

Tequesta:

The Cruise of the Bonton

By CHARLES WILLIAM PIERCE

PRELUDE

The sun was slowly sinking down behind the pine woods on the western shore of Lake Worth, and its last long golden rays were caressing the tops of the white crested breakers, creating a myriad of miniature rainbows in the feathery foam, as each on rushing breaker flung itself madly against the rocky headland whose high grim sides defied the onslaught of the sea. Each breaker seemed to rush in with some definite mission, only to be vanquished with a resounding roar, and a great upflinging of salt spray.

High above the reach of the pounding breakers sat four small dark figures in various attitudes of rest, gazing thoughtfully out to sea. These boys, for boys they were, though they sat so still they seemed a part of the rocky shore, were strong sturdy looking fellows, sun burned and tanned by the semi-tropical sun until they were almost the color of the native Seminole. For nearly an hour they had sat thus, drinking in the beauties of the scene which, though old to them never lost its charm.

Suddenly the silence was broken by one of the larger boys. "Boys," he said, after a long sigh, "The game is getting just awful scarce now days. The trouble is the country is getting all settled up. Too much civilization for good hunting any more." "Yes," responded the boy next to him, a boy about his own age, "It's getting so now you have to hunt and hunt to find anything to shoot at. I just wish we could go on a long trip some place where there is plenty of all kinds of game. Some place outside of civilization where there are no hunters or settlements to scare the game."

For a while the group was silent, each young mind working over the picture of a hunters paradise that had been laid before him. After a few minutes, the boy that had spoken first, leaped up with a radiant face and exclaimed, "I have it. Lets make a trip to the Thousand Islands over on the west coast."

He was greeted by a chorus of; "Gee, that would be fine," "Bet there's lots of game there" "Nobody over there but plume hunters too."

"But we are too young to go, and our folks won't let us," said the other larger boy, and again their faces fell.

"Well, Roz, I have a proposition to make to you," the first fellow said again, "We're both fourteen and in seven years we will be twenty one. Lets you and I make an agreement to take that trip the year we are twenty one."

"You bet we will, Charlie," said Roz, and they shook hands very solemnly. As far as those two boys were concerned, the trip was as good as started, and they straight way began to plan eagerly all the necessary details.

I was the boy who suggested the trip to the Thousand Islands, and during the following six years, when I was busy growing to manhood, I never forgot the agreement, and when ever I was alone, which was a good part of the time, I would plan and replan, going over all the details of the long anticipated trip. Sometimes I would get out the map of Florida and lay out the course we would take; down the coast to Cape Florida, around the Fla. Keys, over the Bay of Florida to Cape Sable, and up the Gulf to the Thousand Islands. Many nights I would lay awake and figure just how we could overcome the many difficulties, would draw plans of the small boats we should have, until finally I knew that I would never be satisfied until I did go to the Thousand Islands, even if I had to make the trip without my friend Roz.

Time passed and six years later my father was appointed keeper of the Biscayne House of Refuge for shipwrecked sailors. This Life Saving Station was located on the ocean beach near the head of Biscayne Bay, and of course our family moved there to stay while my father was keeper.

Some time after moving down there I got a letter from an uncle of mine who was manager of the Titus House at Titusville on Indian River telling me that his sloop *Bonton* needed a captain and care taker, asking me to come

and get her and use her for any kind of business that I might find to do. This was just what I wanted, a good cabin yacht of 28 feet long and seven feet beam. But getting her was some job; first I had to walk up the ocean beach to Hypoluxo, and there get my friends Louie and Guy Bradley to take me in their small sail boat another one hundred and sixty miles up Indian River to Titusville. Well that was what I did, sailing the *Bonton* back to Lake Worth in company with Louie and Guy in their boat the *Nautilus*.

When I started from Lake Worth down the coast to Miami, I picked up an Irish peddler named Pat Murphy that wanted to go with me to Miami, and I wanted him for company. Well we made Miami after a very stormy trip of two days and one night on old ocean. When within a few miles of Biscayne Bay we were struck by a heavy squall from the northeast. I took in the mainsail and run before it under the jib alone. The sea kicked up in a few minutes and Pat got scared, he said, "This old boat will be your coffin yet." But we run into smooth water inside just after dark all safe in spite of Pat's prophecy. We could not see to get over the flats so lay at anchor all night. Next morning I landed Pat at Miami and went on to my home at the Biscayne House of Refuge.

I had heard a great deal about an old Frenchman, M. Le Chevelier, a taxidermist, collector of bird skins and plumes, who was living up the Miami river with a family named Wagner. One day my father came home and told me he had met M. Chevelier in Miami, and he said he had heard of me and my boat, *The Bonton*. M. Le Chevelier was contemplating a trip for the purpose of collecting bird skins and plumes, around the keys and on up the west coast to the Thousand Islands, and perhaps beyond. He wanted to charter the *Bonton* with my services for the trip.

This was my chance to make the long planned trip. I lost no time in seeing M. Chevelier and a week later had agreed to take him and his party on the long hunting trip around the Atlantic and Gulf coasts of south Florida. At last my dream was going to be realized. My friend Roz was in Illinois, and so that left me to take the trip without him. Many times I wished he could be there and see our boyhood plans materialize. M. Chevelier did not want to start on his trip until April 15 so there was plenty of time for me to make preparations. In the first place I needed a small boat and would have to build it if I got one just to my notion. Meantime my father resigned his

position as keeper of the House of Refuge, and in February I moved my mother and sister back to our old home on Hypoluxo Island, together with all our household goods. My father was to follow us later in his boat the *Bonito*.

After all the details of moving were over, and we were settled in our old home I started in to build my canoe or small boat which I named the *Falcon*. Meantime I had persuaded my chums, Louie and Guy to make a plume hunting trip with me as far as Biscayne Bay starting about March 12th which would give us a months hunting together before I started with M. Chevelier from Miami. They built a boat for the trip and called it the *Ibis*.

So that is how and why I finally accomplished what was once almost a dream, My Trip To The Thousand Isles, by way of the Florida Keys, and I called my record of the trip

“The Cruise of the *Bonton*.”

Editor's Note: An entire issue of Tequesta has never been devoted to a single topic. Ordinarily it is not good practice to do so. But “The Cruise of the *Bonton*” is a rarely good piece of natural history, ornithology and human history. Together with the ornithology notes by Dr. Robertson it is one of the most significant items we have published. It will appear to some readers that the proper form of the boat's name may be the *Bon Ton*. The manuscript was prepared by the owner of the boat and we have elected not to change it.

CRUISE OF THE SLOOP *BONTON*
IN THE SPRING AND SUMMER OF 1885

March 11.

After saying "good bye" to my folkes I hoisted sail on the *Bonton* and sailed over to Bradleys place, and anchored while getting Louie and Guy on board with all their things. I had my boat the *Falcon* on the stern deck so we towed the *Ibis* she was too large and heavy to take on deck, then got under way for Palm Beach. Stopped at Dr. Potter's place to get some medicine, got laudnum and quinine, then went on to the Brelsford's store and bought some kerosene, vinegar, cocoa, onions, and fish hooks, then went over to uncle Robert's to tell them good bye. Underway for the inlet about three o'clock in the afternoon. We stopped at the post office to get a bottle to put my vinegar in.

Just before dark we passed the schooner yacht *Decoy* that had a large hunting party on board. They had been on a bear hunt at the inlet. They waved to us a good bye. Come to anchor near the inlet about half an hour after dark. Ate our supper and turned in for the night. We have all got hard colds or influenza.

You should have heard the noise in the cabin last night. We were all coughing and sneezing, and making a great racket. As the wind and weather was not favorable for a trip down the coast and we had to wait until it was, we did not lift our anchor today. After breakfast we got into our small boats, and went hunting on west shore of the Lake. Louie killed a night heron and an egret. Guy killed a white heron. I killed a blue heron, a duck and a purple grackel. After dinner Louie took one of the small boats and went back to the store at Palm Beach to get some things he had forgotten to get yesterday. He did not get back until after dark.

When we got up this morning found there was a fine west wind blowing and the sea smooth, so after breakfast we hoisted our sails, weighed anchor, and out we went on to old ocean with our bowsprit pointing south down the coast, our nearest harbor in that direction being Hillsborough River, forty miles away. As we passed Mr. Chas Lane's place at Lake Worth he saw us,

and run up his flag, and saluted us. We answered with our flag from the mast head.

When we were off the Farrell trail (14 miles from Lake Worth Inlet) the wind shifted to the southwest then southeast. As the southeast wind was right ahead we had to start tacking or beating to windward which was slow work with the tide against us. When off Hypoluxo the wind shifted to the west again and we made better time while it lasted. When off the Orange Grove House of Refuge eight miles farther on it all died out to a dead calm. We had to anchor to keep the Gulf Stream from taking us back up the coast. In about an hour the wind breezed up right from the south, we hoisted sail and commenced to beat down the coast, it now got quite dark. In a short time the wind shifted again the the west, and we were all right.

Arrived at Hillsborough Inlet about two hours before daylight. We came to an anchor outside as it was too dark to see the channel over the bar. The tide was high and ocean very smooth, so I took the *Ibis* and paddled into the inlet to find the channel. I found it all right by sounding with an oar as it was pitch dark and I could not see anywhere. I went back to the *Bonton* and we poled her inside, and up the river away and anchored; then all hands turned in.

On getting up this morning we found the schooner *Neff* at anchor near us, her captain being an old friend of mine, we went to call on him. He had killed a deer the day before, and gave us a ham which was fine eating. While breakfast was cooking we got under way to go up the river. The tide turned against us and we did not get very far. Come to an anchor, and in a short time the *Bonton* was hard aground, so was compelled to wait for flood tide before we could go on. When the tide turned in the afternoon we sailed a long way up the river, and tied up along side of a very high bank. Ate our supper and went to bed. Louie and Guy made their bed on shore while I slept in the *Bonton's* cabin.

We could not go much farther with *Bonton*, so after breakfast we started out in our canoes to hunt for a place to leave her in while we are hunting up the river. I found a good place not very far off, a side channel that run up between high mangroves that hid the *Bonton* completely all but her topmast. After finding this good hiding place we went back to the *Bonton* for dinner. After dinner we began to fix our things to put in our canoes for

our long trip up the river. This kept us at work until supper time. After supper we poled the *Bonton* into the channel I had found where we are tonight.

We awoke quite early this morning, and commenced loading our canoes right after breakfast. We left the *Bonton* about eleven o'clock. Rowed up the river, because it was too deep to pole, until we come to the place where the river branched in every direction. The first channel we went into ended after we had gone a little way. The next, and the next one did the same way. The next channel went a long way but came to an end at last so we had to turn back again. It now commenced to rain so we had to stop and put up the tents on our canoes. It rained about half an hour, when it let up we started on and found another channel that proved to be the right one. The part of the river we are in now is very pretty. It is full of small islands covered with a heavy growth of bay and maple trees. Late in the afternoon we began to look for a camping place. We found one about three o'clock a high spruce¹ bluff on north side of river. We made our camp on top and called it Look Out Bluff.

It rained nearly all night. The morning came in bright and clear with a cool west wind. Louie and Guy thought their boat was not loaded right, as everything they wanted first was stored where they had to move everything out before they could get at it, so after breakfast they went back down the river, to where they had seen a nice low grassy bank the day before on our way up, to restow their load. Meantime while waiting for them I went fishing. Caught a fair size black bass, and although I had breakfast I was still some hungry so went on shore and built a fire, and cooked and ate my fish before the boys came back from down the river. We continued on our way up the river. About noon we come to where the river got very narrow and swift, here I killed a wood ibis or gannet. The river kept getting more and more narrow as we went along, and at last ended in a large saw grass swamp. We are camped tonight in a big hammock on the east side of this swamp, and have named it Camp Gannet.

Started on north this morning, following a small channel through the saw grass and lily pads. About ten o'clock Louie and Guy said there was not

¹ Probably = sand pine, *Pinus clausa*, the principal tree of the Florida "scrub", originally found along the Atlantic Coast south as far as Northern Dade County and sometimes known locally as "spruce pine" or "spruce".—WBR

any use of going farther as all signs of a channel had vanished, and we might as well turn back. I told them they could stay where they were and I would go to the end wherever that might be. I had the advantage of them in shallow water as my boat is made of canvas, and does not draw over two inches of water. So on I went. The wind was west, I put up my sail which helped me a lot in pushing through grass patches and water moss. About noon I come to the end of navigation for the *Falcon*. Beyond me as far as I could see to the north and west was shallow marsh and flat woods, to the east was high land covered with spruce trees. I turned back. The wind changed to the north-west and my sail pushed me along at a good rate, soon I was back with the boys. Ate our dinner and started back down the river. On coming to a shallow part of the river we found a ten foot alligator that did not intend, for some reason known only to him, to let us pass. Every time we started past him he would charge us with mouth wide open. At last seeing there was no other way for us to get by, I killed him. We are camped tonight on island not far from "Lookout Bluff". It is a pretty place, short green grass shaded with large water oaks. Guy killed a purple grackel, Louie also killed one. I killed two and caught a bull head, also speared a small leather back turtle.²

A beautiful clear morning with a cool north west wind, and birds singing all around us. After breakfast as I was cleaning my gun in the boat, I dropped a loaded paper shell overboard, and at first could not find it; after searching in the moss and grass for about ten minutes I at last found it. I thought such a long time in the water would spoil it, but to my surprise it fired all right. Feeling a little fish hungry this morning we went fishing. Louie caught one brim and a black bass. Guy caught two brim, and I four brim. This fishing was too slow so we continued on down the river. Having a fair wind our sails were a great help we only used the oars on head wind reaches, and very narrow places. We did not stop at the *Bonton*, but came right on. We saw the tip of her topmast as we passed her hiding place. Arrived at the Inlet about three in the afternoon, and turned in to Cypress Creek. Went up the creek for about a mile and a half when we come to a kind of open swamp, the creek was just a narrow channel through this swamp. About half an hour before sundown we commenced to look for a camping place as the country is entirely unknown to us, and we did not want night to catch us without a place to camp on. About sundown we found a place we thought would do, in fact had to do as there was nothing better in sight. The place we selected

² *Trionyx ferox*, more commonly known as the soft-shelled turtle.—WBR

was a small grove of cabbage palms about two hundred yards east of the creek, and we had to wade through mud up to our knees to get there. However it was a good camp when we got to it, but such a time as we had getting our things from the boats to camp. On account of the mud here we have named it, Camp-Stick-in-the-Mud.

Broke camp and started on again early this morning, creek very narrow and shallow. At noon we came to saw grass, the channel very narrow and full of lily pads. We had to get overboard and drag our boats along with water up to our waists; while we were at this work I stepped on an alligator. The gator gave a furious wriggle and I nearly fell on my back trying to get away from him. He came to the top and tried to bite my canoe, I then grabbed up my gun and killed him.

Late in the afternoon we reached a small lake that I had heard of some years before. It is called "Lettuce Lake", so named from a queer water plant that grows on the surface of the water.³ This plant stands about six inches above the water, has rounded leaves something like lettuce, but thick and very rough, these plants float around on the surface like water hyacinths. Most of the lake was open water, and we made our way around the north shore where we found a high bank covered with spruce trees and saw palmetto. Here we camped for the night.

Did not get up very early this morning being tired from yesterday's strenuous work. After breakfast we packed up and was on our way at nine o'clock. We had not gone half a mile when we found our way blocked by a large floating island that reached from shore to shore, and was at least fifty feet wide. The creek here is twenty feet deep, and about three hundred feet wide. Beyond the floating island the surface of the creek was a solid mass of floating lettuce as far as we could see. We then unloaded our canoes, hauled them over the island, and launched them—into lettuce—solid lettuce a foot deep, and twenty feet of water underneath. A miniature "Sudd of the Nile." My canoe actually sat on top of the lettuce without touching water

³ The plant referred to is water lettuce, *Pistia stratiotes*. The comparison to water hyacinth may be an anachronism indicating later revision of the diary, because most accounts state that water hyacinth is an introduced plant that first appeared in Florida about 1890 (See: Penfound, Wm. T. and T. T. Earle. 1948. The biology of the water hyacinth. *Ecological Monographs*, 18:447-472). Some botanists however, (e.g., Small, John K. 1933. *Manual of the Southeastern Flora*, p. 267) have suggested that the plant may be native to Florida.—WBR

until I put the load in her. As soon as loaded we tried to move on. We did not have a pole, only six foot oars. It was a case of row, paddle, or nothing doing. The lettuce would roll up two feet high ahead of the boats, we would then get on the bow of our boats and with our hands pull the lettuce out of the way, then force the boats ahead until another bunch rolled up. Finding we could not make any headway at this we worked our way into the shore which was covered with saw grass, and to our delight we found it was floating, so by standing on it it would sink until there was water enough to float our boats, we would then push them ahead. Kept this up until near sunset, and only got half a mile from the floating island. Completely tired out we stopped for the night intending to sleep in our boats, and ate a cold lunch for supper as there is not a bit of ground to build a fire on, and there is not a bit of dry land that we can see within half a mile, and none that we can get to tonight. Just before dark the plume birds began to fly on their way to some nesting place up the creek. Louie killed two herons, one white, and one Louisiana. Guy killed one Louisiana heron, and a grey curlew. I killed two white, one Louisiana, and one little blue heron, but only got one white heron, the others having dropped back in the swamp where a man could not go.

After a makeshift breakfast we kept on our laborious way up the creek. Some time near noon we reached open water, and oh what a relief to get out of that lettuce. Here the creek banks are lined with tall and stately cypress trees, some of them as much as seven feet thick at the base; growing very close together, and all covered with a heavy drapery of gray spanish moss. It was the wildest, loneliest, and at the same time the most beautiful sight we had seen on any of our hunting trips.

The creek here is about seventy five feet wide, and seven or eight feet deep, and on account of muddy bottom, black in color. The trees on each side are so tall and heavy covered with moss the sun seldom shines on the water, and in consequence the creek is entirely free of water lilies, lettuce, moss or grass. But alligators, we see them at every turn. Evidently they have not seen man often as they do not appear to fear us in the least.

Around the first bend we came upon a small island that had a few nesting plume birds on it, the first we had seen since leaving home. We immediately went into it and commenced to shoot the birds. About three o'clock we had cleaned it up. Louie killed seven white herons. Guy killed

two and a gannet or wood Ibis. Wood ibis is the correct name, but we always call them by the local name of gannet, some times called iron head, so called on account of its head, the top of which is bare bone. We kill them for their tails which make beautiful fans, and we also eat them. I killed six white herons and one egret. After killing the last bird we continued on our way up the creek. At sunset the birds began to fly over going west up the creek, and we commenced to shoot them. Louie killed three white herons and one little blue. Guy killed one white heron and a peckit bird. What we call a peckit bird is a year old blue heron, white in color, without plume, and not good for anything. I killed seven little blue herons, one white heron and one gannet. By this time it was quite dark and not any place to camp so we made preparations to sleep in our boats. First we put up our tents that entirely covered the open part of the boat, then spread our blankets on the false bottom which made comfortable beds secure from dew, rain, or mosquitoes. We had not turned in more than half an hour when something began to splash and crunch alongside of my canoe. I raised the edge of my tent and looked out, there was a big alligator within a foot of my boat eating the bodies of the birds we had thrown away after taking the plumes. Louie started to get up and shoot him he heard us talking, and left; do not think he came back, anyway I was soon asleep, and was not disturbed again that night.

A fine clear morning with a light west wind blowing. After breakfast we continued on our way up the creek. About ten o'clock we reached the end of navigation, also the first dry land we had seen since leaving Lettuce Lake. The creek from here on is full of large cypress trees, too close together for our boats to pass. Here the north bank is about three feet above the creek, and for a short distance covered with grass only back to a grove of palmetto trees. In between the trees we set up our tents, unloaded our boats, and made preparations for a stay of some days, depending on the number of birds we find in the woods and swamps to the west of camp.

It sure feels good to walk on dry ground once more. After getting our camp in shape we cooked our dinner. I was sitting on the bank a short distance from the tents, eating; I happened to look back of me and there about three feet from me was a ground rattlesnake⁴ coiled up, shaking his

⁴ *Sistrurus miliarius*, also known as pigmy rattlesnake. Notably, the narrative does not mention the large diamond-backed rattlesnake, encounters with which figure prominently in most early accounts of natural history exploration in Southern Florida.

tail and running out his tongue at me. Of course I lost no time in fixing Mr. snake. Louie and I speared a leather back turtle.

After dinner Guy and I walked over to where the government road crosses the creek. There was a lot of birds there. Guy killed a white curlew. I killed two gannets and one egret. Just before dark we went down the creek to a roosting place. I killed one little blue heron and one white heron. It was now so dark we returned to camp.

The flight of birds follow the creek to the west, we think there must be a large nesting place of them somewhere west of us, and as we cannot go any farther with the boats we have decided to take a few things in a pack on our backs, and travel over land on the north side of the creek to find it if we can. Guy is not at all well and I expect we will have to wait for him to rest on the way.

Left camp with our packs on our backs about eight o'clock, sun very hot, and not much wind. We had walked only a short distance when I saw a turkey, shot at it twice, it flew off a ways and fell, but we could not find it. About every half mile or so we would have to stop for Guy to rest. At noon we rested and ate our dinner. While Guy rested Louie and I went in to the cypress to the south of us to see if we could see any sign of the creek. It was a fearful place, dense masses of ferns, briars, and immense cypress trees. Some of the cypress trees were at least ten feet through at the base. We soon got enough of this place, went back picked up our packs and tramped on. Late in the afternoon we found ourselves cut off from farther travel west, by a large cypress swamp that reached to the north as far as we could see. The woods on the border of this swamp are open flat woods. As it was late in the day we camped for the night. Saw plume birds going down in the cypress west of us at dark.

Set up our tents this morning and fixed up for a stay of a day or so, then went to look for the place where we saw the birds going to roost last night. We tramped around in the swamp most of the forenoon but failed to find any nesting place or anything that looked like one. I killed a little blue heron and a gator. Went back to camp and cooked dinner. While we were eating dinner we heard a queer noise to the northeast of us, and could not make out what it was, none of us had heard anything like it before. After a while I happened to look up and saw a large turkey gobbler looking at us. I

grabbed up my gun and crawled until I was close to him then let him have both barrells. He tumbled down then jumped up and run off towards the swamp. I after him with an empty gun in my hands having forgot to take some extra shells with me. I also had on a pair of heavy top boots, and in consequence was not in good running trim. I got within about six feet of the old fellow and could not get any closer the best I could do. The turkey plunged into the swamp and I after him. The turkey was giving out fast, and so was I.

Soon as we struck mud and water my boots filled up which made them so heavy I could hardly lift one foot after the other, still I was keeping up with Mr. turkey. Finally he turned towards camp, and in trying to run through some briars caught his foot in them and fell, I fell on top of him, got hold of his neck and settled the business for him right there. The boys in camp watching us, and laughing so they could hardly stand. They said it was a fine race. Went out before dark to look for birds, say one turkey, two white herons, and a flock of gannets. I killed one white heron. Turkey for supper.

Weather turned cold last night, and as we are traveling light with only one blanket each, I was very cold all night; too sleepy to get up and build a fire so stayed in bed and shivered until morning. Just after getting up I heard a noise off in the woods, went to see what it was. I found a large slough full of birds. There were plume birds of all kinds, and gannets, feeding. Shot eight times and killed three white herons and one gannet. We broke camp after breakfast and started north. Went about a mile and made camp again. After dinner went to look for birds, found a large slough full of them, and sat down to watch them when they go to roost. They all went about north-east. Guy heard a turkey gobble and Louie killed a gannet.

We heard two turkeys gobbling this morning. Louie started out to try and kill one, but could not find them. After breakfast we left our tents standing and started out to look for the nesting place that we believe is in the swamp somewhere to the north of us. We penetrated the swamp for some miles, and it was one of the worst we had ever been in. Mud and water up to our knees all the time and some times up to our waists. Away out in there we run across a small nesting place of little blue herons, but it was in such bad hole of a place we did not bother them. About noon we gave up finding any rookery of plume birds, and started back for dry land which we reached in about two hours. We found a small patch of huckleberries while on our way back to

camp, and stopped to pick some of them. While at this we flushed a large turkey that got out of range before we could get our guns which we had left leaning against a pine tree while we picked berries. I left Louie and Guy eating berries, and went back to camp. My feet were so sore I could hardly walk, these old boots I am wearing are too heavy and not fit for this kind of work. Had been in camp but a short time when I heard the boys shoot four times. Just before sundown they came into camp with one curlew and one white heron.

We have named this little camp, "Camp Rice", because we have had nothing else to eat but rice since we have been here excepting what game we have killed. Our ammunition was so heavy we could not carry much grub which is all gone now but rice. Packed up and got away early on our return to our boats. Thoughts of the good things to eat there, hastened our steps, and Guy not yet feeling well, could not keep up with us, we had to stop every little way for him to rest. When we were within a mile and a half of the camp on the creek, we told Guy to go on ahead and take his time and when he got tired to sit down and rest and we would overtake him, meantime we would stay where we were for a time to give him a good start. So he went on while we rested in the shade of some bushes. In about half an hour Louie and I started on, soon we heard Guy shoot away ahead of us, we hurried up to over take him, thinking he fired his gun to call us. But we did not overtake him and were getting anxious about him when the white tents of our camp came in view. As we dashed into camp there sat Mr. Guy with a grin on his face, and a dead hen turkey lying at his feet. It was his first turkey, and he left very proud of what he had done, so we named the camp "Camp Hen."

We were sure hungry for something sweet, and all hands started cooking. I made some pancakes, mixed them same as flapjacks, but put in plenty of sugar and condensed milk. I tell you they tasted mighty fine. Shortly after dinner I shot a Cock-of-the-woods or pileated woodpecker near camp. We went out for a short hunt just before dark, along the creek bottom to the west. Saw five turkeys but could not get a good shot at any of them. One of them had gone to roost in a tall cypress tree, we saw it when it was about seventy five yards off, and it was watching us so we could not change our positions without scaring it, there was a bunch of moss hanging down between us and the turkey. We thought if all would shoot at the same time we would sure kill it, so at the word fire, we let drive, three ounces of shot driven by ten drams of powder. The shot shook the moss, the turkey shook his feathers,

and — flew away unhurt. We returned to camp to get our supper and go to bed pretty well tired out.

Arose at sunrise and went to look for turkeys. Did not find any although I heard a number of them gobbling around me. Killed two white herons, one egret, and one great blue heron. When I got up this morning Louie and Guy were sound asleep. I slipped out very quiet, they did not know anything about me being gone until my shooting at the creek ford awakened them. When I returned to camp they jumped on me for, as they claimed, sneaking out just to get ahead of them. They did not like it very much. I told them I thought they would rather finish their sleep than go hunting, so did not wake them.

A short distance above our camp the creek is open again for a little ways. In this part of the creek I found the remains of a burned Indian canoe that I could navigate by standing in the unburned end. In this part of the creek the water is very shallow. After breakfast I went to explore this part of the creek in the old piece of a canoe. I had fifteen shells with me, all loaded with No. 9 shot, the size we use for plume bird shooting. I ran into a bunch of alligators, there must have been fifty of them, perhaps more. The water too shallow for them to hide, and they did not know what to do when I appeared on the scene in the old canoe. Because gators eat wounded plume birds we have always made a practice of killing them whenever we get a chance, and here was a chance too good to let pass. Although my shot was too small for good work on gators, I opened fire on them, and kept it up until my fifteen shells were gone. I don't know how many I killed for as soon as my shells were used up I got out of there soon as possible. There were too many gators there still alive when my gun was empty.

When I reached camp found the boys somewhat excited, they could not imagine what I had run up against, said it sounded like a battle going on down in the creek among the cypress. Finished up the day by washing our clothes.

Got out early this morning and went over on the south side of creek to hunt. I saw four turkeys, got a shot at one of them, wounded it, but it escaped into the bushes and got clean away. It was an off day for me. Shot five times at birds and missed all of them. Lay around camp and took it easy the rest of the day.

Left Camp Hen this morning and started west on south side of creek on another overland trip with our camp outfit on our backs, still hunting for that large rookery that we have failed to find so far. After walking about a mile we came up on a flock of egrets. I killed one and wounded another. A short distance farther on we stopped to rest, and while sitting there talking I happened to look at the cypress to the northwest of us just as a flock of Paroquets came flying out of them and flew west, keeping on in this direction until they were out of sight. We all jumped to our feet and grabbed our guns when we first sighted them, wishing they would come our way as they were the first wild ones we had ever seen. Last year Louie and I were hunting up Snook Creek, which is about two miles south of here, and one afternoon as we were pushing along through a narrow creek, I happened to look up over head and there I saw two scarlet ibis going to the Everglades. They were away out of reach of our guns so all we could do was to admire their beauty and watch them go. Soon after the Paroquets went out of sight we saw a large hawk that was new to us, tried to kill it but missed because of distance. It now commenced to rain so hard we hastily put up our tent for shelter. The rain kept up until dark so of course we had to stay there all night, and it is not the best place in the country for a camp. On starting to cook our supper discovered we had forgot to bring our salt, everything for supper was very fresh. Have named this camp, "Camp-forgot-the-salt."

A clear sky and bright sunshine this morning. After breakfast we continued our westerly tramp until we come to a cypress swamp reaching away off to the south. Stopped here and set up our tent, left our packs and went into the cypress. Soon we were in water up to our waists and getting deeper all the time. We had to turn back. Did not see any birds at all in the swamp. On our way back to camp I was walking ahead, Louie and Guy following Indian file, when Louie called out, "Look look;" I thinking only of plume birds, looked up in the air, but did not see a thing, "Where?" I asked. "Aw, it's gone now", he answered. "What was it?" I asked again. "A deer was right in front of us, why didn't you look ahead instead of up in the air," he answered. "Well," said I, "I was thinking and looking for plume birds and supposed that was what was in your mind too." As it is the first of April it will have to pass as an April fool". Louie killed a Florida mallard which we roasted for dinner, it was fine. Having cooked an over supply of flapjacks they spoiled on us, so before packing up we amused ourselves by throwing them around to see them sail through the air. On this account we named the camp, "Camp Flapjacks-all-around." After dinner we packed up and started back,

and by making a forced march we reached "Camp Hen" a little before dark. On the way I killed a jack snipe.

First thing we heard when we woke up this morning was the patter of rain on the tent roof. Rained so hard we could not build a fire to cook breakfast, so had to eat some cold things left over from supper last night. It rained hard most of the forenoon. When it let up Louie went hunting, Guy went fishing, and I stayed in camp to make a shelter to cook under. Our failure to cook our breakfast this morning on account of the rain put me in mind of a shelter for our camp fire, when this was finished I patched some holes in my pants. When I was finishing my tailor job, Louie come back from his hunting trip empty handed, then we all went fishing. We only caught brim. Louie got fifteen, Guy got fifteen, and I seven. For some reason I was not much of a fisherman today. Went down the creek in the afternoon. Guy killed a gator and I killed a white heron that did not have a plume. A possum got in my plume box last night and destroyed two blue plumes.

Went down to the nesting place that we shot out on our way up, we found the birds nearly all gone. I managed to kill one. Guy killed an alligator on the way down. On our way back we stopped to fish for brim. Louie and Guy caught forty five and I seventeen, they were very small, otherwise we would have had more fish than we could eat. On our return to camp we commenced to load our boats and get things ready to leave for the *Bonton* in the morning.

Got an early start this morning. We had a very hard time in the lettuce and did not get to Camp Lettuce until after dark. By the time we had made camp and cooked supper it was quite late. Beds were hastily made and we tumbled in, very tired after our hard days work pushing through that lettuce.

Today is Sunday, and we slept late not intending to move on today, but rest and clean up. Stayed in camp all day, washed our clothes, picked some huckleberries and made sauce with them. It was a calm clear day, not a bit of wind in the forenoon. I saw an alligator about a quarter of a mile west of camp and of course in the lake. I commenced to call it by making a noise like a young gator. It came right up to us and Guy killed it. Soon after this we saw another, called it up and killed it, kep this up until Guy had killed three and I two, making five in all that came up to us to be killed. I ate all of my huckleberries sauce for supper. Louie and Guy saved theirs

for next day. I cooked some flapjacks to have for breakfast so we can get an early start in the morning. After we had turned in I heard something rattle a spoon among my dishes, got up to see what it was, found a possum had been eating my flapjacks, and ate up all of the boys' sauce, and they never had a taste of it. Will not repeat what they said when they found their sauce was gone. Almost forgot to say Louie killed three coots, and I killed one. After running the possum off we went back to bed, and slept good the rest of the night.

Up and off early this morning on our return journey to the *Bonton*. Had another hard time of it. We thought to better ourselves and took a new channel that did not pan out. Had to get out and haul our boats a long way. We got into the main channel about noon, and arrived at the *Bonton* at three oclock. Found everything all right on board of her. The tide was low and not water enough to float her over a sand bar in the channel. We'll have to wait for high water tomorrow before we can get her out of the creek into the Hillsborough river. Our bunks felt good after such a long time in the swamps and woods. Three weeks today since we left the *Bonton* on this hunt in the small boats.

When the tide came up today we poled the *Bonton* out into the river, come to an anchor to eat our dinner. After dinner, as the river is too narrow to sail with a head wind, we got under way again with our poles, and made about one and a half miles down river when the tide went so low we run hard and fast aground in mid channel, so there was nothing to do but wait for high water. Rigged up our canoes and went sailing for fun, and we had plenty for the wind was fresh, and the water shallow so we were not afraid of a capsiz. The tide not coming up until some time in the night we wait for high water tomorrow.

Bonton hard aground water not coming up enough at high tide to float her. Went down to the inlet in our canoes. It was quite rough outside, and we thought it would be fun to go out in the surf with the boats just to see how much they could stand. We had a fine time jumping around out there. My canoe shipped one sea and wet me all over. Louie got his back wet and some water in his boat. Come back inside and went fishing in the mouth of cypress creek. Caught thirteen mangrove snapper, three sea bass or red fish, and one jewfish, returned to the *Bonton*, and had fish stew for supper. The *Bonton* is hard aground at bed time.

It begins to look as if the water would never come up enough to float the *Bonton* again, she is still hard and fast on the bottom today. Went down to the inlet today. The sea was very smooth. Went out on the bar where I speared a large baracuda which was four or five feet long. He put up a pretty strong fight, and bled quite freely from the spear wound. Soon as I had it in the boat a bunch of sharks, smelling the blood came rushing around; I slapped on the water with my spear to scare them away, as I thought one of them might take a notion to bite through the canvas bottom of my canoe. One of the sharks rushed up and grabbed the spear. When he felt the steel on his teeth he dropped it quick and made for the open sea as fast as he could go; in less than three minutes there was not a shark in sight. After this little excitement we went down a long shallow bay or sort of sound south of the inlet, and in the south end on the land side we found a lot of the finest oysters we had ever seen. One was extremely large, and after taking the oysters out of the shell I asked Guy to try his foot in it. It fit nicely, and Guy had a fair sized foot for a boy of sixteen. On our return to the *Bonton* found her afloat at last. We at once got out our poles and pushed her down to the inlet where there is water enough to float her at all times. We had a grand oyster stew for supper, nothing else but oysters, and we did not feel the least bit hungry at bed time.

Up early this morning to see what the chances were for a trip down the coast to Miami. The chance was good, a fine northwest wind was blowing, and the sea smooth. After breakfast we hauled the *Falcon* on board, and lashed her down, gave the *Ibis* more towline, and made everything as secure as possible on board the *Bonton*. At nine o'clock we hoisted the sails of the *Bonton* and sailed out the inlet on to old ocean. Passed Fort Lauderdale House of Refuge at eleven o'clock, and New River Inlet shortly after. When off Baker's Haulover at the head of Biscayne Bay, Louie discovered the *Ibis* was nearly a mile astern of us, drifting out to sea. She had broken her towline, and we had not noticed it. We of course had to come about and go back and pick her up which delayed us quite a bit. Passed Biscayne House of Refuge at three o'clock. When within three miles of Norris Cut we were struck by a heavy squall from the south and southwest. Close reefed the mainsail and come to an anchor near the shore. We rode out the storm all right and after it had passed the wind was light, but the sea rather rough. Set full sail and made for the inlet which we reached a little after dark. I knew the way in however, having crossed this bar twenty two times to date, but we could not

get in Biscayne Bay except by daylight so we anchored for the night in the inlet. We trolled down the coast and caught a king fish and a baracuda.

When we got up this morning the tide was running out and was getting lower all the time. We have to have high water to get over the flats into the bay. The tide would not be high until afternoon so we took things easy and loafed on board. Got underway about two o'clock with a very light wind, run over to Miami a distance of about four miles. When we arrived found the schooner *Neff* anchored in the river. Guy and myself went up to Wagner's place, which is three miles up the Miami river, to see when Mr. Chevelier wants to start on our cruise to the Keys and Gulf Coast. Mr. Chevelier said he thought he would be ready to start next week. When Guy and I returned to the *Bonton* we talked the matter over with Louie. We did not want to lie around doing nothing, so decided to go up the river into the Everglades, and hunt for plume birds. Although in the Indian part of the glades we believed we could find a few. Before going to bed we called on Dennis O'Neil, captain of the schooner *Neff*.

Sunday and of course we were not in any hurry to get out of bed this morning. Just after breakfast a small steam boat went by going up the river, her name was *Chimo*. About ten o'clock we got underway up the river to Wagner's where we soon arrived and tied up to their little dock on the north side of the river. After dinner we made a call on Wagners which consists of father and mother, son and grandson. Mr Wagner is an old German, his wife a French creole. William the son is about twenty seven years old. Henry the grandson is seventeen. William and Henry are going with us on our coast trip. William will be man-of-all-work, and cook. Henry is the taxidermist. Mr. Chevelier is French and cannot talk good English. All his talk is a sort of Pigeon English which is very amusing to listen to. He had an accident last fall. His gun went off and shot a hole through the middle of his right hand, he has only two fingers and a thumb left on that hand. The hand is still sore and he cannot use it. He shoots by resting his gun over his right elbow. When we start down the coast from here, Louie and Guy will go in company with us part of the way in their own boat the *Ibis*, and when they think they have gone far enough they will return home in her, while I will continue the cruise with my new people. I do not expect to get home before the last of summer. Mr. LeChevelier is a naturalist and we are going on a bird collecting trip. Pelican skins are the main object of the trip, plumes next, also cormorant skins, in fact all kinds of birds. Mr. Chevelier has a market for all of them

in Paris. He gets fifty cents for the pelican skins, twenty five cents for sea swallows or least tern, \$10. for great white heron, and \$25. for flamingo skins. Great white herons are scarce, and flamingos more so. If it was not for that we would soon make the old man rich.

Did not do anything today except get ready for our trip to the Everglades tomorrow. I have promised to return here at the end of five days when Mr. Chevelier expects to be ready to start on our cruise. William and Henry are to pilot us a mile or so into the glades. And although they have lived here all their lives, they know nothing about them farther than this.

Started up river early this morning. William and Henry in company with us in an Indian canoe. In a short time we arrived at the falls or rapids⁵. There is a fall of about six feet in fifty at this place. The water rushing down to the river from the glades over a rock bottom. The only way we could get our boats up the rapids was by getting out on the rocky bank and hauling them up by hand. A tough pull we had of it too. By hard work we soon had all the boats in the calm waters of the Everglades. About a mile west from the rapids William and Henry turned back saying, they did not know the way any farther, and could not help us any by going on.

There was a fine east wind, and as we were going in a general westerly direction the wind was directly behind us most of the time. The *Ibis* had two leg-o-mutton sails while the *Falcon* carried a large lateen, the yard of which was fifteen feet long. Soon as the Wagners left us, we hoisted sails and bore away to the west, into the great Everglades, nothing but water, saw grass, and small swampy islands in every direction, except behind us, farther than we could see, in fact the glades at this point reach almost to the waters of the gulf of Mexico. We had a good deal of dodging about on our journey west. The *Falcon* was a little the fastest on account of her large sail and light draft. After a time I came upon a long heavy bank of saw grass barring my way to the west, but plenty of open water north and south. I come into the wind and drifted until the *Ibis* come up. We decided to run south along the saw grass looking for a channel leading to the next open

⁵ This adds another interesting eye-witness report to the several existing accounts of the rapids of the Miami River. The rapids were located just west of the present N. W. 27th Avenue bridge. They were destroyed in 1910 during early stages of the dredging of the Miami Canal (See: Parker, Garald G., *et al.* 1955. Water resources of Southeastern Florida. U. S. *Geological Survey Water-Supply Paper 1255*, pp. 581-584, and figure 166).—WBR

water, which we could see by standing on our decks. So we filled away to the south keeping a sharp lookout under our lea. Soon I spied a small burn where the grass had been fired not many days before, and headed for it. When we come up to the burn, found it marked a narrow channel leading through to open water beyond. We found later on that all the channels we came to through these saw grass banks were marked by a burn, done no doubt by the Indians to mark them. With only a short stop for dinner, we kept on our way to the west. About three o'clock I had left the *Ibis* far behind and out of sight, and on sailing around a point of saw grass found a large floating Island blocking the channel. It was composed of mud and rotten lily roots. The wind was blowing fresh and the *Falcon* making good time so I thought by sailing right at it and with a little help with the oars the boat would go through all right, but I did not dream how quickly it would happen. When the boat hit the island she slipped out on top of those rotten and slippery roots, and fairly flew over them into the open water on the other side. I sailed on a ways and waited, under the lea of a saw grass point, for the boys to catch up with me. Well I waited for nearly an hour and was on the point of lowering my sail and poling back to hunt for them when they came sailing along around the point. When they come up I asked, "What in the world kept you so long?" Doggone you," said Louie, "it was your fault, we come to that floating Island, saw your boat track over it, and thought we could go where you did, but stuck right in the middle of it. We could not get overboard, and when we tried to push with the oars they would go right through into deep water underneath. We were over half an hour getting over that darned floating island."⁶

Late in the afternoon the pine woods on dry land behind us was a faint blue line on the horizon. Near sunset we come to a small nesting place. Louie killed two white herons, I killed five and one Louisiana heron. Guy was sick and did not try to shoot. As it was supper time we looked around for a place

⁶ Mention in this section of floating islands, deep water, and the absence of any dry land to camp on in the southeastern Everglades in the second week of April, 1885, shows better than any statistics how profound were the changes caused by drainage. At the same season in even the wettest of recent years this area has had little remaining surface water. More commonly, it has been completely dry and swept by wild fires much earlier in the winter. The few existing data (Fla. Division of Water Survey and Research. 1948. Observed rainfall in Florida. Water Surv. and Res. Paper No. 1) suggest that the peninsula had about average rainfall in the period May 1, 1884-May 1, 1885, and no hurricanes are known to have affected Florida in the 1884 season (See: Dunn, Gordon E. and Banner I. Miller. 1960. *Atlantic Hurricanes*. Table 29, p. 298).—WBR

to build a fire so far we had not seen any. Went into the best looking island, and found the ground a regular bog. We managed to build a fire and cook our supper by laying green bushes on the mud and building our fire on them. Just after sunset the sky become overcast with heavy black clouds, and by the time we had finished supper it began to rain. We rigged up the tents on our boats, and crawled in for the night.

Clear and bright about this morning. After breakfast we went into the rookery. Louie killed four white herons and I killed three. I also killed a cormorant and speared a leather back turtle. Guy still sick. I gave him ten drops of laudanum, he slept so long, and hard I was scared about him for a time, but when he awoke about dark he was much better. We stayed by the rookery most of the day until we found there was not any more birds to kill, so moved on south about a mile and tied up for the night alongside of a small Island, sleeping in our boats of course for I do not believe there is a bit of dry land nearer than the main land fifteen miles away.

Starting east this morning, but not having the fine fair wind we come out with we are not moving near so fast, and too, over an entirely different route, so that we have to hunt our way as we go along the best we can. Sometimes we feel certain we are in the right channel, only after going perhaps half a mile to find that ends in a regular cul-de-sac, and then have to turn around, and go all the way back to start anew. About noon we come to a fine nesting place, or in other words, a series of nesting places. There were four or five islands well filled with birds and nests, in fact more birds than we had yet seen this year. We poled up to the nearest island, and as usual all the birds flew away. We hid in the bushes waiting for them to return, but they would not come. They appeared to know we stood there ready to shoot them. I suggested that Guy take the boats away about a quarter of a mile saying, "I do not believe the birds can count, and will think we have left the island, and will then return to their nests." Sure enough as soon as Guy was a good distance away with the boats, here they come back, and what was strange, they did not appear to be frightened but very little by the noise of the guns. When we shot they would fly away a short distance and immediately return. Louie killed seven and I killed nine. By the time we had done this it was late in the afternoon, and as we had to fix the skins, and plumes in a special manner to suit Mr. Chevelier, it took quite a time to prepare them

in that way, so we signaled Guy to return and take us off the island. We went to another island about half a mile away, so the birds would not be afraid of us, and fixed our plumes.

The way Mr. Chevelier wanted us to do was this, commence about half way up the neck and skin down to the tail, taking all the skin of the body, and out to the first joint of the wing, then rub the skin with corn meal and stretch them with small sticks until dry. The skins would dry in a few minutes, but it took much longer to prepare them than our way, which was to skin the back where the plume was only, and let it lie in the sun without stretching until dry, in fact our old way was much after the Indians manner of scalping a man to a certain extent. That night we found an old bay tree stump, on the island, that was enough out of water to build a fire on and cook our supper. After supper we put up our boat tents and turned in.

After a late getup this morning, and a later breakfast, we went back to the rookery for more plumes. Guy was feeling so much better he also took a hand in the shooting. I was sitting in the bushes waiting for the birds to come, when one settled in the bush not more than ten feet above me, it stretched its neck to get a better look at me, I shot at the neck and cut it clean off, the head fell on the mud at my feet. Louie killed eleven birds, Guy killed eight, and I killed nineteen. It took us all the rest of the day to prepare the skins and dry them. We would like to stay here until we have killed all the birds, but I have promised to be back at Wagner's at the end of five days, and that will be tomorrow night so we will have to start early in the morning in order to get there on time.

Underway soon this morning headed east for the Miami river. While on the way Louie caught two terrapin, and I caught one and a leather back turtle. Had quite a fight with the leatherback and had to use my big hunting knife on him. After the "scrap" I left the knife on the stern deck of my canoe to dry, that was the last I saw of it, suppose the grass brushed it overboard while going through some narrow channel. We did not return down the Miami river by way of the Rapids, but took the south fork called Wilsons Creek. It was good dark when we ran alongside of the *Bonton* at Wagner's landing. Found everything all right on board of her.

We certainly enjoyed our supper and beds on the *Bonton* last night. As today is Sunday it is wash day with us. Spent the first part of the fore-

noon in washing and cleaning up generally. Tried fishing alongside the *Bonton*. Caught a few brim and catfish. The catfish we killed and threw overboard, they are an awful nuisance to the fisherman. Mr. Chevelier and Henry came down to inspect the *Bonton* this morning. They were well pleased with the looks of what will be their home for the next three months or more. After supper all hands went up to the house and spent the evening talking over our plans for the trip. We all look forward with much pleasure to this trip among the Florida Keys and the Ten Thousand Isles of the west coast, except Louie and Guy, they, poor fellows, will soon have to return home in the *Ibis*, and it will be a long and rather dangerous trip for them in that little boat. Seventy miles on the broad Atlantic, with only two harbors, New River, and Hillsborough Inlets. However they can run on the beach at any time if the sea gets too rough. We cannot start from here until the mail boat comes in from Key West as Mr. Chevelier expects some important mail on her. There is a heavy north easter blowing, and we expect the boat will be late in consequence.

Louie and Guy took their belongings from the *Bonton* this morning and stored them in the *Ibis*, then went down the river to Miami expecting to precede us down Biscayne Bay. I felt lonesome after the boys left, and went to work so that I would not think about being alone. Put everything in first class order for the trip, or at least for a start as they will have to be put in shape many times before we get home again. Two Indians passed by on their way to Brickell's store at Miami, asked them how many plumes they had, one said he had twenty five, the other Indian said he had not found any. As there is but very little fresh water to be got on the keys, and sometimes a long distance to go to get it, we had to increase our water carrying facilities in addition to the kegs we have been using, so William procured a good sized cask which we installed today, making a cradle for it to lie on, and then lashing it to the floor. I killed a cormorant this morning.

William walked down to Miami this morning and returned with the discouraging news, "The mail boat has not arrived," and our trip again delayed. Henry and I went cormorant shooting, shooting them as they fly by to and from the Bay by way of the river. Henry killed seven and I killed seven. I made a stew out of two of them, and let me tell you right here, I don't like cormorant as a food. Louie and Guy returned from Miami today. The wind was too heavy, and the Bay too rough for them to venture on it.

As there was nothing else for us to do today, we amused ourselves by shooting cormorants or rather by shooting at them. There was, Louie and Guy, William and Henry, Adam Richards, William's Brother-in-law, and myself. The birds were wild and flew high. The whole bunch of us only killed two. William went to Miami again and returned with the long looked for mail. We leave tomorrow sure. Louie and Guy pulled out this afternoon. They want a good start of us as the *Ibis* does not sail near as fast as the *Bonton*.

Started at last. Left Wagner's at nine o'clock this morning. The wind was right ahead, and the river too narrow to beat to windward, so we poled nearly all the way to Miami. Managed to sail a little on some of the bends. Come to anchor in mouth of river. Mr. Chevelier, William, and Henry, went on shore to Brickell's store to say good bye and get some things we were in need of. As soon as they came back on board, we weighed anchor and sailed out on to Biscayne Bay headed south for Black Point fifteen miles away. As we passed out the river Edith (Alice) Brickell was standing on the south shore, and called to me, "Do you want me to send your mail to Key West?" Of course I did. We expect to find cormorants nesting at Black Point, also Louie and Guy will meet us there, at least they said they would wait there for us. The wind was still very fresh, from northeast, and the *Bonton* carried a "Big Bone in her teeth". We arrived at the Point at two o'clock. As we rounded into smooth water behind the Point, there was Louie and Guy waiting for us in the *Ibis*, also a small rookery of cormorants. After letting go our anchor and making everything snug for the night, we got into the small boats and went into the rookery. Henry killed eighteen, William six, Mr. Chevelier seven, and I twelve. We returned to the *Bonton* at dark. Louie and Guy made the *Ibis* fast to the *Bonton* and spent the night with us. Mr. Chevelier did not want to sleep in the cabin, so I hoisted the main boom about four feet above the cabin top, and put up my large tent under it, made his bed inside with the cabin deck for a mattress, just a quilt between him and the boards. When he crawled in to go to bed he said, "My bed commence very tough this time." He uses the word "tough" when he means, hard.

Louie and Guy left us this morning, going they do not know where except they are headed south looking for plume birds, we don't know when we shall see them again. After breakfast bird skinning commenced on the birds killed last night. Henry had a folding table that was mounted on the forward deck, and on this he did the skinning, and Mr. Chevelier helped him by holding the bird with his well hand. Meantime William placed some

1 x 12 boards on top of the cabin, then mixed some lime and water in a gallon can. Soon as the bird was skinned, William placed the skin on the boards, feather side down and stretched it with nails, nailing it down to the boards, then with a paint brush painted it with the lime water. They soon dried in the sun, and then were stowed away under the forward deck to remain until we reach Key West when they will be taken out, packed in a box and shipped to Paris. After the skins dried and were stowed away, we got underway and run down to the eastern key of the Arsnicker Keys. We could see the birds sitting on the mangroves on the north side of the key. Run up as close as we could go in the *Bonton*, and that was about half a mile from the key, the rest of the distance was a soft mud bank covered with about six inches of water. Before we got within shooting distance all the birds flew away. I managed to kill a Louisiana heron. Just before sundown we went back to the key again, saw a lot of man-of-war birds and cormorants on the western key. We went over there, Henry killed a pelican and a man-of-war bird, as there was not any more birds we went back to the other key where I killed a redish egret. It was now nearly dark so we returned to the *Bonton* where we found Louie and Guy. They had not found any plume birds, and as there was not any dry land on the keys to camp on, they come to spend the night with us. The weather today has been of the finest kind.

Underway soon this morning and run over to the western key. All hands except Mr. Chevelier went on the key to shoot birds. The *Bonton* was anchored directly in front of us, about a quarter of a mile distant. After we had shot a few times Mr. Chevelier called to us, we looked and saw him standing holding his hat, and pointing at it saying, "The best you lookoot, some shot come str-r-aight on my hat." We had been shooting up, and some of the shot had fallen on his hat. After two or three hours in the mangroves we returned on board. Henry had killed two cormorants, Louie three, Guy four, and I four. The birds were skinned after dinner. Late in the afternoon we went back to the key. Louie and Guy killed two cormorants, and three Louisiana herons, Henry killed four cormorants, and one Louisiana heron. I killed six cormorants and three Louisiana herons. When we returned on board it was dark so we remained at anchor all night.

After breakfast we got under way for the south, having killed the most of the birds here. The wind was very light from the east, and the mud bank on the south of us stretched away to the east as far as we could see, so we hauled on the wind, and commenced beating to windward, looking for a

channel through the bank into Card Sound. I went up the mast to the cross-trees, and standing on them looked hard for some kind of a channel through the bank. After beating about two miles I discovered a very narrow and crooked channel that I thought would take us through. The entrance was in the shape of a letter "U", starting in in a northeast direction and then turning around to southwest. It was so narrow we had to pole through this bend when the turn of the channel gave us a fair wind the rest of the way, and we soon entered Card Sound which is a beautiful expanse of the clearest blue water, about five miles wide and twelve miles long, not over ten feet deep in the deepest places. Not many fish out in the sound, but sponges, sea fans, and sea feathers growing on the bottom everywhere. Around the shores of the keys, and under the overhanging mangroves, a good many fish can be found, mostly mangrove snapper, baracuda, bone fish, and sometimes crayfish, or crawfish as they are called here, can be got with a spear. We sailed right through the middle of the sound, with a good breeze over the port quarter, and making about seven miles an hour.

The bright sunshine, the sparkling waves, and the white clouds passing over head their under sides tinged with green, reflected color from the water of the sound, made a picture never to be forgotten.

As we sailed along Mr. Chevelier talked about France, and gave us a short lesson in French, said he, "The time a man see Paree, tis ready to die." A little later I sighted tall stakes ahead, and soon after saw a band that reached clear across the sound. The stakes marked a channel which was very deep, and full of fish, mostly all mangrove snapper. After passing through this channel we were again in deep water for about a mile when we ran into a shallow place full of grassy bumps. This shallow reached out from a point on Key Largo. Soon after passing this point of shoals we sighted a lot of cormorants and man-of-war birds flying over a small mangrove island away to the southwest. We run over there, and anchored near by the rookery which was on the end of a point reaching away out into the sound from the northwest. We found only cormorants nesting here, we killed twenty of them, and one man-of-war bird. Henry and I went fish spearing, he got a grouper and I a baracuda.

Skinned the cormorants and dried the skins this morning. Not a bit of wind, and sun very hot. Louie and Guy left us, going on ahead still looking for plume birds. Near noon Henry and I went into the rookery again. He killed

seven cormorants and I killed six. Later on I speared a drum fish, and shot at an eagle but did not hit it. Henry also killed two gulls. After dinner Mr. Chevelier asked me if there was fresh water enough to last two days. I sounded the water cask, and found there was barely enough to last one day. We at once hoisted sail for Little River, a small fresh water creek on the main land west of the Arsnicker Keys in Biscayne Bay. A little after dark we anchored off the mouth of the creek.

A dead calm this morning. Just after sunrise William served coffee and bread to us, then we up anchor and poled into Little River, and up the stream about half a mile. The tide was low and we soon reached fresh water, filled up everything that would hold water, then poled out of the river. Kept poling for about five miles before the wind come enough for us to sail. The water in this part of the bay is not more than three feet deep at low water, and this morning was as clear and smooth as a piece of glass. When the wind come it was right ahead for us, in other words, from the southeast. We had to beat all the way back to the rookery where we started from yesterday, arrived there a little before dark. William and Henry went to shoot cormorants while I cooked supper. They returned at dark with two. Weather is still of the very best, no mosquitoes yet.

Went into the rookery again this morning. William killed two, Henry ten, and I eleven. Henry also killed a Louisiana heron. Brought the birds on board, Henry went to skinning them with Mr. Chevelier's help. William and I returned to shoot some more. William killed three and I killed five. After this we got under way and run over to the mouth of Jewfish Creek. Wind and tide both ahead strong. Come to an anchor to wait for a change in one or both. Just after we had made everything snug and shipshape for the night, here came the *Ibis* out of the creek. Louie and Guy were on their way home at last. They came alongside, and stopped all night with us. They had been as far south as Pigeon Key, and had made a stop on Key Largo at Mr Low's place, here they saw their first wild flamingo. It was flying high out of range of their guns, but they had a fine view of the beautiful bird as it passed over the key going west. Henry and I took a little trip around the mouth of the creek in the *Falcon*. Henry killed a green heron, and speared a baracuda and a sheephead. I killed a pelican.

Louie and Guy left us right after breakfast. We will not see them again this trip as they are going as straight home as the weather will permit. Soon

as they had left us we up anchor and poled through the creek. There was not a bit of wind. When we reached Black Water Bay we kept on poling until we come to a rock shore on the east side. We landed here, William made a fire on shore and cooked our breakfast. Meantime Henry went after crawfish with a spear. He was gone but a short time when he returned with four crawfish, one of them the largest I ever saw. Its tail alone would have weighed at least a pound. After breakfast the wind come up from the south. We sailed nearly due west across Black Water Bay, and through a narrow channel into Barnes Sound⁷ where it was, "Water water everywhere and not a drop fit to drink," light green in color except where the tide or fish have roiled it, then it is milk white. All the mud around the keys is pure white, looks and feels like white lead. Little green islands everywhere, some close together others miles apart, some of them a mere speck in the green distance for everything here is green in calm weather, even the under side of the white clouds are green, reflected from the water. In windy weather the color changes to white, everything white except the trees on the islands. Owing to its shallow water, and long roundabout way to the ocean, and Gulf, the water of Barnes Sound is very salt which is caused by extreme evaporation in the hot sun⁸, and I can tell you the sun is hot here in a calm in mid summer. Have seen a small fish lying on the deck, cook perfectly soft in a short time by the sun. We have to keep throwing water on the decks to keep them from cracking open, they get so hot we cannot walk on them with bare feet unless we keep them wet, and we all go barefooted on board. Shoes are a bother on a small craft like the *Bonton*, especially in hot weather. We only put them on when we go on shore.

Soon as we were in Barnes Sound we hauled on the wind, and beat up to two small islands⁹ that a lot of birds were flying around. On going on the islands we found cormorants, man-of-war birds, and Louisiana herons nesting there. William killed sixteen, Henry four, and I killed twelve cormorants, one Louisiana heron, one redish egret, and two man-of-war birds. We found one

⁷ The "narrow channel" referred to apparently is the pass at the middle west side of Blackwater Sound now called "The Boggies" and the larger body of water entered was Northeastern Florida Bay, not the present Barnes Sound (See: U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Chart 1249, "Fowey Rocks to Alligator Reef").—WBR

⁸ This passage testifies to the author's acute observation. Recent studies (by Robert N. Ginsburg, *et al.*) have shown that the salinity of the enclosed northeastern section of Florida Bay is subject to wide fluctuation, and at times may exceed normal sea water salinity.—WBR

⁹ Ornithological details suggest that this locality probably was Porjoe Key, although only one island exists in the area at present.—WBR

nest of eggs of the man-of-war bird. Heard a lot of shooting to the southeast of us. We remained here all night at anchor. No mosquitoes, weather fine.

Wind S.S.W. clear and fair. Heard guns again to the southwest. Put in the forenoon taking care of the birds we killed yesterday. Had every one cured and stowed away by dinner time. Underway again in the afternoon for Pigeon Key. Passed a small sloop bound north, they hailed us and wanted to know how far it was to Miami, we told them about fifty miles. Was doing some guessing at that as we did not know for sure just how far it was. Saw a small sharpie away to the westward, she heading northwest.

Arrive at Pigeon Key a little before sundown, and anchored off the north side of the key. We took a turn around the key in the *Falcon* before dark. William killed two cormorants, two Louisiana herons, and one green heron. I killed three Louisiana herons. A small squall struck us a little after dark, and we dragged anchor about a hundred yards when the anchor fluke caught in a hole in the rock and held. The bottom is smooth rock, and an anchor will not hold unless the fluke catches in a hole. The water is about six feet deep where we are tonight. Fine weather and no mosquitoes so far.

Calm and hot at sunrise. There is a nice sand beach on the northeast side of the key, so we took our cooking outfit on shore and cooked our breakfast there. After breakfast we carried everything on board again, then with guns in hand went on the key to see what we could kill. Henry killed two red wing blackbirds, I killed one red wing and two white eyed blackbirds. These two kinds of blackbirds, and a great gray flycatcher are the only birds to be found on the key at this time. Later in the season a large blue pigeon with a white crest comes here to nest, they are called Key West pigeons by the people living on the keys, although the pigeons come here from the Island of Barbados during the summer to raise their young. In the afternoon Henry and I made another trip on and around the key. Henry killed three flycatchers, and I killed five. On returning to the *Bonton* the birds were skinned, skins prepared and stored away. Supper cooked and "also stored away", then all hands turned in for the night. In good weather and calm nights I make my bed on the forward deck, tying the corners of my mosquito bar to the rigging. Mr. Chevelier has slept on the cabin top ever since we started on the trip. The weather is calm, clear and warm tonight.

A fine breeze from the north this morning. After coffee and hard tack we got under way and said good bye to Pigeon Key not to see it again for

many weeks. Sailed about one mile south, discovered a mud bank in our way, stretching out in front of us from southeast to northwest as far as we could see.¹⁰ There were two large flocks of flamingoes on the bank, but they took wing when we were at least a half mile from them, and did not give us any chance for a shot at them. Still no channel through the bank in sight. We hauled on the wind to the northwest along the bank, looking for a chance to get through. William took the tiller, and I went up the mast and stood on the cross trees. At last I saw a shallow channel through the bank and called to William to head for it. The channel was small and very shallow, we bumped and scraped the bottom but did not stick, and were soon in deep water on the other side.

Our fine breeze now began to give out on us. About one o'clock Indian Key came in sight right ahead of us, a small island with a few tall cocoanut trees growing on it. We now entered a wide deep channel with a swift current as the tide was on the ebb running into the Atlantic between upper and lower Matecumbe Keys, and to the north and east of Indian Key that lies a little outside of the regular line of keys. Soon we were on the out side or Atlantic side of the keys, but we did not want to stay there as our water supply was getting low, and Mr. Chevelier said there was a well on the upper end of Lower Matecumbe where we could "fill up." So into the next channel, that run along the north shore of Indian Key, we went with the full force of the ebb tide against us now as this channel comes from the Bay of Florida, passes Lignum Vitae on the south and west, and close along the upper end of lower Matecumbe Key. The wind kept getting lighter all the time and we just managed to reach our anchoring place before it gave out altogether. The tide was dead low, and we could not get near the well with the small boat, so William rolled the barrel over the mud flat to the well, and filled it while I cooked supper on the shore. I went on shore to cook to save the wood we carried on the *Bonton*, but it was tough work as there was too many mosquitoes. They are bad here tonight. After filling the water cask we left it at the well, and will get it in the morning when the water is high.¹¹

¹⁰ Upper Cross Bank.—WBR

¹¹ The wells on Lower Matecumbe seem to have been known from the earliest times. In his sailing directions, Bernard Romans (1775. *A Concise Natural History of East and West Florida*. Appendix, p. XXXLV) writes "Next is *Old Matabombe*, remarkable for being the most handy and best watering place on all this coast, on its east end are 5 wells in the solid rock, said to be cut by savages, but to me they appear natural chasms, they yield excellent water in abundance". This area has been much modified by dredging and the exact site is no longer identifiable.—WBR

After breakfast we got our water cask on board, hoisted sail and started for some keys that are about half way to Cape Sable, they are called on our map Arsnicker Keys. We had a head tide and a light wind so we did not get along very fast. Near Lignum Vitea Key we overhauled a small cat boat with one man sailing her. We asked him where he was bound, and he answered, "Cape Sable and the west coast." He also told us he was collecting "Crustacea" for the Smithsonian Institute. He kept company with us the rest of the day. Very light wind all the morning which was ahead for us, and of course made very slow going. About noon we come to a key that had some pelicans nesting on it. We come to an anchor in a sort of harbor with mud banks on three sides of us. Outside of the two little keys near us there is no other dry land within miles of us on any side, but the mud banks and shallows keep it from being dangerous for small boats in bad weather. Cat boat anchored near us. After dinner all hands went on shore in the small boat. There was only a few nests, but a good many birds of various kinds flying around and roosting on the mangroves. Henry killed nine pelicans and one man-of-war bird. William two pelicans, and Mr. Chevelier two. I killed fifteen pelicans, and one great white heron. The little *Falcon* carried us four with our guns and the thirty dead birds at one trip. When we arrived on board the *Bonton* it was too late to skin the birds, so we turned to and cooked supper after which we went to bed.

The cat boat left us this morning, sailing on towards Cape Sable, we never saw the boat or its captain again. First thing after breakfast Mr. Chevelier, Henry and William went to work on the birds killed yesterday. I am not feeling well today. While the rest worked on the skinning job I went on the key looking for something to shoot, but last night's shooting was too much for the birds, they had all gone to other islands. I killed the only one I saw, a purple gallinule. About sundown William took Henry and I to a key which is about a quarter of a mile north of the one we had been shooting on. When we got there found there was a lot of Louisiana herons nesting there also some redish egrets, and white herons. Henry killed a great white heron, and four redish egrets. William killed one egret. I killed seven redish egrets, and one great blue heron.

There is one thing I can't understand about redish egrets, and Mr. Chevelier could not explain it either. There are two kinds of birds called redish egrets. One is a dark slate blue with redish brown feathers on neck and head, the other is pure white all over. Both kinds are just alike in every

way except color. Found both kinds nesting and the young of both kinds same color as the old birds.

The forenoon was spent in preparing and stowing away the skins of birds killed yesterday. Mr. Chevelier seldom skins birds the same day they are killed. If kept until the next day the blood does not run, and soil the feathers. While eating our dinner we noticed the birds had come back to the key, so soon as we had finished eating, and had washed the dishes, made another try for them. They were quite wild and although we spent all the afternoon on the key we only killed seventeen birds, as follows: Henry five pelicans, William one cormorant and I ten pelicans and one cormorant.

About eight o'clock that night, after we had gone to bed, a heavy squall came down on us. In the middle of the rain, wind and darkness, one corner of Mr. Chevelier's tent broke adrift. I jumped out and yelled to him, "Come in the cabin out of the rain." But he was so frightened he could not understand what I was saying. He sat up in bed with the rain blowing all over him, and kept on yelling at me, "Look ot for your bot, look ot for your bot" (Lookout for your boat). The squall was soon over, we fixed the tent in a few minutes, and Mr. C crawled back to bed. Before turning in he found one of his shoes had blown overboard during the squall.

First thing this morning we hunted for Mr. Chevelier's shoe that was lost in the squall last night. Found it on the bottom near the stern of the *Bonton*. Skins all prepared and stored away under forward deck by dinner time. Late in the afternoon Henry, William, and I went after Louisiana herons at their nesting place on the northern key. Henry killed eight, and I killed eight. Returned to the *Bonton* at dark. As this place is about shot out, we will continue on our journey to the Arsnicker Keys and Man-of-war Key tomorrow.

Underway early this morning, and arrived at the Arsnicker Keys about noon. Our stay there short as there was not any birds of any kind on these keys. We hoisted sail, and headed for Man-of-war Key just in sight to the north of us. We arrived late in the afternoon and anchored for the night on

the southeast side of the key. Again we are disappointed in finding birds, none here. Cape Sable and Sandy Key in sight from here¹².

Hoisted all sail and underway early this morning for Long Key on the other side of the Bay of Florida. Arrived off the lower end of the key late in the afternoon. As our fresh water was getting low we went on shore to a house that we saw had a large cistern. When we reached the house found it locked and nailed up, and of course not any one around that we could ask for water, but we had to have it if we had to take it without permission, in other words, steal it. So over to the cistern tank we went only to find that there was not any way to draw it. I managed with the help of William and a pole, to climb to the top, and look in. It was nearly full. There I had to sit until William went back to the *Bonton* for a pail and a piece of rope. When he returned with the outfit one end of the rope was tied to the pail and the other end thrown up to me. I filled the pail and lowered it down to William who poured the water in the cask.

From my perch on the cistern rim I could see the wreck of a steamship out on the reef. It appeared to have been there some time as it was a complete wreck. We remained at anchor all night at this place.

Underway soon this morning with a light fair wind. Started across Bahia Honda about ten o'clock not much wind, and very hot. About a mile west of Knight's Key we passed the sharpie *Zypher*, Captain Richards of Eden Indian River. This makes only the second boat that we have passed since leaving Miami seventeen days ago. About two o'clock we come to a little flat key, covered with grass and a few small bushes, on the west side of Bahia, here we anchored for the balance of the day and night. Went on the key and found quite a number of clapper rails running around in the grass. I managed to kill one of them.

Underway with a light fair wind again this morning. Sailed down the channel between Little and Big Pine Keys, and rounded the north end of Torch Key. Stopped at a house on Torch Key and asked the people there if they had a well where we could get some water. They said, "Yes, but it

¹² Failure of the voyagers to find birds at Arsenicker and Man-O-War Keys suggests that the more accessible outer islands of Florida Bay had already been subject to raids by plume hunters. Both these keys today harbor large nesting aggregations of Brown Pelicans, cormorants, and herons.—WBR

is full of Apes". We were much astonished at the answer to our question. I asked the man over again thinking I had not understood him at first. "Yes" he said, "but the well is full of Apes." I said, "Come on boys lets see what these apes look like." When we come to the well there we saw the apes, about a hundred large green bull frogs¹³. The water however was all right, and we took enough to fill our cask, then on our way again.

About four o'clock we anchored at Johnsons Key Mangroves. Went around the mangroves in the small boat. Mr. C killed two yellow crowned night herons, one redish egret, and one clapper rail. William killed two Louisiana herons, and one gull. I killed three yellow crowns, and one Key West Pigeon, the first one I had ever killed and the first of the trip.

We passed eight sloops today, all outward bound from Key West. They are in the stovewood and charcoal trade with the Island City.¹⁴ Johnsons Key Mangroves,¹⁵ called by the Conchs, "Johnsonskey Mangus" are low mangrove islands that flood at high tide, lying close to the large key called Johnsons Key, hence the name. Mangus being short for mangroves. Nearly all the large keys have one or more of these small mangrove islands near them, that are always named after the large key, but instead of calling them island or keys, they call them "Mangus."

Left Johnsons Key "Mangus" with a light head wind that changed to fair late in the afternoon, but continued very light. We are on what is called the inside channel from Bahia Honda to Key West. There are islands or keys on every hand, and we have to keep a good look out all the time as we work our way through narrow channels between mud banks and reefs of coral.

The mud here is composed of powdered coral, and of course is very white. When the anchor is pulled up, chunks of this mud stick to it, looking

¹³ Probably the leopard frog, *Rana pipiens*, which has been collected in such situations on various of Lower Florida Keys, including Little Torch Key (Duellman, Wm. E. and Albert Schwartz. 1958. Amphibians and reptiles of Southern Florida. *Bull. Fla. State Museum*, 3 (5) : pp. 258-259.)—WBR

¹⁴ The effects upon the vegetation of the Florida Keys and lower Gulf Coast that must have resulted from nearly a century of wood-cutting to supply the Key West charcoal trade have been little appreciated by present-day students of the plant ecology of the region.—WBR

¹⁵ Johnston Key and Johnston Key Mangroves of present charts (See: U. S. C. and G. S. Chart 1251).—WBR

very much like white lead, and is about as hard to wash off as white lead would be. When there is any wind to stir up this mud the water becomes as white as milk, and is very hard on the eyes.

Came in sight of Key West about four o'clock and anchored off John Lowe's dock just before dark. As we were sailing in towards the channel through the reef east of the harbor, I heard a bunch of boys, that were in bathing, talking about us. Said one, "That boat has been here before." Another asked, "How do you know that?" "Why" he answered, "Don't you see she is headed right for that channel through the reef." But that boy was partly mistaken, for I and the *Bonton* had never been here before. Mr. Chevelier had however, and was telling me where to go. A squall in the northwest made everything dark and gloomy, and a church bell kept tolling as we sailed slowly in towards the harbor. As soon as we had anchored, Mr. Chevelier who was very anxious to get his mail, went on shore for it, but found the post office closed. After supper he went up town to see some French friends of his. William and Henry went with him, while I remained on board to keep ship.

Nothing doing today, kept ship all day while Mr. Chevelier looked after his business, and William and Henry ran around town. I was disappointed in not getting any mail. Thought sure I would hear from home, have been out now over two months, and not heard a word from home. Heard the band playing up town tonight.

Went up town with William about ten o'clock this morning. Went to L. W. Pierce's dry goods store, and bought an outfit of clothes, black suit, shirts, ties and underwear.

The mail schooner and the sloop *Ada* from Miami arrived today. Late in the day there was a heavy squall from the east. The *Ada* dragged anchor and went broadside on the sponge dock. I thought she was going to smash as the seas were large and going clear over her, but the squall let up in time to save her damage. A calm, cool night after the storm, but plenty of mosquitoes.

Keeping ship all day while the rest of the crew are on shore. William and Henry came on board at supper time, and I took a row around the harbor in the *Falcon*, when I returned to the *Bonton* William and Henry

went up town again. William has a girl up town named Caroline S, that is the attraction for him, while Henry goes along to see the sights. This is the first town or city that Henry has ever seen, having lived in the country near Miami all of his seventeen years up to now.

The Mallory line steamer *Lampassas* docked this morning. Henry and I went over to have a close by look at her. On our return to the *Bonton* Mr. Chevelier wanted some goods from Cash's store, so Henry and I went back for them. Went on shore with William tonight. Went to a restaurant and ordered a steak, and although it was a tough Florida round, it tasted good to me as it was the first fresh beef I had tasted in years. After washing this down with a bottle of lemon pop we returned to the boat. On our way back we heard a Cuban serenade that sounded good to me.

Sunday, William and Henry rigged out in their best went to church. They are Catholic and of course went to that church. When they returned for dinner they told me about the fine music they heard there, and about the big pipe organ. Late in the afternoon Mr. C came on board and said he was going to keep ship so that I could go and hear the music at the church. So after supper William, Henry, and I went to the Catholic church. The music was sure fine, the best singing I had ever heard, although it was in Latin and of course we could not understand a word, but it was fine just the same. And the organ was great, when on the deep bass notes, the old church would shiver from top to bottom. We returned to the boat at about ten o'clock and turned in.

Our preparations are about complete for our trip up the Gulf Coast, but some important mail that Mr. Chevelier is looking for has not arrived so we are going on a short hunting cruise of a week or so through the keys as far as Bahia Honda. By that time we hope everything will be ready for us to sail for the west coast.

Underway about nine this morning. Stopped at Captain Cary's place, which is just out of town on the east. Mr. Chevelier had some business with him. Then underway again for "Johnsonkey Mangus"¹⁸ where we arrived about noon. After dinner we got into the *Falcon* and went around the mangroves looking for birds. William killed six Louisiana herons. Henry killed

one night heron, and I killed one also six Louisiana herons. This about cleaned up the birds at this place. Mr. Chevelier and Henry skinned the birds before supper. Lay here at anchor all night.

Underway again after breakfast. Sailed about four miles to the eastward, came to a small key that had birds nesting on it. Anchored, launched the small boat and went after the birds. William killed seven yellow crowned night herons and one great white heron. Henry killed two night herons, and Mr. C killed four. I killed five herons, and four Louisiana herons.

After breakfast next morning, skinned and prepared all the skins of birds killed yesterday, then got underway again and run over to Torch Key mangroves where we could see birds flying in and out. There is a wide mud flat around these mangrove islands, about two hundred yards wide at this place, with only about a foot of water on it at half tide which was the condition when we got there. Around all these islands there is a deep channel close to the bushes so I made the attempt to sail over the mud to the deep water near the bushes. There was a good wind blowing, and the old boat never stopped, although very near it at times, until we reached the deep water. Mr. Chevelier said, "The *Bong Tong* the best ah boat in Florida." We lowered sail and dropped anchor close to the bushes. Some would say, we should anchor first and then lower sail. But in this case we would not as there was not room to round up to the wind. Made everything snug as we intend to spend the night here. After dinner went on the island. Henry killed four pelicans, three egrets, and one night heron. William killed two pelicans, one egret, one Louisiana heron, three night herons, one green heron, and one Key West pigeon. I killed three redish egrets, five yellow crowned night herons, two Louisiana herons, and five pelicans. By this time it was so dark we had to stop and go back to the boat, then supper and bed.

After "coffee" this morning we went back to the "mangus" for more birds. William killed seven Louisiana herons, and one pelican. Henry killed one pelican, three cormorants, two Louisiana herons, and one night heron. Mr. Chevelier killed three night herons. I killed two pelicans, two Louisiana herons, and ten cormorants. Afternoon spent in skinning and preparing the skins of birds killed yesterday.

Coffee first thing this morning, then work on the skins of birds killed yesterday. After breakfast (which happens about ten o'clock) Mr. Chevelier,

Henry, and I went to see if there were any birds left on the island. Mr. C killed three mangrove cookoos, and two Key West pigeons. Henry and I did not get a shot.

On our return to the *Bonton* found the tide was high so we got underway and sailed over the mud bank all right without sticking. Anchored off the northern end of Big Pine Key, and went on shore and filled our water cask at a well we found there. The water is not good and not very fresh but is the best we can get here. We sailed on and anchored for the night under the lea of Big Spanish Key. No birds worth while on this key. We did not find anything to shoot.

May 23rd. Just one month today from Miami. After coffee and hard tack we up anchor and started over to another key that lies well out in the Bay of Florida. We saw twelve great white herons on this key, but they were very wild and we did not get a shot, so we sailed back to another small mangrove island that had a lot of small herons nesting in it.¹⁶ As the prospect was good at this island for a good many birds, we anchored in a good place to spend the rest of the day and night. Rigged up Mr. Chevelier's tent on top of the cabin, and then had breakfast, after which we went on the island to shoot. Henry killed three Louisiana herons. I killed one pigeon, four little blues, two Louisiana herons, and one night heron. Mr. C and William stayed on board the *Bonton* while Henry and I was shooting. When dinner was ready William shouted, "Come to grub." And of course we "come" at once. After dinner all hands went shooting on the island. William killed six Louisiana and little blue herons, four pigeons, and three green herons. Henry killed one pigeon and ten herons. Mr. C killed three night herons, one Louisiana and one little blue heron. I killed two green herons, two pigeons, and fourteen night herons.

All of the forenoon today was spent in fixing the skins of the birds killed yesterday afternoon. Went on the island after dinner. William killed nine herons and five pigeons. Mr. C killed five herons. Henry killed twelve and I killed thirteen.

A heavy rain and wind started this morning during which there was nothing for us to do but sit in the cabin and watch it. We could not skin the

¹⁶ Islands referred to aren't clearly identifiable. Possibly East Bahia Honda Key and West Bahia Honda Key.—WBR

birds killed yesterday because we had to have sunshine to dry them soon as skinned. Weather cleared up about dinner time, and after that and the bird skinning, we went bird shooting again in the nesting place. Tide was high and we had to do most of our shooting from the boat as the island was nearly all covered with water. Henry killed two Louisiana herons, one night heron, and one green heron. William killed three night herons. I killed four night herons, three Louisiana herons, and one great white heron. Weather rather bad and squally.

After cleaning up yesterday's work we up anchor and run back to Torch Key mangroves. We did not try to cross the mud bank this time as the mosquitoes have got quite bad, and we do not want to get near the woods, so anchored off in the channel some distance from the mangroves. This place is cleaned up now, we saw very few birds. William killed one night heron. I killed one and Mr. Chevelier killed a cormorant.

While we were cleaning up this morning William took a little trip around the mangroves by himself. He was not gone long and brought back two night herons. Soon after William returned we got underway and started back towards Key West, keeping a little farther south than we did on our trip up. About one o'clock we came to a small island that is high land. Wood cutters have cut all the trees, and the island is nearly bare. Just a few low bushes and scattering grass. We were first attracted to this little island by seeing sea swallows flying around a sand point on the east side. We anchored on the windward side of this islet, and late in the afternoon the *Bonton* was full of mosquitoes. I could see them flying up to the boat at the stern then come in over the stern deck into the cabin. After this I shall always anchor under the lea of the keys where the mosquitoes cannot smell us. When we went on the island we found a flock of long bill brown snipe, all three of us opened fire on them, and killed twenty four. Mr. C killed eight sea swallows, William nine, Henry one, and I six. The snipe was not any use except to eat. We had a fine stew made of them for supper.

Went after sea swallows again this morning. Mr. C killed five, Henry three, William four, and I six. William also killed a clapper rail. Captain Cary came along and stopped to visit us. He gave us two green cocoanuts, and two kegs of very bad water to help out our supply which was getting low. But it was not much help. It was yellow in color, brackish and bitter. We could not drink it, only used it in cooking which took out most of the

bad taste. Went on shore again in the afternoon. Henry killed six swallows, and two royal terns. William killed two swallows, and one royal tern. I killed eight swallows, one clapper rail, and four royal terns. This shooting lasted until sundown.

Spent the forenoon today in skinning and curing skins of birds killed yesterday. Went on the island again late in the afternoon. I killed four swallows, William one and Henry one each. This finishes the birds on this little island.

Got underway early this morning. About nine o'clock anchored near a small key to cook breakfast. We cook on a small affair that is called a furnace such as is used on most sponging and fishing boats around these keys, and burn wood in it. We were out of wood, and had to go on shore to get some, so while at anchor we cooked our breakfast. While the cooking was going on, Henry and I went around the island in the small boat. I killed a night heron. After breakfast we got underway and run over to Tarpon Key where Henry and I went on shore and killed a white heron. I also killed one night heron and a Louisiana heron. This was late in the afternoon so we remained at anchor, besides we expect to get more birds tomorrow.

Went on shore again this morning. William killed two sea swallows, one black head gull, one Louisiana heron and one night heron. Henry killed two Louisiana herons, one night heron and one green heron. I killed three night herons and two pigeons. Spent the rest of the day in taking care of the skins.

Saw large flocks of man-of-war birds flying over the Three Sister Islands,¹⁷ some distance from us, so we got underway and sailed over to them. We went into the islands and killed seven man-of-war birds. As we were all shooting at once from the small boat, we could not tell the number each one killed. We picked up one of the birds that was not yet dead, and I noticed it was shot through both eyes, and supposed it would die in a few minutes, so I placed it on the forward deck, when all at once it stood up stretched its wings and flew away. We watched it disappear in the flock of birds flying over the islands, and never saw it again. There are a big lot of birds here, man-of-war birds, cormorants, pelicans, and great white herons, but are all very wild and are not nesting.

¹⁷ Unidentifiable.—WBR

We are within five miles of Key West, and the city is in plain sight as it is open water all the way there from us.

We came in here yesterday at high tide, and run over the mud bank to deep water around the islands, so we had to wait for high water today before we could leave. It rained all night last night and nearly all day today. When the tide came up we got underway and run over to Captain Cary's landing on the east end of town. Mr. Chevelier went on shore and said he would meet us in town, so we up sail and run down to Sam Low's wharf and anchored. William and Henry went up town after supper while I kept ship. Mr. Chevelier did not come on board tonight but spent the night with his French friends the Grillions.

Mr. Chevelier gave us a feast today and we rather over did the eating part. He gave us two bottles of ginger pop each, and two watermelons, also cake pie and fresh beef stew for dinner. Right after supper William went up town and got a fifteen cent package of ice cream for each of us which was at once put down on the already overloaded stomachs. Results — about eleven o'clock that night all that William and I had swallowed came back and was given to the little fishes. We were sure bad sick the rest of the night.

William and I are on the sick list this morning, not eating a thing. I was sick all day. We had a good beef stew for supper, I managed to eat a little of it. Rained nearly all day.

Raining and squally all day. Gave Henry a quarter to buy a harmonica while he was up town today. He sure got cheated as the thing he brought me is not worth a cent. Got soft brass screw rings to fix Mr. Chevelier's tent. I have had my violin with me, kept it in a water tight box I had made it thinking it would keep it from the damp, but the dampness of the last week has been too much for it, found today that it was coming apart, so decided to send it to Chas W. Story, 26 Central Street, Boston, Mass., and have him put it in good shape.

Fixed the tent this morning then took my violin to the express office. An Englishman named Ball runs an express business to New York, and calls it Ball's Express. So I sent the violin by Ball's Express to Boston via New York. On my way back to the boat I stopped at Cash's store and bought a new block and main sheet for the *Bonton*. The United States sloop of war

Powhatan is in port at the Government Dock. Her bowsprit runs clear over the nearby buildings. I also bought a bottle of red ink. What I wanted red for I do not know.

Sunday. This afternoon William, Henry, and I went for a walk around town. Went around to the Custom House and had a good look at the *Powhatan*, her commander died last night, and her flags were at half mast. Went back to the *Bonton*, and after supper William and Henry went to church while I kept ship.

We expect to get away sometime today for the west coast. Mr. Chevelier came to the boat with his gun, and went up town again to finish up the business of leaving. He sent a large barrel of hard bread to the boat, it was hot from the bakery when it came on board. Weather very hot and not much wind. It was near sundown when everything was ready. We hoisted sail and headed up the coast away from the city. Only got about three miles when dark overtook us, and we anchored for the night.

Sailed all day and anchored for the night a short distance past Big Spanish Key.

A stiff breeze blowing today. Anchored at the Arsnicker Keys late in the afternoon. Beat a schooner that had two miles the start of us. After looking around the keys for birds and not finding any, we turned in for the night.

Got underway and run over to the Twin Keys where we had found a good many birds on our way down a few weeks ago. Nothing doing, birds all gone. I killed one Louisiana heron, and found the nest of a red bellied woodpecker. On our return we got under way and started for a key called Man-of-War Bush. We did not go far when we had to anchor, the wind having left us with a head tide. In about two hours the wind came up, and we sailed on until dark. Anchored in a small deep channel in a bank. Lay here all night. Heavy squalls over the main land which is in plain sight.

As Man-of-War Bush¹⁸ is in plain sight this morning, and we cannot see any birds flying around it, we are not going there. Got underway and sailed

¹⁸ Man-of-War Bush has washed away although it is still shown on present charts of the area.—WBR

over the Oyster Keys near Cape Sable. We could see birds on these keys, so we anchored and went after them. Henry killed a pelican and I killed one. We returned to the *Bonton* to wait for sunset as the birds are not nesting on these islands. Near dark a big lot of egrets, white herons, Louisiana herons, and curlew came to sleep on the key. We went after them, William killed one egret, Henry killed five, and I killed twelve, and one white heron. A big squall this afternoon, and mosquitoes awful thick.

After skinning the birds killed yesterday we got underway and run over to Sandy Key which is well named as it is not much more than a sand bank with some beach grass growing on it, and a few mangroves on the inside shore.¹⁹ Only a few birds here. Mr. C killed one white heron and one small blue heron. I killed a clapper rail. Then we sailed over to Cape Sable and anchored in front of a house. Went and asked the people there if they had a well that we might fill our water cask. They said they did not have a well, but we could get all the water we wanted at Palm Point or Middle Cape, a few miles to the west. We up anchor and sailed along the coast to Palm Point, and anchored for the night. No harbor here at all but as the weather is calm think it will be all right to lay here all night tonight. There is another house here with a Key West family living in it. The man is in charge of a young cocoanut grove that is being planted by a Key West Company. The man came down to the beach and asked us to spend the evening with them which we did. Mosquitoes awful thick.

When we got up this morning the boat was a solid mass of mosquitoes, and we said, "Don't talk to us any more about mosquitoes we know all about them now, they cannot get any thicker." One day later we changed our mind. After filling our water cask we sailed up along the coast rounded North West Cape into the Gulf of Mexico. Just beyond the Cape we saw what we thought was the mouth of a channel leading into White Water Bay and sailed into it. The tide was with us and soon the channel took the form and appearance of a good sized river. Having wind and tide with us we kept going, we did not know where. The place looked wild and lonely. About three o'clock it seemed to get on Henry's nerves, and we saw that he was crying, he would not tell us why, he was just plain scared. About this time the tide turned against us, and as we would have to wait until tomorrow's

¹⁹ In recent years (considerably damaged by Hurricane Donna), Sandy Key has supported more extensive and varied vegetation than is described here, including a strip of beach hammock and several mangrove ponds.—WBR

flood to go on, Mr. C thought best we go back with the tide to the Gulf and at same time relieve Henry's feelings. There was not much to do to get back, just let her drift, as the tide kept getting stronger all the time. The river is narrow and deep, the mangroves on either bank growing about sixty feet high and very thick so the wind did not get to us, only a little puff now and then. On looking at our map found that we were in Shark River. Arrived back in the Gulf at dark, and anchored about one and a half miles from land, in about six feet of water. I never saw mosquitoes so thick before, worse than this morning at Cape Sable.

Dead calm all night, and this morning. When we got out from under our mosquito bars there was not a spot as large as a pin head on that boat from the water line to the tip of the mast that did not have a mosquito on it. We fought them for about two hours before we could stop to make coffee. While among the keys we had gathered quite a lot of sea feathers, that grow on the rock bottom there, to take home to show our folks. We had to use them this morning to kill mosquitoes. They made fine mosquito brushes but when we got through with them they were not much use as a sea specimen. While we were at it there was a string of dead mosquitoes floating astern of us on the ebb tide. Don't know what we would have done if it had not been for those sea feathers. A fresh southeast wind came up about nine o'clock, and we made good time up the Gulf. Took a heavy squall off the southern end of the Thousand Isles. About two hours before sundown we run hard aground on a mud bank. Had to get overboard and work long and hard to get afloat again. We came to anchor for the night inside of Pavilion Key. Henry and I went on the key to try to kill some pink curlews we saw there together with a lot of egrets, white herons, gannets, and white pelicans. These are the first white pelicans we have seen on this trip. We could not get near enough for a shot as they were on a bank too far from cover. The mosquitoes however got us a plenty.

Saw a small boat going up the coast this morning. After coffee and hard tack got underway and sailed up the coast until we came to a small island out in the Gulf that had a lot of pelicans nesting on it.²⁰ Came to an anchor got out our guns with a good supply of shells and went after them. William killed six, Henry killed seven. Mr. C four, and I twenty. A heavy

²⁰ Bird (or Pelican) Key at entrance to Sandfly Pass; still a Brown Pelican rookery. —WBR

thunder storm came up late in the afternoon, during which the *Bonton* broke her cable, and went adrift. I let go the spare anchor, and after the storm went hunting for the lost one, which we found at last after a long hard hunt. There was a large lot of pelicans come to roost on the island tonight.

When I got up this morning found that one of my eyes was badly swelled and sore, don't know what caused it. I remained on board while the rest went on shore to finish skinning the pelicans killed yesterday. When I had breakfast cooked I signaled them to come on board. After breakfast we all went on shore. I killed three pelicans. While the rest were skinning the birds and stretching the skins. I was walking around the pelican nests, and looking at them I heard William yell something, looked and saw the small boat was adrift and going fast from the island, and if she was not caught we would be in a bad fix as the *Bonton* was anchored near half a mile from the island. Some might say. "That is not much of a swim", but when you stop to consider these waters are infested with sharks some of them are of largest size, it was a little more than any of us care to undertake. I realized this as I started running, and the thought increased my speed until I was hitting only the high places. Out in the water I dashed, and got my hands on her as the water reached my arms.

A big squall came on while we were at dinner, and kicked up a big sea in a short time. Mr. Chevelier sat in the cabin eating and looking at the big seas as they rushed by. All at once he said, "Dinnee on board *Bong Tong*, time one largah squall." After dinner he was smoking his pipe with a far away look in his eyes when he remarked, "My tobac tast a leet more better good the time make the large lot the skin." Went on the island again near night, and got caught in a big rain storm. Henry killed eleven pelicans, William two and I one.

Underway this morning, and sailed up the coast until we came to an island that had a pelmetto shack on it where lived an old Portuguese named Gomez with his old cracker wife.²¹ Mr. Chevelier had known Gomez some years before, and I had met him at Cedar Keys when I was a small boy about thirteen years before. Gomez and his wife did not know me until I told them who I was, and then the old lady almost ate me up. Henry stayed on board and cooked supper while we were on this visit to the old Portuguese. A heavy squall late today. Lay at anchor here all night.

²¹ Panther Key.—WBR

Got underway this morning after breakfast, and sailed up to a creek looking for birds. Gomez was our pilot, but he did not find the birds for us. Saw some pink curlews but did not get a shot at them. Turned back and when off Gomez place set him on shore and continued on our way towards Marco. Passed a regular house on the point of an island, and run into a small creek where the tide was very swift. Just before sundown we came to small bay full of small islands, two of them were as full of birds as they could stick, there were white curlew, egrets, white and Louisiana herons. We anchored and went to shoot them. Henry killed one egret, Mr. C three, I killed seven egrets and three curlew. Returned to the *Bonton* at dark mosquitoes very bad.

After coffee, Mr. C, Henry and I got in the *Falcon* and went to look for birds, William remained on board to cook breakfast. Just beyond the islands where we shot birds last night, we found the mouth of a small fresh water creek. We went up it quite a distance. Did not find any birds, saw a small clearing where someone had a garden in season just passed. Went on shore and found a number of very small cabbage growing on the end of stalks about two feet high. We cut enough for dinner. I shot an alligator. We then returned to the *Bonton* and ate our breakfast, after which we got underway and went back to where we had seen the house on the point of the island called, Goodland Point. Anchored here and I went on shore to ask the way to Marco. Went up to the house and knocked at the door, a woman came in answer to my knock. I asked her if she could tell us which was the channel that would take us to Marco. She told us where to go, and also told us her name was Roberts, and that her husband was away in his schooner. We got underway and took the first channel to the left, and got along all right after that. We arrived at Marco Inlet late in the afternoon, and anchored for the night. A man named Collier lives here and has a nice place. William went on shore, Mr. Collier gave him some egg plant. We had cabbage and egg plant for supper, and I can tell you it tasted good to us. We have been living mostly on bread, hard bread and coffee for the past four weeks.

Underway soon this morning and sailed up to Little Marco Inlet on the inside channel. Went out through the inlet into the Gulf and sailed along the coast until near sundown when we went into a small inlet called Ferguson Pass²² for the night. We had very bad weather all day, squalls, calms, and

²² Not exactly identifiable on available maps. Most probably it's Wiggins Pass and the river mentioned later is the Cocohatchee (Horse Creek). However, Little Hickory Pass and Imperial River will fit the context just about as well.—WBR

heat. Saw lots of egrets along shore also three small inlets. After anchoring and making things snug for the night, we went on shore and walked up the beach where we found two turtle nests and a few shells.

Went on shore this morning to shoot sea swallows. There are a lot of them nesting on the sand points of the inlet. Henry killed five, William killed two and one egret, Mr. C killed three egrets and a shearwater. After breakfast I took the small boat and went up the river alone. About a half a mile from the *Bonton* I saw an old clearing in a hammock on the north shore of the river. Went on shore there to see if I could find something good to eat. Found one small watermelon and as it was not large enough to go around our crew I ate it right there. Went on a little farther and found the water in the river was fresh, so returned to the *Bonton* for our water pail and jug, went back up river and filled them with river water. This will help our supply in the cask which is getting low. After dinner we went after the little sea swallow again on the shores of the inlet. William killed two, Henry killed seven and I killed seven. Just at dark I killed a shearwater. Henry killed one and caught a mullet. After dark I took a hand fish line, and went to the point of the inlet to try my luck at fishing. I soon landed a large snook or sargent fish, and a sea trout.

We had an awful hot night last night and did not sleep at all well, and of course do not feel lively this morning. A small sail boat came inside and anchored near us last night, and left early this morning. They did not have anything to say to us, and did not appear to care for company. Most people we meet on this coast seem to look on us with suspicion. Water cask about empty so we took it in the *Falcon* and went up river to fresh water and filled it. I killed another gator on the trip. After dinner went shooting sea swallows. Henry killed three and I killed ten. Went again late in the afternoon. William killed five, I killed six, Henry killed three and one egret. When we returned to the *Bonton* I went to the cask for a drink and found the water too salty to use, so I took the cask up river again and filled it, this time with good fresh water. Took a walk on the beach by moonlight and turned a turtle. It was so hot on the *Bonton* we made our beds on the sand beach and slept good all night.

Three small sail boats came in the inlet last night. This forenoon Henry killed eleven sea swallows, William one and I eight. In the afternoon Henry killed five and I killed four.

While the others were at work on the birds killed yesterday I went to see how many I could shoot. I killed thirteen. When I got back to the *Bonton* we got underway and sailed up the coast to what we thought was Big Hickory Pass, one of the outlets to Estero Bay. When we came to anchor inside, we saw a sloop about half a mile from us, hard aground on the inside beach, evidently placed there to clean bottom at low tide. Henry and I went to have a look at her. Her captain was an old Italian, and he had a cracker boy with him a boy of about ten years old, as cook and helper. The boy started to make coffee, and sat the coffee pot on top of a pile of burning sticks and left it, to do something else. When the sticks burned down, over went the coffee pot, and all the coffee was lost. You should have heard the old man go for that boy, he said, "Jaskassfoolmonkeybabboon donn you know better thana that?" The old man told us that the pass we were in was not Big Hickory, that Big Hickory was two miles farther back, and we had passed it on our way up. The old mans sloop was the *Rena Jenkins*, a boat that I saw when it was being built by Wash Jenkins at the Fort Lauderdale House of Refuge, when I was 14 years old, when on my first trip down the Atlantic Coast to Miami with my father and Ross Brown in our sloop *Creole*. That night we took our bedding and put up our mosquito bars on the beach, but the sand flies got so bad they drove us back to the *Bonton*.

Underway this morning and run back to Big Hickory. Went in through the inlet to Estero Bay. Found a large nesting place of pelicans on some islands on the north side of the Bay. Henry and I went to shoot some of them. He killed five and I killed twenty one. Afternoon spent in taking care of the twenty six skins of birds we had killed.

Henry and I went to the nesting place early this morning. We killed seventeen, then back to the *Bonton*. I cooked breakfast while the rest went on shore to skin pelicans. While I was watching the cooking I saw a man coming in a skiff. When within about 100 feet of the *Bonton*, he turned his boat around so that he could look right at me and at same time be headed in the right direction if things did not go right and he wanted to get away right quick. He said he saw we were shooting birds, and had come to tell us he had heard a law had been passed against shooting birds in nesting places, and

he thought we had better stop.²³ I told him we had just come from the County Seat (Key West) where Mr. Chevelier had looked into the matter and there was not any law then against shooting any place we cared to. However we would look into the matter further before we done any more shooting in the rookery. He talked a little while longer and then returned to his home, a palmetto shack on one of the islands out in the Bay. After dinner we got underway and run over to Big Hickory pass, went outside and sailed up the coast to the pass that we went in on the 25th and anchored for the night. We are going straight onto Punta Rassa. Mr. Chevelier wants to find out for certain if there is a law against shooting birds in rookeries.²⁴

Underway before sunrise and sailed along the coast for some distance, then anchored and went on shore to dry skins of birds killed yesterday. When the skins were dry we got up sail and arrived at Punta Rassa early in the afternoon. We anchored in mid channel. Mr. Chevelier and William went on shore for the mail. I did not get any. We found that there was not any law against shooting birds in the rookeries or any where else. That cracker Frank Johnson wanted to run us off so he could have the birds for himself. Punta Rassa consists of two houses, one of which is the post office, telegraph and cable station, and a large wharf which is used mostly for loading vessels with cattle for Havana, Cuba. Remained at anchor all night.

Left Punta Rassa this morning with a small sail boat going ahead of us for a pilot, that is this boat is going up the Caloosahatchee river to Fort Myers and we will follow her as we do not know the channel. Arrived at Fort Myers about one o'clock. This is a nice looking town from the river, and quite large for this part of the country. Must have a population of about seven hundred. This part of the Caloosahatchee river is wide and straight for about twelve miles, and Fort Myers is located on the east bank. Mr. C went for the mail. I got two letters from home, one from my mother and one from Ned Brown. Ned tells me in his letter that he has a repeating shot gun. That is something new to us, in fact we did not know there was such a thing

²³ By remarkable happenstance, this incident is corroborated by W. E. D. Scott (1887 *Auk*, 4 (3), pp. 216-218) who relates it as told to him by Mr. Frank Johnson at Punta Rassa, May 12, 1886. The two accounts agree in detail except that Scott's version from Johnson doesn't mention that the pelican shoot was interrupted by a trip to Punta Rassa to see about the alleged new law.—WBR

²⁴ Probably the large rookery at the north entrance to Matlacha Pass mentioned by Scott (*op. cit.*, p. 214). It had been plundered again by plume hunters shortly before Scott's visit on May 8, 1886.—WBR

made. The river here is quite fresh, so we filled up everything that would hold water as we don't know when we will have another chance to get all we want.

Underway for down river this morning. Heavy wind blowing from W.S.W. About eleven o'clock we had to anchor, wind blowing so hard we could not carry the close reefed main sail alone. Late in the afternoon the wind let up and we started on again. Anchored at Cape Blanco for the night. There was not any mosquitoes when bed time came, on account of the fresh wind blowing, so we did not put up our mosquito bars. Just got to sleep when the wind let up and the SKEETS came, had to get up and put up our bars. I made my bed on the forward deck because it was so hot in the cabin. Had just got to sleep when down came a rain squall. I had to jerk down that bar and gather up my blankets in a hurry. Had just got to sleep again, this time in my bunk in the cabin, when Mr. Chevelier called me to fix his tent on deck, one corner of which had broke loose and was flapping in the wind. Altogether I did not get a great deal of sleep.

Underway soon this morning and run over to Pine Island, found a small nesting place of pelicans there. Had just come to an anchor when we saw a small sloop coming, she came alongside and a man named Goodwin came on board and asked us to take him to the camp of Chas. Hopkins, C.E. on Pine Island some place, we did not know its location, and Mr. Goodwin could not tell us. We sailed away up the sound, could not see anything that looked like it, so we came back again and went on shore. Found the camp all right after a while, but it was deserted, no one there, so there was nothing to do but take Mr. Goodwin back to Punta Rassa which we did. Arrived back at the nesting place a little before sundown. Henry killed six pelicans, and I killed four.

Had a heavy rain last night. Went shooting this morning. Henry killed one pelican, I killed six. Had just returned on board when Mr. Goodwin came along in a skiff. He came on board to visit with us for about half an hour. Went on shore again late in the afternoon. Birds all gone. I killed one pelican and three fish. I also speared a mullet.

Soon this morning we were underway headed for Charlotte Harbor by way of channel inside of Pine Island. Met the mail carrier in a small sail boat on his way to Punta Rassa with the mail. He told us where there was a

large nesting place farther on. We came to it late in the afternoon. There was thousands of curlew nesting there, also cormorants, Louisiana herons, redish egrets, white egrets, and a number of other kinds of birds. This is by far the largest nesting place we have seen.²⁴ We all got in the *Falcon* and went around the island and as we went along the birds kept flying up until the air was so full of birds we could not see through them, all kind mixed up together. As we did not want the curlew, had a time picking out the plume birds in the flying mass over our heads. Mr. Chevelier just sat there and pointed his gun first one way and then another for about five minutes without firing a shot, at last he laid his gun down and said "Mine God, tis too much bird on this contrie, I can not shoot." I killed two night herons, two Louisiana herons, and sixteen redish egrets. The boys let me do the shooting, there was too many kinds of birds for them. By this time it was dark so we returned to the *Bonton*.

I went on the island early this morning to kill some curlew to eat. I killed seven and gathered thirty seven curlew eggs. William cooked the eggs for breakfast and when we started to eat them found that only nine were good, the rest were too far on their way towards hatching, Henry and I went on the island again after breakfast, Henry killed a water turkey, one egret, one white heron, one Louisiana heron, and two redish egrets. I killed two white herons with good plumes. This looked strange to me as on the east coast the whites drop their plumes by the first of May and this is the fourth of July. In the middle of the island is a water hole. I was standing on some mangrove roots, looking up through the tree tops watching for birds, when I heard a noise in the water hole just in front of me. I looked down and there within a few feet of me was about the largest gator I ever saw. It was all of twelve feet long and very large in every way. I only had No. 8 shot with me but I let him have it just the same. It did not kill him but took some of the "Sass" out of him and he went under the water with a plunge. I did not see him again although I went to look for him in the afternoon, this time had Buck shot but the gator was not to be seen. When Henry and I went to dinner William told us how an old man came rowing along in a skiff and stopped in front of that part of the island where we were shooting. The old man yelled at us, "You had better come out of that." William said just then both of us shot close together. The old man seemed to take our shots as an answer to his hail, shipped his oars and got away from there fast as he could. He did not come back again. Went after birds in the afternoon. Henry

killed two white herons, one egret, and four redish egrets. I killed four redish egrets and one white heron. We gathered one hundred and four curlew eggs.

As the plume birds are about gone there is not enough to pay us to stay here longer. The curlews are here yet by the thousands. Underway soon this morning, and sailed to the west into Charlotte Harbor, and around the western end of Pine Island. As we came about in Boca Grande Pass I lost my hat overboard. We were now headed back towards home which will be getting nearer each day as we sail along down the coast. Come to an anchor near a small island that had some pelicans nesting on it. I have a bad cold in my head and feel bum. Do not see where I got this grippe, as I have not been on shore where people live but once since leaving Cape Sable.

This morning Mr. Chevelier said he thought we had better go to Punta Rassa for the mail and come back for the pelicans later. I do not think we will come back as all are getting tired of the trip, and want to start for home. After coffee we started for Punta Rassa. Saw a number of pelican rookeries as we sailed down the sound to the eastward. Arrived at Punta Rassa early in the afternoon.

Remained at anchor all day today, and spent the time in writing letters, and boxing the bird skins for shipment from this place. Mr. Chevelier said to us today. "Everybody commence very tired this time, the best we go back to Miami." So when we leave here tomorrow we will be on our way home for true, and I sure will be glad. A large schooner, the *Alice Vain*, came in today, and commenced to load cattle for Havana, Cuba.

Started out this morning, wind and tide ahead. When near the light house on Sanibel Island, the bobstay and jib stay gave way. We had to come to and anchor to repair them. The wind got very light almost a calm. The tide turned out and we went drifting out into the Gulf. Not wind enough to sail towards shore so there was nothing to do but wait for the wind and let her drift with the tide. Meantime we were drifting out to sea at the rate of about four miles an hour. When about five miles from land I tried to work the boat in shore, but the wind was so light and the tide so strong we could not make any headway in that direction. The *Alice Vain* passed us on her way out. After a while a heavy black cloud commenced to make up in the east which was dead ahead for us, and soon a fearful thunder storm was rushing up the coast right at us, and against a heavy ebb tide which would soon

kick up an awful sea We lowered all sail, put in a close reef in the mainsail so we would have it ready when we need it most, then stowed and lashed down both sails, and with the help of a large steering oar turned the *Bonton* around to it, and waited for it to strike us. The *Alice Vain* was about a mile southwest of us, hove to under the peak of her foresail. The wind struck us with hurricane force, I never saw it blow any harder. It just picked the water up and blowed it along in a white spray that looked like steam. Mr. Chevelier asked me, "What same? Look same the smoke." I answered, "The wind bring the water, Mr. Chevelier". He only said, "Ah mine God". The sea rose until it was half as high as the mast. I had William at the tiller while I had out the long steering oar, and it was all the two of us could do to keep her straight before it when on the crest of those big seas. A school of porpoise were having a big time coasting on the top of the big seas as they came rolling down on us. They would play and jump around us and appeared to be having lots of fun, but we could not see the fun of it, in fact we were all pretty badly scared. I lost my hat when the storm first struck us, and a number of heavy boards on top of the cabin, that we used to stretch skins on, went flying through the air ahead of us like feathers, never to be seen again by us. A small ensign that was flying at the mast head was whipped into ribbons. I now saw that the wind was taking us up the Coast and I would have to get some sail on her or we would not get back into San Terris Bay.²⁵ I first run up just the peak of the mainsail, and managed to haul in more towards the mouth of the Bay. In about half an hour the wind began to let up a little and we got all of the close reefed mainsail on her and hauled more on the wind. We did not want to go back in San Terris Bay if we could help it now the storm was letting up, and as the wind got lighter we hauled more to the east, heading for one of the inlets leading into Estero Bay. Mr. C was still much excited, two or three times during the storm he tried to come out of the cabin into the cockpit and each time William would put his hand on the old mans head and push him back in the cabin. Now he came out and went to the water cask for a drink. A little later William went in the cabin for something and called out to me that there was two inches of water on the cabin floor. At first I thought sure we had sprung a leak, but when William said the water was warm I thought of the cask, and when we looked at it, sure enough there it was running away. Mr. Chevelier had forgot to shut it off when he got his drink, he was so excited. We lost about half of our

²⁵ San Carlos Bay.—WBR

water supply. Anchored for the night in the inlet. Mr. Chevelier does not want to go on the Gulf any more than we can help so we will go through Estero Bay.

Underway early this morning, run into Estero Bay came to a curlew nesting place and anchored. William, Mr. C and myself went around the island. I killed one Louisiana heron. Went around the island again in the afternoon, I killed a pink curlew, then went alone and killed six Louisiana herons, one white heron, and one yellow crowned night heron.

Up anchor and went over to Collier Pass²⁶ and found a well on north side of pass where we filled our water cask, then went over to the south side and anchored. The old Italian "Monkeybaboon" we call him, came to see us and gave us a short talk on religion as he saw it. He said, "God is like the wind, you can feel it, you know it is there yet you cannot see it." And said he, "It is the same with God you can feel him and you know he is there yet you cannot see him." Just at dark Mr. C killed a shearwater. The shearwater always feed around the inlets near dark. We do not see them in the middle of the day.

Mr. Chevelier killed twenty sea swallows today and I killed eighteen. William found a nice Panama shell. Moved the *Bonton* a little farther up stream tonight.

I went on shore and killed thirteen sea swallows, this morning. Mr. C killed eight, we then got underway and sailed over to the next pass and anchored. I took the spear and went on shore to see if I could get some fish. Got a redfish or sea bass as some call them.

Mr. C went on shore this morning and killed twelve sea swallows then I went and killed thirteen. In the afternoon Mr. C killed eight, and I killed eleven.

Very bad squally weather, we remained at anchor. Mr. C killed twelve sea swallows. I speared two snappers and a whip ray.

I went on shore this morning and killed sixteen sea swallows, and one egret. In the afternoon Henry and I went after sea swallows, Henry killed

²⁶ Not certainly identifiable. From the context probably Big Carlos Pass or Little Carlos Pass, both entrances to Estero Bay.—WBR

nine, I killed ten and two black sea swallows the first I have seen. I feel today as if I would like to go home. The first time I have been homesick on this trip.

July 16th, 1885 Twenty one years old today, and a long ways from home. Wind fresh from the south, clear sky. Went on shore this morning. Henry killed three sea swallows and I killed four. In the afternoon I killed six and Henry killed six. Near sundown we went after fish but did not get any.

Got underway and run over to "Monkeybaboon's" well and filled our water cask then sailed over to the pelican nesting place²⁷ and anchored for the night. Had a very heavy squall tonight. In the worst of the storm I asked Mr. Chevelier how he would like to be out at No. 1 buoy off Punta Rassa at that time, he said, "Tis not be at No. 1 this time for one tousand the dollar."

After coffee this morning Henry and I went to shoot pelicans Henry killed twelve and I killed twelve. Then took Henry and the dead birds to the skinning place on shore. Went back to the nesting place alone and killed sixteen took them over to the skinners and went back and killed ten more which made fifty birds today, all we can take care of in one day. We have to have the skins cured and stowed away by two o'clock on account of the rain squalls which come every afternoon. I speared a bass this morning.

First thing this morning Henry and I went to shoot pelicans, Henry killed ten and I killed fifteen, then took Henry and the birds to the skinning place and went back alone and killed nine. It commenced to rain and we all got wet before we got back to the *Bonton*. After the rain Henry and I went after fish. Henry speared a mullet and two jewfish. I speared three mullet.

I killed twenty three pelicans this morning. They make one hundred and one we have killed at this place. We are going to start for Miami in the morning, and will stop at Ferguson Pass to scrape the *Bonton's* bottom which has got very foul with barnacles and moss. I speared a bass and a mullet. Near sundown we up anchor and poled the *Bonton* over to the channel near the Pass, and anchored for the night.

Left Big Hickory early this morning with a head wind. Got within half a mile of Ferguson Pass when the wind gave out so William and I went

²⁷ Located by Scott (*op. cit.*, p. 218) as near Mound Key, Estero Bay.—WBR

overboard and towed the *Bonton* into the Pass. The tide was running out, and we had a hard time getting in against it. I went up the beach and found a turtle nest. When I returned we put up the tent on shore for Mr. C to sleep in while we have the *Bonton* on the beach cleaning bottom.

Put the *Bonton* on the beach at high tide, and when the tide was low we scraped the shore side of the bottom, and as we can only clean one side at a time, will have to wait until tomorrow to clean the other side. Had a big squall this afternoon. I speared a large sting ray and another carried off my hook when fishing with a hand line. I also caught a snooker sargent fish, and made a pudding. Henry killed eleven sea swallows and one oyster catcher. I killed a paradise tern the first I have seen. It is a little larger than the sea swallow and has a very much longer tail. White except top of head which is black, the breast is nearly white with a faint tinge of rose pink.

The above is the last daily record in my diary of this trip. We were so busy getting ready for the return trip home and excited over the prospect that I did not think of writing things in my diary. The next day we finished cleaning bottom, and got things in shape again for a long trip, as we do not intend to stop to shoot birds at any place, but are going as straight to Miami as we can, and as there are so many squalls in the day time, we are going to leave here tonight in order to avoid them.

We started out after dark with a light off shore wind, and sailed all night, taking turns at sleeping and steering, that is William and I did. Henry and Mr. C did not know how to sail and of course that let them out of that part of the work.

In the morning we were off the Chokoloskee Islands. The day came in with calm and squalls. We anchored for the night off the northern end of the Ten Thousand Islands. William and I were so sleepy we did not care to sit up another night sailing.

When we made coffee this morning found we had miscalculated on our water supply in some way, and had only enough for that morning. Here we were in a fix sure enough. The nearest place to get water that we know of is Middle Cape Sable, and that is a long way off. There was nothing to do however but to get underway at once for that place, hoping the wind will stay fair and fresh until we get there. By ten o'clock the sun was awful hot.

The wind while fair was light, and we were very thirsty. Knowing that there was not any water to drink we kept thinking about it all the time, and that made matters worse. Like the "Ancient Mariner," there was "Water water everywhere but not a drop to drink." We reached Northwest Cape about noon. I sailed the *Bonton* close to shore in hopes we might see a fresh water stream, and soon saw the mouth of a small creek²⁸ that might mean fresh water if we went up it far enough. So we anchored. William and I got in the small boat and went up the creek about two miles. We had to give it up at last as the water was blue salt water all the way, and we had wasted nearly two hours, besides we were getting thirstier all the time. While up the creek I killed two curlew that I intend to stew for supper if we get to water by that time.

When we got back to the *Bonton*, a big thunder storm was making up in the northwest, heavy and black. We at once up anchor and sails and started on. Soon the wind came from the squall which was right behind us. In spite of the risk I kept all sail on the old boat hoping to reach Middle Cape before the wind gave out on us. We had not had a drink since morning, and were getting awful thirsty as the day had been one of the hottest. After we had sailed a few miles I saw the squall was not going to overtake us and as the wind began to let up, I rigged up my canoe sail as a flying-gaff-topsail that helped us along wonderfully.

We arrived at Middle Cape about half an hour before sundown, and as soon as we could get on shore all hands made a bee line for the well. Seemed as if we could never get enough. We filled up everything on that boat that would hold water, and made soup with the curlew for supper. It was so calm we laid the *Bonton* along side the beach where we could step from her deck on to dry land. We did not finish supper until away after dark. The night was fine, not a breath of wind and the moon shining bright as day, and for some unknown reason not many mosquitoes.

Middle Cape was not a very good place to spend the night in case the weather got squally before morning, and as we had a good fair tide, we started on with the tide under pole power. William and I poling while Henry steered. We run in behind a mud bank east of Cape Sable, anchored

²⁸ Little Sable Creek.—WBR

and turned in for the night, pretty well tired out, but we are now as William said when he crawled under his mosquito bar, "Back in God's Country once more."

While having coffee next morning we talked over the question of which was the quickest and best route for us to take, the way we came around by Sand Key and over to Long Key, or right on up the coast from Cape Sable. Of course none of us had ever been up along the main land, but we had been finding our way so long through unknown waters I thought I could take her through all right, so we started with a fair wind and made pretty good headway until we got into a large sort of sound that had mud banks all around it. We could not find any way out except the way we came in, so I told the boys I thought we could jump the bank ahead of us, which was only about 200 wide, and as the bank was very soft mud I thought the boat would go right on over. She would have done it too if the wind had kept up, but luck was against us this time. Just as we reached the middle of the bank the wind suddenly left us, and there we were in the middle of a mud bank stuck hard and fast. The wind went down with the sun so there was nothing we could do but get our supper and go to bed, hoping for a good fair wind in the morning.

All the next morning was a dead calm, and when the wind did spring up about noon, it came dead ahead. Mr. C kept watching a little mangrove all the morning, the top of which was just out of water, he was watching to see if the tide was raising. At noon he said, "The best somebody go bring same letla bushon, tis watch same all day, the water no move." And such was the case, we were so far behind so many banks, there was not any rise and fall of the tides.

We put the small boat overboard and piled into her all the heavy things on board, then we placed two boards on the mud along side to stand on and push the *Bonton*. Still we could only move her a very little. Then I told the boys that there was only one way we would be able to get through, and that was to dig a channel with our hands, and push the *Bonton* into it. This we did and by hard work digging and pushing we got over into deep water late in the afternoon. We at once got underway, and as we sailed away from the mud bank Mr. C looking back said, "Pierce's Channel."

We anchored near Pigeon Key that night, and arrived at Miami the next night, going up to Wagner's place next morning. Everything was taken ashore at Wagner's except my own things. I went up to the house that afternoon, and there was William sitting on the porch all dressed up, tilted back in his chair, smoking his pipe and looking happy. The next day I said "good bye" to my shipmates and companions of many weeks and sailed alone down the Miami river to Miami, and tied up for the night at Ewing's landing on the north side of the river. I was sure lonesome that night, all by myself after having the others with me so long, and again I dreaded that sixty mile trip up the coast alone in the month of August.

Started out next morning, and sailed out through Norris Cut onto the Atlantic, and arrived off New River Inlet in the afternoon. I thought by the way the weather looked it would be best for me to go into New River and wait until next day, perhaps the weather would be better.

So in I went, and sailed up the river to the House of Refuge landing and anchored the *Bonton* and went on shore with the small boat intending to spend the night with the keeper of the House of Refuge, Chas. Coman, who was a friend of mine. When I got to the station there I found in addition to the keeper, my old friend and hunting companion Louie Bradley. His father had taken the contract to carry the U. S. mail from Palm Beach to Miami, which would have to be done on foot down the beach. Louie had been down to see about boats for crossing the inlets and Biscayne Bay. Louie was on his way back to Hypoluxo walking on the beach. I do not know when I was as glad to see anyone as I was to see him, and I did not have to talk very much to persuade him to come and help me with the *Bonton* for the run to Lake Worth Inlet.

We went to sea next morning, and had to put into Hillsborough Inlet on account of bad weather, and remained there all night.

Smooth sea and a fair wind next morning, so we went out on the first of the tide, and run into Lake Worth Inlet about three o'clock in the afternoon. Arrived at Palm Beach just before sundown, and tied up at my uncle's dock.

Reached my home next day at noon August 12th.

Five months in Swamp and Glade, River and Bay, Gulf and Ocean.

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