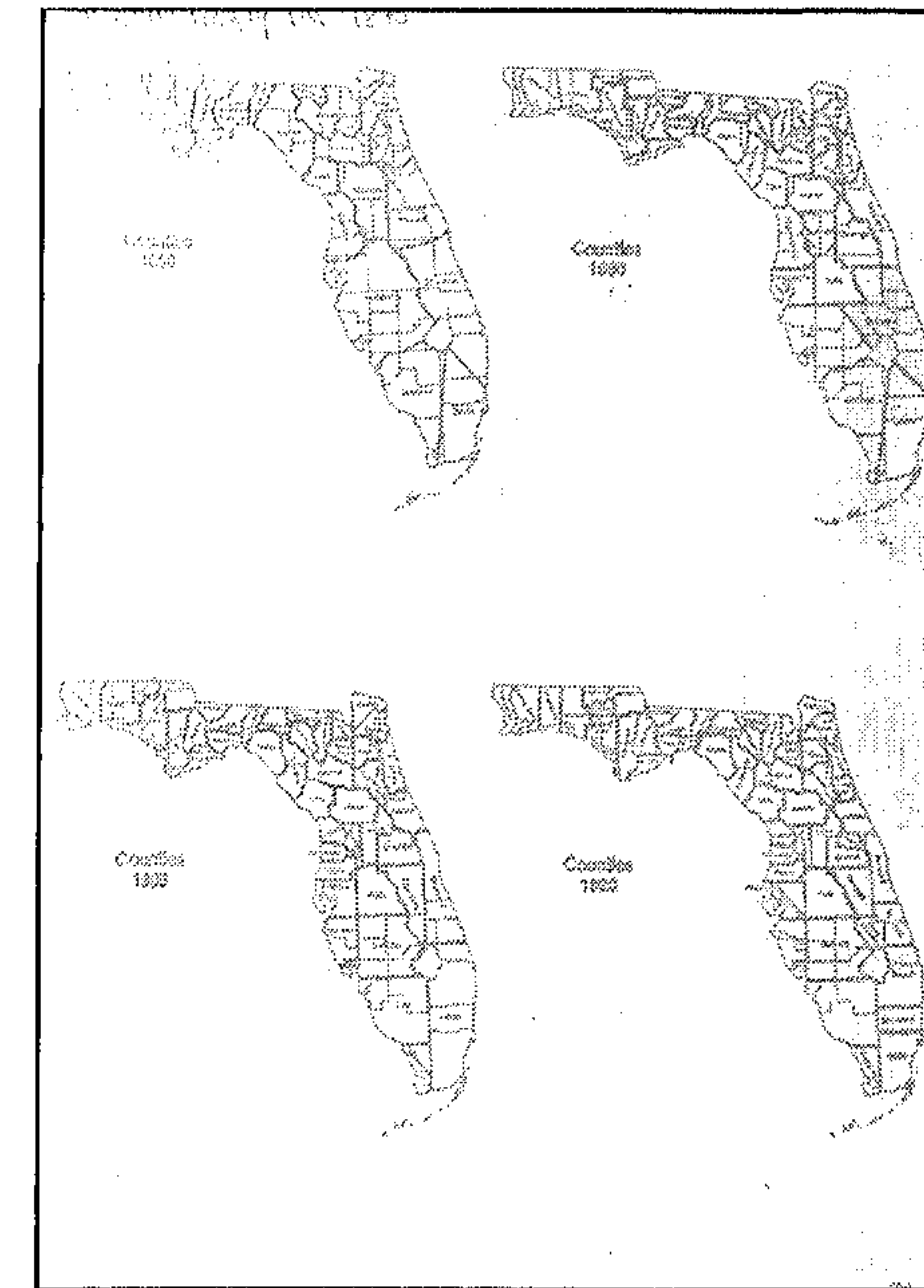


Display at Ft. Christmas Museum showing soldiers' uniforms and Chief Osceola's longshirt

There are different accounts about Fort Taylor's use. It seems it was used as a hospital and a storage area. The Fort was abandoned in March of 1838 after being built in January of 1838. Most of the forts, as I mentioned, were used just a very short time.

Because of the geographic location of the Savage Trading Post on the southwest corner of Lake Winder, there is little doubt that the Timucuan and Ais Indians used this site as a meeting and trading place. A large Indian Mound is still there. Fort Taylor and a Lookout were built on the site in 1838 and used for a short time, and because there is a natural sand bar just inside the lake area, it became a natural cattle crossing. The community of Savage located on lake Winder had been a trading post for decades. The Trading Post and U. S. Post Office were both closed - the Post Office on November 30, 1904 and the Trading Post about 1915. The place was deserted.

After the War (Second Seminole War) the Bumby site again became a cattle crossing and trading post. It is not clear to me nor could I document when the Savage Trading Post was built at the Bumby area, but it must have been built a few years after that war was over. My guess would be in the late 1850s. I have enclosed a copy of the counties as they appeared at four periods. Note in 1880 Brevard County was huge, and the Savage Trading Post on the St. Johns was the halfway point for the County Commissioners to spend the night - at the Savage Store - before resuming their journey to the other side of the County. (Fred Hopwood sent me copies of his research or I would not



Note huge size of Brevard County in 1880's. The Savage Trading Post was the halfway point across Brevard County, so the County Commissioners held meetings and spent the night at the Savage Trading Post

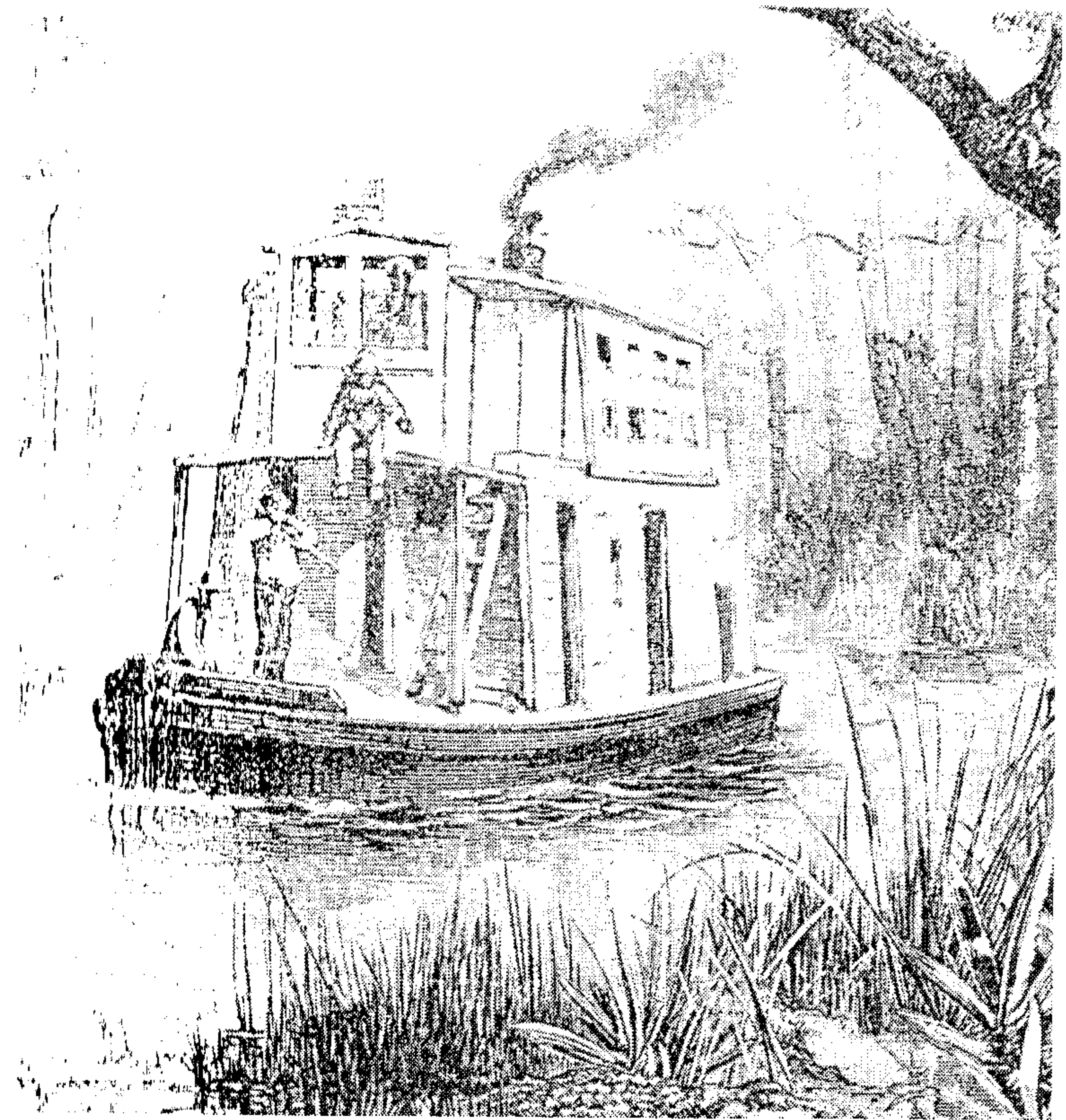
have any of this information). One note showed that Savage Store area stayed in Brevard County until 1887. Fred Hopwood even sent me photocopies of the County Commissioners' meeting with R. B. Savage and J. N. Savage about November 1874. Also in October of that year, the Board of County Commissioners put up money to establish a precinct at the Savage Trading Post.

A good size community was built up around the Savage Store - mostly cattle people and hunters. As I said before, the Savage Trading Post was at the end of the old military trail which branched off at the Bumby Camp site and went westward toward the Kissimmee River. You must realize

that at this time there was no railroad down the east coast (not until 1884 when a railroad connected Jacksonville to St. Augustine). The St. Johns River was the ONLY way of travel for people or goods going the Titusville and Rockledge areas. If you wanted to go to Titusville, you went by boat into Salt Lake (near Mims) and then overland to Titusville. Now if you wanted to go to Rockledge, there is a small lake just east of Lake Poinsett which was the Rockledge landing, so this landing served the Rockledge area (only three miles to town from the lake).

In the late 1800s, a whole new way of life was about to begin on the upper St. Johns with the appearance of the steamboat. Edward Mueller is the dean of St. Johns steamboats. Ed Mueller came to the Maitland Historical Society to speak about the steamboats. His book "The St. Johns River Steamboats" is a jewel. He sent me a picture of the steamboat Charles Willey which was a paddlewheel steamer with a very shallow draft. These boats could navigate in water 2 to 3 feet deep. Note the picture of the people loading supplies at the Savage Trading Post (Bumby area). This picture was done on March 9, 1879, and the Willey is the first steamboat to make it to the Savage Trading Post! These steamboats plied the upper St. Johns down to Lake Winder until the East Coast Railroad put them out of business. I can't even imagine what it would have been like to be on the first steamboat to reach Lake Winder.

Remember, these boats were docked at Lake Monroe and had about a hundred miles of river to navigate in uncharted waters. Ed Mueller writes about the first attempt by a steamboat to find the source of the "great St. Johns".



A picture of the Charles Willey - the first steam ship to reach the Savage Trading Post (later the Bumby Camp) March 9th 1879.

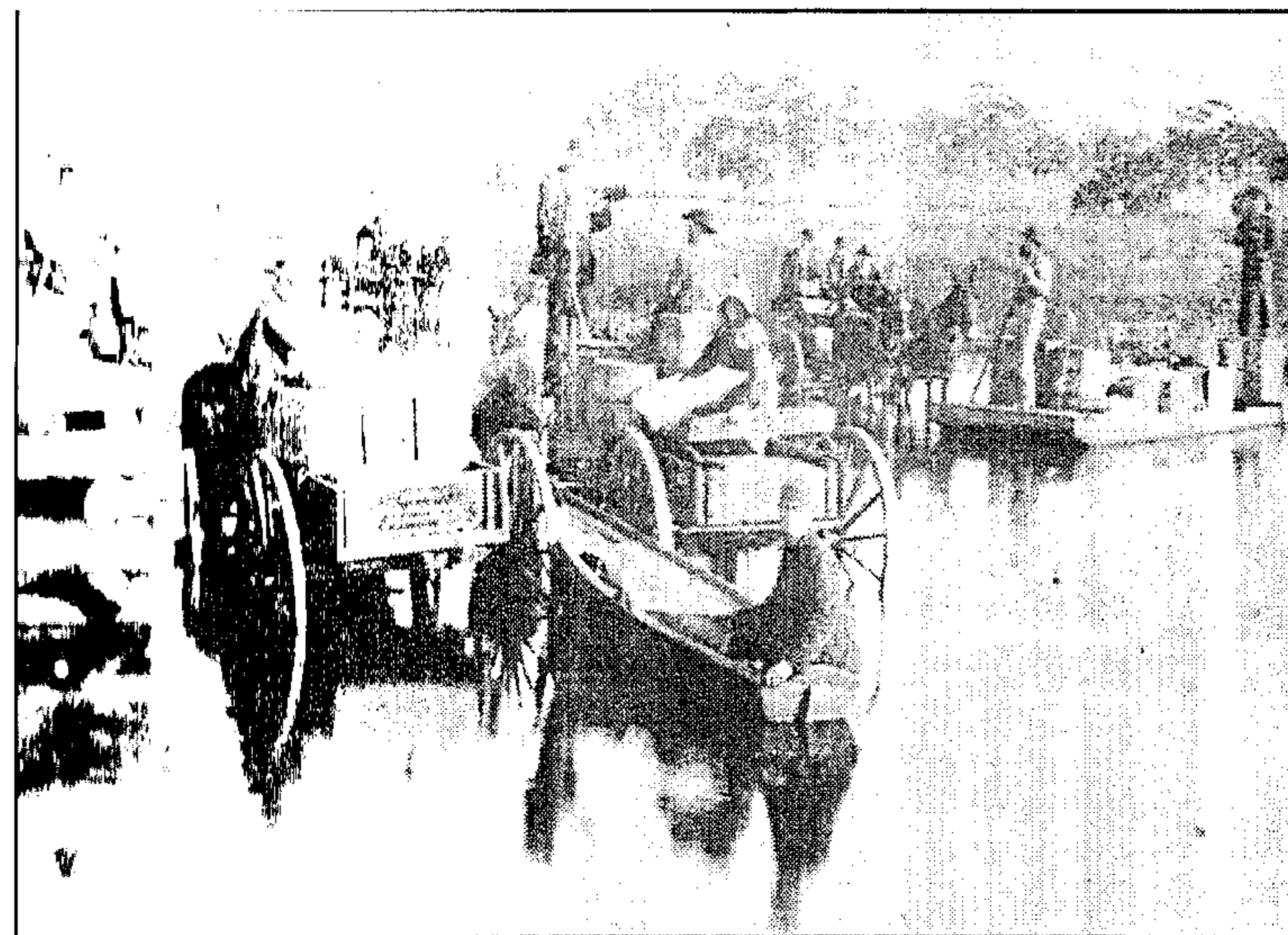
'They made it just fine - through Lake Harney and Puzzle Lake, but at Orange Mound - where the River branches, they went east and landed at Salt Lake. I don't think you can go there anymore by boat. They gave up and returned to Mellonville (Sanford) in 1859.

On Wednesday the 9th of March 1879, the steamboat Willey, took the right branch of the River. When they came into Mud Lake and Crow Lake they were forced to hack their way through undergrowth, cutting vines and rafts of river lettuce for 5 or 6 hours. It took the crew

hours and hours to cut their way through the unyielding vegetation. You would have to read the whole story to realize what a marvelous feat it was for the Willey to have made it to the Savage Trading Post with a load of corn, flour, etc. The area was also referred to as Fort Taylor.

Mueller writes that when the Willey arrived at the Savage Trading Post to trade their good for hides, venison saddles, deer skins, wildcats, etc., the Captain blew his whistle at the docking area and people from 30 to 40 miles came and gathered around to see the "Great Show" and buy calico, dresses, shoes, tobacco, sugar, coffee, flour, corn. Over 50 persons jammed the upper deck alone, and all the people "jollified"! That experience for these early settlers was probably the most exciting day of their lives. After that, a series of steamboats plied the River - most landing at Salt Lake or Rockledge. In the late 1870s and 1880s, the easiest way to reach Brevard County was to take passage on the Lund Pioneer Steamboat Line at Jacksonville. I might add these steamboats went from 60 to 85 feet long; had very shallow draft and very low speed. The steamboat people had no way of knowing it, but their days were coming to an end.

The Indian River Division of the Jacksonville, Tampa, and Key West Railroad began operations in January of 1886. Trains traveled from Jacksonville in only 6 hours. By river steamboat it took three or four days. Also the days of the Savage Trading Post were coming to an end. A U.S. Post Office was established at Savage Trading Post on April 11, 1899 with Edwin A. Stephenson as its first and only Postmaster. The Savage Post Office was



Off loading the steamer Willey at the Savage Trading Post "Bumby Camp" in 1879. Compliments of Ed Mueller.

discontinued on November 30, 1904, and its mail was sent to Lanier. In 1914 only one family member named Savage was still living. He was Henry Savage. The Savage Trading Post came to an end in 1915. If you could stand in the doorway of Bumby Camp and look towards the Lake, with some imagination, you could almost feel as if you were watching a moving picture of figures from the past as they lived and hunted Lake Winder back, as a storyteller says - a long, long time ago.

We come to the end of the history of the Bumby Camp, the Savage Trading and Fort Taylor. Rosalie Savage, whose story appears elsewhere in the book was the last person to visit the Savage Store. Her father took her in his horse and buggy to the store in 1914. They camped out on the way from Christmas to the Trading Post. As I mentioned before, the Post Office closed in 1904, and the Trading

Post closed in 1915. Shortly after that, the house containing parts of the Savage Trading Post was purchased along with the Indian Mound and 40 acres by Charles Bradshaw in the early 1920s. Somewhere in the late 1920s, the property was bought by Leonard Bumby and Jack McDowell. After Leonard's death, his share was sold to Jack McDowell. In 1947, some visitors to the Camp were careless, and the house along with the Trading Post room was burned to the ground. The house was then rebuilt and now belongs to the Blake Family Trust.

I have included some photos of the Bumby Camp, and it looks just as I remember it.

This story was first printed in my book "I Never Had Enough Money To Leave Town". I have taken the liberty to reprint it with a few small changes.

THE BUMBY CAMP ON LAKE WINDER SOME FIFTY YEARS AGO

Sometimes when I want to think some quiet, wonderful thoughts, I let my mind wander back 50 years ago when I was 13 to recapture my recollections of Lake Winder as it was in the 1940s.

My visits to Lake Winder began after I became acquainted with Leonard Bumby who owned Bumby's Hardware Store on Park Avenue in Winter Park. I visited that store every chance I got. I would wander around in there as long as I could get away with it - gawking at the rows of guns and fishing tackle that were kept in several old varnished cabinets, all beautifully cluttered. Neat would have destroyed some of the store's charm. There were rows and rows of hardware items stacked from the floor to the very high ceiling. They had a ladder on wheels to reach the high shelves. No one bothered you or asked if they could help you. Everyone just stood around and talked about hunting or fishing experiences. Eventually you found what you wanted. Mr. Bumby sold me my first gun. It was a 12 gauge pump shotgun that kicked like a mule, and I never got used to it. One thing though, it made a try hard to hit the target with the first shot. It hurt too much to shoot and miss!

Mr. Bumby took a shine to me, and I was soon invited to spend some weekends at his place on Lake Winder. To get to his place we drove east on Hwy 50 to just before Ft. Christmas and turned south on the Taylor Creek Road driving about 25 miles on a narrow dirt road. We would drive for over an hour through pines and palmettos that were owned by The P. V. Wilson Lumber Company. Somewhere in the '40s, Wilson sold it to R. D. Keene, and Keene sold it to the Mormons who own it now. As I remember, it was a tract of land with thousands and thousands of acres beginning at Hwy 50, and it went all the way to the St. Cloud Road. Anyhow, after we started down the Taylor Creek Road we had to drive kinda slow because the narrow dirt road was not used very often - but not too slow though, as there were places you could get stuck. When we crossed Taylor Creek we had to go very slowly, as the bridge timbers were not nailed down very well, and they jumped up and down as the car passed over them. It was about here that we often had to stop to let wild turkeys run single file across in front of our car. After what seemed like a forever, we would turn off the main dirt road to the left and follow a narrow trail leading to a piece of high ground - an oasis of a sort - with great oaks and tall cabbage palms. Mr. Bumby's house sat facing the lake right in that hammock. Except for the old Shiver Place, his was the only house on the lake. There was only one other high place on the lake - directly across the lake from Bumby's place. It was called Moccasin Island - where I was to camp many times in the years to come. The island, incidentally, was well named.



The Bumby Camp in 1933. One room behind the front porch had been the Savage Trading Post. The house burned down in 1947.

Let me tell you about the Bumby house. To me, it was a magnificent, large old Florida style frame house that had once been painted white. It had a steep tin roof and a large porch that wrapped around two sides of the house - complete with old rocking chairs and a porch swing. The east porch faced the lake that was about 300 feet distant. There were two or three bedrooms - one with a fireplace. The bedroom with the fireplace was very long and was made of hand-hewed logs. When I asked Becky Bumby Kettles why that room was different from the rest of the house, she told me that that room was all that was left of what had been the old Savage Trading Post. It was not until I did a year's research on the history of that area did I fully appreciate that room. The Savage Trading Post may date back to the middle 1800s. Sadly, in 1947 the old Bumby House was destroyed by fire and the remains of the Savage Trading Post along with it.

Another special room was the big old kitchen with a huge wood stove in it. Just outside the kitchen was a 6 inch pipe from an artesian well which brought up sulfur water for the house. Mr. Bumby had a caretaker who lived at his place for a number of years, and he fed a large flock of turkeys in a clearing very close to the house. I never saw it, but Mr. Bumby said the turkeys would walk around the caretaker close enough for him to reach out and touch them when he threw out their daily corn. The day before hunting season, he would feed the birds and then while he was in the middle of the flock he would fire his gun in the air. The birds would fly away and not come back until hunting season was over!

One of Leonard Bumby's close friends was a man whose name was Guy Colado who was a turkey hunter of some renown. I can still remember waking up in the morning and going into that kitchen and seeing his wild turkey hanging on the wall. The turkey was so big it seemed to have taken up the whole wall. Needless to say, I was much impressed and can recall with great clarity to this day that beautiful bird. Mr. Bumby told me that Guy almost always got his turkey when he went hunting. I had to be a grown man and tried my best to kill a wild turkey before I really appreciated Guy's skill. I have never killed a wild turkey although I came close on two occasions. The first time was when 13 turkeys ran right past me when I was standing on a river bank. I got so excited that I swung around and slipped and my gun barrel stuck 6 inches into the slick mud! The other time was when I had called up a turkey at the old flowing well on Hwy 50 at the St. Johns River. At

precisely that moment a huge mosquito lit on my nose, and I had to make a decision - would it be the turkey or the mosquito? - I chose to kill the mosquito, and that ended that.

Just south of the house near the lake there was a large Indian mound. It was rich with pieces of bone and chips of pottery. I was allowed to dig all I wanted to, but when I was through I had to replace what I had found. Usually, just before I began to dig, I had to take the shovel and throw off a pygmy rattler or two, as they liked to sun themselves on the sandy mound.

There was other entertainment around the house, also. There were lots of wild razorback pigs in the woods, and they frequented the camp for scraps. They were a huge nuisance, because when you came in from fishing with a string of bass, you had to also carry an oar to run them off or they would steal your fish - with one exception. That was "John" the pet pig. John was a runt of a pig who lived under the house. The house, you see, was set about 4 feet above the ground, and that made fine living quarters for a pet pig. Anyway, John was excellent company. He would come when called - oink, oinking all the way, and we took long walks together in the woods. You did not have to worry about snakes, because when he saw one, John would promptly eat it. I had a board with a nail through it made especially to scratch John's back. He loved to be scratched! He'd talk to you all the while. As I said before, the house sat back a distance from the lake, and a small canal had been dug to keep the boat in so you would not have to walk so far to get into the boat. It would only

take about a half hour to row from the canal to where I fished - at the mouth of the South River as it flowed into the lake. Lake Winder is one of the many lakes of the 300 mile long St. Johns River. The lake is about 3 miles long as I remember with the river flowing out the lake at the north end. I would row the boat to the mouth of the South River entrance and then tie the boat up to some weeds and wade around the sandbar that went partly across the mouth of the river - except where the deeper cut was where the main channel flowed. From there I would cast my lure into the river opening. There were more bass in there than you could imagine. The bass fed mostly on minnows and shiners. I had a lure that looked like a shiner. It was a yellow Heddon Torpedo with spinners on the front and back. It had cost \$1, and I had two. The lure was an underwater bait, riding about 8 inches under the surface, and you reeled it very slowly. As I remember, there were very few casts that were ignored by the hungry bass. Sometimes you could see the bait go sideways through the tea-colored water when it was hit by a bass, or you would feel a yank. Sometimes three or four bass would strike the lure before one got hooked. I enjoyed each fish I caught, though they were seldom large - mostly between 1 1/2 and 3 pounds. In those days we did not know you could catch and release fish, so when you looked down at the bottom of the boat and it was covered with flopping bass, it was time to stop. Mr. Bumby used to say, "Better stop, Buster, we can't eat any more than you already have."

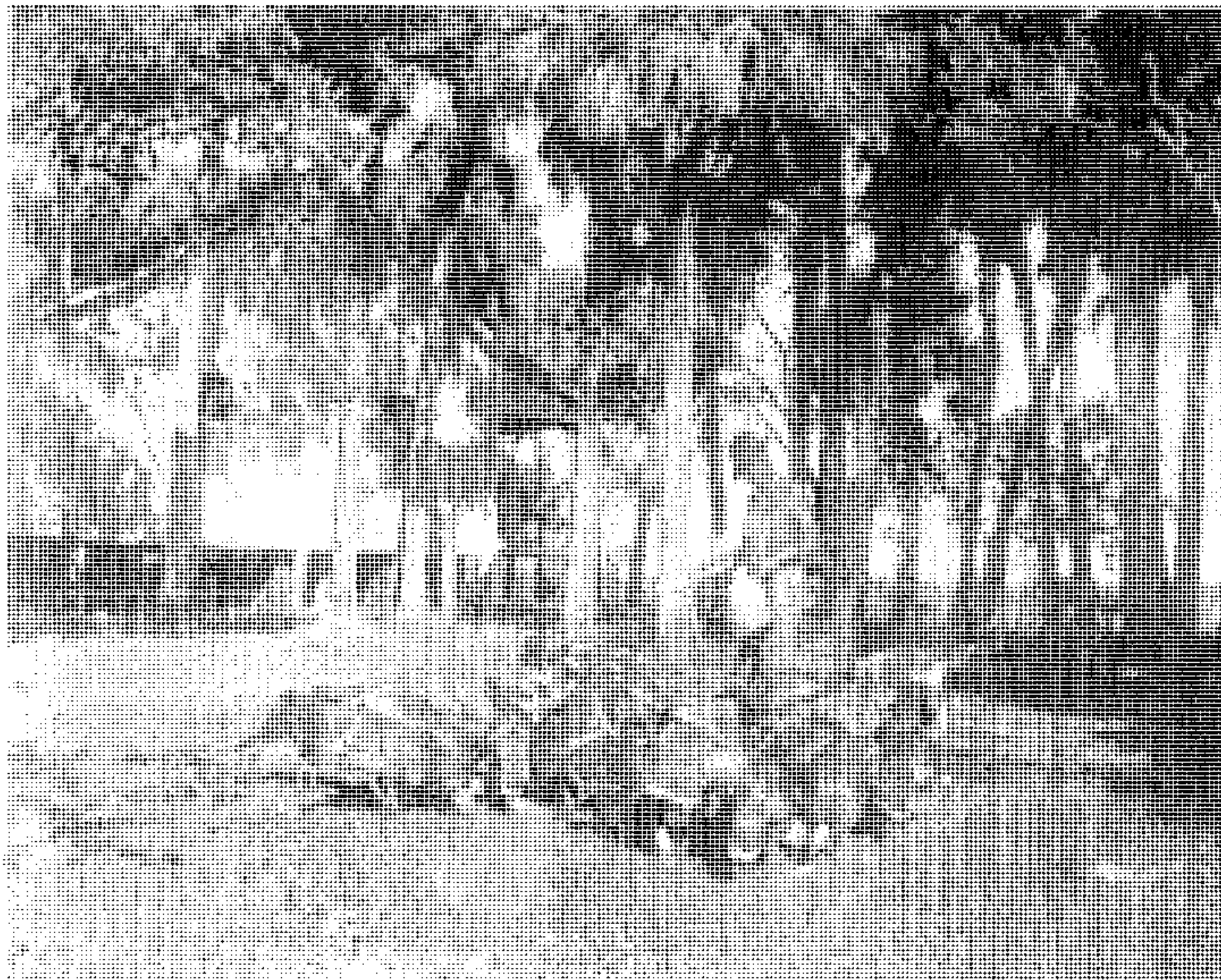
One day when I was casting a Creek Chub #2000 topwater plug, I got a huge strike that I was sure was the world's largest bass. After a half-hour battle a 15 to 20

pound catfish came close enough for me to see. I was sorely disappointed that it wasn't a bass, but the catfish had fought so long and so hard that when I was able to get the hooks out of his mouth, I released him back into the river. He had been too hard a fighter to be eaten.

The lake was very private in those days - I rarely saw another boat on the lake. The closest boat launch was about 7 miles away north on Lake Poinsett, and few people owned outboard motors large enough to go that far. The only other boats I saw were small boats being rowed with the rower looking forward. These boats belonged to the otter hunters who lived in small shacks down the South River. They made meager livings by selling otter hides.

I think I enjoyed watching the bird life around the lake almost as much as the fishing. There were lots of long skinny Blue Herons all along the shore, and when you got close enough to worry them, they would watch you very carefully and then jump into the air and veer off with a loud squaking protest. But most of all, I liked to see the long flights of the White Curlews. They came in long, long lines and flew so low over your head you could hear their wings beating in the air. They would fly in V formations - very informal - kind of sloppy formations, flying like they were never in a hurry. They would glide; then when it was time, flop their wings a time or two and glide again. As they passed over, you could see their beautiful white feathers and orange beaks and faces framed under a bright blue sky.

The Lake Winder days were very special to me, and I will never forget them or stop appreciating them. I've always thought that when the Lord made the world, He saved His very best for Central Florida.



Uncle Hodges feeding the turkeys at the ols Shiver place on Lake Winder in the 1930's.



Leonard Bumby and friend with stringer of bass at the Bumby Camp

CAMPING ON LAKE WINDER FORTY YEARS AGO

In my earlier book entitled "I Never Had Enough Money To Leave Town" is the story Lake Winder Fifty Years Ago. In that story I described the Bumby Camp on Lake Winder and took the liberty of reprinting this story in this book.

Some 10 years after my visits to the Bumby Camp on Lake Winder, I began to revisit Lake Winder - I think about 1955. By then I had finished my tour in the Army, gone to college and had gotten a job. I could now afford a boat and motor large enough so I could launch my boat at the Lake Poinsett Fish Camp. This particular time after launching my boat there at the Fish Camp I traveled some 3 miles across Lake Poinsett - up the South River - to Lake Winder and then across the lake to Moccasin Island on the east side of the lake. Judge Platt, in his story, described the house his father had built on Lake Winder. The house was gone by the middle 50s, so Moccasin Island was deserted. Mr. Bumby had some years before he passed away, and I did not have use of his camp, so the Island was just fine. Moccasin Island was actually an old Indian Mound, and large guava trees had multiplied until a small grove of trees covered the camping area. We ate the big yellow guavas in season when they were ripe. I remember there were most always yellow rat snakes or chicken snakes as we called them sunning themselves in the guava trees. We would catch one once in a while, get bit once in a while, and then turn them loose. They ate the rats around the campsite. In those days we did not have tents, but we did have blankets to roll up in and towels to put over our heads

to keep the pesky mosquitos off our faces and ears. If it would happen to rain, we did get wet. But somehow in those days, it seemed like it rained during the week and was dry on weekends. Now it seems like it always rains on weekends! Anyhow, after work finished on Fridays, myself and another camper or two in another boat would rush to launch our boats and get to Moccasin Island and make camp before it got too dark. It really did not take too long to make camp, as we did not have much camping equipment. We did not have much besides the urge to camp - as I said, no tent, no lantern, no stove. We did have a canteen for water and used the lake water to make coffee with and a can to boil the coffee in. We had a small grill - which really was an old refrigerator shelf which we placed over several rocks or empty baked bean cans. We had a big frying pan and two bent up pots and always a can of Crisco, some corn meal, salt and pepper, and of course, the coffee grounds. We always had a loaf of bread which had to be hidden in the boat so the raccoons wouldn't eat it up at night. We had cans of canned cream and baked beans and usually some bacon, eggs and grits which you could eat any time. But our staple diet was fried fish. I love fried fish. Some years ago, my wife broiled some fish, and when I saw what she had done, I told her, "The Lord will punish anyone who eats fish without frying it!" I hope I'm wrong.

Anyhow, after our camp was set up, the others would roar off in their boat, and I would put on my bathing suit with a belt which had a fish stringer on it - put on my old straw hat which held my extra popper bugs and wade out from the Island about 25 feet - maybe chest deep - then

the can. Then we'd put in a bunch of sugar and a squirt of canned cream. Boy, that was the best coffee I ever had!

I do have to tell you one more snake story. One morning, well after daylight, I was frying bacon and several people were around the fire waiting for breakfast - when from the lake a very large cottonmouth crawled right toward the fire. Everyone scattered! I grabbed my 9 shot 22 target pistol and missed him 9 times! Fortunately, a previous camper had left an old tire iron, so I got that and beat him to death. Believe it or not, it is not easy to hit a snake on his head while he's crawling toward you while you are looking for a place to run in case you miss or hit him somewhere else and really make him mad.

On one camping trip, "Uncle" Cecil, who was not an outdoorsman (he later became a Circuit Judge) was in my friend's boat which was pulled up on the bank, and "Uncle" Cecil saw a snake in the bottom of the boat, so he stood up, took a 12 gauge shotgun and killed that snake - also blew a 2" hole in the bottom of the boat. Needless to say, it took a considerable amount of planning to get that boat back to the Lake Poinsett Landing!

Those were wondrous days on Lake Winder. Few people used the lake, and I can't ever remember having to share the island even though we went there on weekends. I have not been back there for 40 years. I want to remember it as it was.

A FIFTY YEAR DIFFERENCE IN THE UPPER ST. JOHNS

When I look at the waters of the Upper St. Johns River now in 1996 and think back 50 years when I was a young man, I see a vast difference in the water of the river and the land it passes through.

The first thing I notice is the water was much cleaner and lighter in color fifty years ago. There was much less tannic acid to darken the water. Now it's dark tea color. I'm sure this darker color comes from extensive ditching and canals that drain thousands of acres of muck land around Fellsmere. These same canals now have a great effect on the river's depth, as much of the water is controlled by those canals.

As a teenager in the '40s, we used the river water to cook with when we camped and made coffee with it. Now to do such a thing would probably kill you. There are far more alligators now than there were in the 1940s and '50s. I know this huge population of alligators is eating far too many of the river's fish. Young environmentalists who must be from states up in the northeast who have never seen much of Florida much less any alligators, say the gators are helpful because of all the rough fish they eat. It's true to some extent; but be advised, a hungry alligator will eat anything that has meat or whether it's dead or alive. They must eat a lot of large, slow moving Black Bass who get very still during the night. That's when the alligators are most active. Ask any fisherman, large Black Bass are now few and far between. In the '40s and '50s they were

plentiful. Of course, this decline is due also to poor water quality and over-fishing. The alligator threat is last in line, but the problem is controllable.

I call your attention to page 5 in the September/October 1996 issue of the Florida Wildlife magazine. I quote:

"According to the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, alligators larger than six feet are the greatest danger to humans." Then "If you find an alligator in your back yard and try to capture it or kill it, they are protected by law (the GFC handles about 4,000 nuisance alligators a year)". The article goes on to say, "Alligators can also be a threat to pets. One huge alligator that was killed had nine dog tags in his stomach." And last, "Humans swimming can be at risk, too. The GFC recommends swimming only during daylight. Alligators feed mostly during dawn and evening hours." Also they say, "Be sure and swim with a partner and stay within specifically marked swimming areas - avoiding thick vegetation where 'gators live."

This information must tell you something. I would almost bet 100 dollars to a doughnut that there is not one old Floridian who sits on any Advisory Board having to do with making decisions about the protected alligators in Florida. When I was a kid some 50 years ago, we swam anywhere we wanted to at any time, and the gators always kept their distance.

Big Bass now are usually taken on large native shiners fished in a few selected areas. Bluegills, Red Breasts, and Shell Crackers are still plentiful but also in selected areas.

Speckled Perch are still taken in larger numbers. Specks are a primitive type fish and not adversely affected by poor water quality. There are still large numbers of several kinds of Catfish - usually found in the deeper holes. There are still more smaller Bass than anywhere else I know of.

The bird life on the banks and pasture areas of the Upper River is still unbelievable in numbers and variety both in migratory and permanent species. I do see a big difference in the number of the flocks of Heron and Ibis that used to pass overhead in such great numbers that it often took several minutes for them to pass over. However, I do not remember seeing white Pelicans as a teenager, and now there are nearly a thousand of these birds that winter on the River around Hwy 46 near Lake Harney. They are one of the largest birds in North America and magnificent to watch as they ride on the River or soar into the sky in giant circles until they pass out of sight. Man introduced the water hyacinth plants which are spread out in larger areas now than in the '40s. The State now sprays these plants which then sink and rot on the River bottom. But if they were not sprayed, the River would soon be completely covered over. Hydrilla is the worst curse to ever befall the River that I can remember. Parts of the River cannot be used because of the hydrilla, and some of the shallow lakes such as Lake Winder are effectively ruined for fishing or boating, because the hydrilla grows to the top of the water in huge areas. Sadly, for practical purposes, Lake Winder is a dead lake. In my lifetime, I have seen the Lake die. The water quality has a much higher degree of nutrients that fertilize the rapid growth of the river grasses.

The river has a large population of fresh water mussels which are also natural foods for fish and birds. They usually lay buried in the shallow sandbanks or in the shallow mud. The natural food supply in this river is beyond anyone's imagination, and so far, man has not been able to destroy it.

The fishing in the Upper St. Johns "aint what it used to be", but at times "it's still the best around." Let's just hope that the quality of the river does not further deteriorate; because if it does, we will then have lost an incredible natural resource.

Our last line of defense comes from the St. Johns River Management District. Maurice Sterling is the Director. If you are interested in information about their activities, write him at P.O. Box 1429, Palatka, FL 32179-1424.



What remains of Lake Winder today.

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A WASTED DAY ON THE ST. JOHNS

I want you to know there is no such thing as a wasted day on the Upper St. Johns River. It's possible that you may pick a day to go fishing when the fish are all "resting" or gone to "school" somewhere else. Going fishing and catching fish are not necessarily the same thing. But when such a day occurs, you merely look up at the beautiful sky and watch hundreds of white ibis slowly making their way to another place in a very relaxed manner until their whiteness is framed under the blue of the sky. Or maybe you might just want to relax and watch the tea colored water murmur quietly by your boat. Or maybe you will watch hundreds of the little Teal Ducks hurry by overhead at 70 MPH, and you wonder why they are in such a hurry on such a beautiful day. In the cool months of winter, you might see over 1,000 white Pelicans scattered around Hwy 46 as these majestic birds fly in a fashion that could make you think they were performing their "bird ballet", as they unknowingly pay tribute to their future generations. Or maybe you just look at the beautiful pale purple flowers of the hyacinths grouped tightly together. You know, don't you, that you can pick a bloom, quickly dip it into the water, and smell the unmistakable fragrance of fresh-cut watermelon. In season there are endless varieties of winter birds that pass by you so you can marvel at them and be thankful you have seen such a sight. Or maybe you might just be awed by the many different kinds of plants that grow beside and in the water as you pass from place to place. These are endless gifts for your appreciation and maybe even study.

Yes, truly, there is no such thing as a wasted day on the St. Johns River.

PART THREE

INTRODUCTION TO PART 111 OTHER PEOPLE'S STORIES

To make this book of history and stories complete, I thought it fitting to ask other Florida people to join with me in telling about their lives in Florida. To choose the people, I went to Fort Christmas, which is one of the last bastions of undiluted Florida people whose families go back four or five generations. Old Florida people are quiet-spoken people who still talk in a manner passed down through their forefathers who mostly moved to Florida in the 1800s. They have been able in part to preserve some of their colloquialisms. It is pleasing for me to hear as is the special way the mountain people of North Carolina speak. I have taken their stories from the tapes they made for me just as they speak.

I am very thankful to these five people who have shared their stories with me for this book. I thank Judge Platt, the best storyteller I know; and Rosalie Savage, a beautiful woman who had her 92nd birthday this past May of 1996; I thank Laverne Yates for his story and pictures he furnished me; I thank Cecil Tucker, II for his contribution

Cecil is a real Florida historian; and lastly, I thank Cecil's father for his tape. It is particularly appreciated, because he has left us. Boy, I'll never eat another sweet potato without thinking of that dear man.

Cecil Tucker, Sr. left us a short time after this interview was made; and when he left, he took with him a piece of Florida history. I know I will never be able to eat a sweet potato again without thinking of his story about helping his father sell their sweet potatoes.

CECIL TUCKER, SR

I was born in 1909 in Christmas, Florida. My father was born in Christmas, too. My mother come from Chuluota. Her name was Lizzie Simmons.

Growing up in Christmas was kinda wild and woolly. My daddy started me bein' a cowboy when I was about eight years old. He bought me a Shetland pony, and I started bein' a cowboy in Florida. I had no sisters, but I had eight brothers. There was nine of us all together; seven lived to be adults; four of us still living. One lives in Cocoa, one in Rockledge, other two in Bunnell. My daddy's original place, where he bought the land where we lived - he grew sweet potatoes about a mile north of here - 'bout half-way to the Fort. There was a dock there on Lake Cane, and he'd haul those sweet potatoes down there. There was a road through the woods on a little wagon trail. He had a boat he called Ready, and it was an in-board motorboat. Of course the only thing I remember about that - he carried me down there one time - they had a narrow gauge tram that run out to the water that went through "dock cypress". It went right down through the middle of that. He would load those sweet potatoes in that launch and go up the St. Johns to Lake Poinsett. I guess it's about 30 miles. And when he got up to Lake Poinsett, there was a landing there in Rockledge Creek.

Then, there was a road from that landing into Rockledge. He would carry these potatoes and walk out to Rockledge. It was 4 or 5 miles - all the way from where I-95 is now. He would rent a horse and wagon, or mule and wagon, come back and get his potatoes, and haul them down to Cocoa or Rockledge to sell them. He had a brother, John, who lived in Cocoa and a sister, too. My father's name was Andrew Franklin Tucker. Folks called him Drew. He'd spend the night. I remember one time we went with him to that dock and swampy hammock. He stretched a tent. Mother and us children would stay there when he went to Cocoa and back. I hadda been purty small. I still remember campin' there. Didn't see many animals. Daddy was a cattleman, farmer, and a tradesman. He bought furs and alligator skins. He was a dealer in those and also had a store he operated in 19 and 14. The store was over where our old place is, about a mile north of here, before you get to the Cemetery.

First, he had the Post Office for two years. He was the Postmaster for two years; and he had one room of the old building that we lived in that he used for the Post Office. In the room right next to it, he operated a General Store. He gave up the Post Office after about two years, and my mother took it over. She was Postmaster sixteen years. In 1918 he built a big two story building - about 40 feet long and 24 feet wide. That's where he operated the store and the Post Office. On the alligator skins, they brought them to the store; on the furs, he'd travel and buy the furs. He'd travel down the east coast and back. He had a Model T. After 1924 or '25, there was a bridge across the St. Johns River. Prior to that, to get across, you'd have to go up to

Geneva to Mims. Another bridge went across to Osteen. If that road got under water, why, we'd have to go to Sanford and go across to Osteen. He'd buy the hides. One of the fellas in Georgia, he'd buy them; and he'd usually just ship 'em to him by mail. He was a good cattleman, and he had a citrus grove. He did a little bit of everything.

In my lifetime, I did 'bout the same as my dad. My mother ran the store. In 1929 we closed it. In 19 and 31, they started compulsory cattle dipping to eradicate the Texas Fever Tick. Dad and ol' feller name of Redditt rented some land - a pasture. See, up until that time, the cows would just run over all - no fences. They built their pastures and put a cross fence right through the middle of it. They had to dip these cows every few weeks. So, they'd gather them out one side of the pasture and then put 'em in the other side. The cattle had to get their own grazing. They had no feed for them at all. It got to be winter time. Dad went out there and was short 90 head of cows; and he found most of them dead. He said he couldn't stand this and had a system where they could move the cattle across at Maytown and get 'em up on the other side - cross the River at Orange Mound, and then they moved 'em on and dipped them out at Maytown and moved 'em up north. Used to be on the branch line of Florida East Coast. The cattle that died mostly starved to death. They just didn't have enough food for the cows they had, and some died from the dipping. So when he moved his cows out, that left enough range for Mr. Redditt's cows to survive. So he moved up into Volusia and contacted a big landowner up there and wanted to lease his land. That was the territory

where it was. He wrote this man about this land, and the man wrote him back and told him there was no fence area; and, if he had cows on their property, this was notice to move 'em off - they didn't want cows on that property. The reason was, they was movin' timber; and the cattle men would burn the woods to get fresh grass for the cows. So, he moved up into Flagler County. A couple of my brothers camped up there for several months. The cattle had to be moved about 75 miles. And so Dad finally rented a place up there and stayed up there most the time. Had about 700 - I think they counted 738 head whenever they dipped them out at Maytown - must've been 1931. 1932, I had a job bein' range rider. I was checking the cows behind the dipping. When they dipped those cows, they put a paint marker on them. I'd ride the range to see if they had a mark; and if they didn't, I'd take 'em and dip 'em. My territory I was ridin' in was from Christmas to, well, the road that goes from Narcoossee - well, a little ol' town up there. I was working for the Government. I started out gettin' \$100 a month. That was pretty good money back in those days. I had to feed a horse, camped out at night, and had a saddlebag and bedroll back of me and just a coffee boiler. I'd barbecue fat bacon and carry my other rations with me. Goldenrod was my west line - Goldenrod Narcoossee road - and my south line at that time was McCrory ranch. It's finally become the Magnolia Cattle Company ranch. When my first child was born, we was livin' in Rockledge - when we first got married. My wife's name was Juanita Smith. So, we come back over here, and I boarded with my father, until I started working with the State in April, 1931. I was married in 1930. Cecil was born in 1931. My wife and I were boarding with my

father and mother. But, we still kept our place in Rockledge. And, when she went into labor, they carried her over to Rockledge. And we stayed there in Rockledge; and he was born in Rockledge. We stayed there 'til he was about two weeks old, and then we moved to Bithlo. My wife made me promise her, before we were married, I wouldn't move her to Christmas. I worked out of Bithlo until October of 1932. Mother wanted to move up to Bunnell with my dad. So, she persuaded my wife to come down and take over the Post Office - which she did for 42 years! So, I left Bithlo on Monday morning for work. She asked me about moving back here, and I had promised her I'd never move her to Christmas. And, she said, "Well, would it be all right if I moved to Christmas? Down there?" So, she told me when I started to leave. She followed me to the gate around the place (where we was living was right back of Shaw's service station, up there at Bithlo). So, she said, "You'd better check by Christmas to see where you're living when you come back Saturday." So I did. I come by Christmas; and they told me that she'd moved here. My mother moved her down here.

Only thing I 'member about Lake Winder - I went down to Bumby camp one time with another one of my uncles. One of my uncles was a caretaker there - Hodges was his name. It was some rich fellow out of Cocoa that had it leased. I went down there driving an ol' model T truck.

Cecil A. Tucker, II, is a student of Florida history, an historian, and tells me he will eventually publish a book of his own. He was the Chairman of the Florida Cattle Frontier Symposium held in November of 1995.

CECIL TUCKER, II
At His Home
January 11, 1996

Well, I was born May 25, 1931 - born in Rockledge. My folks were livin' in the Rockledge area over near Cocoa. Shortly thereafter, my dad moved to work with the State in tick eradication when they lived at Bithlo 'til about some time in 1932 when they moved to Christmas. The store - my Grandpa Drew built it - at Christmas during the tick eradication in the 1930s. He was losing cattle in the dipping and got tired of that, so he drove his cattle up to Bunnell to get out of the dipping, and my dad was oldest and married. My dad stayed behind at the old place where the store was. It was Tucker's General Store located about 1/4 mile east of Fort Christmas Road. Mother took over the Post Office. The entrance going up to the old place where the ol' Tucker Store and Post Office was is opposite where Jewellyn Road is. I think it was built about 1916-17 and operated it until 1931. Then my dad took over the store and Mother took over the Post Office in 1932, and she was the Postmistress for 42 years. My Grandpa Drew was Postmaster for 2 years. My Grandma Lizzie was Postmistress for 16 years. So, in 1992, when we celebrated 100 of Post Office years in Christmas, at that time, 60 of those 100 years, somebody in the family was the Postmaster - either Grandpa, Grandma, or Mother!

I have one sister, Anita, two years younger than me born at the old place. My recollections are at the old Tucker home place. We grew up there where the store was. The Post Office at my dad's homestead was there until he built a new Post Office on Highway 50 in 1937. They ended up tearing the old two-story building down from the old Post Office and using some of the materials for the Post Office and some for his house, which he moved into on Highway 50 about 1940- somewhere along then. I went to grade school for 8 years at the school in Christmas. This was a two-room school house. The first four grades were in the little room, we called it; the next four grades were in the big room. Then I went to Memorial Junior High in Orlando - rode the bus. In the wintertime we left at daylight and got back at dark. Then, from Memorial Junior High, went over to Orlando High School, OHS. Graduated from there in 1949. Then, I went one year to Orlando Junior College. I had gotten a 4-H scholarship that I was going to lose if I didn't go up to the University of Florida, 'cause that's where it was for. So I transferred to UF after one year at OJC, an' that's where I got my B.S. and Masters.

I mentioned that Dad was a range rider working for the State in tick eradication. At that time, they lived in Bithlo. He would leave Monday morning on horseback looking for cattle that had not been dipped to be dipped, and he went all the way almost to (Hwy) 436 and south to about the Beeline. He covered that area every two weeks - horseback. He camped as he went. One night when he camped out, he kept hearing something sniff. He thought

it was a dog. He finally shook his canvas cover at it, and that's when he found it was a BIG wildcat!

Grandpa Drew - there wasn't very many places they could sell stuff here in Christmas, because it was so sparse; because at that time there were only 100 to 150 people in the area of Christmas - had to go to the store in Chuluota or Oviedo to sell stuff. There was a lot of people in Christmas who were in contact with people in Cocoa; and so Grandpa Drew would dig sweet potatoes and take them by oxcart to the St. Johns River and load 'em on a boat. He had an inboard boat that he kept on Lake Cane, and he'd load sweet potatoes, things like that, and take it down to Rockledge through Lake Poinsett. He'd run up the branch as far as he could with the boat and then get out and walk a five-mile walk to get an oxcart from someone he knew and walk out and come back to load up the potatoes to take them to Rockledge and peddle 'em. This probably was about 1910 or 15, or later than that. Long about 1920.

Dad was born in 1909. Christmas has always been a pretty large area so that people said, well, we lived in Fort Christmas. By the way, the community, the old time community, has always been Fort Christmas. The Post Office was established as Christmas in 1892. So later years, the Fort's been dropped off, but the old-timers will tell you they lived at Fort Christmas. Fort Christmas went from the County line on the north Seminole-Orange to south to the Osceola-Orange County line, east to the River, and today it goes to (Hwy) 520, which is just east of Bithlo. But before Bithlo was established, it went all the way to the Beaconlockhatchee, which is a good portion of east

Orange County. Talaqua grove near the Econlockhatchee. Fort Christmas was built in 1837. I am of the opinion that in this area there were white people here. It's very difficult to find any written history, but it's just hearing people, the old-timers, say, "Well, so and so said they were here." There would be a hearsay type thing. Somebody was here - white people.

When I went to college, I majored in Animal Husbandry with the idea that if we ever got to the point where we could gather enough money for two families to live off the same herd that I would do that. It never did quite work that way. I was always involved with Dad in helping with the cattle business. When I graduated from college, I went into the Extension Service. I was Assistant County Agent in Marion County for two years. Then I became County Agent in Seminole County and was Agent for the next thirteen years or so before I got out into commercial agriculture. I was in the watercress growing business for couple of years; I managed an 1100 head dairy cow herd for a couple of years; and then opened up a farm and garden supply store, feed store. Our store, Tucker's Farm and Garden Center, helped introduce the liquid feed, Superlix.

My store in Sanford - we started in 1972. Then in 1984, we sold it to my son, and he carried it on. We bought Mr. Harry Rice's store on Highway 50 just 'bout 3/4 mile east of (Hwy) 436 about 1976, and we ran it for about four or five years before I sold it. And then about '84, we sold our Sanford store to our son, John. We were also looking at establishing a store in Deland. We never

did really complete that. John ended up going ahead and establishing that store. Son, John A. Tucker, runs both of those stores. Then we moved to the ranch house here in 1986, '87, and we've been living here since then.

We have native pasture, woods, and a little bit of improved pasture. And, of course, part of our cattle are over at the hundred acres or so at the old place. There's about a mile and a half between the places. The big pasture behind us is all attached together. It's family operated, but it's all attached together. Years ago, when it was an open range, we'd go to the river; and years ago when it ceased to be open range, my Dad leased some land, and we had cattle with the Cowards and the Phillips, and we went down to the river in those days. When I was, oh, 13, 14, 15, we had cattle on the river. But since then we've had our cattle in this area here. Only participated in cattle drives in this area, 8 or 10 miles, nothing big like the Great Cattle Drive of '95 that we was on. K-6 to Holopaw. My wife was on that drive. She drove cattle with her Dad, K-6 Ranch, and that was half hour from there to Holopaw - 10 or 15 mile drive there.

When the Spanish came to Florida as early as 1521, they brought cattle with them. Ponce de Leon was here in 1513. We think that he probably left horses at that point. In 1521, we're quite sure that's when the cattle first came in. They established St. Augustine in 1565. They started building beef herds and actually got into a movement of creating ranchos and missions in an effort to missionize native Indians - the Tumucuan, and all of the other tribes that were here in Florida. They created these ranchos. So

between 1565 and 1605, there were as many as 30 ranchos that developed near the St. Augustine area and went to west Florida. The one thing that has always puzzled me is that the land from St. Augustine southward along the St. Johns River to the area of Christmas has been ideal cattle grazing land. The cattle people - during the Civil War - this was an area that they brought cattle from that they drove to the Confederate Soldiers. Oftentimes, they started up around Osteen in the Mims area. I would not be surprised to find some day that we have missed ranchos that the Spanish had in the St. Johns River area south of St. Augustine. I am of the opinion that we had cattle here that the Spanish herded in the early 1600s. I don't think there is any question about that. You see, after the Spanish left, there was kind of a vacuum; because the Native Indians that were here, the Timucuan south of here, the Calusas, the Ais, and all these, the Applachi, these all disappeared because of disease and warring and whatnot. By the time the Spanish left, there were a few that were still living that went to Cuba with the Spanish and never came back. When the Spanish came back the second time, the Native Indians never came back. And so there was a vacuum in Florida that the Seminoles ended up filling by the 1700's. They began to come into Florida and take up that vacuum in Florida that was left by the natives when they left. And the Seminoles started gathering up the cattle that the Spanish had left behind - that had grown wild in this area of Florida. The white settlers followed the Seminoles a short time later. Of course, I am sure there were a lot of white people that had moved down here from Georgia. Well, Florida was doing the same thing, because they were here years before that. And I think this

is part of what led to the Second Seminole Indian War - was this conflict over cattle and range and ownership of cattle. Well you see, these were pioneer cattle people who had been here a long time and learned to live with the Indians, and there are tales - as you move on across the State into Hillsborough County - of the people there having gotten along very well with the Indians until the Second Seminole Indian War. And when that came along, it created a conflict between the Indians and the white people who had been friends with each other for many years. So, I think this is true.

My great-great-grandfather, John Richard Allen Tucker, one of the first that moved to Christmas in the 1860s, moved the family there after the Civil War, in 1866. There was about 10 or 11 families that moved into the East Orange County area - the Christmas area - starting from Chuluota and going south to the County line - the Osceola County line. But there was about 11 families at that point; and for the next 50 years, there's only about 150 people in the whole area! As early as 1950, there was probably not more than 250 people in this whole area, and we're talking about a big area - 30 or 40 miles square. The population in this area did not start growing until the Cape came in; and after the Cape came in - in the '60s, it began to grow. But even so, it's only been in the last 15 years that it's got up to the point now where there's 3,800, 4,000 people here in what we call Christmas. But it wasn't a third of that big 15 years ago.

When I was about 15, my Dad had an ulcerated stomach. He had an operation and had 85% of his stomach taken

out. So for the next few years, I ended up having to do all the cow work, 'cause he couldn't ride a horse and do this kind of work. So a school-mate of mine, a buddy of mine, we did most of the cow work. Of course, some of things I remember have a very indelible memory on my mind - on things concerning doctoring screwworms. Because, every calf that was born - you invariably had to doctor - because the screwworm fly would lay eggs on any exposed blood. Well - the little navel cord would have exposed blood. And so, every new calf you'd have to doctor it, or it would die. If a horsefly bit a cow or any warm-blooded animal, a drop of blood would develop when the horsefly left. And they'd lay eggs on that spot. You wouldn't have to have an open wound for them to get started. So it was a terrible thing that we had to put up with. But, it was part of the cowboyin' we had to do. Most of the time, we would catch calves in the pasture. One of us would catch 'em and doctor the calf, and the other would keep the mother cow off of us. Once in a while, if you were by yourself, you'd have to rope the calf and just pull it up in the saddle with you, to keep the cow from catching you.

Texas Fever Tick. There's been a couple of outbreaks of the Texas Fever Tick. This one I spoke of earlier was in the '30s - the early '30s that Dad was working. In the '50s, another outbreak occurred. Dad went to work for the State then as a Tick Inspector dipping cattle. At that time, he wasn't range riding. He was just dipping the cattle. Of course, by that time, people had their cattle up in pastures; and it was easier to keep track of what had been dipped and what hadn't been dipped.

My wife, Mart's, dad, Louie Albriton, that's what brought him to this area. The tick eradication. He was in charge of a crew just five miles south of Christmas and managed P.V. Wilson Lumber Company, which later became K-6. He managed that Ranch.

My wife, Mart, tells the story about the time of the tick eradication - that although some of it was a fun time for her being able to work with her dad and a cowhand - it was actually a terrifying time for cattle people. Her dad didn't believe in playing around with equipment - whether it's horses or what. He didn't run a horse just to run a horse. He believed you used him because he'd work for you. They'd have to cowhunt on 32,000 acres; Mart's daddy, a cowhand, the cowdog, and her - (in that order, she said). They'd hit a little bunch of cows and send the dog ahead, and they'd gather to the dog 'cause they all had calves. Then they'd send a rider behind the dog. So that by the time they all gathered to the dog, there you were. Well, she was the one to get to gallop lickety-split across the woods and have a real good time. There were times when one of the others would take her horse, because they would have to rope a calf. Sometimes they'd have to rope the cow and tie her off, or something. But they worked harder having to rope all these calves than she did, coming up and helping to stop the herd, and keeping the herd together while they cut out what work they had to do. I had to rope the calves. They didn't have a pen. If a cow had to be doctored, usually it was a longer term job. The medicine we used had benzene in it and some petroleum in it; and it had a pine tar base to make it stick; And it had soot charcoal to make it black, to see what you had done.

But, it worked. There were times when worms would get in a cow, and you'd doctor, and doctor, and doctor. One of the worst places to doctor the screwworm was in a cow's horn. If she broke her horn off, for some reason, and the screwworms would get in the horn - it was very hard to kill worms out of that. Even then, every time you cut it, you created more blood. But usually, you packed it with cotton and you put in all the Smearex and all the medicine that you could; and you just had keep her up until you saw that there was no activity. Sometimes, you could see where there would be oozing down the side of the face of the cow.

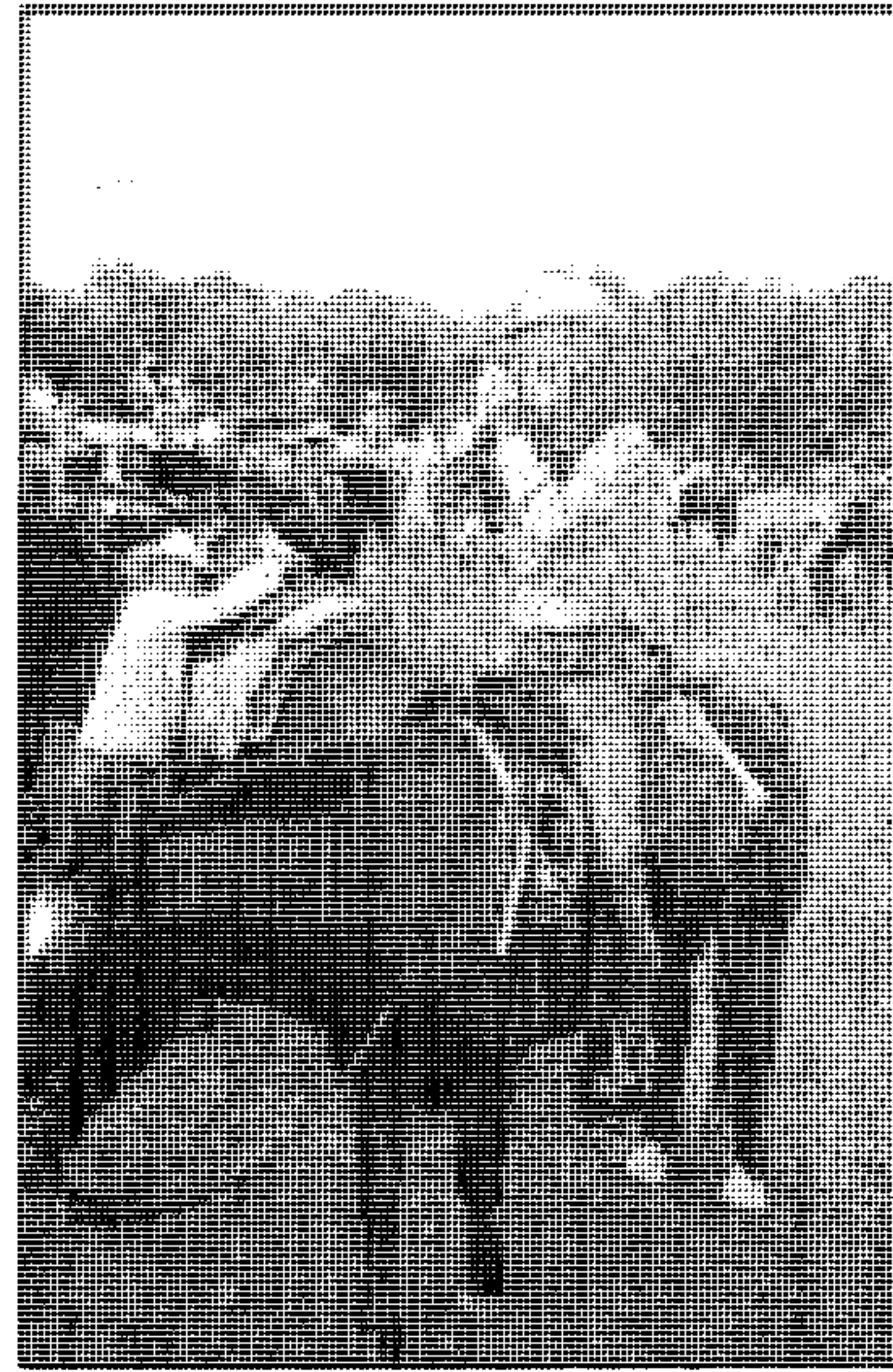
Mart still rides, and we did horseback on the Great Cattle Drive. I have a bad back and didn't want to mess it up, so I quit riding. I did more horseback riding on the Great Cattle Drive than I did the last ten years and didn't have a bit of problem. I enjoyed it. Didn't have a bit of problem.

My dad, in building up his herd, and the kind of cows he had, if they were feisty, they went to the "tin top". He didn't propagate ungentle cattle that couldn't be handled easily. The reason is that if one of them is a bad cow or hard to handle, first thing he'd do is send 'em to Kissimmee livestock market. So, after twenty years or so of doing this, you could create a herd of gentle cattle. So we have no problems.

Mart and I can go back to the pens and start whistling. Then, heads go up and the cows start moving to the gate. We have not had to feed them pellets to gather them like

this for about ten years. They respond to the herding whistle. (Cecil did the whistle). They know that's when to head for the cow pens. Some of ours are half Brahma. You can pop a cow whip and do the same thing. Dad liked to use the cow whip. He'd get out there and pop that cow whip and start 'em a goin'. He liked that!

I surely do thank Judge Platt for his Chapter about early Florida and his early life. Judge Platt is probably one of the best "Cracker" storytellers in the State of Florida and a great entertainer. The Platt Family once owned over 500,000 acres, including what is now Cape Canaveral and Patrick Air Force Base. The Platt Family goes way back in Florida history to 1821 and has played a large part in the development of Central Florida.



JUDGE PLATT

Melbourne, Florida

February 22, 1995

I was born 1915 - March 26th, 'bout 10 miles north of Deer Park at Wolf Creek. My father's name was Calvin Platt. They called him Cab. He was born in 1872, south of Kissimmee, 'bout 10 miles southwest of Kissimmee, on Reedy Creek. He married Alida Drawdy, born between Oviedo and Chuluota at Fort Christmas, in 1875. They got married in 1895; and that same year, he moved from Deer Park to Melbourne. They had cattle over here. He was in the cattle business all his life; and his dad was in the cattle business all his life; and his dad was in the cattle business all his life!

Ancestors? I'll give you the story of the whole bunch. They were in Germany about 4th century, but I don't think they were Germans. May have been Celts or Romans, or I don't know what they were. Anyway, they were a kind of a war like tribe. And they took care of their own - didn't have no outsiders or anything. There was a pretty good bunch of them. Then, in about the 9th century, something happened in Germany - maybe a famine, or a war, or sickness, or I don't know what it was. Anyway, they moved to Scotland; and they stayed in Scotland until the early 1700s. They wanted to come to the United States. The Hudgens were boat builders in Glasgow, Scotland. (This was the same family, the Hudgens, that introduced the Brahmas to Texas). They built three ships to haul them over here. They came to Virginia. Were there for some time getting along pretty good. And the Revolutionary War came along, and they all went to it. Then, when they give land grants to the high ranking officers, why, they give 'em in Georgia and South Carolina. And they had moved from Virginia. They got mad at them people, and they moved to North Carolina. They had to live a year and cultivate the land they give 'em - a Section - 640 acres, but they only planted a 40-foot square garden; and they built a little lean-to as a camp. Before the year was over, they sold it and moved into Florida. Well, when one family moved - they had been together for the last two or three thousand years - the whole bunch of 'em in that family moved with 'em. So, that's what settled Florida, mostly. Actually, they come from North Carolina. Then, they went to splittin' up; and some went all through Oklahoma. It's settled by that same group of people. Like the Platte River out there? Well, I was out

there and seen a Platt out there in Oklahoma City - old feller, about 93 years old - and I said, "How 'bout this Platte River out here?" He says, "You know these Platts! They got mad with their family and put an "e" on the end of their name!"

There was an old man lived down there at Kenansville. Jeb, I think, was his name. He had a bunch of boys; and they was always in to something. They had several killin's around there. And the old man's place, the Parker place, was haunted - still haunted, and some of the people I know - was as bad as anybody ever got - would go there and couldn't spend the night. Buggers would get after 'em.

We lived about 6 or 8 miles away from the St. Johns River. Right along the County line. Dad built a big two-story house there and also built a house on Moccasin Island up there on Lake Winder. He built it about 18 and 98 out of liter wood. Then he built there at Cocoa - there where Five-Points comes in. He built a big two-story house there and here at Valkaria; and he built another one and sold that to his mother. Then he built one on Livingston Hammock (Ellis Road now). This used to be all open country. You could see for miles and miles and miles. Wasn't no trees or anything. Then he built a house down there at the south end of the County. It's called Frank Bay. They moved from house to house - from here to there. Then he built three more houses south of Deer Park. He owned all that land down there at one time.

About 19 and 23, I drove cattle. But before that, I'll tell you a story: We went in 19 and 20 to Moccasin Island up there, and decided we was going over to the old Shiver place - straight across. And there was dust in the middle of Lake Winder and there was old sinkhole-like places; and we was afraid we'd get bogged down in the ol' Model T. So we went around where the river was comin' in up there; and when we got around there, where the sand had washed out of the river, into the lake, we bogged down. We had a guy with us, Willie Simmons. This old Model T - he picked the front end and set it over and picked up the back end and set it over; and we got over there and back. Picked up the front end and the back end! He was awful strong!

About 1928 or '29, we drove cattle right down the middle of Lake Winder into Lake Poinsett. Bone dry. Back in 1920, it was dry and 1928, it was dry. See you had to come all the way out where Highway 95 is now and go around that ol' sawgrass marsh - going up to what we called a pocket, north of Highway 50, with the cattle. We had a well there. My Dad put a well on Moccasin Island, and the water ran down into a pond. So we watered the cattle there early that morning before we started. There wasn't even a gator hole there where we could get water or even a mud hole in the river all the way up to Lake Poinsett. When we got up to Lake Poinsett, up in the north central part, there was a big hole. Must have been 300 yards across. The water was good and clear; and we made the cattle go around on the other side of the river, and we spent the night there. That's the only time I ever used cow-chips and bulrush to cook with; but we got along with it pretty

good. The next morning we drove the cattle down the River; and when we got to the other side of where Highway 50 is now, there was water running in the River. But it was salty. There was big high mounds out there - three, four hundred yards. Mounds all over the place. You could stick a pipe in, and the water come out, but it was salty. The cattle bogged up where these places were. And it was that salt grass that was growin' there; and you could see where they had reached down to get that grass; but they never could get it all. There was a bunch of grass they could not get. They wouldn't drink that salt water. There was some old man with us. There was some springs over on the west side of the river - up there, just other side of Lake Poinsett, and we had to go way over there to get water.

'Bout 1928, we started cattle right here in Melbourne, and gathered cattle all the way up to Lake Winder. And then we separated the cattle - to put them up in the pocket, north of Highway 50. So we'd separate them out. There was probably about 400, was all we had - not very many. From Highway 50 - the cattle would go right on up north side of the River - east side. Passed Doe Hammock, and Possum Bluff, and Buck Island. We usually would take 'em to Titusville and put 'em in the pocket and turn 'em loose. No pastures nowhere - all open pasture. 19 and 30 was probably the end of takin' cattle up there. The dippin' started; and you had to dip them cows every 14 days, by law. The deer came along and killed them about '37. We killed the deer here, before they ever started. What the problem was - we were supposed to have a Texas Fever Tick, and they won't live on the deer. But we had the

Australian Fever Tick. They will live on the deer, and we knew it; because we moved the cattle out, and the ticks all died. He has to have cow blood or he'll die. So, we moved the cattle out of these pastures where these deer were; and when we put cattle back in there, they were covered with ticks. So we knew it was the deer. The horse wouldn't do. 'Cause there were places where the horses were, and there weren't no ticks there. They had to get it from the deer. So we started killin' 'em here.

We started dippin' in Indian River County about 1930 March - dipped down there all the way north of Cocoa and put 'em in there this side of where (Highway) 520 is now. They went right up nearly to the Hospital - our fence was from the railroad west of the marsh where the Hospital is. There's a road just this side of there. Don't know the name of it. That fence run down that road all the way to the marsh. We had about 125,000 acres in that pasture. We left Fellsmere, dip 'em all in 14 days then go back to Fellsmere, rest a day or two, and start all over. Before we got in that pasture, they had to dip 'em down there again. So they helped us pen that cattle - some of them back before that. Takes two days to pen 'em - about 4,000 cattle in there. Whenever they went back, they penned them, there, at Moccasin Island, on the east side. It really was an island - about 30 feet high and 300 feet long. It's right there on the edge of the lake. It had a house on it that my dad built about 1898. Had a bunch of guava trees on it - solid on it. In about '31 or '32 we were there to camp, and it was completely covered with big Moccasins. Completely covered! We had to go over to where the cabbage palms were to camp out. Shiver's

house is on the north end of the lake, over on the west side. He also had a dock run out there where the paddleboats or steamboats could come in - not far from where the river comes out. Built way back - way back. Been there a long time before my Dad built his house in there. There was an Indian Mound there just south of where Bumby's camp was. Somebody else owns it now.

About the Savage Trading Post - In 1839, the Army sent a Lt. Wick; and he built a lookout right on top of that Indian Mound, and he built a small fort here, just north of it. Some years later, a fellow name of Savage came and built the Savage Trading Post. Mulberry Mound on Lake Poinsett has a sort of hole in the top of it so they could see anything coming up the river. Mulberry Mound is on the west side of the river on the north side of the Lake.

Author's note: "The mail came from Eau Gallie, and I have a statement from the Mailman's daughter, that she rode with him and stayed several days at the Savage Trading Post. The Brevard County Commissioners met there for several years, because it was halfway through Brevard County. I haven't been able to find out when that Trading Post was built there. It's strange. Uncle Charlie bought that camp, best I can remember, about 1929. Rosalie Savage says she remembers her daddy taking her from Christmas to there in a horse and buggy when she was a teenager. There was a U.S. Post Office there from 1904 to 1910 and a community of other houses. The old Savage place was way on out, 'bout the north end of Lake Winder. Probably ten miles."

Back to Judge Platt's story -

Henry Partin bought that place. My dad traded him 30 head of hogs and 40 acres of land for that house. Right around 1900. Don't remember which young 'uns were born there. Brother born in 1901 - he was born in the Savage place. Lived there a while, and then moved back to Bellsmere. Straight across from Moccasin Island is the Shiver place. I don't know if Shiver built that house or not. I know Louis Shiver lived there a long time.

Willie was Louis' older brother; and he's the one they put in the box over in Kissimmee and mailed him to Texas on a freight train. The train got up there somewhere over near Orlando. Something happened, and they were checking the cars. When they tapped that box, Willie beat on it, and they opened the lid. He jumped out of it and ran off. He was an old rogue. I guess that's why they did it.

There was a book about this and got Bone Mizell as the guy - Sheriff's boy; really built him up as a cow man, but nearly all of them got killed. Old man Marion Platt, my granddaddy's first cousin, married one of the Mizell girls. And then, he killed Jesse Mizell. Mary Ida Bass Barber wrote about such things in her book. They was first heard of somewhere around Ft. Myers and got mad and started to go to Pensacola - somewhere up that way. Each family had a boat, and got up there 'round Gulf Hammock or one of them rivers; and one of them run aground. They had to go to shore. They liked the area and stayed there. There's a book about each one of 'em. One of the things I know about - old man Driggers was a pretty good ol' teller. His boy got to be Sheriff. The younger boy went

with some guy out to a pasture with some other fella and got caught by the man who owned the calf they killed: the boy shot and killed him. So they wanted the Drigger's boy for murder, too. Well, he took off. They got the other boy, but they knew who he was. So, the Sheriff asked his daddy. His daddy said that he was the Sheriff, and he'd have to go get him. The Sheriff said he knew where he was at: that old man so and so lived on a little island, and that he would be out there. So he went out there, and the old man said, "Nope, nope, I ain't seen 'em. He ain't been here." But, there was two cups sittin' on the table! So he knew somebody had been there. So he went back and told his dad he was there, and his dad said, "Well, you're gonna have to go back out there and git him." And when he started to leave, his dad said, "Now don't let that (blank, blank) kill you!" So, he went: found the ol' boy in the house, and put him in a boat and started back. Just as they got to the landing, why, the boy jumped out of the boat. And he shot at him several times. It was his brother. And then he couldn't find him. He looked and looked and couldn't find him. He went back and told his dad he thought he'd killed him. The dad said, "Well, probably good riddance. The old boy was mean." He said the boy had a habit, when he was little, of catching a bug, stickin' a pin through it, and stick him up on a tree or post or house and watch him 'til he died. He loved the lizards more than anything else. He'd stick a pin through a lizard and watch him 'til he died. The boy disappeared, so they thought he drowned. Okay. About two or three years after that, he got a letter from Texas, and it had a lizard in it! Dried up lizard! But later, the boy come down here to the old Shiver place and stayed there for a long time. We knew him.

Well, I didn't know him, but my brother knew him and several other people knew him. They knew he was wanted for murder; but they didn't think he had actually done anything. He just went with this other boy to kill a calf and maybe didn't know whether that boy owned the calf or not: but he went with him. Probably, he knew different. But you could say he didn't know different. In this day and time, anyone would know good and well they'd convict him. Anyhow, ol' Farmer was down there. He was a character, too. Farmer was the Sheriff of Osceola County: and don't know what really happened, but he killed that boy - the Driggers boy. But, now the book says they don't know whatever happened to him: but I know what happened to him!

Louis Shiver lived on the lake, and I think he was the youngest of the Shiver boys. Old man Martin Hunt was working for Jacob Summerlin; and George was Jacob Summerlin's grandson. They were coming to work with my dad. They were camped on the porch. Louis come in there - he was a great big old rough fella - and went over there to old man Martin and kicked him and told him to get off the porch. Old Man Martin leaped up and kicked the fire out of him. And he said, "D....., Mart, why didn't he tell me who you was?" They were good friends, see, and Mart didn't know who kicked him: and Louis didn't know who he'd kicked!

Then, George married my sister, Lillian. She still lives over in Kissimmee. George died a few years back. But I guess they were some of the last Summerlin bunch we knew of around here. I knew old man George - that was

Sam's brother. He was kind of a peculiar old fella. He said "E-e-e" before he said anything. There was a lot of horses - everybody had horses out there on the marsh: and my dad said, "Well, George, what am I gonna do with all these horses?" George said, "E-e-e, just git you a high powered rifle - shoot 'em in the belly. Be through with 'em." Well, he was a character.

In 1896, it come a flood. In 1895, it froze - everybody knows 'bout that. The river froze. My dad lived at Deer Park to otter hunt. Been real hot all winter. Skins wasn't any good. But it froze that night, so he thought the next day it was still frozen. Been March, second or third day of the freeze. There's a big gator hole in a big cypress pond - right here on (Highway) 192. It's the first big pond (Highway) 192 goes through. When he got there, the dogs jumped these three otters. Well, the dogs hit that hole and slid on the solid ice to the other side! Killed the three otters and spent the night there. Skint 'em. Next morning, he had to chip ice to get water for his coffee. Went down there to Crabgrass Creek where it comes in - there's an old ford down there. He led his horse like two or three hundred yards on solid ice to go across to Beef Camp, where the man bought otter hides. He was going to sell 'em and then go on up to Deer Park. It was solid ice over there, but it froze everything. It did freeze 'coons and 'possums and things - didn't freeze no cows or horses. Some dogs froze. It froze all the orange trees in Florida, except on one little island in the Banana River. It didn't freeze these sour oranges these Indians had in these creeks on them mounds. Didn't freeze them. So, they went and dug them up and planted them and budded these. So that's how

they learned to use the sour root stock to bud. We hunted dogs to get the otters. Set steel straps some places, but most people over here hunted with dogs. Dogs would smell the otters - trail 'em up and finally bay 'em up. They'd get into a big fight; and the old otter would stop to fight 'em. Then you'd ride up there on your horse and kill him. They wasn't in the old deep creeks and places. They had to sit there and wait on them there and in the river. This was in the ponds and flat woods. Lot of otters in them ponds and flat woods where the water wouldn't be up. Might be a gator hole once in a while - a deep hole. If the dog run him in that hole, why, the dog couldn't get him, but then Dad would ride up on his horse and get down. The otter would have to come up to get air, and Dad would shoot him. Had to come up to get air. Can't stay down very long. Anyhow, he'd come up to look for the dogs to fight him. Sometimes they would come up and run the dog off - especially if they had little ones. Dog can't hardly kill one. If the dog would catch them by the back of the neck, why, he'd turn right over and bite the dog!

Been all into Sawgrass and Helen Blazes - real marshy. We had a lot of cattle in there just east of Lake Helen Blazes. In 1896, when that flood come, Lake Helen Blazes flooded. It was already kinda wet in the last part of '95, and in '96. In the Spring and Summer it really rained and flooded everything. Water was probably 10 to 15 foot above flood stage. I seen the water 2 - 3 foot deep - maybe 4 foot deep - over (Highway) 192 and the old railroad that went to Deer Park. I've never seen it over the rails - over the ties, but not over the rails. And in 1896, Helen Blazes floated up. It was a marsh, see. Big trees floated over that

railroad and stopped up Lake Washington. All the north end of Lake Washington was a sand beach, and they filled up half of Lake Washington. The floating trees caused the river to narrow and stop there - it went right over the highway - railroad was higher than the road - went right over. There were big trees - maybe 15 - 16 inches in diameter: there were cabbage trees, and bay trees, and big old myrtle trees, and maples, and three or four other kinds of trees. They floated over there, all in one bunch, and stopped the river up there. Before that, big boats come all the way in to Lake Washington - steamboats - paddleboats. But, in the '96 flood, it closed up Lake Washington on the north end with that drift. It also washed out the river and changed the run of the river there and made a sandbar where it's hard to get over. On the other side of Lake Washington, it stayed pretty good there until it got up above Lake Poinsett - above (Highway) 50. There was one river run across there: and later, there was three runs, and none of them over 3 or 4 foot deep. Big boats couldn't come no more - couldn't leave Lake George and come up there. End of big boats comin' down. Right out here, not very far, there's a place called Dave Hunter's Boat Landing, with houses built all up around it. He went up there to Shiver's boat landing in a big ol' launch and got groceries, and brought it out here to this place and landed there. And they went there in their ox wagons and got it, so the water was pretty deep. Right back here, about a mile, there's a flat pond. There's houses built over it now; but that was one of the best fishin' places on the St. Johns River. They would come out from the St. Johns in a boat and fish and then go back. Things is changed. The land is even changed. Used to be a low spot right out here and

went on around there. When I was about 10 years old, there was a lot of alligators over this place and an old pond. I used to hunt them little old alligators. The water never was up over my belt. Now, if you get out there in that pond, it'd be 10-12 foot deep, so the land has changed. Right here it grewed up. Well, just before we moved here anyway - '57. That land has come up 3 or 4 foot right out there. So our land is constantly changing - goin' up and down.

In the St. Johns, the first water went down below to Alpady Flats. When my dad first moved down here, in 1895, it had rained. The water was pretty high. Couldn't cross the river anywhere. Had to go up to Sanford and cross the bridge. They had a lot at North Field where my dad built the first storehouse this side of the river. They had a barge that they pulled back and forth across the river. You could put a horse and wagon on it - bring him across. Couldn't cross no bunch of cattle. It was boggy and water running swift - drowned a bunch of 'em, and they all drove all the way around Fort Drum swamp - come all the way around. As they were bringing the cattle around at noon, they met ol' man Stan Jones. He lived at Titusville and run a store in Keenansville. He was coming across. He had built his wagon way up high, and put his groceries way up high, out of the bed of the wagon. They asked him how far they had to go to get out of the water, and he said, "Well, I don't know how far it is, but I come into it right after daylight this morning!" They had been in water since daylight 'til noon, and the water was still up past leg deep on the horse. The water is diked there (when they built Highway 60) below Blue Cypress. This is gonna cause

this area to be 10 foot under water when all those dikes break. It comes all the way from when they put the St. Lucie canal out of Lake Okeechobee. Why, they cut that water from the south part of that. My dad owned that land from Rt. 60 back up to Fort Drum, and we had cattle in there. Rt. 68 comes out of Fort Pierce - goes into (Highway) 41 there - well, that stops the water from running back north. At Kissimmee - that land's high and comes out of Orange County about 70 feet. Kissimmee's about 65 feet and right on down, see. But - tell you something else - when the Kissimmee can't run south, it runs right on back into the St. Johns River - runs through Canoe Creek Run, right back thataway.

Old man Nails worked for my granddad. When my granddad died, he worked for my grandmother. He was up there in 1896 when it was flooded. That was when they had these oxen going into Kissimmee, and he told him he could take 'em to the Kissimmee River if they wanted to go. They got in the boat with him, and they come down there. Whether they went out Crabgrass, or whether they went down to Blue Cypress - not sure. I think they went up Crabgrass and went on up to Bull Creek; but they could have went all way down to Blue Cypress and come back up it. I remember him talkin' about Ox Pond. I used to drive cattle through Ox Pond. I know where it is. There is a place called Camp Lonesome. It's a flat that water runs down and goes into Canoe Creek. Somewhere or another, he had to hit Camp Lonesome and go into Canoe Creek to get into the Kissimmee River, and they unloaded the boat and brought it back around. Only at flood stage, they could do that. Got to be deep.

See, all that water runs out of Orange County and runs down to Kissimmee. Comes out of there pretty quick. Anyhow, you wouldn't believe they coulda carried a boat over there. My dad was telling me, and so was my uncle, that when they were kids, they rode up and down Crabgrass Creek from the St. Johns River all the way back to the end of it. There was only a tree just every now and then. You could get down there half a mile and see the water down there. Now its solid.

Things has changed a lot, I'll tell you. I don't know. When we moved over to this ol' house in 1924, that was the last place we moved, you could see practically all around you. When Dad come around here in '95, there wasn't no trees or anything. They could see North Fields just right straight west of here, and it's 25 miles! They could see them cabbages. We used to could see from here out there, and finally, a place out there got a real thick pine to grow about a mile long and a quarter of a mile wide. We called it Pine Island. They growed up so we couldn't see it. Trees all growed up all around. But, I tell you something else, talking about Brazil. They could pull up every tree and plant corn on it; and in 60 years, if they'd quit, it'd be like it is now. Because, there's some trees right over at the house. I can show you where we had a garden planted in 19 and 24 - and there's trees over there that big around and got limbs on that's 50 foot long. So, it didn't take them trees long. When we moved here in '57, these big ol' oaks here weren't no bigger than your arm. We cut out a bunch of 'em here and there. They talk about they cut all that timber, it won't rain anymore? What do they think was there first? A desert? The trees growed and then it

rained on it? I don't care what they do. That rain is gonna come right on. They can't change it. But, we spend billions of dollars down there trying to save the rain forest. Down here they're savin' the wet lands. There ain't no such a thing as wet lands. Now, that's wet lands at the St. Johns River. But all this ol' land out here - ain't none of it wet. Maybe a pond out here. I got a pond out here; and the environmentalists put a bunch of flags over it. Didn't have no flags 'til we had this last flood, 2 - 3 months ago. We got some heavy water. Well, them flags has come up all over the place. They are all down in these ditches and on them hills and everything else. Well, anyway, them flags go on the endangered wet lands. So the environmentalists tell me there's 10 acres out there I can't touch, because there's some flags on it.

Now I want to tell you about the big fight - Barbers and Mizells. Mary Ida Barber, I think she was a Bass, and her daddy was a Mizell. She married a guy went in the Army, and he got killed. So, they called all the young ones Bass, but the oldest one was a Mizell. They'd take the name of Bass because she married a Bass. He was a little bitty feller, and he got killed in the Civil War. They started out with Mizell - his brother was the Judge and he was the Sheriff; and he was the Tax Assessor and the Tax Collector - and about everything else in the County. He had some mean ol' boys. He would send them down to somebody's place. About the only thing they'd tax you for was oxen, and wagons, and cattle. Well, he would figure out that if a man had so many head of cattle, and so many yokes of oxen, and so much of that, he owed so much taxes. Go down there, and get a cow or two cows - cows were \$4 a

head - whatever - bring them back up to Kissimmee: then, he kept 'em - changed the marks of the cattle and put the money in. Where he put the money in, nobody ever knowed. Anyway, he sent 'em down there to ol' man Barber. Nobody had any cash, so he just took the cow. They couldn't drive just one cow, so they'd drive 4 or 5 or 10 head. Nobody ever got them cows back. Old man Barber, settin' there at Bull Creek right there where it comes out of Crabgrass right there at Deer Park. And when the Mizell boy came up there, he shot him and killed him. They called it Mizell's Ford. It's still called Mizell's Ford. He was driving their cows, see, carrying them off, but he had 8 or 10 head instead of the one he was supposed to get - or two. He had too many! So, a few days after that, they come down there - this is a good story. They run from Deer Park all the way to Kissimmee to Bogey Creek. And the old man bogged down, and one of the boys came back to help him, and they killed him. Mizells killed him. But they didn't only spot that, they run that other boy all the way up there - to one of them lakes up there - Conway, I guess it is. He was a heck of a swimmer; 'cause they tied a plow to him and carried him out to the middle of the lake, and he swam to the shore - with the plow! and they shot him and killed him. Well, another old man Barber lived at Fort Christmas, called Barber's daddy to come up to Orlando, and he heard the story and where the guys went - they come back to Kissimmee and then to North Carolina. So he follered the two guys up to North Carolina and killed both them guys up there. That was more the Mizells, but there was 240 killed during that. Mary Ida Bass names most of them and where they were killed and who killed them. At the same time, the Albrittons and the

Padgetts were fightin'. They were kin folks. They were down there at Mulberry. They killed a hundred and some. They weren't all family members. They were imported - even in this Mizell deal. They got to importing bad men from Dodge City, Tombstone, or anywhere. Hired all they could get. Only one of 'em lived. That was William S. Hardy. He survived it. He's the only one. In Texas, they were stealing 50 head of cattle, because there was a lot of honest people, and they couldn't do much with 'em. They had to find out where they could sell 'em before they stole 'em; and then carry 'em and sell 'em. In Florida, they stole like a thousand head at a time - 'stead of 50, but they had to drive 'em all the way from say Arcadia or Kissimmee, all the way up to other side of Gainesville - probably all the way up to Tallahassee. Nobody down here would buy 'em. They had more cattle than they could use, anyway.

Them Indians that was around Payne's Prairie wouldn't let 'em buy any of those cattle. Old Chief Payne - Creek, I think. Then, there was another one - Micanopy. One of 'em was smart and one of 'em was big. Neither one of them wouldn't let you go through with stole cattle - didn't want to get into that.

Now, I've gotta tell you - I've seen the water running from Rt. 68, back there by (Highway) 41, running back north, come right down and run into Fort Drum Creek, right there by Fort Drum and run right on into the St. Johns River.

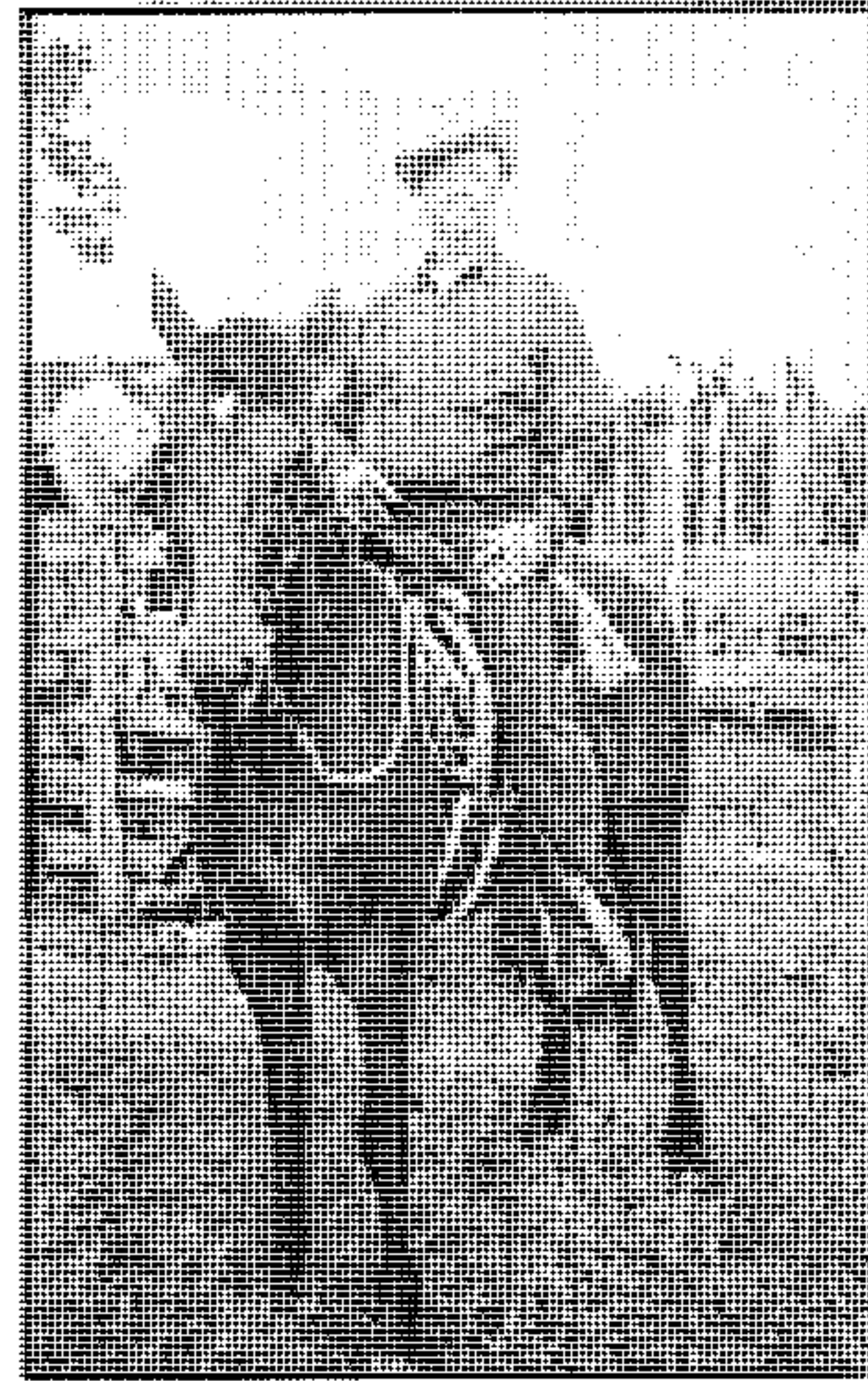
I 'member when there wasn't probably a million people livin' in the whole State! I'll tell you a little bit more about the water storage basin part of the St. Johns. That's the best cow range in the world. And another thing, they can raise enough sugar on that piece of land to feed the United States - on that muckland. There's water, way yonder back - if you take the muck part - where the muck is; and then there's a yellow sand - a river sand. That will grow cane, too. That yellow sand is underneath the muck, too. But then before the muck is not on it, it goes on out a couple miles or so. And they've just taken a whole bunch of our land over here. They're gonna put 8 foot of water over that land. They gonna back it in and put 8 foot of water over it. I guess, gonna take 30,000 acres over there. These Flood Control people. They paid for the land, but not what it was worth. Just a fraction. Thing of it is - you gotta take what they offer you. They put it in a Condemnation Suit. They condemn it. Take it. They get a bunch of these Yankees out of New York, that never owned a piece of land, never seen a piece of land, and don't know what a piece of land is. Now, they are the people who tell you what it's worth! Now my dad owned all this Cape (Canaveral) - the Base (Patrick). He owned all of that land: and when they went to take it, somebody had already offered him like \$300 or \$600 an acre. So they offered \$10: and he said, no, he wouldn't take it. So they went to a Condemnation Suit. And some of them New York Yankees on the jury, they said, he's got plenty of land. He's got plenty of money. Give \$7 and a half. And that's all he could get! They even appealed and went to a higher Court. And they said that it would stand - at \$7 and

a half is all they'd give him. Now, it's worth anywhere from \$80,000 to \$150,000 an acre.

One time, we started at Fellsmere and went north and marked all the pigs. All the hogs was marked. Dogs helped bay 'em up and bunch 'em. All them ol' hogs. We had muzzles of corn on the saddle we carried to feed the horses. At noon and at night, we had a wagon or something had feed in it. We'd throw out a handful of corn and call them ol' hogs; and them dogs would bunch 'em up. Then, you'd ride in and reach down; pull up the pig, and mark him, and put him down. Cut a little piece over the ear. Different marks you can put on 'em. If there was an old boar that was bad, why, you'd cut him off out the side, and them dogs would catch him. Then you'd take a pair of pliers or something and you'd break his teeth off and throw him back. You was right in there with 'em. Some of the sows was gentle. Some of those 'ol hogs was wild. But, the dogs kept 'em right there in a bunch. You could just reach down there and pick 'em up. But, everybody couldn't do that, because there was 6 sows; and each sow had 4 to 6 or 8 pigs. And maybe they belonged to three different people. You reach down and catch a pig and think it belongs to that sow, and you mark it for that sow. Okay. You never looked. When you got 'em all marked, you rode on because the cows were getting away, and two people stopped to mark the pigs. The rest were with the cows. When the sows left, one of them pigs be marked with somebody else's mark. Okay. When that guy found that pig sucking his sow and marked in somebody else's mark, he would go to the guy that had the pig and tell him, "I want you to pay me for that pig or want you to go change

that mark. Either one. One or the other." Invariably, before they left, he would say, "I don't like you stealin' my hogs." And when he said that, there was a fight and a lot of killins. It was the same way with the calves.

Laverne Yates was the last man to cross the St. Johns River at the old Bumby Camp in a horse and wagon, in 1942. He's good at our history. Laverne also furnished me with a picture of an oxen pulled wagon at Deer Park in 1890 after it had left the Savage Trading Post on Lake Winder.



LAVERNE YATES

As interviewed on January 5, 1996

I was born October 13, 1926 right here in Christmas, Florida; and I'm a cross descendant of all the early pioneer families - going back even to the Indians. Some of our ancestors inter-married with Indians, even before the War of 1835 - Second Indian War. My mother was Daisy Nettles, before she married my father, Everett Yates. My Daddy was born March 23, 1902, here at Christmas, Florida. My mother was born February the 24, 1906, here at Christmas, Florida. So my history goes way back. The Tuckers were the first settlers here - bonafide settlers - here in this area. Grandpa Tucker bought a Township or two, and settled here in the middle 1800s. My great-grandmother was Jewel Mizell Tucker, and she was about 5 years old when they moved here and settled. That was my great-grandmother. She married Tom Cox, and their daughter, Dove, was my grandmother. She married I. W. (Willis) Nettles, who was raised down at Deer Park. They married down on Taylor Creek. There used to be lot of

settlers down in the Taylor Creek area. The Savages was one of the largest families down in this area. Grandma showed me the cypress pond where she pulled the moss to make a mattress for her and Grandpa Nettles, whenever they got married down on Taylor Creek. They used to have celebrations down there; horse racing, everything, on 4th of Julys, on the south side of Taylor Creek.

We had to go south from Taylor Creek approximately 2 miles, and cross Cox Creek, and swing left, and then there's probably another 2 to 3 miles down to Lake Winder. Old man Bob Savage ran a Trading Post on the west side of Lake Winder. The Trading Post ended 'bout in 1910: 'cause Grandpa Nettles used to go to that Trading Post with his oxen. He had 4 oxens in the late 1800s. I have a picture of him with his oxens in 1890 at the General Store at Deer Park. Everything came up the river by boat. There was no other transportation at that time. He'd meet the barge, or the launch, whichever it was brought supplies and the mail: and he'd deliver it to wherever it went. Therefore, he had 4 oxen. Most people only had 2 oxen for their own use.

My granddad, Willis Nettles, he wanted to camp and trap down in that country; 'cause that's where he grew up. He moved up to the Christmas area turn of the century, 1900. At that time, my stepfather, Emmet O. Tanner, Sr., owned and controlled all the land on the east side of the St. Johns, in the Lake Winder area, which is presently owned by Duda. Grandpa wanted to hunt and trap that area, 'cause he remembered it as a young man. So this is in 1942, the fall of 1942, talking about this. I said, "Well, let's

go camp at Moccasin Island, and we'll try." We carried a little ol' small boat. Now they call 'em Jon boats. We just called 'em small rowboats. Anyhow, we didn't have no kicker, and we carried our supplies. Emmet Tanner, my stepfather, hauled us around there to the canal end of Fiske Blvd., which is now the site of where Gilbert Tucker lives. We had a camp right there on the east side of Lake Winder, five miles south of Cocoa, off Highway 520. We loaded everything on the wagon, and we drove the horse and wagon. I carried my little pinto horse, Doby, and I tied him to the wagon and drove the old horse called Pink. My stepfather named him Pink 'cause Pinckey Hart broke him. He is one-eyed, 'cause Carrie Baxter, who owned him, punched his eye with a pitchfork when he was a colt for fightin' her. Those times, nobody wanted a one-eyed horse, but my stepfather wound up with him, because he was a good work-horse for plowing and stuff of that nature. We owned him for that purpose, mainly. Anyhow, we hooked him to the wagon, and loaded it up with our camping supplies; and we went to Moccasin Island. There's an old shack of a house there on Moccasin Island and guava trees all over the Island - biggest guava trees I ever seen! Course, I was a middle teenager, and could climb those guava trees. That's how big they were. Some of them - big around as my waist was. I'd climb those trees and shake out the guavas. We'd eat guavas. Course, the 'coons liked them, too. We started off settin' our traps and things and then we ventured all around Lake Winder and up the mouth of Wolf Creek. We was trappin' for otters and 'coons, and we camped there for six weeks. Every once in a while, we'd run out of supplies: and I'd take the horse and wagon, and leave Grandpa there, and

he'd skin 'coons and tack up hides. He showed me how to tack up 'coon hides. We used the old wood building. It was up and down siding - batten strips. Most of the batten strips was gone, so we'd just tack up on the building. The Platts owned that before our time. Grandpa showed me how to take cabbage stems - green cabbage stems - thin 'em in the middle, and bend 'em in a "U" shape: put a cross member down at the bottom of the hide and use them to tack the 'coon hides on so you could hang them on a limb or anything. We dried a lot of our 'coon hides that way. Anytime we run out of supplies, why I'd go out - leave the ol' horse at the camp - and I'd walk to Cocoa - five miles. There was a little road where Fiske Blvd. is now; but at that time, it didn't have no name. No settlers. There was one little ol' grove out there. Elige and Annie Cox lived on Peachtree Street in West Cocoa, and I spent the night with them. Got up the next morning, and Elige had to go to work. They got me up early. We ate breakfast; and I left walkin', going back to where old Pink and the wagon was. When I got there, I fed him, hooked him up, and started in. I also cut posts for my stepfather. They were some of the best posts in the country. That east-coast lumber was hard. It made real good posts. He wanted a supply of posts, so he would give me a dime a post; and I cut on the way to the camp. I swung out through the flat woods there and cut 150 posts fat liter - dead pine trees - the heart of the pine tree, fat liter posts. They were hard. They were some of the hardest wood I ever saw. Anyway, I cut 150 posts, loaded the wagon and had to pile the posts. So I carried 'em on into the Island, Moccasin Island. I pulled up there between 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon, so I'd done a pretty good day's work - cuttin'

150 posts with an ax. Didn't have chainsaws back in them days, you know. During my spare time, I would cut posts while Grandpa lotta times would be skinnin'.

I would push him in the boat with a pushpole and paddles. I would carry him around the lake to wherever the traps was set. 'Trapped otters, 'specially in the run of Wolf Creek where Wolf Creek come into the River down there just south of Lake Winder. We went all up in there, wherever the otters was runnin'. Grandpa was a real good trapper. Course he had a lot of Indian blood in him, and he had real instincts. So we done real good on the trappin'. Later in the year, gettin' towards Christmas, the otters and the 'coons seemed to be thinnin' out. I think the real thing is, we caught most of 'em. We done had most of 'ems' hides on the wall. The weather started changing - gettin colder. The closer we got to Christmas, the less interest we seemed to have over there. Grandpa, the second day before Christmas, said, "You know, I sure would like to be home for Christmas. I wish there was some way we could be home for Christmas." So I says, "Grandpa, you told me about crossing Lake Winder here with oxen and wagon in your younger days. That was the only way to get to Melbourne was to cross Lake Winder here. Water's down pretty good. Show me how you crossed." We discussed these things while pushing along the lake with a pushpole. Certainly wasn't no noise, 'cause we didn't have no motor. I thought maybe we should cross up there, close to where the river runs into the lake; but, to my surprise, you had to cross way out in the Lake. He showed me about where you come out and where you come in. That surprised me, 'cause it was further out in

the lake - made it a lot further across. But he explained that where the channel of the river first comes into the lake, it would be too deep. You couldn't do that. The water didn't get down low enough to even think of crossin' there. So, the more I thought about it, the more I hoped that maybe we could do this. I finally told him, "Grandpa, if you wanna go home for Christmas, let's be loadin' up our hides and put 'em on the wagon and everything." I had my little pinto horse with me, and he grew up on the St. Johns where the Big Econ runs into the river, south of Highway 46; so water and mud, he was no stranger to that. I sez, "If you wanna go home, let me take my horse, and I'll go across the lake and see how deep it is. If it swims, we'll know it's too deep. But if it don't swim, then we'll be able to cross it with a wagon." Grandpa agreed we'd do that. He watched me go across the lake. I pulled off my cowboy boots and my clothes. It was cold - the morning before Christmas - this was Christmas Eve morning, just after daylight. I pulled off my clothes - except my shorts. Kept my hat on, too. I knew if I got in trouble, I didn't want anything to hinder me from swimmin'. So I rode the horse across the lake, and the water didn't quite go up in the seat of the saddle. Course, the little ol' horse was only about 14 hands high. He wasn't no big horse. I got him out on the other side - next to the old Bob Savage Trading Post, and I anchored him on the beach of the lake - to where the other horse, old Pink, could see him, 'cause they were used to being together. I knew that once I started across, he would try to go to that other horse. I built me a fire (had kept the matches in my hat) so I could warm up. Then, I swam back across the lake. When I got over there, Grandpa had me a fire built over there, so that

I could warm up there. I put my clothes on but didn't put my boots on; because I didn't know what our problems might be with the horse and wagon. Grandpa said, "Son, we gotta tie this wagon down. We gotta tie it down to the frame. Otherwise - that water's deep enough - it'll float off if we don't." So we tied the wagon down to the frame. After seeing everything was secured, we got in the wagon. I circled Pink around to where he would have that good eye focused on my Pinto anchored on the other side. I started him in the water. Now old Pink was a nervous type horse. You had to be careful how you handled him, 'cause he'd tear up everything if you messed with him or got him excited. He was a free-goer and a strong powerful horse. We started into the water. The deeper we got, he got a little more skittish. But all I had to do was tap him a little bit with the rein, and he would keep goin'. What we didn't realize was when we hit the run of the river, the water was movin' much stronger. I didn't notice it with Doby, when I went across. But when it hit the wagon, I then found out what the statement meant, "Don't let the wagon get ahead of the horse!" I found out where that originated! because the wagon started to float, and I realized that this could get serious if I let that wagon get too far around. So I tapped ol' Pink with the rein and made him pull a little harder so that he wouldn't let the wagon pass him. If it'd ever got past him around to a certain point, it would pull him off balance, and he would be hindered. I kept tapping him and encouraging him to pull harder and faster, to try to get out of that current. It finally got to the point he was lunging. Grandpa was scared. At that time, it didn't bother me, 'cause I had worked the ol' horse a lot snake-ing logs, and pulling cows, and

everything else. Pink never did let the wagon get passed him. We came out a little further down on the lake than what we had intended - maybe 75 or 100 yards past where my horse was tied. We came out - never lost control - came out safely - for which I was very thankful, because that was an experience I had had. So, I picked up my horse, put on my boots. Like I say, I didn't want no boots on, 'cause if I got in trouble, and had to get out of the wagon with the wagon turned over, I didn't want no cowboy boots on. Back in them days, you couldn't be no cowboy if you didn't have cowboy boots! So we tied my little pinto to the back of the wagon, and we started from there. Just about sundown, we pulled up to Grandpa Nettles' home. He called it Dove's house, his wife's - at Christmas. We drove all the way across Lake Winder and all the way to Christmas, and it was real cold. Grandpa lived here at Christmas - 'bout 1 mile south of Highway 50, so you can figure how many miles that was. That was quite a distance for a day.

At the time I came out, Old Man Thomas Hodge owned the Bumby camp. Guess he owned it in the early 1900s. From the time the Savages left there, he had it until he passed away. I remember him well, because they used to come up here to come to Church - the Pine Grove Baptist Church. I was born in 1926, and I remember them well. I remember they used to come up here to Church as often as they could, so it'd have to been in the '30s. I don't know who bought the place from him - directly from him. Uncle Charlie (Bumby) probably bought it from his heirs.

Thomas Hodge had a son named Lawrence Hodge, which we all remember real well. He had another kid or two, but I don't remember their names. Thomas Hodge was from the old pioneer Hodge family. They were part of the original old Hodge family from this area.

I was the last person to cross Lake Winder in a horse and wagon, and that was in the fall of 1942. Old man Hodge sold it (The Bumby Camp) in the early '40s.

I 'member my grandmother Nettles grew up around Taylor Creek. She was the daughter of Julie Mizell Tucker Cox and Great-Grandpa Tom Cox. They lived on the north side of Taylor Creek, where the road crosses. The old wagon road was east of there. The old wagon road crossed Taylor Creek and came out by Taylor Mound. There's a big Indian mound used to be on the south side of Taylor Creek. Where Grandpa's home was, where he settled, near where the Fort was - it was built against the Indians. This fort was Fort O'Neal. I'd say Fort Taylor was about 5 or 6 miles from there.

Fort O'Neal was built there before Fort Taylor was built. Fort Christmas - see, they was gradually movin' the Indians south. Fact is, one of the biggest battles in our area was on Taylor Creek, before that fort was built. Probably been in 1838. See, Fort Christmas was christened on Christmas in 1837. Fort O'Neal was built right after that - after Fort Christmas was. In other words, as they moved south with the Army, they encountered the Indians in Taylor Creek. The Indians was on the south side of the run on Taylor Creek, and the soldiers was on the north side. They fought

all day. The Indians held 'em to a draw. They got up the next day. Not an Indian nowhere. The Indians, during the night, had moved out. The Army definitely knew they had hit resistance. That was one of the biggest battles in this immediate area. Fort Taylor was built right after that battle, because the supplies had to come up the river. Like here in this area, they met the barge or whatever on Lake Cane which is east of Christmas here on the St. Johns. Well that landing down there was Lake Winder; so it was necessary to have a fort built there, so they could protect their supplies. Water level stayed up higher than it has the years since. They had no trouble. Main thing was havin' a river boat captain that knew the winding of the River. Sometimes they used a 30 foot launch for hauling, and sometimes they used the barges for the supplies to come up the St. Johns.

Lotta people don't realize these vessels used to come up the St. Johns; but that was the only way to get any supplies to the central part of the State - 'cause there was no other method. There was no bridge across the St. Johns or anything.

The early days of the white man in this area was sometime after the Spanish. The Indians originally were here. The Spanish either worked them to death - slave labor - or killed them. All. And the Indians we know as Seminoles, they migrated in to Florida to keep from surrendering in other States. The white people, they were limited as to where they could come into Florida. Some people come into St. Augustine; but a lot of the whites came in from Jacksonville, Charleston, South Carolina, and

they migrated. At that time, there were not many white women much in the country, and some of them married the Indians. They intermarried with the Indians, and some of my people were those people; and, as the Yates were up in north Florida west of Jacksonville, they migrated with the Indians. As the Indians moved south - they migrated with the Indians. The Indians took over a lotta cattle that the Spanish left. One I can think of particularly, was the Payne family. The Payne family was a family of Indians in the Gainesville area. Fact is, the Payne's Landing - the document where the Indians were supposed to go west of the Mississippi - was named after the Payne family. They were very successful cattle people, and they owned lot of cattle which they took over after the Spanish left. Some of the white people - they brought their cattle with 'em from wherever they migrated from. Grandpa Tucker, he brought cattle with him. When he settled here in Christmas, he had brought some of his cattle with him. However, we don't know how many. Originally, there was Tuckers came in to the St. Augustine area and also Tuckers in Georgia. So, we're not sure where he originated from, but he served in the Civil War; and when he came here, he bought a Township or two in east Orange County. The whole area was known as Fort Christmas then, 'cause the Fort was the only title in this area. The Fort was built against the Indians, and was christened on Christmas day. So the Fort was referred to as Fort Christmas, and the whole area was known as Fort Christmas. He was one of the early cattle people.

Now the Barbers were early cattle people, too. They migrated here. Old man Andrew Jackson Barber, he was

an early settler. Whether they brought their cattle or took up some of the Spanish cattle, I don't know. There was considerable cattle over the whole State left from the Spanish rule also horses and pigs which were used by the early settlers. They lived off of the land. And the pigs - they worked them just like they did the cattle. The pigs made their own livin' off the land: and they marked 'em and identified them, just like they did the cattle. Branded them. Marked their ears. Another group of settlers - I think 1842 - was the Savage family. They settled at Fort Gatlin; and they had a big family of boys and moved out into the east Orange district. They were big time ranchers in the 1800s particularly from the middle 1800s until the late 1800s. They settled down in the Taylor Creek area. They lived on what we now know as the Deseret Ranch - known as the K-6. Old man Bob Savage, he settled there back in the middle 1800s, and he had one of the first orange groves in this area of east Orange: and he settled out there in about 1850. Later, it would be known as R. D. Keene Ranch. R. D. Keene sold it to the Mormons.

We know the Trading Post was there before old man Bob Savage, because the Fort was built in about 1838 - against the Indians. It was a Trading Post then before they built the Fort. It was about the last place for navigable waters where barges could come. It was about the end of the line - sand bar across the lake. That's about the point where they could build a fort to protect it so they could subdue the Indians from throughout the area. West of Fort Taylor there, they fought a bunch of Indians and captured a bunch. They were migrating - had been hidin'

in the swamps - and goin' south - 25, 30 Squaws and a few Braves. Most of the Braves had done moved out.

That Trading Post - even the Indians valued that - off of Lake Winder - old man Bob Savage, probably 'bout 1850, settled there - had a large family of boys. They were the dominant cattle people. They run cattle all the way from Christmas down to Bull Creek where Bull Creek goes into the St. Johns. So, that's quite a lot of miles.

The people who lived around the Savage camp made a fairly large community. They built the biggest set of cattle-pens of anywhere in the area on the north side of the south prong of Taylor Creek. They built out of heart cypress and heart liter post. They built probably ten miles west of the Bumby camp out on towards the head waters of Taylor Creek. They'd have roundups in the summer to where all the cattle could be held there. They had a wing that was nearly a quarter of a mile long. They were big enough to hold all the cattle that was being rounded up in that area. That was in the 1800s and early 1900s. Grandma Nettles, she was a Cox. They lived down there. She was born about 1887. In other words, she was a small girl - born right here, which is now Bithlo, south of Highway 50, known as the old Cox homestead. The fact is, Mamie Cox still lives on part of the old homesite. Around 1890, they moved down there and built on the north side of Taylor Creek. And the Savages: there was Peter, and Samson, and little Bob, and Henry. Henry Savage and Little Bob - they married the Yates girls, which would be my great-aunts. They were all Bob Savage's sons and lived near Taylor Creek. In the early 1900s, they built a school

down there. Taylor Creek goes into north of Lake Poinsett, and that's a good way from Lake Winder. It's deeper there.

That school they built - they called it the Savage School. It was a one-room shack - mostly a lean-to to start with - out of cabbage fronds - like an Indian cheekee. That was the first school. The teacher would board - stay with - some of the Savages down there and also stayed with Grandma and Grandpa Cox. He'd teach all the kids in that area. That was one of the first schools in Orange County.

Also - these Savage pens that they built - Jacob Summerlin, well-known in the County for being a cattleman, used those Savage pens on a cattle drive one time that my Granddad Nettles was on. He drove a bunch of cattle from the Orlando area. He held 'em up and spent the night at the Savage pens. That was the only place that there was any hold-up area. He was driving 'em to Sebastian Inlet to ship 'em. I think shipped to Cuba. This would have been around 1900. Jacob Summerlin even sold his horse to the people receiving the cattle. They wanted his horse, and he put a price on it. He rode back with Grandpa Nettles on the wagon. He had a saddle-pocket full of money. He got to Christmas here; and Grandpa told him he could go to Oviedo with whoever brought the mail in the wagon, and then he could ride the little train going through Oviedo into Orlando. The Dinky train. He could spend the night for seventy-five cents at a boarding house in Oviedo and then ride the train in for fifty cents. He thought about it for a little bit and then said that would delay him another day. He said he wasn't about to spend

that much money and delay another day; and all this, even though he had a saddle- pocket full of money thrown across his shoulder. He had a pistol on his hip. He said he'd walk to Orlando, and that's what he did. He walked from Christmas to Orlando. That was about thirty miles. That way, he wouldn't have to spend that money, and he'd get home a day earlier, and he could sleep in his own bed. So that shows you what kind of business manager that Jacob Summerlin was.

Authors Note:

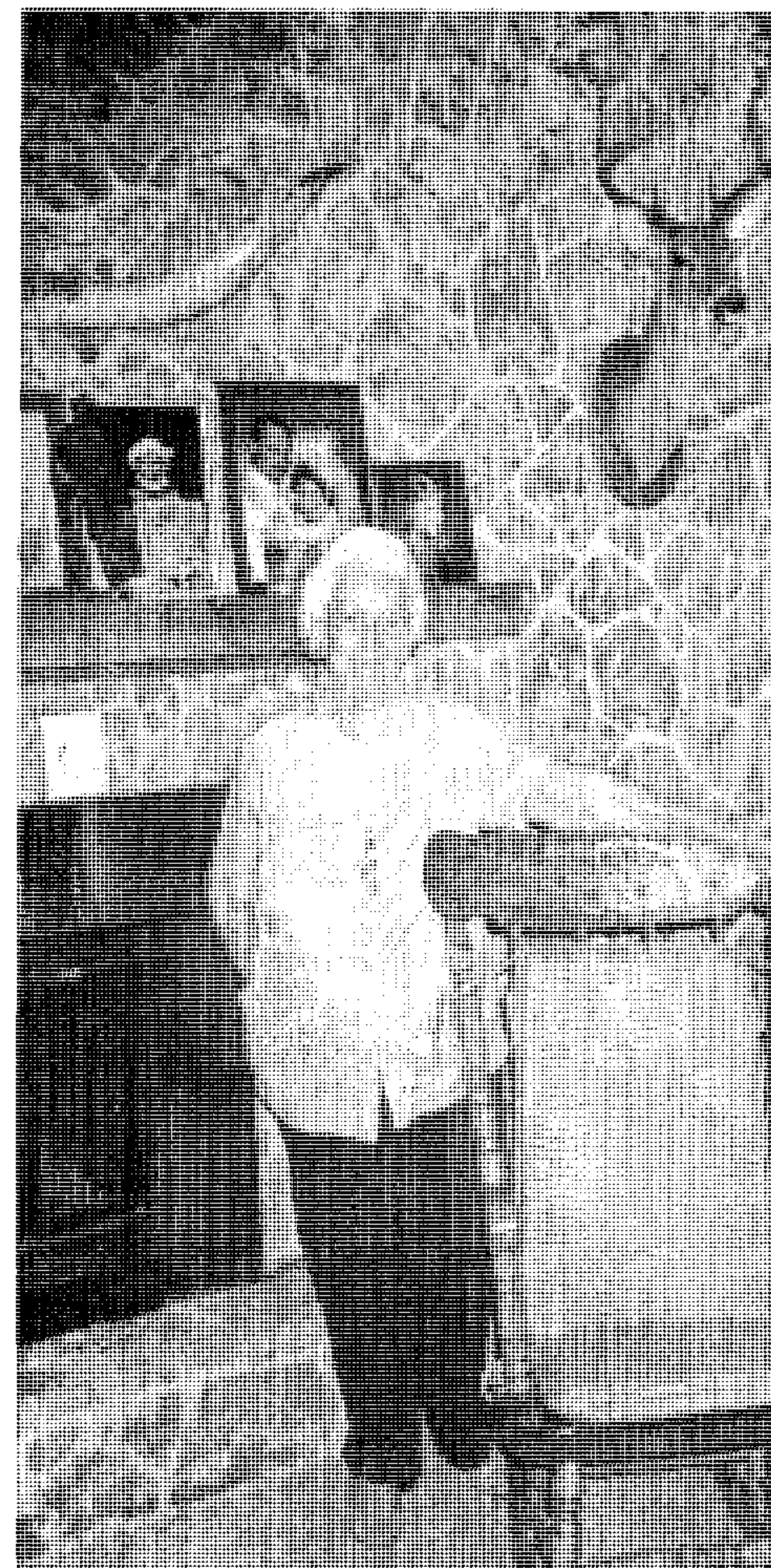
The crossing on the south side of Lake Winder that Laverne Yates describes so well was the best place to cross the St. Johns River for many miles in either direction. The crossing was used by the aboriginal Indians thousands of years ago. The sandbar crossing area made a natural place for a Trading Post site for whites and Indians before the Second Indian War. For nearly 200 years this site was the most important cattle crossing for miles. Please note that Fort Taylor, the Savage Trading Post, and the Bumby camp were all built at this site. The Savage Trading Post was preserved to make one room of the Bumby Camp. Tragically, a fire in 1947 destroyed that old landmark, and a new house owned by the Blake Family Trust now sits on the same site.

Of all the preparations for this book, I think my interview with Rosalie Savage was the most enjoyable. Rosalie was the last person to visit the Savage Trading Post - around which the Bumby camp was built on Lake Winder. Rosalie was 92 this past May. The picture was taken when she was 91. In the background is a mounted 8 point buck head.

ROSALIE YATES SAVAGE

My full name was Rosalie Yates. I was born in 1904. I was married when I was seventeen to William Nathan Savage.

My mom was Polly Canada, and Daddy was John Burl (Bud) Yates. I think he was born here. I think Mom was born here, too. His brothers were Jack and Bryant. Three boys. In my family, to start with, there were ten children. I can't remember all of 'em; then there were eight - Kirby, Everett, Rosalie, Alma, Naomi, Elbert, Walter, and Clark. My mom



and dad's descendants came from up in Alabama, but they was raised here.

My first recollection, as a child, was living down there, eight miles south of Christmas, Taylor Creek Road in a one-room house. We had three different wells around the edge of the bay. The first one was built square: a great big thing! The next one was a little ol' round hole in the bay. We got good water. Put culverts down in there. You got real good water then.

When I went to school - it was called the Canada School. They sent me when I was five years old, to make the average to get the school. I think there were about fifteen in the school. Something like that. They didn't come from too far, because they didn't have no way to go - only just horse and wagons and horseback and so on. The school was about two miles from our house, and I had to walk. Me, five years old! The schoolhouse was made out of cabbage thatch, had a dirt floor, and we had benches. It had a thatch roof. The desk was a big ol' huge wooden box. They could have wooden boxes. But nowadays, you don't see wooden boxes. It's all pasteboard. It was an Orange County School; and they had a paid County teacher.

My Uncle Hardy and Aunt Almedie built a house right on down the road from us - 'bout a quarter of a mile. It wasn't too far. They kinda left that one-room house, and we got that for a schoolhouse. The school stayed there about two or three years; and then finally come up to Christmas. My brother had an ol' Model T Ford and made benches on each side. He'd pick up the children from our

house, clear to Fort Christmas over here: wasn't paid, either. He did it free. It was about eight miles. That was probably the first school bus in the County. I went to that school to the eighth grade. Very few people went much further than that. When you got along in school, they needed you to do other things. There was so many other chores you had to do. I washed a many a night with clothes to get to go to school the next day. Enough clothes for all the children was a problem. We was allowed two suits; and when we got home from school in the afternoons, we'd have to pull them clothes off and put on rags to not mess up your school clothes. And with eight children, that's sixteen suits right there. People used to have large families. They don't anymore.

We raised most of our food. We only bought flour and coffee, and we parched and ground the coffee. Once in a while, we'd get white sugar: but most always, it was brown sugar we made. Two weeks every year, we'd grind sugarcane. At last grinding, why, we'd leave some of the kuddlin'. We'd have to boil it down - to make candy. Then we'd have a candy pullin', you know. Sometimes, we'd pull together; and sometimes, we'd pull separate - and twist it. Then we'd go to the crib and get corn shucks and shuck the corn off and get the clean shucks and carry the candy home in them shucks. We'd make syrup to last the whole year, and we had honey. We had raised that cane ourselves. We raised rice, too, and corn. We ground cornmeal and our grits. The best grits and meal in the world is homemade - ground yourself! We had a small grinding wheel - with our hands, but, we ground it just the same. We grew "chufers" - we'd pull 'em up out of the ground and eat

'em like peanuts. Bananas grew like mad in the old bay. Had fruit we called Horse Bananas.

We also had cows. I had cows all my life - 'til about ten years ago. I had to sell 'em. I lost all my help, and so I had to sell my cows. That was when I was eighty years old: and I hated it, really. It was really tough. I'd had 'em all my life, you know. We raised our cattle, and we raised our ox and had three milk cows that furnished all our clabber, buttermilk, butter, milk. We'd put a bucket on a rope and sink it down in them springs - had no ice - to keep it fresh and cool 'til we used it up. Eight children and Mom and Dad - it didn't take long to use up that much.

We all lived in the one-room house. Mom would put a curtain across thisaway and one back thisaway and make three rooms out of it. We had lots of company. People would just go there just to come, and I missed a lot of school, because I was the oldest girl and had to do the washin' and help. I just almost had to be a mom.

My dad got to working for Chase and Company - in Sanford. Both the boys, too. Every Monday morning, Carla Smith and Carol Reese, Managers of Tosahatchee - we'd cook for them, too. We'd cook about a twenty-four pound sack of flour every Monday morning for them, too. Sometimes, they'd be gone a week, sometimes two, and, we'd bake syrup cookies and bake biscuits. They'd put 'em in their saddle pockets. They'd ride horses into Sanford - take a day and night to go from home to Oviedo. Camped on the road overnight. Same with Orlando. It was a dirt road both ways. Had to spend the night on the road if we

went to Orlando. It was a day and night each way - to get our groceries - what we got. We got one box of candy a month - bought candy. 'Ol Doctor Nixon would send us a box of peppermint stick candy. It was all the bought candy we ever got. The rest of it we made.

Bought lard in forty-five pound tins and cooked most all of our things with it - peas, greens, beans. We raised most of those things. Sometimes we would cook 'coon for the dogs. I had fifteen or twenty (dogs). Sometimes we cooked alligator, and we'd have 'coon and sweet potatoes. Sometimes, we'd have three lard-can-fulls.

The dogs weren't deer dogs. They were cattle dogs. And I'll tell you, one good dog's worth three men! It's the dyin' truth. Because one day, my brother says, "Come on. I want to show you your cattle." Says, "I had to carry 'em next to the river." Now, I had a beautiful bunch of cattle. I had them 'bout near (Highway) 520 and (Highway) 50. He said, "We'll carry 'em back. Come. Get in the truck." He puts the dogs in. He pops his fingers, and in they got. That dairy is way in on the marsh. And he pops his fingers and says, "Go bring 'em in." And they come and brought 'em in. Brought those cattle right back. Three dogs. They brought them cattle right up to the truck.

I've seen 'em work so much, 'til I know that they're worth their weight in gold. You put a man out there, and he don't know what he's doin': helpless, you know. But, them dogs ...

One day, I was out on the river with my brother, and there was one of those ol' whirl holes - swirling and deep. He jumped his horse across and told me to stay and not try to come across. He went across; and when his old dog wouldn't do what he wanted him to, he beat him down and stomped him. I thought sure he'd killed the dog. But directly, the poor ol' dog got up. My brother got on his horse and went ridin' off. Directly, that poor ol' dog got up and shook his self off and followed him. I would've come back across that river - if it'd been me - if I'd been that ol' dog, but he didn't. He followed him. He knowed better than not to follow him, 'cause he would've got punished if he hadn't followed him. Those dogs had to mind. Sometimes, your life depended on it. A good dog, as I say, is worth three men.

We worked the cows from (Highway) 50 back to (Highway) 520, and had 'bout twenty-five head of horses, and some hogs, and stuff in there. But we finally had to give 'em all up.

About the Savages - Aunt Mary and Uncle Bob are buried right down there in that Cemetery. They were working with some kind of a cypress. Then he died, and she went elsewhere. I do remember my daddy taking me down there with a horse and buggy. I remember Uncle Hardy and Aunt Almedie. They were Canadas - were across the lake - Lake Winder. There was a house over there. They lived in on the east side of the Lake. And the Platt house. I was just about 10 or 12. I don't know what Uncle Hardy and Aunt Almedie did for a living. He was a kind of lazy-type person. Never would work much. They done

something. I just don't know what it was. There was another house - Raulersons, I believe. They were cattle people. These were all cattle people that lived there. I also remember quite a few houses around there, but I don't remember who all owned 'em. There were more than two or three. But you know, there wouldn't have been a Post Office there if there hadn't of been. The trip from our house, eight miles south of Fort Christmas to the Savage Trading Post, would take about a day, and sometimes, we'd camp.

Sometimes, we'd see deer, turkeys, bears, and everything else. We would get up early mornin', where I lived, and hear turkey's a gobblin' all around the house in gobblin' season. You could just go out and see deer in droves - fifteen or twenty in a drove. One day, I went huntin'; and my son wasn't with me. My grandson was, though. The deer was out there feedin' like a bunch of cattle; and directly, I heard the dogs a comin'. I was looking everywhere for the deer. I said, "Oh-oh. He's goin' around me." He was around the corner. Directly, he come back, and I noticed him goin' right - right at the edge of the place. He circled the pond, and when he got right agin' me, I downed him. He fell in his tracks. My grandson, Steve, said, "How come you'da put no more shot in that deer's head?" I said, "Son, whenever they're running sideways to ya, shoot just above their nose. Time the bullet gets to their head - hit 'em in the head - the rest of the meat won't be ruined. Let's just pull his guts out and drag him over there to them bushes and pick him up later." It was an eight point.

We didn't have a smokehouse, so we hung it up and salted it down. We had the wooden boxes. Put a layer of salt and a layer of bacon - thick - and we hung it up and let it drip dry. And when it got dry, we'd lay it in salt and then another layer of salt, another layer of bacon, another layer of salt. It would stay fresh until you eat it up.

We had plenty of fresh beef, (but) we salted down the pork. We'd fry it sometimes, and put it in a forty-five pound can of lard. When we wanted, we'd take it out and warm it. It was nice and fresh as could be. If we wanted rice pilaf, we'd make it. If we wanted fried meat, we'd have fried meat. We didn't have any ice, and that's the only way we knew to do it. You know, we grew our own rice, too. I've got the old rice mortar. You take it out and thin it; get all that chaff out of it. The best rice in the world. It's really good.

At the Savage Store, it wasn't like stores are today. It was mostly grits, and rice, and coffee, and stuff like that, and a little medicine, and whatever - whatever they could get a hold of. Some cloth, odds and ends. But not like stores are today. By no means. I believe it was Bob Savage who owned that store. Think it was. (It was my daddy's sister who married Bob Savage. He married my dad's sister. My husband's dad was Uncle Jim Savage). I think Uncle Charlie Bumby must have bought the Trading Post (Bumby Camp) from one of the Savages, maybe late '20s. I remember Charlie Bumby. Yeah! Charlie Bumby used to hunt with my dad - camped down there by Second creek. I've got pictures of him. I really don't remember just when he bought that place.

My husband and I used to trap on the river, and we 'gator hunted. We used to camp on there for weeks at the time long about 1929. We also 'coon and 'possum hunted. We otter hunted, too and come out with boatloads of alligators and skin 'em. We'd throw the meat out to the buzzards and sell the hides for a dollar a foot. I've paddled a boat many a times for my husband to shoot 'gators. Shine that light on the gator at night and that red eye is really red, I'll tell ya! Ruby red. We were camped down there on the St. Johns - close to where the bridge is now in Orange County - until my children got old enough to go to school. One day, when my oldest son was a baby, he was cryin'. First thing I knew, about a twelve-foot alligator just threwed his self right out on the bank - right towards that baby! If he'd a been where he could'a got him, he'd have got that baby! I didn't shoot him. He went back, but I was very careful after that. Very careful.

We'd go out in the middle of the stream in a boat and get our bucket of water to drink. We drank the river water, then. It was much clearer. It was good then.

One time, we were camped at Possum Bluff. I had my children and my sister's children. They were little bitty things then. The children were playin' in the hog pen. Children, then, had to make their own play things. They didn't have anything to play with like the children of nowadays.

We trapped 'coon, 'possums, and otters. We put out steel traps. I often think about them hammocks when I

go to Titusville - where my husband used to go into all of them hammocks and set traps for otters, and 'coons, and 'possums, and things like that, and when the children got old enough to go to school - having to come out and send them to school. I trapped around my place and down in the flats there, from east of my place, back in the woods, too. One time, my oldest son went with me to set a trap. He seen me set it. Next morning, he was up before I was. I heard him a screamin', and I looked out. When I went down there, he was standin' there holdin' that trap. It'd gone just through the sides of his fingers. Didn't get the bones. Didn't break no bones. He'd scratched to find that trap. He'd seen me cover it up a little bit.

When we had hides, we'd skin 'em and tack 'em up and dried 'em. My husband trapped on the marsh. I trapped out here. I'd get two dollars on the hide more for mine than he did, because I'd stretch mine square, and the fur wasn't worn like that switch grass on the marsh to wear the fur. Out here, it wasn't worn that way. I'd get two more dollars on the hide for mine than he would!

We caught wildcats, too. I wouldn't skin a polecat, though. They'd stink too bad. We air dried 'em. An old man would come around and buy 'em. He had an old Model T, or something. His name was Jonas Hancock. He paid us cash for 'em. He also sold old medicine, you know - all kinda old medicine. It was way back - when my young'uns was little - somewhere in the '30s. He'd had an old covered wagon in earlier days and all this junk in there; came once a month or so. Probably sold the hides up north, somewhere. I don't know whether he had much

knowledge or not. People then, they didn't have much knowledge. 'They couldn't get much learnin'.

There were Cottonmouths around the river in those days. Theodore Redditt was in the pasture on a Sunday, and started to cross the branch. This Cottonmouth Moccasin bit him. He never took time to kill the Moccasin, just went and pulled off his shoe. Had on canvas shoes. Bit through his shoe to the big toe. He pulled 'em off quick as he could and just split it open and bled it. When he got to the hospital, he was as white as cotton. He was allergic to the antivenin. They told him he'd already saved himself

bled it squishing out of the shoes. He'd been hit good with one fang. He had taken out his pocket knife and cut it open. After that Moccasin bit him, his leg was swollen from his foot up 'bout halfway up his leg. Ten years later, to the day, his toe got festered up, and he had to go back to the hospital. We don't know whether it was caused by the snake bite or what, but it caused a lot of trouble. He was allergic to the antivenin.

My husband and I were huntin' up on Second creek from where I lived. We were down there along with my sister and her husband. This was about early '30s. My husband and my sister's husband was runnin' the dogs down the creek. Directly, my sister was watchin' for that deer. She didn't even want to miss their tails a flaggin'. She didn't want to miss that deer. All of a sudden, she says, "Oh, I got to go to be excused!" She went and pulled down her britches. She wasn't a lookin' what she was doin'. Below some little palmettos, there's a big Rattlesnake coiled around that palmetto. The snake's head was THAT

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CLOSE to her. I said, "Oh, my Lord!" She hadn't looked. She was watchin' for that deer. It was more important to her than watchin' where she was a puttin' her butt! And 'rectly, I made like there was somethin' wrong with me and said, "Oh, quick! Run here! Run here! Please! Run here quick!" And she got up, draggin' her pants along. Never even pulled up her pants! And I said, "Look!", and pointed to the coiled snake. The snake looked like she had charmed him. I says, "You charmed him, you charmed him with your butt!" I had been so scared. Didn't know what to do. "Why didn't you tell me?", she said. "Why didn't you look where you was a puttin' your butt!", I answered. That was my sister, Alma Cox, married to Johnny Cox. Snake got blowed to kingdom come; but if he hadn't a been wrapped around that palmetto, he would'a bit her.

My husband would walk to the River and bring back a long string of fish, great big string of fish, on his back. Walked maybe six miles. That's how he'd bring back turkeys and deer, too. On his back. He died at sixty-seven in '60. Been a widow ever since.

One day, we's down in the Fort Christmas Swamp, huntin' roostin' turkey. Two big ol' gobblers flew up in a tree. "Which one you want?", he says. "That big one, of course!", I answered. "I'll count to three, and we'll both shoot at the same time. Because, if we don't, they'll fly." So he counted to three. We both shot; and they both fell out. Mine had a beard so long. And they were so heavy, he had to tote both of 'em. Both gobblers. I loved to hunt!

I got an eight point buck - last one my husband ever killed. And mine, too. We both got eight-points, but his had much broader horns than mine. Mine's a beautiful little rack. It's mounted. The whole head. His is just the rack. The last one he killed, and the last one I killed.

When I was livin' at home, we'd go to church with a horse and wagon. My dad rode the horse. The rest of us rode in the wagon. We would go over on Saturday morning to conference, and have church Saturday morning and Saturday night: and then we'd camp Saturday night close to the church so we'd be there to church Sunday morning. We enjoyed it very much. It was about eight miles. We'd go back home after church. Us young'uns would all pile in the wagon and cover up and go to sleep: and Mama would drive the horse and wagon back home.

On a Sunday evening, we'd go to Mr. Coward's. We'd all get together, and Laney would play the piano, and the rest of us would sing - Dole Cox's boys, and the Coward children, and the Yates children, the Woods children, some Canada children. We'd all have a sing.

When we'd go to Orlando, it was just a dirt road - a trail. We'd camp on the way up there and back. Went to Oviedo sometimes, too. Camp all night, get our groceries, and start back home. Camp overnight. One night, we camped at an old house, and my daddy heard somethin' upstairs. He got his gun and went upstairs. It was a bunch of goats! And they all jumped out of the window upstairs!

When the children was little, we'd walk clear to Mama's and Dad's, down there. We'd tote 'em sometimes, and sometimes they'd walk - eight miles. I tell 'em, no wonder my legs are worn out. I walked all my life a huntin' and a workin' and a doin' this, that, and the other. I cut two swamp cabbages a day before my last one was born. Cuttin' the cabbage is not so hard if you know how to do it. You have to know how to do it. With an ax. I've worked hard all my life, and I guess it's good for me. I don't know.

CLOSING

Some thoughts:

Each day of your life is a very special gift from the Lord to you. It is a gift which is denied to many. When you first wake up in the morning, you might want to offer a quiet thank you for the day that is to come - then enjoy the day to its fullest and do some good if you can. And when you have used up your day and evening has come, you might want to say another quiet thank you, because you recognize the greatness of your gift.

The Author

"I shall travel through this world only once; therefore, my good that I can do, let me do it now. Let me not defer it or neglect it, as I shall not pass this way again."

Author Unknown

"For every thing that lives is holy: life delights in life."

William Blake

"All the animals except man know that the principal business of life is to enjoy it!"

Samuel Butler

The Reverend George Hall reminded his parishioners that "Life's successes should be accepted with humility - since they usually only last about 24 hours or until everyone forgets them - whichever comes first!"

So what do we have here? First, that we should be grateful, then that we should do some good, that life is to be enjoyed. And probably, for the most part, we "ain't" much to be remembered; but it is of great importance to learn about and learn from our history. We live in a very special, very fragile place! It is up to us to know about our Florida, past and present, and take care of her; and as wisely as possible, guide her to the future.