

My Life in South Florida

By Edna Morris Harvey*

We Move to Lake Okeechobee

My mother, Alton, Alice and I were visiting Aunt Nettie and family in Ft. Lauderdale for one month. I was eleven, Alice a little more than a baby and Alton was thirteen. Aunt Nettie's husband, Uncle John, was Mama's brother and their family consisted of Earl fifteen, Bud about Alton's age and Mabel who was six weeks older than I. Mabel was the life of both families and many of our escapades and mischievous pranks were engineered by her. Uncle John was not at home but was some place out on Lake Okeechobee, going about in his boat from place to place fishing, pitching his tent here and there where fishing was good and coming down the canal for 50 miles that led home once a month. My Aunt made mention to us that the last time she had seen John he spoke as if he would like to move his family to Okeechobee and thought of doing so. Toward the end of our visit it was nearing the time when he should be home again and the children were much enthused over the fact that they might move to the unknown land which seemed to invite adventure to them. One of the neighbors had a Ouija board and we all went over there one night to ask Ouija some questions. Three of us were seated around the board and Mabel asked "Are we going to move to the Lake?" Slowly the Ouija spelled out the letters "y-e-s." "How many days before Papa will be home?" Bud asked. The answer was four. "How many days before we will move?" was asked and the answer was six.

Sure enough Uncle John returned in four days and began immediately to make preparations for moving his family to Lake Okeechobee. He said

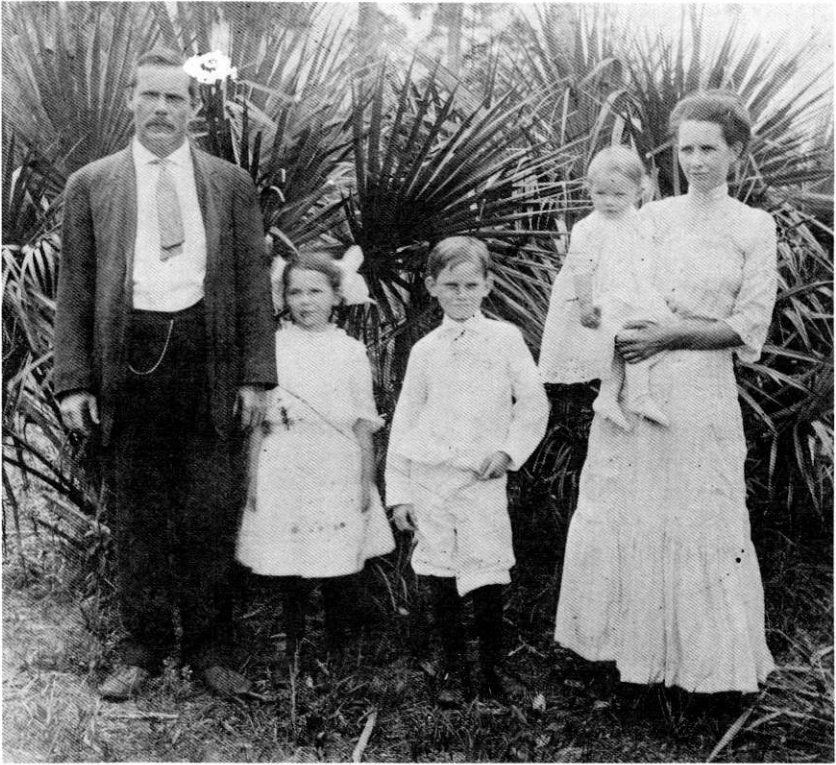
*For more than a half century Mrs. Harvey has lived in Miami and has long been known in art circles. She was born in Sanford, the daughter of Claude Chester Morris and Mary Jane Ingram Morris. This portion of her typescript Memoirs begins when she was eleven.

he was fascinated by the richness of the soil, especially on the east side of the Lake and that he was going to give up fishing and buy a claim there and farm it. They loaded up their launch very shortly with as many household goods as could be carried and started westward down the canal towards the Everglades, our family boarded a train back to our house in Sanford.

It was a year later that Uncle John began writing my father about the possibilities of the new land and urging him to make a trip down there and see for himself. No fertilizer was necessary and this appealed to my father as he was paying large sums for fertilizer to grow his celery and lettuce. Eventually he decided to make the trip to Lake Okeechobee to determine if he too would like to move there. He was packing to go and I was designated to heat the iron and press his only pair of Sunday trousers. Thinking more about the possibility of our moving and not about ironing, I badly scorched one leg of the trousers. A large brown print of the iron was made on them and after calling my mother, in tears I went up stairs and hid behind the bureau. A few minutes later my father came up to that particular room to dress, while I sheepishly crouched behind the dresser hoping I wouldn't sneeze or cough, unable to face him or say goodbye. He left unable to find me.

When my father returned he was much taken with the Everglades and began talking of moving. My mother, however, was not desirous of pulling up stakes until she visited the place, which resulted in her going there for a few days, leaving me behind to do the cooking. My father had been accustomed to having biscuits made daily and I endeavored to make some for the first time. The first pan I made were so hard I took them out to the pig pen and dumped them in, and the second pan were badly burnt and could not be eaten. Thinking how glad I would be when my mother returned, I stirred up a hoecake and fried it. My mother was carried away with the Okeechobee region when she returned and I remember her remarking "Money just grows on trees down there." I thought "grows on trees, I would like to have a tree or two."

After talking with our close friends, the Walters family, they decided to move to the Everglades with us. Their family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Walters and John, Jim and Leonard, boys in their teens. The two families loaded our household goods into a box car which was to go by rail as far as West Palm Beach and at that point it had to be unloaded and shipped in installments by boat. Some of the men accompanied the furniture but the rest of us went by train to West Palm Beach and then down to the slip where we waited for the slow moving *Harry L* to get ready to shove off on its weekly trip down the forty mile canal to the Lake region.



Courtesy of Edna Morris Harvey

The Claude Chester Morris family near Sanford shortly before they moved to Lake Okeechobee. The children, left to right, are Edna (the author), Alton, and Alice.

The Lake, 1917-1920

Lake Okeechobee is a body of fresh water about 37 miles long and 34 miles wide. It is known as the largest body of fresh water in the United States outside of the Great Lakes. For many miles back from the Lake are thousands of acres of rich muck land. The setting of these memoirs is on the East Beach of Lake Okeechobee. The time is 1917-1920. A more beautiful spot could not have been found at that time. Along the lake back about 100 yards ran what was called the ridge. It was sandy and slightly rocky, and then it sloped off to the black and dark brown muck lands. The scattering shacks or tents were built along the ridge. Huge rubber and cypress trees were thick except where an opening had been made for a shack or tent. In contrast, the muck lands were barren of trees except the

scrubby and cork-like custard apple trees and elderberry bushes. A trail wended down the ridge, turning at some large trees or a stocky mass of wild grapevines. In the spring, no spot was lovelier or nearer to nature itself. It was indescribably beautiful, even a child would notice. The green, fresh, shady foliage was a welcome retreat from any burdens or cares and one felt nearer the Maker walking down the trail, where the birds sang so merrily and peace and beauty reigned supreme. The path would emerge into a clearing, going through the front yard of some shack or under the ropes of some tent, only to lead on, winding through masses of twisted and intermingled foliage.

Nearer the lake where there were fewer trees, was a wagon road, not winding like the trail but following more the curvature of the water. The lake itself was at times smooth as glass. Then in the space of a few minutes a squall would come up and it would change to a mass of white caps, and waves would roll in as if it were an ocean. The huge rubber trees would rustle and sway in the strong breeze, dark clouds would form towards the west and many times two or three waterspouts would be visible. Fishing smacks would head for shore. The fishermen had great fear of a norwester and bided their time when catfishing far from shore.

The east beach was 40 miles from a railroad, the nearest one being at West Palm Beach due east and at an equal distance or less was the small town of Okeechobee City, located catty-cornered across the lake. There was no highway leading to the east beach of Lake Okeechobee City, located catty-cornered across the lake. There was no highway leading to the east beach of Lake Okeechobee and it was accessible only by water. The slow moving boats came for 40 miles down the narrow Palm Beach Canal. It was an all day trip of slow riding through never changing scenery of saw grass, moonvines and black muck, with an occasional alligator sunning sleepily near the bank.

This was government owned land and a settler could have a claim. After a certain number of years he was given a deed to it. If a person moved or left the lake country, he sold his claim, usually for about \$500. Not all settlers took out a claim. The land was extremely rich and no fertilizer was needed. The fertility of the soil was thought to have been due to the lake having overflowed at some time. Shells and other fragments in the texture of the soil seemed to indicate that. The settlers engaged in what they call truck farming — raising vegetables, chiefly eggplant, bell pepper, string beans and tomatoes. Today they grow many more crops — potatoes, sweet corn, celery, miles and miles of sugar cane and others.

They could have three crops a year, fall, winter and spring. There was

no question that the crops could be grown in a shorter period of time than elsewhere. They could harvest string beans within 45 days from the time the seeds were sown and there was little work to be done, since no fertilizing or cultivation was necessary. They grew so fast they were ready to be harvested before the weeds took over. This indeed seemed to be the Promised Land.

Houses

We lived in two houses, a board house that Mama, Papa and Alice slept in and about 75 feet from there a tar paper shack with kitchen, my room next to it and Alton's next to mine. Sometimes I would cook breakfast and let my mother sleep. The large rubber trees shaded both houses.

Water

To get our water we loaded two barrels in the wagon, put a tub over each to keep the water from sloshing out and drove Old Kit, the mule, into the lake until the water was level with the wagon bed and with buckets we filled the barrels. Any of us kids could do this. Even Mabel and I did it once and we took a swim at the same time. She didn't want Aunt Nettie to see her wet clothes so she borrowed some from me and left hers to dry. The water was placed in the shade under the rubber trees and it was always cool. A gourd dipper hung alongside.

Groceries

Boats entering the lake at Canal Point usually turned right to go to Okeechobee City but the *Harry L* came along our shore. It was a courtesy of Capt. Bass who owned the *Harry L* to bring our groceries from West Palm Beach 40 miles away. This consisted only of basics: flour, meal, sugar, lard, etc. We met the boat in a skiff, handing him the list for the next trip in about two weeks.

Fish

We also had plenty of fresh fish out of Lake Okeechobee. Mr. Galloway who lived next to us fished for catfish with trotlines. They had hundreds of shorter lines with baited hooks hanging from them. Early each morning he and his son Rufus would go out on the smooth glassy water to get their catch and bring it to his skinning bench. He gave us all we wanted at any time. All we had to do was go out on the dock and get them, all

ready for the pan. We never tired of catfish and hush puppies and like them to this day.

Chickens

We had the most flavorful fryers at that time, not comparable with any since. They strutted around on their long yellow legs looking for insects. We never had to feed them but occasionally the folks would broadcast an area of millet seed for them to scratch in.

Papayas

Papayas grew wild, we called them paw-paws as they resembled something smaller that used to grow out in the woods at Sanford. We didn't eat them but used the leaves to tenderize meat overnight when we had it. I thought they tasted about like perfume would. Now I grow them and am very fond of them when brushed with a little sugar and lime juice. A neighbor from Puerto Rico told me to tie something red on the tree and insects would not bother them. That works.

Elderberries

There were a lot of wild elderberry bushes and my mother often made a cobbler with them — another long lost pleasure. They also made elderberry wine with them.

Thousand Legs

The thousand legs were everywhere, with their many legs and hard shells. They not only had a thousand legs but there were thousands of them. When we got up in the morning we would shake our clothes and they would fall hard to the floor and curl up in a round circle. My grandfather (my mother's father) delighted in squashing them every time he saw one. He would say "By the nation (his cuss word), the devilish things." His fingers were purple like iodine from mashing them.

Mail

The mail, if anyone ever got any, was brought by some boat coming from West Palm Beach, leaving it at Canal Point, then it was handed down from one to another along the trail until it reached its destination. We might see a newspaper two or three weeks old. That was all we knew about how World War I was doing. The way we knew the war had ended was from a passing boat. They were beating loudly on tin pans, their way of letting us know.

Washing

Alton and I did the washing once a week under the guava trees. First, we had to hitch up old Kit and drive into the lake to get the water. We then built a fire under the large black iron pot and cut up Octagon soap to put into the water. After the clothes boiled a while we took them out and rubbed them on the rubbing board. By then they were sparkling clean. It was always cool under the guava trees, getting breezes from the lake as there was no dike there at that time.

Alice was too young to share in such duties as milking the cow, washing, raking the yard and scrubbing the floors on Saturday getting ready for church. She is blessed with beauty (no freckles) and a sweet disposition, never an unkind word to anyone. In some ways she reminds me of Aunt Oleeta. She was in Alton's class when he substituted at school but she said he showed no favoritism to her. She had to toe the line even more strictly. She fondly remembers our years on Lake Okeechobee and wanted me to write these memoirs as a source of her children's roots.

Bob Sparkman

One time we found the body of a man floating in the water next door. He was all swelled up. They brought him to our yard and placed him on a plank laid across two wooden horses under the rubber trees. From a paper in his pocket we learned his name was Bob Sparkman. The men made him a wooden box and placed him in it and we said the 23rd Psalm. Alton played "Nearer My God to Thee." They buried him in a little graveyard that had been started further up the ridge.

Writtenbury

Bill Writtenbury, one of the unsavory people on the ridge, was standing in the doorway when he was gunned down by a shotgun blast. He fell backwards holding his baby. For curiosity I attended the funeral and such as it was I have never seen the likes of since. There were a large number of mourners of all ages. They surrounded the casket with their arms stretched out across it, moaning and wailing. The minister kept trying to begin the "eulogy" but the ladies started fainting and one by one were carried outside and stretched out on the grass. The minister began again, another fainting. I began to wonder if there would be a service and if I should go home but the women were being revived and brought back into the church and the minister was able to continue.

There were a lot of Writtenburys and there was a rival gang. We would see one of them sometimes passing thru our yard carrying a shotgun across

his shoulder. Everyone passed through everyone's yard, it was part of the trail.

1918 Flu—The Bartlett Baby

During the 1918 flu when people were dying with it up and down the ridge and on both sides of us, we learned that nine of the Bartlett family at Bacom Point about a mile from us, were down with the flu and gravely ill. My mother went there to help and brought the baby home. She stayed up all night trying to save it but it was too late. We stood by the cradle of this beautiful baby as it left this world and went back to Heaven. My mother had to go back and tell Mrs. Bartlett the baby had died.

I think the reason that none of us got the flu was that when my mother came home after going to help the sick, she built a fire outdoors and threw sulphur on it, turning herself slowly in the smoke.

Little Red Schoolhouse—Unpainted

We went to a little one room schoolhouse like in the olden days, walking a mile down the ridge to get to it. Miss Margaret Jones was our teacher. We didn't pay much attention to her but she did the best she could, teaching all subjects and all grades in the one little room. One day at noon we found a little skiff and went paddling in the lake with the water splashing in on us. We heard the bell ringing but didn't want to go in wet, so we lay in the grass a while to dry our clothes. We had to stay after school for doing this and write a page in the large, wide, geography book. I think that was the most I ever learned about geography.

Our Fun

Uncle John made us a swing with a long heavy rope tied to a high limb of a rubber tree and at the end of it he put a short log of cork-like custard apple wood for a straddle. We would swing far out above the moonvines, taking turns over and over again. They were called moonvines because they bloomed only in the moonlight. There was a distinctive eeriness about them at night, the large white flowers opening in the moonlight with a permeating fragrance in the air intended only for the Gods. The vines covered the custard apple trees and we would climb to the top of them until they broke and then go tumbling down. That was sheer fun.

Uncle John had an old open Ford which we would all pile in and go joy riding down the wagon road. The boys let Mabel and me steer at times

which wasn't hard to do, the car just seemed to turn with the ruts. At the end of the day there was always a dip in the water in our clothes, as the sun set in the west over the peaceful water, with the soft ripples lapping against the shore.

We look back on our lives on Lake Okeechobee, called East Beach before it was named Pahokee, as being the happiest times of our lives. How many times do we remember those days? Like the song, "The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind—the answer's blowing in the wind."

We have a fond memory of walking down the winding trail even though stumbling sometimes over the cypress knees in the pathway. And if we smelled a ripe custard apple that had fallen, we would search for it until we found it, we knew it was there. It had a plug that we pulled out and then broke open the fruit. It had many seeds and the custard was around them with more custard in the center.

In the early morning when I would go and look at the roses, I was reminded of the song "I come to the garden alone, while the dew is still on the roses." The pink and red Radiance roses were planted just where the ridge slanted off into the rich mucklands. The beauty of them—the large petals folding gracefully over the roses, the ruffled edges turning back to receive the beautiful dewdrops that glistened in the early morning sun. The Radiance roses are my favorite and I would have them now but have been unable to learn where to buy them.

One Christmas, for nothing better to do, three couples of us went on Uncle John's boat *The Stonewall*, to Kramer Island which was catty-cornered across the lake. We walked around the island and looked in every direction hoping to see an Indian, but none was in sight. We did come across a vat of cane juice boiling away for making syrup or sugar. We saw many large Indian burial mounds and at the water's edge there were human bones and parts of skeletons. The water was dashing against them, taking some with it and unearthing others.

On the way back we experienced some engine trouble and the sun had gone down and the moon had risen when we reached shore. We were just starved and my mother's chicken and dressing and pumpkin pie never tasted so good.

Church

My mother started the First Methodist Church at our house and most of the time we had a minister to preach for us. The piano sat in the wide doorway of the parlor that opened into a large shed where we had benches

on the dirt floor for services. Alton played the hymns but if for some reason he could not play I had to substitute. They had to settle for "When the Roll is Called Up Yonder" or "Love Lifted Me." They were both in four flats. I only played four flats.

My dad was Superintendent of the Sunday School, my mother had a class and if for some reason one of the teachers was absent, one of us would try to teach. Even one of the boarders helped out at one time. We were scattered about the yard under the rubber trees. My mother was honored many years later when they had Pioneer's Day as having started the Methodist Church. My Aunt Nettie started a Baptist Sunday School in her home about that time.

On Friday nights we had singing, all of us standing around the piano, each one trying to make himself heard. Sally Todd had a tremendous alto voice, Mr. Rice was a high tenor and my dad had a beautiful bass.

Aunt Ella's Marriage

After church one Sunday Alton and I noticed Aunt Ella and Mr. Irish walking around the bend in the road. They were not walking close together, she on one side of the road and he on the other. We giggled, Aunt Ella having a date. My mother said, "Now you all don't be looking." He was 60, she was 45. They came back in a short time engaged, not holding hands and still not walking close together. She told Mama and Aunt Nettie they were going to get married. He said later that he had come there from Sanford after we had brought Aunt Ella with us. They had only seen each other at church in Sanford. She admired him when he used to play and sing "The Old Rocking Chair." Mama and Aunt Nettie had a conference, what should she wear to West Palm Beach, where did they have to go to get the license? About the scarcity of money, if they could marry before night they would need only one room.

When they returned they were in his little tar paper shack and we serenaded them, beating on pots and pans. It made him nervous and he didn't immediately open the door. He had his head in his trunk and said: "Ellie where did we put those cigars?"

Court

My dad was Justice of the Peace and one day Alton and I knew there would be court and we stayed home from school. It was held on the hard ground between the two houses under the huge rubber trees. Mr. Galloway, the Sheriff, came limping up with the prisoner dragging chains around his

ankles. Surely he could not try to get away. He was found guilty and sent to prison in West Palm Beach. What he did I don't remember, the most vivid memory is the setting, holding court under the trees, the gentle tingling of the leaves in the wind and the prisoner coming to trial.

My dad also performed weddings, standing in the double doorway and the couple on the ground before him. When a colored couple came one night to be married, Alton and I invited some of the kids at school to come to the wedding. The couple seeing the crowd, lingered long in the shadows, they didn't expect any people there. After Papa married them and pronounced them man and wife they kept standing there. Finally, the man said: "Boss, is we married?" I don't think Papa even charged them.

Working

My first job was packing tomatoes at Hill Bros. Packing House. I couldn't see how they quickly grabbed up the thin square piece of paper, put the tomato into it, twisted the end and laid it neatly in the row beside the other one. I got fired.

My next attempt at money making was picking beans. The rows were close together and the beans hung heavily on all sides. We would grab them with both hands, throw them into the hamper and turn to the other row, not straightening up until we got to the end of the long row. Just when we thought we had a full hamper the foreman would come along and shake it down. We picked about thirteen hampers a day at 50¢ a hamper. That was big money. When we got home we walked straight into the lake with our clothes on to get refreshed and rid ourselves of the itchy muck dust. Then to supper which always included hot biscuits that my mother cooked on a wood stove. After supper I would look through the Sears catalog and dream. The most expensive dress was eighteen dollars and I imagined I would look as pretty in it as the girl wearing it. The dream never came true though, the bean crop was over before I had accumulated enough to send for it. This work didn't include Alice, she was too young.

Trip Down the Canal

Uncle John had a launch and he and Papa loaded a barge with some of their produce and towed it down the Palm Beach Canal to West Palm Beach. They permitted Mabel and me to go along. It was beautiful that moonlit night going slowly down the canal. We enjoyed the wide open spaces and the white moonvine flowers on each side.

About midnight we stopped and made coffee. Such a feeling of

mystery and isolation while standing on the bank waiting for the coffee to boil. Half way down the 40 mile canal, away from civilization, amid thousands of acres of saw grass and barren muck lands, with only the sound of a croaking frog or the jump of a fish. This indeed was no man's land.

Then back to our boat towing the barge of vegetables, slowly making our way toward West Palm Beach.

They let Mabel and me steer the boat some while they slept. When we got to West Palm Beach they gave us each five dollars to spend. Mabel got a pitcher and six glasses for her mother with part of the money. That proved a bad choice later.

Coming back for some reason Mabel and I had to get off at Canal Point, five miles from home, in the care of Dr. Laird. We followed him with his lantern down the crooked path, stumbling on the many cypress knees we couldn't see. Mabel hung on to her pitcher and glasses with all her falls. When we got to Dr. Laird's house exhausted and with blistered feet, we fell across his sofa and went fast asleep.

Progress

Connors Highway had been built to West Palm Beach alongside the Palm Beach Canal. As the population grew a post office was provided, a country store was opened, a new and larger school was built and there was a slip for boats to dock. Also a large Methodist Church was built and then we didn't need to have services at our house.

After school we went hurriedly to the new store and right for the candy counter. We hadn't had any candy since we left Sanford except for a candy pulling one night. The conversation of the settlers was about what they had named the town: "Why Pahokee, what does it mean?" It is an Indian name meaning "Grassy Water." They spelled in Pay-ha-o-kee, taken from the Hitchiti Indian language.

Our Latin teacher was Mrs. Blake, old and stout. It made us sleepy as she droned away about Caesar and Gaul. The only thing I think we remember is: Gaul was divided into three parts; and amo, amas, amat: I love, you love, he loves. If we laid our heads on the desk she would let us sleep. She said we must need it or we wouldn't be doing it. I think she believed a sleepy student was a good student.

When one of the teachers had to drop out, Alton was asked to finish out the term. He took it very seriously but was embarrassed one time when the School Board from West Palm Beach came unexpectedly to visit the

school. He had the broom in his hand and was sweeping up the trash during class. This teaching experience gave him his love for teaching and he taught English at the University of Florida for 48 years, after earning his doctorate at Chapel Hill, N. C.

Hogs

Alton said he never got home from school but what he was told, "The hogs are out." He used to give them cane skimmings that made them fat and happy. They could be staggeringly drunk and bleary eyed and still try to make their way back to the troughs to get more. One time he threw cold water on a sow that weighed about 300 pounds to cool her off and it killed her instantly to his great shock and surprise.

The Gospel Train

After the Methodist Church was built, Mr. York a store owner, had a large truck with boarded sides. He placed benches in it to carry people to church on Sundays and prayer meeting on Wednesday nights. Lloyd Hall drove it and I sat up in the cab with him as we went down the ridge to Bacom Point picking up people. We called it "The Gospel Train." I enjoyed those rides and it was romantic, especially at night when the moon was shining. As we came back to my house he would stop for a while.

One Sunday afternoon Lloyd and I were sitting leisurely on the grass and along came Charlie in a nonchalant manner. He had a way of always happening up. When the conversation drifted to me they began to fight. I tried to get between them but couldn't and began to cry. I ran to the neighbor for help but he wouldn't come. I didn't know what they were fighting about and I don't think they knew. My mother came home about that time and the fight stopped. Charlie went to tell her his side of the story but she slammed the door in his face. That night at church, Lloyd and I were sitting in the choir and Charlie came in and sat on the other side of me. I didn't understand that because he had never been there before. He couldn't sing, only hold the book.

Another Fight

There were a lot of long yellow chicken snakes and rats. Once we witnessed above us, on a long limb, a fight between a snake and a rat, wondering which one would win. Finally, the rat pushed the snake off the limb. It fell across my father's neck. This prompted us to get thirteen kittens and they were so cute to watch in their play.

Farmers Lenrose and Jensen

Out on the muck there lived a woman with nine children and the two fathers of the children. They lived and did farming together and the mother always worked in the fields. Someone asked her how she managed to feed so many children and she said she put the food on the board and when they finished eating she just washed it off.

Labor Day

The city of West Palm Beach honored the farmers of the Glades and their families one Labor Day. We went on a large steamboat, *The Lily*. It had an upper deck and I liked to watch the wheel turn as it moved the water, leaving a path of white foam in its wake. Before it left the lake and entered the canal, my prized new large-brim hat blew off and I had to watch it slowly fill with water and sink.

In West Palm Beach they treated us royally, giving us free eats and drinks. We kids went from one soda fountain to another. That was a rare treat for us.

Robert Is Born

Robert was born in the wee hours of Sunday morning between midnight and daybreak, March 8, 1920. I was awakened later and told to come see my baby brother. I hurried to my mother's bedside and saw the prettiest baby boy ever born. Dr. Spooner had no children and wanted him on the spot for his own. There was no way. I had thought that at the time I would play an important role in that event, thinking I would be hurrying around heating water and carrying it between the two houses. I was sixteen years old. They hadn't needed me but he arrived safely anyway.

I never loved my mother more than at that moment, having been told it was precarious to have a baby at age 42 and here was a beautiful baby boy at her side. I said, "Mama how do you feel?" She said, "Not too bad." I asked her what she wanted for breakfast and she said "Two pieces of toast with a lot of butter on it." That lot of butter on it was a special treat as she was always sparing with butter until we got a cow. I thought that was so little for one who had done so much. She said to me, "You all are not going to spank this baby." I thought that strange as she was always the one who did the spanking.

(That was the luckiest day of my mother's life as this was the baby who would become a Colonel and he and his devoted wife would look after her with loving care the last eight years of her life. They even took her to

Germany with them at age 84 when he was stationed there for four years. I hope they are rewarded, if not in this world, surely in the next.)

Robert was the joy of our lives. We would sit on the step, which was more like a platform, and jostle him on our knee, his little fat neck rolling back and forth with a happy face, smiling. We have a picture of him sitting in a dishpan on the platform where we gave him his bath. Up until then Alice was the baby but now she didn't get much attention and she seemed to cry every day, we didn't know why. My dad offered her a nickel every day she didn't cry and she would have to give it back if she did. She was always in the hole and didn't make any money on that deal.

My mother always held a special place for me although I never told her. I could visualize the innumerable caravan, the procession of people appearing and disappearing through the ages, and of all that procession she was the one chosen to be my mother. When you think of the chain of events that had to happen for you even to be born, it makes you thankful you are even here. There seems to be a plan and a destiny for your life.

The old songs my mother loved still have a ringing sound in our memories such as "Take Time to be Holy, Speak Oft with the Lord," and "When the Saints Go Marching in, Lord I Want to be With that Number." I am sure she is up near the front with the Saints of all time.

We were given a wonderful father for our lives. We continue to see his smile. He was proud of us. His eyes used to fill up when he spoke of Alice, he revered her so. He admired Alton with his accomplishments in education and writing of books. He loved us all. People called him C.C. because those were his initials — Claude Chester. After he became Justice of the Peace people called him Judge. He and Uncle John were mentioned in one of the books written about the Glades as being two of the six men who walked up and down the ridge to select the site where the town of Pahokee would be.

Farming

My dad took great pride in the large mirror-like purple eggplants and the huge green bell peppers he grew. With a heavy stubby dark pencil and a flourishing hand he wrote on top of the crates the word "FANCY." One time when a frost was expected they packed them on the hard ground between our two houses, using a gasoline lantern that made a bright light.

The biggest trouble was getting them to market. Connors Highway hadn't yet been built along the Palm Beach Canal to West Palm Beach. The commission men would come out by boat from Okeechobee City and arrange shipment to the north. Weeks would go by and no word. Finally, a

small check would arrive, sometimes as little as two or three dollars. It was disheartening. Farming was always hard.

Leaving the Glades (About 1921)

The cool breezes from the lake caused my father, who was a stout man, to continually have a chest condition and hard coughing spells. My mother said she had a vision one night. She was awakened and in the upper corner of the room she saw my father's face illuminated by a bright light. She took that to mean we should leave the lake. Uncle John had already moved to West Palm Beach so we decided to follow. It was lucky for me because I had two more years of high school and needed that to graduate and also had the opportunity to take the business course at the same time, giving me my vocation for years to come. It also benefited the other children to get a better education.

Storm of 1928

It was lucky we left the lake as many people lost their lives there during the storm of 1928, when the tidal wave covered the whole area. Some were brought to West Palm Beach for burial. For others pyres were used. A group of refugees were taken to the basement of the Methodist Church in West Palm Beach. Mabel and I went there to see if there was anyone we knew. All had the look of stark horror on their faces. So many had lost their loved ones. Later a dike of sand was built along the lake and there was no further danger of floods.

West Palm Beach

West Palm Beach was the most delightful place to live at that time. Cool, uncrowded and close to the ocean. Palm Beach, across Lake Worth, was a beautiful place with the tall and elegant royal palms, the fabulous homes and well landscaped grounds, the large hotels such as The Breakers and the popular Bradley's Gambling Casino. We often went swimming in the ocean after work for relaxation as it was a short distance. Many times at night we would take a ride to Palm Beach and drive along the ocean to Lake Worth and circle back home on the highway. The first time we took Robert to see the ocean when seeing the white caps he said, "Oh, look at the soapsuds."

Once a year in West Palm Beach they had the Seminole Sun Dance. The Seminole Indians would come in from the Glades in their colorful dress and do the sun dance in the street. It was a colorful event and lasted about three days. Everyone was sorry when it was discontinued.

Driving by the jail one night in West Palm Beach we heard a high, pure, beautiful voice singing to the high heavens from the top floor, peeling out the pure notes in the darkness of the night. A chill would go through us, it was so beautiful, surely the voice of a Jenny Lind. We often went by there at night to drink in the beauty of her voice. We were glad she had something to sing about, not knowing why she was there or from whence she came, but she gave us moments of pure ecstasy.

School in West Palm Beach

Two in our high school got two diplomas, one for high school and one in the commercial department, myself and another girl named Elma Jackson. It was lucky I could take both courses because that equipped me for my life's work: shorthand, bookkeeping, business English, etc. I lacked one session of having enough hours in the day and stayed after school to do my typing assignment. Miss Butterfield, one of the commercial teachers, told me one day to remain after school. I wondered what I had done wrong. She said to me: "Edna, you don't really have to study so hard." I knew I did though, my future was up to me.

Mr. Johnstad was our shorthand teacher. It was the first year he changed to the Gregg system from the Pitman. I was glad because in the Pitman they had to write above and below the line. Mr. Johnstad had a blue eye and a brown eye and you could never tell who he was looking at and sometimes we answered out of turn. Mabel, my cousin, was the maverick of the class and did a lot of talking. He would say "Miss Ingraham," her name was Ingram. She would say "Are you looking at me, I'm not the only one talking." He was a cracker-jack teacher. His students held responsible jobs with lawyers and high class executives after graduation.

Court House Job

While waiting at the dock to get on the boat to move to West Palm Beach, Lula Barfield who wrote for the *Palm Beach Post* said to me: "Edna, when you get to West Palm Beach go to see my sister, Myrtle Roberts, who is the head girl in Mr. Fenno's office. He is the Clerk of the Circuit Court and she may put you on for summer work."

I starched and ironed my best dress. It had a three inch-wide sewed-in belt with a thin ruffle top and bottom. I had the ruffle real stiff and ironed it carefully. I felt good in that dress walking up the many tiers of steps of the Palm Beach County Courthouse. Those steps and the building seemed mammoth to me. I was told to come to work the following Monday. A group of lovely girls sat around a large table recording deeds and other

legal instruments in longhand in the huge legal books. At that time it was done in handwriting before modern methods. I admired the girls' personalities and appreciated their friendliness. Sometimes Mr. Fenno would send someone on an errand. He chose me and talked changing his cigar from one end of his mouth to the other. I couldn't understand him and didn't want to ask over. One of the girls told me what I was supposed to get and where to go to get it. At one time, when work got slack, Mr. Fenno had to let some of us go, but he told me out of the corner of his mouth that I could come back in two weeks. When school started of course, I could not work.

Sheriff Bob Baker was often seen limping through the corridors. He had a running feud with outlaw John Ashley and his gang. John had one glass eye and sent word to Sheriff Baker to come and get the other eye. They had many skirmishes with that gang going through swamps and other places, but finally they met their Waterloo one lonely dark night. Sheriff Baker had been tipped off that they would pass a certain place and he and his men set up an ambush and opened fire on them as they approached, killing all of them.

Laura Upthegrove was John Ashley's moll and stayed with the gang somewhere in the Glades but wasn't with them that night. After John was killed, I read in the paper she had been pumping gas out on Military Trail, and in a fit of temper drank a can of potash. I decided to go to the funeral home and see her. They had her in a double bed with a white sheet pulled up to her chin. She was, no doubt, more peaceful than she had ever been in life but her lips and all around her mouth were burnt fiery red from drinking the lye.

Lloyd Hall

We were living in a little stucco house called "Rest-a-While." I loved the name of it and loved the house. It had so much charm. Lloyd had come to West Palm Beach to be near me he said, and was saving his money to go back to Gainesville to study to be a doctor.

One night we were sitting in the car in the driveway and I broke up with him because I was in high school and thought it fair to tell him I didn't want to be serious and wanted him to go with other girls. Later, I wished I had left things as they were. He was so sad about it I might have tried to soften the words or take them back, but my mother was calling for me to come in. She was always suspicious of people sitting in cars, even in the driveway. She was more strict with me than she was with the younger ones, such as going to picture shows on Sunday or to dance halls, etc. As we

parted, Lloyd turned quickly on his heels and left, not looking back, never having had the first kiss.

After I had gotten my first job with Clark and de Gottreau, a landscape firm, before going to work one morning I saw in the paper that he had drowned in Clearwater. At work, I lay my head across the desk for a long time. Helen, the girl in charge, said nothing to me, she knew there was something. Afterwards, Inez his sister, told me that when he was packing to go to Clearwater, he had turned to her and said “Sis, do you think Edna could ever learn to love me?” He was singing “If mine eyes should close in death, tell her that I love her still.”

Ernest Richmond

At the Methodist Church I met Ernest Richmond and when he told me his name was Richmond, for fun, I said mine was Virginia (my middle name). He asked me for a date and when he came to the house Robert answered the door and he asked for Virginia. Robert knowing me as Edna said “W-h-o?” I heard them and came and saved the situation. He would pick me up in his new DeSoto car and we would go to Epworth League. Some people told me we made a nice looking couple and my mother said he would make a good husband for me. I told her “He’s so dumb I would have to show him what to do.” When he would go back North all he would write about was how many pheasants he had killed. I wasn’t the least bit interested in pheasants.

Alton’s Music

We got our appreciation of music from Alton. He would come home from choir practice at the Methodist Church and be so elated over the anthem they would sing on Sunday. He admired Mrs. Effinger, the organist so much, and the soloist who sang “How beautiful upon the mountain were the feet of Him who bringeth good tidings.” That one thrilled me too and I can hear it now. We loved to hear him play, he put so much expression into it. He could play anything by ear after hearing it one time. He went to the church and practiced to learn the pipe organ.

He was asked to play for a church wedding and we were all there. As the couple marched out he held onto a single note a long time and then followed with a staccato dum dum de dum dum. We thought he was making a mistake and were quaking in our boots — he should be playing the recessional. Then he began playing “Here Comes the Bride” again.

He hadn't told us there were two weddings, wanting to surprise us and everyone else.

It used to bring tears to my eyes when he would play "When You and I Were Young Maggie." "I wandered today through the hills Maggie." It was remindful of when we lived at Sanford and the folks would rent a house at Coronado Beach in the summer for a month and we would romp up and down the hills through the sea oats, ride the big waves and pick up sea shells. My very earliest memory was on our first trip a boy asking me where we were from. I called to Alton to find out and he said Sanford.

Trip to Key West

I took Robert to Key West when he was about five years old. We stopped in Miami and got a room at a hotel not far from the station, had supper and then went down Flagler Street to the Olympia Theatre, with its bright blinking lights. He pulled away and said "That's the devil's place" and he wasn't going in. I took his hand, bought the ticket and got him to go in. It was so pretty to me, dark blue sky above with the twinkling stars and clouds moving overhead. He began to enjoy it and said "Edna, what will we do if it rains?"

The hotel was so hot we couldn't sleep. In those days they didn't have air conditioning. I spent the night moistening him with a wet towel.

In the train Robert wanted to sit by the window and then went to sleep. That was all right until he woke up and looked out and saw how high we were above the water on the viaduct. That frightened him and he changed places with me. It was beautiful, the sun coming up glistening on the water, clear blue sky and soft moving clouds.

My dad and Uncle Ernest were down at Key West at the time and we enjoyed it so much. Robert had a lot to talk about when we got home.

Robert was a precious boy, we all enjoyed him. Everyone he met was told, "I was born at Pahokee," until he went there on a visit and got sore eyes. He didn't like the place after that. He couldn't keep straight about marriage and would say "Edna, will you marry me?" I said "No, you can't marry me I'm your sister." He always had to have a dog named Jack. Once when Aunt Oleeta took him to Orlando we thought he would miss us terribly but he only wanted them to write back and tell us to send Jack.

Fagg's Mill was across the street and there was also a laundry. Mr. Fagg never paid much attention to us but one day Jack got his leg broken by the milk truck. Mr. Fagg came out and really bawled out the driver. Robert went to the middle of the street and dragged Jack home with his leg dangling. My dad fixed it up, tying it to a board and eventually it healed.

Robert went around the house gathering up our old shoes and stood out front with them as the colored women came out of the laundry for lunch. He didn't bother to match them up. His price was ten cents a pair or two for a quarter. It would pay you to buy only one pair at a time. Surprisingly he made money.

Working for the Railroad

Mr. Story was Supervisor of Bridges and Buildings and he hired me as secretary through the recommendation of Rev. Summers, pastor of the Methodist Church. Rev. Summers didn't know me, but my mother had known him in Sanford when he was pastor there. My mother was very fond of him and gave Robert the name of Charnelle in honor of him. I was nineteen years old and worked for them eight years.

Mr. Story was a good boss and a good man and he appreciated me. He said I was the only one who could punctuate his letters with the meaning he wanted to convey. That was important because he was always writing to St. Augustine explaining why he did certain things concerning the A.F.E. (Authority for Erection). He couldn't dictate until he fired up a cigarette and then his mind just flowed. I knew to keep quiet and not interrupt his thoughts. On vacation I could get passes anywhere in the U.S., even on ships to New York. I got travelling out of my system and care nothing for it now. After working for him six years in West Palm Beach the Florida East Coast Railway closed our office and transferred us to Miami.

I lived at the Oaks Hotel near the railway station where there were other young people and we paid seven dollars a week for a room and two meals a day. It was nice there sitting on the porch, playing bridge or walking through the park or taking pictures. It seemed each night as we came out of the dining room and walked through the parlor as the sun was setting, we would hear Bing Crosby on the radio singing "When the Gold of the Day Meets the Blue of the Night, Someone Waits for Me." All through the years I have enjoyed his singing, especially that song and "White Christmas." This was about 1930.

Miami moved slowly in those days. You could pass by a juice stand where they were grinding carrot and other juices and buy a glassful for ten cents. Very little traffic, you seldom had to look to cross the street. Not much crime and unusual when we heard the news man barking, "She shot him in the back."

In the superintendent's office at times I took dictation from several different men. One was Mr. Norwood, another cigar smoker, the Road Foreman of Engines. He was hard to understand and the language unfamil-

iar to me such as “I gave her the sand, etc.” I looked at that word sand in my notes and wondered if it could be right.

Shealy, the office manager was a tough nut to crack. He wouldn't let us use an eraser on that cheap yellow railroad paper. I never knew why it was so important except for a way to show he was boss. In school in West Palm Beach they had stressed accuracy but I still wasted some of their paper. Grace, the other girl, was a fast typist with little patience. You could hear her all day jerking out paper and putting it in the waste basket. We each did about 35 letters a day.

Shealy wasn't as strict with the two male clerks. It didn't matter whether they did any work or not, he was always playing the horses with them, figuring out their pyramids. If their horse came in the next selection had to win also or they couldn't collect. He would sit at his desk twirling his pencil thinking up how mean he could be, I thought. He sent me in Mr. Story's office to take his dictation. We liked that for old times sake, but one time when I came back he asked me why I was in there so long — anything to ruffle the waters.

The only time that Shealy ever showed any feeling for me was when he selected me to go with a group of officials by train over the Overseas Railroad to Pigeon Key to hold an investigation. He said to me: “You know, Miss Morris, you can slow them down if they talk too fast.” They didn't talk too fast but they all talked at once. He was sending me out to do something he couldn't do himself. They were investigating a paint gang foreman who frequently left his gang of men to spend time with his new young bride. He had my sympathy when he showed extreme nervousness during the questioning. They were continuously painting the seven mile Matecumbe steel bridge. Later, the Overseas Railroad was discontinued.

While we were waiting for the train to make the return trip, one of the officials took me for a ride on a motor car over the viaduct, high above the water, going fast over the rails, the wind blowing in our faces. It was exciting as I always wanted to ride on one, until I looked ahead and saw the bright headlights of a train approaching. I was quickly assured there was a place we could pull off and let it pass. Then we had to hurry back and get on the train.

Going back to Miami we had a delicious dinner in the diner, then I took my seat and reviewed my shorthand notes to make sure I could read them after they got cold. Mr. Gaddis, the superintendent, later sent me a letter of commendation.

My Husband

It was a lucky day for me when the Lord made William Homer Harvey and reserved him to be my husband. He came to get a room where Mary and I had rented a house to keep roomers and enhance our earnings. We were married 37 years with harmony and love and many laughs, even in the morning when I got up feeling groggy. He had a unique kind of humor that everyone relished. He didn't realize all the attributes he had; people flocked to him like bees to honey. It was an asset to our business. Men would walk all the way to the back of the arcade just to jolly with him. Here is a sample of his wit: he put lots of rich toppings on his ice cream and then poured chocolate syrup over it. I said "Now you're gilding the lily." He said "I'm going to eat it anyway. I don't care if I have to eat flowers with my ice cream."

After we had become engaged I went home to Hawthorne where my parents lived at that time to tell them I was going to get married. Homer was supposed to get a new navy blue suit. He had rented an apartment for us for ten dollars a month. I had a key to it and when I returned I went to the apartment thinking to myself, if he wants to back out of it, now is the time. I quickly opened the closet door and there was the blue suit. We could now get married as Mr. Howard of the Independent Life Insurance Co. had given him a job.

We were married in the huge auditorium of the First Baptist Church. Neither of us was Baptist, I was a Methodist and he was a Quaker, belonging to the Friends Church in N.C. I was 31, he was 37. The benches were all empty and the minister had to go out on the street and bring in a couple of derelicts for witnesses. We were so happy when the minister pronounced us husband and wife. Homer's face just glowed, nothing had happened, we were actually married. That was Oct. 19, 1935. We went to Miami Ave. for our nuptial dinner for twenty-five cents each. It was a small rundown restaurant but it had a bright red checkerboard cloth on the small square table. Later we ate at the Dinner Bell on First Street which was also twenty-five cents but we got dessert with it.

I wanted to show him off and took him to see my friend Ione. Afterward she told me "Gee he's cute Edna, I wish I had him" — no way. I was proud of him, he was so good looking, sparkling brown eyes, slender and straight as a board, with a contagious laugh, always looking for a funny side. On Sunday afternoon we put on our wedding clothes and went strolling in Bayfront Park and got someone to take our picture. When we

returned Mr. Howard unexpectedly dropped by the apartment pretending to give Homer instructions for Monday morning which he already knew. Actually, I think he wanted to see what his bride looked like. I was glad I had on my wedding dress.

Starting Our Business

The apartment went up from ten dollars to thirty-five dollars a month and we had to take a room. I hadn't found a job yet but soon got one at the Ace Letter Service with Mr. Orthner, addressing envelopes and cutting stencils. That was where I learned the business. Mr. Orthner let me go because he was taking his old girl back and she knew how to run the mimeograph. He didn't tell me that though, I knew the girl and she told me, but he said I wasn't suited for the work, after raising me every two weeks. He said he didn't have to proof-read my stencils.

I rented a room in the Commercial Arcade next to Gesu Church for ten dollars a month and started the A-1 Letter Shop with a rented typewriter for three dollars and fifty cents a month, and later rented a mimeograph machine.

On a cold day Mr. Orthner appeared dressed in a heavy overcoat and proceeded to bawl me out for starting my own business. He jerked out a penny post card I had sent out for advertising and asked me if I had sent it out. Homer had joined me in the business and never had seen him but realizing who he was, he ordered him out. (Surprisingly, 25 years later, after Homer had retired he was the one who bought the business for \$7,000, being happy to get back into that business after having sold his shop and losing the money by making poor investments.)

When we used to have Friday night singing at our house in the Everglades one of the songs we sang was "Will the Circle be Unbroken, by and by, yes by and by?" That thought bothered me. It came to pass for me just after I got married. We were summoned to Hawthorne. My father had pneumonia just before Christmas and they had nothing to fight it with, the sulfa drug had not yet come in. At twelve o'clock noon, Friday the thirteenth, he passed away. He was always superstitious about Friday the thirteenth. When the clock struck twelve I had the urge to go to the fields and call him to dinner, but the Maker had called him Home. The sun had set for us all. He was only 57 and hadn't gotten to meet my husband of whom I was so proud.

Through the years there have been other breaks in the circle: my mother, my dear husband, my brother, Alton. But still living are my sister, Alice (Mrs. Robert Whiteley) in California, and my brother Robert, the

retired colonel, in Decatur, Georgia. Both have wonderful families. I have my painting and recently have been studying Spanish, necessary if you are going to live in Miami. So far, though, the Cubans don't seem to understand my Spanish.

In the years of my life, it always seemed to me that my pathway was laid out for me and that I was only following the gleam with the help of the One who created it. Doors closed only for greater ones to open. I have been lucky but I think we make our own luck, at least we lay the foundation for it.

Lastly, I am thankful for having been given the privilege of life in this great Celestial Universe. May God bless us all.

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