

# *Search For Yesterday*

## **A History of Levy County, Florida**



### *Chapter Eleven*



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# The Levy County Courthouse

1906-1937



The Courthouse, was a copy of one (still standing) in Starke except for the dome. The one in Starke has a tower on one corner. A corner of the old jail is at the right.



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# THE YEARTY FAMILY

By William S. Yearty (1877-1971)

The first William Yearty was born in Atlanta, Georgia about 1792 and left an orphan at a young age. He lived with an Uncle until the age of 12, when he left this home and worked for various farmers for wages of \$5.00 and \$6.00 a month. By the time he was 18 years old he had moved to South Georgia. He worked hard and saved his wages, and around 1814, when he was 22 years old, he met and married a woman by the name of Caroline Oglesby. They began their first home on Bee Heavens Bay, Hamilton County, Florida. With the money Caroline inherited from her parents and what William had saved, they built log cabins on their land. Caroline gave birth to three children, all born in Hamilton County, Florida. These children were: a son, Jacob, a son, William (called Bill), and one daughter, Mariah.

After several years of hard work, they sold this property and built a house-boat. He bought Negro slaves, packed their belongings on the boat and drifted down the Suwannee River. This voyage ended at Seabreeze Creek, located between Black Point and Shell Mound in Levy County, Florida. There they dismantled the boat and used the lumber to build a small house. They also cut logs and added a house for the kitchen and dining room. William Yearty and his slaves went to work in the salt works near this home.

Several years later, William and Caroline purchased 80 acres of land northwest of Sumner, Florida. They moved onto the land and commenced clearing and farming. They raised corn, cotton and peanuts and also had a small herd of cattle and a nice stock of hogs. The beef and pork were butchered and sold to the army post that was at Cedar Key, Florida. Caroline and her children picked seed out of the cotton and made it into cloth for their wearing apparel. They had plenty for their needs in those days.

Before the Civil War and up until the building of the railroad from Fernandina to Cedar Key, the mail was carried by stage coach from Lake City to Cedar Key drawn by six fine horses. About every twenty miles there was a place where the driver would change horses. They usually traveled fast and it was necessary to change as the team would be exhausted. The old stage road entered Levy County between Pine Grove Baptist Church and the Waccasassa River came on south to Levyville, then by Concord Baptist Church at Rocky Hammock, then on what is now known as the Cedar Key to Chiefland road. Before reaching the Gulf, about four miles out from Cedar Key, it turned east where the road now turns to go to Parhoda Creek, then through a black marsh to the north end of Live Oak Key. A boat would meet it and carry mail, freight and passengers into town. This continued till the railroad was completed. On Live Oak Key there was quite a number of homes. The people who lived there built a church and sometimes a circuit rider preacher from the Methodist Denomination or a Missionary from the Baptist Denomination would go down and hold services as long as a week. According to stories by the old settlers, there would be singing and shouting each night.

When the Civil War broke out, around 1861, the son

Jacob was mustered into Company C, 7th Florida Regiment at Gainesville, Florida. The son William (Bill) joined the home guard that was composed of old men, and boys that were under the military age; they were stationed in Levy County, Florida. Bill soon ran away from there and took the trail to Gainesville where he joined the same company with his brother, Jacob.

Shortly after this, the Federal Troops captured Cedar Key, Florida, and they had quarters at Number Four. The soldiers would make journeys out into the country and take meat and potatoes, and they would kill cattle and carry off the horses. On one occasion, they took about 20 horses from different people and carried them to Number Four. There was a crippled man in the Rocky Hammock settlement by the name of John Hill. He walked the 20 miles to Number Four and after night sneaked through the guard lines, cut the ropes from the horses, mounted one and stampeded the others. The next morning, there were some happy homes, when Hill came driving the herd home and some disappointed Yankees at Number Four.

While I am on the subject, I will tell you about the Battle of Number Four. Colonel E. J. Lutterloh (pronounced Ludlow) was the Commander of the home guard known as "Lutterloh's Company." This company was stationed northeast of what is now Chiefland, on the old Mawren Studstill farm, where the Confederates had an iron mine and made cannon balls. One day, the Confederates decided to march down and engage the Yankees in battle. That evening they reached Number Four and had a small skirmish under the cover of night, and the Yankees retreated back over the railroad to Cedar Key. The next morning, the Yankees reformed and about 200 Negro troops with white officers marched back over the railroad. At the first volley of shots from the Confederates, the Negro troops broke rank and ran into the black marsh grass and the white officers retreated back, having no support, and the Confederates went into the marsh and slaughtered the Negro troops, leaving them where they fell. Sol O'Steen was in that battle and I have heard him describe it on several occasions. I have often heard my father, Bill Yearty, tell of his experiences in different battles, including his first hard fought battle at Chickamauga. After each battle, someone would compose a song to describe it. I have heard my father sing of the Battle of Chickamauga many times, it goes as follows:

Near the middle of September  
in the year of '63  
The Yankees came to Georgia  
from the State of Tennessee  
With a force of eighty thousand  
bent on havock and on blood  
And Bragg with fifty thousand  
went to stop them if he could.

Rosencrance was Chief Commander  
of this great northern host,  
Due southward he did go  
not deeming any rebel force  
His power could overthrow.

On the banks of Chickamauga  
 on that winding stream of death  
 Where many a valiant soldier  
 was doomed to yield his breath  
 On the night of the nineteenth  
 all in battle rows  
 We slept upon our arms that night  
 before the haughty foes.  
 On the morning of the twentieth  
 with the coming of the light,  
 Major Rosters' skirmishers,  
 then commence to fight.  
 The infantry and artillery  
 both took part in the affray  
 And many a flay with stars and stripes  
 was towered upon that day.  
 Brave Preston, he was wounded.  
 brave Helm he was slain  
 And thousands of our gallant boys  
 lay stretched upon the plain.

For his works at Chatanooga  
 Rosencrance now took flight  
 Leaving Chickamauga under  
 cover of the night.  
 Come learn this lesson Northern boys  
 and learn to stay at home.  
 You'll find the South a super-race  
 wherever that you roam.  
 Each Southern man is determined  
 to sink with the grave,  
 Before he treads the land  
 that gave him birth a slave.

The following is a war song that my mother use to sing:

Oh, yes, I am a Southern girl  
 and glory in the name  
 And boast it off by greater far  
 than glittering gems or fame.

#### CHORUS

Hurrah! Hurrah! for the sunny South  
 so dear, three cheers for the sword  
 And plume the Southern soldiers wear  
 my dress is made of calico  
 My hat's palmetto too,  
 But there it shows for Southern rights  
 what Southern girls will do

And now young man a word to you,  
 if you would win the fair  
 Go to the field where honor calls  
 and win your lady there.

After the Yankees captured Cedar Key, they sent a gunboat up the Suwannee River as far as Fort Fannin and captured a number of people, and took them to Cedar Key as prisoners. Among them was the only physician in these parts, Dr. James Howard, the Doctor's brother Charley Howard, Matt Cannon and my grandfather, William Yearty. Mariah, his daughter went to Cedar Key to help her father. It was said of her that she was very beautiful. She walked the many miles from Sumner to Cedar Key and managed to pass the guards and enter town. Due to her influence, her father was released and returned home and several citizens of Levy County escaped from capture from the enemy. My Aunt, Emma Worthington, was a daughter of Dr. Howard, and she said Mariah Yearty was a great help

to the prisoners. Dr. Howard was anxious to return to his family, but was not allowed to on account of his value as a Doctor for the northern troops. One day, Mariah told the Doctor to pack his bag and meet her at the water's edge about midnight. She got a boat, and when the Doctor arrived at the designated place, she was there. The Doctor got in the boat with her and she rowed it to the mainland at Number Four and put him ashore with the Confederate troops. She rowed back, parked her boat and retired. There was great speculation as some thought he slipped by the guards, others that he swam to Scale Key, Cedar Point and on to Live Oak Key, which was possible.

Mariah married the Commander of the Federal troops, and had one son, Thomas. When the war was over, the troops left Cedar Key and advanced up the Suwannee River to Fannin, Florida. The Commander told Mariah that she couldn't go with him, as he had a wife in New York that would be waiting for him at the dock. She informed him that if the boat sailed, she would be aboard, to which he apparently agreed. They ate dinner and she was taken very ill and died before they reached Sea Horse Key, in Florida. After her death, William and Caroline, her mother and father, adopted the son who they named Thomas J. Yearty.

Jacob, William's son, was killed in the Battle of Missionary Ridge. Bill, William's other son, came through the war unharmed, although wounded at the Battle of Beutonville, North Carolina. Bill was in sixteen hard fought battles and the skirmish lines, in front of General Sherman, on his march to the sea. After the surrender, Bill Yearty and Hardy Benniefield walked from North Carolina all the way back to Levy County, Florida.

Just after the war, quite a few people made their living cutting cedar in Gulf Hammock and selling it at Otter Creek and Rosewood, which were two stations on the railroad. Tom Yearty was the buyer at Otter Creek and a Jewish man by the name of Jacobs was the buyer at Rosewood. They would pile these logs on each side of the train track, two hundred yards long and eight feet high. The sellers would use oxen and wagon to take the logs to the buyers. The specifications for the cutters were: the log was to be hewn square, any length over eight inches at the small end and it must be clear of rot, or any decay. Some cutters would go into the hammock, which was sectioned into lots, build a palmetto camp for themselves and haul their logs to a landing on one of the creeks, put it on rafts and take it to the mills, thus saving railroad freight. At one time, cutting cedar logs was a big business in Levy County. The woods were full of deer, turkey and wild hogs, so that they had their food free, and they could haul their cast nets to the creeks and catch fish. Those people sure did eat well; hot bisquits, hush puppies, cabbage palmetto, venison and in winter time, oysters. The creeks most used to raft the logs were Halls, Hudson, Alf, Jacks, Kelly, Dry and Bird Creek.

Not long after returning home from the war, Bill married Felicia Worthington. Her grandfather settled and founded Worthington Springs and the Springs were named for him before 1861 and the Civil War. At the time he moved to the Springs, Indians lived all around them and the nearest white people were near Lake City. I think her grandfather's name was Samuel. He had two sons, Samuel H., an ordained Baptist Deacon and B. Granville, an ordained Methodist preacher. After leaving the Springs, they settled and homesteaded in Levy County, Florida, Samuel in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Section 12, Township 13, Range 14 and Granville in the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of the same section.

Samuel H. was my mother's father. He married

Felicia Brown, an orphan girl raised by the Richards of Starke, Florida. They had eight children; Mary, Eliza, Ruther, Steve Ann, Felicia, Creasy, Elizabeth and one son, Sam Enos. Mary married Charley Howard. Eliza married John Weeks. Ruther married John Creech. Steve Ann married Harvey Sheppard. Felicia married Bill Yearty (my mother and father), Creasy married Munroe Hudson. Elizabeth married Ellzey Collier and the son, Sam Enos married Emma Howard.

Nicknames were custom, and my mother Felicia was called Pig, short for Piganinee, a name for Seminole Indian babies. Her father, who had had Indians for playmates when he was growing up, had learned the Indian language and taught them English. He joined the army at 18 years old and fought in the Battle of Olustee, Florida and I have often heard him say that for about three hours, it was as severe as any battle he was ever involved in. He often mentioned the Gettysburg Battle of the Wilderness and the Battle of Richmond. While he was in the service, his wife and children ran the farm.

I, William Samuel Yearty, was born July 2nd, 1877 at Rocky Hammock which is described officially as Section 12, Township 13, Range 14. When I was six years old, about 1883, Felicia, my mother, gave birth to another son, Eugene H. Yearty, who was born at Number Four, which is three miles north of Cedar Key on the mainland. While living at Number Four, my father, Bill, made cow pastures and built butcher pens. He then bought a meat market in Cedar Key. He would buy cattle on foot, drive them to his pasture, butcher them and carry the meat by boat to the market. He made good money from this. He had a contract with Morgan Line of Steamers to carry seven to ten beef a day into Cedar Key. Since all transportation was by boat, many farmers from Levyville, Chiefland, and Rocky Hammock would bring produce down and rent boats to carry it to Cedar Key for marketing. Later, my father, Bill, sold his property at Number Four and moved to Rocky Hammock. While living at Number Four he adopted a boy by the name of James Sely, giving him a family of three boys.

In 1878, my father was a policeman in Cedar Key. After serving four years in the Civil War, he still seemed to enjoy danger and during his entire adult life was a Deputy Sheriff. I don't believe he was afraid of any living person. I have on three occasions seen him do things that are unbelievable. At one time, a white man was very drunk and Dad was called to arrest him. The man was armed and when he saw Dad coming, he said, "Bill, you can't arrest me and if you come any nearer I will kill you." Dad just walked slowly straight to him, looking him in the eyes. When Dad was about 10 feet from him, he said, "Stop, Bill, or I will kill you." I called out, "Dad, please stop." Dad kept walking and reached out his left hand, and took hold of the gun and said, "Turn it loose, you are too drunk to have a gun." The man gave it up just like a child. Later, I asked Dad how he could do this and he said, "I had my revolver in my shoulder holster and I knew I could get him before he could put the gun to his shoulder, aim and fire." Another time I saw him arrest a drunk Negro man under the same conditions. The Negro had a shotgun and was twirling it in the air, shooting up in the air and on the ground. He dared anyone to bother him. Dad just walked slowly up and took the gun, slipped handcuffs on him and all was quiet. Another time, there was a man living in Otter Creek who always carried a large pistol and claimed he was bad. One morning, Dad came by my store and I could see that he was mad. I asked what the trouble was and he said, calling him by name, "has told a lie on me and he must apologize or

shoot me." I said, "Dad, don't do that. You are both Masons, can't it be settled in peace?" Dad said, "If he is a Mason, he didn't take the same obligation I did." He walked to the man's door and called him out, and said to him, "You told a lie on me and either you apologize and correct it or I see you have your gun, just reach for it." Well, the man apologized and in a few minutes, they were laughing and joking.

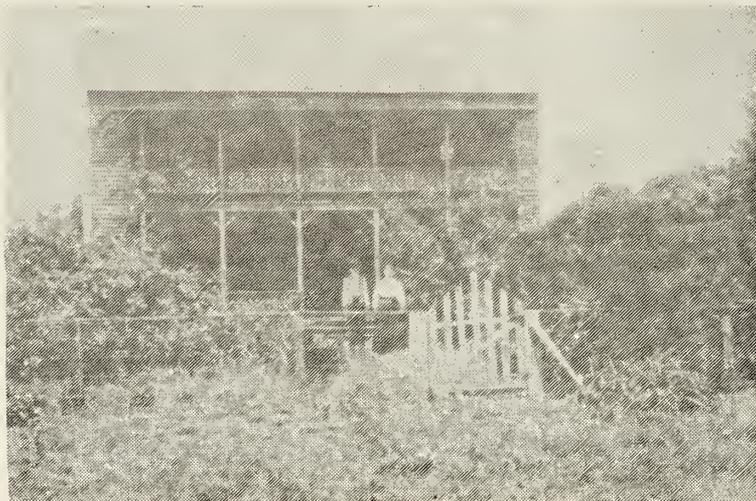
In September, on the 29th day of 1886, we had the most severe storm I have ever seen. My father, Bill, Tom Howard and I were camping on Geiger Creek when we awoke about 4:00 A.M. The wind was about 40 miles per hour. By daylight all the timber, large oaks and pines had blown down. We thought we could go down to the landing and as the water came in, bring the boats up to higher ground. Our camp had blown away, and we had to build a fire in an oak top. Dad came from the oak to look around and noticed a streak of light in the northwest. He called to Tom and me, "Boys, the wind is calming; let's go for our boats." When I got down, I noticed the water on the west side of the hill was a solid wall about ten feet high as it was coming up the hill. We made a run for it. We ran east across a low marsh for about 200 yards to another hill. The water had covered the hill where we had camped and was already coming around on both sides of the hill we were on. We had just made it to the high land ahead of the wall of water. We were six miles from home and we went that way. The first house we passed was the Baptist Church which was blown down. On arriving home, we found Mother safe and she had already sent my brother, Gene, to Rosewood to get a family of Negroes to rebuild the fence. Soon they arrived, and we began to rebuild the fence which covered a 50-acre field. Dad wanted it built eight rails high, as he had sixty head of hogs on peanuts and needed the fence hog high. We were able to finish this job by midnight, and didn't lose one hog. There were quite a number of people drowned as a result of the storm; three Branneu boys that lived on the south end of Deer Island, Frank Haven who lived on Little Bradford Island, and Sam Gause who lived on Cabbage Island. Mrs. Charley Doer and three children who lived on Buck Island; Mrs. Rosa Branch and her two children and Sam Robinson who also lived on Buck Island. Six weeks later we found Mrs. Branch and buried her on Robinson Island. Those saved on Buck Island were Captain George Robinson, Bud Young, and John Burnett. Those saved on Cabbage Island were Charley Doer, Joe Andrews, and George Wadley.

Some of the happiest days of my life were spent on Shell Mound. We used to go there and camp in the fall of the year and catch mullet for the country people. People would come down in covered wagons, the old prairie schooner kind, to buy the mullet, then they would split and salt them for their winter supply. Some people would come as far as Lake City and Lake Butler and I have seen as many as fifty people camping there at Shell Mound.

There was a widow by the name of Young who had a home north of Shell Mound. She had three sons, Robert, Babe and Charley and two daughters, Lizzie and Riva. When the people came to buy fish, they usually made it a fall vacation, and they would bring all the family. On Friday night, we would go to the Young's home and dance. The Young family were good musicians, they could play the violin, guitar and autoharp. We certainly had a good time. On one occasion, there were no fish; however, we had people wanting 5000 fish. By Saturday evening, everyone was ready to go home, but we talked them into staying until



This was a store in Williston, 1915. The man standing by the car was Ellis Newsome, uncle of Willard Smith who lives near Williston (1981).



Willard Smith's Grandparents. His name was Ezekiel Randall. She was an Amaca. The building was a hotel in Montbrook, 1890.

Monday. Sunday morning, Billy Burnett cooked breakfast and called John Burnett, Tom Howard and me, just as the sun began to rise. While we were eating, we noticed a school of fish coming out of Dennis Creek about an acre wide. Our boats were aground and our nets on the spread. We dashed for the landing, got the boats afloat and the nets on. The fish were very near, and had come to an oyster bar and split up, part going on the east side and part on the west side. We threw the nets, and Billy caught 1000 fish and John and I caught 800 fish. Pink Robinson was camping at Shell Mound, told us to go out near Deer Island where he had seen fish everywhere. We soon caught 4500 more and supplied everyone.

About 1895 or 96 the turpentine operators came to the Sumner section. A colored man by the name of Martine Goins, put up a still between Rosewood and Sumner. He came to see my Dad about leasing his timber, but Dad wanted to work his own timber, so they traded, Goins to his crew, box timber, and Dad work it and Goins would buy the raw gum. Dad, Tom Howard, Gene and I took axes, cornered the boxes and then Tom and I chipped and dipped them. After that, Dad and Gene ran the farm and Tom and I worked this timber for two years, then Dad leased it to Martine Goins.

From the time I first started to school, about 1883, until I was a grown man, I don't think there was anytime that we didn't have venison in our smoke house either fresh smoked or jerked. Dad was a very successful hunter and he trained Gene and me to hunt. We would kill a hog in the evening, next morning kill a deer, grind the pork and venison, mix it half and half and make it into sausage. Was it good? You should just taste it.

When I first started to school, we had four month-terms and each Friday evening, the teacher required us to learn and recite poetry. It was required that we come out, make a bow and recite. One I really like was:

I want to be a careful man  
A little fellow follows me  
I do not dare to go astray  
For fear he will go the self same way.  
I cannot once escape his eyes.  
Whatever he sees me do he tries  
Like me he says he wants to be  
This little chap that follows me.

He thinks that I am good and kind  
Believes in every work of mine  
The base in me he must not see  
This little chap that follows me.  
I must remember as I go  
Through Summer sun and Winter snow  
The years I am building are to be  
That little chap that follows me.

My first trip on a large cattle drive came when I was about twelve years old in 1889. Dad and Perry Kirkland decided to drive their cattle to the marsh for the winter. We each gathered about two hundred head and Henry Sheppard and Johnny Creech had another fifty head each and they joined us in the same drive. Dad took Jim and me and Mr. Kirkland took his son, Orrie. Dad had only two saddles, so Mother took a large cotton quilt and folded it and made me a fine soft saddle. We had to tie a rope around the horse to keep the quilt on him. The morning for the drive came and we turned our herd out and started for Kirklands. They joined us and we drove the herd down the old stage coach road. We had such a string that they covered a quarter mile. Dad had me stay in the rear and keep the strays in the herd.

Man, you talk about a happy boy, that was me. By noon we had reached Rosewood. Some of us rounded up the strays while others kept the herd together, others were making coffee and broiling meat and then we would change around until all had eaten. When the meal was over, we gathered the herd and commenced the drive through the hammock to the marsh. We reached the marsh about an hour before sundown and spent the night on a cedar island. We drank water from a small well that tasted very brackish to me, but dad said it was o.k. After unsaddling the horses, we started bringing wood for the fire. It was necessary to have enough wood to keep the fire burning all night. We each cut a palmetto and used the stem that grows from the tree to the fan for a fork. To do this, you split the stem, put a small wedge in the fork, and sharpen it, you then place strips of bacon on it and broil it over fire. We had smoked sausage, bacon, sweet potatoes, soda biscuits, and black coffee. After supper my quilt came in handy for a bed. The next morning, just at break of day, everyone was up, fed the horses, prepared and ate breakfast, and then started the long ride home. I thought about the soldiers who had fought in the war and came home heroes; well, in my mind. I was one of them. That trip was more to me than a trip to Europe would be to a boy today.

When I first went to Otter Creek, in 1901, there were three turpentine stills there. One was in the town and owned by T. W. Shands, another was on the east of the old Seaboard Railroad, about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile, and owned by W. M. Duncan & Company and the third was two miles further east and owned by Oliver Elvington & Company. Early in 1902, Bliss and Vanankin of Saginaw, Michigan, built a large sawmill there and it was known as Otter Creek Lumber Company. Their first Superintendents were two men by the name of Morgan and Als, they were also the mill wrights. The mill had the capacity to cut eighty thousand feet each day, but they only cut fifty or sixty thousand. After about two years of this, Morgan resigned and the company hired a man by the name of S. J. Gunn. Soon after Gunn took over the mill it burned down. Gunn rebuilt it and fired most of the old crew of white men and hired a sawyer by the name of Giles Thompkins. He was the first man to cut eighty thousand feet in a day. J. P. Hennesy was Superintendent of this sawmill and J. P. Kimble was in charge of the plainer mill and dry kiln. They operated this mill until 1918 and then closed it down. About this time, the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad built from Dunnellon to Wilcox. Mr. Gunn secured most of the right of way for this road, and through his influence with the officials, persuaded them to curve the road and build through Gulf Hammock. When the Otter Creek Mill closed down, Mr. A. P. Bliss gave Mr. Gunn eight sections of land that had not been cut over. Mr. Gunn decided to build a crate mill and utilize this timber. He came into the Hammock, purchased more land and built a crate and basket mill. J. P. Kimble became his partner, and they made fine profits off this venture. Mr. Gunn gave shares in the company to his son, Clinton and daughter, Dorothy. Soon after the war, Kimble sold his interest to the Gunns and moved to Bronson and built a crate mill, ice plant and cold storage. The Chief Engineer of the coast line survey team roomed with the Gunns. He fell in love with Dorothy Gunn and she became Mrs. James B. Adkins. The Gunns operated the mill for some time and then sold it to E. W. Grove, the noted Chill Tonic Man.

When Gunn first completed his mill, he got a petition and requested the Post Office Department to move the post office from Hartment Place about two miles east, to his property. He changed the name to Gunntown,

after himself. The Government honored his petition and thus Gunntown was born. The original Post Office in Gulf Hammock was situated in Section 32, Township 14, Range 16, about 400 feet south of the center of Section 32. When Mr. Grove commenced operation, he, through petition to the Post Office Department, had the name changed from Gunntown, to Gulf Hammock. Mr. Grove entered into a contract with Will and Jim Dowling, brothers, to move their mill from Odessa, Florida to Gulf Hammock, Florida. This company was called Grove-Dowling; however, after about two years this company went into bankruptcy. A Mr. Boykin from Texas was appointed receiver and through his efforts, the mill and all holdings were sold to Paterson-McKinnis Lumber Company, who operated until all timber was cut from the land.

About 1906, I was appointed Justice of the Peace at Otter Creek. The Clerk of the Court sent me a large book known as the docket, in order for me to keep record of suits tried in my court. He also sent a Justice Manual of instructions on how to proceed. I got busy learning procedures and soon had to put it into practice.

The Otter Creek Lumber employed a large crew of laborers, both white and black, and there were three turpentine camps located within two miles of each other. Now sawmill Negro labor and turpentine camp labor cannot mix socially. Both the mill and camp paid their help on the 1st and 15th of each month and we were sure to have someone killed on the night of payday. Back in those days, a Justice of the Peace could hold inquest and if the jury found the person guilty, he could have a preliminary trial. If the evidence was sufficient, we would hold the accused, issue commitment, and bind him over to the Circuit Court. Not only were there payday murders, but there was a fight almost every night. There were three juke joints and they all sold moonshine and had dance halls. We had three Deputy Sheriffs and they were kept busy and they kept me busy also.

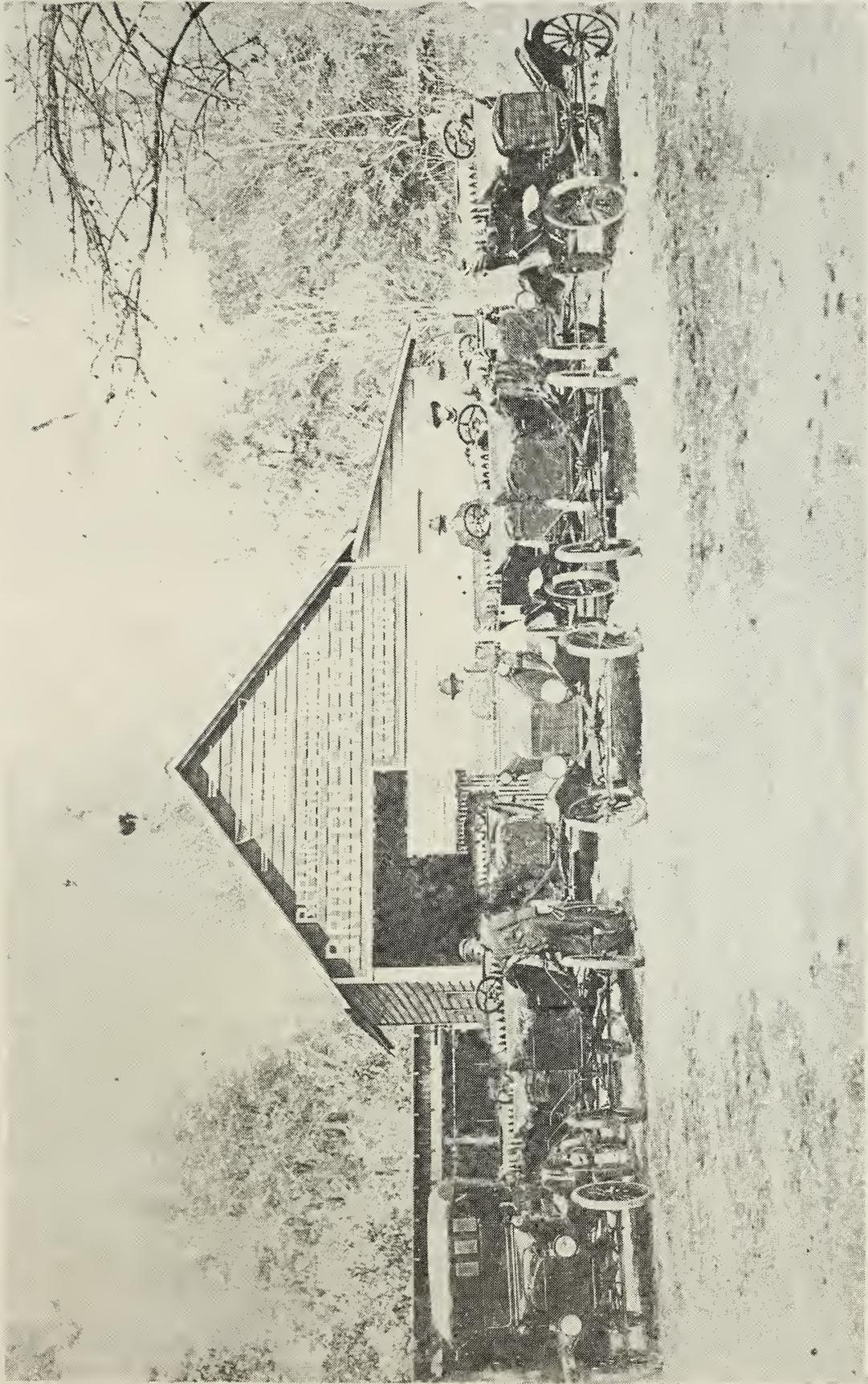
My Office as Justice of the Peace caused me to contract a disease known as Political fever, so I ran for County Commissioner and was elected. I served intermittently for 18 years. When I was first elected, the Justice fee was \$5.00 per day and 5 cents a mile round trip mileage.

In 1915 Tom Yearty and I were in the mercantile business in Otter Creek. Tom had a cedar mill at Vista on the Suwannee River. It was necessary for him to go to New York to meet the buyers. He wanted me to go with him, so we left Otter Creek in the morning, spent the day in Jacksonville, caught the fast train out at 8:30 P.M. and after riding all night, we arrived in Columbia, South Carolina. The next morning at sun-up we left South Carolina and reached Washington, D. C. at 10:00 P.M., and by the next morning we had reached Pennsylvania Station, we then took the train to Manhattan Hotel, in New York. That same day, we took the ferry over to Brooklyn, New York and Tom made his deal. We spent the night at the Manhattan Hotel and the next morning we caught the local passenger train to Baltimore, Maryland. I bought a large bill of dry goods from the Baltimore Bargain House, and we decided to return home by ship. We secured passage on a merchant and miners ship named "The Sommersett". I really enjoyed the large vessel, as it was my first trip, but Tom was seasick all four days we were on the ship.

About 1910 while I was in the general mercantile with Tom Yearty, Dr. J. W. Turner was practicing medicine in Otter Creek. One day he came into the store and said, "Will, I haven't had any rest or a vacation in a long time. Suppose we get off several days and go on a deer hunt." I agreed but I said, "Doc, where will we

go?" He said, "We can go to the Gunn Cottage on the Waccasassa River and take your boat and go up Ten Mile Creek to the old Cedar Mill." I said, "Doc, is there any game there?" He said, "Yes, lots of it." He had some good dogs at Gulf Hammock, kept by an old colored man by the name of Albert Richardson. He said he would have Albert take his horse and wagon, carry our bedding and the dogs for us. Albert was to go out near Lebanneron, cross Ten Mile Creek at Hickory Ford and meet us at the old mill. Doc and I arrived before Albert had gotten there. We made coffee and had some lunch, while we were eating, I asked Doc if he had ever been there before. He answered that he had on one occasion. Back when the mill was in operation, a rattlesnake had bitten a woman and they sent a man to Otter Creek to get the Doctor. He drove a horse and buggy to the Fiber Factory, borrowed a boat and rowed it to the old mill. When I asked him if he had saved the woman, he said, "Hell no, she had been dead four hours before I got there and, without pay, I rowed the boat back and drove home." About this time, Albert drove up. He fed his horse and drank some coffee. While he was eating, I asked Albert where the dogs were and he pointed them out to me. He had an old hound named Butch that was eaten up with mange and two young cur dogs. I told him I didn't think we had much dogs, but he answered, "You wait and see, these are some of the best." We saddled up and I was told to go south on a road for about a quarter of a mile then turn right on the road that goes to the landing at Sheephead Creek. Doc and Albert would go west down to Ten Mile Creek. I went my way and found Wet Weather Slough was open and I knew this was a good place for deer to run. A short time later I heard a gun fire and in a few minutes I saw a large yearling deer coming my way. I killed it and a few minutes later I heard another gun shot about 200 yards from me and Doc called out that it was Albert and he had killed one the same size. We went to the camp and dressed the two deer, cut them into steaks and stew meat and salted them down. It was the month of August making it necessary to get it in salt to keep it from spoiling. Doc, who was a good cook, took the back bones, cut them up, and placed them in a large iron pot, seasoned with onions, pepper, and thickened with flour batter, and cooked them down to what he called a low mull. This was good eating. Just before we ate, Doc took a quart of Canadian Club out of his medicine chest, stating that we only drink when we have killed something. We spent several days hunting and killed wild turkey and quite a few more deer before returning to Otter Creek.

Masonry in my family began with my grandfather on my father's side of the family. William Yearty was a member of Brown Lodge #51, located at Levyville, Florida and he was buried in Shiloh Cemetery, in 1875, with Masonic Honors. My grandfather on my mother's side of the family, Samuel H. Worthington, was a member of Brown Lodge #51 and was buried with Masonic Honors in Rocky Hammock Cemetery in 1896. My father, William E. Yearty was made a Mason in Brown Lodge #51, demitted and became a charter member of Otter Creek Lodge #132. He was Worshipful Master when this lodge was U.D. in 1903. He was buried with Masonic Honors in 1915 in Rock Hammock Cemetery. My brother Dr. Eugene Yearty was a member of Otter Creek Lodge #132 and he is buried in the same cemetery. He was a past master of his lodge. I was initiated in the E.A. Degree on 15 September, 1900, raised to the sublime degree of Master Mason on the 17th November, 1900 in Brown Lodge #51, Demitted and was one of the original petitioners for Charter of the Otter Creek Lodge. I was appointed first



The Ford Agency in Bronson, later replaced by a brick building and located near the present County Health Clinic (1981). The car on the left is a 1921 Ford model T and appears to be new. Its side lamps were little kerosene lanterns; the headlights were electric.

Junior Warden. In 1905, I was elected Worshipful Master. I was acting Grand Tyler in Grand Lodge Sessions of 1941 held in St. Petersburg. Smith L. Turner was Grand Master and my son, John F. Yearty was District Deputy Grand Master for the District. I also served two years as Grand Sword Bearer during second World War. I have enjoyed my Masonic life and have been honored many times by my Masonic brothers. I have served in each of the several stations and I am also a 32nd Degree Mason, having received my degree in the Ocala Corrisistory in the Valled of Ocala Orient of Florida and my certificate as such the 3rd day of November, 1958.

Williams Landing on the Waccasassa River was first known as Townsend Landing. During 1908-1909 and 1910, Tilghman Cypress Company operated a large mill at Lukens which was near Cedar Key. They bought all of the cypress on the Waccasassa River and girdled it and cut it for more than a year. This timber was dumped into the river about a half mile north of where Wekiva enters and drifted down just above the Burns landing and made into rafts and towed to the mill at Lukens. Mr. Thomas O. Townsend contracted the rafting and he lived in a camp on the bank of the river. Because of the large palmetto camp he and his crew built there the place was called Townsend Landing. Townsend had a road cut from his camp to Burns Landing and carried supplies there with a horse and wagon. After the timber was cut from the land the landing was abandoned. Mr. Lonnie Williams bought eighty acres of land just north of Townsend Landing and his brother, Ed Williams, bought eighty acres joining his brother's land. The land belonging to Ed Williams was later bought by Oscar Berryhill and a Mr. Shannon of Gainesville bought forty acres south and west of the Berryhill property and they requested the County to assist them in keeping a passable road into their property.

In 1930 I ran for and was elected Representative for Levy County in the Florida Legislature. That is when the people of Levy County promoted me out of my class. I tried, of course, to keep them in ignorance of it, but I knew it before the first day had passed. I thought we would meet and the chairman would call the meeting to order. This would mean we would drop our bills in the hopper and the reading clerk would take a bill out and read it in full after which we would all discuss it and then either pass it or kill it. I soon found out how wrong I was. It had to go to a committee; they would approve or disapprove it and then it took several more days to get on the calendar. Then you had to watch it like a hawk does a chicken, and probably make a motion for the rules to be waived in order to take the bill up. Really, there is so much that has to be done, it would take too long to write it all down here. Soon after the session started a man that had been a member before this session, told me, "Yearty, if you don't understand a bill, vote against it and you will be right 9 times out of 10." When I finally realized my ignorance, I commenced watching others and found out a lot about others. One of the things that got my goat was some little one-way brain lawyer who had been raised Mama's pet and combed his hair in the middle, thought he was smart. He would undertake to speak to a bill. I soon commenced making fun of him and the others took notice. I also learned how to kill a bad bill by amendment and did so much of it till I was named Amendment Bill Yearty. One special occasion a bill was introduced to have eggs sorted and even a farmer carrying eggs to sell to a store would have to go before a Notary Public and make affidavit as to when they were laid, which to me was a lot of fool stuff. I amended the bill, providing that all eggs sold under this bill must be

stamped in red ink giving the date laid, color of the hen and pedigree of the sire. The amendment carried by voice vote and killed the bill. I killed several by foolish amendments. Sometimes well educated people can have some of the craziest ideas about laws that, if passed, would be an injury to them also.

In 1951, D. P. McKenzie got me appointed Postmaster in the House of Representatives. I served as such during sessions of 1951-1953-1955 and 1957. In 1959, I was transferred to assistant to the Sargent-at-Arms in the Senate, at the information desk in the Old Senate Chamber. Randolph Hodges secured this for me and it is much easier work than in the postoffice. I served in that position in 1959-1961-1963 and 1965.

The 1965 session had adjourned and I had the opportunity of serving. Someone wanted to know the duties of the two old men that sat at the desk in the Old Senate Chamber, referring to Mr. B. B. Sapp and myself. I consider our position very important. Anyone in the state that has business in the Legislature wants to see the Senator of his District. They come to us for this information and we either take them to the right office or tell them how to get there. If a Senator's secretary needs supplies we go to the supply office and get them. We keep drinking cups at the water coolers and see that there is water in the jugs and plenty of ice to keep it cool. If a typewriter gets out of order, we find the repair man and have him fix it. Sometimes we conduct people out of the building when they can't find their way. We carry messages from the Senate over to the House. We notify the Senators when to be present in the Senate Chamber for roll call and many other services. It is quite a job after all.

Back about 1945, John Yearty was Postmaster in Gulf Hammock and I was operating a store and the post office at Otter Creek. John and his wife, Imogene, came over to visit me. During the visit John and I decided to go on a fishing trip on Armistice Day that was just coming up. The day arrived and we took my boat from his landing at Wekiva and reached the camp just before sundown, and got everything ready for the next morning at daylight. At the mouth of Bird Creek we saw a big bunch of running mullet going out of the river. We ran the boat just east of the mouth of Depew Creek. I ran out part of the net and John got out on the bank. I waited until the ripple was between me and the shore and then I ran ashore a perfect strike. We caught 863 mullet. We slipped them out of the net and started home, arriving back at 11 A.M. With the help of two colored people, Ed and Laura Hodge, we split and washed the fish, then we hauled them home and salted and packed them until 2 P.M. We sold the yellow roe for \$1.00 per dozen and the salted fish for 5 cents each or 6 for 25 cents. This is one of the good trips we love to tell about.

July in the last year of the Hoover Administration, 1928-1932, I was foreman of a crew of men known as FERA. We worked ten hours a day for ninety cents a day. We opened up a road and built runways to the Townsend Landing. After a short time, the public wanted some improvements around this Landing. I discussed this with Mr. Berryhill who offered to ask Mrs. Lonnie Williams to donate an acre of land there, if the county would make a public park there. However, before this transacted, Mrs. Williams sold the land to her son Guy Williams, a railroad conductor living at Archer, Florida, who commenced to develop the land. He cut a canal from the river up to high ground, built some cottages and changed the name to Williams Landing. Since that time, the county has purchased three acres, south of Williams Landing, from Paterson-McInnis Lumber Company, which includes



Dicie Carolyn Hatcher (1886-1973) married Issac Ivy Smith (1872-1954)

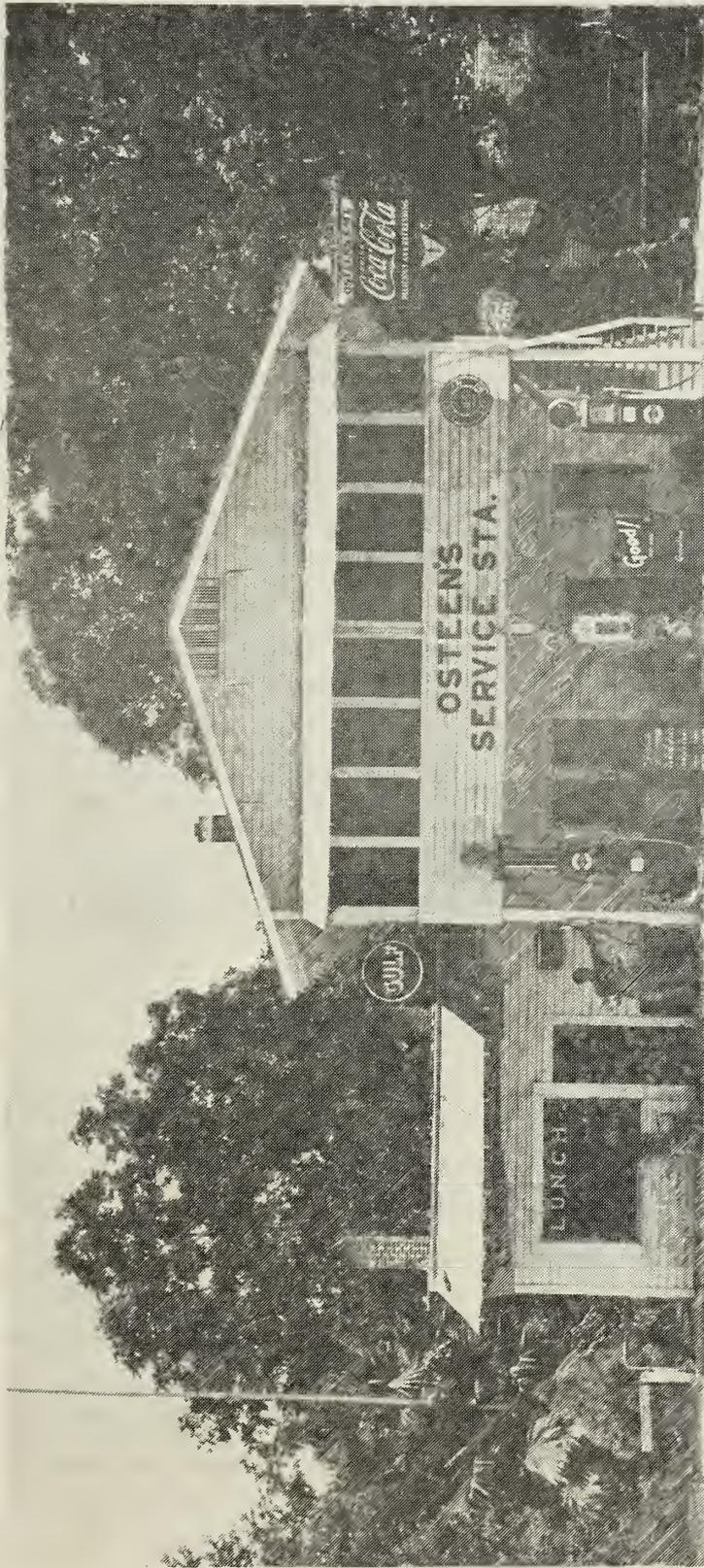


A Methodist Sunday School Class, Williston area, 1915. Back row: unknown, unknown, Mrs. Madison Roach, Mrs. Angus Smith, Mrs. T. C. Fletcher, Mrs. Lawrence Wooten, unknown, Mrs. P. N. King, Mrs. Tom Price, Raymond Robinson. Middle row: unknown, unknown, Mrs. Wallace, Mrs. Sallie Smith, unknown. Front row: John White, P.N. King, Tom Price, Dr. T. C. Fletcher.

canal, made a boat ramp, put in public toilets and made a fine public park. At the present time, the state is building a paved road from Gulf Hammock to Williams Landing. Guy Williams has sold quite a few lots and a number of people have built homes there. It is possible that in the near future, we will have a nice little town here. During the winter season it is not unusual to see fifty to seventy-five boats on the river every day. When I commenced working for a road to Williams Landing, I was called all the names that people thought I was, but I finally succeeded in getting a passable road. After my

son John was elected County Commissioner for Levy County, he was successful in getting the state to build the road mentioned here before and he has been called all the names they originally called his father and then some. As their vocabulary increases they find new and improved words. I say that Williams Landing has been more than a headache to the Yeartys and sometimes it was a bowel complaint.

Edited By Norma R. Hutson  
Levy County Archives Member  
Chiefland, Florida



This combination gas station, care and residence was built at the intersection of S.R. 24 and U.S. 27-A in 1927 by Alma J. and H. E. (Kias) Osteen (1891-1953). Mr. Osteen is standing by a post. The house in the background was that of Isaac Faircloth, Sr.: The H.A. Moring house is further back. Among others, Jessie and Walter Duden operated the place for some years. The last operators were Louise and Lynn Williams; its name then was Lynn's Grill. Something about the place fascinated the people driving through. It was a favorite stopping place for hunters, fishermen, university professors, and other diverse groups; all of whom covertly studied each other. Nationally famous persons habitually stopped here; they had learned that no fans would bother them, they would be ignored by the Bronsonites. For many years, Lynn's Grill was a well-known landmark.

## ANDERSON PHILPOT (1819-1866)

Anderson Philpot was born about 1819 in South Carolina and died as a result of gunshot wounds in 1866 in Levy County. He married in South Carolina, Sarah Ann, whose last name is believed to be Peacock. They are buried in the Ebenezer Baptist Church Cemetery.

To Anderson and Sarah Ann Philpot were born the following known children; James Jefferson, born 1842, killed in 1862 while serving in the Confederate Army; William, born 1844, died young; Thomas W., born 1846, married Miss Emily Wester, Levy County; Washington, born 1849, died young; Richard A., born 1851, married Emiline Parrish; John Henry, born 1855, died 1938, buried in Chiefland Cemetery, married (1) Laura Lancaster - descendants live in Bell; Mary Ann,

born 1858, married William Lancaster - descendant live in Trenton; Robert P. born 1861, died 1926, buried in Pine Grove Cemetery, married Leila Lee Love; George L. born 1864, died 1892, married Sarah O'Steen.

In 1855 or early 1856 Anderson sold his property in Barnwell County, South Carolina, and moved his family to Putnam County. Sometime after 1860 they moved to Levy County where he lived until his death. It is believed that Sarah Ann died in 1876.

During the Civil War, Anderson, his sons James Jefferson and Thomas W., served in the same company, Company I, First Florida Calvary. James Jefferson was killed in Kentucky, 20 August 1862.

## THOMAS CHARLES LOVE (1825-1864)

Thomas Charles Love was born 13 May 1825 in Florida and died 12 December 1864 in Levy County. He married in 1849 Mary Ann Prevatt, daughter of Thomas James Prevatt and his first wife, name unknown, of Newmansville, Alachua Co., Florida.

To Thomas and Mary Ann Prevatt Love were born the following children: Sarah Frances, born 1850, second wife of James S. Turner, Levyville; Charles, died at age 3; Thomas James, born 1854, married (1) Jane Smith and (2) Lorena Colson; John McQueen, born 1857, married Laura A. Shuler; Margaret Rebecca, died at age 22; Mary Eliza, died at age 2; Leila Lee, twin, born 31 October 1864, married Robert P. Philpot; Lillian Lee, twin to Leila, married James McMahlon Sanders and moved to Alachua Co.

Shortly after their marriage, Thomas and Mary Ann sold their property in Alachua Co. and moved to Levy County, settling near his uncle, Thomas E. Barrow, at Fort Fanning where he served as postmaster from 1846 to 1849. At one time he served as a county commissioner. He owned and operated a cotton gin and in 1860 owned twenty-two slaves.

After her husband's death in 1864 and the end of the

Civil War, Mary Ann was left destitute and lived for a time near Cedar Key where the younger daughters worked in a cedar pencil factory. She later bought a farm at Judson and was one of the original members of the Pine Grove Baptist Church; however, prior to her death in 1886 she and her children converted to the Church of Christ.

The oldest daughter, Sarah Frances, received her schooling at one of the nearby plantations at Fort Fanning where a tutor was employed and she later taught school. The younger children attended the one-room school house at Judson.

Thomas Charles Love was the son of Charles Love, born 1790, Onslow County, N.C., and Rebecca Barrow Love. Charles came to Florida as a young man when Florida was under the Spanish and was allowed a Spanish land grant in what is now Maxwell, Duval County. He lived first on the St. Mary's River but later moved, along with his brother-in-law, Bennett Maxey Dell, the Stanleys, Barrows and others to the Alachua territory. He was nominated by the Governor to be a Lt. Colonel in the Alachua County militia in 1828 but died that year.

## ROBERT P. PHILPOT (1861-1926)

Robert P. Philpot, son of Anderson and Sarah Ann Philpot, was born 15 January 1861, Levy County, and died 31 October 1926 at his home in Trenton. He married Leila Lee Love, a twin, at the home of her mother, Mrs. Thomas C. Love, in Levy County on 28 December 1884. They are buried in the Pine Grove Cemetery.

To Robert and Leila Love Philpot were born the following children: James Milton, born 1885, died 1942, married Quincy Isabelle Bass; Robert Cleveland, born 1888, died 1939, married Agnes Elizabeth McLain; Felton, born 1889, died 1957, married Roma W. Weeks; Sarah Frances, born 1891, died 1979, married Valentine William Mims; Mary Love, born 1894, died 1976, married Washington Mallory Layfield; Newton born 1896, died 1932, never married; Ira Judson, born 1899, died 1965, married Mildred Turner; Ada Lee; born 1902, died 1904; Allie Mae, born 1904, married Thomas

Leonard Cain; R.P., born 1908, died 1980, married (1) Eloyse Renauld and after her death (2) Sara Isabell Brown.

He was a farmer and in 1904 bought the old Love property near Trenton, but located in Levy County, where they raised their family. Robert and Leila were members of the Church of Christ.

Robert played the fiddle and was called upon throughout the area to play at social gatherings and square dances.

In later life they sold the farm and moved to Trenton. After his death, Leila lived with her daughter and husband, Sarah Frances (Fannie) and Tine Mims. She was loved dearly by her children and made annual visits to their homes. She became ill while visiting her daughter, Allie Mae Cain, and stayed with her until her death on 26 September 1940.

Researched, compiled and submitted by Marjorie Mims Dick, 2020 N. Atlantic Avenue, Cocoa Beach, Florida, 32931, January 29, 1981.

# MEMORIES OF AN OLD TIMER AND HIS WIFE

By Katherine and Jason McElveen

Transcribed and Edited by Lindon Lindsey

I was born at Welburn, Florida. That's about 12 miles from Live Oak right in the edge of Suwannee County toward Lake City.

I came to Levy County in 1898. Now, I was about four years old when we came to Levy County and we went to Cedar Keys, stayed in Cedar Keys about a couple of years. I went to my first school in Cedar Keys, went to school there with Harry Rogers, and Harry Higgin, and another Harry and I don't remember what his name was besides Harry. They're all dead and gone. I saw the steamboat Ctiy of Hawkinsville when it came into Cedar Keys the first time. It came in across the bay and it came in from towards Port Inglis house. I can see the two stacks and the smoke going out them stacks when they were coming across the bay. We lived in one of the white houses. The two houses are still standing up on the hill. We lived in the one with the marble colored portico out on the porch. Under the front, I don't know if it was painted or marble. Surely, it wouldn't be marble.

My father worked for McCreary, ran a fish house for McCreary. They were big fish people at that time. But my father was a railroad man. He had a section up at Ellzey and at Otter Creek, and at Sumner, although he kept that section and old man Hagens kept a section at Cedar Keys. They were section-masters buddies you might call them. They took care of the Seaboard there at that end, for maybe 40 years, 30 or 40 years.

Father's name was D.F. McElveen, they called him Uncle Mac, known all over Levy County as Uncle Mac and he's owned land in Levy County for the last 50 years. Just the last few years, since 1970, I went out of the land business in Levy County. I sold out.

Mother's name was Araminda Birchfield. They came from Mississippi. My grandfather on her side, her father, was a blacksmith in the Civil War. He had a shop at Live Oak, Florida. The old tree is there yet where he had his shop under there and some of the old irons are still around there today, at the old homestead place. They let him come home to try to raise a farm and then they would take him back to repair these army vehicles. They would keep him up there for three or four weeks and bring him back home to let him plow a little bit then take him back and that's the way he went through the war.

My father was in the Confederacy and went to the war in South Carolina. He's buried at Live Oak, both of them buried at Live Oak at Antioch Cemetery, about four miles out from Live Oak. In fact, it's only about a mile from this old blacksmith shop that my great-grandfather blacksmithed.

We've been married 64 years. My wife lived at Cedar Key, she was born and raised there on the island. She was a native. My wife's name was Katherine McCumber before we got married. We had 10 children; boys were George, Willard, Cannon, Paul, David, and girls were Phyllis, Mary, Jeannette, Edith, and Barona. See, I never missed one of them. My wife's father was George Washington McCumber and his nickname was Buck. We got married in 1915, 21st day of December in that old church about a block past the Methodist

Church, was a Baptist Church. It's Louise Depew's house now. That's where we were married. The train was about two hours late that night and it was at Christmas time and they had to wait until I got there.

(His wife talking) My mother's name was Mary Theresa. She was a Holland before she married. I was born in Cedar Key. The big storm came, a tidal wave, and washed our house away when I was about three years old. No family was lost, they carried all us children to a house up on the hill. He bought it from a Mr. Reddick. A picture of the house is in the museum. The house is still standing.

When we got married we lived at Sumner. I lived at Cedar Key and he came from Sumner. He was working there. My Daddy and Mother were dead, and all I have is three sisters and two brothers. Their names are Elizabeth, Gertrude, Irene, and boys names David and George and I had a brother that died long years ago named Frankie. He's buried at Cedar Key with our parents, don't know where.

(McElveen resumes talking) That locomotive engine there was named P. W. Crater, and I unloaded this little locomotive here up at the gondola. I wanted to go and be a railroad man on Cummer. And old man Polk, he was going to be a sawmill man. They already designated him to be foreman of the sawmill. He said you ain't going nowhere, you're going to be with me. So, I couldn't get away from him to get back to the locomotive railroad. So I helped build that tank. I climbed that tank one time with a girl about 13 or 14 years old and tied a rope around my waist and one around her waist and I climbed that tank there with her and put a flag on top of that during the 1st World War. Her name was Eva Smith.

We lived at Ellzey quite a long time, went to school at Ellzey until I was 14 years old. When I was 14, my father lost his job on the Seaboard. That put me to hunt for a job and him to hunt for a job, and then I went to Summerlin and went to Lukens, went to work over there with a man named Amerson, Lukens Gulf Cypress Company. I worked there for about three weeks with Amerson. There was a fellow there by the name of Bill Crosby, he ran the locomotive engine there. Mr. Crosby wanted me on the engine with him. We just struck it up. We were both young fellows. He was only about 18 years old so we hit it off together.

As we hit it off together he got me transferred over to the job that I was on in the shinglemill to fire for him. He said, "Mac, won't be a month or two before I have you running this thing," and in a couple months I was running it and he took a larger engine. Well, then, that little locomotive I was on, the Little 2, wasn't any bigger than my automobile out there. It had four driven wheels, it didn't have pony trucks under the front nor under the back and it had a tank on it, but it was solid framed, the whole tank was built together. Locomotive tank, boiler, and everything was built altogether with just four drivers under there. Looked more like a duck than anything else, but would travel about 40 or 45 miles an hour. Now, I would run that thing just as fast as it would turn on wheels. And I ran the labor train,

carrying men back and to labor back in the woods getting logs. I was known as the "Whistle Blower", I pretty soon learned to blow a whistle and they called me the "Whistle Blower". They'd say, "Mac's coming, Mac's coming," everybody called me Mac.

Dr. Warren was the General Superintendent and owned the saw mill. Lukens Gulf Cypress Company sold out to Tillman's Cypress Company. Dr. Warren was in the Tillman's Cypress Company. I'll tell you more about that in a minute because his daughter married a Tillman, I think that's the way it is. But anyway, in this logging department, I bought me a whistle for my locomotive. It cost me \$75 and I paid for it out of my earnings, \$2.50 or \$3 a week and let the company pay for it and I blowed it on that machine. When I left there I left the whistle on the locomotive. I don't know what ever happened to it.

Dr. Warren's daughter, Mildred, married a fellow, Tillman, rich people, Tillman's Cypress Company of Palatka. So he hired a special train of the Seaboard to come in there with Pullman cars, sleeping cars, and a dining car and had the train put it in there on the side track. Well, I was still on this little locomotive of mine and that was just about all I could handle with them two cars. So I went out and met the train when it came by. Lukens wasn't there right at the railroad, it was a half-mile up in the woods from the railroad, so I had to go up there and meet that and pull it up there in front of the Doctor's house, Dr. Warren's house. They were married that night and had a big blowout, a lot of rich people through the country got down there. The automobile wasn't in fashion, they didn't have them, so they come in horses and buggies and what have you. A lot of them came in boats around there. So, next morning when it got about daylight the passenger train was ready to go out so they went down there and waited until I got down there and hooked up the train with mine and pushed them back down there and coupled them up and away they went. There might be a lot of people in Levy County that might remember that, see, and as they read this they will say they remembered that happening.

There were about five or six locomotives and with a little prompting from that paper I can tell the names of all engineers that were working there at that time. And the engineers was a fellow named Davis, John Pappered, John Phillips, Bill Crosby (the man I went to work for), and McElveen was my name. But Bill Crosby was the one that worked me up and there was Johnny Peacock, R. A. Polk, Ray Polk was a noted man in Levy County, everybody knew him up there. There was a man named Valentine and he had about seven or eight boys and said that his boys could run a locomotive but couldn't tell which way it was going. If it started off one way, they didn't know which way it was going. He was a great old fellow. Now they had locomotives, they had the Little 2, that's the one I've been telling you about. The Big 2 and the Firespot were identical locomotives and they were put out by Rodgers. Old 4 was a Baldwin locomotive and the 8 Spot was a Baldwin locomotive. Little 2 was also a Baldwin.

Now they had a pine mill over there and we had to log that pine mill at Lukens, we had to bring logs in for the pine mill. That pine mill was built there by Aldrich and it was a nice mill and I've got a photograph of it some place but I haven't been able to locate it at all. It was a little double deck mill. It would cut about 40,000 or 50,000 feet of lumber a day, that is in timber. Them days they cut mostly 4x4's or 6x6's or 8x10's and something like that. They didn't cut very many boards. And there was a fellow that ran the dry kiln over there and his name was Jesse Smallwood. That was Hunter Smallwood on the photo and that was Jesse's brother.

I had a gas boat then and her name was Nellie Mae. It was about 20-22' long, and it was a fantail boat. If a propeller was way under there, the tail went way out over it. Had a six cylinder motor in it. One of the finest little outfits I ever saw. Gasoline engines were just then coming in. The company had two other gas boats, they had the old Marie and that was a big boat, 36-38' long. Bud Young got drowned on the Marie. It burst open and split the sides of it and drowned everyone. I think the propeller on that boat is under the house that Leo Collins lives in. Ten or twelve years ago I saw that propeller under there. Now they had another boat and that boat was the Hiawatha. The Hiawatha was a smaller boat and had a nice gas engine in it but it was a narrow boat and they couldn't take it out to sea. If you come around the mouth of the Suwannee River sometimes that gets to be about the roughest place around the Gulf Coast. I've been around there when you couldn't see out with a 40' boat. There would be waves coming in there where you couldn't see out, 12-14' waves there. Hiawatha was 24' long.

They used three steamboats down there to haul logs in. Those three steamboats, The Oatavia, Helen Derium, they used four steamboats, the Kennedy-Kevin Kennedy I think was the name of it. Oatavia is right beside where the sawmill was. Helen Derium is sunk by the dock. The one that sunk in the mouth of Suwannee River in the East Pass is old Sam Pile. Old Captain Wallace built that boat. Jim Brush over there at Cedar Keys, you're familiar with Jim Brush, Jim Brush married Captain Wallace's daughter. He built that boat and they used it there for hauling logs. It was a dandy boat. AOP was on the side of the boat, and it's sunk right where the saw mill was, right where the old boilers used to be. I don't know if there is anything there now or not. Someone might have gotten the old boilers and moved them possibly by now. Old unloading docks were where they unloaded the railroad cars. We pushed the cars out there and we unloaded them off in a log pond, then pulled the logs up in the mill with a skidder. Boats were sunk right at the end of that dock. That's the Helen Derium, I think, cause last time I saw the Helen Derium it was sunk right there. That old City of Hawkinsville, it's up by Old Town, can see it at low tide. Sam Pile sunk out there in Suwannee River on the East Pass, I think.

Now they had another boat there that had a Daimler engine in it. Now I am going to explain that thing to you, cause it was peculiar. That Daimler engine was one that didn't have any electric wires and no electricity whatever. It run with a hot plug that was about as big around as the end of your finger and that long with a flying handle to it so you could screw it quickly with threads on it. You kept it oiled good so you could screw it out, and heat it just as hot as you could get it. When you got it red, hotter than red, in a fire or with a blow torch, you screwed that in, then you begin to crank her. Presently, it would kick off and it would run a week until you cut the gas off it. It was a success, it worked. They used it for surveying. They used it to go up the river with a survey team and they would go up there and stop and when they got ready to go, about a half-hour before they got ready, they would build a big fire or a blow torch out there. They even had one of these here tool irons like they have in blacksmith shops with coal to heat the plug. They would heat that plug and screw it in there and give it a turn, and boom, boom, boom, away she goes. It would run just as long as they would put gas to it. Daimler engines were made in Germany, and they used Naptha, they called it. They didn't use gasoline at that time, they called it Naptha. And you would buy that stuff and you took a suck on the end of a tube out of a 50-gallon drum, you drank about a

half-pint of it when you got it then you'd stick it over in a can and fill your can up, cost you about 60 or 75 cents for five gallons. That's the way you got your fuel.

It was about a mile and a half from here to the pine mill, a mile that would put it, better cut a half-mile off there.

There's a little fellow named Ayers here, was the walkingnest man I ever saw in my life. We could leave the pine mill here with the locomotive engine and two cars of logs going over here, he would beat us to the mill. There was a Y in here, (looking at map) we had to work this Y to turn anything around, and right in there was a doctor's office. But this was the commissary and it was run by a man named Neil Worthington. Now this was a terrible road here, unpassable. Anything but a dump cart and a mule or something like that, the road was unpassable. There were no automobiles at that time, in 1909 and 1910, times I'm giving you right now. They got a few automobiles in 1911, and I left there about that time. I got crippled. I got crippled right here, on this railroad, right here in front of this doctor's office and they carried me right from the locomotive here right across to the doctor's office. A log caught me between here and that Big 4. I was out there helping them couple up. John Phillips come in here with a log train and it was leaking so bad that he couldn't back his log train up to the pine mill. We had to back them out. We couldn't let anything block the tracks down here on account of fire. So when he couldn't back it we had to back that log train back into the pine mill and he asked Tom Henley--Tom Henley's a familiar name to you up there--Tom, he said, you come help Mac here back my train out to the pine mill. No, he says, I ain't got time, my engine has gone dead. I said mine's live. I'd just put the fire out so I could liven it up in a minute. I was always a fellow that could do anything. That's the reason I got in trouble. So I went ahead and fired it up and Tom came over there to help me. We went back down there and they had what you called ridge poles in between that coupled them cars together and they had a ridge pole, about a 4x4 or 6x6 piece of timber with a bag of nose iron on the end with a loop there and a big pin that went down through to couple that locomotive when it backed up. Well, the 5 Spot had a big extension back on it and that young fellow was running the 5 and he had big extensions back on his which the back stuck way out here. The 4 Spot, the one I was running, didn't have an extension back on, just butted right square off with a coupling right up to the end of it. I didn't think about it and nobody else thought about it, so I got out there to help the man raise the reacher up and raised it up and made the coupling and that log caught me right here through the chest with my back to the locomotive and compressed it. Broke my ribs, but they carried me right across to the doctor's office and took 40 to 50 stitches. They got me right in there and doctor stitched me up. I was about to bleed to death and about to drown. Blood was going into my lungs. There was 117 days before I got to where I could lift. I kept spitting blood up from my lungs. I haven't got but a piece of lung and that's what my trouble is today. That's been a long time ago, was the third day of February, 1911.

They paid off in aluminum coin. We had a wreck there one time and I was running the Little 2 that I was telling you about and was called out on Sherrel Hill, out there in the woods. I was on that hill, and there was a water hole up there. We had a railroad right side of it and we got water out of there with a pulse-a-meter. We got water for the locomotive. I was up there getting water and here comes a log train by. I met him down there. He was coming as fast as he could go and when he comes down to this curve which is about 200 yards

from Sherrel Hill and a big deep hold where they dug a lot of stuff up there that locomotive jumped the track right there and jumped right in that hole. There must have been a hundred men on that car of logs that was right behind him and them logs and men went out in the woods and there wasn't a man that got hurt. If they did, nobody said so. I was parked up there on the hill and they had me cut off. There was about three cars behind me and that was all I could handle, three cars. He just got it down there where I could move it back. So I got out there and kicked them cars and carried them down past the skidder and picked up a skidder back there and brought it down there and pulled these other loads back. Took me all evening to get that track cleared up and get the skidder down there with a hand-pole to pick that locomotive out of that hole. We had to get it out and that was the only way to get it. So we worked there two days and two nights and about ten o'clock the next morning we got it up and set it up on the track and I got behind that thing and pushed it into the sawmill with my locomotive. It was a dirty and nasty looking mess in the clay hole. When they paid me off they paid me in aluminum checks and I had a handful of them things. At that time, I lived across the railroad. My mother and father lived there then, where the dump ground was. I had a house up there in the big oaks. We had a pretty good old house up in there. When I got home, I ate and went to sleep. The next afternoon, late in the afternoon, I got up. I slept all that day, all that night, and the next evening got up. I was tired.

There is a Surls Hill out on the old railroad, on the Lukens railroad and there is a fish pond up there. Somebody had a camp, I think Studstill had a camp right at that fish pond. The hole was 40 or 50' across. That is now Emmett State Preserve.

We moved over to Lacoochee on the 12th day of April, 1930. I left Sumner and went over there, moved to the mill. We stayed there 20 years then moved down here. Louise Abraham has some pictures of the sawmill and the town. She can tell you everything you need to know about Lacoochee. She was born and raised there, raised in my yard, part of it.

We moved from Lukens to Sumner. I went to work at Cummer the 27th day of May, 1911. There wasn't anything there about 12 or 15 men, and they had bush hooks and cross-cut saws and 22 pistols and machetes. They were cutting down that place there to build a sawmill. They wanted somebody to play ball with them millrights. Well, I was a good ball player. I was just about 17 years old, and a good ball player and could throw a wicked ball. They wanted somebody to get with them millrights to entertain them so they would do their work. We killed a rattlesnake or two every day. We averaged better than a rattlesnake a day for a long time. We built that mill and put it into operation and started about August, 1911, and started cutting timber. The first they cut was for Mr. William R. Stecker, Gainesville, Florida, who owned the timber. It was Cummer Lumber Company but they cut Mr. Stecker's cause he was a man that had an interest in it somehow. Then when we got all his lumber cut we went out and painted the ends of the boards, painted them red. Had many stacks of it, several million feet. Then we began to cut Cummer lumber, and piled it out there, we didn't mix it.

Stecker and Cummer were very close. All of them are dead now. Mr. Stecker has been dead many years. They were fine people. They cut lumber there until February 14th or 18th, 1927, and then it caught fire and burned to the ground.

Then they left me over there at Sumner to load out and ship all the lumber, take down the house, and dig



In 1981, Robert Missouri (90) and Jason McElveen (86). As young men they worked together in Lukens and were friends. Then each went different ways and they lost contact over a period of many years. Recently, they discovered that they lived near each other in the Dade City area.

up the water pipes and everything, and follow it out. And that's what I did. Then I moved to Lacoochee in 1930. Took me three years to take down the houses and ship all the lumber--about 13 or 14 million feet of lumber on the lumber yard.

And that is when I used to come in from the woods in the morning, I ran the log train at night on account of floods over there so we could get enough logs in to keep the mills going. We had to log the cypress mill and the pine mill. We had to pull the logs for both mills. That's the reason for so much rolling stock. So when I came in this old colored man, a night watchman then, his name was Lockit, would say hey boss, I got some of the prettiest bait you ever saw. I'd say alright, I'll be back as soon as I put the engine up so I'd go on and as soon as I cooled down I'd come back and me and old Lockit would get in his boat and go out there by Candy Island. It's the little island off Lukens there, about 2 or 300 yards over from Lukens, Candy Island. Years ago there used to be a little sand and all on that island. The last time I was there, about one and half-two years ago, it was awash. There used to be a pump of water on there. It was drinkable, wasn't fresh but it was drinkable. People did drink it. A fellow named Hatcher lived there and planted a little garden on there but now it's down under the water. I don't know what could cause it to be that way but it had too much washing or something. But Candy Island was on some high ground, that is dry land. A fellow named Hatcher raised a family on that thing, had a dozen dogs. You come up to that island, you got to hollering before your boat got close cause them dogs come up there and met you in waist deep water. They wanted to bite. They were hungry. He had three or four girls and I was a young fellow at that time, so I went out there to talk to the girls and them dogs would keep you away from the island.

But that old Lockit and me, we'd go fishing and catch all kinds of fish. I'd come back and take a couple of them fish and take them down to where I boarded, with a Mrs. Smith, and she would cook some fish, fix them up and I'd eat them. But old Lockit would take all the rest of the fish and go in the quarters and sell them. We'd catch Red Fish, Sheephead, Jack Fish, and any kind of fish that would come along and bite. Then he'd come back and when I'd come out to get on the engine in the evening he'd always be there and he'd come down there and divide that money with me right in the middle. I got half of it and he'd get the other half. I'd get sometimes \$2 or \$3 for my half. I got as much for that as I did for running the locomotive. That was old Lockit--a big, tall, stout fellow, about 6'6". He was a big man, but he could sure pull that boat so easy and nice out there. He was 96 in October.

The east side of the narrow red bridge was water. They had little houses there that were about 8' wide and 16' long and set about 8' apart, just so a fellow could put his boat side of it. People lived in there. Ludlow and Hodges and somebody else was landlords there. Old Lady Reed had an oyster factory there and she had two boys, David, and can't remember the other one. She just about broke up the oyster business around Cedar Keys. They would run Cedar Keys a few years and then some enterprise fellow would come in and sell all the oysters and then they would go broke. Then the people would just about starve to death for a few years. They couldn't make a living. You can't hardly make a living just on fish, but you can on fish and oysters.

Ten or twelve years ago when I was down there, or fifteen years ago it was, they began to sell all the oysters they could find for \$1 a bushel and \$2 a bushel. All they had to do was sack them up. I told them there would be a time when you couldn't get a mess of

oysters, but they would just keep selling them for the quick money. Those quick money fellows, when they got through, there wasn't anymore. Takes a long time to get them back. Leo Collins told me they were just now coming back. They got a pretty good crop of oysters this year.

The McCreary's had a big fish house. My father worked for McCreary. Old Man Whitman had alligators, all kinds of birds and whatever he could find in the woods he would bring it in and put it in his back yard. He would set the alligators in a boat out there.

At that time, you had to catch the water you drank. They had cisterns. He had an old locomotive boiler or cedar mill boiler upside down and he would catch the water off his house and run it in there. Water would be on the house all day sometimes, but that's how they had to get it. The water was bad stuff. To stay healthy, you had to drink two drinks of moonshine to one drink of water.

The big two-story building by the Depot was Taylor's. He used to have a little hotel and rooming house. There are some Taylors in Cedar Key now. Some of the Taylor girls live in that block now, in the little white house.

There was Old Man Lugen, the mill engineer was Tom Henley, blacksmith was Thompson, Early Smith was his helper, skinner/logger was MacPherson. Dan Masters was skidder man; Dan Andrews, I call him the ax man because he was the greatest man with an ax I ever saw. He kept his ax just as sharp as a razor. You could shave with it and you could take it and cut the hair off your arm. He girded the timber out of the swamp. When they girded it they cut around the edge of it, cut the sap and the water runs out. Cypress is the only timber they girded. Dan Andrews was the man that did this and he wouldn't give you his ax to cut a snake with. No sir, you killed the snake with your fist if you wanted to, but not with his ax.

Johnny Arline was usually the man that was my helper. I had entire charge with everything that run with gasoline. That's when Cummer was pulling logs down the road.

I lived down there at Sumner along the time before they ever had a road above tide water. I reckon they built the road above tide water about 1915 or 16, and then it wouldn't be above tide water when they had excess tide. You would have to wait until low tide to come and go. It was about 1915 or 16 when they done that, right about the time we were married. We were married in 1915.

I want to tell you about something else. They had a killing out there at that pine mill. There was a fellow, Molten Nipples, killed a man named Hyatt. I don't know why. Dolphin Shaws, there's a name will remind you of Levy County, Dolphin Shaws went out there, and there was an Irishman watching this pine mill. He had a lantern going around in that pine mill and so he saw a movement out there in the dark somewhere, so he went out there to see what it was. H said what is that out there and somebody said put out that light. He said I'm the night watchman here, what's that moving around out there. He said put out that light and when he didn't do it, about that time, POW. The light went flying. So Pat went back in the pine mill and they said it was Dolphin Shaws who shot his light out with a high power rifle. Now, that is just a tale and Dolphin Shaws, you could write it down cause somebody would remember it, and Hyatt was the watchman and Nipples, was the one that killed him. Molten Nipples had been in the Marines and he was a wonderful shot and he just killed Hyatt. They went over to catch him. So far as I know they never did catch him.



Otter Creek Lodge 132 in 1905 (refer to McElveen's Memories for names).

About Lukens and the Stage Coach Road, I know where Stage Coach is, I know where the road is exactly. Used to be big oaks there and a fellow went out there and cut some of those oaks down and cut them up for wood. I burned them in Cedar Key. He was an oysterman there. Some of the prettiest wood I ever saw in my life and they cut it up and it split like an acorn. I had a pot-bellied stove in Cedar Key, so I just bought a load of it. Don't remember what the fellow's name was. We went up there and they had little puppies in a barrel on the boat when they were oystering. Stage Coach Road came by Lukens and went on to Cedar Key.

I knew all the doctors there, Dr. Walker and Dr. Colby. Dr. Colby's widow was living in Arcadia three or four years ago. I knew all those old folks. Sparkmans used to be there a long time ago, also Old Man Mitchell, Calton John Mitchell, and Dan McQueen, we called him Uncle Dan. He operated the Octava part of the time. He was Captain, Captain Dan. He also operated The Sam Powers. The Sam Powers was a short steam boat like a tug boat. But it wouldn't hold much turpentine, didn't haul very much stuff. It would push litters and stuff around most of the time, pull logs. The City of Hawkinsville was the largest boat around Cedar Key. It would load passengers, sometimes it looked like a couple hundred people on it. All would get on it and go up the Suwannee River.

Scale Key Hotel had 16 rooms, big ones. They had a big furnace down there when wood was plentiful and ducts went to the rooms. I remember, when that old hotel was there and I remember old Captain Barnes. He had two daughters, Sally and Freda. Freda married Ronnie Osteen.

People were living on Live Oak Island, there was a man named Fowler. He used to try to farm it: Had a mule out there and raised feed, but everytime he got his crop up it looked like they had a southwest wind or something and it would blow water in there and kill his corn. Old Man Dorsett, one time it killed his corn up there at his place.

Old Lady Masters put Cedar Key in grapefruit one time. Planted it in grapefruit trees and everybody in Cedar Key ate grapefruit.

I lived on Hungry Bend in Cedar Key, owned that whole corner down there.

There was an old Negro, the one I went to work with over there. His name was Robert Missouri. He is living down here at Lacochee now and he'll be 92 years old. I went up to see him about a week, or week and a half ago, something like that, and that old fellow is still in good shape. His memory is good and sharp and he remembers. He was tickled to death to see me. He's from Cedar Key, born and raised in Cedar Key. He would answer most any questions that he could. He could tell you a lot about it.

Robert Missouri is the one in Lacochee. It's before you get to Lacochee, when you get to that road that turns off to Lacochee, go down it until you hit the railroad and about 150 yards below that stop and go to asking people about Robert Missouri and someone will tell you right where he is for you'll be right at his house. He lives where there's two or three little waterholes in the road.

Robert saved up enough money--nickels, dimes, and quarters--and bought an automobile from W. J. Tate. Bought him a brand new Ford and that was about 1926. It was a Ford Roaster and cost \$386.50. He paid him in nickels, dimes, and quarters and had them in paper sacks. Tate told me that he counted one of the sacks and found out that it was exact and said I'm not counting another nickel of it. He took him at his word. The old

man was as honest as can be.

Al Dorsett was the man that kept that road up from Cedar Key out to the mainland. That's where he made a big part of his living. Going and getting oyster shells and piling them up in a road there and keeping that thing. It wasn't above tide water. The tide would cover it everyday it came.

This fellow, Dorsett that I've been telling you about, he pumped a tank out there at Number 4. Number 4 there was a water tank on the Seaboard and he pumped that water tank and had a few cattle. He killed a cow or two every week and he was the butcher. He hauled the beef to Cedar Key in a covered wagon and cut it up out there and everybody bought the meat. He would come down there ringing a bell and they would say Mr. Dorsett, I want a soup bone and he would just pull a leg of beef around and saw a chunk off it and give them that soup bone. He thought more of me than he did most anybody. The Doctor said I had a big heart and I hope I have. I said, Al, ain't you going to put that down, that 25 cents soup bone that Mama wanted, and Al would cut her off a chunk of meat like this. I said ain't you going to put that down on the books, and he said no, Jas, most likely I ain't going to get it no how so no use putting it down. Well, I said, if you did get it though, you wouldn't know where it come from. He said that don't make no difference. Said I'd just check somebody else off. It will be alright. God prospered him, and he had a lot of insurance when he died. He died in 1912, September, died during a flood.

There was a flood came there in Sumner and water ran over the railroad, washed the railroad out and floated the lumber around in the lumber yard. Covered the quarters all over, and I made floats out of some of them big boards. Sawed boards in that lumber yard 4" thick, 20" wide, and 16' long, made a plum good float. Got on them, took a pole and poked it around and took a .22 rifle full of bullets, and I'd go around out there shooting sea gulls and what have you. I'd kill them by the peck cause I didn't care nothing about birds then. They were plentiful, but it got them down to a million or so around there. There's a million or two down there yet.

During the flood Al Dorsett, he was Postmaster and he pumped that pump down there and he done everything else just about around there. He died in 1912 of some type fever. He would go out there to the railroad iron where there was great big Bream and Trout, couple of pound Trout out there trying to swim over the rail on the railroad track, and he had on one of these old slicker coats with big pockets in it and he had them pockets full. I'll bet he had a peck of fish in both pockets, a half-peck in each pocket. He would give everybody fish; you wanted a mess of fish, and he would shake them out a mess of fish and he was picking them up and down on the railroad there.

Now, I stopped the train that morning, I was on jury duty at Bronson. So when I saw the railroad was washed out I got out there, being a railroad man. I got out and stopped the train. They was going to give me a free ride from then on and they did as long as I stayed over there. I never paid a fare on the railroad. The passenger train wouldn't go any further but they backed up to Cedar Key and the freight came out about 9 or 10 o'clock and they tried to run the freight through. They thought they would go through easy and slow and they went up the road with the thing and tried to back it up. There was about 12 or 14 days when there wasn't any transportation. No outside world hook-up, except the hand car. They'd take the hand car on the railroad and a fellow would pump the hand cars and bring the mail in on the hand car.

Groceries got scarce down there. At that time, there were two trains that ran into Cedar Key, a freight train and a passenger train. Passenger trains came night and morning and a freight train ran the middle of the day, up and back.

Now I will try to figure out this picture of the Otter Creek Lodge 132 in 1905. Dink Long is the first one on the back row. Charley Young, R. A. Polk, Bud Young, Hunter Smallwood, Cobb (from Otter Creek that runs the store), Ray Townsend is not in the back row but right in the same line.

There's an extra back row coming up now. Ray Townsend is the one in the light suit. Now the one in the back up there, one of the other of them three, there's two of them that is Hudsons and one of them is Dave Young. Now I can't tell by my picture here which one would be which. David is the one in the middle. Now down in the front is Oscar Berryhill. The next one is George Meeks, Will Yearty, the next fellow behind him is, he's a Hudson, Rowland or Raland Hudson. The next fellow is Waterman Clapp. And the old gentleman on the end is my father, D. F. McElveen.

Now we'll go down to the front row, beginning on the left. First is old man Tom Hogan, next one Bill Yearty (that's Will Yearty's father), next Rowe Hudson, next Ed Williams, next Gene Yearty, next one got killed over here at Lacochee, Deputy Sheriff (can't think of his name, will have to pass him), next Monk Clyatt, D. S. or Ed D. Graham (don't know which is his name), not the Tax Collector Graham. And the little boy in the background is Howard Williams. This picture was

taken about 1905. I was there at the same time that picture was made, but some reason I didn't get in the picture. Fleet Williams, I gave Fleet a copy of it because of his Daddy down there, and his brother.

My father was Senior Warden when that Lodge was instituted. It was in 1903 when it was instituted. He and Will Yearty, both of the Will Yeartys, Bill Yearty was the old man and Will Yearty was the younger one. Will died at 93 or 97 years, three or four years ago. They were both on that Charter of this Lodge. It's hanging up in this old building. This is about the third building, but all the buildings were built in exact duplicate to the other. The old building, the old Yearty store, that was the first one made with a long porch on it with great 3x10 or 4x10 timbers out there for steps. You didn't shake a step when you went in there. And there's everything out inside there, when you bought anything you got it out of a barrel or from the counter. They pulled the barrel out and took a scoop and loaded it in there, put it in sacks. You got coffee, buckshot or gunpowder or whatever it was, they had it under the counter. You didn't see it on the shelves, there were very few things that you saw on shelves up there in the store. They didn't have displays like stores have now. You would have tomatoes and a few things like that but so far patent medicine and stuff like that you would see just a little stack of it in the corner. You didn't see it scattered all up and down the aisle.

Today you go in a store and you don't see the wall at all. Then you could see the wall in many places. Their stuff wasn't out there in a lot of places.



Zimmie Willis Lewis (1874-1902) and James H. Lewis (1874-1956), parents of Alice Lewis Mulkey. She was born in 1894.

# HODGSON HILL IN CEDAR KEY

By Charles C. Fishburne, Jr.

At thirty-seven feet above mean sea level on the U.S. Geological Survey map, Hodgson Hill is the king of the hills on Way Key. In recent years it was brought within the Cedar Key city limits. Its commanding view of the western keys as they reach northward toward the Suwannee River is impaired only by its gnarled live oaks interspersed with pines and dense underbrush.

Few conversations about Hodgson Hill extend beyond "the Dinosaur Tree"--an aging oak whose broken limb, crowned with cactus and fern, does suggest one of those extinct creatures. But the more curious ask searching questions. How did the hill get its name? Did someone actually live here? Did the great naturalist, John Muir, visit here? Who owns the place now? What does the future hold for it? History supplies some answers, suggests reasonable speculations as to others, and invites sheer guessing as to the last.

Before the place was called Hodgson Hill, it was doubtless a site of much Indian activity reaching back prior to the Seminoles through centuries of Timucuan occupancy.<sup>1</sup> In more modern times, the hill was part of 160 acres granted by the United States Government to Henry A. Crane under the Armed Occupation and Settlement Act of August 4, 1842 intended to encourage settlement in Florida. Federal Land Offices in St. Augustine and Newnansville issued 43 permits in 1842 and over 1200 in 1843.<sup>2</sup> The St. Augustine office issued Crane Permit No. 10 on November 8, 1842. But a permit did not bestow title. The settler had to satisfy certain conditions which included clearing five acres, building a house, and residing on the land for at least five years. One sees here a predecessor of the Homestead Act that came two decades later. Precisely what Henry Crane did in the interval has not yet been determined, but the record shows that he received title (by patent) on September 6, 1854. The Newnansville office issued him, on authority of President Franklin Pierce, Register & Receiver's Certificate Number 397.<sup>3</sup> Although he did not know it as such, Hodgson Hill had become the property of Henry A. Crane.

Not until 1868 did the name Hodgson become identified with the hill in official property records. On September 2 of that year, Henry A. Crane and his wife Sophia A. Crane of Key West deeded to Sarah A. Hodgson "ten acres on Way Key, Levy County, Florida." The detailed property description establishes that the parcel included the hill and its environs reaching westward into the water, that there was a "dwelling house" with a brick chimney included, and that the point of beginning of the survey was a live oak "66 inches in circumference 4 ft. from the ground." The recorded amount paid was \$75.<sup>4</sup>

Sarah A. Hodgson was the wife of Richard W. B. Hodgson. The federal census taken two years after this purchase shows that R.W.B., age 49, and Sarah, age 45, had six children ranging in age from 21 down to 5.<sup>5</sup> R.W.B.'s stated place of birth was Delaware, Sarah's was North Carolina, that of the three oldest children was Georgia, and that of the three youngest children was Florida. This record suggests that R.W.B. was born in 1821 and Sarah in 1825: that their oldest child living with them was born in Georgia when they were about 28 and 24, respectively; and that they came into Florida sometime between 1856 and 1860 when R.W.B. was in his late thirties. This period coincides roughly

with the construction phase of David Levy Yulee's Florida Railroad that linked Fernandina with Cedar Key.<sup>6</sup>

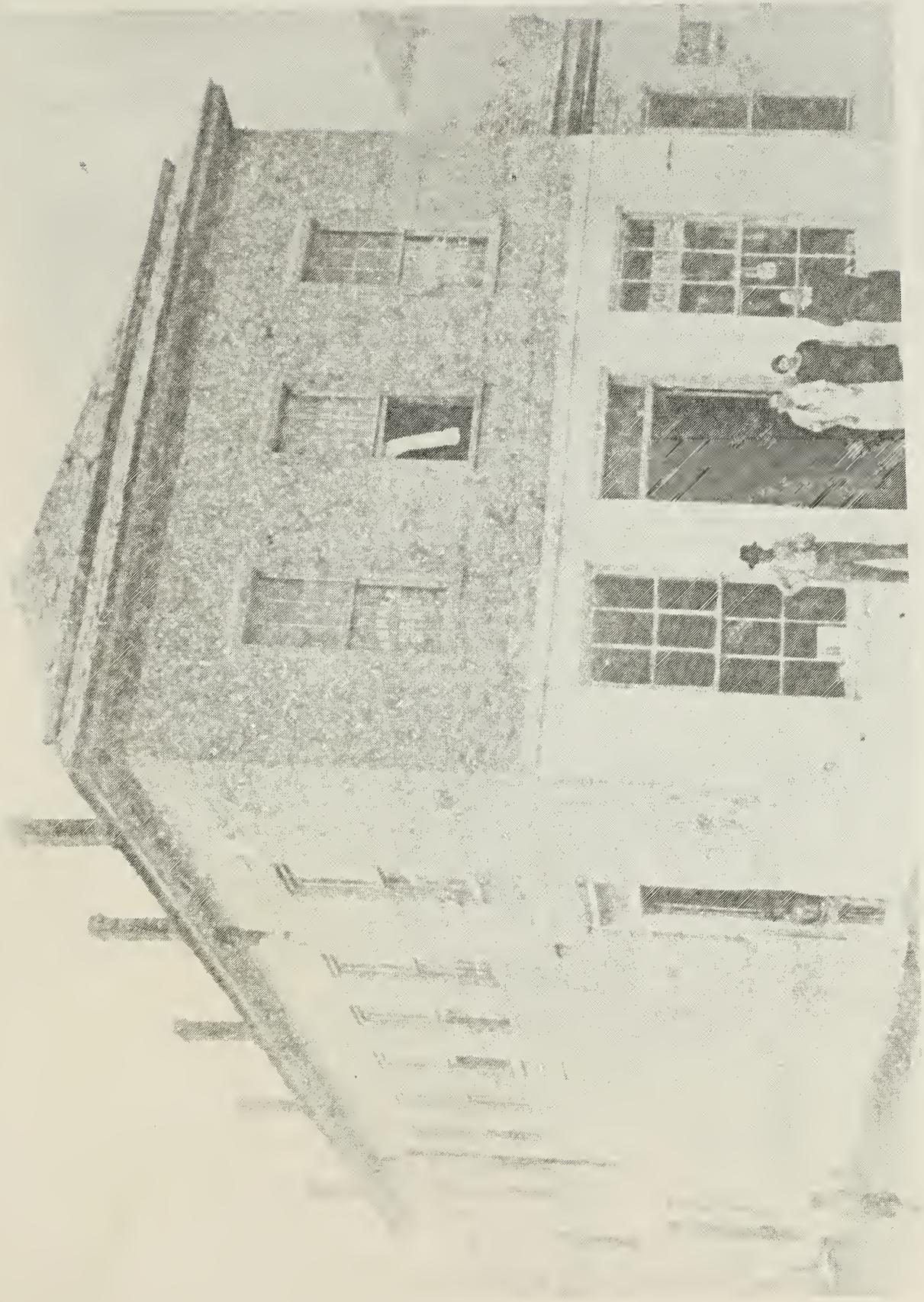
Were the Hodgsons already occupying the house and ten acres when the property was purchased from the Cranes? Probably so. R.W.B. Hodgson and his saw-milling partner H.V. Snell on March 25, 1867 heavily mortgaged a mixture of personal and real property, including extensive timberlands, to F. Dibble in return for thousands of dollars over several years "for the purpose of carrying on their saw-milling business at Way Key."<sup>7</sup> R.W.B. Hodgson listed his house on Way Key among the properties mortgaged. Was this the "dwelling house" that Sarah A. Hodgson, named alone, acquired by deed from the Cranes in September 1868?

The mystery surrounding Hodgson Hill deepens when one finds (Levy County Deed Book A, p. 247) that Henry A. Crane had already deeded to David Levy Yulee's Florida Railroad Company on September 22, 1855 the identical 160 acres he had received by patent from the U.S. Government two years earlier. The deed shows that Henry A. Crane was then residing in Hillsborough County, and that he had been represented and acted for in Fernandina, Nassau County, by Joseph Finegan as his "attorney in fact." Apparently Crane was not troubled by this transaction when he sold the ten acres including the hill and dwelling to Sarah Hodgson in 1868.

Now, in the interval, there were two notable episodes that deserve attention here; the Civil War and John Muir's thousand mile walk to the Gulf of Mexico at Cedar Key.

While the confusion over property rights may not be illuminated by it, the record shows that Captain Henry A. Crane belonged to the 2nd Florida Cavalry Regiment with headquarters at the Federal Military Post of Cedar Keys in 1864 and 1865.<sup>8</sup> "Post Returns" show that Crane served for some months as Provost Marshal of Fort Myers, returning to the Post of Cedar Keys in October 1864. The return for January 1865 lists Captain Henry A. Crane as "Regimental Commander" and shows Colonel Benjamin R. Townsend as Commander Officer of the Post. On February 28, 1865 Crane was discharged from the service "by order of Brig. Gen. Newton." Two weeks earlier the Federals at Cedar Key had been chastised at Number Four by Confederate Captain Dickison's troops. Two weeks later the Federals of Cedar Key would participate in Brig. Gen. John Newton's abortive attempt to capture Tallahassee which was turned back at Natural Bridge. And within another four weeks Lee would surrender at Appomattox. No explanation for Captain Henry A. Crane's early discharge is stated. Two and one-half years later Mr. Crane was Clerk of the Circuit Court in Key West, Monroe County. In his official capacity he certified the status of the notary public who notarized the deed by which Sarah A. Hodgson received her house and ten acres on Way Key from the same Crane and his wife, September 1868!<sup>9</sup>

John Muir had already been there. In his own story, *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1916, reprinted by Norman S. Berg, Dunwoody, Georgia), John Muir recounts how he arrived at Cedar Key on October 23, 1867, took a job in Hodgson's sawmill, and became stricken with malaria



The Hale Building in Cedar Key, 1921. From left: child; unknown; person in side door, unknown; J. D. Goss, wife of owner; Molly Thomlison; Lizzie Wethington.

on the third day after his arrival. Then, as Muir himself has put it, "Sometime or other I was moved on a horse from the mill quarters to Mr. Hodgson's house, where I was nursed about three months with unflinching kindness, and to the skill and care of Mr. and Mrs. Hodgson I doubtless owe my life."<sup>10</sup> In his original journal, Muir included a sketch of Lime Key viewed from the Hodgson Hill area and another sketch of a live oak, "a grand old king," that was "growing in the dooryard of Mr. Hodgson's house." While he fails to pinpoint the location of the house, Muir writes that "his spacious house ... occupied a shell hillock and commanded a fine view of the Gulf and many gems of palmy islets, called 'keys,' that fringe the shore like huge bouquets." Was this the house on the hill that Sarah Hodgson acquired from Henry and Sophia Crane the following September, 1868?

Twenty year old John Muir sailed away from Cedar Key and Hodgson Hill in January 1868 on the schooner *Island Belle* commanded by a Captain Parsons. After visiting Cuba, Muir proceeded to California and ultimately became famous as a botanist, naturalist, conservationist, and first President of the Sierra Club--an office he held from 1892 until his death in 1914.

Some twenty-three years after John Muir left Cedar Key, Sarah A. Hodgson, as a widow, executed a quitclaim deed pertaining to her Hodgson Hill property in favor of the Cedar Key Town Company. The record shows that she signed it March 16, 1891 and received \$75.<sup>11</sup> In the Levy County Tax Book for 1878, Sarah Hodgson's hill property was valued at \$800.<sup>12</sup> Perhaps the dwelling has been destroyed when she gave up the property.

Who owns Hodgson Hill now (March 22, 1981)? The owner is Cedar Key Shores, Inc. of Ocala, Florida. And what does the future hold for this place, the majestic cathedral of the woods? It is too bad that we cannot put

the question to John Muir who wrote: "I used to lie on my back for whole days beneath the ample arms of these great trees, listening to the winds and the birds."<sup>13</sup>

Charles C. Fishburne, Jr.  
Levy County  
Archives Member  
Cedar Key, Florida  
March 22, 1981

Hodgson Hill on Cedar Key

#### NOTES

1. Jerald T. Milanich and Charles H. Fairbanks, *Florida Archeology* (New York: Academic Press, Inc., 1980), pp. 3, 25, 65-88.
2. John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War 1835-1842* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1967), p. 314.
3. *Levy County Deed Book 20*, p. 242.
4. *Levy County Deed Book A*, p. 108.
5. *Federal Census of 1870, Florida, Levy County, Cedar Keys*, House 95.
6. Arthur W. Thompson, "David Yulee: A Study of Nineteenth Century American Thought and Enterprise," (New York: Columbia University, doctoral dissertation, 1954), pp. 109, 113, 116, 123.
7. *Levy County Mortgage Records, Book B*, pp. 18, 20, 23.
8. "Federal Military Post of Cedar Keys, Florida, Returns, July 1864-June 1865," (Washington: National Archives, 1965), Microfilms of Public Records, Micro Copy 617, Roll 1502.
9. *Levy County Deed Book A*, p. 108.
10. John Muir, *A Thousand Mile Walk to the Gulf* (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1916), p. 126.
11. *Levy County Deed Book K*, p. 468.
12. *Levy County Tax Book for 1878*, p. 17.
13. Muir, p. 131.



A Bronson School class, 1912. Front: 1. Elizabeth Bean, 2. Grace Prevatt, 3. Clarence Dean, 4. \_\_\_\_\_ Colson, 5. Bill Jones, 6. Herman Wellman, 7. Isaac Faircloth, 8. unknown, 9. Ed Green. Second: 1. Stella Merchant, 2. Vanilla Merchant, 3. Ollie Mae Garrison. Third: 1. Gladys Morse, 2. Tom Price, 3. unknown, 4. Elsa Rheinell. Note the three small boys in front wearing their best suits, barefooted. Isaac Faircloth still lives in Bronson (1981). Gladys Morse and Elsa Rheinell were teachers, Tom Price was county superintendent.

# HISTORY OF PINE GROVE BAPTIST CHURCH

Organized July 10, 1871

By Resha E. Hudson, Sr.

In the fall of 1866, at the meeting of the Santa Fe River Association, Rev. Simeon Sheffield was chosen associational missionary of the body and directed to move to Levy County and establish a mission work.

On the twelfth day of February, 1867, he left Bradford County and moved, not knowing where he would stop. In the evening just before night he made camp near what was known as the Boney Place. The next morning the preacher bought out Boney and settled down to the business of winning lost souls to our Lord.

This was taking place at a time when missionaries were needed as the Civil War had just come to a close and the country was torn with strife and discord, filled with outlaws and ruffians. Some people had never heard the Gospel preached.

The first sermon by the missionary was preached in an old discarded bar-room in Levyville, the old county seat of Levy County.

Brother Sheffield, the missionary, established several mission stations, preaching most of the time under the trees, or "arbors" when the weather was good, in bad weather, services were held in private homes.

In this community the missionary organized a Sunday School in a little house about 1/2 mile east of the present church. This was the first Baptist Sunday School in the County. They got their literature from the American Tract Society.

The following March, Mrs. Hagan gave a rail splitting and quilting party, as was the custom in those days. They were to have a dance that night, but instead they decided to have preaching as there was a preacher living among them, so they sent a delegation after the preacher. In due time he arrived and the text that he used was the words of Peter, where he said to Cornelius "with what intent did you send for me". With this meeting there was established a regular appointment for the following third Sunday in each month and the Saturday before. These meetings were held in the open under the "trees and arbors" during fair weather and in private homes during bad weather.

In the Spring of 1871 the people gathered and built the first church in this community, of pine logs with split boards to cover the building. On July 10th, 1871 Ebenezer Baptist Church met and organized Pine Grove Baptist Church; transferring the following names from the Ebenezer Church Rolls to Pine Grove Church Roll: 1. Ela S. Sheffield, 2. James K. Sheffield, (a former pastor of Ebenezer), 3. Elizabeth Sheffield, 4. Julia C. Sheffield, 5. Jane E. Davis, 6. Mary F. McDonnell, 7. Mary E. Moore, 8. Harriett Ann Sanchez, 9. Mary A. Love, 10. Elisebeth Colson, 11. Martha Rogers, 12. Mary D. Loper, 13. Francis J. Colson, 14. Sarah F. Love, 15. Julia A. Smith and 16. Georgia Ann Brock.

The Rev. Kinsey Chambers came from Live Oak, Florida to assist in constituting this church and on the 11th day of July, 1871, the transferred members from Ebenezer came with their letters and Pine Grove Baptist Church was duly organized and constituted.

The widow Hagans and her daughter became charter members of the church.

After Pine Grove was organized, it joined the Santa

Fe River Baptist Association and remained a member of the Association until the fall of 1879. In the fall of that year the organizational meeting of the Harmony Baptist Association was held at Pine Grove from October 31 to November 2, 1879. Pine Grove has remained in this association since that date -- Pine Grove gave \$4.35 to this association for mission work in 1879.

At the first Baptismal services, two men announced that they would not permit Rev. Sheffield to baptize their wives. They let it be known that they would be on hand with horse whips ready for the preacher. Undaunted, Missionary Sheffield went forward with the service. When it came time to baptize one of the wives, a man rode out of the forest on a big horse, and holding in his hands two (2) large pistols. He announced that if any man molested the preacher, he would be shot instantly--no trouble was experienced from that day on. (Florida From Indian Trails To Space Age). By Dr. Charlton W. Tebeau and Ruby Leach Carson, Manatee County Library.

In 1881, Pine Grove sponsored the Hope Baptist Church, which later became defunct in 1900. A frame building was erected on the present site in 1885. Pine Grove sponsored Liberty Baptist Church in 1892, and Judson Baptist Church in 1895--both of which are defunct.

By 1896, the twenty-fifth (25) anniversary, Pine Grove had forty-two members and its property was valued at \$500.00.

The old "T" shaped, white frame building was erected between 1920-1922. It was dedicated on August 15, 1925. On the 50th anniversary in 1921, Pine Grove had one hundred eighty-five members and the value of the church property had risen to \$2,400.00; the total amount of gifts given was \$327.16, of which \$12.93 (4%) was given to associational missions and \$287.47 was paid to Rev. J. L. Norris.

A Sunday School building was added in 1936-37 and the church building remodeled in 1939.

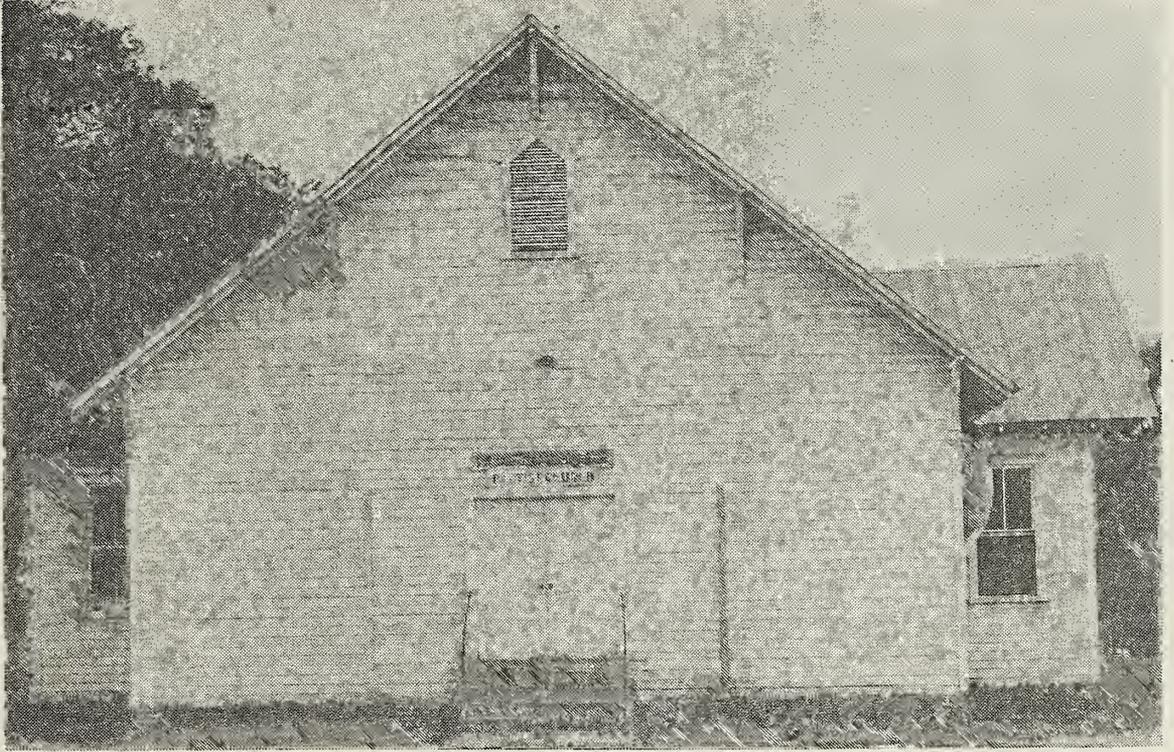
In 1946, after 75 years of service, Pine Grove had grown in membership to 355, the value of the church had grown to \$9,000.00; and \$5,000.00 for the pastorium. Gifts given during the year were \$3,706.66. Brother R. M. Hall was paid \$1,800.00, and \$775.16 was given to missions.

The first W.M.U. of Pine Grove was organized about 1906, with Mrs. Minerva Orange Swilley, wife of Francis "Frank" Swilley, as its President--Pine Grove has had a W.M.U. since that time.

In 1919, B.Y.P.U. was organized in Pine Grove by W. C. Armstrong, with 51 members, all meeting in one department. The youngest member was Milton McLeroy, and the oldest was I.S.C. Sheffield. Since then the name has been changed to B.T.U. and is now called Church Training.

The present building was dedicated September 10, 1961. Rev. Ruben Davis gave the Sermon of Dedication with the Hymn #380, "The Church's One Foundation". Pastor was Rev. Josh Long. Brother R. M. Hall brought the morning message.

On July 10-11, 1971; Pine Grove observed its Centennial with Brother C.A. Lundy, Pastor. Brother Austin McElroy brought the morning message. Dinner was Bar-B-Que Pork, Beef and Chicken prepared by the men of the church; the ladies brought salads, desserts,



**This Pine Grove Baptist Church building was used from 1921 until 1961.**

and other delicious dishes from home. Ice tea and coffee was served.

Mrs. Angus J. (Johanna) Swilley made a large two layer cake decorated with 100th Anniversary on it.

Brother John Dicks, former pastor from Lake City, brought the evening message; the text he used was taken from John 3:16. The closing song chosen by Brother Milton McLeroy was "God Be With You". Deacons were: Stacey Quincey, Carver Hutchinson, H. Tom Willis, Milton McLeroy, L. V. Corbin, Ronald Watson, Lynn Ward, Vernon Watson, R. C. "Cole" Horne, and Ronald Layfield. Training Union Director was Angus Swilley, Sunday School Supt. was Carver Hutchinson.

A new \$75,000.00 pastorium has been built since 1971. The approximate value of land (40 Acres) and all church buildings is over \$500,000.00. Pine Grove gave to Harmony Association in 1980 - \$2,555.35. Other contributions were: World Hunger \$40.00, Annie Armstrong \$1,719.65, Lottie Moon \$2,536.93, Home Missions \$3,089.14, Cooperative Program \$13,284.92.

Gifts to Pine Grove for 1980 totaled \$92,880.88. Membership was 339. Sunday School Enrollment was 220. Training Union was 131. Pine Grove has had 31 Pastors - including the present pastor. Brother Simeon Sheffield served as pastor longer than any other twelve (12) years.

The present pastor is Rev. William C. Estes, Sunday School Director is Billy Leggett, and Church Training Director is Angus J. Swilley.

Active Deacons are: Ronald Watson, Angus Swilley, Wayne Arrington, Carver Hutchinson, Dan Faircloth, Jr., Bruce Watson, Derrick Hardee, Frank Quincey, Jolyn Corbin, and H. Tom Willis.

In-Active Deacons are: Milton McElroy, L. V. Corbin, Lynn Ward, Ronald Layfield, Stacey Quincey, and Vernon Watson.

Prepared and submitted by:

Resha E. Hudson, Sr.

Levy County Archives Member

Homecoming, July 19, 1981



Ellzey School 1927-28

Front row left to right: Primary Teacher Ruth Freeman, Hazel Tindel Ishie (Mrs. Cecil), Luther White, Elizabeth Fralix Swilley (Mrs. Frank), Etta Fralix (deceased), Helen Curry Ellzey (Mrs. William) Quastie Tindale Nichols (Mrs. Ed), Clarice White Hogue, Edward White (deceased), Lewis Oglesby (deceased), Alice Meeks Gordan (Mrs. Henry), Eddie Meeks (deceased), Verdie Mae Crews (Mrs. Johnny), Malcolm Pinner, Floyd Tindale, Mr. Henry White, Principal.

Second row left to right: Arthur (Art) Pinner, Nita Williams, Willie Ishie (deceased), Newton Fralix, Eltis Collier (deceased), Berta Meeks Curry (Mrs. Mitch), Bernice Pinner Murray (Mrs. Ed), Lillie Tindale Cooper (Mrs. Frank), Irene Berryhill, unknown, Hallie Curry Langston (Mrs. Howard), Mudrick "Cub" Meeks (deceased), Minnie Ishie Radacky.





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