

1958

## Florida Pioneer

Adelaide H. Reed

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### Recommended Citation

Reed, Adelaide H. (1958) "Florida Pioneer," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 37 : No. 2 , Article 4.  
Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol37/iss2/4>

## FLORIDA PIONEER

by ADELAIDE H. REED

### Prologue

**W**HETHER THE SOURCE of the Manatee River was really the "Fountain of Youth" for which Ponce de Leon searched in vain is a question for historians - or geographers - to argue about. But, in its early days, the little town of Manatee really did have a "Fountain of Youth." At least, it was named that. It was not exactly a fountain, but a little spring of clear, cold water bubbling up out of the ground, with a gourd hung on a nearby oak tree from which to drink.

When Father Reed heard of this, nothing would do but we all must visit it and take a drink. He had come to Florida for his health - and if he could regain his youth as well, he was all for it.

So one of our earliest trips was to the Fountain of Youth, and we all drank deeply of its refreshing water. In those days, all drinking water came out of cisterns and most of us strained out the mosquito larvae through a cloth before pouring it into earthenware jugs and hanging them under trees to keep cool. Though there were some who didn't mind the larvae-colloquially known as "wiggle-tails"!

At any rate, I like to think that those generous drinks I took from the Fountain of Youth have contributed to my reaching four-score years and ten, able to walk several blocks at a time with no arm or cane to lean upon, and, what everyone considers more remarkable, no silver streaks in my brown hair.

### OFF TO FLORIDA!

The story of my days as a Florida pioneer begins - as such stories often do - in a very round-about fashion. I was a student in the Wisconsin State Teachers' College in Oshkosh - then called the State Normal School - when I happened to see, and immediately answered, an advertisement for a teacher in the nearby town of Butte des Morts - pronounced Beauty More.

I was accepted with suspicious alacrity - and I found out

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why, after I had arrived at the school. The former teacher, just about as young and experienced as I was, had done or said something to annoy some of the older boys in the school - and they had picked her up bodily and thrown her out of the classroom into the snow. She had promptly left them to an undeserved holiday - hence the advertisement for a new teacher!

Needless to say, I was horrified. But I was determined that they should not throw me out. I turned on all the charm I had, suggested that we start out by singing some songs they all knew - surprisingly enough they really could sing - and soon, with the aid of a little diplomacy and an occasional compliment, we were getting along all right.

On Sundays I played the organ in the little Episcopal Church in Butte des Morts. It had been built by a Mr. Hull, who owned the store and much of the land in and around Butte des Morts. He had come from England and, as there were not enough church people in the neighborhood to support a mission - much less a church - he had built the little church on his own land and at his own expense, serving it as lay reader, choirmaster and sexton.

The Reed family - father, mother and youngest son - boarded just across the street from me in Butte des Morts, while their home was being built on the shore of the lake and, since they also attended the little Episcopal Church, we soon became acquainted - an acquaintance that was to lead me far afield from the life I had planned as a school teacher.

Father H. G. H. Reed had been a railroad builder and general superintendent. He had laid the rails for the first railroad to run north of Milwaukee to Ashland, on the shore of Lake Superior, thus tapping a rich iron and lumbering country and opening up thousands of acres of land for farming and dairying.

Now he had retired with the intention of living on the large farm he had purchased on the shore of Lake Butte des Morts and spending his winters in Florida. As superintendent of a railroad, he and Mother Esther C. Reed had travelled both to California and the Gulf Coast. He had only to have his car hitched to the rear of any train he wanted - as a matter of railroad courtesy.

Eventually, he had decided upon a winter home in the South, where he had found better hunting and fishing, and had reduced his choice to two locations - Pass Christian in Mississippi and

Braidentown, where he had spent several previous winters in hunting and fishing in Florida.

So it was in Braidentown that the youngest son and I planned to have our honeymoon. It was not exactly a whirlwind affair. At seventeen, I was considered much too young to get married - and I had to teach school for several terms before my parents would give their consent. But the "period of probation" eventually passed.

The little church in Butte de Morts was too small to hold all of the relatives and guests of the Reed family and mine, so the ceremony was held in the Methodist Church in Winneconnie, with the Episcopal Ceremony. And immediately afterwards we headed for Florida. Although it was a honeymoon chaperoned, so to speak, by both Father and Mother Reed, it was all so exciting that I, at least, was willing to forget this little detail.

About all I remember of that trip was the view from Lookout Mountain, near Chattanooga, where we stopped over for a day to make connections with a train going further South. The Florida East Coast Railway had not yet been dreamed of by Flagler, but there was a single-track line leading from Jacksonville to St. Augustine, Fla., and we spent a day seeing the sights there. Finally, after back-tracking to Jacksonville, we boarded the train for Tampa. There was no air-conditioning and it was too hot to keep the windows closed - so our hair, eyes and clothing soon were full of cinders.

Diners had not yet been invented, and the train would stop at some small station, the conductor would call out, "Twenty minutes for breakfast!" - or lunch or dinner as the case might be. Then everyone would pile out of the train and rush to the station restaurant! I need not say that these meals were scarcely consumed in a leisurely manner! It was a case of grab it and growl.

At other times, the train would stop long enough for boys to go through the train with lunch boxes - invariably containing "Southern Fried Chicken," whose sanitation we did not question. We just ate it.

It was well in the afternoon when we finally reached our destination. The Tampa Bay Hotel - now the University of Tampa - had not yet been built, with its splendid Moorish mina-

rettes - and its then-legal gaming casino. But Father Reed, on previous trips, had located a fairly good hotel, where we stayed until the boat for the Manatee River should make one of its tri-weekly trips, leaving Tampa one day and returning the next.

Tampa, I had been led to believe by my geography books, was a seaport. But there was no ocean shipping to be seen; only a few fishing boats tied up to wharves along the Hillsboro River. The seagoing vessels came into Port Tampa, clear across the Hillsboro peninsula, where they loaded phosphate rock with which to enrich the impoverished soils of many countries.

At last the morning arrived when the steamer was to leave for Braidentown. We found her to be a little side-wheeler, with a walking beam in the center, carefully encased in glass, I presume to keep inebriated passengers from falling into the machinery. We were told that she had once been on the Hudson River Day Line run, brought down from New York when replaced by a larger and more modern craft. I do not remember her name, but am quite sure she was in service before the "Manatee," the "H. B. Plant" and the "Pokanoket" - pronounced by the natives poka-noket - were put in the river run. Maybe she was the original "River Queen."

She had scarcely any draught - which was an advantage considering the shallowness of some of the bays into which she ran. But she stood too high out of the water for Florida's strong south winds and her northers, which sometimes made landing difficult.

I have often wondered about her trip from the Hudson to the Manatee River. Granted that much of her trip was by inland waterway, it must have taken courage and seamanship to have brought her clear around Florida to Tampa.

So here we were - bag and baggage - on the last lap of our momentous journey. And when I say baggage I mean it. Convinced that he would be in the deepest wilds, Father Reed had brought along a huge family encyclopedia of medicine and even larger chest of medicine for self-treatment.

There was even - mind you, this was in 1888 - a small boat, hinged in the middle and mounted on a wheeled chassis - that could be trailed behind a horse and buggy; the great-great-granddaddy, I suppose, of today's motor boats that ride so easily on land

- behind automobiles. All of this had to be stowed in the steamship's capacious hold.

After the long train journey and the small Tampa hotel, the boat-ride was wonderful. We all sat up in the bow, where we could not miss anything. The sky was blue. The waters of the bay, once we had left the Hillsboro River behind, shone in a dozen different shades of green and blue. Porpoises played around the bow of the boat and occasionally a school of "flying fish" - really needle-fish - would skitter off across the surface. Pelicans stared solemnly from channel markers - as did cormorants.

Wow, as we reached the middle of the Bay, we could see an ancient freighter plying her way up to Port Tampa. All glasses brought to bear, we finally deciphered a Norwegian flag at her stem. St. Petersburg - then little more than a fishing village. Eggmont Key - with its white, gleaming lighthouse and its fort protecting Tampa. The fort appeared only as several sand mounds - but we were told they concealed the latest in long range guns. Then east - to the Manatee River and Braidentown.

The river was not a river at all, but an estuary, some mile and a half wide by ten miles long - with a channel that zig-zagged for its entire length.

On the right-hand side, as we entered, stood a hill, perhaps one hundred feet high - the first we had seen since leaving Georgia. We were told that this was a solid mound of oyster shells, left by the Indians who had come here, once each year, for "The Feast of the Oysters," leaving the shells behind them. Accumulated at the rate of, perhaps, two inches a year, one could figure how long the feasting had been going on before the arrival of Ponce de Leon - who is supposed to have landed somewhere in this vicinity.

Slowly the boat proceeded past the shell mound and up the river, with brief stops at Palma Sola, Fogartyville and Palmetto - just across the river. Finally she made fast to a long pier at the head of which stood an unpainted warehouse.

Braidentown - at long last.

#### INTRODUCTION TO BRAIDENTOWN

B-r-a-i-d-e-n-t-o-w-n! Yes, it was spelled that way in 1888, with an "i" in the middle and a "town" at the end. The name,

we were told, was derived from an early settler named Braden, who had built a fine antebellum home further up the river as the center of a big sugar plantation.

The home was still pretty well intact at the time we arrived; a two-story house built of "tabby" - a mixture of ground oyster shells and lime laid on courses - and topped with a cupola commanding a fine view in all directions.

Known as "Braden's Castle," it had not been occupied in many years. The windows were gone as were the galleries that once must have surrounded it, but the roof and cupola were still there. And the walls - laid in courses three feet thick - probably are still standing.

It was rumored that the house served as a "fort" during the Seminole wars, with the white settlers defending themselves until troops could come down from Tampa to their relief - hence the name "castle." A more authentic version, probably, is that there was once a stockade fort at the present site of the city.

At any rate, Braden Castle was for years the favorite site for picnickers, and the grounds were dug up over and over in search of treasure supposed to have been buried there, but never, so far as is known, found.

It did not take much imagination to visualize the Indians turning from their oyster shell feasts to fight the new settlers who, fleeing to the "castle," found its thick walls protection from both arrows and bullets while sharp-shooters in the cupola kept the foe at a reasonably safe distance.

As for the "i" - that's another story. Some early county recorder - who knew how to spell not wisely but too well-knew that the word "braid" should be spelled with an "i" - and so he spelled it that-a-way. It was many years before the spelling was corrected. And many more before the "town" was shortened to its present form of "ton" - in the interest of civic expansion.

But Braidentown was not the only "metropolis on the Manatee." In fact, at that time, it was the smallest of at least four towns at which the little steamer landed on its tri-weekly trip up the river.

There was Fogartyville. It was populated entirely by the families of the Fogarty brothers, all of whom were shipbuilders and sea-captains. It had a shipyard in which the Fogartys - now

retired from the sea but still operating coastal schooners - built their own ships; a long pier at which the "Manatee" stopped to deliver the mail, and a general store. It has long since become West Bradenton.

The three Fogarty brothers were named John, William and Tole - but whether the Tole was a real name, an abbreviation of a nickname, I never knew. Tole was the "sailingest" one of the three, making periodic trips to Key West and thence up the coast to Miami, at that time just a fishermen's settlement, reached by a foot-path from Daytona, along which mail carriers came on foot - believe it or not - to bring news of the outside world.

And even this path could be travelled only at low tide.

Palmetto, as I have mentioned, was on the north bank of the river directly across from Braidentown. Ellenton was on the north bank at the head of the bay - and the last stop for river traffic. And Manatee, several miles up the river from Braidentown, on the south bank, was the real metropolis of the region. It boasted half a dozen stores. And, strangest of all, a cemetery in which the victims of a yellow fever epidemic had been buried.

Manatee avenue, the main east-west highway of the area, stopped short at this cemetery - for the authorities decreed that the bodies interred there must never be moved, for fear that the dread disease might break out again. But to return to Braidentown. After several attempts to land, due to a strong south wind, the Manatee finally tied up at the end of the long pier and we walked down the gang-plank - virtually the only passengers and certainly among the first "tourists" to visit the little town.

There was no hotel "conveyance" to meet us - although the "wharf" as it was called was wide enough for a horse and buggy, with a turn-around midway for teams that might meet in the middle, coming and going. So we walked up the long pier, with several colored boys carrying our luggage.

At the shore end of the pier was a small general store, set well off the ground on wooden piers and with steps leading up to a porch across the front. The pier and store were known as Fuller's store and wharf and there were no other places of business in sight.

Across the street - an expanse of gleaming white sand known as Main street - was a two-story house bearing the sign "Duck-

wall House" across the front. This hotel, operated by Paul Duckwall, was Braidentown's one combination hotel and boarding house. Like the Fuller store, it had a porch across the front, on which several old men sat. They looked like they had sat there for hours, watching the boat come in - as, indeed, they had. It was, for Braidentown, the big event of the day.

A few scattered buildings graced Main street a little further up from the wharf. One was a small shop operated by a Mrs. Cowdrey and her daughter, Daisy. It housed the post office - where such letters and papers as arrived were kept in cigar boxes or on a row of shelves. But at least it was a post office.

From Main street, a foot-path led through scrub palmettoes and pine trees to a parallel strip of sand hopefully named Prospect Avenue. And on this street lived the Miller family, with whom we would spend the winter.

#### WINTER CHEER COTTAGE

The Miller home, towards which we were headed, was located well back in a large grove of orange and lemon trees. The Reed family had spent two previous winters there - and now it was Father Reed's intention to buy it lock, stock and barrel, for a permanent winter home.

The grove had a long frontage on Prospect Avenue, and ran back to a body of water called Weir's Creek, where it had a long curve of water-front. The creek, like the Manatee River, was not, properly speaking, a creek at all, but a small bay at least half a mile wide at that point and extending south for about a mile - at which point the actual creek entered.

There were no sidewalks leading from the sandy street Up to the house - only a path. And this path, I discovered to my sorrow, was bordered by small plants known locally as sandspurs. They were appropriately named, for they grew out of white sand - and the spurs clung to everything with which they came in contact.

I was dressed very much in style in those days - a wide flower hat and sweeping skirts that swept around my ankles - and also swept up those sandspurs in increasing quantities. In spite of the fact that I held my dress immodestly high - well

above the ankles - those sandspurs continued to accumulate on the edge of my dress and petticoats and I spent most of that first afternoon in Braidentown picking them off. But if the styles in dresses were not well adapted to the sandspurs, at least the "picture hats" of the period served to shelter one from the South Florida sun.

Near the shore of Weir's Creek stood a gigantic dead pine tree which must have been at least 100 feet high, and on the tip branch of this tree a bald eagle often roosted while watching for fish hawks, his natural prey. Whenever he saw a fish hawk struggling home with a mullet in his claws, he would swoop down upon it. The fish hawk would drop his dinner in an effort to escape - and the eagle would transfer his attention to the fish, which is what he had really been after all of the time.

Having in mind the "observatories" which German settlers, homesick for the Rhineland, built along the shores of many Wisconsin lakes, Father Reed had this tree cut off some sixty feet from the base and converted into an "observatory" - from the heights of which one could watch the "Manatee" as it turned into the river out of Tampa Bay.

On top of this "observatory" was a flag-pole on which our colored man, Walter, one unfortunate Fourth of July hoisted the American flag upside down. In that Confederate neighborhood, it really created a sensation. But that is getting ahead of the story.

That orange grove! What a bonanza it would have been for the Reed family had they been able to foresee the Florida boom -and just hung onto it. The Miller grove contained orange and lemon trees but no grapefruit - they were considered a curiosity and there was, at that time, no sale for them. The grove did have one tree - an overgrown grapefruit called a shaddock, coarse and bitter to the taste. It, too, was a curiosity - and considered worthless by most people. That it was one of the "parents" from which the present-day grapefruit was developed, none of us realized.

Years afterward a man named Atwood purchased a large tract of land near Ellenton, planted it all to grapefruit, and built a big packing-shed at the end of a long pier there, so the fruit could be shipped out by boat. During the "grapefruit season," culls

from this packing shed were simply thrown into the river, where they floated like so many miniature yellow mines. He had doctors analyse the beneficial qualities of his grapefruit, did extensive advertising, and soon the grapefruit was launched as a Florida citrus crop. Everyone began replacing their lemon trees, which had not proven too profitable, with grapefruit.

To manage his huge grove, Mr. Atwood "imported" an expert gardener to handle the grove while he devoted his attention to promotion and advertising. This was a Mr. Randall who, with his family, made a substantial addition to our little group.

In order to get from Braidentown, where he made his home, to and from the Atwood grove in Ellenton, without being dependent upon the steamer, Mr. Randall purchased and brought to town the first naphtha launch ever seen in the section.

Father Reed, who had operated a steam launch to get from his home on Lake Butte des Morts to Oshkosh and back, had no faith in the new contraption. He predicted that it would "blow up" on the Randall family some day. And, sure enough, it did.

The launch caught fire - and the Randall family, in the water and clinging to the edge of the burning craft, were rescued just in the nick of time. Their eye-brows had been singed off by the fire as they clung to the boat.

That ended the naphtha launch era. Thereafter, until the advent of the gasoline engine, people in the community put their trust in sails or in good old-fashioned, hand-operated oars.

In such a small town, one might think there was nothing to do for amusement - no movies, no radios, no television sets, no baseball games, no horse or dog races-and certainly no automobiles. Even if there had been, they could not have navigated in the deep sand that surfaced every road.

But we found plenty of things to do. The fishing was always good. One need drive only a little way out of town to get a bag of quail. Near the head of Weir's Creek was a large patch of blueberries [blackberries] - colloquially known as huckleberries-which could be picked in season.

We often rented a horse and buggy from the local livery stable and drove out in the country - our trips usually ending up an orange grove from which we were always welcome to help ourselves to as much fruit as we could carry home. My first taste

of grapefruit was at one such grove, whose owner was pioneering in the new product.

And then - we had our cameras and were always taking picture of whatever looked interesting. To avoid the long wait of sending film to Tampa to be developed, we even put in our own dark-room - and thought for awhile of going into the photography business, then in its infancy.

#### OF SCHOOLS, CHURCHES - AND PIGS

Braidentown had no schools in 1888. A Miss Sue Hough taught the youngsters of Braidentown and Manatee in her home, handling all the grades. When she married Ollie Stuart and kept on teaching, she was still known as "Miss Sue" - and she kept right on teaching until many of her former pupils became grandparents.

The town's first school was built by a public-spirited citizen - a Dr. Ballard, who had retired and moved to Braidentown to make his home. He gave the land and supplied the money with which the school - long known as the Ballard School - was constructed.

Not until many years later was the two-story frame building at the head of Prospect Avenue, which was to become the first high school in the area, built. Students came to this high school from as far away as Manatee, Palma Sola and across the river at Palmetto, a ferry bringing them across in the morning and carrying them back after school in the evening. There was no such thing as a school bus. And no one - even though some of the residents owned their own horses and buggies - ever thought of conveying a student to school.

Those within walking distance - a mile or so - walked. And those who lived farther away bought bicycles and pedalled them through the sand as best they could to get to school. So far as I know, the county never had a juvenile officer.

The Presbyterian Church was the only one in Braidentown at that time. It was a frame building, and stood well off the ground on wooden piers - the theory being that it would be cooler if de air could circulate underneath it.

Unfortunately, it was so high off the ground that there was

plenty of room for the pigs in the neighborhood to congregate there, too, where they could be out of the sun and in the shade. The Lord might have been in His Holy Temple - but those pigs certainly did not keep silence before Him! Every once in a while, the service would be enlivened by the grunts and squeals of a first-class pig fight going on underneath, whereupon the elders of the church nearest the door would go forth and eject them - at least for the time being. Or perhaps it was the music that inspired the pigs - I cannot say.

If we had had a Gaderene Demoniac in the community, perhaps we might have exercised him and driven those pigs to Weir's Creek. But it was an exceptionally sane community. There wasn't even a village idiot.

The pigs - a very distant cousinhood from Poland - Chinas or Hampshires - were thin and scrawny and known as razorbacks. There were no fences and the pigs and cows roamed at will through the community, having been turned loose to forage for themselves.

We met cows frequently on the footpaths which served as sidewalks in the community. This sometimes startled and annoyed visiting ladies. But I wasn't raised on a farm to be afraid of a cow. When I met one on the way to the store, I simply said, "So, bossy!" and pushed on by. They always moved over to give me room and gazed at me thoughtfully. I guess they recognized the "voice of experience."

There were other animals in and around Braidentown besides pigs and cows, however. On the side of "The Point" that separated Weir's Creek from the Manatee River, there was quite a forest of oaks and pines, filled in with underbrush and this made a refuge for such small animals as raccoons, o'possums, and civet cats [skunk]. It was said that wildcats had been seen there, but we never encountered any.

We *did* encounter the civet cat, however. Hearing a commotion in the chicken house one night, we proceeded to investigate. The civet cat fled in one direction - and we lit out in the other - but not before the cat had used his atomizer to good effect on the chicken house, the flock and the neighboring trees. It was some time before we gathered any eggs.

After that, Father Reed built a double box trap, which was

baited and set up near the chicken house. It was firmly constructed of two-inch planking - and when a civet cat was caught in it, he was compelled to keep his perfume pretty much to himself.

We took no chances with it. When we found one end of it closed, we crept up, tripped the other end, loaded it on a wheelbarrow, and transported it to the end of our wharf - where it was unceremoniously dumped into Weir's Creek. Later in the day the trap would be hauled out and its contents - by this time thoroughly drowned - examined.

But those black-and-white kitties were adaptable. Long after the raccoons and opossums had departed, disgusted with Braidentown's growing civilization, they remained - often to make their nests and raise their litters under the barn, adjacent to the chicken house. With a little encouragement, they would have become as tame as house cats.

One other animal roamed at large. That was the hunting dog - usually a black-and-white or a brown-and-white pointer. Everyone had at least one pointer trained to point out quail on a hunting trip and no one ever thought of tying one up. It would have been cruelty to animals.

They had a regular trail they followed along the edge of Weir's Creek, from the "Point" to well up the little bayou-visiting all of the neighboring dogs, our own included, en route. And dogs of any other variety were few and far between. A dog, in Braidentown, was for business purposes - not for a pet. And that business was to aid his master in bagging a nice mess of quail.

#### THE HALIOTIS

Having purchased the Miller home and orange grove - the Millers reserved one lot facing on Prospect Avenue on which to build a new home - Father Reed next turned his attention to having a sailboat built.

There were no bridges, then, linking the mainland with the Gulf keys - and certainly no such concrete causeways as now connect Tampa with St. Petersburg and Bradenton. It was a yachtman's paradise - and Father Reed intended to make the most of it.

The previous summer he had spent his spare time in draw-

ing up the plans and specifications for the sort of a yacht he wanted - and now was the time to translate the plans into actuality.

He even had a name for it. It was to be named the "Haliotis" - the name of a beautiful sea shell commonly called the ear shell. And, indeed, the boat, when completed, was as beautiful as the shell for which she had been named. The "Haliotis" was unlike any of the coastal craft in those waters, being yawl-rigged. She was some forty feet long and sufficiently broad of beam to provide sleeping quarters on long coastal trips. And her sailing qualities were all that Father Reed had anticipated.

There was only one shipyard on the river capable of producing such a boat - that of the Fogarty Brothers. So there we repaired with our plans. They had never produced anything exactly like her - but they were real ship-builders, capable of reading plans and following them to the letter. The "Haliotis" was a year in building, and it was not until our return in 1889 that she was ready to be launched.

I christened her, as she started down the ways, with a bottle, not of champagne, although we could well have afforded it, but more appropriately with a bottle of the brew that already had made Milwaukee famous. Needless to say, we could scarcely wait to go for a cruise in her.

In planning the "Haliotis" and getting her started, we made many trips to Fogartyville - and got to know all of the Fogarty family well. One of the most interesting members of the family was Madame Jo. I never knew her last name, but she was the mother of Mrs. William Fogarty, and her little yard was filled with strange and beautiful plants.

One of these was a coffee tree - the first any of us had ever seen. It really had coffee beans on it, and one of Madame Jo's proudest possessions was a letter from a president of the United States thanking her for a shipment of the beans and stating that he had roasted them, served the coffee to a group of friends, and that it was delicious.

He stated that he was amazed that coffee could be grown in this country. And so were we.

Madame Jo treasured that letter and showed it to everyone - and I hope the Fogarty family has saved it or placed it in the Bradenton archives.

I do not remember which president the letter was from, but it must have been before Cleveland's administration - in which we went to Florida. Certainly a personal letter from a president - like a coffee tree - is not to be found in every backyard.

Whether the strange plants Madame Jo grew were brought in by the seafaring Fogarty brothers, or came from the Reasoner nurseries, I do not know. The nursery was Manatee County's most remarkable establishment at that time - and is no less remarkable today.

It was established by the two Reasoner Brothers - one of whom traveled to all parts of the world gathering plants and the seeds of plants he thought might be well adapted to Florida, while the other remained at home and tested them out to see if they would grow. A surprising number did. And, as a result, the Reasoner nursery did a business even at that time, that extended all over Florida and well along the Gulf Coast.

We made use of a hired livery stable rig to drive out there one day, spending the day admiring the plants. Over a sandy road, in which the wheels of the buggy sank below the rims, it was an all-day trip - as, indeed, was any trip of more than a few miles out of town.

Another all-day trip was to the Warners, who lived at Palma Sola, near the mouth of the river. The Warners lived on the highest location on the river - a bluff some twenty feet high, down which ran a flight of wooden steps leading to the customary wharf extending out to deep water.

Most people, however, took the road from Braidentown, which led through a magnificent forest of pines at the base of which grew fragrant evergreen shrubs called rosemary. The deep sand was carpeted with brown pine needles and these, with the rosemary, made the drive aromatic indeed.

The Warners were an unusual family. The senior Mrs. Warner - a charming old lady whose snow-white hair was always topped by a lace cap - had two sons, Harry and Warburton, who was the husband of the "junior" Mrs. Warburton Warner, who lived in a house next door. She also had one daughter, Kate.

The Warburton Warners had one son named Gilbert, and called "Bert" for short, and three daughters Ethel, Alice and Susan. Alice and Susan are still living - Susan in a house of her own and Alice in the old home nearby.

Like the Fogartys in Fogartyville, the Warners formed another family community. And like Madame Jo, they cultivated many new plants. It was here that I first tasted - and did not like - the mango. The mango of that day tasted mainly like turpentine and was so slippery it was claimed the only safe place to eat one was in the bath-tub. They have been much improved and now are one of Florida's specialties. Here, too, I tasted Surinam cherries for the first time. And close by "Miss Kate's" home stood and flourished a tamarind tree - the first and only one I ever saw.

We discovered that the Warners were all Episcopalians - and we had quite a session planning how we might build a House of Worship of our own. The Warners, Leffingwells and a few other families were at that time meeting in various homes, with Judge A. T. Cornwell as lay reader.

For many years, the big Warner home, with its exotic shrubbery, was the traditional site of Sunday school picnics and the annual Easter egg hunt - at which, due to the fondness of some of the boys for brightly tinted eggs, the number collected never totalled with the number put out. Fortunately, no one ever died of egg-dye poisoning after the event - proof, I guess, that the Lord takes care of His own.

#### THE BRIDGE AT WEIR'S CREEK

When Kipling wrote, "East is East and West is West, and Never the Twain shall Meet," he definitely was not referring to East and West Bradenton.

From earliest time, Manatee, Braidentown and Fogartyville were connected by Manatee Avenue - and the Weir's Creek bridge. This may not have been as complicated a structure as that built by Ceasar, but it was complicated enough in those early days.

In compliance with government regulations, which were in effect on even such an insignificant body of water as Weir's Creek, this bridge had been built with a "hump" in the middle to permit sailboats to slip through without the necessity of unshipping their masts, giving it, roughly, the appearance of a dromedary with its head in the sand on one side and its tail in the sand on the other.

Coming to town one day, the two Warner girls drove up this hump on one side and were preparing the more rapid descent on the other when "something," as the old song puts it, "happened, but Heaven knows what." Either the faithful old horse slipped on the boards recently moistened by a shower, or he became frightened. At any rate, he bolted through the railing on one side - and he, the buggy and the two girls were swiftly deposited in the water beneath. Fortunately, the tide was low.

Dr. Ballard, whose house adjoined the Braidentown approach to the bridge, was sitting on his front porch at the time - all the houses along Weir's Creek faced the water rather than the more or less non-existent street - and witnessed the accident. Sounding the alarm, he rushed to the rescue, as did all of the neighbors within reach. They fished the girls out of the water. The old horse, disentangling himself from the harness, made his own way ashore. And, with some difficulty, the buggy also was righted and hauled away.

Later in the day the girls were dried out, purchased their groceries and returned home. But it was more exciting than anything Braidentown had enjoyed in a long time - and that it did not turn out to be a tragedy was due to the fact that the tide happened to be low at the time.

In later days the bridge figured in another accident, when Father A. C. Killefer, who was rector of the Episcopal Church at the time, encountered the grocer's cart in the middle of the structure. The hump had been removed then, in favor of a draw-bridge - the government insisting upon this even though all the boats traveling up the creek at the time did so by virtue of gasoline engines instead of sails.

In those still pre-automobile days, Dr. Killefer visited his widely separated parishioners on a bicycle. Either he was thinking about a sermon or the grocer's boy was thinking about a girl. At any rate, they collided right in the middle of the drawbridge - and the grocer's boy later reported, with much respect, that he had never known anyone with such a command of the English language.

But now it was May - and time to return to Wisconsin. It was time to sow the wheat in the big farm on Lake Butte des Morts, which Father Reed had christened "Lindenwood" because

the house was located in the middle of a grove of linden trees.

He had big plans afoot for the following winter. The big pine tree in the front yard was to be sawed off and converted into an "observatory." The "Halyotis" was to be built and delivered in the fall. A new wharf and boathouse had to be constructed for her. And he had great plans for "modernizing" the orange grove and making it pay. But all this would have to wait. We made the rounds, saying goodby to all our new-found friends from far and near.

We packed - fortunately a lighter job than was required when we came, since many things would be left behind for future use. And having in mind the sketchy manner in which we were compelled to eat on the way down, we prepared a huge basket of food to take with us - everything from fried chicken to home-made cake.

At last the day of departure arrived, and we drove out the long Braidentown pier to board the boat. She was supposed to come back down the river from Ellenton about two in the afternoon, on her return trip to Tampa. Ellenton was around a bend at the head of the bay, so we could not tell exactly when she left the pier there.

After a long wait someone happened to glance *down* the river instead of up - and discovered that the old "Manatee" was still tied up at the Palma Sola pier, below Fogartyville, where she occasionally touched to let off passengers. She had never come any further up the river at all.

Later in the day, the passengers arrived by horse and buggy from Palma Sola - along with the mail bag - and we learned what had happened. She had broken down and would be tied up for an indefinite period undergoing repairs. So we had to return home, eat the lunch we had so carefully prepared, and wait with what patience we could. It was two days later before we got off.

Fortunately, this did not cause us to miss any connections, because, in the absense of both telegraph and telephone, we could not have made any. Indeed, even with the aid of the telegraph, connections were very sketchy in those days. Trains were nearly always late - and if you didn't make a connection with the train you wanted, you just waited until it came along the next day.

It steeled Father Reed, however, in his determination to complete the "observatory" for, as he said, we could then sit in our front yard and see whether the Manatee was coming up the river - or tied up somewhere for the day.

#### ALL ABOARD FOR SARASOTA

One interesting thing about "going north" for the summer is that, when we returned in the fall, there was always something new to observe. In the fall of 1889, it was a new railroad, which extended south from Braidentown to Sarasota, providing that community, for the first time, with regular communication with the "outside world" - if Braidentown might be called that.

Sarasota had no regular steamship service, as did Braidentown and other points on the Manatee River, although it was at the time quite a sizeable town and even boasted a hotel for the benefit of residents of that area.

Father Reed, as an old railroad man, was somewhat piqued over the fact that this railroad - even though no more than ten miles long - had been constructed without his aid or assistance. But it required no particular feats of engineering. The ties were just laid in a straight line through the piney woods - the land being perfectly level - and the rails duly spiked in place.

How the wood-burning locomotive and flat cars got there, I do not know - possibly they were brought in on scows and transferred to the rails at Sarasota. At any rate, it was there, intact, when we returned.

And it was not long before Dr. J. B. Leffingwell and his wife proposed a dance at the hotel in Sarasota.

The good doctor did not, like the Wesleys, quite have "the world for a parish", but he was the only physician in an area that now includes both Manatee and Sarasota counties - making trips, by horse and buggy, from Manatee to Palma Sola and from Braidentown to Sarasota to visit patients.

There were no specialists in those days - Dr. Leffingwell was a family physician who attended to all of the ills that man is heir to. Nor were there any maternity hospitals. He met the stork at the door - if he could get there in time with his horse and buggy. He delivered the babies and watched over them through their early months of colic and teething.

But people did not worry too much about the so-called children's diseases. It was thought that children should have such diseases as chicken pox and mumps as they came along - and so obtain early immunity.

How so many survived is a mystery to me. But Dr. Leffingwell - and the Florida sunshine - prevailed over the community's general ignorance and most of them reached a ripe old age.

At any rate, when one of the doctor's patients, who owned the Sarasota hotel, suggested that some of his Braidentown friends come down for a dance, the idea was seized upon with alacrity as something new and different to do. But when it was suggested that the group take the new railroad's train to Sarasota as being more rapid transportation and easier on the horses, nobody quite realized what they were getting into.

The Braidentown to Sarasota Railroad had no palatial parlor cars. Indeed, it had no day coaches at all. Its rolling stock consisted of several flat-cars, used for hauling lumber, and orange crates and several "stock cars" used for hauling cattle. As the cattle cars were not exactly the cleanest things in the world, we chose a flat-car for transportation.

Orange crates and boxes were laid out on the car - and we sat on these. They definitely were not comfortable and they jolted at every rail connection, but we did not mind, it was a lark. At least, it was at the start.

The locomotive - not too far ahead - burned fat pine for fuel and emitted clouds of dense black smoke, which, since the wind was from the south, soon surrounded us. As the train progressed, we sang such songs as "I've Been Working on the Railroad," "We're 99 miles from Home," "We'll Ride awhile and Walk awhile," "We're 98 Miles from Home," "Clementine" and - speaking of revivals, "The Yellow Rose of Texas," which was then brand-new and popular.

I leave it to your imagination how we looked when the train finally reached the end of the line in Sarasota - and we proceeded to the hotel. In the words of another old song, we were like the king of the cannibal island who had "forty wives as black as soot-forty more of indelible smut!" But we washed up as best we could - and had just as good a time at the dance as if we had ridden there in taxicabs.

Sarasota - the name is supposed to be an abbreviation of "Sierra de Soto" - liberally translated as "The Hill of de Soto" - was not the resort of the wealthy then that it is today. With the exception of the hotel and a few stores, it was smaller, if possible, than Braidentown. Its main street stretched out along the bay front and on this most of the homes - and the hotel - were located. And instead of private yachts, fishing boats lay tied up at its piers.

We danced until the small hours of the morning, when the wood-burning locomotive was shunted to the other end of the string of flat-cars - and we proceeded home.

This time - such was the speed of the train - the wind blew the smoke ahead of us, and, now that it did not particularly matter, we made our way relatively free from smoke and cinders. Arrived in Braidentown, we thanked our hosts. Dr. and Mrs. Leffingwell, and found our way home, tired, smokey, and happy. This was the first of several "special train" parties to Sarasota - and vice-versa.

The Braidentown to Sarasota Railway did not last long. The venture did not prove profitable, even for its simple facilities. And it was many more years before the Seaboard, en route from Tampa to Sarasota, finally bridged the Manatee River and put forth spur lines into Palmetto and Braidentown - lines on which the train carefully backed into both stations and as carefully pulled out again.

The rails, ties, rolling stock and even the road-bed of the old Braidentown-to-Sarasota Railroad have long disappeared. But its memories still remain.

#### THE TELEPHONE COMES TO BRAIDENTOWN

Father Reed had, somehow, missed out on the construction of the Braidentown to Sarasota Railroad. But this does not mean that he had not been busy. The "Haliotis" had been completed and launched, and christened with a bottle of beer.

The "observatory" had been constructed on top of some fifty feet of dead pine tree - fortunately with no casualties among the carpenters, who freely expressed themselves on the subject of what they considered "the craziest job they had ever tackled."

And he had developed into the region's first orange grove scientist - in a period when agricultural colleges were still being established. He ran the land turtles - locally known as gophers - out of their sandy domain among the orange trees by tilling the soil and planting beggar-weed, supposed to provide new fertility to the soil.

At picking time, he devised an iron pan set on top of a long pole. Filled with sulphur and set afire, this pan, not unlike the brazier which led the Children of Israel through the wilderness with a "pillar of fire by night," proved deadly to the wasps that infested the trees and impeded the orange pickers in their work.

Unhampered by the cold, which kills wasps in other sections of the country, these insects build nests often a yard in diameter and containing as many fighting warriors as a hornet's nest.

He purchased and put in use one of the first orange graders in the county. And he waged unremitting and unsuccessful war against the white fly which, although itself white, covered the fruit with a film as black as soot.

But this was more or less out of his line. He had decided to settle down permanently in Braidentown, whose sunshine and south breezes had done much to restore him to health. And now he yearned for something that would provide more familiar engineering problems.

Alexander Graham Bell supplied it. To have a telephone system, you must first have an exchange and Braidentown had no building suitable for this purpose. So it was proposed to build one. This took the form of the first brick building to be constructed in the town-and there were quite a number of skeptics, armed with the Biblical quotation about the house built on sand instead of rock, who claimed that it couldn't be done.

True, there was nothing under Braidentown but sand. But none of the skeptics had visited New Orleans or seen the lotus-columned Federal Building, so they did not know that a masonry building can be built on nothing but bottomless mud, if it becomes necessary.

The new store and exchange building was two stories in height and was decorated across the front with a row of iron pillars supporting a gallery. The main floor housed the general store of H. G. Reed and Oliver Stuart-and the embryonic tele-

phone exchange. The second floor carried-off all things-an opera house, known as Warren's Opera House.

This was reached by a long flight of stairs up to one side, and had a complete stage, with dressing rooms for the actors, and a series of doors opening onto the balcony at the rear, where the patrons could cool off between acts. The floor was flat-at last providing a dance floor for the young people of Braidentown-and was supplied with chairs instead of the usual folding seats. And, for the first time, Manatee County could provide a place for the road companies that were popular in those days.

A little later, when Gilbert and Sullivan became popular, the young people of the community staged "The Mikado," "H. M. S. Pinafore," and most of the other famous operettas "on their own" -and had a lot of fun doing so.

But I started to tell about the telephone exchange. In establishing the first telephone lines in Braidentown, the Reeds formed a father-and-son team that proved quite effective. The father supplied the mechanical ability and the son, who had previous to this time, been somewhat of a play-boy, furnished the energy needed for the enterprise. Soon nearly all of the homes in the little community had telephones installed in them.

And what telephones! They were fastened to the wall in some convenient place and at what was supposed to be a convenient height for conversation-but, of course, no two people were exactly the same height, so the telephones were supplemented by everything from books to chairs to stand on. They resembled old-fashioned coffee grinders more than anything else.

You turned the crank at the side. Then the operator asked for the number you wanted-everyone was supplied with a book containing the numbers in the system, and eventually, if there was no trouble on the line, you got the person you wanted.

The fact that you had to stand up to use the telephone may have shortened some conversations-but not many. And it was not long before customers demanded that their telephones be installed at chair height and that was that.

Soon lines began to be extended to Manatee, Fogartyville and even to Sarasota. But the problem was to get to Tampa. Eventually this was solved by an underground cable across the Manatee River - a real engineering feat in those days - which tied in

Palmetto and eventually was extended as far north as Tampa to really connect Braidentown with the outside world.

As a railroad builder and later as superintendent, Father Reed had a working knowledge of the telegraph which proved indispensable in the installation of a telephone system-which, after all, was a simplification of the telegraph-and, with the financial backing of most of the town's leading citizens and a son to carry on the construction work, the venture was a success-one of the first of its kind in Florida.

It was not until many years later that the privately-owned system was purchased and incorporated into the present Southern Bell Telephone and Telegraph Company.

#### BRAIDENTON LOSES AN "T"

Braidentown was growing up. For one thing, it was a sportsman's and fisherman's paradise. True, there were no automobiles and no long bridges connecting the mainland with the various keys bordering on the Gulf of Mexico. But nearly everyone owned some sort of a sailboat with which to traverse the blue-and-green waters of Tampa Bay and Sarasota Bay.

And, with rail transportation from Sarasota to Braidentown, with water transportation from the Manatee River to Tampa, orange groves proved a profitable proposition. The fruit could be readily gotten to market, and the sandy roads that led out of Braidentown began to be lined with orange and grapefruit groves.

Finally, a tourist trade began to develop-people who, like Father Reed, were tired of the rigors of a northern climate and, after spending a few winters in Braidentown, decided to move there permanently.

Perhaps the first indication of growing pains was the selection of Braidentown as the county site. This was hotly contested by Manatee, which felt that it had a prior right as an older-and at that time a larger town. Indeed, if Manatee had been named the county site at that time it probably would have become the leading community in that area. Certainly it would have been significant and appropriate - although having a river, a county and a county site all with the same name might have been too much of a good thing.

In any event, there seems little question that at one time-before the section became too civilized-the manatee, or sea cow, *did* inhabit the upper reaches of the river, this being one of the few places in North America where it has ever been seen.

With Braidentown selected as the county site, the next progressive step was to build a county courthouse and, after much discussion about it, the site of the town's first and only church was decided upon.

The Presbyterian Church was accordingly moved from its location on Main Street to a lot that had been purchased at the corner of Manatee and Prospect avenues, right across the street from Dr. Ballard's.

The Ballards were delighted, as they were pillars of that Church and now found it very handy indeed. Only one member of their household objected. That was little Georgie Prime, whose mother had lived with the Ballards ever since her husband had died.

Mrs. Prime, too, was a staunch Presbyterian and a leader in all of its woman's activities-hence Georgie was detailed to go across the street, open the doors and windows, and ring the bell for all church services. That he escaped building the fires, too, was only due to the fact that they were unnecessary in Florida's mild winter weather. Georgie was a great pal of mine-and I must say that I sometimes sympathized with him.

Now that Braidentown was the county site, and a courthouse under construction, several leading citizens decided that it was high time something was done about the sand that constituted the city's streets.

Fortunately, the solution was close at hand. In the Indian shell mound at the mouth of the river were countless tons of oyster shell - ready to be used. Furthermore, this mound was close to navigable water - so it was a simple matter to load the shell on barges and tow them to the foot of Main Street - which was the first one to be paved.

I do not remember how those barges were moved, before gasoline engines came into being. Perhaps it was by steam tug. But soon Main Street was paved as far as the courthouse square - then Prospect Avenue was paved. Finally Manatee Avenue and a few other cross streets were paved - if it might be called that.

Carriage and wagon wheels soon crushed the first shells-and the shoes of the horses eventually crushed the rest of the area to produce ribbons of gleaming white that criss-crossed Braidentown and eventually extended all over the county.

Being named the county site soon brought other ventures to Braidentown. The Reed and Stuart general store, which had enjoyed a virtual monopoly on everything from straw hats to sharp-pointed shoes for some years, began to have competition. The town's first drug store was opened on Main Street by a Dr. DeTar. Although a physician as well as a pharmacist, he did not practice, as did Dr. Leffingwell, but contented himself with filling prescriptions and dispensing drugs for the community.

A surveyor, Mr. Edwin Camp, appeared out of nowhere to lay out the streets in a more orderly fashion and put some semblance of geometry into what had previously been a series of cow paths.

Finally, the cigar box post office was replaced by a brick building which had lock boxes for those who wished to come and get their mail - and getting the mail was the high point in the day for many citizens who, when oranges were not being picked or court in session, had little else to do.

Finally, someone pointed out that Mr. Braden, for whom the town had been named, did not have an "i" in his name - and it was duly left out of the town's nomenclature - although a great many years were to pass before another enterprising citizen decided that Bradentown was no longer a town - and that the name should be shortened to its present form - Bradenton.

#### THE FOUNDING OF CHRIST CHURCH

The beginnings of Christ Episcopal Church, whose new building has been completed on West Manatee Avenue, were simple indeed. They consisted of less than a dozen people, meeting in homes for services under the leadership of Judge Cornwell, who served as lay reader, and it was quite a few years before there were enough communicants to consider building a small chapel.

A few winters after we had made our first trip to Braidentown, however, this small group had increased sufficiently to finance a building of its own-and the question of where the church was to be located then came up.

There is something about a body of water - even so small a stream as Weir's Creek - that tends to divide communities. The people east of the creek wished the church to be located in Braid-entown and those west of it wanted it in what was then Fogartyville.

Father Reed offered two lots on Prospect Avenue for a location in town, and the Williamson family countered with an offer of as many lots on the east side of what was then Sarasota Avenue - now 26th street, I believe, with the proviso that they should be buried in the graveyard there. Thus matters stood when the time came for us to go North for another summer.

When we returned next fall, the congregation had taken a vote and decided upon the Williamson location. The Braidentown contingent had simply been out-voted by members of the congregation living in Fogartyville and Palma Sola.

Father Reed was not so fortunate as his friend, Dr. Ballard. Instead of having his church located right on the corner, he had to hitch up Old Kit and drive a mile to it. Fortunately, it was located in a grove of pine trees, to which horses could be conveniently hitched during services. He took the matter with good grace, however, always contributing generously and during the last years of his life serving as Senior Warden.

The first Christ Church was, of necessity, a frame building, for the cost of transporting brick or stone to Braidentown was prohibitive. But the little frame building, designed and built by a member of the congregation - Mr. Harry Wadham - was quite dignified and churchly in appearance. It had a steep roof, supported by cross girders, Gothic windows - which in the absence of air conditioning, opened out to take advantage of whatever stray breeze might wander in - and a tall spire and belfry.

The windows had panes of colored glass - but the chancel window, given by the Cornwell family in memory of Mrs. Cornwell's father, was a beautiful piece of stained glass and, I dare say, the only real stained glass window at that time south of Tampa.

Its bell was Christ Church's most unusual feature. Cast in France by a famous bell-casting firm, it weighed six or seven hundred pounds, and had a beautiful tone. Fogartyville boys took turns ringing the bell for church services - and each New Year's Eve, they would get together and ring the old year out and the

new one in - a procedure usually lasting for at least half an hour. In this manner, the year 1900 was rung in - though whether it marked the 19th or the 20th century, no one was ever able to decide.

For several years, Christ Church operated as a mission, with a clergyman coming down from Tampa once a month to hold services and Judge Cornwell "filling in" for the other three Sunday's. But it was a place in which to meet.

Finally the services of the Rev. Mr. TenBroeck were secured on a full-time basis. The Rev. TenBroeck was a recluse who had bought a grove and built a small home for himself near the headwaters of Weir's Creek - where, at that time, he was far enough away from everyone as any recluse could possibly want to be. He had an independent income, a small sailboat, and subscriptions to just about every magazine in print, which he gathered in on occasional visits to town to replenish his larder.

Some of his ideas were not considered to be quite orthodox at the time. He held, for one thing, that the Lord and the Devil were co-equal in power and that it was nip and tuck which one would win out in the end - a heresy, if such it was, which has appealed to me at various times since. And when a misfortune occurred - like a hurricane or a long drought causing the orange crop to drop and be lost or a freeze blackening the trees, he always said that "the devil simply squirted it down on us." As, indeed, he may well have.

The Rev. Mr. Ten Broeck, so far as I know, was never actually unfrocked for this little heresy. But he would much rather stay home and read or go sailing in his small boat than visit the parishioners. So he eventually was displaced by someone more "active", to put the matter in its most kindly light.

In later years, when it became obvious that Bradentown, not Fogartyville, was to be the county's metropolis, a new church was built in town - and once more Weir's Creek became the embattled dividing line.

A compromise was finally reached by utilizing the old building as a Sunday school - while a handsome Gothic stone building was erected in town. Well - it wasn't quite of stone. In the meantime, a process of simulating stone had been invented, forming artificial stone blocks from sand, cement and water - and the second Christ Church was constructed of these materials.

As for the Williamson's dream of a county church-yard in which, after the Anglican fashion, they were to be interred; it dissolved-leaving them in lonely graves in the midst of a small grove of pines-and a serious problem to the community, which had a private cemetery on its hands in the midst of a growing residential district. Such is the "American Way of Life."

#### THE GAY NINETIES

In those days, we went to church morning and evening on Sundays - many of us driving for miles to attend the services in horse-drawn vehicle. Younger children were expected to attend Sunday school - and when they got older, to go to church. And most of them did. There were no Sunday night dances for the young people as there are today. Nor were there parish houses to attend to their needs. Indeed, young people got along as best they could for entertainment.

Yet vandalism was unknown. I can recall only one case in those early days. After the new Christ Church had been built down-town and the old one virtually abandoned, some boys broke open the corner stone of the old building, stole the few coins it contained, and scattered the papers about the yard. They were apprehended later and given a lecture on the sin of vandalism and the sacreligious nature of this particular act. But that was all the punishment they received. Those were the Gay Nineties. Our friends were scattered over a wide area-but that made visiting all the more exciting. To visit the Fogartys or the Warners, one turned off 26th Street - then known as Sarasota Avenue - and took a winding road along the banks of the Manatee River. Where it turned west to Fogartyville, there was a little stream bridge and a series of wobbly planks over which we had to drive very carefully. Then came a forest of oak trees. And, finally, Capt. John Fogarty's general store and shipyard. The little stream filled up with sand and the oak trees disappeared-and now exist only in the memories of some of the older inhabitants.

Captain Tole had a large two-story home, with wide verandas across the front and a parlor large enough to hold a dance in and, with his two sons and three lively daughters, we spent

many an enjoyable evening under his roof. And I need not add that the long drive home was equally enjoyable.

We found plenty to do in those days. Once in a while a band of Seminole Indians would come to town, dressed in bright colors. They would stand and stare at us - and I must confess we would stand and stare at them. The Reed and Stuart store was usually their magnet. There were no cash registers in those days and little "trolleys" with baskets were dispatched from various vantage points to the office at the rear of the establishment.

These were a never-failing source of amusement - and amazement to the Seminoles. I must admit they were something of the same to us. At any rate, the Seminoles never said a word in making a purchase. They would point at the merchandise they wanted, which would be paid for, wrapped and delivered to them in equally solemn silence. Then they would watch the transfer of the money to the office and return of the change in the little wire basket with delight. I believe they always bought more than they intended - just to watch the basket. And I know it was one of the town's chief attractions. Then, there was the Opera House. When a touring opera company could not be secured, we put on our own local talent plays. Looking back, I can see some of the talent was not so good. But Gilbert and Sullivan provided an outlet for our histrionics-and "H.M.S. Pinafore" was an oft-repeated favorite. What we lacked in training we made up for in enthusiasm-and we always played to full houses. What was more the town re-echoed to the strains, hummed or whistled, of "I washed the windows and swept the floor" for days.

We even had a mandolin club. Mandolins were popular in those days and, with the aid of a piano, a trap drummer and a violin or two, we could put on a quite passable concert.

Then, of course, there was the "Haliotis." She was large enough to carry quite a party - and many a cruise we had to the outlying islands - even to Sarasota and return in her.

With the little church completed, Mother Reed called a meeting of the ladies of the congregation at our home, and a Women's Guild was organized to raise the money for such incidentals as altar coverings, carpeting for the aisle and chancel, prayer books and hymnals. This led to still more activity. Each year we had a social on our lawn - complete with Japanese lanterns and a fortune teller's booth-to raise money for the Guild.

I distinctly remember one dear old lady who bought gadgets at the ten-cent store for a dime-and sold them in her booth for five cents. She had a tremendous business for a while - but, fortunately for the Guild's finances, the ten-cent store soon ran out of stock.

The Gay Nineties ended with the Spanish-American war. Tampa became the headquarters for operations against Cuba. The Tampa Bay Hotel, just completed, became a sort of unofficial officer's club. And the Great White Fleet came to anchor, for a time, in Tampa Bay.

We crowded the rails of the little "Manatee" to view the ships at anchor as we passed them by. It was our one and only chance to view the United States Navy at its best. Then we had dinner at the Tampa Bay- a never-to-be-forgotten highlight in our lives.

It was popular, then, to catch chameleons, and fasten them with a little gold collar and chain to the coat lapels of the ladies -a high style that I had never seen before and never have witnessed since.

But after the troops left for Cuba, we returned to a Bradenton that would never be quite the same again.

#### THE ROOF-RAISING

We did not have radios, televisions or even phonographs in those days. Nor did we miss them. What with trips to the "keys," amateur operettas, a mandolin club, the Women's Guild and its annual "bazaar" and a little bridge club that met once a week, we found plenty of amusement.

The one draw-back, from Father Reed's viewpoint, was that the house he had bought was too small to admit of dances or large parties of any sort, and he proposed to remedy this as soon as possible.

He had two choices-to tear the old house down and rebuild, or to enlarge it. He chose to enlarge it-and the method he took was quite unusual. Not wishing to live in a hotel-or rent a houseboat, as one family did while its house was under construction-he determined *to live at home and enlarge the house at one and the same time.*

Among other things which he had brought to Florida with him was a drawing board and set of instruments, which had been placed in his "office nook" along side of his big roll-top desk, which was supposed to have a secret compartment, but successfully resisted all efforts to find it. Now he set about designing a house which could be built over the one we occupied.

The result was a masterpiece of ingenuity - if not, as I now realize, of architecture. It left the first floor of the old house intact, added a room on the north side and a complete new second story and left that vital part of the establishment-the kitchen-intact while rebuilding operations were in progress.

The end results were remarkable. It resembled, in plan, a "T" with a short one-story stem-the kitchen-and a long top, which was the two-story house proper.

On brick piers, with two massive chimneys, it certainly met all of Father Reed's ideas about more spacious living. Since there was no city water at that time, all water being drained off the roof and stored in cisterns for the dry season, the ridge-pole was decorated with a scroll-work designed to keep off the buzzards, who contributed nothing to the purity of our water supply.

And, in lieu of the then-unknown air-conditioning, the porch was extended around three sides of the house-with a hammock, I remember, strung across each corner. Thus, whether the breeze came from the north, east or west, one could always catch it with a book and a glass of lemonade. Since we raised our own lemons, we never lacked this.

Although, to be fair, Father Reed preferred a toddy in the evening to any of Florida's native drinks which, in the absence of canning factories, had to be made-and drunk-on the spot as it were.

The highlight of this "re-construction period" occurred one morning when the carpenters employed on the job discovered a five-gallon jug of orange wine Father Reed had made and stored in the attic to age. They imbibed of this, not wisely but too well, with the result that very little work was done for several days-much to the mystification of both Father Reed and the contractor until the empty wine jug was found stashed away behind a pile of lumber!

Occasionally one reads of treasure being found when an old house is being remodelled or torn down. But this is one of the few cases on record where a jug of wine was unearthed-or unroofed, as the case may be. And it ranks along with the time, much later, when a still was found in the belfry of Christ Church. It did not, however, gain the bad publicity of the still.

The remodelling gave us virtually a three-story house since, when visitors from "up north" arrived, the younger members of the family were parked in two attic rooms, at each end of the building, thus providing more space for the older members of the family.

When remodeling was completed, came the task of furnishing all those extra rooms. And such furnishings, I dare say, were never seen before nor have they been seen since. The living room had a fire-place set with tile and topped by a mantel on which stood a gilt French figurine clock carefully kept under a glass case and wound up once a week.

The living room table was of mahogany with a marble top on which reposed an old-fashioned kerosene lamp. Indeed, for many years people in Bradentown had to depend on kerosene lamps and either wood or gasoline stoves for cooking, as the town had neither gas nor electricity to serve the purpose. Even when electric lights were installed, Mother Reed refused to use them in her room, claiming they were "bad for the eyes!"

The rest of the furniture-believe it or not-was of wicker. Period design? I guess it must have been "Teddy Roosevelt" period - for our bedrooms had grass mat carpeting and our beds were of iron, with many fancy curlicues.

But it was all "high style" in those days - if sometimes a trifle mixed up - and, anyway, Bradentown folks went in more for comfortable living than style. And I doubt if there was anyone south of Atlanta who could have told the difference between Chippendale and Hepplewhite.

At last we had a home big enough to give parties in-and with sufficient bedroom space to accommodate visitors-and that was the main thing. And whatever we may have lacked in style we made up for in spaciousness.

HOUSEBOAT ON THE MANATEE

With the remodeling of "Winter Cheer Cottage"-now, alas, no longer a cottage - we did not have to wait long for guests, for Father Reeds oldest son, Harry, and his family began coming to Bradentown each winter for a month.

These trips were sponsored, paid for and largely managed by his father-in-law, A. J. W. Pierce, who had fallen in love with Florida as Father Reed had previously done, and who now made the trip an annual event. Sometimes he brought the whole family along - and he never failed to bring less than three or four with him on these expeditions.

He never quite reached Father Reed's decision to move to Florida - but as long as he lived, the after-Christmas pilgrimage to Bradentown was an annual event.

A great fisherman, the high point in his Florida fishing occurred when, on a trip up the Little Manatee, he hooked and landed a four-foot alligator which, somehow, got on his hook instead of the expected bass.

He had quite a struggle landing the "critter," as he called it, and even a tougher time tying it up in the boat, but eventually he brought it back, sank a tub of water under a tree in the back yard, and tethered it by means of a stout rope.

The alligator, however, had no intention of staying put. It promptly chewed the rope in two, scrambled out of the tub and, with unerring instinct, made its way to the waters of Weir's Creek, where it lived for some time and never, so far as I know, got hooked again.

On one trip South, Mr. Pierce learned of the house-boat in which a family and lived while having their home built, and was seized with an idea. Why not a house-boat trip to the keys?

Gasoline engines had come in by then, and Dr. Leffingwell's oldest son, Jack, had a launch-which he had outfitted with rakish masts and a false stack to look, at a distance, about four times as large as it really was.

Mr. Pierce promptly rented the house-boat and engaged Jack to tow it out to Anna Maria Key - and come back for it when a two-weeks stay had been completed. The house-boat, what with the two Reed families and his unmarried daughter, Nannie,

would be a bit crowded, it must be admitted. But wouldn't it be fun? It was!

The day set for the cruise was not particularly auspicious. Clouds kept banking up in the north and a norther was predicted, but Father Pierce was "rarin' to go" and Jack was sure he could make the turn south at the mouth of the Manatee before it began to blow - so we started out.

Unfortunately, the wind struck before anyone had anticipated and Jack's brave little launch was not quite equal to the task of pulling a house-boat against it. After battling all day only to reach Palma Sola, we had our choice of returning home-or spending the night at the "cut-off."

The "cut-off" was a channel, dredged across a narrow spit of land to connect Terra Ceia Bay with the Manatee River to shorten the trip made by the river boats. In making it, the dredge had simply thrown the sand up on either side, after the manner of a Mississippi levee, and "bolted" it in place with heavy piling and planking. Back of the low "levee" on either side was a jungle of mangroves.

It was not exactly an inspiring camping site, but by that time all of us - and particularly Jack - were ready to welcome any place at which we could tie up for the night. What none of us realized was the tide - as was often the case when a norther was blowing, was unusually high - and that, after the blow was over, would be unusually low. We learned the hard way.

We built a fire and had a wonderful time that evening. Go home? Of course not-next morning the norther would have blown itself out and we would be on our way.

We slept so hard no one noticed that the house-boat, tied to the shore, had begun to tilt more and more. But when we woke up the front end was high and dry - and no amount of pulling on the part of Jack's tug could get it off!

The men had a wonderful time. They found a patch of woods a little way back from the canal and pitched a tent - and if there had been boy scouts at that time would really have had themselves a jamboree.

For the women, it was not so amusing. We watched the pelicans diving for fish -but most of all we watched the waves as they lapped the stern of our house-boat, in the vain hope that

the tide might be coming back so we could be pulled off.

Instead of coming back, it went further out all that day, so that the table tilted at an uncomfortable angle and it was almost impossible to sleep in the bunks.

That evening, at supper, Nannie declared that she had not come all the way to Florida to be marooned in a "throw-up." Since it had not been rough and nobody had been sea-sick on the trip, we pressed her for an explanation.

"Well," she said, "that dredge threw the sand up on either side, didn't it? So I guess that makes it a throw-up!" Thereafter the cut-off became the "throw-up" in our family conversation.

We never got any further on that trip. By the time the tide finally came back, most of the week had passed. Both Nannie and Harry's oldest daughter, Kathie, were dead set about not going on with the expedition any further. They contended that they had seen enough sand, sea-gulls and pelicans to last the rest of their lives. And the thought of home and a fire in the parlor fireplace - a norther can be cold in Florida - finally induced everybody to have Jack tow us home, once he had succeeded in pulling us off the bank.

Only Mr. Pierce had regrets. He averred that he had seen another alligator sunning himself on a log in one of the bayous near the "throw-up" - and he was certain he could have caught it, if we had stayed a day or two longer. Much as he wanted one, to be stuffed by a taxidermist, he never even got a claw for a watch-fob.

#### DECADE OF PROGRESS

The period between 1900 and 1910 was, for Bradentown, a decade of progress. Not that growth was not accompanied by some "growing pains," for it was. But the gains, in the long run, more than overcame the losses sustained.

By 1900 the town had grown to the point where it could support two doctors - and Dr. F. C. Whitaker, who had recently completed his medical education in Atlanta, Ga., hung up his shingle. In time a third doctor - Dr. H. C. Baer, who had graduated from the medical school in Charleston, S. C., also joined the group.

Curry's Point, which lay between Weir's Creek and the Manatee River, and, with the exception of the Curry's residence had been a wilderness of palmettoes, scrub pine and cactus and the abode of opossums, raccoons, wild-cats and other "varmints," was subdivided and cleared and became Bradentown's first subdivision.

With all boarding houses filled up in the growing "tourist season," the time had now come for a real hotel-and the Manavista Hotel was built on the river's edge at Main Street. It was an imposing edifice of artificial stone - and it introduced Bradentown to the art of "filling in" the area along the river by means of a sea wall and a dredge pumping sand from the bottom of the Manatee River.

Soon everyone with river or creek frontage was taking advantage of this relatively inexpensive method of adding to their acreage.

The old Ballard school was replaced by a new two-story frame high school - the only fully accredited high school in the county - to which students came, not only from Manatee, Bradentown and Palma Sola, but from Palmetto, across the river. Miss Sue, relieved now of teaching *all* the grades in the school, took over the primary grades-and continued to teach for many years.

Electric power came to Bradentown, in the shape of a power plant, built on the river bank to insure "water delivery" of coal -the only fuel then in use for that purpose. Since South Florida had no hills - only the Indian shell mounds - water power was simply unavailable.

John A. Graham - afterwards Major Graham - was responsible for the power plant. A native of Manatee who had gone north and made a fortune in the business world, Mr. Graham had returned to Manatee with his charming wife, a son and a daughter, and had built a beautiful home on the banks of the river.

Now he conceived the idea of building a power plant and an electric trolley line to connect all of the towns strung along the south bank of the Manatee. For some reason best known to itself, the city council refused to let the tracks be laid on Mana-

tee Avenue - the logical location for such a venture - so they were laid several blocks south.

Nor were they laid on Sarasota Avenue-now 26th street-which was another main-travelled street-but a block further west, where they terminated in a long pier and modern warehouse designed to capture the "steamer trade."

It was wonderful-while it lasted. But there just was not enough trade to keep the trolleys in operation and eventually the line was abandoned - and Mr. Graham's efforts were concentrated on the electric power plant.

Bradentown's first street lights-each consisting of two carbon sticks forming an arc and attracting all of the night-flying insects within-were installed and electric lights began to replace kerosene lamps in the homes.

A proposal to install "tower" lights was vetoed by the government, which feared that they might be mistaken for the lighthouse at the entrance to Tampa Bay and so cause wrecks.

Next came the railroad. It didn't exactly come either to Bradentown or Palmetto but at a point somewhere between, with spur tracks backing into both towns, as it preceded by the shortest possible route to a terminus at Punta Gorda.

The demise of the trolley line and advent of the railroad inspired the following from one of Bradentown's would-be poets:

There was a man in our town  
And he was wondrous wise.  
He built a great, long trolley track,  
But much to his surprise  
He found that street-cars didn't pay  
And so, with might and main,  
He jumped onto his trolley track  
And pulled it up again!

Another man in our town,  
The mayor, good and wise,  
He watched them pulling up the rails  
And burning up the ties;  
And, as he watched the mournful scene,  
The mayor said, "We must  
Have another kind of railroad track  
In the place of the one that's bust!"

And so, into his fertile brain,  
 There popped a little scheme;  
 'Twas to have another tram come down-  
 The kind that's run by steam,  
 And now the locomotive's shriek  
 Has replaced the trolley's gong-  
 But we sadly miss those trolley rides  
 As we slowly walk along.

We did not have to walk, however, for many years before the automobile came to our rescue. The first pre-Ford ones had a door at the back through which we entered. We all wore long coats, called "dusters," and long chiffon veils around our heads to keep our hats on as well as to protect our complexions - or as much of them as the Florida sun, on cruises, fishing trips and outings to "the beach" had not yet ruined.

Finally a municipal water system replaced our roof-drains and cisterns. The water, from artesian wells, was strongly sulphurous - an indication, some said, that Florida really was close to the "other place" - but at least we no longer had the duty of fishing an occasional dead rat out of our water supply.

As for the sewage system - for those living on the river or creek it was very simple. We just ran the lines down to the water and let it go at that.

And as for culture - we had it in the form of a one-room public library, built by public subscription and without benefit of Andrew Carnegie. Everybody contributed what spare books they had - I remember Mother Reed contributed a complete set of Godey's Ladies' Book to the cause - and a small membership fee kept things going once a small start had been made.

Yes, pioneer days were over. But, if there were discomforts, we did not seem to mind them. Nor did we much miss the modern conveniences the twentieth century was to bring.

Life was simple and relatively inexpensive. And the fact that we had to make our own fun rather than have it brought to us by radio and television made it, as it now seems to me, all the more enjoyable.