

North to South Through the Glades in 1883

The Account of the Second Expedition into the Florida Everglades
by the New Orleans *Times-Democrat*

Edited by MARY K. WINTRINGHAM

By 1883 the first South Florida land boom was well underway. Several factors contributed to this boom. In 1881 the state had sold a large tract of public land to Hamilton Disston for development. Disston and other developers had started large drainage projects and sold the reclaimed land in small plots to private individuals for cultivation. A New Orleans newspaper, the *Times-Democrat*, claimed a share in promoting the boom. The editors had an expressed policy of promoting interest in the development of the South following the Reconstruction period, and in 1882, the *Times-Democrat* had sponsored an expedition into the hither-to unknown and almost unexplored Everglades. This first expedition was designed to explore the Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee and to the Gulf via the Caloosahatchee River. The first expedition had been a great success, and the story had captured the attention of many newspapers in the North and West which reprinted the story of the expedition and "attracted much attention toward Southern Florida—its picturesqueness, its climate and the possibilities of its soil. The articles in the *Times-Democrat* interested the whole country in Florida, and a general desire was felt to know more about the country and particularly about the Everglades."¹

Because of the awakening interest in the area, the lack of exact knowledge of conditions, and the absence of any recent explorations, the *Times-Democrat* in 1883 decided to extend its investigations and send an expedition into the north part of the Everglades. No white man it was thought, had ever crossed the Everglades from north to south. "It was discovered that in this country,

¹ New Orleans *Times-Democrat*, January 6, 1884. For the full account of the first exploration by the *Times-Democrat* see Morgan Dewey Peoples and Edwin Adams Davis (editors), "Across South Central Florida in 1882; The Account of the First New Orleans *Times-Democrat* Exploring Expedition," *Tequesta* (Miami, 1950), X, 49-88 and (1951), XI, 63-92.

in a State which can boast of being the first colonized of any portion of the Union, there existed a region, of which less was actually known than of the interior of Africa."

Major Archie P. Williams, who had successfully led the first expedition, was to lead the second one. He was the correspondent for the *Times-Democrat* and was to report conditions as he found them. Wolf Hollander was the artist of the expedition. J. R. Phillips was the mechanic and commissary; and Colonel C. F. Hopkins, the civil engineer. Captain F. A. Hendry was to join the expedition at Fort Myers, and a Dr. Kellum, who lived on the Caloosahatchee River, was to join the group on Lake Okeechobee. There were six colored crew men; one, Caesar Weeks, had been the cook on the first expedition. However, Allen Robertson was to be the cook on this trip.

Two large canoes, the *Susie B.* and the *Daisy W.*, had been built for the expedition. The *Susie B.* was the flagship, carrying the flag of the *Times-Democrat*. Three smaller canoes and two provision batteaux completed expedition.

The plan of the trip was to take a steamer from Cedar Key to Punta Rassa. Captain Jackson ran a regular schedule along this route. From Punta Rassa the men would paddle the canoes up the river to Fort Myers. This trip in the canoes would give the men experience in learning to handle a canoe. Two separate ducking and "numerous other smaller accidents occur, which teach the men better than words that a canoe, like the mule, 'is a very uncertain animal', and bears watching." Provisions had been stored at Fort Myers. A careful listing of all the things necessary for the trip had been made. Machetes and knives for hacking the passage through the dense jungle and saw-grass, buckets for storing provisions that could be ruined by getting wet, food for twelve men for ninety days, and a "keg of nails" for drinking to give the inner man strength after a hard day's work—all was on hand. As they started packing the food into the canoes and batteaux, they found that they had room only for thirty days' supply and planned to live off the game and fish on the way to fill out their rations. From Fort Myers the expedition would use *The Spitfire*, a small propeller captained by Captain Bill Nelson who made a regular run up the Caloosahatchee River for about thirty miles from Fort Myers, in order to save on supplies. Then by canoe they were to continue up the Caloosahatchee to Lake Okeechobee and enter the Everglades from the south shore of the lake. The plan was to

head straight south through the Everglades and to emerge at the source of the Shark River. A Mr. Christain had brought a boat to this point which would take the expedition down the river to White Water Bay. Mr. Christain had been instructed to set up a camp, wait for the expedition, and to send smoke signals by day and flares by night to guide the expedition to his camp.

An account of the expedition, which hereinafter follows, was written by Williams and published in the *Times-Democrat* in six installments from November 30, 1883, to January 6, 1884.² According to the editorial in the *Times-Democrat* of January 6, 1884, the expedition accomplished all it had set out to discover. "It has set at rest all questions about the Everglades, which have been found much different from what was imagined. . . . In 1848, when the United States Senate investigated this question, the possibility of draining the Everglades a committee reported that the swamp could be drained. Major Williams reports adversely. He can see no hope or possibility of redeeming the greater portion of this region, which must remain a swamp forever. The Country is very low, in most cases below the level of the land fronting on the Atlantic and Gulf, and a canal will not drain it, but will probably increase the depth of water in the glades. In the Southern glades many of the islands can be utilized and cultivated, but with this exception, the Florida Everglades are of no value agriculturally. We regret to learn this, but it is better that it should have been brought out now, instead of the world being encouraged into the mistaken belief that the Everglades could be redeemed."

The articles which appeared in the *Times-Democrat* follow without a break for the sake of continuity. Rivers, lakes, islands, and other geographic features have not been located because they, for the most part, are familiar to the readers of *Tequesta*. No corrections have been made in the text of the newspaper reports or editorials.

Article appearing in the New Orleans *The Times-Democrat*, Friday, November 30, 1883 (page 4, column 5 and 6)

² See the issues of November 30, 1883; December 10, 1883; December 12, 1883; December 21, 1883 (editorial); December 23, 1883; December 30, 1883; January 6, 1884 (editorial); January 6, 1884.

THE EVERGLADES

Start of the *Times-Democrat's* Exploring expedition.

The trip from Cedar Key to Punta Rassa Up the Coloosahatchie to Fort Myers—Incidents by the Way—The Parting at Cedar Key and the Welcome at Fort Myers.

Special Correspondence of the *Times-Democrat*.

Fort Myers, Fla., Oct. 25, 1883

All aboard! There is a jingling of bells, a sound of churning water, as the wheels of the steamer *Lizzie Henderson* begin to turn, and *The Times-Democrat* expedition, bound for the unknown wilds of the Florida Everglades, has begun its journey south. There is a waving of handkerchiefs, and perhaps a faint cheer or two from some of the colored population, in token of good-bye and God speed to the six stalwart, fine-looking and handsomely uniformed colored members of the expedition who stand upon the deck of the vessel and give an answering cheer and chant their last words of instruction to wives or sweethearts, standing grouped upon the wharf of Cedar Key, as they slowly move away in the darkness toward the light burning brightly upon Sea Horse Key in the distance. Another group gaze more silently upon the fast receding shore, sitting upon the upper deck of the steamer, of which your correspondent forms one. There has been no waving of handkerchiefs or cheers for the white members of the expedition. We are all comparatively strangers in that little seaport town, and the hands that would have waved a last adieu, and the voices that would have spoken words of cheer, are many miles away, still we are not affected by the gloom which first affected us on leaving for very long, and the cherry voice of Capt. Jackson, of the steamer, soon dispelled the last cloud, as we sat enjoying the bright moonlight, the pleasant roll of the Gulf and a good cigar, scudding before the wind as fast as steam and canvass could take us.

ADDITIONS TO THE EXPEDITION

Since the first formation of the expedition two gentlemen have been added to the list, viz: Wolf Hollander, an artist, and J. R. Phillips, who will act as mechanic and commissary for the party. The colored men consist of Caesar Weeks, Richard Little, Wash Bruce, Madison Williams, Mose Gordon

and Allen Robertson. They are all stalwart, strong, and, with the exception of Caesar, black as crows. Caesar did not exactly come up to our standard of what we required in our men, but as he had been our chief cook in the former expedition from Kissimmee City to the Gulf of Mexico, we could not refuse to take him. One other of our crew needs particular mention, and that one is Richard Little, whom we nick-named "Tiger Tail," after the warlike Seminole chief now gone to the Happy Hunting Ground. He applied to us in Jacksonville for a place in the expedition, and at first I was inclined to refuse Him; not that in frame and appearance he did not fill the bill, but his gloomy looks were in such contrast to the balance of the crew, who, like the majority of their race, were a merry, light-hearted crowd, but when he told me that his wife was just dead, and that the house was so lonely now at night, that it almost run him crazy, and that he wanted to go anywhere, or do anything to make him forget his trouble, my heart warmed toward him, and he was put in charge of our flag canoe, the Susie B., in command of Col. C. F. Hopkins, civil engineer, and has so far proved himself the best boatman and most daring man we have.

We go below before returning to our stateroom, to look after our canoes and men.

The first we find well stored away where they can't be injured, and the second gathered in a group, listening to Caesar, who is relating his hair-breath escapes from both Indians and alligators on the banks of Lake Okeechobee, on his former expedition with *The Times-Democrat* party down the Kissimmee River, and across Lake Okeechobee. He has an attentive audience, and among that dusky group there will be many who will sleep uneasily in their beds, as their dreams tend toward the sportive alligator and bloodthirsty savages of Caesar's imagination. We are well pleased with our crew, all of whom are first-class boatmen and accustomed to camp life.

Morning finds us still sailing before a stiff and favorable wind. To the steward's disappointment we all occupy our seat at breakfast, and from the way the provisions are stored away, he soon finds out that every man has his sea legs on, and that sea sickness in our crowd will be a stranger during our short voyage. We are hugging the shore closely, and with our field-glass are enabled to recognize many familiar places visited in our pleasant voyage of last December in our sailboat around that portion of the coast. Soon we reach Boca Grande Pass, see Captiva Island with its little village of

palmetto huts, occupied by as warmhearted and hospitably inclined a set of fishermen as we ever met. We recollect with pleasure the willing hands that hauled our boat upon the beach, as we landed to camp for the night, the barrel of fresh mullet sent as a present, and the many small acts of kindness of which we were the recipients on that occasion. May their nets always come up filled, and success attend them in their avocation. In the dim distance in Charlotte's Harbor we catch a glimpse of Mundungo Island, with its tall cocoanut trees, and lying a mile farther the Island of Euzepa. Both of these islands are uninhabited, containing forty or fifty acres each, and are the most beautifully situated on the coast of Florida.

As night approaches, our captain begins to look anxiously for the buoy which will guide us into the pass at Punta Rassa, the place of our disembarkation. When we engaged passage on the steamer, she reserved the right to carry us on to Key West and put us out on her return, in case the captain saw fit, which would necessitate our remaining three days longer on the boat, and as the time drew near for us to enter the harbor, we began inquiring anxiously of the captain as to our prospects of being landed that night. "Gentlemen," says the captain, "I always work in the interest of my boat, and as much as I shall miss your pleasant faces and genial company, still the idea of boarding twelve such men for three days free, which I will be compelled to do if I take you to Key West and return, is not to be thought of for a minute. You shall be landed to-night if the ship's compass don't blow up or the vessel sink." Sure enough, at 8:30 p. m. we find ourselves wandering through the tortuous channel which leads through the harbor to Punta Rassa.

After tying to the wharf, each one of our men picks up his canoe and lays it gently down upon the shore. The paint looks too nice and fresh to treat them roughly, and they get gentler handling than they ever will again. In half an hour after landing we find ourselves standing in darkness upon the wharf, realizing for the first time that we are to a certain extent thrown upon our own resources, and *The Times-Democrat* expedition is standing upon its own bottom. All our supplies are at Fort Myers, eighteen miles above on the river, so we march up to the hotel, and to the surprise of mine host, ask for rooms for six and meals for twelve men in the morning. Mr. Samuel Summerlin and his charming lady, both of whom are old acquaintances, receive us in a most hospitable and courteous manner. Clean and soft beds soon make us forget the rolling and tossing of the vessel we have just left,

and we wake up in the morning feeling refreshed and ready for work. After a good breakfast, in which juicy venison steak and fresh mullet form an important part, we settle our bill, which is a very moderate one, and repair to the wharf, where our canoes are ready for launching. As we have hired a sloop to transport all our baggage to Fort Meyers, there can be no better time for the men to learn how to manage their canoes and in no danger of injuring anything, or suffering any greater hardship than a good ducking. The wind is blowing quite fresh and waves rolling high in the harbor, yet each man is willing to make the attempt to reach Fort Meyers, ducking or no ducking.

As soon as the word is given the *Susie B.*, with the *Times-Democrat* flag flying, glides into the water, and is followed by the *Daisy W.*, with the stars and stripes at her mast-head. Each of the smaller canoes follow in quick succession, and we are soon riding the waves of Charlotte's Harbor, heading for the mouth of the Caloosahatchie River, which is two miles wide at that point, and over a mile wide for twenty miles above. The *Susie B.* and *Daisy W.* being large canoes, and perfectly sea-worthy, hover around the small canoes in case of accident, to render assistance. The first to suffer is the *Page M. Baker*, in command of W. Hollander, artist. We hear a yell, and on looking around see nothing but a black face on one side and a white one on the other of the boat, which is bottom up. Not being far from shore the water is shallow, and the canoe is carried to shore, emptied and launched, with two wiser men than started in it in the morning.

But a short time passes before we hear a cry of "Look out for the shark!"

And in a second he is among us, creating considerable consternation as regards the occupants of the small canoes. His lordship heads directly for the *E. A. Burke*, in command of J. R. Phillips, commissary and mechanic of the expedition, and for awhile we think he intends cutting the boat in two, but he swerves as he gets within a few feet of it, and his fins cut the water in such close proximity that the occupants instinctively lean to one side, and consequently two more dripping objects and a swamped canoe is the result. There is, as usual, a general laugh, especially from the artist and his boatman, who are glad to find companions in misfortune. Numerous other smaller accidents occur, which teach the men better than words that a canoe, like the mule, "is a very uncertain animal," and bears watching.

We notice that the land lying upon the bank of the Caloosahatchie, between Punta Rassa and Fort Myers, which last year had but few settlers, is now being built up, and it will be but a few years before the two places will be connected by groves of cocoanut trees and pineapple orchards.

It is dark when we arrive at Fort Myers, and after dragging our canoes upon the shore, find a vacant building near, or at least a carpenter-shop, which the owner has neglected to lock, and as the men are too tired to wait to look for better quarters, we take possession for the night. Being in rather a bad plight from our wettings received during our short and stormy voyage, we decline numerous invitations from the warm-hearted and more than hospitable citizens of the town, and content ourselves with beds at the hotel for the gentlemen of the party. Our men wring the water out of their wet blankets, roll themselves up upon the floor of the carpenter-shop and are soon oblivious of all surroundings. Salt water is not very beneficial to shot-guns and rifles, so we sat up quite late that night wiping off and greasing our arms and drying books and papers, which have suffered. A warm supper, and we, too, follow the example of our men, and forget in sleep the hardships of the day.

A. P. WILLIAMS

(second letter, December 10, 1883, page 1)

THE EVERGLADES

Second letter from the *Times-Democrat's* expedition.

The Voyage Up the Caloosahatchie—Fort Myers and its Surroundings—A Beautiful Country—The First Night in Camp.

Special Correspondence of *The Times-Democrat*.

LAKE OKEECHOBEE, Fla., November, 1883.

We wake up in the morning (Sunday, 21st October) after reaching Fort Myers with the rain pattering upon the roof and the wind whistling around the house. We console ourselves with the thought that our dose of bad weather had better be taken comfortably housed than in the Everglades without covering, for in that condition we will have to take it, being unable,

from the smallness of our canoes and lack of room, to carry anything in the way of tents except two tent flies, which will be used for provisions in case of rain.

After breakfast we have our tents and boats moved to more comfortable quarters, in a house kindly placed at our disposal by Major James Evans, one of Fort Myers' most prominent citizens, famed throughout the land for his hospitality, genial and amiable qualities, but more especially for a peculiar habit he has of never saying no, and carrying his generosity and charity so far, that we believe he would give away the very shirt off of back if he thought the stranger within his gates needed it more than he did.

Col. Hopkins and myself accepted an invitation, extended by Capt. F. A. Hendry, one of our future companions, to all the gentlemen of our party to make his house our headquarters during the stay in his town, the remainder preferring to remain at the hotel. Our surroundings in the captain's palatial home were too pleasant for us to refuse, so our baggage was removed from the hotel to his house. We would all prefer camping out, but our provisions are yet in the hold of the schooner, which has just arrived from New Orleans, and is at the wharf unloading. We have bought provisions and borrowed cooking utensils for the men, and they are enjoying themselves in their comfortable camp.

Fort Myers is the most beautifully situated town in the State of Florida. Standing as it does upon the banks of the Caloosahatchie River, which, at this point, eighteen miles from the Gulf, is over a mile wide, its handsome residences, beautiful orange groves, the tall symmetrically shaped cocoanut trees lining the bank, every house surrounded by the rarest variety of tropical plants and trees, the guava growing wild upon every vacant lot in the town, handsome public buildings and churches strike the stranger with wonder that such a perfect little jewel of a place should exist in Southern Florida, a land yet unsung, and, to a large extent, untrodden by the Northern tourists that cover the other portions of the State during the winter months. Refinement and cultivation exists nowhere in the State to a greater extent than in this little town of 300 inhabitants. Pass down its streets on a pleasant evening, and from almost every house can be heard the sound of some musical instrument, or the rich tones of voices, which prove better than words that naught has been left undone to bring them to perfection that means or opportunity could offer. They seem to be a music-loving

community and the excellence of their public schools, of which there are two, a male and female, and the great attention paid to the education of their children speaks well for its people, and is the great solution of the problem of who Fort Myers is unsurpassed in the refinement of its society, its great prosperity, true Southern hospitality, and why, after one visit, either on pleasure or business, you yearn to return. The great personal beauty and loveliness of its women, the high commercial standing of its men, and its peculiar freedom from all the little vices of small towns, make it a little Eden in this wilderness of tropical beauties. A new large and commodious hotel has just been finished, built upon the bank of the river, on the edge of the town, handsomely and luxuriously furnished. The tourist is, or will be attracted here, and in a few years we will see this little village, yet unvisited by the hordes of visitors which overrun this State from the outside world, a busy, populous and, from its situation, naturally a thriving city, with all its present loveliness and attractive beauties swallowed up in the vortex of city life. We will always think of this little town as we first knew it, and although it may be best for its commercial interest that money and men should crowd to the wall and rob it of its present village simplicity, purity and sweetness; yet it seems to us like trampling to earth the roses which bloom before each door and putting an ax in the beautiful palm and stately cocoanut trees which grow and thrive on every side.

We spend Monday, the 22d, in receiving our supplies, comprising outfits, etc., from the schooner and transferring them to the *Spitfire*, a little propeller, which occasionally as necessity demands, runs up the Caloosahatchie for about thirty miles, as we intend using all the means of transportation the country affords for transporting our supplies as far as possible, wishing to enter the Everglades with every pound that our canoes can carry, at the very point of entrance, as on that depends the success of the present expedition. Our stores are ample for the subsistence of twelve men for ninety days, but from experience of one day in the canoes, we will only be able to leave Lake O'Keechobee with thirty days' rations, depending upon our guns and fishing lines to make thirty days' do us for sixty days' supplies. Our men are all busy making mosquito bars, grinding knives, axes and hatchets, and bothering me generally all day to buy certain little articles that they neglected to provide themselves, until this their last opportunity of doing so on the trip. Our artist takes a sketch of the place, and remainder of the gentlemen spend the day loading cartridges, fixing fishing lines and packing each a small hand satchel, the only baggage allowed, in which he is

expected to carry a single change of clothes. Our trunks are stored at Fort Myers, together with our extra baggage. We all pay a visit to Major Evans' beautiful home, and sitting in front of his vine-covered bachelor's (what a treasure some woman has so far missed) ranch, we regale ourselves eating cocoanuts, oranges and guavas, and drinking fresh milk from the cocoanuts, not flavored with water, and still there was a foreign element put in—say two fingers of element to one of milk.

Night finds us seated at the luxurious tea-table of H. A. Parker, Esq., one of Fort Myers' most prominent merchants, which table is presided over by his charming, accomplished and intelligent lady. Hours fly like minutes in that charming household, and it is with reluctance and a happy memory of true southern hospitality from Southern hearts and hands, that we bid good-bye to our host and hostess, and receive their god-speed and hearty wishes for our success in our present undertaking. We return to Capt. Hendry's, our pleasant temporary home, where we spend the remainder of our last evening in one of the happiest households in the State, made happy and attractive by all that education, wealth and refinement can do toward accomplishing that object. The halo of true religion prevades throughout this household, and all has been done by our host and his charming lady to make their childrens' home the sweetest and dearest spot on earth to them. How great their success has been it need but a visit in their midst to see and know.

We are all up early on the morning of Oct. 23 (Tuesday), and soon canoes are launched, each man in his place, and everything ready to start. I put Col. Hopkins in charge of the little fleet, to which a large batteau for carrying provisions has been added, put the *Daisy* in tow behind the steamer on which I intend taking the provisions and stores as far as possible up the river, get on board, leaving Caesar sitting in the stern of the canoe to prevent accidents, and in a few minutes we are all off, followed by the good wishes and hearty cheers from the citizens of Fort Myers.

Our steamer is not remarkably fast, or the canoes are, for it is a neck-and-neck race until we reach that part of the river in which the current is strong, and then we steam ahead, and at the first bend of the river lose sight of the boats. Dr. Kellum, the surgeon of our expedition, is on board, going as far as his place, at which point we intend establishing our first camp for the purpose of unpacking provisions and storing them in the boats. Capt. Bill Nelson, of the little steamer *Spitfire*, is a host within him-

self. He acts as captain, pilot and roustabout, and when his engineer is absent fill that office also. There are two or three ladies on board, and when the boat is well under way our captain finds time to leave the wheel, play the agreeable, keeping an eye on the wheel, and in fact be in more places, and doing more things about his little boat in a short time than any man I ever saw. It is a rule on the *Spitfire* that every man must bring his own provisions along, already cooked. We have not done so, nor has the doctor, so we are very polite and attentive to Capt. Billy, and when the time comes that we think any captain of good hard sense ought to dine, we redouble our attentions, the doctor even going so far as to open his medical case and bring out about four ounces of something which tasted quite pleasantly, and brought a smile and invitation from our captain to join him in the rear of the boat, where we take a seat upon deck, with our plate on our lap, and enjoy our dinner as we have not done for many a day.

At 5 O'clock we land at Dr. Kellum's, our stores are put on shore, the little steamer goes on her way to her destination, which is a few miles farther up the river, and Caesar and myself are left busily piling up everything, and putting things in shape ere the arrival of the other boats, which in half an hour land, and for the first time *The Times-Democrat* expedition begins to feel that they have cut loose from the balance of creation, and are independent of the outside world. Sufficient of our stores are unpacked to give the men their supper, while some of us begin trolling in the river for bass, and others, gun on shoulder, are soon lost in the dense woods which surround us in search of game of some kind. As night approaches our hunters return with about a dozen squirrels and a few birds (quail and doves) and our fishermen a fine lot of bass, which, when placed before us an hour afterward by Allen, our cook, make every man feel that if life in camp is always so pleasant, the luxuries of civilization will cease to have any attraction. Our camp fires burn brightly until late at night; our last cigars are smoked (pipes will take their place on the morrow); stories of adventure by field and flood are related, laughed over, or listened to with such gravity as to even make the narrator believe that what he relates is not part of his imagination, but of actual occurrence, and as blankets are spread upon the ground, each man lays himself down upon Mother Earth to drop off into slumber, or lie awake listening to the mournful notes of the whip-poor-wills, and hooting of the owls, which resound through the woods long after the whole camp is wrapped in sleep.

We spend the 24th October opening the provisions and unpacking our camp outfit. Such provisions as are liable to be spoiled by getting wet we have transferred to tin buckets, which can be easily divided among the boats. As soon as everything is unpacked and stored in as small space as possible the work of loading the boats begin. We load and unload, pack and repack, and still after each boat is loaded to its utmost capacity, and the men gaze with mournful countenance upon their different canoes, and wonder how they can possibly get in without capsizing, there remains a large pile upon the bank. The batteau we procured at Fort Myers is loaded to its gunwale, and can't carry a pound more. Nothing can be done without another boat, and a large one at that, so, after looking around the neighborhood, we find one, which, though smaller than we require, still we will make it do until we can do better.

Our artist, while wandering in the woods near camp, comes in contact with a snake which, from his account when he arrives white and breathless from a long run, must have been of an enormous size and quite ferocious, as it ran after him. He had his rifle with him, but in his excitement forgot to use it. In fact, to use his own expression, "De rifle maybe snap, and de snake bite me, *but de legs I know he don't snap.*" There is a good laugh in camp at his expense, and it is many days ere we cease to chaff him about it; but he is too good-natured a fellow for it to continue long, especially as we find out that no one is ever before him when coolness, endurance or daring is needed in the days that follow.

On the 25th of October, the sun shining brightly upon the surface of this beautiful river, the tall palmetto trees lining its banks, the dense, dark and sombre forest which the eyes from our canoes are unable to penetrate—all combine to lend an enchantment to the scene which no pen can describe, no pencil illustrate. We have started before sunrise from our picturesque and pleasant camp on Dr. Kellum's place, leaving the doctor behind, who promises to join us on Lake Okeechobee. The gentlemen of our party busy themselves with killing squirrels, as they leap from bough to bough; shooting wild turkeys, which fearlessly stand on the bank of the river looking at an approaching canoe until a rifle ball either lays him fluttering upon the bank or sends him flying back into the dense woods from which he has emerged to get his noonday drink. We often land and walk for miles, getting ahead for the purpose of hunting, and when our game-bag is sufficiently full, or we have walked ourselves down, we sit upon the bank and

wait for our canoes, which move slowly against the swift current of the river, which is confined to a channel of not more than thirty or forty yards, and consequently flows with great rapidity. We camped that night near old Fort Deneau, of which nothing remains to mark its former occupancy as such during the Indian war, except a small clearing of a few acres. We feel tired and weary from this our first hard day's pull, and the voices of our colored crew are not heard in song as on the previous nights, but as soon as their night's work is done, a fresh log is thrown upon our camp fires, each man rolls himself up in his blanket, and perfect silence reigns in camp.

A. P. WILLIAMS

(Article on December 12, 1883, page 1)

THE EVERGLADES

A preliminary report from *The Times-Democrat* expedition.

The Difficulties Overcome, the Rivers Explored and the Island Discovered—
General Character of the Country.

Special to *The Times-Democrat*.

Punta Rassa, Dec. 11.—*The Times-Democrat* expedition for the exploration of the Everglades reached Lake Okeechobee on the first day of November, and coasted around the southern shore of the lake for nine days, thoroughly exploring every river and creek running in the direction of the Everglades. The expedition discovered and explored to their source eight rivers, which headed in the dense swamps bordering the glades.

On the 10th of November we selected the T. - D. River as the best point of exit from the lake, and began cutting our way through the swamp. On the 11th of November we reached the borders of the marsh, composed of grass, scrub willow and custard apple. Our passage through this was most difficult, we being unable to make more than a few hundred yards a day.

On the 14th of November we reached the borders of the saw-grass, set fire to the same in our front and burned it ahead of us. We found about

four inches of water, which depth lasted for fifteen days, and during that time the expedition worked entirely in the saw-grass.

On the 28th we reached the grassy waters of the glades and sighted our first island, and after reaching the same we camped for two nights and one day, repairing damages to the boats.

Our progress was uninterrupted in our passage among the hundreds of islands composing the glades, until Dec. 3, when we encountered the rocks which border the southern glades. The boats were carried for miles by hand until the evening of the 5th of December, when we sighted the rockets from the camp of parties we had sent to camp, until our arrival at the head of Sharks River, with instruction to send up rockets by night and make smoke by day.

On Dec. 6, we reached the head of Sharks River and descended the same to the Gulf. We became separated during the night from our provision boat, in charge of two men, and being unable to find them, the next day we left for their use the boats sent from Fort Myers to our relief. We then chartered a schooner and ran for Punta Rassa. We have failed in no particular in carrying out the programme to the letter.

(Editorial comment on December 21, 1883.)

THE FLORIDA EVERGLADES

Members of *The Times-Democrat's* Everglades exploring expedition reached this city Wednesday night, having made a very quick trip from Florida. They return the picture of health, burned a deep brown, but grown stout over their sojourn in this Florida wilderness. Judged by them, the Everglades must be the very fountain of eternal youth, for which Ponce de Leon searched in vain. Although the party spent more than a month in this region, exposed to the rigors of the weather, and the severest hardships, pushing their heavy boats through the swamps for four weeks without rest, there was not, during the entire trip, a single case of sickness among them, and all of the party added from fifteen to twenty pounds to their weight. The climate they describe as tropical and nearly perfect, and at no time did they experience any inconveniences from their long march through the swamp.

The trip was without serious accident, although very severe and fatiguing, the journey through the saw-grass, where there was neither land nor water, being about as arduous an undertaking as ever attempted by an exploring party. This region is described as gloomily monotonous, a broad stretch of grass extending as far as the horizon, without a single elevation to relieve it, and destitute of all animal life. Once in the Everglades proper the scene was different. Innumerable romantic islands were discovered, lakes and game in super-abundance, and plenty of Indians, suspicious but not unfriendly to the whites. Of the character of this region, however, and of the many important discoveries made, we must leave to Major Williams, the gentleman who had charge of the expedition, to speak. His account of the trip will be published very shortly, and the initial letter will probably be given Sunday and the rest of the trip told soon after. The attention of the world has latterly been turned to the Everglades as a *terra incognita*, whose mysteries it desired to penetrate. We promise that the whole story of that region shall be told so that every one will know its present and its possible future value, and whether it can be redeemed, improved and thrown open to settlement.

(December 23, 1883)

THE EVERGLADES

Up the Caloosahatchie River to Lake Okechobee.

The Times-Democrat's Expedition on its Way to the Glades—A Toilsome Journey Through a Delightful Country—On the Waters of the Great Lake of Southern Florida.

LETTER NO. 3

Special Correspondence of *The Times-Democrat*.

It is a clear, bright and beautiful morning, as we rise from our blankets on the ground and prepare for our second days' journey up the Caloosahatchie River. The first duty of our cook is to rouse each man before it is good daylight, and his second, to always have a coffee-pot of strong hot coffee ready to be partaken of as each rises from his luxurious bed. Woe to him if he neglects his duty in that respect. After coffee there is a general washing of faces at the river bank, and by the time that is accomplished breakfast is ready, which this morning consists of quail on cracker, broiled bass or

trout, the remains of a cold roasted wild turkey, bacon, crackers, corn bread and coffee. To be sure, we use tin cups and plates, and our table cloth is the grass, yet there is naught to disturb the digestion of the party, and the appetite with which each man charges upon the viands set before him is enough to make him smile himself in after days, when reviewing the incidents of his camp life. The gentlemen of the party are all keen sportsmen, the majority of them good shoots and fisherman, consequently we are seldom without game or fish in this country, that is teeming with deer, bear, wild turkeys, ducks, snipe, quail, and numerous water fowl of species quite new to us, which we will describe more fully hereafter. We generally camp at 4 o'clock in the evening, that the men may prepare camp for the night before it is dark, and at the same time get a little rest, which is not given them during the middle of the day.

Today the current in the river is strong, and our provision boats make but little headway. The canoes move with ease, and it needs but a paddle to make them skim over the water, but we have to keep together, and as there is plenty of leisure time for the occupants of the canoes they get ahead for a short distance, and spend the time scouring the woods in search of game, or lay on their paddles and fish, during the time we are waiting for the larger boats. The scenery of the river remains unchanged. It is all beautiful, and there is not a bend of the river, nor a curve, that does not present to the eye some new beauty or freak of nature, which from sunrise until sunset keeps us in a state of expectancy and excitement, regardless of fatigue or flight of time.

At dark we arrive at Fort Thompson, which, like all the other places with the cognomen of "Fort" attached in this portion of the State, have naught about the place to remind them of the former occupancy of the place as such, except the memory of the oldest inhabitant, or its mark upon the map. We camp for the night upon the eastern bank of the river, and when after seeing each boat landed and unloaded, we visit the last house we shall see until we are through the Everglades, for to-morrow we continue our course up the Caloosahatchie to Lake Okeechobee, which will be through an entirely uninhabited country.

We are joined at this point by Capt. Hendry, and by him are introduced to Mr. Frazier, the last inhabitant of the Caloosahatchie. At his place we find everything in the way of vegetation grew, and either in fruit or bloom.

Tomatoes and okra are in abundance. He is attempting to set out his whole land in grasses. The Johnson and Para grass are both planted, and fast taking possession of the soil, and when once they gain the ascendancy over the other grasses, he will have a stock farm not equaled in the Blue Grass region of Kentucky. All the inhabitants of this portion of the State are interested more in the raising of stock than in using the magnificent and rich soil which nature has provided them, a climate unsurpassed for tropical fruits in the United States for the cultivation of either fruit, vegetables or grain.

At sunrise the next morning we get ready to leave, but previous to doing so we are warned by Capt. Hendry that our provision boats are too heavily loaded to cross Lake Okeechobee, which necessitates the hiring of an extra batteau and one man. Leaving Fort Thompson, we pass over that portion of the river in which were once the falls of the Caloosahatchie, but since we passed over them last December, the Okeechobee Drainage Company have blasted and dug them out, and the only thing to remind the stranger of where they stood are the piles of lime rock lying on the bank. From this point we enter Lake Flirt, which is but a widening of the river, very shallow and covered with rank marsh grass over almost the entire surface of the lake. Our artist takes a good sketch of the lake and its surroundings, including the dredge-boat, which is busily at work cutting a straight canal through the same.

We stop on board the dredge and spend a pleasant hour with our fellow Louisianian, Capt. Thenge, who has charge of this work for the Drainage Company. A good dinner is one of the pleasant features of our short visit. At 2 o'clock, with Caesar bending to his oars, our little canoe is sent spinning through the water, and at dark we overtake the balance of the fleet, and camp for the night on Coffee Mill Hummock. We take a peculiar interest in this place, first on account of having camped among its tall palmetto trees for two days last December and spent a pleasant time, and second because as far as the eye can see, and much further, the lands are owned by Louisianians. They entered it several months ago without ever seeing it, and, if they only knew it, have struck a bonanza.

We find our hunters have secured several wild turkeys, ducks, and the fishermen are equally successful with their fishing lines. It is all pleasant, smooth and delightful, this camping out; weather all that a man could

desire, plenty of game, and with nothing to do but eat, drink, and be merry, and we say nothing to mar the pleasure of our trip by referring to the dark days ahead.

Today (Oct. 28), being Sunday, I decide to remain in camp at this point. After breakfast, having secured a guide, with gun on shoulder we start on a tramp to visit the celebrated Indian Mound, lying about three miles from camp. One point of interest in connection with this mound is the fortification erected near it and two old canals diverging from it, both emptying into the Caloosahatchie at different points, about three miles apart. As we leave camp we enter a thick hummock of palmetto trees, which lasts for about half a mile, the soil as rich as any we have seen in the State, and susceptible of growing all and any fruit grown in a tropical climate. Leaving the palmetto trees, we enter a thick pine woods, which lasts until we reach the Indian Mound. The sun is blazing hot, and when we have climbed to the top of the mound our gun weighs about a thousand pounds in our imagination, and we are only too glad to sit down and rest beneath the shade of the bushes, which cover this pile of white sand from base to top. After a few minutes rest, with a good field-glass we get a view of the whole Caloosahatchie Valley to the eastward as far as Lake Hickpochee, a distance of about eight or ten miles as the crow flies. The two canals are plainly to be seen from near the base of the mound, one running about south and the other southwest. We leave the mound and follow the canal running south for a short distance. Why they were dug, or for what purpose, I shall leave to some one in the far future, better versed in Indian or ancient lore than I am. Two things are plain: first, that they were never dug for drainage, for they rise or begin in the high land and go toward the river, and the lands through which they pass really need no drainage; and, secondly, they, except at a time when the river is flooded, could not be used as a means of transportation, as they are perfectly dry, except at the time of some extraordinary flood, only one of which has occurred within the memory of the oldest white inhabitant or Indian living. We soon enter the land owned by Louisianians, as above stated. Most of it is the very best pine land in the State, dark and rich soil, easily cleared, and what gives it a present high value and a much higher one in the future is that it is the last timber for almost 100 miles going in the direction of the Kissimmee, and the last place that steamers will take on fuel going to Kissimmee City. Its soil has not its superior anywhere in the State, and we hope the next time we pass through this country to see a thorough and prosperous Louisiana colony established.

At present it is a rich tropical wilderness in the most beautiful portion of the State, where injurious frosts never occur, and needing but the hand of man to change its present wildness into blooming orchards of orange, lemon, lime, but more especially pineapple, that being the fruit which is at present attracting more attention than any other, in the portions of the State adapted by its tropical climate to the cultivation of the same. We do not know what the intentions of our Louisiana friends are as regards their investment, but it is certainly a good one as regards the pecuniary portion of the business.

After returning to camp at 3 o'clock p. m., I receive a call from a gentleman who has selected a portion of the land in question, built a small house and made a clearing, thinking it was United States lands. To his sorrow when he attempted to enter it he found he was too late. He now wishes to buy, but I am afraid he will find quite a difference in price from United States lands.

We are awakened at 3 o'clock on the morning of the 29th by finding out to our sorrow that mosquito bars are no protection against the rain, which is coming down in torrents. Bed clothing and every other article is but a secondary consideration in comparison with provisions and ammunition; so there is quite a commotion in camp erecting temporary shelters for their storage. We succeed in saving everything, and when daylight breaks it finds us as wet and bedraggled a set of men as ever met together in Florida. Down comes the rain in an almost solid sheet of water, and the tents utilized out of our canoe sails are but a poor protection. All day we sit in our India rubber coats, boots and caps, and have a jolly time under difficulties. As dark approaches the rains cease, and we take advantage of half an hour's sunshine to dry our clothing, bail out boats and get everything ready for an early start next morning. Our night's rest is not a pleasant one, sleeping, as we do, upon the ground soaked with water, and rivulets of water running down our backs, but still if we don't succeed in sleeping, nobody is out of humor, and everyone does what he can to make time pass pleasantly.

At daylight in the morning we are off, a leaden sky overhead and the swift running Caloosahatchie beneath us. It is a hard pull against the current, but our men bend to their oars with a will, for we shall see no more land until we reach Lake Okeechobee, and, therefore, no place to camp. Our whole day's journey is between marshy banks, although once in awhile we

get a glimpse of a line of timber lying to the north or south. At 12 o'clock we enter the canal running between Lake Hickpochee and the river, and we find a current almost impossible to stem. At 3 o'clock we reach the lake, and attempt to find dry land with an intention of camping on the bank of the canal where it enters the lake. We find land, but we find a moccasin coiled up to every square yard ready to spring. We don't stay long on shore, and after reporting that any man who sleeps on shore will have to take a snake for a bed-fellow, they unanimously decide to cross Lake Hickpochee, and go to Lake Okeechobee, even though we travel until late at night. Several of the party go to shooting alligators, that are swimming around us in numbers. Some fine shots are made, and over a dozen alligators are killed in that many minutes. The lake is quite rough, so the small boats, together with the provision batteaus, hug the shore, and the larger boats strike across under full sail. Night overtakes us in the middle of the lake, and we are compelled to make signal lights from the different boats every few minutes to keep from being separated.

Ten o'clock finds us at the mouth of the canal running from Lake Hickpochee to Okeechobee, with three miles yet to make against a stiff current and strong northeast wind. Lanterns are lighted on the boats, and before recommencing our journey we pass around the "keg of nails," and after inspecting its condition, turn our attention to something more substantial, consisting of crackers, bacon, etc. We feel considerably refreshed after our lunch, and all hands bend to their oars with renewed strength as we push from shore, and begin our battle against both wind and current in the almost Egyptian darkness which surrounds us. The splash, splash of the alligators from their resting place upon the bank of the canal, as they are disturbed by the passing boats, keeps the occupants of the small canoes wide awake, for if by accident the 'gators tail should come in contact with their frail bark, somebody would certainly get a bath in too close proximity to the animal to make it healthy.

About 12 o'clock we arrive at the mouth of the canal emptying in Lake Okeechobee.

The moon has just risen as we reach the lake. The roar of the water and the sight of the white-capped waves breaking against the scrubby trees which mark the shores do not have a very enlivening effect upon the tired and sleepy crowd just arrived. One thing certain, and that is, no one intends

attempting to sleep among the moccasins on the bank of the canal, and to sleep in our boats in the canal is equivalent to a night's battle with the mosquitoes. After discussing the question, we decide to pull out to an old cypress standing in the lake, tie our boats to the limbs, and wait until daylight. We reach the tree in safety, tie our boats, roll up in our blankets, and sleep soundly until daylight, notwithstanding the tossing of the waves or the bumping of the boats against each other. No mosquitoes—and that was happiness enough for one night!

A. P. WILLIAMS

(December 30, 1883)

FLORIDA EVERGLADES

The Times-Democrat's expedition on Lake Okeechobee.

Unpleasant Companions in an Unpleasant Camp—A Gale on the Lake—
Narrow Escape of the Canoes—A Fortunate Sail and a Happy Rescue—
Incident of the day.

LETTER NO. 4

We were waked up at daylight on the morning of Nov. 1, by the increased rocking of our canoes, and whistling of the wind through the branches of the trees to which we are tied. A perfect gale is beginning to blow, and those of our party who are not already awake are roused up, canoes are loosened, the wind and current sweeps us back through the mouth of the canal, and ere many seconds we are all landed upon the banks of the canal, busy with axes, hatchets and machettes cutting brush, and clearing away the vines which lay two or three feet deep upon the ground. The hissing of snakes, and the splash, splash of alligators, as they retreat from their beds and plunge into the waters of the canal, keeps the men working in rather a quick, nervous and excited manner for several minutes. We, who are sitting in the stern of our boats directing the work, encouraging some, and laughing at others who seem to have the misfortune of finding every snake, have rather an easy time, and have not the least anxiety to put our feet on terra firma until breakfast is cooked and snakes have vanished.

After breakfast, finding from a personal observation that the waters of the lake are too rough for our little fleet, orders are given to unload boats

and thoroughly dry everything which has become damp from exposure to the rain during our camp on the Caloosahatchee River. There is plenty to occupy the time of every man in the party until dinner, after which time begins to hang heavily upon our hands as we watch with anxiety the white-capped waves of the lake, and in our hearts pray most fervently for calm waters and gentle breezes. Night finds us still occupying the banks of the canal with a northeast gale blowing. The men make preparation to sleep on shore, but a few of us prefer our canoes. We are not afraid of snakes; we deny with scorn such charge. On the contrary it is really a pleasant sensation to feel on a hot night a cool, smooth, slick body gliding noiselessly over our bare feet, or hear a musical and gentle hiss as we put our hand out from under our mosquito bar to feel around for our pipe, and touch something that is not our pipe. Such little incidents enliven us, as well as everybody else, and considerably assist us in making life bearable. Still we prefer sleeping in our canoes, and do so on this occasion and many others in the future. We are disturbed a little during the night by the bellowing of alligators, and occasionally by one swimming back and forth under our boat, scratching his back, we presume, against the boat's keel. We have no objection to his scratching his back against anything else except our canoe; alligators are careless, is one reason; another is that, like many of the human species, the more liberty you allow them the more they want. Caesar, who is occupying the bow of the boat, sits up all night, a rifle by his side, and a boat hook in his hand, merely because we carelessly remarked, as we rolled over in our blanket, that "alligators never touched a white man when he could get hold of a nigger." Consequently I was well guarded all night, and had not asked for a guard either. Before we raised our heads above the gunwale of our canoe on the morning of the 2nd of November, we knew by the roar of the waves, that an angry sea was still before us to impede our further progress. The prospect of passing another day in our present camp was not pleasant, consequently a gloomy crowd gather around our campfire and watch the preparation of breakfast. We indulge in that repast in silence, after which we gather in knots and discuss our future prospects of getting away. One thing certain, if we could only get around a point of timber which lies about a mile to the southward, our smaller canoes and heavily laden batteaus could hug the shore, keep in the grassy waters which border the margin of the lake, and we could look out for a better camp, or slowly make our way around the southern shore until a place could be found for a harbor for boats, and a suitable spot from which to cut through to the Everglades. With that object in view, we unloose our canoe, row out

into the lake to see if the waves are really as high as they look, and at the same time if it is not possible for our boats to weather the point already mentioned. We return from our tour of observation, our canoe half-filled with water, wet to the skin with the spray, perfectly satisfied that none except the larger boats could live for ten minutes in such a sea. The wind blows a steady gale all day, and the prospect of getting away next day is gloomy indeed. Still we give orders to the men to load the boats before daylight, that we may be ready to take advantage of even half an hour's lull in the wind and get away.

We are all awake before daylight on the morning of Nov. 3, and our hearts are made glad by the knowledge that the waters of the lake are smoother and the wind considerably less than on the previous day. Breakfast is hurried up, the men work with a will to get the boat loaded, and sunrise we shove off from shore and make for the lake. The small canoes, and smallest batteaus keep in the grassy waters which lie between the open waters and dense swamp of scrub trees which constitute the borders of the lake, while the large canoes and largest batteaus hoist sail, stand out a short distance in the lake, and by making short tacks keep in the vicinity, and at the same time a close watch upon the smaller craft. We soon succeed in getting our boats safely around the point, but alas! wind shifts, and we are exposed to a stiff gale from the east, without any harbor in sight, and unable to return to that which we left. We who occupy the larger boats are in no danger—at least the danger is not very great; but the smaller canoes and batteaus will certainly not be able to weather the gale. For while we are in considerable trouble, as the only assistance we can offer is to take the occupants of the small in our large canoes, and tow the small ones until a landing can be made somewhere on the shores of the lake. It is rather a ticklish business, crawling from one canoe to another, with the waves tossing us about life feather on its surface, but the change is effected, and those of the larger boats soon begin to realize the difference 150 pounds make in their management. Our canoes have a tendency to take a short cut through the waves, instead of riding them gracefully as they did in the minutes previous to taking on our additional load, and sea after sea is shipped, which necessitates considerable bailing to keep afloat. Should we attempt to take cover in the brush and scrub trees which mark the margin of all that portion of the lake our small canoes would soon be dashed to pieces on the roots and snags, which are as thick as the hairs on our head. When things have about reached their worst, and we feel that even though

complete shipwreck awaits us, still we will have to run for the shore. We suddenly see emerging from behind the point of timber we have just left a large sail-boat, which heads directly for our little fleet in distress.

We wave our hats, shout, fire off guns, and generally behave like a parcel of school boys just released from school. For the last three days we have been looking for Dr. Kellum to form our party, and we are satisfied in our minds that our deliverer is our friend, the doctor. Our little fleet crowd together waiting anxiously for the boat which is speeding toward us. Suddenly Caesar jerks off his cap, begins waiving it like a crazy man, and shouting like a wild Indian, almost over-turning our canoe in his efforts to express some great joy. "What the devil is the matter with you?" we yell, and at the same time launch an empty bottle at him. It's the "*Daisy*, the Whitehall boat of de Major's!" Caesar still continues to shout. We take a closer look and soon recognize, to our surprise, the large Whitehall boat used on our voyage last December down the Kissimee and across Lake Okeechobee, with Caesar as one of the crew. This boat we had left at Manatee but a few days previous to our departure from Cedar Keys, and placed her at the disposal of Judge Marshall and Col. Bushnell, of Louisiana, who, in company with Mr. Marshall, a photographer from Jacksonville, Fla., intended cruising around the gulf coast.

The boat is soon among us, her anchor dropped, sails furled and each canoe busy transferring their extra load on to her decks. She is large enough to hold us all, but we who are in the large canoes consider ourselves safe in our boats as if we were in an hundred-ton schooner, provided we are not overloaded; so we stick to them after putting the small canoes in tow and their occupants in the large boat. Neither Judge Marshall nor Col. Bushnell is on board. Mr. Marshall, the photographer, is in charge of the Whitehall boat, accompanied by a Mr. Murray, and have followed us for the purpose of taking photographs of the expedition until we disappeared in the Everglades. We have no time for explanations, with the wind howling around us and the waves tossing us about in anything but a pleasant style upon the surface of the water, so sails are once more hoisted, and we are soon speeding along the western shore, hoping every minute to see high land sufficient to land our boats and camp. Night is fast approaching, and we realize the fact that we must make for the shore and find some shelter from the gale.

The Whitehall boat being the strongest, is put in front and ordered to make for the line of the woods on the shore, the canoes following some distance in her wake. She directs her course toward a slight opening in the dense swamp, soon disappears from view in the woods, but soon returns to the edge and signals to the canoes that are slowly feeling their way to come on. Away we speed, the waves, which are much higher near the shore, breaking over the small canoes at every step, and how they kept afloat is a mystery to us to this day. We are soon among the trees in comparatively smooth water, each boat tied to the branch of a tree, and their occupants busy driving their poles and oars down beside them to prevent being rubbed or crushed against the neighboring trees, or thrown upon the roots which stick up above the surface of the water in all directions. Rough as our surroundings are still we are in safety, and nothing seriously injured. Canned meats are distributed around, coffee is made on a small coal oil stove, lanterns are lighted and hung up among the branches of the trees, which illuminates this strange encampment on the water in this dense, dark, tropical woods. All are in good spirits, so when supper is finished and pipes lighted, we sit in our boats and laugh over the different incidents of the day.

Something amusing has happened to each and every member during the day. Very amusing, as told lying in perfect safety, smoking our pipes after a good supper, but we are satisfied nobody laughed at the time. I can't help relating one little incident of the day which came under my own observation. The largest one of our colored crew is a man by the name of Allen, about thirty years of age, black as a crow, standing about six feet three inches in his stocking fee, a devout Christian to all appearances, and a deacon in the colored Baptist church. When during the day it became necessary for the large canoes to relieve the smaller ones, it fell to our share to take charge of the canoe "Judson," rowed by Allen. After he had in fear and trembling (for he was badly frightened) crawled from his boat into our's, for awhile he felt safe, but when the gale increased, and our overloaded boat began forging through the waves, instead of riding them, the water dashing over us and into the boat, things began to look squally and Allen began praying in a most devout manner, notwithstanding our man Caesar's protestation to the contrary. "Throw dat nigger oberboard, majur," says Caesar, his own courage beginning to ooze out. "He's gwine to bring us bad luck, an' den he's so heaby dat he bound to sink de boat!" "Oh, Lord, save us!" prays Allen, and then follows a confession of his sins, each sin followed by a prayer for deliverance and promises of a better life. Each time the wind lulls Caesar gets brave, and is inclined to make fun of poor Allen, who,

wet to the skin, is crouched in the bottom of the boat, eyes shut to keep from looking at the waves, and his fervent prayer going on. "Allen," says Caesar, "it's too late to go to prayin' now; you has sartinly ben a mity bad man, from your own statemint to de Lord to-day, and what I knows of you myself. You fooled dat gal in Savannah; you went to R——, married dat widder wid nine children; went from dar to Tampa, and fooled two oder lady members of de church. I heard you tell dat gal in Fort Myers de oder night you wasn't married, and I cocht you stealin' de majurs whisky last night." The last accusation is too much for Allen. He rouses up and for awhile the Lord, the boat, the storm and his danger are all forgotten. A war of words ensues between them, which is only stopped by an extra large wave which dashes over us, which puts Allen at his prayers again and Caesar to thinking.

Caesar is the narrator of this incident tonight and it is greeted with uproarious laughter by both white and black. When the laughter subsides, Caesar turns to Allen, who is so glad he is living that smiles are wreathing his face, and says:

"Allen you mus'nt put off yer prayin' till de debbil got yer in his fingers. Too late den. Be good like me and de Majur, all de time. Didn't yer see de Majur cussed, just like he always does, and de only difference he made durin' de whole time, was he never took no sugar in it. but took it straight out of de keg of nails. Dat shows a clear conscience."

The rocking of our boats upon the swell of the water make it anything but pleasant or conducive to sleep; still one by one becomes silent, and soon nothing is heard but the roar of the angry waters as they break against the trees, or the pious ejaculation of some fellow, whose canoe will break loose from its fastening and bump against his neighbor's.

A. P. Williams