

# Across South Central Florida in 1882;

## THE ACCOUNT OF THE FIRST NEW ORLEANS *TIMES-DEMOCRAT* EXPLORING EXPEDITION

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*and*

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The development of modern Florida may be said to have begun in 1876 when the Federal military control which followed the War for Southern Independence ended. But the financial heritage of that conflict and of the reconstruction years was near bankruptcy, and after struggling against almost insurmountable odds for five years, in 1881 the state sold 4,000,000 acres of undeveloped lands in the south-central portion of the peninsula for \$1,000,000 to Hamilton Disston and his associates. Other extensive land sales followed and the intensive development of the state through private capital began. By 1890 Florida's population had reached nearly 400,000, having tripled since 1860.<sup>1</sup>

When these land companies began to plan drainage projects to prepare their holdings for cultivation and for sale to small investors they found that little was known of this section of the state. In 1882 one southern editor wrote that the area was "a region mysterious, unknown, beautiful—a *terra incognita*—of which as little is known as of the centre of 'the dark continent'."<sup>2</sup> The statement was practically true although from the 1840's onward many individuals had become acquainted with various portions of the region: soldiers, sailors, and marines engaged in the Seminole Wars; the members of the Federal-sponsored Buckingham Smith expedition of 1847; numerous scientists, sportsmen, and men of letters; and those who had accompanied the naturalist, Frederick A. Ober, during his excursions of 1872 and 1874. The decades of the 1880's and 1890's, then, was a period of intense investigation and exploration of the central and southern sections of Florida.

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<sup>1</sup> See *Florida, A Guide to the Southernmost State* (American Guide Series, New York, 1939), 59-60.

<sup>2</sup> New Orleans *Times-Democrat*, December 3, 1882; also quoted in Alfred Jackson Hanna and Kathryn Abbey Hanna, *Lake Okeechobee, Wellspring of the Everglades* (Indianapolis, 1948), 108.

Interest in unexploited Florida lands was but one phase of the active post-reconstruction development of the South and it was natural that southern newspapers began to devote considerable attention to these potentially productive agricultural and timber areas, and to encourage their exploration. Frequently they added a touch of glamour and mystery to the region, some of which has carried over to the present day, for only recently the Everglades have been described as an area "thickly overgrown with marsh sawgrass, tough as bamboo, its edges razor-sharp. Out of this drowned plain thrust rounded hammocks, overgrown with scrub oak, willow, cypress, cabbage palm, and palmetto. No visible life stirs across these broad reaches of marsh except that on the road and canal."<sup>3</sup>

The New Orleans *Times-Democrat* was one of the most vocal of the Southern newspapers in heralding the potentialities of south and central Florida.<sup>4</sup> The *Times* had been founded in 1863 as a Union paper in the hope of mending the political division of the city's population, while the *Democrat* had come into existence in 1875 and had been ably edited by Richard Tyler of Virginia, who was the son of the former president, and Major H. J. Hearsey. The two sheets merged in December, 1881, dedicating the new publication to the upbuilding of the South. Before the end of the century it had published more than three score special editions describing the resources and singing the economic possibilities of the southern states, urging the development of timber and agricultural lands, propagandizing for Federal aid during flood years, and, not the least important of these activities, urging the feasibility of draining the Florida Everglades.<sup>5</sup>

In keeping with this policy of aiding Southern development, and also perhaps to aid in enlarging its circulation through news stories regarding the area, the *Times-Democrat* announced that it would sponsor an expedition to investigate the Everglades region. "The country generally is very anxious just now to get information about this new territory which will soon be thrown open to settlement and cultivation,"<sup>6</sup> it editorialized, anticipating the optimism of the correspondent of the Hartford (Conn.) *Times* who six months later wrote glowingly of the three Florida seasons—"the orange, vege-

<sup>3</sup> *Florida, A Guide to the Southernmost State*, 407.

<sup>4</sup> The owner and editor of the New Orleans *Times-Democrat* was Edward A. Burke, at that time state treasurer of Louisiana. Later, Burke was indicted for fraud and fled to Spanish Honduras. For a brief account of his life see Alcee Fortier, *Louisiana*, 3 vols. (Atlanta, 1909), I, 134.

<sup>5</sup> For a brief sketch of the early history of the *Times* and the *Democrat* and their merger see Thomas Ewing Dabney, *One Hundred Great Years; The Story of the Times-Picayune from its Founding to 1940* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1944), 378-79.

<sup>6</sup> New Orleans *Times-Democrat*, December 3, 1882.

table, and invalid" and that 30,000 Northern people had recently moved to the state.<sup>7</sup>

The exploring expedition was to be headed by Major Archie P. Williams, a former Confederate Army officer and the representative of the *Times-Democrat*. He arrived in Jacksonville on November 7, 1882, made the preliminary arrangements for the trip, and then suffered an attack of dengue fever.<sup>8</sup> After recovering, he proceeded to Palatka, where he inspected Hart's orange grove,<sup>9</sup> then boarded one of the St. John's River steamers<sup>10</sup> for passage to Kissimmee, at which point the expedition was to rendezvous.

On December 3, the editor of the newspaper wrote that the "*Times-Democrat* exploring party" into "the celebrated Everglades of Florida, famous in poetry and almost equally famous in history," had started, and gave its general itinerary. "Starting from the source of the Kissimmee River, it will descend that stream into the celebrated Lake Okeechobee, lying in the center of the Peninsula. After thoroughly investigating this lake and the character of the lands surrounding it, the expedition will proceed on its way to the Gulf, through the Caloosahatchie and other rivers, and canals of the Diston Company, reaching the Gulf at Punta Rasa."

The expedition left Kissimmee on November 28. Its equipment consisted of two sailboats, the *Daisie* and the *Crescent*, a considerable quantity of baggage, including fire arms, fishing tackle, a medicine chest, and complete camping paraphernalia, supplies for thirty days (including "a few gallons of newly invented antidote for snake bites"), and "last but not least, a first class cook." The *Daisie* was a whitehall boat twenty-two feet in length, with a five and one-fourth foot beam, carried a single sail, and was fitted for two sets of oars. The *Crescent* was a somewhat smaller vessel.

The party's personnel included Williams, who captained the *Daisie*, Colonel C. F. Hopkins, a Jacksonville engineer and a former United States

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in *Harper's Weekly*, January 6, 1883.

<sup>8</sup> A febrile epidemic disease, which used to occur in the southern part of the United States and which occurs in the West Indies, was characterized by severe pain, particularly in the joints, and was sometimes accompanied by an eruption somewhat resembling that of measles. The attack was sometimes violent but brief, although seldom fatal. It first appeared in the British West Indies, where it was called dandy-fever. The Spaniards of the neighboring islands mistook the term for their word dengue, denoting prudery (which might also express stiffness) and eventually gave their name to the disease. It is also called dandy, and break-bone fever.

<sup>9</sup> This was one of the oldest and most famous groves in the state. It was budded from wild stock during the early 1830s, was badly damaged by the frost of 1835, and began bearing about 1845. See Charles Ledyard Norton, *A Handbook of Florida* (New York, 1892), 190.

<sup>10</sup> For a brief account of the "St. John's River Fleet" about this time see George M. Barbour, *Florida for Tourists, Invalids, and Settlers* (New York, 1887, first edition published in 1881), 123-24.

naval officer, who captained the *Crescent*, Captain Greenleaf Andrews, former president of the New Orleans Wrecking Company, and Will Wallace Harney, called the "professor", who acted as the artist of the expedition and who was a correspondent of *Harper's Magazine*. Sam Maxwell was the crewman of the *Daisie*, while Fred Humphreys handled the *Crescent*. Caesar Weeks was the colored cook.

The party accompanied Captain Rufus E. Rose,<sup>11</sup> who at that time was engaged in dredging a canal between Lake Tohopekaligo and Lake Cypress, in his small steamboat, the *Okeechobee*, as far as Lake Kissimmee. The two sailboats followed, the *Daisie* in the lead, "flying at her peak the flag of the TIMES-DEMOCRAT."

A Mr. Cowden, who was the correspondent of the Jacksonville *Union*, accompanied the expedition in a small boat of his own, the *Cary*, until Lake Kissimmee was reached, from which point he returned to Jacksonville. Here also Captain Rose left the party to make a surveying trip to Lake Rosalie and Lake Walking Water. From this point the "Times-Democrat Exploring Expedition" plunged toward that "mysterious and unknown region hitherto concealed from the white man."<sup>12</sup>

The party continued without mishap down the Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee, camping along the stream, fishing and hunting, and visiting the few scattered settlers who inhabited the area. After exploring a considerable portion of the coast line of Lake Okeechobee it reached the dredge of the Atlantic, Gulf Coast and Okeechobee Land Company, then engaged in cutting a canal between Lake Okeechobee and Lake Hicpochee, where their boats were hauled overland to the dredge boat on the canal. Then it continued along the canal to Lake Hicpochee, through Lettuce Lake and Flirt Lake to the Caloosahatchee River, and down that stream to Fort Myers, which was reached on the night of December 14. The explorers had traveled approximately 500 miles in a little over two weeks. Three days later the *Times-Democrat* proudly announced that they were "the first white men who ever succeeded in making the journey" through the "unknown" Everglades region.

At Fort Myers the *Crescent* was abandoned and the crew discharged, while Williams, Andrews and Hopkins continued up the Gulf Coast in the *Daisie*, touching at Charlotte Harbor, Tampa and Cedar Keys, from which point Williams returned by railroad to New Orleans.

<sup>11</sup> For information of Rose's dredging and planting activities in Florida see Hanna and Hanna, *Lake Okeechobee*, 102, 178, 305.

<sup>12</sup> New Orleans *Times-Democrat*, December 26, 1882.



The account of the expedition, which hereinafter follows, was written by Williams and was published in the *Times-Democrat* in seven installments during the interim from December 26, 1882, to March 16, 1883.<sup>13</sup> According to the newspaper's editorial of December 17, the expedition had "been very generally discussed by the press of the North as well as the South," and the opinion had "been expressed that it would result in material advantages to the country by making known a rich and promising section, hitherto closed to settlement."

That the New Orleans newspaper took considerable pride in its sponsorship of the expedition is obvious, for in an editorial, published March 16, 1883, it bragged: "Florida is now one of the most promising portions of the South. Much of it has hitherto been unknown wilderness to the rest of the world, but is now being opened up, redeemed and rendered habitable. Immigrants of the best kind are pouring in from all directions and helping to build up the State, and everything is promising there. THE TIMES-DEMOCRAT claims some of the credit for this Florida 'boom'. Its articles, which were copied by the northern and western papers, have done much toward creating this 'boom'." Without doubt it had rendered Florida a noteworthy service by directing public interest to the Everglades-Lake Okeechobee region which was soon to be opened to settlement.

In the account of the expedition which follows the articles have been continued without a break for the sake of continuity. Rivers, lakes and other geographic sites have not been located as in practically all cases the readers of *Tequesta* will be familiar with them. Persons have not been identified for, with the exception of a few well-known individuals, they would be almost impossible of identification. Incorrect and variant spellings, inaccuracies, and inconsistencies have been left untouched. The only liberty taken by the editors has been to capitalize such titles as "Captain," "Major," and Colonel."



[DECEMBER 26, 1882] After leaving Orange lake, from which place my last communication was dated, it was my intention to proceed to Jacksonville, fit out an expedition to visit Lake Okeechobee, in the Everglades, and from there try to work our way through to some point on the Gulf of Mexico, something not at that time done by any party of white men. I arrived in Jacksonville on the morning of November 7, and after calling upon several

<sup>13</sup> See issues of December 26, 1882; January 21, 1883; February 5, 1883; February 10, 1883; February 23, 1883; March 15, 1883; March 16, 1883.

parties who were acquainted with a portion of the route through which I intended proceeding, and making other necessary arrangements for the trip, I was warned by certain premonitory symptoms that I was soon to become a victim to the prevailing disease of Florida, viz: the dengue fever. Not wishing to lay up among strangers in a strange city, I decided to visit some relatives living in Rosewood, near Cedar Keys, and with that intention boarded a train running to that place, and soon found myself under kind hands, where I remained for two weeks. I was made painfully aware, during my suffering, of the number of bones in my body by the aches and pains which always accompany the disease.

Well, all good things have an ending, and thank Heaven the bad ones follow the same course, so on the morning of November 22, considerably lighter in weight, a change of clothing in my valise, a pair of heavy blankets, shotgun, and 500 rounds of ammunition, I find myself on the transit road on my way to join my party, which has been waiting for me 10 days at Kissimmee City, on Lake Tohopokaliga.

Leaving Gainesville at 5 o'clock that evening (having left the transit road at that place), I take the Florida Southern, a narrow-gauge road, and reach Palatka, its present terminus. Palatka is a town fast growing into the proportions of a city, situated on the banks of the far-famed river St. John. After a good supper at Graham's Hotel, I retired to bed, and woke up in the morning with the disagreeable feeling that I had been awfully fooled in imagining I had bid an eternal farewell to the dengue fever, for it had followed me, and I was once more in its grip. Determined not to give way to it I am soon dressed and sauntering around the town, taking in the sights of the place. Palatka is one of the most beautifully situated and laid off towns in Florida, consisting of many fine buildings, and many more in process of erection. The sound of nailing and sawing is heard on every side, and I was informed by a gentleman that 50 new buildings were then going up. Of course, as in every town and hamlet in either North or Middle Florida, there is not only one fine hotel, but several, notably the St. John's Hotel, considered one of the finest in the state. One peculiarity of Florida is that the first building erected when the site for a town is selected is a fine hotel, and if the hotel succeeds, other buildings soon follow.

The St. John's River at this point is a little over half a mile in width, and in many respects resembles the Mississippi river in appearance. Opposite to this town is the celebrated Hart's orange grove, considered by all the finest in Florida, both as to variety of fruit, size and cultivation. It is one

of the first points that the Northern tourists visit when they come to Florida, consequently Palatka is a lively place during the winter months. The streets of the town are wide, and everything has been done to make the sidewalks as beautiful and attractive as possible. Orange trees are planted every 15 or 20 feet on every street, and when walking down the streets they resemble wide avenues fringed on each side by the orange tree; not only the main streets being so arranged, but every side street in the town. Every tree is loaded with the golden fruit, which, strange to say, is undisturbed, even by the street boys. As every yard in the town is an orange grove in itself, and every one has plenty at home, it may account for the fruit being undisturbed upon the sidewalk, and the branches of private trees which hang over the streets from the different yards.

Palatka, like every other town in the State that I have visited lately, is filled with Northern visitors. There are a few Southerners also here looking for lands, but they do not tarry long in any one place, continuing to travel around until they find a location suited to their taste. They are considered better judges of soil than their Northern cousins, and almost invariably make good selections. Before finishing my walk around the town I inspected several Artesian wells which are placed at several points where the streets intersect with each other, for the use of the public. They furnish ample water for the use of the whole town and are an ornament in the appearance of the place. I can't say I have accustomed myself to the taste of the well water of Florida, which is limestone of the greater or less strength. I notice throughout the whole State that those families who use cistern water are free from chills, fevers and other ailments, while with those who drink the well water it is exactly the reverse. Cisterns are coming into very general use, as the people are beginning to realize the importance of having them.

At 8 o'clock that night I was joined by my old friend, Capt. Greenleaf Andrews, a resident of New Orleans and formerly connected with the New Orleans Wrecking Company, who, by invitation, is to join our party. His smiling and jolly face, his loud and cherry voice, issuing his orders to every one in the hotel from the bootblack to the headwaiter, in a tone well-suited to the quarter-deck of a man-of-war in a storm, makes me for awhile forget I am a sick man, and I soon found myself joining in the general laugh as he related some of his Florida experiences since his first arrival in the State. He was a great addition to our party, and from my knowledge of the old gentleman, I was certain he would make things lively for every man in the party. At 1 o'clock a.m. we boarded one of the St. John river steamers

bound South, and found, after getting on board, that every stateroom was occupied, half the floor of the cabin, and not a bare mattress or blanket. All the gentle whispering of the captain in the ears of both steward and chambermaid with the exhibition of a silver dollar failed to get even a pillow to put under our heads. "What can't be cured must be endured,," so tired out with waiting for the boat, burning up with fever, and in no enviable state of mind, we unrolled our camp blankets, found a soft plank on the floor of the cabin, put our overcoats under our heads for a pillow, and with a gentle blessing from the lips of the captain upon Florida steamboats in general, and this one in particular, we dropped off into a troubled sleep.

We were awakened at sun-rise next morning by the sound of female voices, and it did not take us long to find out that both the captain and myself were becoming objects of attention to several ladies on board, who had risen early to view scenery on the river and had crowded to the forward part of the boat for that purpose. We both consoled ourselves with the idea that we looked very handsome as we lay, but the Captain said he heard one of the girls say: "If I was ugly as those two men I'd drown myself." But he said she had a red head and was crosseyed, so we did not think she was a good judge. We arose, and after washing our faces and making the acquaintance of the man who mixes the "pizen", we took our seats among the crowd, all of whom seemed to be strangers to Southern scenes, and were amused for some time by the remarks around us. The sight of a huge alligator lying lazily upon the banks of the river caused quite a commotion among the ladies, except our red-headed girl, who remarked after bestowing a casual glance at the captain and myself, that "The alligator wasn't half as ugly as she had expected". We passed large numbers of large and flourishing orange groves, but saw few fine residences, most of the highly improved places being below (north) of Palatka, where we embarked. Of this fact we were informed by others.

The great peculiarity of the St. John river is that it is one of the only two rivers in the United States that run North. The water of the river is of an inky hue, being almost black. It is a chain of lakes for many miles, at least it so appeared, for at times we found ourselves passing through sheets of water four or five miles wide, and again we were steaming between the banks of a stream no larger than our Louisiana bayous, with hardly room for our boat to pass without touching. We were a little disappointed, having formed quite a different idea from all we had heard and read of the great beauty of the scenery which would meet our eyes at every turn. Perhaps my companion and myself were too much inclined to draw a comparison be-

tween the rivers of our own State and that of the black stream over which we were passing. We were summoned by the breakfast bell to go below and get our morning meal, and in obedience thereto we took that direction at the tail end of the crowd, who were hurrying toward the dining room. Suddenly the stream of human beings who were crowding the doorway turned back with disappointed face, and we were informed that we would have to take the second table. A second time we made the same attempt, and were turned back to wait for a third table. The captain remarks that "this thing is a little monotonous", and so when the third table is ready we head the column in gallant style and secure a seat. It is about all we do secure for a while, for the waiters are rather exhausted, but after a few nautical phrases from my companions we are served with the whole bill of fare. As a cup of coffee was all I required, I was soon satisfied, and in fact I shall remain satisfied all my life that a meaner resemblance to a genuine cup of coffee never was invented in any land. I believe the remainder of the breakfast was better. I certainly hope so for the benefit of those who partook of it.

After breakfast, one of the state-rooms becoming vacant, the Captain and myself took possession, and were soon trying to catch up with our lost sleep of the night before. The balmy breezes which fanned the cheek of the Northern tourist upon the promenade deck of the steamer, the beautiful, grand and magnificent scenery of the St. John, through which we passed while in our unconscious state, we take for granted, and are willing to believe what we heard concerning it when we arose at 3 o'clock that evening, but of our own knowledge we were unable to say a word, but that the sleeping accommodations were good, the berths being clean and airy, we do say, and certify to it. When we arrived on deck we found that we were in sight of Sanford, where we intended disembarking and taking rail to Kissimmee City, where the expedition will start. We arrived about 4 o'clock, and at 5 o'clock took the South Florida road, and in a short time were in the heart of Orange county, a county on which more printer's ink has been used in advertising its beauty and attractions as an orange-growing section of the State than any other portion of Florida. It has certainly succeeded in settling almost every acre of the soil, the land being sold at almost fabulous prices. It is settled with many Northerners who do not hesitate to spend any amount of money in improving and fertilizing their groves. Consequently the county, which is nothing more or less than poor pine woods, sandy soil in the majority of cases, teems with fine residences, groves in the highest state of cultivation, brought to their present perfection by the profuse use of fertilizers,

which have cost perhaps double the original price of the whole place. Money has been spent with a lavish hand, but whether in the far future the money so spent will ever be returned to the pockets of the owner we are unable to prognosticate. The citizens claim to be beyond the frost line (every county in Florida claims the same thing with but few exceptions); but alas! ere I got beyond the borders old Jack Frost made his appearance, and waked them up from their fancied security in rather rough style. Not only once did he make his appearance, but he continued to come for several days. I think that the subject of "frost line" is a sore subject today, and the stranger seeking an investment will not be regaled with the tale of "no frost", "only place in Florida for raising tropical fruits," etc. We must give Orange county its due, and when we say that her citizens have shown more pluck and perseverance, expended more money, and are today enjoying more of the comforts of home-life than any other county in the State, we speak the truth. We pass on our journey a starch manufactory, and see acres of the cassana growing from which they manufacture the starch, which is of a very superior quality.

At 7 o'clock we had reached Kissimmee City, situated on Lake Tohopokaligo. I was met at the cars by Col. C. F. Hopkins of Jacksonville, and Capt. R. E. Rose, of New Orleans, now in command of the dredge on the canal between Lakes Tohopokaligo and Cypress. Col. Hopkins is one of the most prominent civil engineers in this State, who, being well acquainted with the topography of the country through which we intend traveling, has kindly consented to direct everything. The Colonel served for several years before the war, with distinction, in the U. S. Navy, and is a graduate of the Naval Academy at Annapolis, Md. He is a thorough gentleman, full of humor, and looked forward to our coming expedition with the eagerness of a school boy. We wended our way from the cars to the Kissimmee Hotel, an unfinished building, and being still with fever on me, I retired to a very airy chamber, which I do not leave for three days. Every kindness and attention were shown to me by my future companions, and to their efforts and the skillful treatment of Col. Hopkins, who acted in the capacity of physician, there being none within twenty miles, I owe my speedy recovery. Feeling that life in a comfortable tent was far preferable to lying in bed with the wind whistling through the unfinished walls of my abode, I announced myself ready to start. Our party received an addition in the person of Prof. W. W. Harney, a resident of Orange county, who accompanies the expedition as an invited guest, acting in the capacity as artist and correspondent of *Harper's Magazine*, and on the trip sketched all the most important points. Mr. Cowden, son of Capt. Cowden, of Mississippi river fame, also joined us, acting as correspondent

of the Jacksonville *Union*. He accompanied us a portion of the way and then returned.

Everything being ready for the start on the morning of November 28, our little party, with bag and baggage, fire arms, and fishing tackle, wended our way toward the wharf, where our two sail boats, the *Daisie* and *Crescent*, were riding at anchor in the lake. The *Daisie* is a whitehall boat 22 feet long, 5¼ feet beam, carrying single sail, and fitted for two sets of oars, well provided with comfortable seats and good "lockers" fore and aft. Her crew consisted of Sam Maxwell and Caesar Weeks (cook) in command of your correspondent. The *Crescent* is a smaller boat, fitted with mainsail and jib, her crew consisting of Fred Humphreys, the professor acting as volunteer, in command of Capt. Andrews. The *Daisie* is loaded with the tents, baggage, ammunition and medicine chest; the *Crescent* with cooking utensils, provisions, axes, etc. Col. Hopkins accompanied your correspondent in the *Daisie*, both boats being under his supervision, as well as every member in the party. When we arrived at the wharf we were met by Capt. Rose who tendered us the use of his steamboat, the *Okeechobee*, to go as far as the dredge now working in the canal, a distance of about twenty miles from Kissimmee. We accepted the invitation, and followed in the rear by our boats, everybody in good spirits, provisions in abundance, a few gallons of newly invented antidote for snake bites, and last but not least, a first class cook in attendance, we bid adieu to Kissimmee City, and steamed across the lake, followed closely by our two little sail boats, the *Daisie* in the lead with all her canvas set, flying at her peak the flag of the *TIMES-DEMOCRAT*, and followed closely by the *Crescent*. An invitation from Capt. Rose brought us all together in his private room, and we there found a delicious cold lunch set forth, and were soon busily engaged in tasting the delicacies set before us and listening to the very musical sound of popping corks. Capt. Rose rose and proposed the health of the *TIMES-DEMOCRAT*, and predicted success to the enterprise. At his close every man in the party, considering himself interested in *THE TIMES-DEMOCRAT*, rose from his seat to respond. Who made the most eloquent response, future posterity will never know, for all spoke at once. Suffice to say, our first day's journey toward that almost unknown region of a thickly populated Southern State, the Everglades, had begun, and as we were leaving behind us the last postoffice we should see until we reached the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, no more would be heard of or from us until our journey of 500 miles had been completed.

[JANUARY 21, 1883] The whistle of the steamer warns our party that we have finished our journey across Lake Tohopotaliga, and are nearing the en-



trance to the canal of the Florida Land and Improvement Company, which is under the process of construction by our genial host and fellow-Louisianian, Capt. Rose. All of us soon find ourselves on the hurricane roof listening to Capt. R., who explains to us the work already done and to still be accomplished by the company. Several beautiful islands on the lake are in sight, which we are told but a short time before, were subject to inundation at a high stage of water, but that now, owing to the level of the water having been lowered about three feet by the canal not yet finished, and to be still lowered about two feet more when finished, were now being planted in orange groves, and although originally bought for a trifle could not now be purchased for \$100 an acre. The islands are owned by private parties, and the great work now going on in the interest of the company and State in this instance, as in many more, are of incalculable benefit to those who own lands in the neighborhood of the State lands being drained. There is not one of our little party that does not envy the possessors of the beautiful islands, and especially as we are aware that there is not a pocket-book in the crowd that does not contain cash enough to have paid the original purchase price of that, which, if we owned now, would be a competence for the remainder of our days, the magical work of turning cents into dollars having been but the labor of months.

We are now within a few hundred yards of the entrance of the canal which is plainly marked by the jetties which Capt. Rose has caused to be constructed for several hundred feet into the lake, to prevent a bar from forming while the canal is being dug, and to wash and deepen the channel, as the lake is lowered, a wise piece of engineering, as his experience has proved, for, without it, the dredge would, ere this, have had to return and recut and deepen the channel, as the work of lowering the water went on. The steamer, as she reaches the entrance, turns and backs down between the lines of jetties into the canal. This is done, we are informed by Capt. Rose, on account of the swiftness of the current in the canal, it being almost impossible to stem the same on his return by backing his boat, as it runs at the rate of about four miles an hour, and the boat being almost as wide as the canal, a mile or two after leaving the entrance, makes it a difficult feat. The canal is dug directly across the mouth of the Kissimmee River, leaving the river, and running due south across the marsh to Lake Cypress, a distance of three and one-half miles. After getting into the canal, the boat is landed, and we all go on shore to examine the work accomplished. Eight months ago, the ground upon which we stand was covered by surface water to a depth of from one to two feet; today it stands, high and dry, two feet above the level of the lake and the canal, the great instrument of the reclamation not yet cut through. As

we walk across the land, we crush beneath our feet the dried and dead water lilies, cresses and lettuce, which a few months ago grew, bloomed and flourished in their natural element (the water), and in their place the familiar switch cane of Louisiana, the sure indication of rich alluvial land, is fast taking possession of the soil. It, too, may grow and flourish for a few months longer, but as Louisianian's hand directed the great work which wrested and reclaimed this, the richest land in the South, from the water, so will a Louisianian's hand perfect what has already been done, by showing how sugar cane can be made to grow and yield by Louisiana cultivation upon Florida soil. The land for about one-half mile from the lake, has more sand intermixed with the soil than the remainder of land in the direction of Lake Cypress. The whole body of land lying between the two above named lakes, containing five or six thousand acres is nothing more or less than decayed vegetable matter, to a depth of from six to eight feet, resting on a subsoil or pan of hard clay, except about two hundred yards bordering on or near Lake Cypress, and in that case, the clay comes to within two feet of the surface. We have no difficulty in determining the depth of the soil, for the dirt thrown up in digging the canal to a depth of eight feet, shows for itself. How much greater the depth of soil such as I have mentioned is than eight feet, as regards about two miles of the land through which the canal has been dug, I do not know, the dredge not having reached the hard clay on that portion in dredging. Although for several months the land has been exposed to the hot sun, it has neither baked nor become hard. The soil which I see before me is that which, in my journeying through Florida I have seen hauled for miles in carts, after having been dug from the bottom of ponds, and used as a fertilizer for orange groves. Its richness is unsurpassed in Florida, and I doubt if its equal can be found in any State. Having secured a specimen of the soil for future analyzation, we wend our way back to the steamer, and are soon backing down the canal in the direction of the dredge, whose bulky proportions and black smoke-stacks, is seen at a distance of about three miles.

"You'll soon see plenty of alligators," remarked Capt. Rose, as he glanced at the array of shotguns, rifles and ammunition we had brought on board. We look around the cabin for the familiar notice which has always heretofore greeted our eyes upon every steamer we have traveled on in Florida, to wit: "No one allowed to discharge fire-arms on this boat," and not seeing it, we ask Capt. Rose if he has any objection to our indulging in the sport of shooting at the reptiles. The captain says that it is not pleasant to have dead alligators floating down the canal and lodging against the dredge; still,

as he knows Col. Hopkins could not hit an alligator if he tried to, and your correspondent does not look dangerous, he is perfectly willing we should try our hand. At first we were inclined not to take advantage of the permission, but when a reflection was thrown upon our proficiency in the use of a rifle, our pride was roused, and the Colonel and myself after remarking in our most sarcastic tones that "appearances were sometimes deceptive," picked up our rifles and took our seats on the hurricane deck, determined to have no mercy on any alligator that might appear. We were hardly seated, after the Colonel and myself had made an agreement to shoot together, he selecting the head and I the tail, as our mark, when we saw, a few yards ahead, a huge monster lying quietly sunning himself on the bank. Two shots fired simultaneously bring the remainder of the crowd upon deck.

"Shot right through the head," yells the Colonel! "Through the tail, too," I remarked as I slip another cartridge in the rifle, and prepare for the next. "Shot no where," says Capt. Rose, as he throws a billet of wood over the side of the boat at the alligator, which, quick as lightning, slips into and under the water. I looked at the Colonel, the Colonel looked at me, and we both looked at each other, and I am certain each look reflected a doubt of each other's skill as a marksman. It was rather hard on us, and we felt considerably mortified, as at a meeting held the night previous, we had elected ourselves the huntsmen, and Capt. Andrews and Prof. Harney the fishermen of the party. Capt. Rose tried to console us by promising as soon as we arrived at the dredge, to make one of his men rope an alligator and tie him up for us to shoot at the balance of the evening, as he says, he knows from experience that the motion of the boat, and Capt. Andrews bellowing in such a loud voice to the steward "to put plenty of sugar in his, with a squeeze of lemon", is enough to destroy the aim of the best marksman alive. He even indulged in a little flattery by remarking upon the beautiful style in which I closed my left eye when I took aim, and how gracefully the Colonel bent his right knee as he pulled the trigger, all of which had the desired effect, and being once more happy and contented that it was not our fault that we missed our alligator, we went below, determined to do no more shooting before company, for the present at least. By the time we had interviewed the steward upon what he had learned in his long experience of the best and most profitable means of utilizing corn, and what his opinion was as to the size of the lemon drop, we were landed at the dredge.

As we step from our boat to the deck of the dredge, we notice how swiftly the waters are rushing by the sides, with seemingly enough force to prevent the workings of the huge machine, but the steady thud of the engine

tells us the work is going on. Moving to the front of the boat, we watch with interest the perfect work being done by this machine, which is an improvement on the Menge dredge in several respects. The improvements were thoroughly explained to your correspondent in plain words and good English, and I felt that, if necessary, I could construct one myself; but alas, when I pulled out my notebook that night to put down the little occurrences of the day, and got to that portion relating to the new mechanical devices, which had been added to the original machine, I felt that my education had been sadly neglected in that respect, and was as much bothered as I was years ago as a school boy, when I wrote my first composition on "the dog"; so all I can say is that everything seemed to work like clockwork. The dredge was within a quarter of a mile of Lake Cypress, and had struck the clay subsoil, which at this point comes to within two feet of the surface, and consequently was experiencing great difficulty in cutting through. Capt Rose informed us that in ten days they would be into Lake Cypress, at which point they turn back and recut the canal, widening it 20 feet, and at the same time deepening the channel. There about 15 men regularly engaged and at work in and around the dredge. Noticing how healthy and well looking they all appeared, we asked Capt. Rose how often he had been compelled to change his crew, how many had died, the number of cases of malarial fever, etc., for of course I felt certain that, working as they did, from sunrise until dark in rain and the sun, water and mud, drinking the water, and sleeping every night beside a bank of freshly turned up earth, that necessarily there must be a large amount of sickness. Capt. Rose kindly allowed me to look over the books of the boat for the information I wanted, and strange to say, but one single case of sickness was reported in eight months. In conversation with the men, who represented both Northern and Southern States, they confirmed what I had already learned.

We took supper that night on the dredge and cannot compliment too highly the "cuisine" of Pat, the chief cook, who spread himself for the occasion. Capt. R., in the kindness of his heart, tells Pat, who acts as waiter as well as cook to "see that the Major is well helped as he has been under the weather", etc., and so I am brought prominently under his notice. There is nothing mean about Pat, and he certainly had most winning ways about him, perhaps too winning for what with his good cooking and careful attention to every man at the table we feel as we rise that we can with little difficulty get along comfortably for the next week without much trouble as regards eating.

Returning to the steamer, every man pulls out his pipe, gets a chair, fixes himself comfortably, and prepares for a pleasant evening. The Professor busies himself arranging his sketching materials for our journey next day. Capt. Andrews goes to work on his fishing lines, hooks, etc. Col. Hopkins files and remodels the sights of his rifle, and your correspondent and Capt. Rose hold a conversation on the subject of draining. By 10 o'clock everybody is sleepy, and we retire to our different berths. In 10 minutes thereafter, every man is snoring to suit himself, and with as much independence as if the boat belonged to him alone.

At daylight the next morning everybody is awake and listening to the pattering of rain upon the roof. In looking out we are greeted by a gloomy prospect. The sky is black and lowering, and the rain comes down as it only can in Florida. As we all meet together in the saloon of the boat there is nothing but disappointed and gloomy faces. We all agree that it would be madness to attempt to start on our journey on such a day, so determine to remain where we are until the weather clears off. We feel better after the determination, still better after a cup of coffee, considerably better after taking a dose of malarial medicine, and by the time Pat has informed us that breakfast is ready we feel as if a week spent with such genial host as Capt. Rose would certainly be to our advantage. After breakfast some of the party watch the working of the dredge, the Professor makes a sketch, the Colonel and myself amuse ourselves shooting at a mark to get accustomed to our rifles, and in fact everybody does as he pleases, even to our cook Caesar, who gets royally drunk. By 12 o'clock the weather begins clearing, and procuring a pair of field glasses, I mount to the top of the dredge, to view the surrounding country. On both the east and west side of the land now in process of being drained, is a thick and heavily timbered pine woods, a prairie of about one-half mile intervening between the woods and this land. In the distance in the woods, I see a field planted in cane. Without glasses I should say it was corn, for the cane, which is in full bloom, and tasselling, certainly to one like myself, unaccustomed to seeing cane in bloom, resembles at a distance a field of corn. This is the only cane field in sight, although I am told that there are several small fields a short distance in the interior. I obtain a stalk of the cane, which would cut for the mill about eight feet.

This cane has been growing about 12 months, and the proprietor would not begin grinding until the latter part of December when I see cane growing upon pine woods land, of the size which obtain, and on soil, if fertilized at all, is with the very soil on which I stand, I can hardly realize what the

difference will be when all the vast area of land I see before me, under proper hands, is put in the same product. I have neglected to say, in speaking of the lands just drained and being drained, that the future settler will have no difficulty in clearing, as there is not a tree to remove, and only such brush as may spring up in the next few months. From \$25 to \$50 per acre will be saved in that respect.

Suddenly the sun bursts from the clouds and the whole scene is transformed. All is soon hurry and bustle. Capt. Rose orders steam raised on the steamer as he intends taking us back to the mouth of the Kissimmee river, from which point we leave in our boats tomorrow morning. Capt. Andrews goes below to superintend the ducking of our cook, Caesar, who is still drunk, and the remainder of the crowd begin putting our traps in order. On arriving at the mouth of the river a camp ground is selected, tents are pitched, fires lighted, and Caesar, looking piously inclined and very damp, goes to work to give us our first taste of his skill as a cook. Capt. Andrews, wishing to try the excellence of a new "spinner", among the fish, we get in one of the boats and row down the river, with the "spinner" glistening in the water, which is as clear as crystal, about 10 yards from the stern of our boat. "Stand from under", yells Capt. Andrews, and looking behind, I witness for the first time in my life, the fight for his life, of the gamest fish which swims to-wit: The black bass. Darting from side to side, the line cutting through the water like a knife, never allowing it to slacken for a second, he is hauled to the side of the boat, and the captain his face red from the exertion, and his fingers tingling from the cutting of the line, lands safely in the bottom of the boat our first fish of the expedition, which we find, upon putting him in the scales, weighs just  $10\frac{1}{4}$  pounds. Our oarsmen send the boat skimming through the water, and ere a quarter of a mile has been passed over a dozen fine bass lay in the boat, and we begin our return to camp. Another and another is hauled over our gunwale, until we begin to feel the fish must be a foot thick at the bottom of the river. As I step from the boat to the shore, I feel for the first time in my life, I have had half an hour of such fishing as I have often heard, and read of, but never seen or experienced. In one short half hour, by actual weight, with one single line, we had caught 108 pounds of fish. Caesar is an important personage tonight, to judge from the numerous private interviews held with him by the members of the party, every one of whom thinks he alone knows the most artistic and delicate mode of cooking bass. He certainly tries to please everybody, for when supper is announced the delicious flavor of fried, broiled, baked and stewed fish brings a heavenly smile upon

the face of each and every one. Bottles of different sauces are opened, every man receives his tin plate, cup, knife and fork, and beneath the spreading branches of a large oak we sit down, a merry and happy party, to partake of our first supper in camp. Capt. Rose had insisted on our remaining that night on the boat, which was moved to the bank in front of us, but we had concluded to "break everything in" as soon as possible, and no better opportunity could have been offered to find out what, if anything, had been overlooked or forgotten for our voyage. Sam Maxwell, better known as "Mac", our head man, an old campaigner, has everything in charge, and knowing that on his devoted head will fall most of the blame if anything is missing or wanting, he stirs things around lively looking for the different articles required. By 10 o'clock Mac reports everything is all right, and if Capt. R. in the future, when taking an inventory of the furniture, etc., of his steamer should find it minus a few articles, I hope he won't lay it on Mac. Caesar also reports his department correct, with nothing lacking. Pipes are filled for the last time, and ere another hour is passed all are sleeping soundly upon our beds of green moss, dreaming of tomorrow's journey.

Everybody is awake at 4 O'clock, and, after getting our morning coffee, the men begin packing the boats; Capt. Andrews arranges fishing tackle, the Professor sharpens his pencils and prepares his paper for sketching, while the Colonel and myself clean our guns and load cartridges for a day's shooting. Capt. Rose, accompanied by Mr. Cowden, reporter for the *Jacksonville Union*, will sail with us for a day or two, so his men, too, are busy packing his little yacht, the "Cary", with a week's provisions. At daylight Caesar announces breakfast, and, with appetites sharpened by our early rising, we soon demolish what is set before us. As the last blanket is rolled up and strapped, and the last box stowed away in the boats, the two oarsmen in each boat take their places and announce all ready. We take a last farewell of the steward of the steamer Okeechobee, and we somehow feel as if it was bidding farewell to civilization, step on board of our different boats, and as the captain cries in stentorian tones, "All aboard for the Gulf of Mexico", our boats are shoved off, the oarsmen bend to their work, and we go whirling down the swift-running Kissimmee, and with as much excitement and pleasure depicted in our faces as if we were a parcel of schoolboys turned loose, instead of four men with faces upon which old Father Time has already begun to put his mark, and whose heads are fast becoming like old Uncle Ned's—barefooted on top.

The Kissimmee, from where it leaves Lake Tohopotaliga until it enters at the same point as the canal and comes into Lake Cypress within a few



hundred yards of where the canal comes into said lake. The canal will be  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles, and the river is 15, so one may judge of the crookedness of the stream. The river, previous to the dredging of the canal, was navigable, so far as depth of water was concerned, for small steamers about 4 feet, but since the canal has lowered the waters of the lake the river is hardly navigable for small boats, and ere many months go by, the Kissimmee river, between Lakes Cypress and Tohopotaliga, will be a thing of the past, leaving naught behind to remind one of the past existence except the line of willows and oaks, which fringe its banks, and a dry bed of white sand which once was its bottom.

The Kissimmee river at this point is hardly thirty feet wide, but crooked and narrow as it is, still it is a beautiful little stream, with its clear and sparkling water, soft and sweet to the taste—so different from some of the other rivers of this State, whose waters are so impregnated with lime that it reminds one more of some nauseous dose of medicine than anything else. The trees upon the banks are small and stunted, but if any deformity or ugliness exists in their construction it is hid by the mass of flowering vines which have twined themselves around their trunks, crept from branch to branch, until from top to bottom it is clothed in a lining green, with here and there a white, purple or crimson flower, peeping forth between the leaves, which add an additional beauty to the scene. Large white water lilies upon their slender green stems line the shores, and it seems almost a sacrilege as the oars of the boatmen in their swift strokes crush and bury them beneath the water, and we see them rise to the surface in our wake, crushed and disfigured beyond recognition.

“Here comes a flock of ducks”, says the Colonel, in an excited tone, and in a second both he and myself, with guns in hand, the men resting on their oars, are gazing at a large flock of mallards coming right toward us. Nearer and nearer they come, and when within 20 yards we fire together, both of us emptying both barrels of our guns ere we cease. The splashing in the water of the wounded ducks in the marsh tell us we have bagged some. The Colonel says he is certain we have killed at least 20, and I am more certain we have killed 30. The high marsh grass covered with water “hide our game” from view. We have no water dog to bring it to us, so we give Caesar, our cook a dose of “antidote for snake bite”, and tumble him overboard. We hear him splashing around in the marsh and in about 10 minutes he reappears with one duck. He says it is all he can find, and we begin using some very polite language to him. In fact, we insinuated that he never descended from any of George Washington’s old family servants, etc. We

give him another drink, as his teeth are chattering like castanets, and send him back. Another 10 minutes pass, and back he comes with two more, which he swears are all. We don't believe him, haul out the bottle, and send him back grinning again. Five minutes more, and two more ducks are added to the pile. Caesar looks serious, as we again haul out the bottle and insist on one more search. Once more he primes himself against snake bites, and is rewarded by a single duck. Either Caesar has had enough to drink, there are no more ducks, or he don't want the bother of cooking and cleaning any more, for no persuasion can induce him to try it again, so we haul him aboard and continue our course.

By 10 o'clock we find ourselves on the border of Lake Cypress, quite a pretty sheet of water, about seven or eight miles long, and five or six miles in breadth. Here we join the other boats which are waiting for us, and as there is a stiff breeze blowing across the lake, we lay aside our oars and at once begin getting ready sails for a small size regatta of our own. At the word, all the sails are hoisted, and off we go together. Before a mile is passed, Capt. Rose in his yacht draws ahead, and we are compelled to acknowledge defeat in that quarter, but there is one consolation—we forge ahead of the Crescent and dance merrily over the waves in the direction of the Kissimmee river, which resumes its course on the South shore of Cypress Lake. A cool north wind is blowing, the sun shining brightly, the atmosphere clear, cool and exhilarating, and with the incitement of our impromptu boat race, there is not a man in the party that does not feel the pleasurable excitement, caused by his surroundings. After a delightful sail of three-quarters of an hour we find ourselves once more in the Kissimmee river. Lowering sails, for it is impossible to sail in this crooked river, oars are resumed, and, with a swift current to aid us, we are soon floating down stream at the rate of about seven miles an hour. The river is somewhat similar in appearance to that portion we have just left, except that no trees are growing upon the borders, and all the land is covered with water to a depth of from one to two feet, with marsh weeds growing to a height of six or eight feet. Capt. Andrews once more unwinds his "spinner" and gets ready for slaughter among the finny tribe. The fish are so plentiful we do not begin fishing until evening, as we wish them to be alive and fresh when we arrive in camp.

Before the fishing commences we anchor one boat and wait for the others to come alongside that we may eat our noonday lunch. The others fall into line with alacrity, and after passing around the tin cups together with "a

five-gallon keg of nails", we soon discuss the merits of canned corn beef, boiled ham and crackers. We miss our coffee, but there is no dry land to build a fire on, so we do without. Lunch finished, we are once more off, with the captain watching his spinner, which is trolling behind the boat. He does not watch long ere his labors are rewarded by a fine bass. He continues to pull them out until we arrive on the borders of Lake Hachinaha, when finding that there are enough fish for a regiment we throw about half of them back into the water, hoist our sails, and are once more enjoying a sail over the waters of Lake Hachinaha, about the size and similar in appearance to Lake Cypress. The marsh extends to the waters of the lake as far as the eye can reach, with a few trees to mark the borders. Both Lakes Cypress and Hachinaha are quite shallow, and it is the intention of the Drainage Company to drain the first-named lake perfectly dry, and to do the same to the second named lake as far as practicable. The lands between and around these lakes are identical with those of Lake Tohopotaliga.

We once more enter the Kissimmee river on the southern shore of Lake Hachinaha, about 2 o'clock p.m., and after a pull of a few miles we reach our camp ground for the night, which is a high hummock, situated upon the banks of the river, owned by a Mr. McQuade. On landing we walk up the banks, and find ourselves in a thick woods of oak, ash, gum, interspersed with cabbage palm. This piece of land is considered one of the most valuable tracts within many miles. No one is living here, but I understand that the owner, who is a western man, is soon to begin clearing, and planting an orange grove. While Caesar is building his fire, and the men cleaning fish and picking the ducks, rifles and guns are taken from the boats, and we will start off into the woods to try and kill a turkey or deer. Capt. Andrews accompanies your correspondent to assist in bring home his game. After walking about one-quarter of a mile in the woods, we come upon an old Indian camp, consisting of seven or eight palmetto shanties. This is one of their summer camps. During the winter they go further South, in and around the Everglades, for the purpose of hunting. The bones and antlers of deer which lay scattered around attest the excellence of the surrounding country as a hunting ground. The captain and myself feeling very tired from our great exertion of walking a quarter of a mile, conclude it is a bad day for hunting and return to camp to see how supper is coming on. The first to come in from the hunt, as night approaches, is the reporter of the Jacksonville *Union*, who has killed nothing, but has found a large highland terrapin, which is turned over to Caesar to be transformed into a turtle

stew. A little later Col. Hopkins returns with a fine gobbler, and congratulations have hardly ceased, when Capt. Rose appears, and suspended between him and one of his men, on a pole, is as fine a buck as we ever saw. Words are inadequate to express our feelings of satisfaction, so we haul out the tin cup, and the keg of nails, and all smile sweetly. The turkey is picked, the deer skinned and cut up, fresh logs thrown on the fire, and we prepare to watch the busy fingers of Caesar prepare our supper. The ducks are already roasted, the fish cooking and soon Mac has rigged a spit and before a hot wood-fire is turning a haunch of venison, while on the other side is the turkey keeping it company. We are all hungry, but such a supper is worth waiting for, and so to pass off the time pipes are lighted and I wager that a happier or merrier party the Florida oaks beneath which we sit never saw before.

At 10 o'clock Caesar announces the first course on the table, and twelve hungry men set to work in earnest. We drop the curtain, and when we raise it again two hours later all is quiet in camp except Caesar, who is washing dishes, and an occasional snore from the Professor's side of the tent. Twelve pairs of eyes are closed in sleep, and so they will remain until daylight, unless the Captain wakes up and catches the Professor snoring, and then we are certain to have our usual row, and the whole camp waked in consequence.

[FEBRUARY 5, 1883] We are a lazy crowd on the morning of 30th November, and the sun is shining brightly as we open our eyes, and meet the smiling face of Caesar with the coffee pot in one hand, and a tin cup in the other, and I admonish it is time to get up. We take our coffee, make our toilet (which means putting on our hats, and sauntering toward the river tin basin in hand, and towell and soap in the other), and join the group who are waiting around the campfire for Caesar to dish up the breakfast. The remains of our sumptuous repast of the night before await us, and when we finish that morning meal, I guarantee to say Caesar will have but few remnants to gather up to add to our lunch basket for that day.

When we start from Lake Tohopotiliga, it was understood we are to branch off from Lake Kissimmee and visit Lake Rosalie and Walking Water, which are connected with Lake Kissimmee or a small river or creek, but finding it would cause a delay of at least six days, we determined to keep on our course; so, with a great deal of reluctance, we informed Capt. Rose of our determination. In so doing, we will be compelled to part company with him and Mr. Cowden, reporter for the Jacksonville *Union*, the Captain being

compelled to visit those two lakes on business connected with the Drainage Company.

By 9 o'clock tents are struck, blankets packed up, and everybody is stirring around to assist in getting the boats loaded. We are not exactly "in harness" yet, for things do not work smoothly, the men do not yet understand their different duties, etc., but when Capt. Andrews has finished his fatherly talk to Caesar, turned the white of his eyes in the direction of Mac., picked up the "keg of nails" and stepped on board the Crescent, we feel that all is serene, and that little trouble will be experienced in the future. As each boat is loaded the oarsmen push off from shore, and the voyage is resumed.

From the time we leave McQuiag's hummock until we reach Lake Kissimmee, we find no difficulty of navigation, the river being over 100 feet wide, deep and not quite so crooked as yesterday. Still we are unable to sail and depend upon our oars. The morning is quite cool and overcoats are brought into requisition for the first two hours of our journey, but before eleven o'clock the sun is pouring down upon us, coats and overcoats are thrown aside and the boat's awning stretched to shield us from its rays. By 12 o'clock we reach the border of Lake Kissimmee, one of the largest lakes in Florida. The banks of this lake on the northern shore were low and marshy, with some little high land above the water. On the west and east shores there are a number of valuable tracts of land high above overflow. Of the east shore I speak from information received, as I did not visit it. As far as the eye can reach in a southerly direction, even with glasses, we are unable to discern any land, nothing meeting the view but a wide expanse of water. A stiff norther is blowing, and the whitecaps of the waves remind us more of salt water than that of an inland lake.

As we leave the river Capt. Rose lowers the sails of his yacht, casts anchor, and we come along side for the purpose of two things—taking our last lunch together and bidding farewell to pleasant and genial companions, who have been a great addition to our party, and with whom we loath to part. The best of friends must part, for after we have broken bread together, passed around the "keg of nails" and received the wishes of our friends for our success on our present undertaking, the sails of our little boats are hoisted, headed to the south, and ere an hour passed the little yacht, sailing in a westerly direction, is but a speck upon the water.

We have no pilot to guide us, and are dependent entirely upon maps drawn, (as we find out by experience) more from imagination than from any real knowledge of actual surveys, and are therefore compelled to head closely

to the shore, for fear of passing the point at which the Kissimmee river resumes its course. At 3 o'clock, finding ourselves opposite a point of land which is covered with cabbage-palm trees, we land our boats for the purpose of having a cup of coffee made. We find ourselves on a narrow strip of land running right through the marsh to the pine-woods in the distance. After the fire is extinguished, Capt. Andrews brings from his boat a half dozen fine bass, which he suggests should be cooked. A haunch of venison from the buck killed the night before is exposed to our view by Mac and visions of broiled bass and juicy steaks compel us to give additional orders to Caesar, and, instead of the hot cup of coffee, bread and butter, which we intended to take and then resume our journey, we sit down to a dinner fit for the gods. The 15 minutes that we had allotted to the making of our coffee have been extended to two hours, as we once more hoist sail and continue our search for the river. As the sun is sinking, we find ourselves once more floating down the Kissimmee, peering anxiously across the marsh, which, covered by water from a depth from two to three feet, is the only marsh to show us the channel of the river. We look in vain for some friendly clump of trees in the distance, under which we may pitch our tents for the night. Nothing meets the eye but sky, marsh and water, without a foot of dry land in sight. Night comes upon us, and we feel that our chances are slim of discovering the few feet of dry land that we require, in the almost Egyptian darkness which surrounds us, even though it might be near. We cannot sleep in our boats, and the oarsmen prefer pulling to sitting up all night in the boat, so we row ahead, hoping each minute to discover dry land. Every once in a while our boat crushes in among the tall cane, which, as far as we can discern in the darkness, covers the shores and fills the marsh grass, and we experience a great deal of difficulty in keeping the channel.

About 12 o'clock we are aroused from our sleepy state by a noise a few yards ahead of us, which in our half unconscious condition we think is the paddlewheels of some large steamer beating toward us and bearing swiftly down upon us. We do not stop to argue the question with ourselves or anybody else, but head our boat for the shore and are soon stuck fast in the canes, and with a long breath of relief of having escaped impending danger we wait for the supposed steamer to pass. The noise of churning and splashing water continues, but we see no lights, and as we gathered together our scattered senses, the absurdity of a steamer being on those waters strikes us, and if a light could have been flashed upon the faces in our boat, I am afraid a sheepish looking crowd would have appeared. In our rest on the shore,

we had not neglected to give the command to the Crescent which is in our rear to pull for the shore also, and we soon hear above the terrific noise in our front the voice of Capt. Andrews quoting scriptural phrases with vehemence worthy of the call, as he calls for our boat and wants to know "What in the thunder is the matter" with us. We explain the matter as well as we are able, which is no sooner done than a lantern is lighted from atop the Crescent and flashed across the water ahead, and we find out the cause of our alarm. We have struck a rookery of water-fowl, and the water ahead is a moving mass of the feathered tribe, flapping their wings and beating the water, without giving forth a single sound from their throats. They do not attempt to fly until our boats are among them, and then it seems as if pandemonium had broken loose. As they rise they strike against the boatsmen's oars, and the mast of our boat, and we actually feel the touch of their wings as they bring their upward flight toward the banks, and then light among the reed and cane, to resume their perches in the water after we pass. By the light which streams across the river from our bow we are able to discern a dozen different varieties of the crane specie. The common white and blue cranes, the egrets with their long beautiful white plumes, flamingoes, curlews, and the water turkey, are among the varieties we note in their hurried flight. A few hundred are passed, and by the noise we hear in our rear we know that they have once more settled down in security upon their watery beds, and are making night hideous.

The little adventure has chased all inclination of sleep from our eyes, and our oarsmen strike out with new vigor, hoping each moment to find dry land. At 2 o'clock the moon rises, as it lights its shed over the surrounding country we see, to our joy, three palm trees, a few hundred yards ahead, which to us is a sure indication of dry land. Landing our boats is but the work of a few seconds and we find ourselves on a high bluff bank, and our feet once more touched *terra firma*. We are too wearied and tired to do aught but lay ourselves on our blankets and go to sleep and when the sun rose next morning it found a quiet camp. At eight o'clock everybody is awake and hurrying up the cook for breakfast. After taking a survey of our night's camp ground, we came to the conclusion that there is certainly a better one somewhere ahead, and so conclude to take a hurried breakfast, push on to some more desirable place and there camp until the following morning, hoping by the worst to recover from our 75-mile journey of the night and day just passed. So off we start, after a cup of coffee, and we are once more floating down between marshy banks, the Captain amusing him-



self with pulling out black bass, while Col. Hopkins and myself are using our guns to some effect on the ducks, which at almost every turn of the river allow us to approach without fear until we get to within shooting distance. Many are wounded, and once they get in among the tall marsh grass we give them up, but many more we safely housed in the bottom of our boat. At 9 o'clock we land at the most beautiful high hummock we have yet seen on our journey. Tying our boats to the trunk of a tree on the water's edge we go to the bank, when to our amazement we find ourselves on the borders of a most beautiful, highly cultivated and at the same time extensive orange and lemon grove. A small house was in process of construction in the middle of the grove, the carpenter's tools lying scattered about, and everything looking as if the women must be somewhere near, but all our calling and noise failed to unearth a living soul. Needing some lemons, to be used for Capt. Andrews' sore throat, and the Professor, who will get dry in spite of the soft, sweet and delightfully tasting water of the Kissimmee river, we gather about a bushel of lemons having the card of "Prof. H., correspondent Harper's Magazine," stuck to a tree, take to our boats, and continue our voyage, as the owner on his return might object to so large a party camping in his orange grove. We learn afterward that the owner had gone out on a hunting expedition down the river, to kill pink curley, which sell to a taxidermist, in Jacksonville, for \$5 a piece.

A five-mile row brings us to another "hummock," high above the river, heavily wooded, with the exception of a small clearing of a few acres, which some enterprising settler has already cleared, and where, from the young orange trees being set out, we will expect in a few years to see a flourishing orange grove instead of the present wilderness. Determining to go no further for that day, the tents are pitched under the trees, and our dinner, as well as breakfast, is in process of preparation. While waiting, the Colonel, Professor and myself take our guns and go on an exploring expedition through the adjoining woods. The Professor may not be either a good fisherman or a hunter after game, but there is one thing sure—when he puts his spectacles high on his nose and takes a bee-line through the woods, he will be certain to discover some Indian mound, unearth some relic of a past age, or find some tree or flower of surprising beauty in his eyes. At first, in the beginning of our journey, we referred to the Professor for information as to the main species, etc., of the different beautiful flowers we saw on every side, with Latin phrases and names which would have dislocated our jaws to pronounce, the Colonel and myself decided to ask no more questions, for fear

of displaying our ignorance on such matters, and thereby gaining the pity, if not the contempt of the Professor. We mutually agreed to swallow everything the Professor says and never to ask questions. On this particular day we do not go far, ere the Professor spies a slight elevation of the ground, and with the explanation that he was sure it was an Indian mound, he rushes in the direction of his beloved object while we continue our work. Coming to the edge of the woods we see a short distance ahead of us quite a neat and comfortable residence, situated on the edge of the prairie intervening between the "hummock" and pine woods in the distance. On arriving at the house we find not a living soul in sight, but the chickens and the ducks in the yard tell us quite plainly that the absence of the owner is only temporary. We return to our camp by a different route, and in passing through a small clearing we see a man at work, and make towards him. Strangers must be an unusual sight, for he continues to stare at us until we arrive in speaking distance. We are informed that the owner and family left for church that morning, and will be back home some time during the following week. We conclude that going to church in that country must mean something.

After making a few inquiries about the backcountry, which we are informed is pine-woods for hundreds of miles, and "mighty pore lands for craps," we continue our course toward the camp. We are hardly 20 yards from the scene of our conversation, on our way across the open field, when we notice a tremendous gobbler running in front of us. I pull my gun up to shoot, but the Colonel interfered with my aim by yelling, "Don't shoot, it is a tame turkey" and although I miss, that turkey rises in the air and flies away, despite the fact that the Colonel takes a shot at him with his rifle and I get another one in. We find utter relief by giving vent to our feelings in language remarkably mild but very plain. It is my first chance for a wild turkey since our journey began, and I feel very sore over my failure. The Colonel consoles me by telling of the number we will see ere our journey is completed. It is poor consolation, and although before we reached our destination I see many a one fall before my gun, still, to this day I remember with anything but pleasure the terrible failure of that day.

On returning to camp we find Caesar smiling and ready to dish up dinner. Our morning's row down the river has given us all an appetite, and we sit down to our dinner of fish, dried venison and cold ham, and eat with a relish only acquired after a few days' camping in the open air. After dinner the Professor exhibits his specimens, found in his search through the woods, which consists of bones and various specimens of rocks, flowers, etc.

We leave him in his glory, and Col. H., Capt. A., and myself take refuge from the hot sun under an adjacent tree, to discuss the programme for the next day's journey. Unintentionally the Colonel, in his remarks, casts a reflection upon the speed of the "Crescent," under the command of Capt. Andrews. Immediately the Captain is up in arms, and the storm of words which ensues bring all the men around us. The matter is compromised by a race the following day, to last for twelve hours, a "go-as-you-please" affair. The men seem to partake of the excitement, and the Captain, assisted by his crew, has his boat pulled on shore, turned over, and all go to work to soak her bottom, and in various other ways get her ready for the race. Our boat is all right, so we amuse ourselves offering suggestions to the Captain and the Professor in the arrangement of their boat, which the Professor treats with contempt, and the Captain answers in language only seen occasionally in scripture. Night soon comes upon us, and every man arranges his seat around our brightly burning campfire, and prepares for the evening talk. It was a pleasant camp, and the sharp contrast between the dark background of the forest in our rear and the river at our feet, shining brightly in the starlight as it glides swiftly on its course to the great Okeechobee, add an additional charm to the scene. Pipes are lighted, anecdotes related and by 12 o'clock Caesar passes around the sugar dish and the tin cups; each man selects a lemon and for a few minutes the clinking of the metal spoons against the cups as the sugar and lemon are mixed, is all the sound heard. One by one we all pay a visit to the roots of a large oak in our rear, where the medicine chest is lying, and return with smiling faces to lie down upon our mossy beds.

Before the sun rises upon the horizon next morning, we are moving swiftly down the Kissimmee, the Captain who has got the start of us, is a short distance in front. The clear, cool, morning air is very refreshing, and we note with interest the beauty of the scenery, changing at every turn of the river. As we leave our camp of the night before, our course lies between high banks covered with a thick forest of oak, which only lasts for a mile or two, when we are again passing between marshy banks, which at first glance remind us more of high green walls, with the different flowering vines having interwoven themselves so thickly among the reeds, and scrub trees that it is impossible for the eye to penetrate the thickness. The morning sun has not yet withered or marred the freshness of the beautiful tropical flowers of every imaginable hue and beauty of form, which peeked forth through this living wall. Once in a while we see an opening about two feet high, look-

ing as if cut by the hand of man, and it takes but little imagination to fancy it the entrance to the bower of some water sprite, but we on our journey have learned a different lesson, and as we approach this sylvan bower our men rest on their oars, and we glide silently down the river until opposite, when the changes are 99 out of 100 that the two bullets from our rifles leaves one less alligator to answer to his name at roll-call. On all sides of us at times these huge monsters are to be seen floating on the water, or lying quietly on the banks sunning themselves. During the early morning we leave them unmolested, unless one is particularly bold, and use our shotguns among the ducks and jacksnipe; at about 11 or 12 o'clock shotguns are laid aside and with rifles we play havoc among the alligators. They are bold and fearless, and in several instances have been known to attack a single man. They are so seldom molested and shot that the crack of our rifles do not disturb them, unless a bullet takes effect, and then if not killed dead make things lively around them for awhile.

At 10 o'clock we overhaul the Crescent, which is moored to the bank of quite a pretty little island covered with a growth of palm and oak trees, the Captain and crew lying exhausted from their morning's work under the shade of a tree. We hear, as we land beside them, murmurs, both loud and weak, about somebody having stolen the lunch they had prepared the night before, and something about having a cup of coffee. Everyone in our boat is quite willing to lose the time necessary to make a cup of coffee, so we also land, and Caesar soon has spread before us the missing lunch belonging to the Crescent, as well as our own. We smile as we notice the peculiar look Captain Andrews gives Caesar as he recognizes his missing lunch. He asks for no explanation from Caesar, but about 10 minutes afterwards, we heard a splashing in the water, and upon looking in the direction of the river we see the Captain standing on the bank, shaking his fist and quoting Scripture to a black and befogged object just emerging from the water, whom we recognize as Colonel Caesar Weeks (colored). A few minutes afterwards we are once more pulling down the stream, the Crescent far in the rear, and Caesar grinning as he remarked: "I made dat captain stop and wait fo us, when he found dat somebody done stole his lunch." He also remarked that "He was sorter careless in goin' so near de ribber dis mornin', specially as de captin was so near behind him."

At 2 o'clock, after passing numerous small hummocks bordering on the river, we come to one containing about fifty acres, with high bluff banks and covered with large and majestic oaks. It is the highest point of ground we

have yet seen, and we have little difficulty in recognizing it, upon reference to our maps, as one of the most celebrated spots of ground during the Indian War of Florida.

Here it is that Micco, an Indian chief, celebrated in his tribe for his great bravery and strategy in war, assembled his warriors, determined to make his last stand against the soldiers before taking to the impenetrable fastness of the Everglades. From this point we find, after climbing up the banks, that a perfect view is attained of all the surrounding country. A huge oak stands upon the bank, towering high above all the others. We can see where, many years ago, the limbs were cut off to give an unimpeded view of the surrounding country, and in the body of the tree are the remains of steps cut in the wood to place the feet in when climbing. Taking a field-glass, I climb to the top of the tree, and obtain a perfect view of the whole country through which we have passed that day. The fire we lighted to cook our breakfast was plainly seen in the distance about five or six miles, although we have come at least twenty-five miles by the river. No wonder Micco selected this spot for a lookout, for anyone approaching by water, coming either from the north or south, could be seen plainly for 12 hours before they arrive. Looking south we see the Kissimmee river, winding like a snake between its marshy banks, until our view is obstructed by a hummock through which it passes and is lost to sight. We select this distant hummock as our camp ground for the night, get down with some difficulty from our lofty perch, take a shotgun and wander into the woods in search of game. We do not go far before we come upon an abandoned Indian camp, which from evidence around it has been occupied in the last few days. We continue our walk until we come to the edge of the woods and find ourselves gazing across an open prairie four or five miles wide on which numerous herds of cattle are grazing. We also see a herd of deer about half a mile from us, but we have not time to spend a couple of hours in an attempt to call within a shooting distance. A shot from Col. Hopkin's gun in the woods tells us that he has found some game, and when, a few moments afterward, we find him, a couple of wild turkeys lying dead at his feet attest his skill as a marksman.

We return to the camp fire where we find Caesar with dinner ready, and the crew of the Crescent, which has just arrived, lying under the shade of a tree, resting from their morning's work. The Captain gives up the wager, and as there is nothing mean about the Col. and myself we call on Caesar for the "keg of nails", wish the Captain better luck next time, and then hide

our blushing faces behind our shiny tin cups. The captain will always imagine that he would have won the race if Caesar had not stolen his lunch, for compelling him to wait for us or travel all day without anything to eat. Caesar always smiles, and looks innocent when anything is said about the race, but for several days thereafter, he keeps out of the way of the Captain.

Dinner is soon disposed of, and our journey resumed. Two hours rowing brings us to the mouth of Istoktoga creek, which is the only outlet to Pokpoga lake, for a large sheet of water, lying twelve to fifteen miles westward of us. We are very successful on this day in shooting ducks and snipe, and when we go into camp, about an hour before dark, we are proud of the array of game lying in front of our campfire. According to our own calculation and the maps, we have traveled over 80 miles, the greatest distance traveled in one day since we began our journey.

As we land we are met by a man on horseback, who, having seen our boats approaching, waits for us to come up. A house in the distance, he tells us, belongs to a Mr. Daugherty, quite a large stock owner; in fact, all the workmen in this country attempt to do nothing else except raise cattle and hogs.

After supper we are visited by several of the residents. We received pressing invitations to visit their houses, and remain several days, which we are reluctantly compelled to decline, except as regards Mr. Daugherty, we have an engagement to visit him next morning for the purpose of inspecting one of the largest Indian mounds in south Florida. We gather from our visitors a great deal of valuable information as to the surrounding country, and the journey that lies before us.

A good supper, followed by a good nights rest, and we rise at daylight feeling perfectly refreshed and ready for our day's journey. After breakfast we visit Mr. Daugherty and are introduced to his family. Mr. D. is busy killing hogs, and on inspecting the lot in the pen waiting their turn to be transferred into bacon, I noticed they were all jet black in color. To my surprise, Mr. Daugherty informed me that no other species could be raised in that section on account of the paint root or warm pea, which is shaped similar to a carrot, both ten times hotter than tap water, and any person coming into contact with bare feet, is affected with a burning sensation, worse than itch, for which there is no relief. White or spotted hogs lose their hoofs, whether from eating or coming in contact with it I was unable to learn. The black hogs keep fat upon it and are not affected at all by contact.

The Indian mound that we have come to visit, we find about 200 yards from the house. It is about 40 feet high and about 80 feet at its base, built of white sand, and covered with a stunted growth of trees. Some gentlemen from the Smithsonian Institute visited this mound last year, and dug into it for about eight feet, their search being rewarded by quite a number of relics. I obtained several relics myself, consisting of beads, three pieces of silver, and a small ornament, round in shape, about the size of an acorn, and hollow, so corroded with rust and age that the species of metal it is made of I have as yet been unable to determine. To tell the truth, not being much of an antiquarian, I have taken very little interest in the relics, and they still lie at the bottom of my trunk. Numbers of skulls and bones lie scattered around in the sand. The remains of a canal, running in the direction of the river, is plainly to be seen, and I suppose that the land of which this mound is built is the same which was dug up in its construction. Whether in digging the canal they had any other object than to obtain the material for the mound I know not, and leaving the problem to be solved by some more scientific mortal than your correspondent.

Before leaving we are presented with a basket of fresh eggs and several chickens, which we accept with many thanks. We return to our boats, find tents struck and everything ready for departure; so bidding farewell to our new friends, we pass around the tin cups, smile at Caesar as he solemnly pauses before each individual with the "keg of nails" under his arm, his polite invitation of "Drive a nail in yer coffin, sar," causing a look of surprise to show itself upon the face of our new friends, step on board our boats, push off from shore, and are soon rowing swiftly down the river, our oarsmen keeping time with their oars to the singing of the Professor in our rear, the only words of his song distinguishable being something about "Johnny fill up the bowl."

We are now about 125 miles from Lake Okeechobee, and ere two more suns shall set we hope to be sailing over its surface.

[FEBRUARY 10, 1883] A run of 10 miles on the morning of December 3 brings us to Fort Bassinger, so named from it having been used during the Indian War as a depot of supplies for the army. For a long time after it was abandoned by the government the surrounding country was without a single inhabitant, but such a magnificent grazing country could not remain forever without an occupant, and so one by one the stockmen were attracted, and moved in the neighborhood, until the space of six or seven miles there are at least a dozen families now residing. We were in hopes of finding a



postoffice here, or some means of communicating with family and friends, but there was none and no chance of getting a letter to the nearest post-office under two weeks, so half-dozen letters were torn up and thrown aside, and we were all soon seated in the little country grocery which this place boasts, listening to the proprietor, who gives us some valuable information about our route. The proprietor is a gentleman by the name of Pierce about 59 or 60 years of age, who is an old settler, and has seen a great deal of frontier life. Being a man of intelligence and education we listen to him with interest and attention. We visit his garden, which is quite an expensive one, and in it we find ripe tomatoes, beans, peas, watermelons, green corn, Irish and sweet potatoes, and other varieties of vegetables, growing luxuriantly and bearing in profusion. All this we see on the 3rd. day of December, when in the northern portion of the State frost and ice are the order of the day. We have not yet passed the frost line, for our entertainer says he has seen vegetation killed many times since he came here to live. We accept with thanks, a large basket of vegetables for the use of our party.

We see no fruit trees planted, but Mr. Pierce informed us that now that there were in a short time being opened a communication from the Gulf to Kissimmee City, that he intends planting quite a large grove of orange, lemon and pineapple on his land, which is high hummock, the soil very rich. Being anxious to push on, we are compelled to decline Mr. P.'s invitation to spend the night with him, and wend our way to our boats. As we reach them we find Caesar with true hospitality has forestalled us by making preparations to offer Mr. P. hospitality by placing upon the bow of the boat that delapidated "keg of nails," surrounded by his attendant tin cup. With many kind wishes for a successful voyage, and admonition from Mr. P. to beware of sleeping too near the waters edge when in the vicinity of alligators, we push off from shore, and are once more riding down the river.

For the first five miles we note a great deal of high hummock land but a short distance from the bank of the river on the west side. Pine woods extend backward as far as the eye can reach. After traveling about 10 miles we come to a beautiful camp ground, high hummock composed of large oaks and tall palms, and a good landing for our boats, and as we have adopted a rule never to pass a good camp ground after 1 o'clock in the evening, our boats are headed for the shore and all the men are soon busy arranging camp for the night.

An open field lies on our left of about 40 acres, and about a quarter of a mile distance we see quite a neat house and outbuildings. Taking our

guns, we saunter across the field in the direction of the house. We have not gone many yards before we come upon a flock of partridges feeding in front of us, seemingly undisturbed by our approach. I take the first shot at the birds on the ground, and the Colonel stands ready with cocked gun to shoot them as they fly. Although I kill several at the first fire, the rest remain huddled up together, and I take a second shot with the remaining charge in my gun with some effect, they still remained huddled together attempting neither to fly nor run. The Colonel steps in my place and opens fire on them with both barrels of his guns, the few remaining birds, instead of flying, begin running across the corn rows in the direction of the woods. We kill several more as they run in front of us, we count our game and find that we have killed twenty-three birds. I will state here, that after passing Fort Bassinger, although we fired into numerous flocks of partridges, and killed many before our journey ended yet in not one single instance would they fly or attempt to move until after the third or fourth shot. We come across one more flock before we reach the house, and fifteen more birds are added to our bag. On arriving at the house we are received in a very hostile manner by a big bobtailed crop-eared "yaller dog," who, after a few preliminary barks, drops in our rear, and while we are opening conversation with a man seated on the fence, he (the "yaller dorg") tests the thickness of the Colonel's "unmentionables," and being a dog of noble birth, he bites high. We have always heard that when a man receives a bullet through his heart, he leaps in the air before he falls; but we saw a man on that occasion who wasn't shot through the heart or anywhere else, and instead of falling to the ground, he stayed on top of the fence. I am not fond of climbing fences myself, but when I do climb, I always do it quickly. We are not afraid the dog will hurt us, but we are very much afraid we will hurt the dog, as he is made to retire before we come down.

In our conversation with the man, we learn that the owner is absent. He also informs us that there are fifteen of twenty flocks of partridges that stay in the field through which we have come; that they never before had been shot at until that evening, and were so tame that they frequently fed in the yard with the chickens.<sup>9</sup>

Seeing twenty or thirty milch cows around the pen, waiting to be milked, we engage some sweet milk for supper, and start on our return to camp. On our way we came across one or two more flocks of partridges, and as a result of an hours shooting we count forty-three birds. Perhaps, as Colonel H. said, "It was unsportsmanlike to shoot birds on the ground," but as far as

I myself are concerned, I much prefer picturing myself seated before our campfire, watching Caesar broiling the same upon the coals, than banging away at a lot of flying birds, killing none, and coming to camp demoralized with an empty game bag. In fact, I, as a boy took my first lessons in shooting from an "old darkey" whose whole and only advice was to "shoot 'em in de head, shoot 'em in de tail, shoot 'em in de wing, shoot 'em anywhar, so you kill 'em," and I have never gone back on my teaching.

When we arrive at camp Colonel H. goes to work with needle and thread to repair the damages caused by the contact with the "yaller dorg," and all prepare for supper.

Moss we find in abundance, and after the tents are stretched, the interior is filled to a depth of three feet which makes a soft and comfortable bed. After our supper of ducks, fish and partridges, not forgetting a cup of rich sweet milk which is sent from the house, we all retire to our soft beds and sleep soundly until sunrise next morning.

We learn from the man we met the evening before, that this is the last house we will see on the rest of our journey until we reach civilization on the Caloosahatchee, a distance of about 225 or 250 miles. A point of timber is shown us about five miles off, which we are told is the last timber we will see and the only dry land we can camp on before reaching Lake Okeechobee. We cannot tell how far it is to Lake Okeechobee, never having been there, but think it is 100 or 125 miles.

The Colonel and myself, while the men are packing the boats, take one more turn among the partridges, and when we step on board to resume our journey half an hour afterwards, we feel that we have enough birds on hand to last for a day or two. We take our last look at civilization as we glide down the river, and our sensation is not a pleasant one in some respects. No one makes any remarks except Caesar, who in a most serious manner, suggests he "Hopes Capt. Andrews goin' to stop dat way he got of pushin' dis nigger in de ribber every chance he gits, fur fust thing he know I sure to cotch cold, and den whar is de doctor to come from?"

Our course down the river lines through the same marshy banks and the only different scene is in the increase in the number of alligators and ducks. Today we killed a large number of species of ducks quite new to me. It is a small teal, gray in color, and as fat as a butterball. Like the teal of Louisiana, they go in large flocks. They are so tame that our boat is often in the midst of a flock before they attempt to fly. We have seen but few large mallards on our journey, as we understand they prefer feeding in the

rivers near the gulf coast. We see numerous flocks of sandhill cranes but so far we have been unable to kill a single one. Nor have we been able to get a shot at a pink curlew. The common white crane, eagrets and ibis we see in numbers, and could kill at any hour of the day but we do not waste ammunition in useless slaughter. The eagret when in full plumage in the month of August, is hunted and killed for their plumes, which rivals the ostrich in beauty, are much sought after by our northern belles, during their winter sojourn in the Land of Flowers, and used to adorn hats and bonnets.

At 10 o'clock we arrive at the point of timber seen in the morning, and conclude to pitch our tents and remain there until next morning. Orders are given for unpacking both boats, which are to undergo a thorough washing and cleaning; valises are opened and contents put in the sun; provisions are inspected, in fact a general overhauling takes place and every man is soon busy at work. The Professor selects a good point for a sketch of the camp, and is soon oblivious to all surroundings; Capt. Andrews sits complacently upon a fallen tree, smoking a cigar and sewing on a missing button. So, while everybody is preoccupied, the Col. and myself, after a parting conjunction to Caesar to wash, clean and dry everything before we get back, we take our guns and start through the woods, hoping to knock over a duck or turkey. We separate after getting a short distance in the woods and each take an opposite route. After traveling a short distance the "gobbling" of a turkey puts me on my guard, and I lie down behind a tree to wait quietly until I can locate my game. As the sound comes nearer and nearer I lie quietly and await his approach. In a few minutes I see approaching a fine specimen of a gobbler, followed by two hens. Nearer and nearer they come, unconscious of danger, the male leading the way, the dark purple plumage on his breast fairly glittering in the sunlight, until they are within close shooting distance, when, after taking deliberate aim across the tree I fire at his majesty with deadly effect, and as the hens rise in the air I empty my remaining barrel and bring one of them down. I think I have done my duty for one day, so tying my two turkeys together, I take my seat on the fallen tree, light my pipe, and wait to hear the sound of the Colonel's rifle, that I may know where he is and join him, we having agreed on parting that after hunting an hour, to return to the spot at which we parted, the first to arrive to fire off his gun. Now, to tell the truth, in wandering around I have not exactly lost myself in the woods, but I certainly don't know in what direction to go to reach the rendezvous agreed on. Over an hour has passed, when the stillness of the woods is awakened by the

crack of a rifle within 50 yards of me. There is a cracking of dried twigs, a rushing of some object through the bushes, and, as I reach for my gun, a huge buck bounds within 30 feet of me, drops to the ground, attempts to rise again, and then falls back struggling. I give a whoop to notify the Colonel of his proximity to me, and he, having answered, soon joins me, and with cocked guns we approach the stricken animal, which is still struggling on the ground. We are both aware of the danger in "tackling" a wounded buck, so when we get within a few yards, we do not hesitate to give him a second bullet, which ends his career. The Colonel draws his hunting knife across the bucks throat and while we wait for him to quit bleeding, pipes are lighted, and we sit on a log and discuss the "ways and means" of getting our game to camp. Our discussion ends in cutting a short sapling, tying the bucks feet together, passing the sapling between his legs, and, with the turkeys across also, each puts an end upon his shoulder, and we trudge in the direction of camp, which we soon reach.

On our approach to camp it certainly looks like "washing day," for every bush and bunch of grass is covered with some article drying in the sun. I remark to the Colonel that Caesar is obeying to the letter instructions to wash everything in camp, from the looks of things; and it would not have surprised us to have seen the Professor and Capt. Andrews well washed and stretched out on a limb to dry. On getting into camp we hand over our game and inquire for the Captain. We are informed he is asleep in the tent, after having been fishing all the morning. We next look for the "keg of nails," which we do not find in its accustomed place in the tent, so we wake the Captain up to assist us in searching for it. He joins us in the search, but we search in vain. The Captain inquires as to the whereabouts of Caesar, and on being informed that he is on the river bank obeying our instructions of washing everything in the camp, he suggests the idea that perhaps he (Caesar) thought the "keg of nails" needed washing, and had put it among the soiled clothes. Acting upon his suggestion we start to look for Caesar. We have no difficulty in detecting his whereabouts, for from the river bank in anything but a musical voice, we hear him singing in stentorian tones the following refrain: "When de rocks begin to tumble and de elements to fall oh, sinner where will you stand!"

As we near him we take a look at the result of his labors, and oh, horrors! On every side each one of us recognizes some familiar garment we thought safely housed in our valise, that that morning nicely starched and clean we had looked at with pride, and fancied with much pleasure to don

them when we reached civilization, while now wet and steaming in the sun they lie wet and spread out before us. On one side lies the Colonel's blue cloth coat, the pride of his heart, and keeping it company is a pair of lavender colored pants belonging to the Captain. Words give but a poor expression of our feelings. The Captain's face turns red, the Colonel's pale, and both make some remark about mill-dams, etc. A few steps farther we come upon Caesar. Behind him, in reach of his hand, sits the "keg of nails," a tin cup by its side, while he, drunk as a lord, sits upon the Captain's fine ulster, the sleeves of which he is lathering with soap. We do our best to look dignified, speak calmly, but I am afraid it was a failure. He says he is obeying orders, and as we left our valises wide open he supposed we wanted the contents washed; as for the "keg of nails," he carried it with him for safe keeping during our absence, and on his word of honor as a gentleman he has not touched a drop that day. We see he is too far gone to argue with, so we gather up our delapidated effects with the remains of the "keg of nails," and sorrowfully return to the camp to get a courtmartial to try Caesar as soon as sober enough. Mac takes charge of the cooking, while Caesar rolls up in his blanket, and is innocently snoring a short distance off. Caesar's little mistake does not prevent us from enjoying our supper, and we sit around our campfire that night, the remembrance of each others face causes many a hearty laugh. Capt. Andrews describes, most graphically, how I looked and acted, which complement our return, and then we join forces, and go for the Colonel. It is 12 o'clock before we retire to our tents, and we are not long in searching for the "land of Nod."

At 4 o'clock the camp is aroused, tents struck and boats packed, while Caesar, looking as innocent as a lamb, is preparing breakfast. We all understand that if we do not reach Lake Okeechobee before dark, that we will be compelled to sleep all night in our boats, as we know it would not be too prudent to travel after dark through the country which we expect to find difficult enough by daylight. Pine wood is cut, split, and thrown in the bottom of the boat, for making torches in case of need, and after a hearty breakfast, just as the first streak of dawn appears, we push off from shore, and our men with a determination to reach Okeechobee before dark, provided it is not more than a hundred miles, turn to their oars and send our boats spinning down the swift current of the Kissimmee. We feel certain of making a hundred miles that day, if necessary, at the rate we start off; and we know our men will work as they have never worked before, rather than spend a sleepless night in our little boats, anchored in the middle of the river.

After traveling about 25 miles between marshy banks, covered by a depth of water from two to three feet, the river gets wider, and the current becomes stronger. No dry land as yet meet our eyes. A few miles further on we come to a place where the river divides itself. Which branch to take we are unable to decide, as they are equally wide and the current flows swiftly down both. Not wishing to blame ourselves in case we make a mistake, we allow Caesar to suggest which we shall take. Without hesitation he says the left hand stream is the genuine river, and to the left we go. For four or five miles we are of Caesar's opinion concerning the right course; but, alas, we are doomed to disappointment, as we suddenly come to where the stream is obstructed by lettuce, saw grass and marsh weeds, and after a few vain attempts to get through, we conclude that it is a useless waste of time, and so, with disappointed faces, we begin our toilsome row against the swift current toward the point at which the river had divided itself, for the purpose of taking the other prong. We arrive there after a while; but the men are worn out with their heavy pull against the current, so we anchor, rest, and take lunch, which consumes an hour of precious time to us.

By 1 o'clock in the afternoon we resume our voyage, the men refreshed and rested, and as we have had an opportunity of venting our ill-humor on Caesar for his mistake in taking the wrong course, we feel in much better spirits. We do not use our shotguns to-day on ducks, as we have no time to stop and pick them up; but our rifles are kept warm all day, and many an alligator's spirit winged its flight toward the "haven" from which no good alligator ever returns. Mile after mile is passed and the same vast area of marsh and water meets the eye on every side, with not a foot of dry land, and not a tree in sight to relieve the monotony of the scene around us. Hour after hour passes, and our eyes are not gladdened by a sight of the waters of the lake.

At 4 o'clock Mac volunteers to climb the mast of our boat and attempt to get a view over the tall grass, hoping to cheer us with good news, but he comes down and reports that the view is so obstructed that he can only see about a mile ahead. But one short hour lies before us for work, so calling to Capt. Andrews to come on at his leisure, as we intended pulling rapidly until sundown, hoping to either find a small spot of dry ground or reach the lake, and the men knowing what a short time lies before them, pull with renewed vigor and we shoot ahead of the Crescent, losing sight of her at the first bend in the river. Six or seven miles are passed over; the sun will in a few minutes set and we see no other fate in store for us but a miserable night



in our open boats, without even the consolation of a cup of coffee, when our boat glides around a bend of the river and hearts are gladdened and eyes greeted with our first sight of the far-famed Lake Okeechobee, the sun, like a ball of fire, resting upon its surface as if ready to sink beneath the waters, which, in our eyes and imagination, it certainly does a very few minutes afterward.

Editor's Note: The description of the remainder of this journey around the lake shore to the Caloosahatchee river and thence to Fort Myers will be printed in the 1951 *Tequesta*.