The Mountains of Florida

Popular Error Regarding State is Corrected.

The following was written by Rev. Alex Bealer, who held a series of meetings at Chipley:

I am engaged this week in holding a meeting with my friend and brother, Rev. B. W. Collier, at Chipley, in the mountain lands of Florida.

I know that many of my readers will wonder at my statement about mountains in Florida. They will doubtless exclaim, "Who ever heard of mountains in Florida, the land of pines, wiregrass, low country, and rivers lazily crawling over the flats and through the marshes to the waiting gulf?"

This is in keeping with many other popular errors about the south Georgia and Florida country. The people in northern parts of Georgia and Alabama are as ignorant of the country to the south of them as the average church member is of the contents of the word of God. In spite of the popular belief there are mounts in Florida. Of course they are not granite hills nor do their peaks rise up to kiss the clouds, but they are very respectable in size and merit the name of mountains.

If you will consult your map you will see that the Alleghany range runs down into north Georgia and north Alabama, making its final output at Kennesaw and Stone Mountain. Then there is a section of hill country around Atlanta. Below this is a comparatively low country until you come to Macon, where there are some very bold hills and where there are some splendid views to be had. Then there is a long stretch of level land until you come into the neighborhood of Tifton. There the country is rolling and reminds you very much of the long swell of the ocean wave. Over toward Alabama in the neighborhood of Lumpkin, in Stewart county, and Buena Vista, in the county of Marion, the country is broken and some regular mountains of red clay are to be seen. Then follows another stretch in and about Albany. At Thomasville and around Doerun the hills crop out again, growing bolder as you cross the Florida line and reach the neighborhood of Tallahassee. To the west, at Chipley, there are some striking mountains of sand and lime stone, and some splendid views are presented to the lover of fine scenery.

Yesterday afternoon, in company with E. N. Dekle, whose guest I am, Rev. B. W. Collier and Mr. D. A. Campbell, I went out for a trip to the mountain country. Four miles from Chipley, in the midst of the piney woods, the country as rolling as the sea was suddenly broken, and we came to many great gorges, some of them fifty feet in depth.

No one would ever think of finding a water fall, or a cataract in Florida, but that is just what I came across. A bold spring rising on the side of one of the sand hills runs sparkling among the sombre looking place, cutting a deep and wide ditch in its course. Suddenly it comes to a limestone cliff which appears to be the result of some great upheaval in the days gone by. The chasm is 50 to 100 feet across. It seemed in all directions and appears as if some great jet of stream had here found an exit, probably in prehistoric times. In one corner, possibly ten feet across, there is a great hole looking more like a large well than anything else. The sides are very smooth and are of limestone. Over this limestone cliff the water from the little stream pours into the chasm whose yawning mouth seems always to be calling for more. The water falls fifty or sixty feet and its murmuring music mingles melodiously with the voice of the wind as it wanders among the magnolias, beech and pine that lift their tapering tops toward the sky. The water here disappears into the earth and is seen no more. Nature, artist as she is, has fringed the edges of this great pit with the waving ferns, and within the reach of the falling water great patches of maidenhair fern, shimmering with the falling spray that rests upon them, cling to the sides of the limestone cliff.

Descending these limestone hills, we entered a long stretch of flat woods, typical Florida country and then we came to what is known as Orange Hill. It is a regular little mountain of limestone and clay rising from the midst of the sandy country in which it stands. The pines, so plentiful everywhere else, have disappeared and the hill is covered with a growth of hard wood of every description. On top of this hill are some of the finest oaks, planted in rows and once they guarded a beautiful residence. Just here is a very interesting little story. Long before the war a Baptist preacher by the name of Everett came to this country with quite a retinue of slaves. On top of this hill he built a beautiful residence, planted the oaks, made some beautiful drives, and set out a fine grove of orange trees. He cultivated the land, tended his orange trees and gave much time to the preaching of the gospel. Following the scriptual injunction he was given to hospitality and it is related that whenever the West Florida Baptist Association met at any of the churches in this neighborhood his house was thrown open and he entertained the whole association, and did it in a princely style.

The war came on, the slaves were scattered, the beautiful home was burned to the ground, the freeze killed the orange trees and the glory of Orange Hill had departed. To-day a neat cottage occupies the site of the old time and where the orange trees stood many pear trees are to be seen. Near this point occurred a great excitement over the finding of oil some time last year. A well had been dug and the clay that came up was seen to have caught on fire and to have burned fiercely, making a dense smoke and giving off the odor of petroleum. The story soon became public property and there was a rush to obtain options on the land in the neighborhood of Orange Hill. A man was engaged to bore for oil. He bored into the earth as well as into the pockets of those interested in the venture. It is not exactly clear just what was the result of his boring. Many wild and fanciful stories were circulated by the poorer class of natives who thronged about to watch the unusual proceedings. It was reported that a black gummy stuff was brought up from a depth of several hundred feet and that it was eagerly devoured by the wandering dogs and the piney woods hogs who came from far and near to enjoy the unusual feast that seemed to have been provided for them. I do not vouch for this story, but from the appearance of some of the piney woods rooters I have seen in Florida I should judge that they would be willing to eat almost anything that came in their way. After keeping the hopes of the people at fever heat for several weeks the borer announced that no oil could be found, packed his traps, folded his tents and sought new fields and greener pastures.

There is still some very fine round timber in and about Chipley, but the trail of the saw mill man is to be seen on every side and most of the trees are scarred by the axe of the turpentine negro. The country is ready for the entrance of the farmer and in the course of a few years there will be many fine farms nestling at the feet of the mountains of Florida.

I shall not soon forget the view presented to me from Orange Hill. Across a deep valley, a mile in width, I looked to the heights of Oak Hill and was forcibly reminded of some of the mountain scenery in North Carolina and Georgia. Here and there were points rising to a surprising height and there as my eye took in the scene I could see many little patches upon the side of this sand mountain, that were in cultivation.

Another freak of nature to be seen in this neighborhood is known as Rock Hill. It covers considerable territory. Beginning at the foot and running over the top, in the shape of a crescent, arranged in regular order are numerous great boulders, some of them as large as a one-room cabin. They seem to have been thrown up from the center of the earth by some violent eruption that took place in the days before this country was inhabited, the days when the mastodon whose bones have formed the great phosphate beds, roamed through the vast and wonderful wilderness that waved about them. This land of the south is indeed a wonderful land, and the more I see of it the more am I ready to exclaime with the Queen of Sheba, "And, behold, the half was not told me."

Chipley Well Supplid With Good Churches

Two of Chipley's Churches, Baptist in Upper, Presbyterian in Lower, position.

Chipley is well supplied with good churches and pastors and people work together for the healthy moral sentiment that is so essential to the proper development of any community.

The church edifices are all good and pictures of two of them, the Baptist and the Presbyterian, are presented above. The one in the upper part of the cut is the Baptist and that in the lower is the Presbyterian.

The Methodists have a neat little structure, but that will soon be supplanted by a handsome concerte block building that will be one of the prettiest church edifices in the state. It is now pratially completed and the builders hope to have it ready for occupancy some time this coming autumn.

The church and pastors are as follows:

Baptist—Rev. B. W. Collier, pastor. Preaching every second and fourth Sunday at 11 a. m. and 8 p. m.; prayer meeting every Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock; Sunday school every Sunday morning at 10 o'clock.

M. E. Church South—Rev. R. C. Williams, pastor. Preaching every first and third Sunday at 11 a. m., and 8 p. m.; prayer meeting every Thursday evening at 8 o'clock. Sunday school every Sunday morning at 10 o'clock, I. H. Kepler, superintendent.

Presbyterian—Rev. Clyde Johnson, pastor. Services every first and third Sundays at 11 a. m., and 8 p. m.; Sunday school every Sunday morning at 9:30 o'clock.

Missionary Baptist—Rev. W. A. Bryan, pastor. Services an Ebenezer church every second Sunday; Piney Grove church every third Sunday.

WASHINGTON CO. OFFICIALS

Any One of Them Glad to Answer Questions About the County.

Washington county has an exceptionally clever set of county officials and tney are doing their part in the development of the county. A list of them follows:

State Senator—S. H. Clarke, of Wewahitchka.

Representative in Legislature—W. B. Lassiter, of Vernon.

Circuit Court Clerk—W. C. Lockey.

County Judge—Joel R. Wells.

Sheriff—Chas. G. Allen.

Tax-Assessor—J. J. Williams.

Tax-Collector—W. B. Gainer.

Treasurer—H. B .Tiller.

Supt. of Schools—B. F. Gainer.

Surveyor—Thos. Collins.

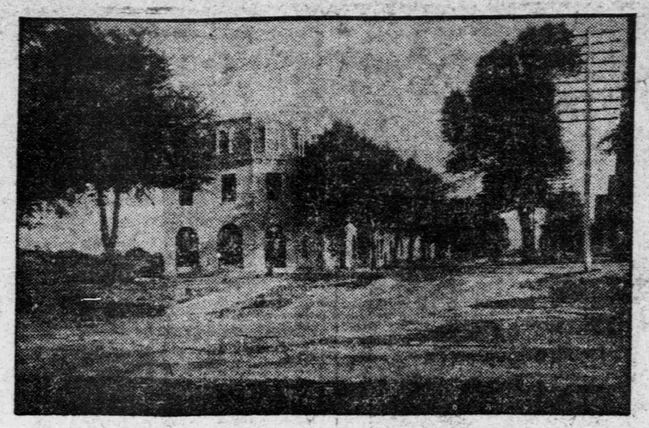
Supervisor of Registration—J. W. Gainer.

School Board—J. H. Nelson, G. B. Bush, and S. J. Gainer.

County Commissioners—W. J. Singletary, chairman; T. N. Hutchison, S. L. Davis, Levy Yates, Jr., and B. Brooks.

Game Warden—W. H. Fuller, of Miller's Ferry.

Any of these officials will be glad to answer questions about their county and letters addressed to Circuit Court Clerk W. C. Lockey, Vernon, Fla., who is also clerk of the board of county commissioners will receive prompt attention.



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WASHINGTON COUNTY TOOK TOBACCO PRIZE

Lands are Especially Well Adapted to Growing Valuable Product.

DURING COMING YEAR LARGE ACREAGE WILL BE PLANTED AND GREAT PROFITS WILL BE MADE—TESTIMONY BY ONE WHO KNOWS.

By John E. Cailey.

It has been contended for some time, that tobacco, good, bad or indifferent could only be raised in Gadsden county, in the state of Florida.

I have alway doubted this claim, but particularly so since the premium offered by Col. W. D. Chipley, some twelve years ago, for the best tobacco raised in any county from Tallahassee to Pensacola, was won by Washington county, over and above all. This contest was decided at Pensacola, by a number of experts, in the tobacco line, brought from all over the United States for this purpose.

A number of leading men in this town were awarded prizes as a result of the decision.

With this in mind, I planted seed about the middle of May.

I was very much elated, some two weeks ago to be able to take a number of leaves from one stalk, which I have been told should be worth not less than two dollars per pound.

This tobacco is hardy, is every way and the equal, if not the superior, of any tobacco grown in any part of Florida. It is of an exceptionally fine texture and varies in color from a light to a deep dark brown.

It was grown in a sandy, yellow, clay ground, fertilized highly with cow manure. Beyond this nothing was done, save that which was done by nature. It was not shaded, except in spots by weeds and fence rails.

Experts claim that yellow clay subsoil is the best for the growing of tobacco. From my experience I agree with them in every particular.

So enthusiastic are the people of Washington County over the raising of tobacco, that at least 50 or 60 acres of land will be given over to the raising of shaded tobacco, next season.

I am personally of the opinion, that within the next year, the farming interests of this section of the state will be devoted largely to the raising of this product. Inasmuch as there is always a ready market, backed by good prices, there is no reason why tobacco rasing in Washington county should not become a matter of great importance.

It has been demonstrated that the soil is productive, and that is half the battle. Time alone can tell definitely, what will be the result.

Personally I see the word "success" in large letters indelibly stamped in every acre of ground.

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Note: Mr. White is also the largest cross-tie contractor and timber dealer for the L & N. railroad west of the Chattahooche river to Pensacola. In addition to this he is a wood contractor and also does a large furnishing business to farmers.