

*Everglades and first celebratory idea.*

WORDS are tricky. We would have them as servants, but they will not be slaves, and sometimes they become our masters, and never is this more evident than when statement about the Everglades is undertaken, where over and over again the impish quality of words shows itself. Using words, man invented speech, and long ago it was charged that men employ speech only to conceal their thoughts, which is shown to be inaccurate in the number of instances in which words are used to conceal the lack of thought. We attempt to domesticate the sounds evoked by the experiences of animals, to tame them and make of them words with which to elicit information or communicate the degrees of our emotions; we would marshal them into sentences, into rows and ranks, and have them march and turn and go through the manual of arms, but they are rebellious, and they mutiny, and disperse. But words are man's creatures and they return to him, sometimes shamefaced and sometimes brazen, and man receives them, for he must have them, but they are never the same as before in successful insurrection they learned their power.

Disraeli said that men are governed with words, but John Seldon, who lived a century before, was more right when he said "syllables govern the world". In the Elizabethan period a writer regreted that words had become corrupted since Chaucer's time though we may be sure Chaucer did not always find them pure. He put words through a routine--he had them lie down and play dead, and jump through a hoop, and stand on their hind legs, but did they always do as he would have them do? We cannot know; we take what we find.

We write of the Everglades, and at the outset there is a question: Is it singular or plural, was there one glade or more? It ~~is~~ a word or a term, and we would use it, make of it a servant, but we must be tender with

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it lest it turn and bite us or otherwise plague us. Very early it was necessary to try to conquer ~~it~~ by dividing and by saying "Upper Glades", "Middle Glades" and "Lower Glades" and thus weakening it, but in so doing we weaken the servant we would have do heavy labor. The impish thing grins at us and challenges us to identify it --is it a region or a condition?

The first known use of the term "Everglades" is on Turner's map of Florida (1823) and is cited in the Dictionary of American English currently being published by the University of Chicago Press. A map of Florida compiled by an English geographer for the British government and dated 1821 does not show the Everglades. *The word seems to have come into use in Florida only after acquisition by the United States in 1819. The Spanish seem to have had no equivalent of "Everglades".*

An early spelling was "glad" and it meant bright, shining. "Glade" in a sense now obsolete except in poetry meant "a clear place in the sky, a bright streak or patch of light". Derived from Anglo-Saxon and Icelandic languages, used by peoples in lands where bright waters were seen at some seasons of the year and snow and ice at another, glade was associated with water in any of its several forms. The glade was always a treeless plain and the poets discriminated between "hill and glade": Alexander Pope in his memorial to An Unfortunate Lady asks:

What beckoning ghost along the moonlight shade  
Invites my steps, and points to yonder glade?

and seemingly got no more answer than did Ben Jonson, writing the Elegy on the Lady Jane Pawlet:

What gentle ghost, besprent with April dew,  
Hails me so solemnly to yonder yew?

the Merriams' Webster's New International Dictionary defines Everglades (singular) as: "A swamp or low tract of land inundated with water and interspersed with hummocks or small islands and patches of <sup>high</sup> grass; chiefly used <sup>as</sup> the Everglades, a great tract of this nature in Florida."

Whatever the spelling, capitalization, derivation, area and nature adopted for "the Everglades" they must be arbitrary and used as a matter of convenience to express the thought that is being communicated at the moment, sometimes involving a contradiction which however is reconciled in the general view.

The word "Okeechobee" does not occur in Webster's Dictionary until 1884 and then as in the latest edition (Merriam's) it is in the gazetteer section. It is assumed to be a "Creek Indian" word. But "Creek Indians" is a term of geography, not a term of ethnology; the Carolina colonists settled at Charleston in 1670 called the aborigines by that name because they lived on creeks, and creek means (or meant to these English settlers) bays and inlets of the sea as well as streams inland. There were dozens of tribes in the Southeast, some native and some of the then newly-come Muskogean tribes, and not all speaking the same <sup>language</sup> ~~term~~. When Captain Tobias Fitch went on a mission to the Indians in the creek country in 1725, recorded in his Journall (sic), he held a council with the "Okeechobys", presumably a tribe of Muskogean stock. As the lake to which this name was applied was also known in 1836 as "Lake Mayaca or Lake Okeechobee" it can be conjectured that it got the present appellation after 1835, when the Indians <sup>e</sup> ~~retreated~~ <sup>^</sup> southward in that year. Hamilton Lisston's drainage company had constructed a <sup>Canal</sup> ~~a~~ connection in 1832 between <sup>the</sup> Caloosahatchee ~~river~~ and Lake Okeechobee, and articles in Harper's Magazine and other periodicals as well as ~~his well-known writings~~ <sup>by his real estate salesman</sup> dissemination of reports of development brought the word "O<sup>e</sup>eechobee" into general use, displacing the old term "Lake Mayaca", accounting for its inclusion in the dictionary edition of 1884 and not before.

Origin and first use of the word to describe the river on the west side of the big lake is obscured by the letter <sup>r</sup> which is a troublesome member

in other instances. Is it "Carloosahatchee" or "Caloosahatchee"--or is it important? There were Indians called "Calcos" or "Caloosa"; and there was a King Charles of Spain whose name was rendered as "Carlos", and the question is whether the name of the river is derived from the one or the other. In the adoption of the present form the aboriginee won over the Spanish king. The persisting error that the words "Muscogee" and "Creek" are absolute equivalents, despite the fact that the Muscogees were but one division of the inhabitants of the early Southeast, leads to the statement so often printed that "hatchee" is a Muscogee word, which it is not. Indians of a common linguistic stock living in the area of the Colony of Carolina in 1650 were the Sawonakas and the <sup>(Uchys):</sup> Euchees. General Thomas S. Woodward, the Georgian part-Indian who delved into such matters (and is not disputed by the author of Pickett's History of Alabama), says the Savannah river was originally the <sup>a</sup> Sawonaka-hatchee - the latter syllables meaning river, as Savannah is derived from ~~Sawonaka~~ <sup>Sawonaka</sup>. What is now the Chattahoochee river was the Euchee-hatchee in the time of William Bartram of The Travels of William Bartram; these and other authorities establish it sufficiently definitely that "hatchee" is the Sawonaka-Euchee word for river, and as these were native (non-Muscogee) tribes, it is evident that "hatchee" is not a Muscogee word. The Euchees, with whom were remnants of the Sawonakas, fled to Spanish Florida after the Yamasee uprising that was led by Brims of Coweta in 1715 <sup>and</sup> put down by Governor Craven, and joined with the groups which in the aggregate were known as "Seminoles". The ~~Euchees~~ <sup>Euchees</sup> maintained their tribal organization in Florida and in Indian Territory to which they were removed in the 1842 period. They were among the Indians captured or surrendered near Fort Jupiter in 1838; a certain stream in that area <sup>then</sup> took the name ~~then~~ of Loxahatchee, from which it may be conjectured that "hatchee" is sufficient and the word river need not be added--the Caloosahatchee is the Calcos river.

Down the valley of the Kissimmee came the Indians pursued by Colonel Zachary Taylor in 1836-7, and the lively fancy of the Cracker cow-hunters has invented fantastic stories of the origin and meaning of "Kissimmee". One of these versions is that of the embarrassed but delighted Indian maiden who, having met a cow-hunter, rushed to her mother with the report that "he kiss a me", a version so pleasing to juvenile minds that it should not be upset with a correct version.

In folk lore the Indians were "Seminoles". There were Seminoles among the bands of Muscogees, Euchees, Hitchitees and other Indians, for the Seminoles were the cimaroons, or maroons--runaway slaves or descendants of fugitive slaves, and as the Indians were recalcitrants, as were the negroes and the half-breeds, and "Seminoles" was a term of reproach, an opprobrium, the lazy intellects of ~~the~~ avenging whites applied to all of them the all-embracing word "Seminoles". This is an instance of the tricks that words play on men who would make slaves of words instead of cooperative servants. The officials of the Territory of Florida, impatient at the lingering of the Indians who held lands and negroes the whites wanted, made a treaty with a miscellaneous group who came in to drink the whiskey that was tendered, and were as amazed as they were enraged when they found Indians who refused classification as "Seminoles"; if the treaty was with "Seminoles" it was not binding on Indians who knew themselves to be Muscogees or Euchees, or Hitchitees, or Apalachees or Choctaws and they resisted the enforcement of the treaty, leaving observance of the document to such as felt themselves bound by it. An old formula had been "The only good Indian is a dead Indian"; the new formula was "All Indians are Seminoles and the only good Indian is a dead Seminole". So the Seminoles came down the Kissimmee and to the Loxahatchee and the Caloosahatchee, to the lake they called Okeeshobee and to the land of the grassy waters, Pahayokee.

From the circumstance of the Florida Indian war came surveys of public domain; this was the pattern established in the Ohio country and on the Cumberland and along the lower Mississippi <sup>long before.</sup> In 1838 in what had already become Dade county General Thomas S. Jesup, commander of the forces of the United States, wrote to the Secretary of War a recommendation that the pursuit of the Indians be abandoned, for of that region, now embraced in Palm Beach county, we know as little, he said, as we do of the interior of China or Africa. Four years later (1842) President Tyler did have the pursuit abandoned, and the troops were withdrawn, and although there had been conflict between the Federal and Territorial authorities as to the conduct of the war, the Territorial officials protested bitterly against the frontier being left undefended by the withdrawal of the Regular army. *The Armed Occupation Act of 1842 did not compensate for the removal of the troops of the Regular Army.*

In 1845 Florida was admitted to Statehood. Many ~~and not one~~ <sup>and not one</sup> considerations brought this about; Congress had been bedeviled by the Florida war <sup>and Indian depredations -</sup> and by the claims of the plantation owners about runaway slaves - let Florida have statehood and attend to its own business. But in Florida was the Everglades--in 1823 by Turner's map the Everglades had a local habitation and a name, and the title was in the Federal government, and the region was held by the Indians and the seminoles; still in 1845 the region was as Jesup had described it, as unknown as the interior of China, and the Legislature by resolution of December 10, 1845, recommended to Congress "the adoption of measures for reclamation of the Everglades." Significantly the resolution was transmitted over the signature of James T. Archer, secretary of state; ~~and a man of a~~ <sup>a</sup> name much similar to this was the <sup>name of the</sup> man who about that time ~~was~~ brought a boatload of negroes to the Manatee river for sale as slaves, as related in Lily B. McDuffey's "The Lures of the Manatee".



at Smith's disposal, and the "Report of Buckingham Smith, Esq., on His Reconnoissance of the Everglades (1848)" was transmitted to Secretary Walker under date of June 1, 1848. The Appendix to the Buckingham Smith report included an extract from the report of Colonel R. Butler, surveyor general of Florida, in 1847; a letter from General James Gadsden of South Carolina, who had assisted the Florida Territorial government and the Federal government in Indian affairs; and many other letters on the subject and all of the same import-- that the reclamation of the Everglades was desirable, that it was practicable, and that it would serve national interest to a high degree.

It was a good job of carpentering and joining - everything was made to dovetail. The highest local and immediate thing was to deprive the runaway negro slaves of a refuge--that would be accomplished by opening up their hiding places, and depriving them of a place of refuge by giving the State title to the area and permitting the exercise of the State's police powers without interference from the Federal government. It would produce ~~new~~ <sup>in Florida</sup> territory for expansion of the plantation system and the use of slaves and obviate the need of migration by planters to Texas and California. It would relieve Congress of the importunities of the Florida Legislature and the problem of decision as to the disposition of a large section of public domain -- mechanics, farm laborers and small farmers were clamoring for a Federal homestead law, a program resisted since the foundation of the Republic by the champions of the policy of keeping the working class poor and dependent. (It was not until Lincoln's administration that <sup>the</sup> National Homestead Law was enacted). Disposal to Florida of the Everglades would assist the removal of the Indians and reduce the hazard of another Indian war with a cost that was a national scandal. And if Florida could get a large slice of public domain, so could other states. Very potent was the statement by General Jesup that execution of the proposal would "pro-



fect us from the influence of the policy adopted in the British Islands", a hint made more clear by the statement of Colonel (later General) William S. Harney that as "our coast in south Florida is now extremely exposed in time of war . . . it would tend to the security of the entire southern portion of the United States in an eminent degree". Populating southern Florida would protect it and afford security to the whole commerce of the western country passing along its shores -- this was Harney's appeal to the interest of the western states, as there was reminder to the southern states that peopling southern Florida would be the erection of a cordon against the free slaves of the West Indies who were attempting to incite slave Insurrections.

So the bill to cede the wet and overflow lands passed. Tricky words again. It was not only the Everglades or the portion of "them" described in the resolution of the Florida Legislature of January 6, 1848 -- "the lands south of the "Alloosahatchee" - it was the wet and overflow lands in a much larger area. The lands were to be reclaimed by drainage. That reclamation could be prevented by drainage--that resources could be destroyed by drainage, did not occur to anyone. But Senator Westcott had discharged with celerity and thoroughness the task assigned him. And the imps in words had had their fun. Florida was charged with the duty of reclaiming the Everglades and populating it for national security and aid to the commerce of the west.