

# Reminiscences of the Lake Okeechobee Area, 1912-1922

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The Darrow family moved to Florida in 1911. The family consisted of my father and mother, Dr. Charles Roy Darrow and Dr. Anna A. Darrow, my grandmother Darrow, my brother Dick, and me. We had come south mainly because of my father's health and to get away from the Chicago climate. My father who was on the staff of the Illinois Charitable Hospital and Cook County Hospital had as one of his patients a Mr. Louis Larson of St. Augustine. Mr. Larson was the Northwest Passenger Agent for the Florida East Coast Railroad. He sold my father on Florida in preference to California to which state my parents had been thinking about for a move. In 1909 they came to Florida and passed the state medical board examinations. Mother was always proud of the fact she had made the highest passing grade up to that time, a general average of 98. In 1911 my father developed a bad heart after an attack of la grippe and that caused them to make the decision to move. All of our household belongings, including our pet maltese cat, Peter, arrived in Jacksonville in September 1911.

We had lived in Jacksonville less than a year when my father heard from Mr. Larson about a new town to be built at the head of Lake Okeechobee. It was one of Henry M. Flagler's projects and it was planned to be a second Miami. Among the inducements offered to get my father to move was that he would be the railroad physician for the extension line to be built down from New Smyrna. As soon as school was out in June we prepared to leave. In July 1912 we left Jacksonville headed for the new town of Okeechobee. Mother, grandmother, and Peter came down to Fort Pierce by train and stayed at the Faber Hotel while waiting for the rest of us. We were driving down in a new Model-T Ford car which my dad had just bought and which he did not know how to drive. The Ford agency sent with us one of its men to teach my dad to drive enroute.

The roads in Florida at that time were not paved and left much to be desired. It was a most memorable trip and one that took three days. The heat and mosquitoes were very bad. It seemed that we pushed more than half the way. What little hard surfaced road there was consisted of crushed oyster shell taken from Indian mounds. The road was one lane and the surface had the effect of a washboard. Whenever we met another vehicle which made us get off of the road we got stuck in deep sand. The more one tried to get out the deeper the wheels sank. Then saw palmetto fronds had to be cut and put under the rear wheels to get traction and all of us but the driver pushed. How many times we did this is anybody's guess.

The road over to Okeechobee was impassable for an automobile due to high water. Also there was no place for us to live. Dick and my father went over to the settlement which until a short time before had been called Tantie. They lived in a tent while they built a temporary shelter for us. The local sawmill owned by Harmon Raulerson sawed the pine lumber for a shed which was later used as our garage, servant's quarters, and washhouse. To saw this lumber with a hand saw was a real job. It was full of resin and the saw teeth had to be cleaned periodically with kerosene. To drive nails into it was even more of a job as they would bend before going into the wood. Finally, just before Christmas they were ready for us. The three of us, with Peter, drove over in Mr. W. L. Bragg's buggy drawn by a pair of horses. Mr. Bragg was the representative of the Model Land Company, a subsidiary of the Florida East Coast Railroad.

While in Fort Pierce we had lived in the Budd Cottages located on the banks of the Indian River. They were built in a large grove of live oaks and sabal palms. The one thing that I remember about this place was the abundance of pineapple juice. A "croker sack" full of ripe pineapple culls could be gotten by any one who would go to a packing-house for them. Nearly everyone had a pineapple press in his yard and every ice-box had a pitcher of cold juice in it.

One of the first problems that had to be solved was what was to be done about a school for Dick. There was no high school in Okeechobee and he was in the tenth grade. The solution was to send him to a private academy. At that time Rollins College in Winter Park was both an academy and a college. Plans were made to enroll him there in the fall of 1913. Transportation was another problem. Captain Clay Johnson of Fort Myers owned a

small side-wheeler steamboat which made regular trips from Fort Myers to Okeechobee with supplies. I recently wrote my brother and asked him to describe his first trip to Winter Park and I quote: "I took the boat from Okeechobee to Fort Myers via the Caloosahatchee River. It was a pretty trip down the river. It took a day and a half as we stopped to gossip, pick up freight, etc. We got to Fort Myers about noon of the second day and I remember having a time getting my trunk hauled to the railroad station. Can't seem to remember where I stayed that night but I have no recollection of a hotel. Captain Johnson probably let me sleep on the boat. I well remember the train ride to Winter Park on the Atlantic Coast Line though. It was a local with no diner or train butcher and I didn't have anything to eat all day. When I got to Winter Park I was the most forlorn and lonesome kid in the world. I was a half day early for the opening of the college and no one but me got off of the train. The agent wanted to know should he put my trunk inside or was I going to have it hauled out to the college. I had it taken up to Chase Hall, the boys' dormitory and parked in the lobby. I had a room assigned and fortunately we had dinner in the 'beanery'. That night the kids turned the bed over on me and I was ready to go back home, only I didn't have the price of a ticket. I can't remember all the places we stopped. Moore Haven was one of them, then another down the river where we pulled up alongside of the bank and took on a load of wood. Then at Labelle, and I think that covered the first day. I can't remember a thing about Fort Myers, except that the dock was much higher than the deck of the boat. That's a 'fur piece' back and I thought nothing of it."

I was more fortunate. There was a one-room school in Okeechobee, and there was only one teacher, a young man named Arthur Weaver from North Carolina. He stayed only a part of the year and the term was finished by Faith Raulerson, one of Peter Raulerson's daughters, and now Mrs. Ellis M. Meserve. She recently told me how hard she worked to keep ahead of her brother Cornelius and me in fifth grade arithmetic. She said that we were entirely too smart for her. The entire enrollment of the school was nineteen pupils in 1912. I was resented at first because I was a Yankee. It took a few days to get used to cracker talk such as, "Hit don't make no never minds", "Let's get shet of it", and "Do you want I should carry you home?" We were seated by grade levels and went up front to the long recitation bench when it was time to recite. I made grades five and six in one year. Not only that but I learned something.

Our next teacher was a Miss Emma Bell from South Carolina. In the meantime Okeechobee was growing in population and additions were being built to the school and several more teachers were employed. Miss Victoria Ingraham was the principal when I finished the eighth grade in 1916. There was still no high school so that I, too, went to the Rollins Academy for my freshman year. In 1916 a red brick schoolhouse was built and it included all grades from one through twelve. I was the first graduate of the high school in 1920 in a class of four. In the class were also Beryl Lovvorn, Alma Camp, and Willie Dubois. The principal was W. R. Terrell, a younger brother of the recently deceased Judge of the Florida Supreme Court, Glenn Terrell. Mr. Terrell entered my grades for a scholarship offered in our senatorial district. This was given annually to a student with the highest average grades over a four year period in that district. I was awarded the scholarship and chose to go back to Rollins College from which I graduated in 1924 with an A. B. Degree.

Getting to Winter Park hadn't improved too much over 1913. I left on the Florida East Coast Railroad at six o'clock in the morning and changed trains in New Smyrna for Orange City Junction where I caught the Atlantic Coast Line train for Winter Park arriving about ten P. M. A few years later I took the Atlantic Coast Line to Sanford and transferred to a bus which took me to Geneva where I caught the train for home. It took much less time to go that way. The trip was quite an occasion. I knew practically all of the train crews and shared meals with them. We frequently stopped to allow the crew to shoot quail, turkey, or deer, and of course to chase cattle off of the track as there was open range. One never knew just when we would arrive in Okeechobee. The stations on the line had intriguing Indians names such as Osowaw, Bithlo, Hilolo, Holopaw, and Yeehaw. The only "outcast" station on the line was Kenansville, named for Mr. Flagler's third wife's brother. When the train was nearing Okeechobee the whistle was blown and some one would be there to meet me, Dick, mother, dad, or our Negro cook. The train brought in the morning paper from Jacksonville, the Florida Times-Union, and it was sold in our drugstore, so that some one in the family always met the train. I frequently surprised them. I rode on a pass so it cost me nothing.

There were not many people living in Okeechobee when we moved there. Peter Raulerson with his family were the first settlers and they had come down from Bassenger. He was in the cattle business. The houses were mostly log cabins and quite a few had dirt floors. There were not many glass window

panes, instead wooden shutters were used. One was forced to sleep under a mosquito netting canopy, called a 'skeeter bar.' The cooking and eating areas were usually separate from the house and connected to it with a breezeway. There were fireplaces in the living room for the cool winter months. Sheets and pillowcases were made of unbleached muslin and coverlets were hand-made quilts. Cooking was done on wood stoves with a reservoir on the side for heating water. When our stove arrived from Montgomery Ward and was found to have an oven thermometer it created a sensation. Water was gotten from hand pumps or wells, but almost everyone had a rainwater barrel in which to collect soft water. The pump water contained minerals and tannin from tree roots which yellowed the washing.

Securing food was a problem. Louis Raulerson, Uncle Pete's oldest son, ran a small general store in which most staples were kept. The post office was in here, too, and mail was brought in by horseback from Fort Drum. The staples for the store were either brought over from Fort Pierce by wagon or from Fort Myers by steamboat. We bought flour, sugar, and grits by the barrel. Salt pork, or sow belly, was the main meat. When a steer or hog was butchered the meat had to be eaten right away as there was no refrigeration. We had brought with us a three unit fireless cooker which proved a boon to mother in keeping meat. The food was partially cooked on top of the stove and soap stones heated at the same time. Both were put in the cooker and food would cook and stay warm for several days. Even the tough meat from range cattle came out tender. Local foodstuffs grown were mainly sweet potatoes, collards, turnips, and cow peas. There were small citrus groves and every yard had its guava trees. We varied our diet with wild game, turkey, venison, rabbits, ducks, quail, snipe, doves, and even coots. My grandmother Lindstedt could cook game so that even coots tasted pretty good. We usually brought back with us from a hunting trip several swamp cabbages. Fish were plentiful and they helped to vary our diet. We soon raised our own chickens and had over five hundred white Orpingtons. Most families had a milk cow so that occasionally we had fresh milk. The crackers made biscuits with flour, lard, clabber, and soda. Mother made 'light' bread which the crackers called any bread raised by yeast, except baker shop bread which was 'wasp nest.' We bought a lot of our staples by the case, such as canned milk, fruits, vegetables, etc. Sears, Roebuck and Montgomery Ward catalogs were our "Bibles."

The yards of houses had no lawns, instead the dirt was swept clean with brooms made of small branches. The yards had allamanda bushes, pink vines, crepe myrtle, and always a cape jasmine bush. I was amused when I went to New York City and saw cape jasmine blossoms sold as gardenias for twenty-five cents apiece.

It was not until some time in the 1920's that water was piped in from Lake Okeechobee. Before that we had running water in both bathroom and kitchen. My father had had erected an enormous rainwater cistern from which we got water. While conveniences were still in the backyard dad had gotten plans from the State Board of Health for a sanitary outhouse. It was placed the required distance from our pump, the enclosure was ventilated and the lower part was bricked in, the lids were made so that they would not stay open and a bucket of slaked lime was close at hand. This was quite an innovation and one which my dad hoped would help to teach sanitation. All too frequently the droppings from the outhouses were tossed on the ground a short distance from a dwelling, thus helping to spread hookworm. Children ran barefoot the year around—all but the two Darrow kids—and the larvae would be picked up by their feet causing ground itch and then hookworm. Many of the youngsters were found to be infested with hookworm when we first moved there. Another annoyance gotten from the ground, but not so debilitating or serious, was migrating larva. This caused an intense itching as the larva burrowed under the skin in small furrows.

We had a variety of pets. Our maltese cat was the first of her breed ever seen over there and she was referred to as the Darrow's blue cat. Her kittens were much sought after and one of mother's favorite stories concerned buying back one of her kittens for a setting of white Orpington eggs. We had all gotten too attached to Muggins to give him up. He lived to be nineteen years old and when he died in Fort Lauderdale he had an obituary in the local paper. We had all kinds of dogs from curs to thoroughbreds: Bassett hounds, Irish setters, and Airedales. Our pig was famous for getting drunk at syrup making time when the boys would feed him fermented skimmings. He would come home drunk as a coot and squealing every step of the way. Our goose was too good a watch dog. She would hiss and then fly at wagons. She caused several runaways until we clipped one wing. We used to like to ride Piggy but he was so smart that we couldn't get on his back unless we gave him a sweet potato. Then he would head for the house and if we didn't get off fast we would get knocked off against the side. Once we had a sack of

sweet potatoes in the garage on the far side of the car next to the wall and Piggy found them. He had eaten so many that we had to jack up the car to get him out.

In those days we had to make our own amusements. Reading was our evening diversion. We had brought with us a good library which included a set of the *Encyclopedia Americana*, Webster's *Unabridged Dictionary*, a complete set of Dickens, books for identifying birds, butterflies, and wildflowers. My father read aloud from Dickens and Sir Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. He was an avid reader and kept up with current periodicals and novels. *Ridpath's history* was in our collection and though its authenticity may be questioned it did give Dick and me an historical background. Among its many illustrations there are two that I can still vividly recall—Joan of Arc and John Hus going up in flames. Hunting, fishing, and just exploring in the woods and marshes we thoroughly enjoyed. We hunted at night for wildcats, coons, possums, panthers, and alligators. It was not against the law at that time to kill alligators and Dick skinned them and sold the hides for more spending money.

Hunting was not only recreation but at times a necessity as we would get meat hungry. Cotton tail rabbits were one of our main sources of meat. Our hunting grounds for these was the Kissimmee prairie which was pocked with bull holes. One of us would drive the Model-T while the other sat astride the hood with a gun. Shooting the rabbits didn't require half the skill that staying on the car did as the driver dodged the bull holes.

I thoroughly enjoyed just roaming the woods, and on the prairies and marshes. I rode horseback whenever I had to chance to get our horse Old Jim or when Connie Raulerson would let me ride his cowpony, Pinder. Before our car could be gotten over from Fort Pierce we had bought a horse and buggy in which mother made her calls so that it wasn't often that I got a chance to ride Old Jim. Faith and I rode many miles and many hours on horseback. When we lived in Chicago my brother and I spent a great deal of time in the Academy of Science and in the Field Museum of Natural History. The knowledge we picked up there came into good use in Okeechobee.

Flowers in spring were especially beautiful. Small ponds would be ringed with the yellow and blue of butterworts. Ditch banks would have large blue violets and the smaller white violets. After I had a course in botany I

was thrilled to find the sundew and insectivorous plant, as were the pitcher plants. Marshes would be full of blue flags and the pine uplands would be misty with the blue of lupine. Bayheads would be in bloom with the sweet bay and the loblolly bay. We identified terrestrial orchids and the biggest thrill of all was finding acres of yellow lotus in bloom in the Eagle Bay marsh. Sometimes the woods would be fragrant with the shrub whose flower was called the tar flower. In the fall we always enjoyed picking the red lillies and later the red berries of the Dahoon holly.

Picnics would be gotten up on any pretext. The Scharfschwerdts would come in from Bluefields and we all would head for Trout Creek. This small stream was one of the tributaries of Taylor's Creek, or the Onosohatchee River. One of the last battles of the Seminole Wars was fought here and we delighted in digging bullets out of the trees. Dick and I also found a mastodon's stooth embedded in the muck and sent it to the Smithsonian Institution. If our car was not available we would hitch the shafts of our buggy to the rear end of the other Ford and away we'd go using a bamboo fishing pole for a brake.

Dick and I owned a twenty foot Old Town canoe in which we made day long excursions down the creek, around the perimeter of the lake, and on the Kissimmee River. We never got far from the shore on the lake because a sudden blow might come up and capsize the canoe. In the summer these canoe trips were mostly fishing expeditions. We fished with rod and reel for bass and if they weren't biting would still fish for bream. Our favorite bait was a large white grub which we found in the stalks of the yellow pond lily. In the winter months we hunted for geese, ducks, coots, and snipe. Once Dick shot a duck and before it hit the ground an osprey grabbed it. Once when I had shot a duck I walked over to a patch of tules to pick it up and almost put my hand on a very angry cotton mouth moccasin. I had several unpleasant experiences with cotton mouth moccasins. The one that frightened me most occurred when I attempted to kill one that had crawled under my brother's house. As I stooped down to aim the shotgun at him he came for me with a rush.

Another snake story involved my grandmother Lindstedt. She was deathly afraid of snakes and to the day she died she did not know that she had been bitten by one or she would have died much sooner. Dick was raising white mice to sell to laboratories and when he was away at college I



took care of them and when my grandmother was visiting us from Chicago she would help me out with this job. This evening just at dusk she went out to the garage to feed them and when she came in she told me that one of the mice bit her and she showed me the teeth marks in her finger. I couldn't imagine how that happened as they were very tame so I went out to investigate. I found that a small chicken snake had gotten into one cage and was so full of baby mice that he couldn't get back out and it was what had bitten her. I put iodine on the bite and never told her what had bitten her. No infection ever set in either.

Driving around the roads required skill. I learned to drive a car when I was twelve years old by steering and stopping it as Dick and Otto pushed it through deep sand or out of the mud. Steering was no problem as one could hardly get out of the deep ruts. But when we took off across the woods and prairies it was another question. The lights of our first Model-T ran on the magneto and to be able to see it had to be driven in low gear to race the engine and brighten the lights. But for four young people that wasn't fast enough and radius rods took a beating as we hit low stumps. We spent one night in the woods disconnecting the radius rod, building a fire and heating it until it could be pounded straight, and then getting it back in. I must add that part of the night was spent swatting mosquitoes. Another hazard to driving were the bridges across small ditches. They were built hump-backed and springs didn't last too long. Also cattle would get up on the graded roads at night and unless we happened to shine their eyes they were hard to see.

After the road to Fort Pierce became passable for automobile travel we would go over there for a swim in the ocean. There was no bridge across the Indian River and we went over to Tucker's Cove in Clarence Summerlin's launch. What a sight we looked in our get-ups. Mosquitoes were a real problem and this is what we wore: over our bathing-suits a light weight long coat, a wide brimmed hat with netting hanging from the brim and tucked in around the coat collar, newspapers wrapped around our legs and stockings over them. We'd get the outer layer off as quick as possible and make a dash for deep water. Fort Pierce at that time was known to us as Fort Fierce. I think there was no place on the Florida East Coast that had more mosquitoes. It was their headquarters I am sure. Even train passengers were warned by the crew not to get off there when the train stopped twenty minutes to take on water. Every house had a swisher made of split palm fronds

hanging by the front and back doors and they were used to drive away mosquitoes. I thought I'd never see one of these things again but I did in the fall of 1966 when I bought one in Luxor, Egypt, to fan away flies.

About 1915 the Southern Utilities Company built an electric power plant. Then a moving picture theater was started by the Scharfschwerdt brothers. It was located in our warehouse just behind our drugstore. The seats were folding camp chairs and a player piano was used to entertain while the reels were being changed. The machine was hand cranked and the illumination for it was furnished by an arc of brilliant light made by two pieces of ignited carbon placed so that they touched. Reels would break and had to be spliced. All of this complicated business I learned to do as well as being the chief piano player. I should have known better than to learn to operate the machine because I frequently got stuck doing it while Dick and Otto would vanish and forget to come back. Lottie Scharfschwerdt sold the tickets. The movies were shown only on Saturday nights and other nights the hall might be cleared and dances held. Roasted peanuts were sold at the door and after the show the Scharfschwerdt's English setter would make the rounds looking for some that still had nuts in them. When he found one he'd crack it open and eat it.

There were no churches when we first lived in Okeechobee. An itinerant Baptist preacher came around and a sect called Pentecosts would hold meetings in the schoolhouse. The latter would talk in unknown tongues and work themselves into a frenzy and might go sailing down the aisle to fall in a coma in the yard. This was strange doings to my grandmother Lindstedt and once she nearly broke up the meeting by yelling at the top of her voice to my mother as a woman went sailing down the aisle babbling in unknown togues, "Catch her, Anna, she's crazy." My grandmother was born in Sweden and although she had come to the United States when she was fourteen years old she never lost her accent which made it sound even funnier.

The itinerant preacher who came around was Edward M. C. Dunklin and he was affectionately called Brother Dunklin. The Everglades was a haven for all sorts of vagabonds, escaped criminals, moonshiners, migrants, Negroes and Seminole Indians. The July 1927 issue of *The American Magazine* has an account of him written by Frank E. Brimmer. Mr. Brimmer writes, "On one occasion Brother Dunklin walked eighteen miles to a place where no one had heard a sermon for many years. He was sitting reading

his Bible when rocks were thrown at him. After preaching he asked for a contribution and received 30¢, two pieces of chewing gum, two buttons, half a match, and two bullets. A judge offered him twenty-five cents for every bullet he received and when the men found out that he was not afraid they quit dropping bullets in the collection plate and a year later he received a substantial contribution from the same place. Many times it was impossible to drive a horse where he wanted to go. Then he took off his clothing, hung it on a stick over his shoulder, and plowed through the mud and water. He often fought off moccasins and stepped around alligators. When he asked at a house where he was staying for food for himself and his horse the man of the house told him that it was bad enough to provide food for him but to feed his horse was just too much. So Brother Dunklin told him to feed his horse and he'd go hungry. The man was converted shortly after that. He was a friend of desperado gangs and some of them were really tough fellows. People in Okeechobee built him a home on a lot he owned and also gave him a car."

There were plenty of Indians around from the Cow Creek tribe. They had great faith in mother and called her "Squaw Doctor". If she was not in when they came to the office in our drugstore to see her they would wait patiently sitting on the floor until she got back. Many years after I left Okeechobee I met Billy Smith, a chief of the Cow Creek Indians, and asked him if he knew who I was. He grunted and replied, "Uh-huh, think so, you Squaw Doctor's pickaninny." Mother always had to talk to the men as the women were very taciturn. She used the sun's position in the sky as a time by which they could take medicine. She never charged for her services and was repaid with venison, wild turkeys, and huckleberries. I recall vividly one delayed trip to Fort Pierce because some squaws had brought us twenty-five quarts of huckleberries and they had to be canned to keep them from spoiling. The Indian ailments were mostly malaria and hookworm. Old Aunt Polly Parker, estimated to be well over a hundred years of age at that time, Billy Bowlegs, the Osceolas, and the Jumpers all came into our drugstore. One Indian was unusual because he spoke excellent English. His name was Billy Stewart and he had been bitten by a cotton mouth moccasin and survived. When gangrene set in he was taken to St. Augustine to a hospital there and stayed for many months as the flesh from the entire back of one leg sloughed off. The nurses had taught him to read and write. He would often come into our store as an interpreter for other members of his tribe. As

I recall him he was of the Micosukee tribe. Those Indians poled around the lake and up the creek in dugout canoes.

Ellis Meserve who lives in Okeechobee recently told me that it was fascinating to watch the Indian squaws buy merchandise in Louis Raulerson's store. They would point to what they wanted, pay for it, have it wrapped, and then go on to the next item. Every item had to be wrapped no matter how small or large. Ellis also told me about the time that he and his father-in-law, Uncle Pete Raulerson, were rounding up cattle and they met Kneehigh Tiger and his squaw. Kneehigh Tiger was on horseback and his squaw was walking behind carrying a sack of groceries slung over her shoulder. Ellis asked Kneehigh why his squaw was walking and received this answer, "Squaw no gottem horse." A very logical response. Ellis Meserve married Faith Raulerson and I told him I thought his claim to fame should be that he was the first and only passenger on the first train to come into Okeechobee and he also opened the first hardware store.

Fishermen on Lake Okeechobee were a strange lot in those days. One didn't ask them many questions and frequently they would not give their names when coming in for medical attention. Many were criminals who had come to the Lake region to lose their identity. They never gave us any trouble and mother never had any fear of them and she never carried a gun even though many of them knew she always carried change for one hundred dollars with her. They had great respect for her.

A woman doctor of course was a rarity and one as feminine looking and as pretty as she was was almost unbelievable. Many times mother was asked how she happened to be a doctor and as many times I have heard her tell the story.

In 1902 when my parents were living in Ogden, Utah, mother became very ill. My father was away from home at the time was sent for. When mother recovered she remarked to my father that she wished she was a doctor so that she could have diagnosed what ailed her. My father told her that his one ambition had always been to study medicine. Plans were made right then for the two of them to study medicine. There were plenty of obstacles in the way. First was financial and the next finding a school which would accept high school graduates and a woman. The fact that mother was eight months pregnant with me had also to be considered. In January of 1903

they moved to Kirksville, Missouri, and entered the school of osteopathy there. They had decided to get that training first and practice osteopathy while putting themselves through medical school. Mother entered school three weeks late because I was born February 2nd. In 1905 they were accepted in the now defunct Chicago College of Medicine and Surgery after taking and passing entrance examinations. It was the medical school of Valparaiso University located in Indiana. It later became the medical school of Loyola University in Chicago. They graduated in 1909 and practiced in Chicago until moving to Florida.

Men at first were reluctant to use her services but eventually there was no hesitancy on their part. When our drugstore was built offices were set up in the rear of the store. Mother did most of the outside calls while my father took care of office practice. Both were also licensed pharmacists. I wish I knew how many hundred babies mother delivered. Her charge for an obstetrical case was ten dollars, plus one dollar a mile if it was any distance. I have known seventy-two hours to pass before I would see mother. Our Negro cook, Jim Holman, always kept a hot meal waiting for her in the warming oven and I think he worried more about her than we did. My father was an eye, ear, nose and throat specialist in Chicago but all that changed in Okeechobee. Both of them did all kinds of medical work, even taking care of animals. Will Raulerson once asked mother to prescribe for his three weeks old shoat which was having convulsions after having drunk too much fermented cane skimmings. Not being familiar with the word 'shoat' she thought it was his child. On finding out that it was a pig she decided to treat it anyway. Asking how much it weighed she figured out the dosage the same as she would for a twelve pound child. The pig survived and from then on she was a veterinarian as well as a medical doctor. Her reputation was made with the Indians when Billy Bowlegs brought in a four year old boy whose illness she diagnosed as acute pericarditis. Billy had told her that the "pickaninny die sunup" but according to mother's notes she told him, "pickaninny no die if you do as I say." Then she persuaded them to camp near Judge Hancock's house and bring in the boy every day and she instructed them in his bringing up. She let them listen through a stethoscope to her heart and then the child's. Much to her surprise they agreed to do all she had told them. Five years later they brought the boy back in to see her and she found his heart in good condition and he seemed to be a normal healthy child. The Indians thought so much of her that they put beads around her neck the same as the squaws wore. Some of the home

remedies curative powers she was never able to fathom. Her most curious remedy was one used for stricture. She found the wife had been giving her husband a brew made from crickets' legs. To quote from the notes mother left, "The ten years I spent over in the Glades are in retrospect among the happiest and most colorful of my forty-seven years as a physician. I had to cope with things that medical books and lectures do not teach. Every moment was a challenge. Historians told us that the early pioneers of the Everglades were outlaws and hid in the wilderness to be lost from civilization. Sometimes when filling out a birth certificate and I asked where the parents were born the answer would be to write 'unknown' and not to ask any more questions. Some of these pioneers were considered tough. This I became aware of when I was called upon to take care of the Ashleys, the Mobleys, the Rice gang, and the Upthegroves. Leland Rice had his lower jaw shot off and was carried to our house in the middle of the night. Dr. C. R., Dick, Dolly, and I worked for hours stopping the hemorrhage and overcoming shock. Early the next morning we put him on the train for St. Augustine where his jaw was wired together. A couple of months after that I was driving along the parkway when a man stepped out and flagged me. He asked if I was Doc Anner and then he said that he was Leland Rice and I want to thank you and Doc for being so kind to me. He was killed later after robbing a bank at Homestead. The other brother was sent to prison and I was called to the Ashley home near Jupiter to see their sick father. When I treated Laura Upthegrove, who lived on the ridge near Pahokee, I didn't know that she was in with the outlaws." Mother said that even the cattle and hogs were tough. A man came into our store one day and reported that on the way over from Fort Pierce a bull had rammed his Ford car head-on. My father could testify from personal experience that hogs were tough. A wild boar attacked him while he was out quail hunting and he had to shoot it. I well recall that we skinned it late at night and buried skin and marked ears deep. To be a hog thief was the worst reputation one could have.

My father's practice was different from mother's. He examined eyes and fitted glasses, did minor surgery of all kinds such as amputations, tonsilectomies, curettages of carbuncles, opening boils, etc. I think his worst job was cleaning up slashes and cutting out catfish fins. There were plenty of broken bones to be set, too. A lot of the breaks were caused by cranking Ford cars. He pulled teeth and according to our old cash book the fee was fifty cents a tooth. People would come with wounds stuffed with old felt hats and cobwebs which they had used to stop bleeding. The felt hat remedy caused

very bad infections but surprisingly enough cobwebs did not. Both were a mess to clean up though. The fishermen on the Lake always went barefoot and would often step on catfish heads on the skinning benches. The side fins of a catfish were very infectious and generally septicimea set in where they had punctured the foot. Sometimes a bad abcess would form and a huge piece of the foot would slough out .

One of the most unusual cases was that of John McLaughlin who was a trapper. He was up near Fort Drum about fourteen miles from Okeechobee when he shot a racoon. It crawled off into a hollow stump and as he was certain he had killed it he reached in to get it out when he was bitten by a diamondback rattlesnake on the thumb and index finger. He realized instantly that he would be dead before he could ride horseback to Okeechobee for help. He took his hatchet, put his hand on a stump, and chopped off the fingers just above the joints. Then he put a tourniquet around his arm, tied himself on his horse, headed it for Okeechobee and gave it a whack on the rump. He was unconscious when he got to our drugstore but my parents saved his life and amputated the fingers after removing the splintered bone. In 1947 when mother and I were in Okeechobee he met her on the street and gave her a big hug and kiss.

When the railroad was built into Okeechobee and a turpentine camp was located near town a rough element came in with them. My father was the railroad physician and the Negroes always seemed to spend Saturday night carousing and cutting on each other. One night an especially tough Negro named Big Six was sitting on our steps when we got home. I can hear my dad say, "Six, what the hell's the matter with you now?" and hear his reply, "Doc, they bin woikin' on my haid wid an axe." They really had, too, because I helped my father put forty-seven stitches in his scalp.

All kinds of characters came into our drugstore. During prohibition days they drank anything that had any amount of alcoholic content, bay rum, Lydia Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and Hostetter's Bitters. I was alone in the store one evening when a fisherman came in and asked for bay rum. It and everything else he asked for were gone when he spied a bottle on the shelf labeled Electric Bitters and bought that. I watched him as he went behind the store, up-ended the bottle, and drank the entire contents. When my dad came back from supper I told him what had happened and he roared with laughter. He said he knew where that fellow could be found

for the next few days as that concoction was a potent cathartic, summing it up with words to the effect that, "that'll larn, him, by golly."

We had a series of automobiles because cars quickly wore out from the use they got on the sandy or muddy roads. The prize car we had was a Maxwell. I learned to drive gear shift with that one by the simple expedient of being told to drive it home one day. Once we went to Jacksonville in it and when we got on the ferry at South Jacksonville the motor wouldn't stop running although the ignition switch was turned off. My dad had fished as young man off the Grand Banks and he used all the words he had learned from the fishermen telling that car what he thought of it. The motor had overheated and the fuel in the carburetor had vaporized. Anyway, the next morning he came around to our hotel with a nice shiny new Oakland sport roadster.

Like mother in retrospect these were ten interesting and happy years. At first Dick and I hated Okeechobee, the crackers, and the primitive existence we had. For two children to be taken from a big city such as Chicago and set down in the wilderness with no modern conveniences it was none too happy an experience. But as children will, we became adjusted and had a wonderful time. I wouldn't trade those ten years for any other ten years of my life. I learned so much about nature, a sense of responsibility, and hard work. My parents were strict disciplinarians for which I am most grateful. I never had a whipping which I am certain I must have deserved many times. The punishment I got always seemed to fit the crime. Once I filled hundreds of capsules with quinine to pay for a window pane through which I had shoved my brother. It is with a keen sense of appreciation that I look back on "Those Happy Golden Years."

In writing this paper about Okeechobee I have received help from a manuscript left by my mother, Dr. Anna A. Darrow. I corresponded with my brother, Richard G. Darrow, now an attorney in Tucson, Arizona. I talked with Harmon Raulerson, a son of Peter Raulerson, who lives here in Miami. I recently made a trip over to Okeechobee and spent most of a day with Faith and Ellis Meserve, and I also talked with Hiram Raulerson, who is a grandson of Peter Raulerson, and with whom I went to school.