

Search For Yesterday

A History of Levy County, Florida



Chapter Twenty



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Bronson, Florida

A Bicentennial Publication

Sidney Estus Gunnell, Jr.
By Kathryn P. Harris



Sidney and Allie Gunnell

Most of you already know that Sidney Gunnell is a very versatile and interesting "young" man. You know that he had influenced the lives of many of our Levy County youth as well as some of us "older" citizens. Maybe you will be interested in his background before coming to our county in 1954.

As you will notice on the next few pages, his family did not cut his limb from the family tree. His pedigree chart will explain his Mississippi ties including the fact that his better half, Allie Britt Gunnell, is also from Mississippi. Incidentally, Allie and his family members call him Estus rather than Sidney.

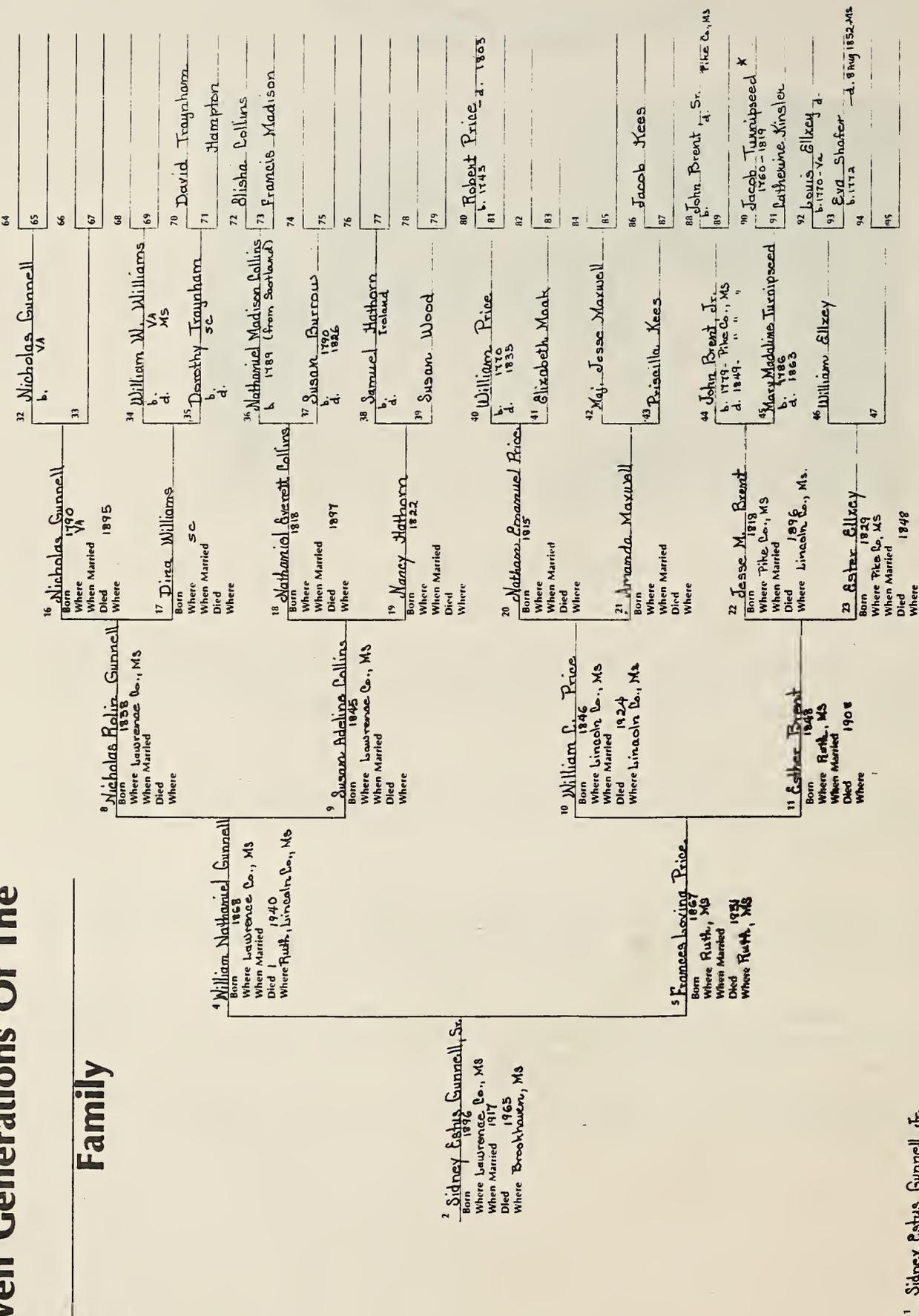
Sidney, as we know him, attended Mississippi State University, University of Chicago, and Mississippi Southern University. He holds the following degrees: Bachelor of Arts; Bachelor of Science; and Master of Arts. He served in the U.S. Signal Corps in World War II. In addition to teaching Vocational Agriculture and Biology, he has coached basketball.

We are fortunate that he and Allie decided to come to Florida to teach. They have played a wide role in our county. As you can tell from his writings, the old boy has the "sand" in his shoes and has become quite knowledgeable about our area.

Thank you, Sidney, for your contributions to the Levy County Archives and to our people. We appreciate you!

Seven Generations Of The

Family



3 Polly Ann Moak
 Born 1896
 Where Sweetwater, MS
 When Married 1984
 Died Where Brookhaven, MS

6 David Alexander Moak
 Born 1926
 Where Sweetwater, MS
 When Married 1925
 Died Where

7 Burissa Palmer Hall
 Born 1958
 Where Lincoln Co., MS
 When Married 1952
 Died Where Sweetwater, MS

12 Henry Franklin Moak
 Born 1911
 Where Pike Co., MS
 When Married 1984
 Died Where

13 Polly Ann Reeves
 Born 16 May 1819
 Where Pike Co., MS
 When Married 1886
 Died Where

14 James Henry Hall
 Born 1816
 Where Lincoln Co., MS
 When Married 1899
 Died Where

15 Patience Price
 Born 1826
 Where
 When Married 1906
 Died Where

24 Andrew Moak
 Born
 Where
 When Married
 Died
 Where

25 Catherine Sophia Dorminey
 Born
 Where
 When Married
 Died
 Where

26 Thomas Andrew Reeves
 Born 1786
 Where
 When Married
 Died
 Where

27 Martha Price
 Born
 Where
 When Married
 Died
 Where

28 James Hall
 Born
 Where
 When Married
 Died
 Where

29 Gwynes
 Born
 Where
 When Married
 Died
 Where

30 Price
 Born
 Where
 When Married
 Died
 Where

31
 Born
 Where
 When Married
 Died
 Where

96 Andrew Moak
 b. Germany

48 Jacob Moak

49 Rachell Sanders

50 Andrew Dorminey, Jr.

51 Margaret

104 William Rings
 b. 1712 Poyam?

52 Lazarus Reeves
 b. 1752 d. 1821 MS

53 Elizabeth Massey

54 Price

55 Elizabeth Fergie

56 David Hall

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100 Andrew Dorminey, Sr.

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Sidney Estus Gunnell, Jr.
Pedigree Chart
(Continued)

00104. **William Rives:** born 1712; married _____ Pegram?; died 1786.
00208. **Col. William Rives:** born 1683; married **Elizabeth Foster;** died 1746.
00416. **George Rives:** born 1660; died 1719.
00832. **William Rives:** born 1636; died 1695.
01664. **Timothy Rives/Ryves:** born 1588; died 1643.
03328. **Richard Ryves:** born 1547.
06656. **John Ryves:** born 1514; married **Amye Harvey;** died 1549.
13312. **Robert Ryves:** born 1514; married **Joan _____;** died 1551.
00092. **Louis Ellzey:** born 1770, VA; married **Eva Shafter;** died after 1850 Census. (VA to SC; sold SC property, Fairfield Dist., 1818; to MS).
00184. **Thomas (Thomazen) Ellzey:** born 1845.
00368. **Thomas Ellzey:** born 1707; died 1761.
00736. **John Ellzey:** born 1675; died 1759.
01472. **Arnold Ellzey:** born 1650; died 1673.
02944. **John Ellzey:** born 1625, Ailsa's Crag, England; died 1700.
05988. **Arnold Ellzey:** born 1599.
11976. **John Ellzey:** born 1570; died 1633.
00090. **Jacob Turnipseed/Rebsaman:** born 1760; married **Catherine Kinsler;** died 1819.
00180. **Beat Rebsaman:** born 1720, Switzerland; came to SC; died 1781.
00360. **Rudolf Rebsamen:** born 1647; married **Anna Talmann;** died 1730.
00093. **Eva Shafer:** born 1772, Germany; married **Louis Ellzey.**
00209. **Elizabeth Foster:** married **Col. William Rives.**
00361. **Anna Talmann:** born 1666; married **Rodolf Rebsamen.**
00722. **Jacob Talmann:** m/1 **Verena Burgi;** m/2 **Verena Huber.**
01444. **Baschi Talmann:** born 1638, Switzerland; married **Barbara Relmann;** died 1688.
02888. **Christian Talmann:** married **Barbara Ysenring;** died ca 1648.
05776. **Baschi Tallman:** born 1549; married **Magdalena Bossnart;** died 1643.
01445. **Barbara Relmann:** born 1640; married **Baschi Talmann;** died after 1700.
02889. **Barbara Ysenring:** married **Christian Talmann.**
05777. **Magdalena Bossnart:** married **Baschi Tallman;** died 1643.
06657. **Amye Harvey;** married **John Ryves.**

GROWING UP IN NEW TOWN, FLORIDA

By Isaac W. Faircloth
(1898-)

New Town was a turpentine village that existed from the eighteen nineties until after 1910. It was located near the present-day intersection of Levy County Roads 339 and 320, and was founded by the Newton brothers. The place was originally called Newton but that evolved into New Town.

When I was living there, William P. Jones was superintendent of the operation. He drove a two-horse buggy team and was related to the Lastingers by marriage. The Lastingers owned practically all of New Town. A number of black people lived around there and worked in the turpentine operation. The company would lease pine timber land and box the trees to collect the resin or sap for distilling the turpentine.

My father hauled gum into the still. He did this with a three-mule team. He had control lines on the lead mule. One day, lightning killed one mule and knocked my father off the wagon. After a while, he regained consciousness lying there on the ground in the rainstorm. He arranged his surviving mules into a two-mule team and made it in with the loaded wagon. He then enlisted some help, returned to the scene and dragged the dead mule out of the road. After that, my daddy was very scared of lightning.

We lived near the store which was operated by Rolin Hudson. The post office was combined with the store. Another store was there, a type of company known as a commissary. The commissary was a retail establishment specializing in credit sales to company employees.

I attended Union School, a one-room school with Mr. Luther Callaway as the teacher. The children played softball with a homemade ball of twine. As a child, I worked more than I played.

Then, we moved out of New Town to a nearby farm which we rented. There, we lived in an old log house. On Saturday afternoons we went fishing over on the Waccasassa and Horace Lake. I never was much on hunting.

The mail was brought from Bronson to New Town by a Mr. Jolly. With that name, he did stay happy most of the time. One day, he started back to Bronson in his road cart, went past our house and came to the fork in the road. Mr. Jolly was happier than usual that day. He was driving a horse newly acquired from my father. The horse turned into the road leading to our house as he was accustomed to doing. That caught Mr. Jolly by surprise and off balance, so he tumbled out of the road cart. The horse came to our house and stopped. My father was watching all this. He tied the horse and Mr. Jolly came walking up, unhurt. He lived in Bronson and was an elderly man. On his route, he crossed the Waccasassa at a fork about two miles upstream from the present-day bridge on the Bronson-Trenton road.

During these years we hauled our corn to the grist



Isaac W. Faircloth, 92, native of the extinct town of Newtown, Florida.

mill in Bronson, Ben Jones ran the mill.

Back to my going to school at Union School, I went with Fleming Folks. His family lived in the outskirts of New Town. His older sister was a teacher. Their father was Tom Folks. Fleming was my age. His sister was called Rosebud. One of their older brothers was named Griffith. A man named Bailey was the distiller.

Along at this time, all the streets in Bronson were sand roads. Hogs were all over the place, also cows. The depot was pretty active. The resin and the turpentine were shipped from there. The train engines were small wood burners. A man named Strickland had the railroad wood rack over at Meredith.

Bob Walker was sheriff and a cousin of my father. One day he arrived at our farm and wanted my father to move into Bronson and take the job of jailer. So we moved into Bronson.

Lonzey Stelle owned a house on two acres of land which my father bought for cash. He borrowed the cash from my grandfather, Dan Faircloth. He also lived on the upper Waccasassa just beyond the fork. The house we bought was on the south side of Bronson near the railroad station. This was in 1908. Sometime later, we lived in a house east of the present-day Lil' Champ Convenience Store. That house faced the present Alternate Highway 27. My grandmother on the Dean side lived next door. She moved out of there and a man named Tom Wilkerson bought the place from a Mr. Bigham. Tom was in the beekeeping business. His brother, Alfred Wilkerson, lived across the

street nearby. Neither one had children. Alfred farmed around there and lived in a two-story house. He worked in the Sumner Mills for quite a while.

I have been asked to describe a day at school when I attended the Union School when I was about nine years old. Mr. Callaway was very strict. One day he gave me a poem to memorize. Now, I don't even remember the poem. Anyway, I went in and recited part of my poem. I bogged down on the second part. Then it was lunchtime, as they say now. We called it dinner. So, Mr. Callaway appointed a high school girl to hear me recite the rest of my poem. Her name was Molly Highsmith. Mr. Callaway went outside and sat on a log. After dinner, Molly heard my poem, I bogged down again on the second stanza but Molly prompted me enough to get me through it. She was a kind hearted girl and I never forgot what she did for me. Her father was Sol Highsmith. They lived over west of Union School.

Miles Dixon had a little store in that area and had a farming operation. He had a whole bunch of sons. Then he sold out and moved into Bronson. His oldest boy was Jesse Dixon. One of his daughters was named Ella. She married and moved up into Georgia. His other sons were Jim, Joe, Fred, Ed, and maybe another one. Miles Dixon leased Epperson's Store in Bronson. Another son, Sid, lost an arm in a hunting accident. He was in the same grade with me in the Bronson School. We came to the end of the sixth grade and neither one of us passed. A new teacher came on and put both of us in the seventh grade. Sid Dixon married Salem Bean's daughter, Elizabeth, and

moved to Jacksonville. He was in the insurance business.

I remember the first time I rode in an automobile, a Ford Model T belonging to Dr. Young, that was in 1912. I expected the car to hit the trees along the sides of that narrow road. I just couldn't believe the car could go along that narrow slot.

A man named McCan was the banker here, or he was the cashier. He boarded over at the hotel.

Mr. Boyd had a Ford agency here. The cars were shipped partly assembled. The mechanic, Shug Faircloth, put them together. They were shipped in box cars with some of the cars standing on one end propped against the walls. One car had a problem with the differential; so, Shug dismantled it, fixed the problem, and reassembled it. The car wanted to go backwards. It would move forward only with the transmission in reverse. That happened once in a while with the Model T Fords. Shug re-did the assembly and the car was all right.

The buyer of a new car came in and paid for the car, Boyd ordered the car, it arrived and Shug finished putting the car together. Shug had a gasoline pump, hand powered, out in the front of his shop. He refused to sell gas after dark because the kerosene lanterns might blow up the whole place.

About 1920, I moved to Miami and went to work there.

(Transcribed by S. E. Gunnell)



David Graham (1831 in Scotland-1904) and Emily Graham at John Cox's house in Meredith, Florida, about 1903. The roof was made with genuine split board shingles, in common use at the time, now very rare.



Convict crew that worked a phosphate mine at Meredith, about 1902. The man making a speech was John Cox.



*Amelia Graham, wife of David Graham,
born in Scotland.*



Maude Graham Cowart



Augusta Cox Graham



Church of Meredith, about 1912

THOMAS JEFFERSON FAIRCLOTH

Early Settler of Levy County, Florida

Thomas Jefferson Faircloth (b. ca 1811, GA) came along with his wife, Sophia, and their four oldest children to Madison County, Florida, ca 1844. Thomas is listed on the voter registration list for May 1845 in the Jenkins Ferry District of that county (**Territorial Papers**, Florida Archives). The family came to Levy County during the 1850's. The oldest daughter married here in 1859; and the whole family appears in the 1860 Census in the Long Pond Precinct. Thomas died prior to the 1885 Census. At that time, Sophia was living with her daughter, Roxey Ann. According to some members of the family, Thomas and Sophia were buried on the old homeplace.

Children of Thomas Jefferson and Sophia Faircloth:

1. **Mary Jane Faircloth** (12 May 1838, GA - 18 February 1917, Ebenezer Cemetery, Levy County) Mary Jane m/1 **Louis Wilkerson** (Wilkinson on the marriage record), 22 February 1859, Levy County. Louis died prior to 1866, leaving her with two small children. She m/2 **Nathaniel Green Renfroe**, 12 April 1866, and they had at least one son.

2. **Ebi Ann Faircloth** (1840, GA - 1924, Bronson Cemetery, Bronson, FL) Ebi Ann m. **Alexander L. Long**. Their children:

a. **Sophonra Long** (b. ca 1868) m. **Berrian Anza Chesser**, 16 March 1890

b. **Thomas Levy Long** (b. ca 1871) m. **Della**

c. **Annie Vienna Long** (1873 - 1962) m. **John Paul Hopping**.

d. **Laura Frances Long** (b. 17 March 1876) m. **John Madison Chesser**, 18 March 1894.

e. **Idella "Della" Long** (1878 - 1963) m. **Walter C. Chesser**, 18 February 1904.

f. **Idella "Della" Long** (1878 - 1963) m. **Walter C. Chesser**, 18 February 1904

g. **M. Elizabeth "Lizzie" Long** (1862 - 1971) m. **James Isaac Baldree**.

h. **Alexander L. Long, Jr.** (b. ca 1883) m. **Bertie Markham**.

3. **Sanford V. Faircloth** (ca 1842, GA-) He was in the Civil War.

4. **Daniel David Faircloth** (7 November 1843, GA - 22 May 1922, Ebenezer Cemetery) Daniel David m. **Sarah Elizabeth Wilkerson** (7 March 1847 - 17 October 1921, Ebenezer Cemetery, daughter of Joseph and Charlotte Wilkerson. Daniel David and his brother, Sanford, served in Company J, First Florida Regiment Cavalry, CSA (A- 05849: David D. Faircloth; applied for pension from Levy County 1902; 9 pages in his pension file). Daniel had to walk home without shoes from the war.

According to census records they had at least 10 children but three died early. The seven remaining were:

a. **Joseph W. Faircloth** (12 April 1866 - 16 June 1942) Joseph m. **Martha Luvenia Hatcher** (23 December 1876 - 10 April 1956), daughter of J. Knox and **Isabella Hiern Hatcher**, 3 January 1893. Joseph is buried in the Ebenezer Cemetery and his wife is buried in the old Chiefland Cemetery.

Their children:

(1) **Isaac Orlando Faircloth** (8 August 1893 - 19 May 1955, Ebenezer) m. **Eunice May** (28 March 1901 - 26 May 1980, Ebenezer) (2) **Jessie Jane Faircloth** (6 March 1898 -) m. **Charlie C. Crews** (1892 - 1956). (3) **SeBelle Faircloth** (b. ca 1899). (Probably others).

b. **Thomas J. Faircloth** (9 June 1867 - 27 December 1946, Pine Grove Cemetery) Thomas m. **Ernestine Horne Prevatt** (4 May 1873 - 6 December 1944, Pine Grove Cemetery), daughter of J. B. and **Ann Horne**. Ernestine m/1 **Charlie C. Prevatt**. Thomas and Ernestine had at least two children:

(1) **Janie Faircloth** (24 December 1894 - 31 August 1945, Pine Grove Cemetery) m. **Henry Arrington** (1888 - 1964).

(2) **Dan Faircloth** (b. ca 1897).

c. **Caledonia/Aldonia Faircloth** 18 September 1869 - 16 January 1944, Ebenezer Cemetery) m. **James Matthew Hodge** (1867 - 1923, Ebenezer). Their children:

(1) **Charles F. Hodge** (b. 21 September 1889).

(2) **Annie E. Hodge** (b. 16 December 1891).

(3) **Daniel Lee Hodge** (8 April 1893 - 26 December 1976, Ebenezer).

(4) **Viola Hodge** (31 March 1896 - 30 October 1973) m/1 **William Shepard** (1890 - 1961) and m/2 _____ **Jones**.

(5) **Alma M. Hodge** (11 September 1898 - 23 June 1966) m. **George Monroe Asbell**

(6) **Isaac Green Hodge** (b. 25 March 1900).

(7) **Atlanta Hodge** (b. 7 July 1901).

(8) **Adell Hodge** (b. 21 May 1907).

(9) **Henry Hodge** (b. 9 January 1909).

d. **Isaac Walter "Ike" Faircloth, Sr.** (11 January 1874 - 20 April 1930, Bronson Cemetery) Ike m. **Theodosia "Dosa" Dean** (28 October 1879 - 15 December 1962, Bronson Cemetery), 11 October 1896, Levy County. Their children:

(1) **Isaac Walter Faircloth, Jr.** (b. November 1897) m/1 _____ **Huckleby**; m/2 _____ **Cutler**; m/3 **Cora** _____; retired from railroad and now lives in Bronson with Cora.

(2) **Elizabeth "Lizzie" Faircloth** (5 November 1902 - 10 November 1978, Romeo Cemetery) m. **Leroy L. Godwin** (1894 - 1972).

(3) **Rollin Faircloth** (b. ca 1906) m. **Susie Lea Stephens** (ca 1908, Trenton - 2 May 1989, Bronson Cemetery). Children: (a) **Alfred W. "Al"** m. **Mary Elizabeth Whitener**; son, **William B.** (b) **Wilma m. _____ McGill, Anthony, Florida** (c) **Mitzie m. _____**

Davidson, Clewiston, Florida.

(4) Lessie Faircloth (b ca 1910) m. "Bunk" Thomas.

e. Eliza A. Faircloth (b. ca 1876) m. James M. Southard, 20 December 1900.

f. Annie Faircloth m. Ben Waldron.

g. Missouri Texas m. John Larkin Carter (1865 - 1914), 3 January 1901.

5. Betsy Ann Faircloth (b. ca 1844/5, FL) m. Charlton Wilkerson, 25 April 1863, Levy County-- Children:

a. Sanford W. Wilkerson (b. ca 1864) m. Matilda Starling.

b. William Wilkerson (b. ca 1866) m. Marietta Philpot.

c. Sophia Wilkerson (b. ca 1870).

d. Josephine Wilkerson (b. ca 1870) m. Henry Dixon.

e. Laura Wilkerson (b. ca 1874).

f. Lucy Viola Wilkerson (b. ca 1879).

6. Levi E. Faircloth (b. ca 1846) m. Coloney "Loni" Hunter, 27 May 1877, Levy County. Loni was the daughter of Elijah and Sarah Ann Gillett Hunter. Children:

a. Franklin Marion Faircloth (29 October 1878 - 20 October 1948) m. Luvada Osteen, 28 December 1804, Levy County. Luvada (4 April 1883 - 11 June 1943) was the daughter of Solomon and Sarah Frances Medlin Osteen. Children:

(1) Claire Faircloth (b. ca 1906) m. Ardis Milton Smith.

(2) Stella F. Faircloth (b. ca 1908).

b. Thomas G. Faircloth (b. ca. 1880) m. Mary Dean??

c. Sarah A. Faircloth (b. ca 1884)

d. Daniel Jackson Faircloth, Sr. (6 May 1887 - 5 January 1950, Bronson Cemetery) m. Alma/Alva Faircloth??

e. Jesse Levi Faircloth (b. ca 1890) m. Ethel Richardson.

f. Harvey O. Faircloth (b. ca 1893).

7. Roxey Ann Faircloth (b. ca 1847) (Census records indicate that she m. _____ Smith.

8. Martha Ann Faircloth (b. ca 1850) m. Joshua P. Faircloth, 3 October 1875, Levy County. Based on census records, an incomplete list of their children:

a. Eveline Faircloth

b. Thomas Faircloth

c. D. A. Faircloth

d. Alma Faircloth

e. John Faircloth

9. John F. Faircloth (b. ca 1851 - d. age 75) m. Annie Wilkerson (b. ca 1867 - d. age 63). Children:

a. Barney E. Faircloth (6 May 1881 - 23 January 1956, Ebenezer) m. Ruby Lee Prevatt (6 May 1891 - 9 September 1919), 4 April 1909, Levy County.

b. Corrinne Faircloth (b. ca 1884 - d. ante 1900).

c. Daisy Irene Faircloth

10. Thomas Seth Faircloth (29 September 1854 - 16 May 1932, Ebenezer) m. Elizabeth "Eliza Prevatt" (1860 - 1932), 9 July 1876, Levy County. He was listed as Sessoms rather than Seth in one census report. Children:

a. Atlanta Faircloth (b. 1878 - 1908 in childbirth) m. Manuel "Mannie" Faircloth (b. ca 1874; son of John M. and Mary Faircloth), 24 February 1895, Levy County.

b. Clarence Orlando Faircloth (5 May 1893 - 18 February 1973, Ebenezer) m. Ruth A. Hiers (3 May 1898 - 23 May 1984, Ebenezer), daughter of James David and Rachel Studstill Hiers. Children:

(1) Grady Birdell Faircloth (b. 1914) m/1 Mae Dell M. Sache (1919 - 1965, Ebenezer); m/2 Meta Purdy. He and Meta live in Williston. Children by Mae Dell:

(a) Birdell Bray Faircloth

(b) Franklin Faircloth

(c) Retha Faircloth m. Floyd Rogers

(d) Geane Faircloth m. Maria _____

(e) Patsy Faircloth m. _____ Sox

(f) Allene Faircloth m. _____ Beck

(g) Maudine Faircloth m. + _____ Smith

(2) Clyatt Orlando Faircloth (b. 14 March 1918) m. Laneva M. Garner

Please note that much of this genealogy has been based on census reports, Florida Archives materials, county records. The census material is often inaccurate, especially dates. I do want to thank Mary Whitenier Faircloth and Grady Faircloth for providing information. I hope that those of you who have accurate records of your family lines will send them to me. I am in the process of trying to put together all of the Levy County families.

Kathryn P. Harris



Depot at Meredith, Florida, about 1910.

THE ISLAND CITY

By Jessica Lee (age 9)
Bronson Elementary School

Cedar Key is a city on a group of islands located forty miles west of Bronson, Florida, three miles out into the Gulf of Mexico on State Road 24.

Archaeologists have found artifacts here that indicate habitation as early as 500 A. D. The earliest inhabitants of the area were the Timucuan Indians in the 1700's. There are still mounds of shells, oysters, clams, and others, left by the Timucuan Indians. These shell mounds are disposal piles. Though the Indians ate the oysters for survival, they did not affect the oyster population.

In 1774 there were maps made of the island keys, opening this territory up to the white man. In the early 1800's there was evidence that there may have been pirates in the keys. These pirates protected buried treasures.

On July 11, 1931 an article was published in *The Levy County Journal* saying that Cedar Key area was being used by two British agents to get the Indians to riot against the American white settlers during the first Seminole War (1816 - 1818). The second Seminole War (1835 - 1842) brought the U.S. Army to Atsena Otie Key, which at that time was known as Depot Key. This is an island just off of Cedar Key. At this time there was a military hospital built. Also at this time there was a detention camp built and port of embarkation for captured Indians.

It was in 1842 the first settlement in the keys was established. Judge Augustus Steele took up 168 acres to establish a summer colony made up of merchants from a more civilized area. The colony attracted people to the sun and sandy beaches of the keys.

The summer colony came to an end in the fall of 1842 when a hurricane demolished Atsena Otie, including the military hospital. Many people stayed in the area, relocating themselves on what is now Cedar Key. By 1855 the population had began to grow, making Cedar Key a more interesting place to live.

The son of a prosperous merchant, David Yulee and a leading political leader for Florida had a dream. For several years they wanted to build a railroad. This would save a lot of time and money of the long routes around the state by ship. Acts were passed to provide land for the Yulee's dream to come true. There were many problems during the building of the railroad, financial and political. It was 1860 before the railroad was completed.

In 1855 Eberhard Faber bought a lot of land in Atsena Otie Key which was a few miles away from Cedar Key. This land was covered with cedar trees. Mr. Faber established saw mills to saw cedar logs into ap-



Jessica Lee (9) who wrote the Cedar Key essay in this chapter and the principal of her school, Cliff Norris, Bronson Elementary.

propriate sizes for his pencil factories in New Jersey and Germany. This gave a lot of people jobs. About 500 workers made their home on this island. After Faber Company came to Cedar Key, others followed. The Eagle Pencil Company and F. A. Wolfe Company also built saw mills on the various keys.

By 1860 everything was going good for the city. But in 1861 came the outbreak of the Civil War. Cedar Key was occupied by federal troops. By 1862 they had taken over Cedar Key until the end of the war.

The fishing industry suffered from the war. If fishing vessels ventured out too far they were captured by the Union ships.

One battle took place at Cedar Key during the war. Federal troops tried to move inland from Cedar Key but were stopped. After a four hour battle Federal troops withdrew to Cedar Key. When the war ended, and the railroad was back in full operation, Cedar Key began the most prosperous period for its existence.

In 1870 a new industry opened. This industry was building ships. This industry expanded the fishing and harvesting of oysters, crabs, turtles, and sponges.

At the same time the cedar mills were in full swing. There were thirteen large saw mills and three pencil factories. Land was very affordable to the owners of the saw mills selling at 50 cents an acre.

The population in 1850 for Levy County was 310. In 1878 it had risen to more than 800 in Cedar Key alone.

In the 1890's Cedar Key was becoming more prosperous with the increase of saloons, restaurants, and dance halls, large motels, and promising businesses.

By 1890 another railroad had been built altering some of the trade business from Cedar Key. This marked the beginning of a big decline for Cedar Key. Timber lands were also being used up very fast. By 1890 the population had fallen to about 1200, a considerable drop from the 5000 mark of its heyday.

December 2, 1896 a hurricane hit causing a tidal wave across the Keys. The Faber and Eagle Company cedar mills were blown or washed away. It was a miracle anyone survived. It wasn't enough that a hurricane and tidal wave hit, there was also a fire. The fire destroyed half of the businesses while the hurricane and tidal wave drove off the pencil companies. After this disaster the Atsena Otie Key was abandoned and overgrown with mangrove trees.

By 1920 the population was down to 695 people. During this time a paved road was built for easier access to Cedar Key to help the real estate boom. Once again the community was coming back as the lots were sold for double and triple their original value.

The railroad was removed in 1932, ending the train service to Cedar Key.

By 1940 the population was dropping again. By 1950 it was down to 900.

In 1950 a fire raged through the city destroying half of the fishing village, eight fish packing plants, a restaurant, a gas station, and the pier. In 1950 Cedar Key was also a victim of another hurricane. The hurricane destroyed 95% of the homes and businesses.

In the late 50's it was time to rebuild and develop more recreational and tourist housing to supplement the sport fishing to attract visitors to Cedar Key.

During the 60's and 70's the community became a place to visit and relax. There are now several social events for the community, two of them being the Seafood Festival and the Art Festival which began in 1970. Now, Cedar Key being one of the oldest ports in the state, it has become a major supplier of seafood, a haven for artists and writers. Many people visit each year to walk the historic streets, browse the museums, shops, and galleries, explore the back bayous and enjoy the world-famous restaurants, featuring seafood fresh from local waters.

There are many beautiful sites in Cedar Key but there are also sites of the many hardships of this community. The land value has doubled in the last 10 years. In my research we priced some property around Cedar Key. The cheapest on the market was \$57,000. This was a lot size 60 x 80, with a very old small

home costing \$325,000.

In 1988 Cedar Key was threatened by hurricane Hugo. Hugo rested just a few miles off shore for several hours. The winds from this storm did 3 million dollars damage to the buildings in the city, 11 million dollars to the county. The city has now recovered from the storm, leaving Cedar Key a very interesting and remarkable place to visit or to live.

Thanks to everyone who provided information for my report.

Jessica Lee

Jessica, thank you for sharing this report with us. We are very proud of you!



The Bishop House in Cedar Key, about 1914.



A boarding house in Cedar Key operated by Dora Ellis, in 1914.

Atsena Otie Family

By Norene Andrews and Katie Andrews

The following account was told by Ellen Tooke, 97, the oldest resident of Cedar Key and the eldest of the Tooke family in 1989. Miss Tooke particularly wanted to correct the mistaken impression that the island was deserted after the 1896 tidal wave.

"We moved to the island in the early 1900's and our family consisted of: Father, John, Mother, Sarah Jane Delanio Tooke, Chloey Ellen, Agnes, Ester, Cora, George and John. Two children were born on the island, Margaret in 1901 and William in 1903.

Those sun-filled days on Atsena Otie were the happiest days of my life.

There were about 35 families living on the island when we were there. We lived in a nice two story house, and there were several other two story houses.

Many of the homes had fenced yards and the island children climbed the fences and trees. I didn't climb because I'd fall, but I'd watch out for the others, and I never told Mamma, not once.

Everyone kept chickens, and the fertilizer was mixed with sea grass for the gardens. My, the island gardens were lush and plentiful. We had all kinds of vegetables and fruit--peaches, pears, plums, guavas, and we all had grapevines. People used to come from Cedar Key for our fresh garden crops.

There was a sidewalk from the dock way on down to the cemetery. It was a wide plank walk with the plank ends outlined with beer bottles. These were two-tone bottles, brown and yellow, and they were stuck in the ground along the walk.

The cemetery on Atsena Otie was quite a good size, and it is where the people who lived there were buried. I think Bernie Hudson was buried there, and I remember a lot of graves there. Most of those graves were covered with clam shells and marked by a wooden post.

We had a big rain water tank at our place, and a big pitcher pump too.

There was a church and school on the island. The preacher came once a month, but we didn't attend the school. We went to private school at Cedar Key later.

I well remember seeing quite a few big rattlesnakes out there. One day we were playing in the deserted Crumpton house, and in an empty room we found a big rattler coiled up. It scared the piling out of us.

I recall when Daddy would be away fishing and we'd get hungry for fish. Mamma would take us to the lagoon on the back side of the island, and net us fish for supper. We'd fry it right away, and that fresh fish tasted so good.

Boothsby and his daddy moved most of the houses off the island on a big barge to Cedar Key. Our house was taken apart for the move then was reassembled at Cedar Key. I remember one of the two story houses was moved whole.

When the Andrews brothers--Forrest, Ray, George and Daniel--bought the island they maintained the dock and kept it in good repair.

Grandpa John W. Andrews came to live with Dr.



The Tooke sisters of Cedar Key: Naomi, Virginia, Ellen, and Cora. Their father was John William Tooke, their mother was Sarah Delaino Tooke.

Dan and Cora Andrews. Grandpa had been a farmer from Muncie, Indiana, and Dr. Dan arranged for a boat to and from Atsena Otie for grandpa to garden every day. He had a regular little farm on the island and his garden was wonderful. He had the nicest cantalopes and watermelons you ever tasted.

Grandpa lived with them, and that's how he passed his time, gardening, until he died. You know, back then there was no medicade or medicare. You just took care of your own folks."

Taking care of your own is a strong Tooke tradition, as strong today as it was in the past.



Martha Wilson Delaino (1851 - 1905), wife of Dominique Delaino and grandmother of Ellen Tooke.



Dominique Delaino (1820 - 1899) was the ancestor of the Cedar Key Delainos. He was born in Austria.

SEAHORSE KEY CEMETERY

By Lindon Lindsey

Hobday, Catherine.....	20 October 1796 - 30 November 1879
(Wife of one of the lighthouse keepers. He had expected to be buried by her, but died while with relatives in South Florida and was buried there.)	
Crevasse, Joseph (b. Italy).....	19 March 1809 - 26 March 1874
Doran, Patrick U. S. Navy.....	No dates
Robinson, William M. U. S. Navy.....	No dates
Heam, Ephriam U. S. Navy.....	No dates
Wilson, William, Sr. (b. New York).....	1804 - 1866

CEMETERY ON LITTLE HICKORY OR HODGE'S ISLAND, PORT INGLIS

By Lindon Lindsey

Hodges, Cullie D.	1895 - 1917
(b. 14 December, Hickory Island; d. 28 November, Camp Wheeler, Georgia)	
Hodges, Culpepper Johnson	1868 - 1940
(b. 29 February; d. 16 February)	
Hodges, Malvina E.	1872 - 1956
(b. 29 April, Louisiana; d. 7 April)	
Hodges, Andrew Elton	1829 - 1885
(b. Georgia)	
Hodges, Romulus	1858 - 1866
Hodges, Florence.....	1864 - 1880
Manson, Mae Hortense	1903 - 1932
(d/o Culpepper J.; b. 24 July; d. 16 May)	

HISTORY OF CHIEFLAND

*By Hazel R. Etheridge
1979*

Sometimes, as I watch the almost steady stream of traffic pass through the busy intersection in front of Chiefland High School, I wonder what this place was like years ago and what it will be like many years from now. How long has the City of Chiefland, located in Levy County in Northwest Central Florida been in existence, and what was it like in its early days? Who were the people who may have stood exactly where I am now standing, and what did they see as they looked around? If I could return in 100 years, would there be anything here that I would recognize? No one can answer with certainty my questions about the future of this small-but-growing community, but by researching books, maps, pictures, and other records I can partially satisfy my curiosity about Chiefland's past.

At the time of the arrival of the Spaniards in Florida in the 16th Century, marking the beginning of the historical era in this state, the inhabitants of this area were the Timucuan Indians, whose ancestors had migrated to this area from Asia by crossing the Bering Straits and the North American Continent. Relics of their culture have been found that prove they once had a settlement at Cedar Keys and apparently roamed all through this area southward to Ocala. These people were tall, well-built, and intelligent. Their homes were a circular arrangement of poles with palm-thatched roofs.

There is evidence that the Spanish explorer, Hernando de Soto, and his men passed through this area in 1539 capturing and massacring the Timucuan, who had a sizeable village at Long Pond, just south of present day Chiefland.

The Spaniards held Florida until 1763 when Spain gave Florida to Great Britain in exchange for Havana. The British held it until 1783 when Spain got it back. Over these years since 1539, the Timucuan natives disappeared from this area. They had been killed by the white man or his diseases, had been taken in slavery, or had migrated out of the area. Seminole Indians, "Runaway Creeks," moved into this area in the early 18th Century. Also during this time, records show that some white settlers of various national origins moved in. There was a settlement at or near present-day Chiefland where some Creek Chieftains and their tribesmen lived peaceably beside their white neighbors and engaged in farming. This is said to be the origin of the name "Chiefland" (Land of the Chiefs). But all was not destined to remain peaceful.

During the time of the second Spanish rule, General Andrew Jackson, accompanied by 1,000 men in 1818, invaded Spanish Florida and seized the Post at St. Marks. There Jackson learned that two men, Alexander Arbuthnot and Robert Ambrister, were believed to be supplying guns and ammunition to the Seminole Indians, who were becoming hostile to the United States. Both men were captured, tried, and executed. General Jackson and his men marched to the east of

the Suwannee River where Arbuthnot and Ambrister had a thriving trading post near an Indian village (present-day Clay Landing), a few miles from present-day Chiefland. There he destroyed the post and massacred many Indians.

In 1821 Spain ceded Florida to the United States. With the passage in 1842 of a law called the Armed Occupation Act, persons could obtain government-owned lands in Florida, and some people in this area took advantage of this opportunity. Records show the names of four people who obtained land in Levy County near "Charlie Emathla's Town." Was this the same Charley Emathla, Seminole Indian Chief, who was murdered in 1838 during the Wars of Indian Removal?

By the time Florida was admitted to the Union in 1845, the small settlement of present-day Chiefland was being served by two stage-coach routes. One ran from Lukens, near Cedar Key, through Vista, and at Clay Landing turned toward Long Pond, running east. It is well defined on a Plat, part of which was drawn in 1843. The other route, it is said, came from the east coast and continued on to the northern part of the state.

During this period, several plantations were developed in the area. Around 1860, Isaac P. Hardee, one of these slave-holding plantation owners, built the first home in this region to be made of boards, replacing his earlier plantation home in this region to be made of boards, replacing his earlier plantation home, which was constructed of hand-hewn logs and chinked with clay. This wooden, two-story dwelling, still in use today, is within sight of the city limits of present-day Chiefland, and since the Hardee land holdings extended outward for miles, most of the land on which Chiefland is located must have been at one time part of this plantation. A settlement, called Hardeetown, developed on this plantation and was later incorporated into present-day Chiefland.

This area saw some military action during the Civil War (1861-1865). A small battle between the North and the South was fought at Clay Landing. Legend records that a Negro, Jerry Goldwire, leading a small contingent of Northern soldiers armed with small cannon, freed the slaves in this area after a smart skirmish. Thereafter, he married a former Hardee slave and remained in the area unharmed.

By 1889, Chiefland had a general store, post office, school house, grist mill, and a sawmill. These were mostly in the area now known as McKenzie Avenue. Isaac Rogers and Bryant Smith were merchants here at that time. H. S. Rogers was the first postmaster, and the post office was in northeast Chiefland about where Meeks' Animal Hospital is now.

By 1900 an ever-increasing number of settlers were establishing homes in Chiefland. Mercantile establishments were coming into being. Several physicians and an attorney had opened offices here, as well as a barber and a surveyor. In 1913, it is recorded, two lots were purchased for \$35 each, the site of a large store building. At this time, the post office shared space in another store building on the present location of the Chiefland Theatre. Silas Weeks, a veteran of the Civil

War, was a well-known storekeeper. His place of business was located about where Babcock's Furniture Store is now located on Main Street (south of the railroad tracks).

Chiefland had two churches by 1913. The Methodist Church, which was located in the northwest section of present-day Chiefland (then called "Hardeetown"), had been organized in 1861 on the front doorsteps of Isaac P. Hardee's plantation home. The other Church was the Mount Pleasant Baptist Church, which stood near the east side of the present Chiefland Cemetery. This later became the First Baptist Church.

In 1913, the year it was surveyed, Chiefland obtained its charter. When it was incorporated in 1929, Etter Usher, Sr., served as the first mayor, with Graham Carter having served as mayor before that time. Land was set aside in the center of town for a park and a city hall building by the Chiefland Development Company, which also subdivided a plat of 160 acres of land into lots for homes and businesses. Early officers of this company were Claude E. Rodgers (for whom Rodgers Park was named), Etter T. Usher, Sr., and Graham Carter.

Voting and other civic affairs were conducted in a small, octagonal structure that stood in the park. This odd, little building, built in 1921, has since been made into an attractive public library.

The first school in Chiefland was built by Graham Carter about 1914 and housed about 30 pupils. It was a small, wooden-frame building in a field behind the present Carter home. The second school, built about 1915, was located where Orange Avenue is now. It faced north, between Clay and Boundary Streets. This school and one at Hardeetown later merged in 1931 to

form the present-day Chiefland High School.

The Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, which arrived in 1915 with its woodburning engine, was a big factor in the continuing development of the town of Chiefland. This railroad sealed the doom of Levyville, a thriving Levy County community of that era, resulting in the eventual moving of families and businesses from Levyville to Chiefland.

In the 1930's, when a survey was made by the Federal Government, Chiefland had a population of 421. It was described in the report as being "a town of old frame buildings with tin roofs, shaded by water oaks and chinaberry trees," a shipping center for turpentine, rosin, livestock, and peanuts.

Chiefland continued to grow over the years from a population of 421 in the Thirties to 1,459 in 1960. The 1970 census showed a population of 1,965.

Today Chiefland is a small, modern, progressive town. U.S. Highways 19, 27A, and 98 pass through it, making the town truly a crossroads. In 1974 the population was estimated to be 2,245. Chiefland has progressed so much that very few of the "frame buildings with tin roofs" remain, and I do not know the location of a single chinaberry tree, so prevalent in the Thirties. The stores are modern and offer every service to be found in any town of similar size in the state. The annual Watermelon Festival, staged in June, brings thousands of visitors to the town. Well attractive homes, a progressive newspaper, a fully accredited school, numerous churches--all help make Chiefland the major community of Levy County.

This beautiful, little town is what I see as I stand here at the busy crossroads today--and I wonder who will some day stand in my footprints and what will they see?



Cecil Stanley, Williston native, married Pansy Youngblood (daughter of Carlos Youngblood) and worked in a drugstore there for some years. Then he ran his own store in Chiefland, served as a member of the Levy County School Board. Now retired, he lives in the Williston vicinity. His parents are Arthur Stanley (1897 -) and Pearl Stephens Stanley (1902 - 1966).

BRONSON POST OFFICE

Levy County, Florida

(Established 26 September 1859; discontinued 15 June 1869;
reestablished 2 May 1870)

Postmasters	Appointment Dates
Nicholas S. Cobb.....	26 September 1859
John Stockman.....	8 January 1866
Lydia J. Coulter.....	2 May 1870
E. Maxwell.....	9 January 1872
George M. Jack.....	6 February 1872
James M. Jackson.....	11 March 1873
William B. Wimberly.....	16 July 1874
James M. Barco.....	17 September 1879
Charles E. Taylor.....	24 October 1879
Charles E. Sivers.....	23 August 1880
George W. Stonemetz.....	30 November 1880
Solomon Bachman.....	30 September 1881
Charles E. Taylor.....	10 August 1885
Ella M. Lindsey.....	18 May 1889
Clarence A. Lindsey.....	1 October 1897
George C. Darden.....	25 July 1906
Norma Wellman.....	8 July 1915
Gladys D. Ellis.....	13 October 1922
Frank B. Marshburn.....	10 November 1923
Margaret Marshburn (acting).....	14 March 1932
Frank B. Marshburn (confirmed).....	1 October 1932
Leonard C. Griffin (acting).....	26 April 1945
Theron J. Griffin (confirmed).....	31 July 1946

The oldest post office established in Levy County
is Cedar Keys which was established 24 May 1845.

BRONSON TOWN COUNCIL MINUTES

By Norene Andrews

October 1926:

Officials: John R. Willis, Mayor; S. E. Wasson, Jr., Clerk; J. B. Anderson, Tax Assessor; W. E. Rivers, Tax Collector; W. H. Gurney, Town Marshal; and B. O. Smith, Treasurer. Members of the council: F. C. Whiddon; G. A. Boyd; John Cox; C. W. Gilbert; and J. P. Kimble.

August 1927:

Listed for delinquent taxes: W. J. Epperson; Louise N. Sale; G. H. and J. H. Benner; J. C. Sale; M. T. Marshburn; A. Long; O. S. Thornton; L. W. Drummond; L. L. Johns; Gilbert Patterson; J. A. Dean; John Faircloth; F. B. Marshburn; F. F. Winter; S. B. Humphrey; Mrs. Belle Strange; Nathaniel and Alonia Brooks; D. F. Faircloth; Mrs. Arabella Thomas; Thomas Wilkerson; W. F. Osteen; Peggy Luster.

February 1928:

The town hall was a rented room in the S. L. Bean building, an office occupied by Dr. J. H. Twiggs. A town pound was erected on Jackson's Island.

May 1928:

B. O. Smith was paid \$20 to feed hogs in city pound.

June 1928:

D. L. Carroll was paid \$5 for lumber to repair city pound.

October 1928:

Elected officers: Mayor, A. P. Hardee; Councilmen, Jesse A. Dixon, P. L. Fender, W. M. Cowart, and L. L. Johns; Tax Collector, Turner Boyd; City Marshal, H. A. Moring; and Registration Officer, F. N. Faircloth.

December 1928:

Received at the meeting were "strenuous complaints as to the swine running at large in the streets."

January 1930:

Election results: J. A. Dixon, Mayor; Nadine Kirkland, Tax Assessor; Ruby Drummond, Treasurer; F. M. Faircloth, Registration Officer; J. F. Mooney, Marshal; C. W. Gilbert, F. B. Marshburn, and W. M. Cowart, Councilmen; and Wilbur F. Bean, Tax Collector.

February 1931:

Town imposed a one-cent gasoline tax. The electric bill for street lights was about \$40 per month. The gasoline tax was levied for the purpose of paying off old delinquent electric bills which had accumulated due to the failure of property owners to pay ad valorem taxes. The gas tax was then suspended.

October 1931:

Street lights were turned off to "demonstrate the necessity of citizens paying their taxes."

September 1932:

Mrs. J. D. Kirkland, Jr., was town clerk. Carl Wellman was elected to the town council. The one-cent gasoline tax was reactivated and the street lights were once again turned on.

October 1932:

Bascom Hardee presented a petition calling for a referendum to dissolve the municipality. Mayor J. A. Dixon advised that Hardee would have to pay the referendum costs.

June 1933:

H. E. Osteen brought suit for injunction against the town of Bronson in circuit court.

July 1933:

George Kemper requested the council to charge license fees for certain laundry trucks and meat trucks in sums sufficient to keep these certain trucks out. The council refused.

August 1933:

Walter Cribbs offered to cut weeds from all the streets in Bronson for \$10, but the council decided to search for cheaper ways to have this done. The town tax levy was 10 mills.

January 1934:

Osteen's suit was to void the town's one-cent gas tax. The suit was dismissed at the cost of the plaintiff. The town clerk, Nadine L. Kirkland, was the wife of the school principal. She was orphaned as a child but managed to raise a younger brother and sister. Mrs. Kirkland later moved to High Springs.

October 1936:

Florida Power Corporation had foreclosed on the property of the Bronson Manufacturing Company. The town accepted the proposition of Mr. Kimble who offered the old well six and one-half acre at the old mill. The council was negotiating with F. E. Clayton, WPA field engineer, to get a municipal water system built, using a gravity storage tank and Mr. Kimble's large well. T. Frank McCall was a council member. He later served as treasurer.

January 1937:

Miss Carrie Cheely was tax collector. The intersection light near Moring's filling station and H. E. Osteen's station was generating static. Council had contemplated buying a water tank at Inglis. Mayor J. A. Dixon reported that this tank had rusted out. They decided to fence the town of Bronson with a hog and cattle-proof fence. The town office was in the Dixon's Drugstore building.

September 1937:

R. B. Child was mayor. Council members were P. L. Fender, W. E. Rivers, and H. E. Osteen, L. M. Moring and registration officer, and Carrie Cheely was town clerk. The town office had been moved to The Levy County Journal building.

October 1939:

F. R. Coulter was a newly elected council member. The town water system project was dismissed for lack of an available elevated water tank.

August 1940:

Council member, Francis R. Coulter, had died.

September 1941:

Town office moved again. New location is Mayor Rivers' office.

November 1941:

Bronson tax levy went up to 12.5 mills.

February 1943:

Inez Bronson is town clerk.

September 1942:

Mrs. T. F. McCall and W. E. Duden are council members. Owen Giddens is town marshal.

November 1942:

G. T. Robbins is town marshal.

March 1943:

Town Clerk, Inez Bronson, joined the military.

August 1944:

The Suwannee Store is mentioned as located at the corner of North Main and Darden Avenue. On the council: Allen Campbell; George Hemingway; and Walter Duden. Long discussion held about acquiring a fire siren to be installed on the jail roof.

May 1946:

Wayne Duden and Harrell Hemingway were employed to operate a garbage pick-up business and to "dump the same into the clay hole on S. Pennsylvania Avenue."

December 1946:

The position of marshal was left vacant by the death of F. M. Faircloth. Lynn Williams was appointed.

January 1948:

Lynn Williams resigned as marshal.

September 1948:

John Williams elected mayor with 33 votes; Henry Beck got 25 votes and W. E. Rivers 29. Juanita Stephens was elected town clerk. She won over Helen Wilson. M. L. Martin elected to council and N. F. Ishie, Marshal.

October 1949:

Tax levy up to 15 mills.

November 1949:

Eric Brown is marshal.

June 1950:

Council meeting had heated discussion about the hog which had broken into Cowart's Store. The council advised that there was no ordinance prohibiting hogs from entering and burglarizing stores.

October 1950:

John Williams was mayor; Juanita Stephens was still clerk.

October 1951:

Shorty Cooper got one vote for tax assessor. Mariam Wasson was clerk. Ernest Stephens was county commissioner and Lint Moring was appointed chief of police.

November 1951:

Council members: G. B. Hemingway; W. A. Campbell; A. M. Moring; F. B. Marshburn; and W. E. Duden.

October 1953:

Willie Lee Green was town clerk. Council members were Dogan Cobb, M. D. Graham, and A. E. Mikell.



A class at Bronson in 1931. Back row: Merle Dixon, Dorothy Faircloth, Maggie Lou Cowart, Lessie Hatcher, Gertrude Hendricks, Lynn Harris (M. Pete Jones), Mary Francis Lastinger, Genevive Barrett, Emma Edwards, Ruth Stokes and Bonnell Williams. Third Row: Jeanette Edwards, Irene Fender, Ruby Cowart, Grace Lastinger, Mrs. Bernice Osteen (teacher), John De-
 kle Kirkland (principal), Elizabeth Foxnier (teacher), Mildred Faircloth, Margie Osteen, and Opal Lewis. Second row: Shelton
 Cowart, Carlos Smith, Perry Lewis, Billy Albrittan, Paul Hendrix, Erzell Smith, Eric Brown, Clifton Griffin, and Fred Fender.
 Front Row: Leon Cowart, Theron Griffin, Woodrow Hendrix, Wilson Lastinger, Eustis Osteen, Carroll Gilbert, Min Ayers, and
 Ralph Rivers. Identification by Theron and Reba Griffin.

AROUND LEVY COUNTY
Norwood F. Ishie
(1911 - 1979)

This is S. E. Gunnell writing. Mr. Ishie is still somewhat indisposed due to a recent illness but will probably be back in this corner, dispensing philosophical gems next week.

Last Monday just before dawn the old post office building in Bronson burned. It was built shortly after Highway 19 (Now 27A) was completed in 1927. Sheriff L. L. Johns and his brother A. C. Johns built the structure for use as a packing shed. Some commercial vegetable farming was going on in the area at the time. Rat Wynn built the front with that odd design reminiscent of the architecture of the 1920's. We are unable to determine Mr. Wynn's correct name. He operated a short order cafe in the building's front. The back portion was walled in and converted to a dance hall, a favorite hangout for young men stationed at the local CCC camp.

Across the road, Bronson's first service station was operated by Percy Fender. Gas pumps existed before that at such places as Boyd Motor Company. They were the tall hand operated pumps with the five gallon transparent tanks on top. Mr. Fender's station sold Standard Crown gas and was a 24-hour station.

The post office was moved from Main Street into the old building during the thirties. The rear area housed various garages over the years and then turned into a movie theater owned by Bob Mullis. This was a circuit movie. Mr. Mullis owned several of these (one was in Cedar Key) and in some parts of the South they were called horse operas due to the preponderance of cowboy movies. A. M. Moring bought the property and operated the cafe and gas pumps until he retired.

Just a little over twenty years ago the movie house was in operation. Mr. Mullis would ride around town every Saturday morning with a mobile sound system advertising the picture to be shown that night. He also owned a big drive-in in another area and the horse opera customers would sometimes see new motion pictures before those movies appeared in much larger towns. The old circuit movies were displaced by television.

The cafe and gas pumps were displaced by highway improvements, as were the great oaks of Chiefland and the tall palms of Williston along with that row of large Australian pines in Bronson. Progress is a kind of necessary evil. The improvements had to come but we lose a little at the same time. So now the old building is gone. A lot of people walked into it and out, a lot of living was done there, a lot of memories for many people are focused in and around it. And in its dying conflagration it took out the electricity around town, turned off my electric blanket and I woke up cold.

(This edition of Mr. Ishie's column was published in **The Levy County Journal** in about 1974 and was printed on the **Journal's** antique linotype press).

Big Time Mayor

Vassie Pinson was married to John Williams who was mayor of Bronson around 1950. John was a traveling salesman and on one of his selling trips he wandered into a National Convention of Mayors in Birmingham. Some mayor from a large northern city asked John what city he represented as mayor, and John said he represented Bronson, Florida. This northern mayor had never heard of Bronson, so he assumed it was a city somewhat smaller than Miami. He escorted John all over the hall introducing him to mayors of most of the larger cities in the United States.



Basketball team at Bronson, 1940. Left to right: Louise Moring, Reba Fender, Margaret Owens, Montez LeVoy, Evelyn Fender, Juanita Marshburn.



Mrs. Turner Boyd, who ran the Boyd Hotel in Bronson in the thirties.



Dorothy Herlong Beck, Anzonetta Marshburn Brice, teachers at Bronson, about 1944.



The home of William R. Coulter (1874 - 1958) in Bronson was built by his father, William R. Coulter, Sr. (1832 - 1892) and was torn down after the son's death. The house was about 100 years old.

NOTES FROM MINUTE BOOK L

By S. E. Gunnell

September 1925:

Commissioners W. R. Hodges, J. P. Kimble, W. S. Yearty, M. M. Clyatt, and E. C. Price decided to contract for a limerock road from Bronson towards Newberry to the county line. The Levy County News was being published at Bronson. Banks in the county at this time were: Bank of Levy County at Bronson, Citizens Bank of Williston, Bank of Chiefland, and Cedar Key State Bank. J. A. Hawkins was a JP at Williston and R. M. Middleton was a JP at Sumner. Homer Slaughter was paid \$2.50 for cutting bushes. The Chicago Motorcade was due to arrive in Levy County around October 25; commissioners agreed to spend \$500 to entertain the group. William R. Coulter was tax assessor and M. D. Graham was tax collector.

April 1926:

William R. Coulter was granted permission to purchase 5 pounds of ice daily for public use in tax assessor's office, with Commissioners Clyatt and Price voting against the action.

May 1926:

N. J. Albritton, County Agricultural Agent, gained approval for a car, gasoline, and oil to use with hog vaccination program.

June 1926:

For the primary election of June 1926, the poll workers were:

Bronson: H. F. Wellman, John Cox, F. C. Whiddon and G. A. Boyd.

Levyville: S. J. Clyatt, Joe Faircloth, George Hatcher and Nathan Sheppard.

Otter Creek: A. L. Studstill, S. C. Clyatt, A. H. Cason and J. C. West.

Cedar Key: J. B. Lutterich, James Barry, H. E. Charpia and Vinzent McLeod.

Lebanon: H. M. King, C. E. Robinson, I. C. Stephens and G. M. Cannon.

Montbrook: G. M. Highsmith, O. C. Sistruck, A. G. McDonald and G. I. Randall.

Williston: J. G. Newsom, Walter Chesser, J. K. Scott and Walton Bell.

Morrison: Ernest Mills, L. D. Peterson, Emory Priest and B. A. Pedrick.

Sumner: W. C. Hill, Sam Miller, Troy H. Jones and John Wright.

Judson: W. W. Weeks, B. C. Adams, J. R. Beauchamp and Amon Ward.

Raleigh, B. R. Hume, J. W. Bradley, Mims Mattair, and C. S. McDonell.

Red Hollow: John L. McCall, Charlie Owens, J. D. Watson and C. Durrance.

Chiefland: H. W. Arrington, E. H. Durrance, H. E. Sheppard and T. J. Clyatt.

Inglis: J. H. Anderson, C. C. Gaines, Jr., B. Wells and H. L. Coleman.

Janney: D. W. Hiers, T. J. Beck, J. T. Fleming and H. A. White.

Guntown: C. J. Gunn, J. H. Smallwood, H. J. Watkins and Leo Bryan.

Tidewater: J. C. Craber, B. S. Folks, H. R. Swartz and J. E. Hall.

Plans were being made for the construction of State Road 19 from Fanning to Chiefland to Bronson to Williston. Numerous problems arose concerning the right-of-way. The commissioners agreed "to furnish Mr. Bob Jones lumber and nails to build a new smoke house rather than to move the old one as heretofore agreed to." J. E. Langford was to be paid \$100 for a strip of land in the right-of-way near Bronson. T. W. Scott's house in Bronson was to be moved, also a house belonging to M. D. Graham. Board requested Road District 3 to remove the large rock lumps that were constructed across the public highway in the town of Otter Creek, after complaints about vehicular damage from motorists. Commissioner Yearty voted against. He was then advised to have proper signs erected protesting against fast and reckless driving of cars.

July 1926:

The Citizens Bank of Williston bought out the Bank of Williston. Plans were being made for the construction of State Road 13 (now SR 24) from Gainesville to Cedar Key. The two roads being built (SR 19 and SR 13) required a number of houses in Bronson to be moved. The Bronson Manufacturing Company had houses where SR 24 is now located.

A few names selected at random from the lengthy jury list were:

Andrews, D. A., Asbell, J. W., Barton, William, Beamer, Boyd, Beauchamp, J. O., Beauchamp, J. R., Beauchamp, W. A., Berryhill, O. W., Bronson, T. J., Brookins, Foster, Cannon, W. S., Cassaux, Sim, Charpia, H. E., Cobb, J. P., Cobb, W. C., Coburn, Charles H., Collier, J. H., Crevasse, H. W., Curry, B. H., Dean, J. A., Epperson, A. C., Faircloth, I. W., Finlayson, E. B., Fugate, John H., Gilbert, C. W., Hathcox, Willie, Hogan, J. W., Ingram, C. L., Jerrell, E. L., Kepote, Emanuel, McCall, T. F., McDonell, C. S., McKoy, J. L., Mack, W. L., Maxwell, G. H., Morning, H. A., Philpot, J. H., Priest, G. C., Quincey, J. W., Richburg, James, Ross, E. R., Schlemmer, A. P., Scruggs, E. R., Sistrunk, Odis C., Sneller, Otto E., Tillis, C. C., Tooke, George, Usher, E. T., Whitehurst, V. E., and Williams, Howard.

THE OLD WATER MILL By J. C. Partin

Remnants of the old levees may still be in existence. This was a water powered grist mill (ground corn into meal) located in the upper Waccasassa near Station Pond. Morgan Hodge was the original owner and the mill was established in the 1870's. It was being operated in 1896 by a family named Cannon. After the great hurricane of that year, they moved away. The mill continued to be operated up into the 1930's.

The flat terrain of Levy County appears to be an unlikely location for a turbine water mill and this one's source of water power appeared to be inadequate. However, the steady seepage through the marsh land would eventually fill the mill pond and the mill had power for awhile. Then the operator would shut down until the millpond filled again.

The two old millstones can be seen today incorporated into the front wall of a stone building in Bronson, owned by the First Baptist Church of Bronson, and located at the intersection of Hwy. 27-A and Court Street.



At the Vista Mill, about 1906. The tall man wearing a wide hat at the left end was Benjamin Adolphus Lindsey (1855 - 1911), grandfather of archives member, Lindon Lindsey.

ROAD TO THE WATERING PLACE

By S. E. Gunnell

That day in 1974 was sunny and chilly, for this was the winter season in Florida. Two high school students from Chiefland, Allan Jesk and Carl Williams, met me in the extinct town of Sumner, Florida. We rode trail bikes south from State Road 27 and came into the long-abandoned highway that once led to Cedar Key.

We rode slowly along that old roadway and stopped along a stretch where the road had been excavated through some prehistoric sand dunes formed by Gulf of Mexico storms when this was a coastline. Now, there are trees with tops meeting over the excavated roadway producing the effect of a series of high-vaulted shady tunnels. The shade is so deep that the roadway floor is almost clear of brush and grass, like a smooth sandy floor.

We sat there awhile and wondered about this place. Cedar Key, in the late 1800's, was a noted "Watering Place." that term comes across the centuries from the time of Chaucer in England.

Recreational pilgrimages were made to these watering places and to their old hotels and restaurants. Very few of the visitors actually got into the water; they merely looked at the water, the ships, the sea birds.

The watering place term may have originated in reference to a stream or pond where one could pause so a team of horses could drink. When the teamsters saw an ocean they also called that spot a watering place. The foregoing is pure speculation and may sound simplistic but it appears to be the best I can do.

Back to the place where we sat on our trail bikes and tried to go mentally back in time to the 1920's. New Ford A Models came clattering along here, thumping Chevrolet four cylinder cars, drum-beat Whippets, and aristocratic Buick touring cars which purred along with six cylinder engines. They were so quiet you could hear the air-hiss of their carburetor intakes. I was never here in the old days but I remember the cars of that decade.

Now the old highway is silent and deserted; its existence as a watering place route ended many years ago.

We sat there on the trail bike seats and agreed that there is a curious kind of pathos about the whole thing. A curious blue jay eyed us, as if some kind of racial memory prompted him to wonder what these humans were doing back here after being absent so long.

We rode out to the paved highway, toward Cedar Key, across the stretch of causeways and bridges, and out there in the water, exposed by the low tide, we saw an elongated oyster reef paralleling the highway. It was the old road again. It must have been usable at low tide only and its shells probably cut gashes on a lot of the "clincher" tires during the twenties.

We rode by the old Island Hotel where a lot of the visitors stayed. I remembered having seen a great mural painted on the walls on the upstairs hallways by some wandering artist during the thirties. I don't know if his painting is still there or not.

This place and the decade of the 1920's must have been interesting to have experienced. I have that impression even though I was a child at that time. The people of that decade with their unique culture have vanished into the past, and I look around at the here and now of 1990 and I realize, as someone has said before, this, too, shall pass.

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