

AMONG THE FARMERS

Introduction by Howard Kleinberg

Charles G. Featherly arrived in Miami from Michigan during the third week of October in 1898 aboard the ship *Algonquin* to work with his brother Wesley in publishing *The Miami Metropolis*. Wesley, who was the newspaper's first local editor beginning in 1896, assumed editorship as well as ownership of the paper on August 26, 1898.

It is doubtful that Charles wasted much time around the newspaper office in those first days here. The mammoth job he took shortly after his arrival would not have allowed much time for sitting in the office with his feet up on a desk.

Charles Featherly embarked on what turned out to be a remarkable census of Dade County's farmers.

He traveled from Fort Lauderdale's New River to south of Cutler, recording a treasury of information about how South Floridians lived, where they lived and what they planted - publishing the information in *The Metropolis*.

In those days, Dade County ranged farther north than it does today; there was no Broward County. Fort Lauderdale was in Dade County. His journey took him to now lost names. His Modelo is today's Dania - renamed by Danes who settled there - while Halland Prairie, named after the Swedish settler Luther Halland, now is Hallandale. Featherly visited more exotically named places such as Tiger Tail Hammock and Four Mile Hammock.

His reports were massive, containing information on more than 400 vegetable and fruit farms. How Featherly managed to cover so much ground in such a short period - his journey began immediately after his arrival in late October and his first report appeared in early November - is not explained in any of his stories. There was no mention of how much of his journey was done on horseback, foot or bicycle. Several times, Featherly referred to guides, so he had some help. But considering the physical state of South Florida in 1898 - few paved roads, heavily overgrown areas, few forms of communication (no telephones)

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and a concentration of wildlife - Featherly's enterprise was astounding.

Unfortunately, what was likely his first report - November 4, 1898 - is lost forever. The microfilm files of *The Miami News* - successor to the *Metropolis* - do not include an issue of that date. All the files of the *Metropolis* were destroyed in a fire in January 1900. Only through the generosity of S. Bobo Dean - who years later was to own the *Metropolis* - were most of the missing files replaced; Dean had saved them at the newspaper plant he owned in West Palm Beach and he turned them over to the Featherlys after their disastrous fire. Obviously, he did not have a copy of every issue of the then weekly newspaper; among the missing was November 4, 1898.

Featherly's report in the November 11 issue begins with a preface that he is continuing his report. The fact that there are no listings in any of the available reports on people living in the Miami River area east of Twelfth Avenue or immediately south of the river near the bay, or in the downtown area for that matter, lends further credence that a first report appeared on November 4.

There are four surviving reports.

The purpose of Featherly's trek throughout South Florida was twofold. In addition to the reporting he was doing, he was selling subscriptions to the newspaper. At one point, he boasted that he had received a flattering reception from those he met "in the nature of many new subscribers in each section visited."

The report reprinted on the following pages use the place spellings of 1898; thus Cocoanut Grove instead of Coconut Grove, Alapattah instead of Allapattah. (All-a-pa-taw is the Seminole word for alligator.)

Featherly, probably as the result of a combination of newness to the community and a rush to print, also erred in the spelling of several early Miami family names. His report, however, is printed here unaltered.

Following the articles, Featherly crowned his study with a painstakingly meticulous series of tabulations of the leading vegetables being grown in the county that winter, listing specific acres planted by specific farmers. The vegetables included tomatoes, eggplant, peppers and beans.

Charles Featherly spent a little more than a year in Dade County. Shortly after his series of articles appeared, *The Metropolis* building burned to the ground. In temporary quarters, Charles' brother Wesley sold the paper on December 20, 1899, to B. B. Tatum.

The Featherly's, citing difficulties in being Republican publishers in

a Democratic town, moved from Miami and assumed the operation of a newspaper in Harriman, Tennessee. With that the last word was heard from Charles Featherly. But the depth of his work, four of five parts is preserved on microfilm, and remains behind as a valuable document on the life and times of 1898 pioneer Dade County.

Editor's Note

Space considerations preclude the use of the entire *Among the Farmers* manuscript. Future *Tequestas* will contain excerpts as space allows.

From *The Miami Metropolis*, November 11, 1898

The Metropolis Scribe Interviews Many of Them in the Cocoanut Grove, Miami River and Lemon City Sections and Tells What He Learned

We continue this week our interviews with the farmers of this section of Dade county, entirely completing the section south of the Miami River and commencing the work upon the north side. Next week we expect to complete this section as far north as Arch Creek, but may not have space for it all. We have covered a good deal more territory in our interviews than we have found room for all this week. We find our work appreciated by the farmers and are encouraged to continue. We will say here that if by chance any should be missed, it will not be intentional, as it is our purpose to have the work thoroughly done. Where any may be missed by chance we ask that they call our attention to the oversight and acquaint us with their affairs.

JACK PEACOCK

And sons are living on the old Peacock homestead at Cocoanut Grove. This is one of the familiar old landmarks to the most of our readers. Trees of all kinds are here found in abundance and the Peacocks know how to grow them. Mr. Peacock, with the assistance of his boys, will cultivate 10 acres of eggplants and 10 acres of tomatoes.

M. M. MORRISON

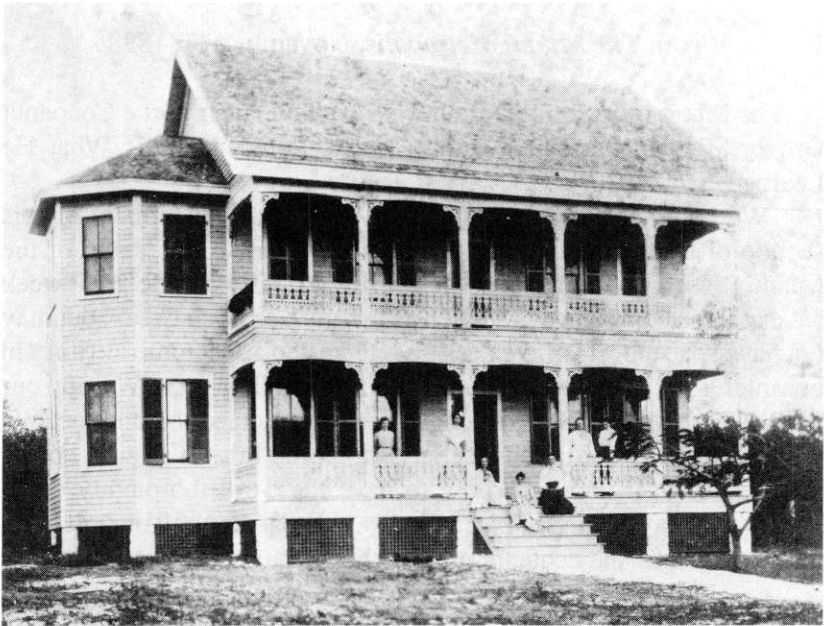
Will make a crop of one-half acre of tomatoes and one-half acre of eggplants on hammock land south of the Grove. He also has seed beds from which he expects to sell a considerable quantity of plants.

W. E. ALLBROOK

Who has a place just west of Cocoanut Grove, is preparing land for cultivation of one and one-half acres of tomatoes, one acre of eggplants and one-half acre of beans.

SAMUEL RHODES

Has a neat place at the Grove running down to the prairie land, that part of which he intends setting out to bananas as fast as possible. This year Mr. Rhodes will cultivate about three acres of tomatoes and three acres of eggplants and peppers.



W. D. Albury home on the site of what is now the Mutiny Hotel in Coconut Grove. R. A. S. Peacock purchased the home from Albury.

R.M. BROWN

Who is fast clearing up his place just west of the Grove, intends to cultivate about four acres of mixed vegetables.

W.D. ALBURY

Will cultivate three acres of tomatoes and peppers on Elliot's Key, where he also has nine acres of pineapples. Mr. Albury will cultivate one and one-half acres of tomatoes and one-half acre of beans at Cocoanut Grove.

E. and C. DEAN

Have 9 acres one and one-half miles south of Cocoanut Grove on which they have growing all kinds of tropical fruits. They will cultivate tomatoes and eggplants in considerable quantity, but the exact amount we didn't learn.

A.C. RICHARDS

Has a tract of 58 acres two miles south of Cocoanut Grove with about eight acres cleared, and a tract of 97 acres two and three-quarter miles south with five acres cleared. He has considerable number of mango and alligator pear trees growing and intends setting out more of this variety of trees. Mr. Richard's crop will consist of tomatoes, beans, and peppers, but we didn't learn this amount.

HARLAN TRAPP

Has 120 acres two miles south of Cocoanut Grove, with a clearing of five acres, on which may be found growing a considerable number of healthy trees. Mr. Trapp intends making a winter crop vegetables.

C.L. TRAPP

Has 80 acres two miles southwest of the Grove, with a clearing of two acres, which are set out to alligator pears, guavas, orange, limes, lemons, etc.. He will put in no winter crop.

C.H. RICE

Has 120 acres in the southwest quarter of section 20, town 54-41. He also has a fine piece of Bay front property at the Grove. He has four acres cleared at his homestead which is set out to pineapples and tropical and citrus fruits. We did not find Mr. Rice at home, but understand that he will put in about two acres of tomatoes.

The following nine places were missed by our guides during the course of our trip through this section, which was not known to us until our attention was called to the omission by Chas. E. Davis, to whom we are indebted for the information covering the improvements and facts in connection with the homes of J. McAllister, John Ellis, Fletcher Albury, Alfred Kemp, R.F. Hoffman, John Douglass, G.F. Wheeler, C.H. Perry, Frances Obenchain.

J. MCALLISTER

Homestead is admirably situated, being part glade land. He has five acres of pine under improvements which are set out to citrus and tropical fruits, which are in fine condition. His 15 acres of glade land is land of the best in this section. There will be cultivated about 13 acres of the glades, eight of which Mr. McAllister has leased. Ten acres will be in tomatoes with one in peppers and eggplants.

JOHN ELLIS

Homestead was missed with the others passed by in this section. Mr. Ellis, with his well-known skill in the handling of trees and flowers has made his place a corner of the earth fit for a queen. He has eight acres planted to citrus trees, most of which are bearing. He will plant two acres of tomatoes on his homestead. He has pretty buildings and surroundings. We met Mr. Ellis upon the road last week when he gave us some detail as to his river property, but modestly withheld the information concerning his homestead.

FLETCHER ALBURY

Is one of the old settlers, and as his name would signify, is of Bahamas stock. He has 80 acres on the south one-half of the southwest quarter of section 9. He has two acres cleared and will plant one each to tomatoes and eggplants. What he has cleared he has planted to citrus and tropical fruits not yet bearing.

ALFRED KEMP

Has 40 acres in the ne one-quarter of sw one-quarter of sec. 9. He has three acres cleared, all set out to citrus and tropical fruits. He cultivated three acres of glade land of which he will plant two acres to tomatoes and one acre to eggplant. He has a pretty home.

J.F. HOFFMAN

Lives in Arkansas City, Kansas. He has 200 acres of glade land, eight of which are under cultivation - three pine and five glade. The pine land is set to citrus fruits. He has grapefruit trees just commencing to bear finely. They are by all odds the finest lot of grapefruit trees in the town. He has a comfortable home surrounded by tropical plants and flowers.

JOHN DOUGLAS

Place of 200 acres in e one-quarter sec. 7 se one-quarter sec. 5 has upon it a large commodious two-story house with deep and shady double gallery. He has five acres of pine land set to citrus and tropical fruits which are just coming into bearing. He cultivates five acres of glade land. This year he will plant two acres of tomatoes, one and one-half acres eggplants and one and one-half acres peppers.



John Douglas family picnicking along the Miami River on the Ferguson Property, located at today's N.W. 12th Avenue.

G.F. WHEELER

Has 120 acres in the N. one-half of SE. one-quarter and W. one-half of SE. one-quarter of Section 7 we believe. The neighbors say he has three hound dogs, one shotgun and his weather eye out for a "fiddle." He has 10 acres of pine land set to citrus and tropical fruits, a greater portion of which are just coming into bearing. Mr. Wheeler has 10 acres of valuable glade lands in the sw one-quarter of Sec. 7. He will cultivate five acres of tomatoes, one acre of eggplant, one acre of peppers and three acres of beans. He will also experiment with one-fourth acre of celery. It doesn't look as though he allowed his dog, his gun or his "fiddle" to interfere with business.

C.H. PERRY

Has a homestead of 160 acres in n one-quarter of Sec. 5. He has four acres cleared, has a good two-story frame house surrounded with handsome tropical flowers, plants and shrubbery. He has a nice lot of

citrus fruits, with tropical fruits bearing. Mr. Perry lives in the Grove and rents his pine and glade land. There will be cultivated on his place this year three acres of tomatoes, and an acres each of eggplant and peppers.

FRANCIS OBENCHAIN

In the nw one-quarter of Section 19, has eight acres cleared one and one-half miles west of the Grove. The family has a most handsomely surrounded home embowered with handsome tropical plants, flowers and shrubbery. It shows the result of the care of a tasteful wife and three daughters. He has five acres planted to citrus trees, besides a few tropical fruit trees. He will cultivate two acres of tomatoes and one acre of eggplant. Mr. Obenchain has three accomplished daughters teaching school, Miss Jeannette being engaged in the Miami schools.

ARTHUR F. LANG

We passed the handsome home of Arthur F. Lang last week. There was no one at home at the time and by oversight we neglected to interview Mr. Lang in time. A Mr. Duval of Sanford, an experienced gardener, will cultivate Mr. Lang's place this year. There will be cultivated four acres of glade and four acres of pine land. Six acres will be planted to tomatoes and eggplant. They will also experiment with three acres of Kaffir corn and millet for forage purposes. Mr. Lang's orange trees are looking exceedingly fine, while his Tahiti limes promise fine fruit trees. Mr. Lang has been on his place two and one-half years. Every tree shows a remarkable growth and is a demonstration of what care and proper cultivation of wild land in this section for two and one-half years will do.

The following truckers and fruit growers along the Miami River have this week been visited by the *Metropolis*.

On the south branch of the river the first place of any importance is that of:

GEN. S.C. LAWRENCE

of Boston, who has 185 acres which he is fast improving. A considerable portion of this is prairie and hammock. The place is under the supervision of H. Price Williams. There is now employed upon the improvements, or was at pay time last Saturday, 24 men. The payroll

amounts to about \$1,700 a month. The improvements consist of a large tract of land which has been cleared and drained where necessary. The dairy which is to be operated in connection with Gen. Lawrence's farm is one of the most complete affairs in the South of its kind. We doubt if there is a finer dairy in any Southern States. The main part is 34X54 feet, two stories high. It is built of rock and has cement floors. There are now in the dairy 24 Jersey cows, 14 of which are giving milk. The stable space is arranged so that all secretions are carried off from the stable and conducted to a fertilizer vat 18X24 feet, built of cement, into which all the droppings of the stock with soiled bedding is thrown, where it is allowed to decompose. The liquid is drawn off as liquid fertilizer. The stock is kept perfectly clean and the stable and calf shed 26X52 feet near at hand built of rock. There has also been constructed a steam dairy 16X26 feet also of rock with cement floor. All the latest improved machinery for separating cream from milk, churning butter, grinding and preparing food for stock, etc. is employed. A large number of pineapples and citrus fruits have been set out. This week a force of men are employed in commencing the construction of a road from the farm to Miami, about two miles. D.L. Hughes, a practical dairy man, has charge of the stock. Frank Cobb is the foreman of operations. It is only about a year since Gen. Lawrence purchased the place in a wild condition practically. A \$10,000 to \$15,000 winter home can be looked for overlooking the river in short time. We wish we had many more General Lawrence's in this section.

H. PRICE WILLIAMS

Has the next place up the river from Gen. Lawrence's and adjoining it on the west. Mr. Williams home although not elaborate, has a tasty appearance. He has about six acres under cultivation. He will plant two and one-half acres of tomatoes, one acre of peppers and one and one-half acres of eggplant. The location, as are all the places in this section, is beautiful.

ROBERT KILPATRICK

Has 10 acres next west of Mr. Williams's nearly all cleared. He will plant this year two and one-half acres of tomatoes and two and one-half acres of eggplants. He has 200 orange trees growing thrifty and has a most promising field of Porto Rico pines. Mr. Kilpatrick also has a homestead of 100 acres on the pine land. He has not yet built a home on

his river tract. His hammock land appears to better advantage than some of the rest, as it is quite free of rock and has a black rich soil to set it off.

JOHN ELLIS

In this connection we must mention John Ellis again. He has here one of the prettiest places in this section of the country. His home, which is entirely new and handsome in construction, commands a fine view. It is a little higher than the surrounding property and is at the commencement of the North and South forks. The lawn is broad, gradually slopes to the river and is covered with grass. A note of his crop was made last week.

C.W. BRUCE

Has also 10 acres just west of Mr. Ellis's, which is just being cleared up. He will cultivate three acres of tomatoes on the glade in the rear.

R.W. BRIDGE

Is located just west of Mr. Bruce. His place practically faces the South Fork. He has 10 acres. In the early times of which we have no history a portion of Mr. Bridge's place has been cleared and set to oranges and limes. The tract went back to a state of nature. Yet we find in the hammock which he is now clearing away a large number of very large limetrees, as well as sweet oranges. Mr. Bridge's place is the western most of all those yet placed in cultivation in this spot. He will build a home next year. He has 60 grapefruit and 40 tardiff orange trees set out. Mr. Bridge is trucking this year with his brother-in-law, John Ellis, mention of which co-partnership was made last week.

Passing up the river two miles we come to the rich hammock land at which is known as the "Rapids of the Miami," about four miles from the Bay.

CAPT. R.C. MAY

Has the largest place here and the largest improvement. He has 75 acres of this rich land, 35 of which are under cultivation. He is just constructing a new home which will add much to his place. Capt. May has gone largely into citrus fruits and has in bearing a number of grapefruit and lemon trees. He was unfortunate in the shipment of his young trees down by schooner from Jacksonville before the railway came through. They were soaked with salt water which ruined many of them. A considerable number are doing fine. He will cultivate 114 acres of

tomatoes, 4 acres of eggplant, 2 acres of peppers and sundry other vegetables.

J.A. MCCRORY

Has 10 acres below that Capt. May. He has no buildings yet. Nearly the entire ten acres are cleared. Mr. McCrory will cultivate three acres of tomatoes and one of eggplant.

O. RICHARDSON'S

Fine home of 19 acres has been mentioned in these columns a number of times, therefore we can tell nothing new. Mr. Richardson will cultivate five acres of tomatoes and one and one-half acres of eggplant.

C.O. RICHARDSON'S

Place of 10 acres just south of his father's was also mentioned at length a few weeks since. Mrs. Richardson arrived a few days since from Chicago to make her home. Mr. Richardson will cultivate four acres of tomatoes and one and one-half acres of eggplant.

BURCHARD and WARD

Have 19 acres just below that of O. Richardson, a good portion of which is cleared. There is a nice residence on this place with many different kinds of fruits. They will cultivate three acres of tomatoes and one acre of peppers this year.

Across the river and just below the forks we find

S.N. GLADWIN

With six and one-half acres of new land which will be cultivated for the first time this year. He will have four and one-half acres of tomatoes, and one acre each of eggplant and peppers.

A.D. SMITH

Has ten acres in this tract which he has cultivated for three years. This year he will cultivate six acres of tomatoes. On his home lot in Miami he will plant two acres of eggplant.

W.M. STILES

Has five acres more of this tract. He will cultivate three acres of tomatoes.

L. N. SNELL

Has also five acres of which he will plant two to tomatoes.

There are also on this tract of rich land at the rapids

MESSRS. L.E. HILL AND WEBBER

Who will cultivate four acres and two acres respectfully of tomatoes.

When attention is called to the fact that up to three years ago next spring this entire Miami river section was an unbroken wilderness it will be seen what has been done.

There are several hundred acres more of this rich hammock which will be under cultivation before three years more rolls around.

North of The River

Starting north along the line of the new rock road and the old County road leading to Buena Vista and Lemon City our representative interviewed the following named truckers and fruit-growers this week in search of information.

SAM FILER'S

Well-known place just north of Miami on the Bay hardly needs a description by us. In attempting to describe the beauty of Mr. Filer's home we would fall far short of conveying to our readers any accurate idea of the tropical grandeur which here surrounds one on all sides. Oranges, lemons, grapefruit, alligator pears, mangoes, guavas, and in fact, all kinds of tropical and sub-tropical fruits are growing in full vigor and beauty. Mr. Filer will make a crop of about five acres of tomatoes and eggplants.

C.M. MORGAN

Who is living on the place of F.A. Blackman, just north of Miami, will make a crop of about one acre of eggplants and one acre of tomatoes.

WM. LOWE

Is at present living on the place of Geo. Olson, about one mile north of Miami, which is a pretty place with a good clearing and plenty of

tropical fruits of all kinds. Mr. Lowe has eight and one-half acres just west of the Olson place on which he is making improvements, but will not be able to make a crop.

J.R. RICKER

Has a clearing of three acres on a five acre lot two miles northwest of Miami on which he intends to cultivate two acres of tomatoes and one acre of eggplants.

JOHN PULASKI

Has a clearing of 10 acres on his homestead two and one-half miles northwest of Miami on which he will cultivate one acre of tomatoes.

LEON FORNELL

At Buena Vista, has a pretty little home surrounded by guavas and other fruits. He is cultivating a crop of three acres of tomatoes, one acre of eggplants, and one acre of peppers.

J.C. HOOKS

Who lives in Buena Vista, owns 40 acres of Alapattah prairie land and in company with his brother, W.A. Hooks, will cultivate 15 acres of tomatoes, two acres of eggplants, and one acre of beans.

JAS. HOOKS

Will cultivate Alapattah prairie land to the extent of seven acres of tomatoes.

R.B. FICKLE

Is making a nice home of his place at Buena Vista, on which we found mangoes, alligator pears, guavas and some nice young orange trees growing. He is putting in one acre of eggplants and peppers at his home and three acres of tomatoes at Alapattah prairie.

H.L. HOFFMAN

Home on the Bay front just north of Buena Vista is another Florida home in attempting a description of which one hardly knows where to begin and when to stop. Skirting the Bay is a fine old grove of cocoanut trees, behind which is located a slight elevation overlooking the Bay, a neat and comfortable home, forming a sight enchanting in tropical beauty. Mr. Hoffman has a number of large orange trees in bearing, and

is preparing the whole of his place of 15 acres for oranges as fast as possible. He has erected an aermotor which he utilizes as power for an extensive irrigating plant and also for furnishing water for his dwelling, which has a complete system of waterworks. Mr. Hoffman will cultivate three acres of tomatoes.

CHAS. COURLY

At Buena Vista, has one acre of land which demonstrates that out of the primeval forest a blooming Florida home can be made in a few months. Mr. Courly has only been on his place for eighteen months, and is surrounded by a beautiful display of tropical plants and flowers besides some fine young trees growing. He will cultivate for one-half acre of eggplants and one-half acre of peppers. Those of our readers who know not of French hospitality should call Mr. Courly's.

E.L. WHITE

Who has sixty acres just north of Buena Vista, is putting up a steam irrigating plant and intends to set out his whole clearing of five acres to fruit trees of different kinds. He will prepare for the winter market two and one-half acres of tomatoes and one acre of eggplants.

HENRY JOHNSON

Has 40 acres three-fourths of a mile north of Buena Vista, on which he has a clearing of six acres, with two acres of pineapples. Mr. Johnson has in the way of fruit trees, guavas, alligator pears, mangoes, grapefruit, etc., all looking nice and showing careful attention. He will cultivate no winter crop.

THOS. G. RUSSELL

Came to Dade County from Key Largo, where he farmed for twenty years. He has 40 acres one-half mile south of Lemon City, with a clearing of about 12 acres, on which we found four acres of pineapples and an abundance of tropical fruit trees. He will not prepare any crop for the market this season.

C.B. WAINWRIGHT

Has six acres of new land at Lemon City which he is clearing and transforming into a home. He will put in one-half acre of tomatoes, one-half acre of eggplants and one-half acre of peppers.

G.B. STEVENS

Who lives at Lemon City, will put in a crop of about three acres of celery and cauliflower about one mile up Little River.

W.M. MATTAIR

Who is the village blacksmith at Lemon City, will cultivate three acres of tomatoes at his home and eight acres of tomatoes on Little River land. Mr Mattair has a pretty home on the Bay front just north of the village.

F. MATHEWS

Also lives a Lemon City where he has a pretty home and also runs a sawmill. He has 40 acres of Little River land, where he will make a crop of 10 acres of tomatoes, where his son Paul will also put in a crop of six acres of tomatoes.

JAS. W. ROBERTS

Lives in Lemon City, but owns 13 acres of land two miles west on which he has a clearing of two and one-half acres. He will cultivate for the market one acre of tomatoes, one acre of eggplants and one-half acre of peppers.