

1962

The Editor's Corner

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Recommended Citation

Society, Florida Historical (1962) "The Editor's Corner," *Florida Historical Quarterly*. Vol. 41 : No. 1 , Article 14.

Available at: <https://stars.library.ucf.edu/fhq/vol41/iss1/14>

THE EDITOR'S CORNER

We continue in this number the reminiscences of Florida, begun in our January issue, by the late Jane D. Brush of Michigan. Mrs. Brush was the wife of Alanson P. Brush, a pioneer of the automobile industry.

* * * *

TALES OF OLD FLORIDA

by JANE D. BRUSH

CHAPTER III

ALZARTI HOUSE

HERE WE ARE back at Alzarti House again; but I do not believe you have been properly introduced to this charming old Florida home, and Alzarti House deserves something more than a casual introduction. To appreciate it fully one should know something of its background. This house of simple but gracious lines was built by Mr. William H. Whitaker, first white settler of Sarasota, who lived in a much more imposing house higher up on the bluff overlooking Sarasota Bay. Much of this bay shore land belonged to Mr. Whitaker and he deeded a goodly piece of it to his oldest daughter, Nannie, and built this house for her as a wedding present. Nannie Whitaker was to marry "Johnnie" Helveston. An old Spanish sea captain named Alzarti, had given up his sea-faring ways and had "squatted" on the exact spot the young couple wanted for their home. The old captain must have been something of a character, for even after his shack had been moved and a new house had been built on its former location, people kept referring to it as "the Alzarti place." Perhaps because the Spanish name fitted in with early Sarasota legends, or perhaps just because they liked the sound of the name - the young couple decided to keep it as the name of their new home. Some old records refer to this region as "Alzarti Acres," but the big sign they had painted to put over their door

said "Alzarti House." That is what it was called when I first knew it and as Alzarti House it lives in my memory.

When we went down there on our first visit, the old people, Mr. and Mrs. William Whitaker, were gone and their big family of boys and girls were very much scattered. The imposing old house high on the bluff was almost in ruins - most of its fine furniture had been moved to the newer house which seemed to be taking the place of the old deserted house. The beautiful piece of shore line which went with the house built for Nannie Helveston, did not give the young couple any commercial advantage, except as an inviting location for entertaining guests. Their family was small - they had only the one son, Furman - but the Whitaker family had wealthy and influential members in the North. Some of these relatives formed the habit of coming South each winter, and gradually the reputation of this charming southern home spread. Soon Nannie Helveston had as many guests each winter as she could possibly care for. The youngest Whitaker daughter, Flora, had married the son of a prominent citizen of Birmingham, Michigan, Frank Brooks, one of my husband's friends. They had built a home just where the Whitaker Bayou empties into Sarasota Bay. Frank and Flora were not in their home that winter, but Frank's sailboat was anchored in the Whitaker Bayou and had been put at our disposal. We made good use of it. About halfway between Alzarti House and the Brooks place was an attractive little cottage which took the overflow when Alzarti House was crowded. Back of the big house were some trees, mostly guavas and orange, with one fine fig tree. This was not a grove, but was enough to keep the family supplied with fruit. Back among these trees were two small houses. In one of them lived a fine up-standing southern woman, John Helveston's mother. Her grandson, Furman, must have taken after her, for he was over six feet tall. Her own son, John, or "Johnnie" as she always called him, was much shorter. It may have been because there were three Mrs. Helvestons in this group that Mrs. John Helveston was so generally called Nannie.

In the second small house at the back of the Helveston place lived Furman, his really beautiful wife Ida, and Mabel, who with her reddish blond hair, fair skin, and sunny disposition, resembled her grandmother, Nannie Whitaker Helveston. Why do I write so much of this group of houses and these people? Be-

cause they are so much a part of the "Old Florida" I want to picture, and I hope I can show them in something of the beautiful simplicity of their lives and their characters. These people gave their guests (that is what we were, even though we paid for our room and board) not only a warmhearted hospitality, but they made us to quite an extent, a part of the simple informality of their lives. They shared with us their knowledge of local scenes and characters, with all sorts of odd bits of information: what farm to drive to for the best oranges ("much better than you can get at the big groves"), if you want some grapefruit, "go to the Phillips place. There is one tree there (and old seedling) that bears the best fruit to be found in Florida." For stone-crabs "go to the flats beyond Bird Key." Did we want some guava jelly to take back North with us? "Don't go to so-and-so's - they make theirs of sweet guavas, sweet syrupy stuff not fit to eat. Sweet guavas are all right for canning, but only sour guavas should be used for jelly." "Don't go fishing down on the dock today. Those old rovallias are there; they drive every good fish away." I have never been able to identify absolutely those "old rovallias" but I have seen them - ungainly, chunky fellows, said not to be fit to eat, and they did drive the good fish away.

Nannie Helveston was a perfect hostess for that kind of living, where the commercial element was so in the background that you forgot that you were anything but a welcome guest. Her big dining room was the gathering place for a somewhat miscellaneous group. Her long dining table had served in the past as the nucleus for family gatherings of the Whitaker clan; now it held such diverse elements as the venerable prelate from Baltimore, Bishop Curtis, and a crusty old man by the name of Smith. No one seemed to know much about him; however, he and Bishop Curtis had one thing in common - they both loved fishing. Mr. Smith was apt to preempt the Helveston's flat-bottomed rowboat and disappear for hours at a time, always showing up, however, at mealtime. Bishop Curtis was more apt to be seen fishing from the old Helveston dock. Many of my fondest early memories of this place center around the old dilapidated dock. It had been an imposing structure at one time, running far out into the bay to deep water. The supporting piles and timbers were still strong but many of the surface boards had

either been worn out or had been washed away by storms. This left dangerous gaps had they not been bridged by boards laid down lengthwise over the open spots. At the outer end of the dock were two detached platforms at different levels. A little at one side, off the corner of the dock, was a high square platform. Before the dock had been badly damaged by one of the fall hurricanes, this had been the landing place for passenger steamers which in earlier days ran between Tampa and Sarasota. The only access to it now was by means of some long planks which made a slanting runway to the higher level. On this square platform stood an old dilapidated canopy which looked as if it had been salvaged from some wrecked boat. Why this antique bit of wreckage was kept, I never heard. Near to the high detached landing place was a lower platform from which one could step into a rowboat.

This lower platform which was quite strong, was not only useful to us in getting into a small boat; it was also the favorite resting place for our tame pelican, old "Bill." Bill haunted our old dock where he picked up many tid-bits discarded from strings of fish brought into the house. "It is easy to make paupers of these fellows," said Al. "They would much rather be fed than to fish for themselves." One day Al tempted Bill with a minnow till he came so close that Al caught him by his big beak. Al handled him gently and the old fellow soon resigned himself to sitting in various poses for his picture with a man companion. He even allowed Al to expand his wings to their full extent. Eight feet they measured from tip to tip. I could never make up my mind as to whether his expression indicated pride or resignation. When Al took his hands away, Bill took a moment to make sure he was free and then flew off but not very far. When he was about to strike the water, he wheeled in true pelican fashion and lit facing us arrogantly. The experience seemed not to have disturbed him at all. He used his favorite resting-place as freely as ever.

My husband had been very anxious to have me like his old playground in the South, and after my first disappointment over Florida pines, I had so fallen in love with its semi-tropical beauty as to satisfy him. My first love was for the live oaks and the different varieties of palm trees, and I was enchanted with some of the blossoming shrubs. It took me a little longer to ap-

preciate the beauty of the pines, but I finally did. My interest in them started when Al showed me places where self-sown forests were trying to spring up. Large areas were nearly covered by young pines, from those just pushing above ground to saplings of all stages of development two, three, four, five or more feet tall. Each of these young pines carried at the top a large head, whose long leaves, or needles, spread out from its base to the tip with a fairy-like grace and beauty. They were very aptly called "pine-crowns"; the name fitted. The top terminal bud made the largest pine crown but the end of each branch held one only slightly smaller. I learned another term when we were driving one day and Mabel exclaimed, "Oh look, mama! The 'candles' are out." Mabel said this as a northern child might have said, "Oh see! The pussy-willows are out!" We looked, and sure enough, there was a young pine on the sunny side of a bank and from the tip of each crown was a pale green bud, its slender needles wrapped so closely about it that at a little distance the tree looked as if it had been decorated with pale wax candles. We knew, however, that as the season rolled by these "candles" would grow, spread out, darken, and by next year they would be the new crop of "pine crown." The time came when the spreading leaves of a newgrowth, long-leaved "pine-crown" seemed one of the most beautiful things I ever saw.

Al was also pleased, interested, and a little amused to find how much I enjoyed fishing. To tell the truth, he did not care a great deal himself for fishing, but he loved handling a boat and enjoyed taking me to places where he knew the fishing was good. If I made a notable catch, as I did several times, he was much more pleased than if he had caught the fish himself.

Al disappeared one morning right after breakfast and I wandered out toward the end of the old dock. Before long I saw him; he was sailing Frank Brooks' cat-boat up from the bayou. As he came near the dock he called out to me, "Janie, what do you say to going out in the Gulf and trolling for king-fish? It's a good day, and I hear they are running."

"You will have to get some tackle," I said. "I've got all kinds of tackle," he said, "Took it down with me when I left the house."

That told me he had set his heart on this sail and I knew

why. I liked sailing in the bay - I was not so keen on the open Gulf. This was a good day so I readily agreed.

Over at the other side of the dock Mr. Smith was putting his fishing-rod and pail of bait into the flat-bottomed boat. Al glanced at the old man and said in a low voice, "What do you say to asking him to go along? Let's give the old fellow some real fishing."

"Go ahead!" I said, though I'm afraid I hardly felt as enthusiastic as I sounded. Al went over and spoke to Mr. Smith but he soon came back, a funny little smile on his face. "The old fellow turned us down," he said. "He was tempted, and he almost yielded, but he finally said, " 'No, I'll go by myself. *You can never catch any fish when a woman's along.*' "

Fate played a shabby trick on Mr. Smith that day, for we had the most spectacular fishing luck I ever saw in Florida, or anywhere else. Al took our little sailboat out into the Gulf and sailed it back and forth parallel to the shore line, for that is where king-fish are most likely to be caught. While he was busy sailing the boat, I stood up in the stern holding a long trolling line. Soon I felt a sharp bite and began pulling in my long line. As the line grew shorter it became more and more difficult to handle, and I had to call for help. Letting the boat come up into the wind, Al came to my rescue. With his help I landed one of the biggest and finest king-fish I ever saw down there. We had been sailing north from New Pass but now Al turned and sailed down toward Big Pass. Once more I had a bite but this fish proved to be not quite as big; I got it up to the boat alone but had to have some help in lifting it into the boat. Then we headed up toward New Pass again. We had gone only a short distance beyond the Pass when I caught my third big fish. By this time the breeze had freshened, which made standing up and handling the line difficult. I was tired. "Al," I said, "these are such big fellows, I think three are enough. Let's go home."

"We've only been out an hour," said Al, "but I noticed the gulls were very busy in the Pass. We'll go in there and see what they are feeding on." We did this and found a most unusual situation. A large school of minnows had drawn the gulls; it had also drawn a school of Spanish mackerel and many bluefish. For another hour Al tacked his boat back and forth across the pass

and as fast as I could pull in the short line and hand it over to Al so he could take them off the hook, I caught fish. Our total catch that day - between fifty and sixty mackerel, over a dozen bluefish and the three very large king-fish, and *a woman caught them all* - though I must admit that my husband took them all off the hook. Poor Mr. Smith, when he saw our remarkable catch, made no comment, but later when they had been strung up to be photographed he very meekly asked if he might stand beside them. I always wondered who got that picture and also, did he tell that *a woman caught those fish*?

Bishop Curtis did not sleep at Alzarti House. He and his sister, who was also his housekeeper, lived at "The Palms," the next place on Sarasota Bay north of Alzarti House. This house, with its beautifully landscaped grounds, was used in the first place as a club for a few families, but it had reverted to private ownership and this winter the popular Catholic Bishop from Baltimore and his sister lived there. They took their meals, however, at Alzarti House.

I enjoyed Miss Curtis. She was everything one could imagine in a typical southern aristocrat. Refined, cultured, well educated, beautifully dressed, but very friendly, she seemed in a class by herself. The South, I reflected, could produce different types, as well as the North. I thought of my southern friend, Ida Helveston, and of her wild ride across the Florida plains. No! I could not see Miss Curtis in such a situation. In fact, I could not see her sleeping in a tent on a bed made of pine boughs, rather, she suggested fine linen and lace. The Bishop, however, was not always beautifully dressed. Frequently I would see him out fishing off the square end of the Helveston dock looking like anything but a Bishop. One day I snapped a picture of him at his favorite pastime. I would try to picture him on a Sunday morning, in the cathedral in his vestments. It was difficult to do so.

That winter one of the Whitaker cousins came down from Boston. He was a pleasant young man and very fond of his Aunt Nannie. The thing that I remember best about him was that he brought with him a small portable phonograph with a big horn and numerous cylindrical recordings. This was new enough at that time to attract a great deal of attention. After dinner the whole family would gather in the big livingroom,

and from there listen to the new instrument. We would hear "Any ra-a-ags, any bottles today? 'Tis the same old song in the same old way. Any ra-a-ags?" etc. Then, after a short interval, we would hear, "For I'm a red-head! ginger-bread-head!" and so on, to the plaintive refrain, "Why wasn't I born a blonde?" After the applause for Nora Bayes had died down we would hear another ditty which ended, "Every little bit, added to what you've got, makes just a little bit more." So we would finally drop asleep with some of the old refrains ringing in our ears. No wonder we never forgot them-that last piece of philosophy especially-Al often quoted it as we added one pleasurable experience after another to the abundance of our lives. My husband was truly a philosopher-no one ever cherished the "little bits" of happy life experience more than he.

I have tried to give you the *feel* of Alzarti House, but how can I make you *see* it as I do? The old ell-type house was somewhat unusual. The ell part was two stories high and was about a third longer than the upright with a broad gallery running its entire length. This gave the house a substantial look. The broad porch with its white columns and well-kept railing gave it a most inviting air. If its white paint had lost a bit of its glaring newness, still it did not look rundown or neglected. It had simply mellowed a little to fit in with the beautiful dignity of the great oaks under whose shadow it stood. Those oaks spoke of age, and around the corner of the upright part of the house stood an old seedling orange tree. This tree was so tall that the oranges on its top branches had been left unpicked, for they were out of reach from an ordinary ladder. My athletic husband had no trouble reaching them; his early training on boats came to his aid. In his youth he had thought nothing of having to "shinny" up a mast to fix the rigging, or just for the view; so now it was simple fun for him to go to the top of that old orange tree. When he came down, the front of his shirt would be full of the most delicious oranges I had ever tasted.

When one looked away from this house, one faced the blue water of Sarasota Bay. Through the branches of the trees could be seen the old dock, running far out to deep water. Fringing the end of the bank which led to the dock was a picturesque assortment of trees-young pines and cabbage palmettos of all sizes.

This is the place to which we came back from our camp on the Myakka. Did we have any other adventures on this first visit south in the early part of the twentieth century? To be sure we did, and my mind is full of them. To tell the truth, everything was so new, so absorbing, so beautiful, that every new experience became an adventure. To go as we did one day to a place in upper Sarasota Bay famous, at least in the Helveston family, as a good fishing spot and inside of an hour and a half catch not ten fish, but ten different kinds of fish-this was so unusual that it became an adventure. If I hadn't written about this at the time-and if I hadn't the faded record before me-I probably would not be able to name the kinds of fish we caught, but here are the names as I wrote them down that day: Spanish mackerel, grouper, black fish, mangrove snapper, grunts, sailor's choice, sheep's -head, shiner, suck-fish, and dogfish. All but the last three of these are good eating.

Then there was the day that Al sailed me down to lower Sarasota Bay-about twenty miles down the coast. There was no dock and he had to roll his trousers and carry me ashore. After landing, we had an adventure with a big gopher snake and I learned about southern hospitality from a most interesting family-the Higels. These and many other things live in my mind and would be interesting to talk about, but there is another series of adventures which came a little later, but which definitely belong to our "Old Florida," and they clamor to be told while the details are clear in my mind. The events just recorded took place in 1904. There were two years of hard work in Detroit before Al could go south again; then, due to certain important changes, he was to have a long vacation. It was to be two months-the longest one he ever had.

This led to two interesting experiences; one a camping-trip, the other a cruise. The camping-trip I want to tell about because it differs so from the Myakka experience. The cruise deserves even more attention for conditions were changing so rapidly in Florida, particularly in the Everglades region, that very soon not only would we not be able to repeat it, but neither could anyone else. We had what might well be called a unique experience. My next two chapters tell the story of these experiences.

(Continued in the next issue)

Mr. Robert M. Adams, Box 393D Route 2, Palmetto, has presented us with the following essay which gives us a charming, imaginative, and romantic impression of the lower Gulf coast region.

* * * *

THE ROMANCE OF SNEAD ISLAND

by ROBERT M. ADAMS

Any fisherman on the lower Gulf coast can locate Snead Island for you by routing you from Palmetto west on Tenth Street and across "Humpback Bridge" - a focal point for fishermen for many years. It is where you load up with gas for your boat and lay in a good supply of shrimp for a day's fishing in Terra Ceia Bay, the Manatee River, or Tampa Bay, for all three of these bodies of water surround Snead Island. This little-known island has been preserved for people who seek a quiet, peaceful, and interesting way of life away from the noise and clatter of urban areas. It is removed from the glitter of night spots, seemingly so necessary to many tourists. Area zoning has helped make Snead Island a community for relaxed living but circumstances determined the ultimate fate of the island. A severe hurricane in 1884 stripped the tall timber from Passage Key, six miles directly west, and left it a small sandy island barely visible at high tide. But Snead Island was left undamaged and intact.

The nineteenth century ambitions of Henry B. Plant to convert the island into a southern terminus of his South Florida Railroad, and to erect there a magnificent hotel, failed largely because one large land holder refused to sell to Mr. Plant. More recently, plans to build the Skyway bridge and causeways from this island were abandoned. The island was destined to remain a residential area. Although remote from big city confusion, it has the advantage of being only minutes away from Palmetto and Bradenton, and within an hour's ride of Tampa and St. Petersburg.

It is not too difficult in one's minds eye to visualize Snead Island as it might have been on a fair May day in 1539. It is not hard to imagine peering, bewildered eyes of curious Indians who,

from vantage points on the island, may have seen the nine great caravels of Hernando de Soto approaching what is now Shaw's Point across the Manatee River. Perhaps war canoes slithered silently around Emerson Bayou near the west end of the island to get a glimpse of DeSoto's ships. Maybe a few of the older Indians could even remember a similar but brief landing of Ponce de Leon further south twenty-six years before. Little did these peaceful, agrarian Indians realize that the appearance of the white man would eventually require their removal from this area. The bow and the arrow, though capably used, was no match for the cross-bow, the fire-arms, the trained fighting dogs, and the cavalry of the Spaniards. Evidence of the importance of the fighting dogs is that DeSoto brought with him his personal watch dog, named "Bexerillo."

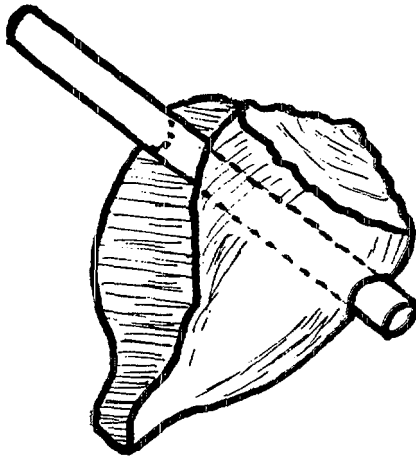
DeSoto lost little time in launching his quest for gold, which was his prime motive for coming to North America. Before his army of five hundred men, horses, dogs, and hogs, the Indians discreetly fled. In due time the village of Ucita on Terra Ceia Island, the home of Chief Hirrihigua, was destroyed by DeSoto. There is no recorded account of his sending a searching party across the Manatee River to Snead Island, but his proximity to the island, his enthusiasm in the search for gold, and the recent finding of many pieces of Spanish olive jars, make it reasonable to assume that a reconnoitering party might have landed on the island. According to Spanish historians, the Indians encountered in this region were quite tall. Historian Karl Bickel tells of finding two skeletons on neighboring Longboat Key, one seven feet, the other eight feet tall. At least one complete skeleton from Snead Island, with other Indian artifacts, now rests in the Smithsonian Institution. There were at least three Indian festive shell mounds located on Snead Island.

The nearby Caloosa Indians, from the Fort Myers area, took over this region after the Timucuan Indians who perhaps met DeSoto fled to north Florida. They remained until 1763 when Spain ceded Florida to Britain. Some of the Caloosas emigrated to Cuba, others went into hiding in the Charlotte Harbor area. By 1812, both the Timucuan and the Caloosas had virtually become extinct and the more recently arrived Seminoles were the dominant Florida Indians.

Before the appearance of the Spaniards, life must have been

easy on Snead Island-as it is now. Food was abundant. Some crops were planted, but most of the Indians' food could be obtained from the native plants, the rivers, and the bays. There were the buds and berries of the cabbage palm, the fruit of the sea grape, and pears from the prickly cactus. There was deer, bear, alligator, turkey, possum, rattlesnake, and birds on the island; and the river abounded with manatee and vast quantities of fish. The tale is told that fish were so plentiful that all one had to do was lower a weighted basket over the side of the boat. There were crabs, scallops, clams, and oysters. The capacity of the Indians to enjoy huge quantities of shell life is evidenced by the shells still found in the large mounds on the island.

Many artifacts - arrowheads, shell implements, pottery - are still being found on Snead Island, reminding us of the culture that existed there 400 years ago. Implements were often made



HOE MADE FROM WHELK SHELL

of shells, as in the instance of the left-handed whelk and the much smaller fighting conch. Besides supplying food, these shell-fish provided agricultural tools and implements for some of the Indian crafts. The left-handed whelks in particular were used in quantity. A notch was made in the lip of the shell about two inches from the top. On the opposite side from the notch, a hole

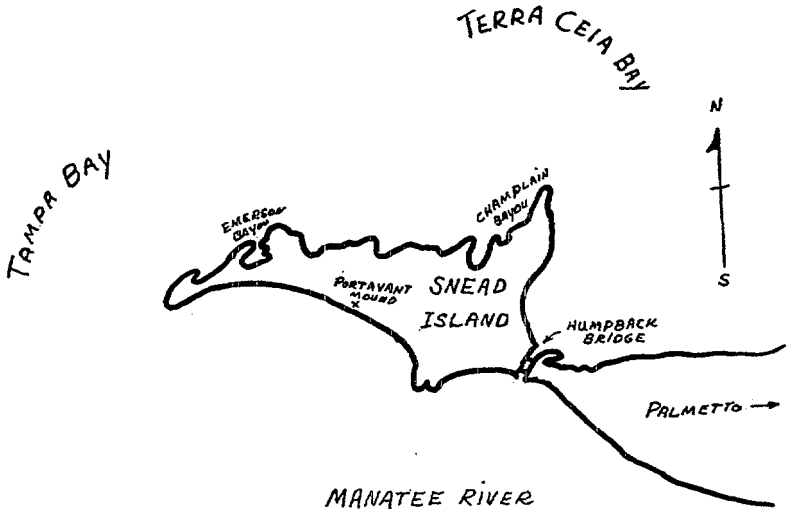
was drilled about three-quarters of an inch in diameter. A stick was inserted along the notch, extending through the drilled hole on the opposite side. The long narrow shank end of the shell was sharpened and the tool used as a hoe. In some cases the shank end of the shell was cut off several inches from the end, and the wider base sharpened and used as an adze or a scraper. Another use of the whelk was achieved by cutting off the top third of the shell, lengthwise, and using the remainder of the hollow shell as a cup. The smaller fighting conchs were used in the same manner as the whelks, but apparently for smaller projects. Such artifacts, along with others made of native limestone or imported flint, are still being found.

Since a few Indian artifacts were also made from bones of animals, or fossils, it is well to note the numerous fossils found on the island. The uninitiated are astonished upon first learning that the saber-toothed tiger, bison, camel, mastodon, mammoth, and horse roamed this area twenty thousand or more years ago. They were here by the thousands, along with the armadillo, bear, deer and, in the sea, the sharks. Most numerous of the fossils found on the island are manatee ribs, sharks' teeth, turtle shells, horses' teeth, and mammoth teeth.

An interesting feature of the fossils found on the island are their designs and shapes-often a clue to the identity of the animals. For example, the pre-historic horse which roamed this island thousands of years ago had teeth with a specific and complicated design on the grinding surface. Every tooth found in this species has exactly the same pattern on the grinding surface. The smaller and rarer three-toed horse has an entirely different design on the chewing end of the tooth. Most of these fossils are brought up from six to eight or more feet below the present surface of the soil. Even if one is not interested in the scientific aspects of a fossil found on the island, it does add a bit of curiosity to the many interesting subjects that make life worthwhile on Snead Island.

The island's tranquility was not even disturbed by the War Between the States, or the earlier second Seminole War. Indeed Edward Sneed [*sic*] for whom the island was named home-steaded 128 acres of land there under the Armed Occupation Act on June 19, 1843. Yet even twenty years later there was still little on the island to attract either Federals or Confederates

and no fighting occurred there. Fishermen and farmers may have seen Federal gunboats in the Manatee River, but they were not molested by them.

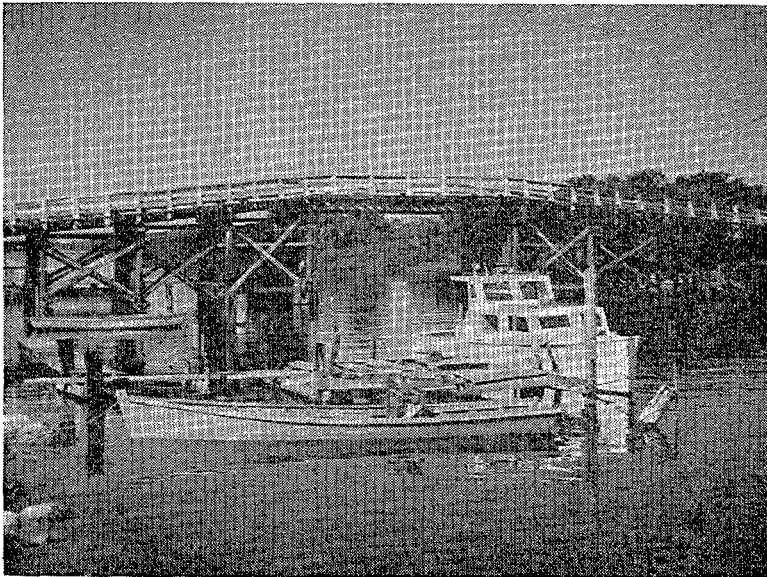


Before the War Between the States, a Mr. Foster built a home on top of a twelve foot high Indian mound located on the south side of the island. The excellent view from the high mound, with its long sweep to the Manatee River, was sufficient reason for the location of this house. The patience and determination of such early settlers is cause for reflection. The absence of saw mills required the importation of pine timbers from Pensacola, brought here by sailboat. Mr. Foster apparently did have plenty of help in building his house once the timber arrived; he was employed by sugar plantation owners who for some time permitted him to use their slaves to clear his land and construct his house.

In 1888, Captain June Poitevent, a retired Mississippi River captain, and his wife May purchased 363 acres including the Indian mound. The mound still bears his name but the spelling has been corrupted to Portavant. Concluding that Mr. Foster had chosen the ideal location for a house, the captain proceeded to enlarge the living area by adding a lean-to on the north and west sides and a porch on the east side. Mr. Irvin Andress, until recently a fifty-year resident of the island, helped dig the cistern

which stored the drinking water for the Poitevent family. The Poitevent family's various trips to the mainland were made by horse and buggy. They forded the narrow and shallow channel at the east end of the island at low tide. Some years were to pass before the channel was deepened for ships to come in. After this the big boats came in to load the produce handled through the Irving Andress packing house, near the present location of the Terra Manna Sports Center. It was a treat for the children of the island to stop at the packing house to watch the produce grown on Snead and Terra Ceia Islands being loaded. The H. B. Plant boat from Tampa was of particular interest, probably because it was the largest to stop there.

Progress came to Snead Island slowly. The first small bridge was built and it was no longer necessary to ford the channel to the mainland or use a boat. After the early bridge had given its



The weather-worn "Humpback Bridge" which connects Snead Island with the mainland.

useful service, a better one was built in 1932. This wooden structure is the present "Humpback Bridge," a landmark for fishermen and a guide to the island. Old "Humpback" is also

known for other reasons. Its weather-worn timbers have already been hurricane-tested - they were all that was left of the Longboat Key-Anna Maria Island bridge after the storm of March 6, 1932. Frugal county authorities brought the best timbers to Snead Island on barges and put up "Humpback." With its barnacled supporting columns, its steep incline from both approaches, and its flat top, it has become the central feature of many paintings by local artists. Late every afternoon kindly Mrs. Mary Hart hangs three oil-burning lanterns on the side of the bridge, a red one in the center and white ones on either end, as warnings to night boatmen.

Old "Humpback," however, is doomed. It will soon go the way of all wooden structures subjected to the elements of weather, devastating marine life, and time. Most people will acclaim the replacement with satisfaction and consider it an act of modern progress, but there will be a few who, with an inner feeling of nostalgia, will regret to see it go. "Humpback" is the last of an era.

Families whose names were prominent in the early life of the island are still remembered. The Pillsburys are one of the oldest families in the business of dredging; the Emersons are perpetuated in the name of the bayou at the northwest end of the island, and the Champlain name is given to the bayou at the northeast end of the island. The Pillsbury family in 1912 founded the Snead Island Boatworks, largest and best on the west coast from Fort Myers to St. Petersburg, which is presently owned by E. E. Bishop and is managed by Captain Jim Alderman.

On January 8, 1918, Mr. Peter Marine purchased the Indian mound and adjoining 363 acres. To enhance the natural grandeur of his location, he planted parallel rows of the stately royal palms from the base of the mound almost to the river's edge. Eighteen of these palms still remain-a memorial to one of our hardy pioneers. In February of the same year, Marine added thirty-nine acres purchased from the state. Present day land buyers may well cringe at the thought of the price paid for this thirty-nine acres: a total of \$59.46.

Peter Marine was born in Spain and married soon after coming to this country. He settled first in Chicago where he succeeded as a candy and ice cream manufacturer. Some of the Snead Island land which he and his son Lincoln farmed is now

in the Gulf and Bay Estates sub-division. They principally raised tomatoes and peppers and lived a tranquil life; but tragedy struck. One day Lincoln returned home at noon to find the meal on the table but no one in the house. Realizing that his parents customarily took a short swim in the river each day, he ran down the palm-lined lane to the river bank. There he found his father's body floating on the water. After help was summoned, the mother's body was found at the bottom of the river.

After the death of the Marines, Mr. and Mrs. Freeman H. Horton bought the acreage including the mound and, after extensive remodelling, lived in the house for some time. Parts of the old house were later torn down but a section remained as a beach house. Remnants of the old house are still there; the concrete cistern is still in place, a part of the chimney remains, and concrete slabs that were used as steps up the mound can still be seen. Huge limbed live oaks stretching gracefully toward the clear blue sky, still grow on the mound. The sansevieria has multiplied profusely, and occasional blooms of the tamarind are still visible. The bougainvillia regularly assists nature's beautification of the landscape. The huge gumbo-limbo trees add strength to the scene. Even the nearby Australian pines, with gentle sub-tropical breezes swaying their branches in murmuring symphony, seem to whisper for all who care to listen that this, the top of a mound, was once a home.

The surrounding bodies of water make Snead Island warmer in winter and cooler in summer than inland towns and cities. These same rivers and bays produce fish, crabs, scallops, and oysters in sufficient quantities for the average family. With the rippling blue tidal waters available for boating, swimming, and skiing; with abundant wild plant life in the undeveloped part of the island and with bird life everywhere an inducement to those interested in nature's best, Snead Island is more than just a community - it is a "Shangri-la."