

Tequesta:

Homesteading In Florida During The 1890's

By MARY DOUTHIT CONRAD

WE MOVE TO THE LAND OF SUNSHINE

I was born and spent my childhood near Winston-Salem, N. C., the eldest of five children. My father was Edward Joseph Douthit. He had fought in the Confederate Army and been taken prisoner at the Battle of Spottsylvania Courthouse and sent with other Southerners to prison in Elmira, N. Y., where he suffered through a terrible winter. After he was released he and a buddy walked home to North Carolina and he became a farmer. When I was sixteen my mother passed away and I tried to take her place with the younger children which may be the reason they called me Sister Mary, though sometimes I was nicknamed Mamie. My three brothers were James W., Robert Steven, and John E. and my sister was Alphonsine whom we called Senie.

About the time my mother passed away Father began to suffer a great deal from rheumatism. He made a trip or two to Gulf Hammock, Florida, near the Suwanee River, in the wintertime, when he felt the worst, and the warmer climate helped him so much that he wanted to move to Florida.

The Fall of 1891 Father and my three brothers went to Gulf Hammock to look for a homestead, leaving Senie and me with my Grandmother Perry. We didn't like being left behind. We wanted our family to stay together and I wanted to look out for them.

When Father got to Florida he heard about homesteads opening up in the south end of the state. That sounded good to him so when Spring came he left the boys with our Uncle Charles Perry in Gulf Hammock and came back home to sell out. Senie and I told him that we were going to Florida with him. He thought we should stay in North Carolina with the Perrys

and be brought up as proper young ladies. We got our way but I confess there were many nights after we got to Florida that I cried my pillow wet with loneliness.

We sold most of the furniture with our home. The things that were left we packed in three large wooden cases. In one we put our treadle Singer sewing machine, our most valued possession, and around that we packed blankets and pillows. We took our bed mattresses, cooking pans, dishes, and silver. It was June, 1892, by the time we were ready to leave North Carolina. We wrote the boys we were leaving and told them to join us at Lemon City.

Father, Senie and I went to Tampa on a wood-burning train. We looked out the window curiously at the long stretches of palmettoes and pines. There were few towns and few farms. When we got to Tampa we took a steamer, the *Mascotte*, which was owned by Henry Plant, and in eighteen hours we were in Key West. There Father found a schooner, the *Emily B.*, headed for Lemon City and had our packing boxes put on board. The captain was Johnny Frow, a big suntanned man whose family of seamen fished and gathered sponges around Key West and the Bahamas. The *Emily B.* was neat and comfortable with room to sleep eight first-class passengers. There were also some deck passengers. We hit such a dead calm that we would have been standing still had it not been for the Gulf Stream. We just rode that Stream right up to Cape Florida in five days.

We came in past Cape Florida lighthouse to Biscayne Bay. I remember how the sun glinted across the water that hot Saturday morning and how we could look down and see whole meadows of seaweed. The water was very clear and most of the bay was shallow. No channels had been dug then and Government Cut did not exist. We could see a little settlement which Captain Frow told us was Coconut Grove. Farther along we passed the mouth of the Miami River where there were a few houses. The largest on the south bank was Mr. William Brickell's. We could see Ft. Dallas on the north side. When we got to Lemon City the water was deep enough so that we could come in to the long dock though the Captain told us that many times boats had to anchor out a ways and lighter in.

Our first thought was of the boys, for Johnny, the baby, was only twelve years old. Father, Senie and I walked up the dock and father asked a bystander if he had seen three boys named Douthit and he told us to go ask Willie Filer because Willie knew everybody. Mr. Filer was postmaster and he also ran a grocery store.

"Sure your boys are here," Mr. Filer said. "They got a camp all fixed up out at your homestead."

Everybody liked Willie Filer and no wonder. He borrowed a horse and wagon and hauled us and our things to the homestead which was about five miles northwest of Lemon City. The road was a sand rut that wandered through thickets of oak, across open pineland, and around the edges of little prairies.

We found the boys cutting trees and clearing a place for a house. It was so hot we were glad to stand in the shade of the thicket while the boys told us how they had come from Gulf Hammock to West Palm Beach by train and from there had walked along the beach with the barefoot mailman, paying one dollar each for the privilege. This walk took three days and they camped at night at the houses of refuge along the beach. They had walked barefoot, too, and hung their shoes over their shoulders, because the easiest walking was right at the edge of the surf where the sand was hard. The reason the mailman could charge his "passengers" was because he owned the boats without which you couldn't cross the inlets or Biscayne Bay. He didn't charge for the boys' old foxhound, Pete.

Our homestead had 160 acres. It was near an upper fork of Little River, part high pineland, where we built our house and had our grove, and part lowland. Little River at our place wasn't much of a stream and above us it petered out into the Everglades. But near where the N. E. Second Avenue bridge is today there were some large springs that made Little River fine and deep below that place.

Soon after we arrived at the homestead a woman wearing a sunbonnet came walking through the woods. I guess she was curious about us. She said she was our nearest neighbor and lived only a half mile away. She was Mrs. Pomeroy. She took a look at Senie and me and then at the single tent which the boys slept in and said, "You girls come right over and stay with me until you get a proper house." We went with her and that was a relief to Father.

Within the next few years several families acquired homesteads near ours. Others besides Mrs. Pomeroy were Ed Knowles, Joseph Dougherty, Mary and Garry Niles, Samuel Mishler, Jim and James Dexter Hubel, Ed Moffatt, Comstock Sturtevant, Fanny Tuttle and Captain Stephen Andrews. My brothers, Bob and Jim, helped build a house for Fanny Tuttle. Fanny's mother, Mrs. Julia Tuttle, frequently stopped to visit with us on the way to her daughter's homestead.

There was no sawmill in the Bay area in 1892 and lumber had to be shipped in from Cedar Keys, Florida. But we didn't need much. The boys built our house of pine logs which they cut on the homestead. They removed the bark and daubed the cracks between the logs with a mixture of lime, sand, and water, then whitewashed the daubing with a thin paste of lime and water. The house had two stories, a living room below and the space above partitioned into two bedrooms, one for father and the boys, and one for Senie and me. The steps were like a ladder. We made frames to hold the mattresses and from the packing boxes we made cupboards and tables. The windows were covered with cotton netting to keep out the mosquitoes. Father drove a pipe a few feet into the ground and put a pitcher pump on it. This gave us a good supply of water.

We didn't cook or eat in the house. We ate under a tarpaulin stretched from one side of the house and making a kind of a porch. For the first year we did our cooking over an open fire, Indian style. Then we built a separate kitchen and attached it to the house by a breezeway. The style then was a kitchen separated by several yards from the main house. When my brothers got a little time they also built what we called the summer house, open-sided and palm-thatched, like an Indian chickee. This was a pleasant place to sit, except when there were mosquitoes, as the breeze could blow through it. We entertained in the summer house sometimes.

Our land was covered with palmettoes, pines, scrub oaks, wild grape vines, and coontie plants. It took a lot of work to clear it with grubbing hoes. The thick brown palmetto roots were laced everywhere, at the surface of the ground or just under it. They came out in chunks as long as my arm and about ten inches thick. These were burned in piles. My brothers managed to clear ten acres the first year and they planted orange, lemon and other fruit trees. We also had a large vegetable garden in the winter with sweet potatoes the year around. We always had enough vegetables to share with neighbors. We didn't see our neighbors often for they were as busy as we were, fixing up their places. But we would always lend one another a helping hand when needed.

As a finishing touch we built a sidewalk, like the Stantons', seventy-five feet from our house to the roadway. Mr. W. C. Stanton was the Baptist minister. One day Mrs. Stanton invited all the ladies of the community to an all-day church meeting at her house and we all admired her sidewalk. "I can't stand sand in my shoes when I am ready to get in the buggy to go to church," she said. They built their walk by pounding down the gray-white

limestone rock that stuck up in whorls and ridges like honeycomb among the palmettoes. This rock was soft when it was first grubbed out but it hardened as it weathered.

Mrs. Stanton was elected president of the Village Improvement Association in 1892 and the first project was street paving. Men went into the woods and loosened the rocks and hauled them to the street and tamped them down with picks and hammers. The first street to be paved was Lemon Avenue which is N. E. 61st Street today. It was paved for three blocks running west from the bay. Later it was extended west two blocks and north several blocks. A group of winter residents from Elmira, N. Y., were building homes where N. E. 68th Street is today, along a pretty rocky ridge above the bay.

Until we got the *Old Crank* the only way we had to go anywhere was to walk. The *Old Crank*, which we bought from the Seminoles, was a dugout canoe made from one cypress log. It was temperamental as a horse. We'd be gliding along smoothly and suddenly it would commence to roll and out we'd spill. Mr. William Freeman made us a little sail to go on it but generally we poled or paddled. When we wanted to go to Lemon City we paddled down Little River to a place just below the big spring, tied the canoe to a big tree, and walked from that point to Lemon City, a distance of about two miles. Our Seminole neighbors tied their canoes at the same spot and walked the same trail. We called it Indian Train and I believe it was there long before there were any White people in Florida. This trail was so smooth that you could walk it barefooted without hurting your feet.

Later we got a mare named Clyde for the Clyde Mallory Steamship Line. I don't remember what we paid for Clyde but Mr. Brossier, a friend of ours, paid \$150 for his horse, Charlie, which he used to draw a Studebaker wagon. Most of the horses were brought in from Kentucky by way of Key West. They would come by boat, sometimes thirty at a time.

After we got Clyde we went to Lemon City in our wagon. Senie and I used to make a day of a shopping expedition, preferably on boat day, for, before the railroad, watching a boat come in was our biggest excitement. We would buy our supplies at Dan Knight's store on Lemon Avenue. By this time Dan Knight was also running a sawmill in Lemon City. Then we would have dinner (noon) at the home of some friend. After Mrs. Dupuis came to Lemon City as a bride we frequently went there for dinner.

Mr. Lewis W. Pierce, a leading citizen of Lemon City, had a long dock of his own as well as a warehouse where he stored groceries and rope and

sometimes repaired small boats. Mr. Pierce operated three boats between Lemon City and Key West, the *Clara*, the *Ardell*, and the *Dellie*, all three named for his adopted daughter whose name was Clara Ardell and whom everyone called Dellie. She was one of the most popular girls in town and later married D. W. Moran, an early sheriff of Dade County.

Mr. Pierce made a lookout for himself by nailing cleats to the trunk of a tall pine. When he thought a boat was due he would climb to his "crow's nest." From there he could see a boat as far away as Coconut Grove. When a boat got near it signalled its coming by a blast on a conch shell. There was always something exciting about that sound. Doors banged open and children raced down to the dock. The Seminoles would come and stand on the dock, barefooted and watchful. In those days the Seminole men wore a garment that was really a full-skirted dress to their knees. At first Senie and I used to stare at them but we got used to them.

Soon after we arrived in Florida my brother, Bob, who was still in his 'teens, got a job as assistant to the barefoot mailman. When the regular mailman could not make the trip Bob was his substitute. One trip Bob had a "passenger" who seemed such a frail-looking youth that he wondered if he could stand the trip. "Oh, I think he'll make it all right," the postmaster in West Palm Beach told Bob. All went well until they reached New River where Bob couldn't find the rowboat. "Well, we'll have to swim," Bob said. "Hope you don't mind a few crocodiles."

Then the "boy" broke down and revealed that she was a girl, a dancer by the name of Jessie. But she was plucky. She did swim the New River with Bob beside her on watch for crocodiles. A short time later Jessie opened the first dancing school in Miami.

We once lost the roof of our house in a hurricane. There was no warning service then. The day of the storm we had some company for dinner (noon), among them Mrs. John Cleare who later became Senie's mother-in-law and Alex Conrad whom I later married. The wind got so strong the house shook and we felt it was going to pieces. The men decided the safest place was in the orange grove so they carried a mattress and put it under a tree and we all huddled there for several hours in the wind and rain. We watched the roof of our house go sailing away. When the wind subsided the only dry place we could find was an empty stall in the barn. It was growing dark so Alex Conrad hitched up the wagon and took us to the Mishlers where we were given shelter, dry clothes and food. The next day my brothers started putting on a new roof.

WE HAD PLENTY TO EAT

Nature makes certain provisions for man's food but in the early days these foods had to be wrestled from nature and converted into palatable dishes for the family. The task of converting was Senie's and mine. It was up to Father and the boys to get supplies, from the Indians by barter, by hunting, from our garden, or from the store. Some of the things we ate as a matter of course are considered delicacies today, such as turtle steak, quail, and venison. We also had turtle eggs, oysters, clams and many kinds of fish. In the woods we picked huckleberries and wild grapes. If we didn't want to pick berries ourselves we could buy them from the Indians for 10c a quart. I remember that Mrs. Dupuis once bought forty quarts from them to can. Huckleberries made delicious dumplings, puddings, hot breads, and preserves.

One constant item of our diet was starch made from the wild coontie root. Starch-making was Dade County's first industry and in the summer, the slack time for gardening, many people worked at it. The process was to grind the roots, wash out the milky starch repeatedly and then dry it. We used it like flour, for baking, thickening stews, and even for starching clothes.

The early settlers did not have as many fruits and flowers as some might imagine. You had to plant fruit trees before you had much fruit. There was a saying among us, "Florida is the land of fruit in cans and flowers on the outside of the cans." Before our garden started bearing we had to depend largely on staples, some of which we brought with us from Key West. We had hams, dried beans, green coffee (which we had to roast and grind), sugar, salt, and grits. Besides the six of us we soon had five dogs to feed and a flock of chickens which we bought from the Seminoles. Soon one of our favorite foods was the small Indian pumpkins which we cut in half and baked, then seasoned with butter and salt. The Seminoles gave us the seed. Sometimes we found wild honey in the hammocks. We often used molasses in cooking for it was much cheaper than sugar.

We were a long way from push-button cooking. The first year I cooked outdoors on a campfire arranged Seminole-fashion, logs fixed like the spokes of a wheel with the fire at the hub. That saved wood-cutting. When a log burned down you shoved it along until it was again in the fire. We put in two sturdy green oak posts and fastened two rods between them, then hung our pots from the rods. If we wanted to bake we used a Dutch oven on top of coals.

Mrs. William Freeman taught me to make sour-dough bread like the miners baked out west. For this bread we used one cup of flour, one cup

of corn meal, one medium potato, cooked and mashed, two cups of water, and one half cup of sugar. This mixture was allowed to stand over night so it would collect wild yeast from the air. Of this mixture we would set aside a ball the size of an orange which would be the yeast for next time. To the rest we would add four cups of flour, one half cup of sugar, two thirds cup of shortening, two teaspoons of salt, and two cups of water. This was kneaded and let raise until it doubled in bulk, kneaded again and made into four loaves.

We called the Montgomery Ward Catalog the "Cracker's Bible." Some families would go in together and order staples from Chicago, using the catalog. The Freemans, Mettairs, and Matthauses used to do this, getting grits and rice by the barrel, condensed milk by the case, and pickled beef by the keg.

After the railroad came in 1896 Mr. Mettair had a meat market open Wednesdays and Saturdays, on which day he would receive half a beef. Our whole family would arise early, be at the station when the train came in, and wait for Mr. Mettair to slice off the wanted roasts and soup bones. Most people ate steak the first day, and beef stew the second and third days. Of course we had no ice. But fresh venison will keep several days if it is hung high so the air gets to it. It will keep much longer if it is cut in strips and let dry in the sun. This is called jerked venison. One of our neighbors whose house was up on stilts about six feet used to dig a hole under her house and bury the butter. It would keep firm and stay fresh.

We never could have won our battles with ants and roaches had it not been for big tin lard cans. These we prized highly for storing all our dry staples. We even packed our lunches in lard cans when we were going out in the *Old Crank* so the water wouldn't spoil our food.

Until the fall of 1896 we had only canned milk. That year the Peters family moved to the Bay area from Lady Lake, Florida, for their orange grove there had been killed in the Big Freeze. Jim and John Peters, who were young men, drove the family herd of cows and horses all the way down the peninsula in thirty days. They used a covered wagon for carrying feed for the animals and supplies for themselves. Much of the way there were no roads. When they got to New River Mr. Frank Stranahan took them across on his ferry. Several trips were required to move all the animals across. We soon became acquainted with the Peters family and they lent us a cow.

Mr. William Freeman was the government agent for matters pertaining to homesteads. After my brother Jim and I came of age we each acquired

a homestead of our own. Some of the legal description of mine read, "The United States of America by President William McKinley . . . to Mary E. Douthit, September 19, 1898. . . . 120 acres." My land was on Snake Creek near where Greynolds Park is today. Jim's was two forties southwest of mine. A short distance north of my land was the Big Snake Indian Camp, one of the largest in the area. Sometimes 200 Indians camped there.

The whole family helped clear my homestead and build a 20 x 20 log house there. It had a hip roof and a loft because I didn't like sleeping on the ground floor because I was afraid of snakes. We used to go from my father's homestead to mine in the *Old Crank*, going the back way, poling up Little River and along a kind of water trail through the 'Glades. The Everglades was not a dismal swamp as some might think. It was open and sunny, the water was clear, and there were many islands with grass, vines, and wild flowers, some hammocks with trees, and many water birds of beautiful colors.

We loved pineapples and we always liked it when the Filers went down to their farm on Elliott's Key during pineapple season and asked us along. The farm belonged to the father of our postmaster, Willie Filer. Captain Henry Filer was a semi-retired sea captain who had come originally from Harbour Island in the Bahamas. Mrs. Willie Filer was Lottie Cleare and her folks, too, had come from the Bahamas. They had settled in Key West in the 'Eighties. Lottie's father was Captain Johnny Cleare, a master sea captain, who never relinquished his British citizenship. His son, Allen B., did become an American citizen and the mayor of Key West. My sister Senie married Allen B. Cleare.

Captain Henry Filer had been a blockade runner during the Civil War, running supplies from the Bahama Islands into the Confederate States. Captain Filer used to tell us about those exciting days. He had other stories, too. One time he had gone to Havana to hear Jenny Lind. Another time he was in Liverpool, England, when there were two ships lying in the harbor, one British and one French. The French captain gave a party for the English captain and officers. It was a very fashionable party and after dinner the French waiters threw the dishes overboard (but into a net) to wash them. The next night the English captain entertained the French and tried to outdo them in every way. They threw the dishes overboard — without a net.

Captain Filer had sometimes taken his wife along as he sailed the Seven Seas. Now that he was "retired" they had two homes, one in Lemon City and one on Elliott's Key. The latter was right at the edge of the dock and was almost like a boat. The dock stretched out a long way so as to reach

beyond the shallows. The captain still went to sea sometimes, delivering his pineapples to places as far away as New York. We used to watch the Negroes carrying pineapples in baskets on their heads as they wound along a path towards the dock. I spent many happy hours sitting on that dock, looking at the beautiful water and listening to the captain's stories.

North by east from the Filer dock was Fowey Rock Light and straight east was Carysfort Light. Each flashed a different signal. The Fowey Light had three flashes and then a steady light. I used to wake up in the night and see the fingers of light in the sky and think what a blessing to all sailors, especially during storms.

But in spite of lights a shipwreck sometimes occurred. I remember the wrecking of a large ship, the *Alicia*, on a reef to the southeast of Fowey Rock. Some of the damaged cargo floated up onto Elliott's Key. Captain Filer was the first one to reach the wreck so he claimed the salvage rights. Other wreckers came out from Key West to help. Captain Filer hired my brother Johnny to help. The salvage crew worked for several weeks. The salvaged goods were taken to Key West, sold at auction and the men paid off.

The *Alicia* had a varied cargo including a complete iron bridge, buggies, harness, cases of Edwin Clapp shoes for men, Queen Quality shoes for women, coffee, condensed milk, laces, plain and flowered linens, cases of silverware and jewelry. But the oddest thing about the salvage came from the soap suds. There were many cases of a washing powder on the ship and the water became so soapy the men would not go into the hold of the ship. There were many cases of bitters aboard in pint bottles and these were tossed as souvenirs to onlookers who came out in their boats to watch the salvage.

The salvage workers received their pay in cargo. Johnny received a buggy with a patent leather dash board, and beautiful linens for Senie and me. Soon all the men around Lemon City were wearing Edwin Clapp shoes.

Near our homestead, northwest of Little River, lived the Fino Soops, a very agreeable couple, originally from Detroit. They had a neat cottage, high off the ground, and surrounded by citrus trees. We used to lend them our horse sometimes. Usually, though, they went by boat, for they were at the edge of the 'Glades and had easy access to the water trails. One time when the Soops had some visitors from the North, a Mr. and Mrs. Campbell, they got up a hunting trip and invited John Harp, Senie, my brother Johnny, and me to go along. It was at Christmas time. We went in three canoes up the Everglades to the Hillsboro River and camped in two tents, one for the women and one for the men. The men got up at four in the morning and by

daylight had some fine wild turkeys which we steamed in a Dutch oven. Later that day they came in with two deer. The next day they got a lot of ducks.

After three days of successful hunting we started home just as a strong "norther" began to blow down on us, roughening the water and chilling us to the bone. Night found us still a long way from home so we had to draw our canoes onto high ground and make camp as best we could. It was about the most miserable night of my life. We were certainly glad to get home next day to find our house warm, with a good fire in the kitchen stove, and some of the neighbors standing around talking about the weather. That night we had such a bad freeze that we lost some of our orange trees.

Our neighbor, Mrs. Pomeroy, taught us to make palmetto hats. Palmettoes covered the ground everywhere in the piney country, gray-green and from knee to shoulder height. The big thick roots covered with a brown matting had to be grubbed out with a grubbing hoe. A good grubber could do a "task" a day, or a spot forty by forty feet, and for this he would be paid about three dollars. Unless they were ready to plant a grove or garden most people didn't bother to grub their palmettoes. Mrs. Pomeroy showed us how to cut the still-folded center frond. This was still white as it had not been exposed to the sun. Usually it could be pulled out and then there would be the tip of the stem, about a half inch long, which we would eat. It was tender and sweet. We would pull the fan-like frond apart and dry it in the sun. After three or four days of curing we would remove the heavier ribs, and slice the strands lengthwise into quarter-inch ribbons. These we kept wet so as to be more pliable for braiding. There were several kinds of flat braids, some quite lacey. Sometimes we braided as many as seven or nine strands at a time. It took about twenty yards of finished braid to sew round and round into a wide-brimmed hat. These hats were durable, some were quite pretty, and Senie and I thought they were fun to make. We liked to give them to our friends. Mr. P. W. Merritt wore one of these hats for years. I measured his head and seamed the braid as much like a man's hat as possible. Later we learned to make brown straw hats from coconut palm.

THE SEMINOLES

The shooting and trapping of animals provided food and recreation for my brothers and also a source of income. Bob and Jim sometimes went hunting with the Seminoles. They would shoot and skin alligators and take the

hides to Ft. Lauderdale and sell them to Mr. Frank Stranahan who ran the Trading Post. In one day Mr. Stranahan might pay out to the Indians as much as \$1500 for baby alligators, alligator eggs, and skins of alligator, otter, coon and fox. The Indians bought enamel cooking utensils from Mr. Stranahan. They were blue and white until set over a campfire, then black forever after. Indians also bought calico by the box, each box containing many pieces each about ten yards in length. They bought their hand-operated sewing machines from Mr. William Freeman. Their dresses were not quite as elaborate then as now.

Father always got on well with the Seminoles. He was their friend. The Indian family living nearest us was that of Crop-eared Charlie Osceola. Each time an Indian was caught telling a lie a bit of ear was cropped off. Usually after a couple of crops they became either truthful or careful. Charlie's family consisted of about twenty, some adults and some children. He used to come to beg a little tea or sugar from us, saying his wife was sick. Or one of the men would come with a chicken to sell for fifty cents. He would always stand silently outside the wall until we noticed him and then he would come to the back door but never inside. Once some girls from the camp visited us. One whom we called Annie Stacious was quite beautiful. We thought they didn't know English but when Senie held up a watch Annie asked, "What time is it?"

One time the Indians invited Jim and me to their Green Corn Dance. This was a religious rite, not a social function, though there was a social side to it too. The Dance was a thanksgiving to their diety. They would also pass sentences on misdemeanors.

Crop-eared Charlie said to come before sundown. Jim and I walked the short distance to the Indian camp. We were met at the edge of the camp by one of the women. She motioned for me to sit down inside a chickee which was near the camp fire. Jim was taken to the other side of the camp where the men were. The woman was cooking. She had a fish cleaned but had left the scales on. She washed it and put it on a hot rock along with a cornmeal patty.

"Sofkee, you like 'em?" she asked me, stirring some gruel in a pot.

"Yes," I replied, determined to eat whatever she offered me.

Sofkee in those days was made from coontie root. She dipped some out into a small bowl, put a piece of fish and the corn cake on a tin plate, and handed them to me. I ate the supper which was not bad. I felt that this

courtesy was extended to me because on several occasions I had carried molasses cookies to the children of the camp.

At dark the Indians began to beat their drums. These were made of skins stretched across hollow logs, some large and some quite small. The dance was performed in a circle, no hands held as we often do in group dancing. The women wore rattles made of small turtle shells filled with stones tied around their ankles. The Indians would chant something that sounds like this: Lee Ho, Lee Tommy Ho, Le Ho, Lee Tommy Ho, over and over while their feet moved to the same rhythm. The last word of the chant was a quick cry like "Huh!" and a quick beat of the drum.

Mrs. Stranahan was a true friend of the Indians. She taught them and helped them and persuaded some of them to move to the Dania Reservation. The Indians felt all the land was rightfully theirs. As long as they had the land they were careful never to kill off all the game in one region. There were several groups of Indians, the Jumpies, Tommies, Billies, Willies, Tigers, Osceolas, Gophers, Bowlegs, and Tigertails. They still resented the White man but the day of the Seminole Wars was long over.

We used to watch the Indian cure hides. The hide was first stretched and allowed to dry. Then the inner side was covered with a paste made of alum, saltpeter, borax, cornmeal and water. After this paste dried, two or three days, it was scraped off, taking bits of animal fat with it. This was the method when the hide was to be sold with the hair on it. For removing hair from hides lime was dusted into the hair and the hide buried in the ground for a few days.

The Indian women taught Senie and me to make beaded belts and bracelets, weaving the beads into threads stretched on a home-made loom, made from a cigar box. Usually we used bright beads against a field of white. We copied Indian designs which were mostly of birds and animals. The diamond-back snake was a popular pattern. We also made moccasins from deer skin and ornamented them with beads. These shoes were very durable and we wore them around home most of the time so as to save our leather shoes for dancing.

Some Indians knew how to read and write as well as the Whites. I remember Sam Mishler telling how an Indian by the name of Charlie Tigertail and two of his Indian friends were invited to church in Miami and then taken by some White friends to the Royal Palm Hotel for dinner. They were asked to sign the register and Charlie Tigertail wrote, "Charlie and 2 Indians from the Everglades."

FRIENDS AND VISITING

Almost everyone in the Miami area had heard of the Ada Merritt Junior High School. It was named to honor one of the first school teachers in Dade County and one who will always be a symbol of high achievement in the field of education. We knew Miss Ada, as everyone called her, and the other members of her family from the time we arrived in 1892 until they died one by one. My family was at the bedside of Miss Ada when she died, and with Miss Nan when she died.

There were four Merritts, two brothers and two sisters. Only one, Z. T. or Taylor, ever married and he had no children. While they lived the Merritts were interested in all movements for the benefit of the community. Z. T. Merritt was Superintendent of Schools from 1897 to 1905. During that time he married one of the teachers, Miss Polly Richardson, of Kentucky. Miss Polly came to Lemon City on a visit and was persuaded to stay and replace a teacher who quit because she was having so much trouble disciplining the big boys. That teacher had tried whipping the big boys with a stick and they had laughed at her. Miss Polly introduced a merit system, giving out much prized blue ribbons every Friday afternoon to those who had done their work well. She soon had the classroom under control.

Z. T. Merritt was something like Dr. J. C. Dupuis, fat, popular, and liked to tease the girls at dances. Both of them went to dances but neither would ever dance. Dr. Dupuis, before he married, would carry marbles in his pocket and challenge the girls to a game of marbles instead of asking them to dance. Senie, Dellie and I didn't care. The men always outnumbered the girls at dances anyway, so that we never lacked for partners.

Miss Nan Merritt lived in Cincinnati a part of the year. The word would spread around late in the fall, "Nan Merritt's back!" That was good news, for everyone like Nan. She was beautiful, full of fun, and greatly added to the spice of life.

The other brother, P. W. or Pete, homesteaded what we called Merritt Island. It was up Little River and at the edge of the Glades not too far from us. It was high land but during wet weather it was surrounded by swamp water. He built a kind of causeway so he could get out and in during wet weather. He was no longer a young man. People used to tease him about never getting married. "Pete, you sure need a wife over at your homestead," they'd say. Then he would laugh and say, "Well, I've offered myself to every girl who comes along. I'm always available."

One school term Senie stayed with Miss Ada and took a business course. This course was not a part of the school but Miss Ada gave Senie special lessons. Sometimes Senie would bring Miss Ada home for weekends in the country. She always enjoyed the fresh vegetables from our garden.

About 1899 the Merritts built a large house in Buena Vista with the idea of starting a school there. Instead, however, Miss Ada was invited to teach in the new school in Miami and she accepted that position. Mr. Rodney Burdine was one of her pupils. One day Miss Ada came home from school to find the big house on the bay burned to the ground. What made her feel even worse about it was the loss of many beautiful antiques that had belonged to Dr. Eleanor Simmons. When we reached the Miami area in 1892 the only doctor was a woman doctor, Dr. Simmons. She died in 1909 and her husband, Captain Simmons, stored these fine things of hers in the Merritt attic. Captain Simmons started the first guava canning factory in Coconut Grove.

In 1892 there were about 200 people in Lemon City if you count those on homesteads round about. West of Lemon City was an area we called Pocamoonshine Prairie. The village part of Lemon City was east of what is now the Biscayne Boulevard on 61st St. At first it had been called Motlow after an Indian chief but by 1892 it was Lemon City, for there were some lemon groves in the vicinity.

Little River as a settlement dates from 1895 but it did not have a post office until 1898 and then only because Mr. J. W. Spivey out-did the government. Mr. Spivey came to the Bay region about the time the railroad did and took an active part in the community. He developed a fine grove in Little River known as Eureka Grove. He was also a truck farmer and real estate developer and in 1922 he became president of Little River's first bank. But in 1898 he went to work getting a post office for Little River. By the Indian Trail this small settlement along the railroad track was less than two miles from Lemon City and post offices had to be spaced at least two miles apart. Mr. Spivey's thinking was "put enough curves in the Indian Trail to make it two miles long." He helped lay out a new road, a rutted sand trail, about where N. E. Second Avenue is today. The postal inspector agreed that the new route was a good two miles and Little River got its post office. The first postmaster was Mr. Hudson Burr, succeeded by Mr. Alfred Huskey in 1901.

Mr. William Freeman had a tomato packing shed along the railroad near Little River and Senie and other neighbors used to work there during

tomato season. One day Ed Freeman, the youngest Freeman son, came running from the home near by shouting, "The bees are swarming." The Freemans had recently bought the bees from Mr. Huskey. George Freeman, the older son, ran home, Senie went with him, volunteering to help. Mrs. Freeman began pounding on a tin pan to settle the bees and they came to rest about thirty feet up in an oak tree. George placed a ladder against the tree and climbed up, Senie right behind him. Senie spread out her big apron and said she could catch the bees in that. "You'll get stung," said George. "No I won't," said Senie. She was too trusting. She didn't know what bees could do to her.

The bees boiled out into their faces. George leaped to the ground and someone came and rescued Senie. She was moaning and rubbing her arms and face. She was stung all over. During that day the Freemans tried every bee sting remedy anyone could suggest to try to ease her pain. She had several miserable days and gained a new respect for bees.

Because of distance and slow travel, people, when they went visiting, stayed for a meal or two or even several days. The whole family went in a group even when the object of the visit for one member of the family happened to be courtship. In that way the Cleare family paid the Douthit family a visit when Allen was courting Senie. Women and girls liked to have all-day work visits, which included pot-luck dinners. Our work would be embroidery, sewing, bead-work, or hat-making. I once took my sewing machine with me in the wagon to Mrs. Fino Soop's house for such a meeting as some of the neighbors had no machine and were glad for a chance to use mine.

A trip to the beach meant a day's expedition. Our friends, Mr. and Mrs. Fulford, lived at the House of Refuge on the beach and once when my Aunt Lucy Douthit and her daughter, Laura, were visiting us from North Carolina we all spent several days with the Fulfords.

We didn't have regular bathing suits in those days. What we wore swimming would probably seem very funny to people today. I remember an outing we had to the beach right soon after Dr. Dupuis brought his bride, Katherine Beyer, here from Paducah, Kentucky. "What will I wear to go in the water?" Katie Dupuis asked me when we were planning the picnic. She had not yet ever seen the ocean. I told her what we all wore — an old calico dress and black cotton stockings.

For a dressing room we used a thicket of seagrape and palms. When Katie had gotten into her rig she was very timid about going out on the beach. "I don't think Doctor is going to like this," she said. From that time

on this expression was a kind of by-word with us girls. We would tease Katie by saying, "I don't think Doctor is going to like this."

Dr. J. G. Dupuis was a conscientious doctor. When Mrs. Sol Peters (the mother of Jim, Tom and the other Peters boys) became ill with gallstones Dr. Dupuis heard of a remedy used successfully by a Dr. Shelton in Umatilla. He wired Dr. Shelton to send him a bottle of this medicine called "Granddaddy Gray Beard." Dr. Dupuis then proceeded to take the medicine himself until he was satisfied it had no ill effects. The basis of the medicine was the bark of a root found in Polk County. The white spray bloom of the plant was known as Granddaddy Gray Beard.

We had many dances. The first ones I remember were in Mr. Pierce's sponge warehouse in 1893. Mr. Mettair played the violin and as he did little Henry Filer would tap on the violin with a stick like it was a drum. Mr. Bill R. Truett played the harmonica. The usual refreshments were cake and lemonade. The dances drew people from as far away as Coconut Grove. Count Nugent from Coconut Grove came in full dress but danced barefoot. Count Jean d'Hedouville came. So did John Sewell and his girl, Jessie, who had opened a dancing school in Miami.

There were polkas, the Virginia reel, two-steps and waltzes. One of the square dance callers was Bubba Carey whose mother ran a small hotel in Lemon City. Sometimes he would get a couple of Italian musicians to come by boat from Miami. One played the violin, the other a three-cornered harp about four feet high.

When the new school house was built south of the library the women made the men include a social hall. Downstairs there were two classrooms and a porch. The stairway was on the porch and the big upstairs room was the social hall where we gave dances, socials and sometimes staged plays. Later this upstairs room was made into two classrooms and we began to have our dances at Mrs. Carey's boarding house on Lemon Avenue. About this time we formed the Magnolia Club to sponsor dances. Senie and I and sometimes Becky Freeman used to drive with Bubba in his wagon collecting girls for the dances.

We didn't waltz much until Garry Niles moved to Lemon City from Key West. He taught us to waltz. He told me to practice with a broom or anything that would help me to balance. So after emptying the dish water I would practice a few steps holding the pan in my hands. Niles married Mamie Moffett and settled down on a homestead near us.

Some of the musicians who used to play during community sings were: Dellie Pierce, piano; Willie Filer and Jim Peters, guitar; Bill Mettair and Becky Freeman, violin. Sometimes Willie Filer would play his guitar and sing his popular elephant song solo which went like this:

ELEPHANT ON HIS HANDS

There was once a king, so the minstrels sing,
 Who a herd of elephants had,
 A peasant poor, lived next door, and wanted an elephant bad.
 The generous king did a foolish thing when he gave that
 peasant one,
 For the elephant ate all night,
 And the elephant ate all day.
 Do what he would to furnish him food
 The cry was still "More hay!"

Till he tore his hair in wild despair
 And clacked his heckled glands,
 And cursed the day that he had an elephant on his hands.
 You all no doubt have found out without if's, but's or and's
 To avoid the plight of the luckless knight
 With an elephant on his hands.

At Christmas in 1898 Senie and I and some of our friends formed the Alabama Troubadours and got up a show made up of Negro melodies, buck and wing dances, cakewalks and hoedowns. We blacked our faces and made fancy costumes and went by wagon to various homesteads round about and put on our show. Jim Peters was our white-faced manager. I was Alabama Coon and Homer Ingalls and Will Norton were my "suitsors" in the show. My brother John was Bascom Brown and Jack Peters was "the nig with a razor." Senie and Ted Taylor were fattest so they were the Heavenly Twins. Miss Mattie Peters who sang and danced was billed as The Warmest Baby in the Bunch. Wherever we went we were greeted with shouts of laughter. After our show at each house we were served refreshments. We kept going until two in the morning. Later friends who lived miles away complained that we hadn't gotten to their homes too.

In 1898 the Second Texas Regiment was stationed in Miami before being sent to Cuba. The camp was in what is now downtown Miami and the drill field was twenty acres in Allapattah. One day while some of the soldiers were sitting under a coconut tree writing letters there was an electrical storm and two of the soldiers were killed by lightning. I went to dances

given by the community for the soldiers. I remember the army band played "The Yellow Rose of Texas" over and over. This was probably the largest band ever to play in Miami before 1900. Some of the local people who attended these dances and supplied the cake and limeade were: the Peterses, Douthits, Fulfords, Filers, Careys, Currys, Freemans, Moffatts, Merritts.

We certainly had many good times back before the turn of the century. But changes were coming, not only in Dade County, which was getting new settlers with almost every train, but also in the lives of us Douthits. Something I could never entirely get over happened when my favorite brother, Jim, died of diabetes. Doctors didn't know about insulin then.

About 1900 we traded Jim's homestead and mine in the Snake Creek area for three acres and the McDonald Hotel in Little River, not far from the railroad station. The hotel was a two-storied wooden building with twelve rooms. I now became a hotel keeper. We had room for about twenty boarders, most of them men and boys who worked in the tomato fields and they all had farmer appetites. I had a good cook, a Georgia Negro, Aunt Ann Johnson. As a farm center Little River was booming. There were tomato fields between Lemon City and Little River where there was a naturally treeless prairie and many west of the settlement.

By 1897 they were shipping carloads of vegetables out of Little River for the northern market — tomatoes, eggplant, peppers, and okra. Twenty acres of vegetables was considered a large farm. North of Little River Mr. T. V. Moore planted a large field of pineapples. Mr. Henry M. Flagler was interested in all these farms because he wanted his railroad to have something to haul north. He frequently got off the train in Little River to look at the farms and encourage the farmers. As a token of his interest in the Peters family who were all energetic farmers he gave them all passes on the railroad to Jacksonville. He would also invite some of us to dances at the Royal Palm Hotel. Ed Ingalls, Jim Hubel, John and Jim Peters, Senie, Bob, and I used to go to these dances together either in a wagon or by boat.

Mr. Arthur Griffing had a rose nursery between the McDonald Hotel and Huskey's store. Tom Peters and his brother W. S. began dividing some of their land into lots near the Little River railroad station. One gave land for a church, the other for a school.

I had a steady beau, Mr. Alex Conrad, whom I had known even before we moved to Florida. He kept asking me to marry him and I kept saying no because I felt my first duty was to my family. But then the family began to break up. Jim died. Johnny went to the Isle of Pines and came back to

get married. Senie was engaged and waiting for the floor to be laid in the Episcopal Church so she could get married. My brother Bob had decided to move south of Miami and farm tomatoes with his friend, Tom Peters. Bob married one Sayer sister and Tom Peters married the other so the two boys were kin as well as friends. I still wanted to look after Father but Alex convinced me we could do that together.

When I decided it was quick. I didn't want any fuss made over my wedding. Since the floor wasn't in the church I planned a quiet wedding in the hotel. This was in August, 1904. Miss Nan Merritt helped me make a white lawn dress. We asked a few friends but word got around and I think everyone in Little River and half of Lemon City came. They couldn't all get inside at the same time. We got enough ice by train to make ice cream. We also served pound cake, sandwiches, and lemonade.

We went away on our honeymoon — across the street to Jim Peters's house. They wanted Alex and me to live in their house while they were away for a week. Our first baby, Mary, was born in the hotel and shortly after that we turned the hotel over to my brother and began to divide our year with summers in North Carolina and winters in Florida.

But before we left the hotel we helped another couple get married. One of our boarders was a young man named Luther Cooper. He was courting Mattie Peters but everytime Mattie tried to set a wedding date her mother would throw a spell. Mattie and Luther made up their minds to elope and asked me to help.

I went with Mattie to the home of the minister, Rev. Fuller, and we waited there until Luther and the Gramling boys, William and John, could get a marriage license. The county seat was still at Juno, north of Palm Beach. But by that time there were telephones and the boys kept the wires hot until the license was despatched by train and received in Miami. We waited all that afternoon and evening at the Fullers. Finally, at eleven o'clock at night, the marriage was performed. The witnesses were Bessie Fuller and I, and the Gramlings. After the ceremony we all went to the Peters home and told Mattie's parents. There was nothing they could do but make the best of it. They couldn't have a real honeymoon because Luther was busy clearing land for the Deering Estate. Mattie and Luther came to live at our hotel.

WE BURY OUR DEAD

In a pioneer community neighbors were really neighbors and a call for help was never ignored. Troubles brought us together. Storms, forest fires,

sickness and death — those were our troubles. There were no undertakers at first. Neighbor women would lay out the body. They would bake cakes and fry chickens for the bereaved while the men made the coffin and dug the grave.

There never was a cemetery in the Lemon City area. People used to say, "It is so healthy here we will have to shoot someone and start a cemetery." Of course people did die. Since there was no cemetery they were buried in back yards or in the woods. The Miami City Cemetery was the first real cemetery. Mrs. Key who lived in Lemon City near N. E. 63rd Street and the bay buried her father in the back yard when he died in 1896. The Mettairs buried one of their children, Lillian, in 1887, about where 68th Street is today. A tall, leaning coconut tree used to mark the spot. Later the coffin was moved to City Cemetery.

In 1925 another coffin was discovered in a back yard and moved to City Cemetery. There was no name on the grave but Mr. William Mettair identified the bones by the two quarters that he himself had placed on the eyes at the time of burial thirty years before. The body was that of a Mrs. Sandlin or Chandler whom no one knew anything about. She had come to Florida to try to heal a bad leg infection and died. They buried her in a hurry because of the awful odor of her leg.

One day after the Will Peterses moved to N. E. Second Avenue and 63rd Street Mrs. Peters looked out and saw a man poking in her yard with a stick. "What are you doing?" she asked. "Hunting a couple of bodies," the man replied. Mrs. Peters was shocked but Will thought it was a good joke. The bodies were moved to City Cemetery.

I heard Miss Ada Merritt tell how she had conducted the funeral of a little child who died in 1890. She read the funeral service from the prayer book and comforted the parents.

While they were building the railroad there was a commissary in Lemon City and a camp for workers. The town changed a lot, and for the worse, much to the distress of the law-abiding early residents. Many of the railroad workers were convicts kept in line by foremen with long black whips. Gamblers and other riffraff followed the camp. These outsiders were always getting drunk and getting into fights. Some were killed in these fights and others lost their lives in the construction of the railroad. These bodies were buried in rocky potholes along the right-of-way where sand had been removed. It was thought twenty bodies were buried in these holes.

When Mr. and Mrs. L. W. Pierce and their daughter, Dellie, moved to Lemon City from Key West about 1888 Mrs. Pierce was in poor health so she brought a coffin along. It was a fine coffin and cost \$100. They kept it inside a packing case stored in the top of the barn on the two-by-four's. Dellie used to say that when she went to the barn to feed the chickens she would stand and look up at her mother's coffin and chills of fear and dread would run along her spine. But Mrs. Pierce never used that coffin. When Rhett McGregor was murdered she gave it up for him. Before Mrs. Pierce needed a coffin in 1901 Miami had a railroad, a funeral director, Mr. King, and a handy supply of coffins.

Rhett McGregor was a homesteader and he had been a tax collector. He was a good friend of Senie's. The way he got killed is a long story.

In Lemon City a man named Sam Lewis was the bartender for Pop Worth's Poolroom and Bar. He was a noted marksman and could shoot a penny tossed into the air. One day two patrons of the bar, Ed Highsmith and George Davis, became so noisy and disorderly that Sam called them down. Then when they started throwing pool balls at him Sam grabbed up his 44 Marlin rifle and took a shot at the two. Someone knocked the rifle barrel up just in time and so no one was hit.

"Go on home and cool off," the bystanders told Sam.

"We'll be back tomorrow and settle with you," said Highsmith and Davis.

The next morning Sam Lewis was in Doddy and Rob's Restaurant when Highsmith and Davis came down the road. With them was their friend, Mr. Friar. Sam Lewis came out of the restaurant with his rifle.

"Get down on your knees and apologize for the row you made yesterday or I'll shoot you!" Sam said to Highsmith.

Highsmith pulled his hat on one side and said, "Shoot, you son of a gun, shoot."

Lewis pulled the trigger and a bullet went through Highsmith but he managed to run to the back of the restaurant before he dropped. Davis didn't have time to run. He turned sideways and Sam shot him through the heart. He fell dead in the road. Then Sam pointed his gun at Friar. "Do you want any of it?" he yelled.

Friar threw up his hands and said, "For God's sake don't shoot!"

Lewis put his gun down beside him and cut open a box of cartridges and put some in each coat pocket and left. Mr. J. W. Spivey, who had arrived in Lemon City the week before, was a witness to these killings. My

brother and Pete Merritt were two of the posse formed to go look for Sam. Everything in the community stood stock still that day. Windows were nailed closed and doors locked and barred. Children were not allowed out of the house. The posse aimed to give Sam Lewis "no rest and no food." They thought he could be starved into giving himself up. But it was three weeks before they got him. In the meantime he had made a trip to the Bahamas and returned.

The two dead bodies remained on the floor of the restaurant all day. I remember that day well. Senie and I went to Lemon City to comfort poor Mrs. Davis. Frederick Matthaus made the two coffins from lumber someone donated. Mrs. Matthaus and Annie Matthaus covered the coffins with black cloth outside and lined them with white cotton cloth. They made little pillows for head rests. This work took them until midnight. After dark my brother Bob and Pete Merritt dug the grave in the woods by lantern light. It was so rocky that it took them most of the night to dig one grave so both coffins were put in one grave. Mr. Paul Matthaus took the coffins to the grave in his one-horse wagon.

After about three weeks Sam Lewis did get hungry and he came to Mike Spears's place in the dark and asked for food.

"Who's there?" asked a woman inside.

"Sam Lewis."

Rhett McGregor heard that answer and he came running, shooting as he came and wounding Lewis in the thigh. The woman inside the house yelled, "If it's Sam Lewis shoot him again!" Rhett bent over Lewis and struck a match. He laid Lewis's rifle aside. But Sam had a pistol and he took it out and shot McGregor. Then he crawled off and hid in a house. When the posse surrounded the house he said he would give himself up if they wouldn't lynch him. Otherwise he would shoot it out. They promised and he came out. They took him to the county jail in Juno. McGregor didn't die until several days later, July 27, 1895. When he died a mob went up to Juno, shot the jailer, took Sam Lewis out and lynched him.

After all this excitement the Village Improvement Association of Lemon City put on a box supper and ice cream social at the church to raise enough money to send Mrs. Davis and her two little boys back home to Texas. One boy was old enough to pay half fare. I remember that Mrs. Carey was the "barker" for the cake sale at this supper. The most popular cake, as always, was Mrs. Willie Filer's — a pound cake made with ten eggs, and one pound each of butter, flour, and sugar. Dellie Pierce, Annie Matthaus, Vickey

Carey, and Becky Freeman waited table. This was Mr. Spivey's first social and he stood around very nicely dressed and not saying much but he must have been keeping his eye on Annie Matthaus for later he married her. Some of the ladies got his name mixed up and called him Mr. Spider.

The social was a success but they were still short \$22. Mr. Davis had been a carpenter so Mrs. Davis offered to sell his tools at auction. No one seemed interested in bidding on them so Mr. Spivey bought them all to help out.

In the summer of 1894 a terrible forest fire burned for several days near our homestead. We fought it by back-firing, by clearing strips to check it, and by wetting gunny sacks in water and slapping at the burning brush. At night the burned-over area looked like the lights of a big city because there were still fires in stumps and even in the tops of trees. It was the Moffatt place that was most threatened. Among the firefighters were the Moffatts, Sam Hubel, Mrs. Pomeroy, the Fino Soops, the Myerses, the Andrews, and my brothers, Bob and Jim.

Rob Moffatt, Mrs. Moffatt's son, was a soldier and recently arrived home. He fought the fire so hard that he got overheated and came down with pneumonia. They moved him to Garry Niles' place on the bay so that it would be easier for Dr. Eleanor Simmons to come by boat from Coconut Grove to treat him. When it became apparent he was going to die they sent for his mother's sister and his own sister, Mrs. Brossier. They also sent to Key West for the priest but he did not arrive in time. The last day of Rob's life the family sat around the bed praying and burning candles. They put paper crosses and pictures of the Virgin Mary, of Christ, and of the Saints on the bed. When Rob died they carried his body home and waited until after dark to bury him, hoping the priest might arrive. Meantime, Mr. Spivey had found a Negro to dig the grave in the pines and palmettoes. Finally, by lantern light, they buried Rob, his nephew, Duncan Brossier, reading the Catholic service. Then Duncan blew taps on his bugle.

In 1898 a homesteader in Ojus died and Will Norton and Jim Peters undertook to make a coffin for him. Since this was their first experience with coffin-making they were not sure of the measurements. "You get in and try it for size," Will said to Jim. Jim did. It was a good fit. Then Jim got out and they put the body in. Twelve people gathered for the service which Jim read from the prayer book. Then the coffin was placed in a wagon and the people walked after it, the volunteer pall bearers puffing on cigars which Jim and Will had provided.

There are still a few people living who remember how John Peters was killed. He was one of the Peters boys all of whom had acquired land in the Little River area and become farmers. John's farm was in what is now Miami Shores. There was a small settlement there called Biscayne where the trains stopped to load vegetables. There was even a post office there for a time. John had just finished building a small frame house on his land. Shortly after daylight of a morning in March, 1901, a twister dipped out of the clouds and cut a streak through John's farm, completely demolishing the new house and carrying John through the air for a hundred yards. A big splinter, a stick like an Indian arrow, completely penetrated his body below the heart. Dr. Dupuis was certain the removal of the stick would cause death. A wagon was gotten and John carried to his brother Will's house in Little River since his mother was dying and they wanted to spare her the knowledge of John's accident. Another doctor was called in and the two doctors decided to remove the stick and pack the wound. After a few days in which John's condition became worse he was put on a train on a cot in the baggage car and taken to the nearest hospital which was in St. Augustine. There, in spite of several operations, he weakened and died.

In a pioneer country you learn to bear up and take what you have to. And even in the sadness of death there was sometimes a flash of humor, like when my brother Bob and one of his friends painted a "water line" on a coffin for "smooth sailing." Mr. Ned Pent's humor went even further. He was an expert boat builder and once when he was called upon to make a coffin he put in a centerboard. Of course after he got a laugh from everyone he removed it.

SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES

There had already been several schools in the Bay area before we arrived in 1892. Miss Alice Brickell had taught a school in a cabin furnished by Mr. William Mettair. Mr. Harlan Trapp had conducted a school in his home. One of my friends who had attended this school was Rebecca Freeman. Then Miss Ada Merritt started to teach a school in Lemon City on Lemon Avenue. The building was like a big box with planks and battings running up and down. When the railroad camp came to Lemon City Miss Ada could scarcely keep the attention of the children. They all wanted to hang out the windows and watch the work gangs. At recess the children would go to the railroad commissary and buy large molasses cookies. Among the pupils in school at this time were Ethel Freeman, Edna Mettair, Henry Matthaus, and Lilly

Watson. Miss Ada had a white horse named Dan which she used to ride to visit the parents of her pupils.

There were no churches in Lemon City in 1892 but several were soon started. We were Methodists in North Carolina but when an Episcopal Church was organized in Little River we joined it, partly because one of our best friends, Mrs. T. A. Winfield, was an Episcopalian. The Episcopal Church in Little River was just north of the present intersection of 79th Street and N. E. Second Avenue but the first church was soon destroyed by a hurricane. It was during the building of the second church that I was married in 1904 and couldn't be married in the church because there was no floor. This church was called St. Andrew's and in March, 1912, it was closed and the congregation merged with that of the Holy Cross Church in Buena Vista. I remember that Bishop Gray stayed in our hotel while he was examining the construction of St. Andrew's.

The Methodists organized a church in Lemon City in 1893, meeting first in private homes. Then they built a small wooden structure in a patch of palmettoes. I remember the sweet sound of the bell they had. It was here that Dellie Pierce played the organ, the kind you pump with your feet. Sometimes several Indians would come to service. They always liked to hear Dellie play the organ. One or two benches in the church were set aside for Negroes. You could hear their strong voices singing above the White people. Among my friends who were active in organizing this church were Miss Ada Merritt, Mrs. J. W. Fulford and Mrs. Willie Filer.

The Baptists were organized by our good friends, the Reverend and Mrs. W. C. Stanton. The Stanton Memorial Baptist Church is named for them. Mrs. Mary Pierce and Mr. and Mrs. Zumwalt were a part of that congregation. When the Methodist Church was destroyed by a hurricane in 1902 the Baptists invited the Methodists to use their church. Within two years the Methodists had rebuilt their church, this time on N. E. Second Avenue near 62nd Street. It was named Grace Methodist.

A popular way to raise money for the churches was by giving a box social. The girls and women would decorate boxes with crepe paper or fresh flowers and put enough supper in each box for two persons. The boxes were sold at auction. The husband or suitor might be tipped off ahead of time as to which box to bid on. One night Mr. J. W. Spivey bid \$3.00 on a box, thereby outbidding a husband and gaining the privilege of eating with the man's wife. The husband became so angry that he soon left the social in a huff, taking his wife along with him. Mr. Spivey thought it was

a good joke. Baby sitters were not needed in those days. Families came together to these socials. Mr. Henry Filer used to always bid for the box decorated by Miss Bertha Lanier and in 1912 they were married, my daughter, Laura, serving as flower girl.

Taffy pulls and hayrides were other church-sponsored social activities. Sometimes ice was brought in on the boat from Key West and we would have an ice cream social, making the cream in hand freezers. Beach picnics were popular. These often included a hunt for turtle eggs and drift wood. The Beach was a kind of peoples' lumber yard. Boards of all kinds would wash ashore and these would be gathered up and preserved in backyards until needed. The pulpit for Grace Methodist Church was fashioned from timbers washed up on the beach.

Fellowship was not restricted by church affiliations. Activities were shared by all, regardless of church. For instance, our friend, Mrs. T. A. Winfield, an Episcopalian, wrote and directed a play for the benefit of the Baptist Church and many who took part were Methodists.

Mr. Merriwether Strayer, Mrs. Winfield's brother, had been to London and seen Madame Toussand's Wax Exhibit and that was the inspiration for Mrs. Winfield's play. It was called "Aunt Jolly's Wax Works." Mr. Winfield made the scenery and dressed in women's clothes to play the role of Aunt Jolly. Each character had to act like a wax doll and was first seen in a picture frame. Mr. Strayer then pretended to wind up the doll and it would step out of the frame and march across the stage, with body rigid and only the feet and lower legs moving.

We had quite a problem getting costumes for twenty-five people. My brother Bob wore Father's big old black hat and represented Christopher Columbus. Mr. Spivey's hat was so big for him it kept falling down over his face. "Get this hat off my face," Mr. Spivey whispered to Mr. Strayer, since, as a doll, Mr. Spivey wasn't supposed to move. It was a "stage" whisper and the audience laughed. Dellie Pierce and John Peters were others in the play. The play was a big success and netted \$80 which was almost enough to buy a lot for the Baptist Church. In 1900 the Baptists got two acres near N. E. Second Avenue and 59th Street for \$100. The church that was erected three years later cost \$600.

At the time of "Aunt Jolly's Wax Works," about 1897, the Baptists were still meeting in the schoolhouse. That year Dellie Pierce helped with a money making scheme to raise money for the church by having a party at

"Pierce's Hall" which was her father's bay front warehouse. These were Dellie's invitations:

"This birthday party is given to you,
'Tis something novel, 'tis something new;
We send you each a little sack,
Please either send or bring it back
With as many cents as you are old —
We promise the number will never be told.

"Kind friends will give you something to eat,
And others will furnish a musical treat.
The social committee, with greetings most hearty,
Feel sure you'll attend your own birthday party.
March tenth is the appointed date
And we hope the returns will not be too late."

Lemon City's first library was in one room of the bayfront home of Mrs. Cornelia Key. It began with 500 books which were donated. Everybody, townfolks or homesteaders, could borrow books. This was in the year 1894. Then a group of girls called the Buzzing Belles gave a supper and dance and raised \$47.38 to help the library. A few years later a wooden frame building was built on N. E. 61st Street and today that building is still used as a library, though now it is a branch of the Miami Public Library.

Changes have come so fast that it is hard to find any of the old landmarks. Pete Merritt's island is no longer an island. The swamp is filled and houses cover it. Our old homestead has fallen to the bulldozer and the old McDonald Hotel has been torn down. But there are still some houses on N. E. 61st Street, old Lemon Avenue, which have withstood all changes and all hurricanes and are much the same today as I remember them as a girl. They are frame houses, built of Dade County pine lumbered in Dan Knight's sawmill. This wood gets so hard with time that termites cannot eat it. These are modest houses hidden behind alamandas, bougainvillas and crotons. Of the thousands of people who drive along this street every day only a few remember that here was the beginning.