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## CRUISE OF THE *MINNEHAHA*

*edited by* PAT DODSON\*

**I**n the winter of 1891-1892 four men— three brothers, Stanley, Robert, and Edward Bullock, and their friend, A. E. Woodham — sailed a thirty-foot sloop, the *Minnehaha*, from Narcoossee on East Lake Tohopekaliga on a round trip down the Kissimmee River to Lake Okeechobee and out to the Gulf of Mexico via the Caloosahatchee River. They began the trip that fall down the Kissimmee River, opened a few years before by Hamilton Disston's dredges.<sup>1</sup> Leaving November 26, they reached Marco on January 9 and returned home February 8. They followed a tortuous route, covering about 1,000 miles in seventy-three days.

The three brothers were the sons of Stanley and Agnes Cotton Bullock, an English couple originally from London. Stanley Henry (Harry), the captain on the *Minnehaha* and keeper of its log, was born at Bulepilly near Secunderabad, India, in 1866. His father, a captain in the Second Madras Light Cavalry, India, had received a medical retirement and moved to New Zealand in 1870. Robert Stanley (Bob) was born there in 1872, and Edward Stanley (Ned) the following year.

Captain Bullock suffered serious financial reverses and returned to London in 1874. He died soon afterwards, but his wife was able to keep her sons in private schools, first in England and then in Germany. At the Felstead School in England, Ned distinguished himself in boxing and languages. At Wiesbaden

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\* Mr. Dodson is a business executive in Pensacola. He is a former member of the Florida Board of Regents and was the first chairman of the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Florida. He is still a member of the commission.

1. One of the English colonies established in Central Florida in the 1880s, Narcoossee had been started on the west shore of Lake East Tohopekaliga (Little Lake Tohopekaliga) about 1883 by E. Nelson Fell who bought a large tract and advertised it in English newspapers. The editor took a boat trip from Lake Tohopekaliga to Okeechobee in 1955 before the river and Disston canals were improved by the Central and South Florida flood control project. See Pat Dodson, "Boat-A-Cading the Dark Continent," *Florida Wildlife*, IX (October 1955), and Dodson, "Historical Background," *Central and Southern Flood Control Project* (West Palm Beach, 1957) 1-9. For details on river at turn of century see "Examination and Survey of Kissimmee River," House Document 176, 57th Cong., 1st sess., 1902.

Harry and Bob played on the same tennis courts with the English, Danish, and Greek royal families. In 1886 the family moved to Brussels where Mrs. Bullock's uncle was attached to the British consulate and operated a finishing school for boys. Here Harry was first in his English, French, and German classes. He was working as a secretary-interpreter when in 1887 he was offered a job as a cowhand in Texas. After about a year he returned to England for his brother, Bob. However, a real estate agent in New York convinced them instead to join some English settlers in Florida. Arriving in 1888 at Narcoossee the brothers built a house and set out a peach orchard. In 1891 Mrs. Bullock joined them with their two sisters and younger brother, Ned.<sup>2</sup>

The *Minnehaha* log, written by S. H. Bullock, the captain of the crew, is now in the possession of his son, William Bullock of Kissimmee. It has been edited, and a few entries have been eliminated. Spelling and punctuation are exactly as in the original manuscript. A version of the log was published at intervals in the *St. Cloud News*, beginning with November 24, 1950, and continuing for the next several months.

The following description of the *Minnehaha* and its accommodations was the final entry, February 8, 1892, in the log.

Minnehaha, centre board sloop, 30 ft over all, 9-1/2 ft beam, 6 ft drop of keel, drawing without board about 2 ft. Only plain sails no topsails, spinnakers or ballooners.

We had a four burner stove with oven mounted on deck, which was perhaps not the best scheme imaginable as the stove pipe was apt to be swept away by the boom in manoeuvring. Also being right amidships it was considerably in the way when lowering away, especially if the stove happened to be hot at the time. Our stores were mostly packed forward of cabin which we left for our cartridges etc. Guns were hung

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2. Bullock family history furnished by Edward Stanley Bullock of Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina, and William Ledlie Stanley Bullock of Kissimmee. A. E. Woodham, the fourth member of the *Minnehaha* crew, arrived with his brother Fred in Narcoossee from England in the late 1880s. They built a house and started an orange grove. A. E. Woodham was given his nickname "general" because he had served for a time in the British Army. Other English colonists in the area at the time included the Fells, Cadmens, Skipworths, Littles, Carrs, Hills, Bests, Vans Agnews, Droughts, and Burnhams. Most left after the freeze of 1895, some to Kissimmee, and others like the Woodham brothers went back to England.

in slings along the centreboard case. We slept below most of the time & by dint of extreme tidiness found we had plenty of room after the first few days. . . . The distances marked down throughout are far from accurate— being merely guesswork. On an evening we used to discuss the day's run and decide how far we had sailed during the day. The temperature readings are fahrenheit and taken three times per diem— morning, noon and night. The thermometer hung in the cabin.

The Crew: A. E. Woodham [The General]  
 R. S. Bullock [Bob]  
 S. H. Bullock [Harry— the logkeeper]  
 E. S. Bullock [Ned]

Nov 26th/91 Thursday. A stiff S.S.W. wind. A quick short sea rolling on to the beach. Having said goodbye to everyone we weighed anchor 2.30 p.m. & running close along shore passed Garret's. Here we fired a salute & yelled vociferously by way of bidding them farewell. Putting about we stood out, heading for St. Cloud,<sup>3</sup> or rather as near there as we could lie with a dead head wind which was dying out fast. We managed, however, to reach there about 6 p.m. and anchored for the night off the "Cottage". Supper was then discussed and the coffeepot discovered baked to pieces in the oven. Went ashore & purchased new coffeepot & amused ourselves by examining store.<sup>4</sup> Wind S.S.W. unsteady. Clear & fine. 80° 75° Distance 5 miles.

Nov 27th/91 Friday. Up bright & early. Breakfast over, we poled down to first bridge & waited for Mr. Thomas to have bridges opened. He soon appeared & told off seven Italians<sup>5</sup> to see us thro! First bridge was passed without much troubled. Second bridge defied all our efforts altho' we spent 3 hours working at

3. St. Cloud was the site of Florida's first large sugar mill, built in 1888 on south shore of East (Little) Lake Tohopekaliga. Pat Dodson, "Hamilton Disston's St. Cloud Sugar Plantation," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLIX (April 1971), 356-69.

4. "Store" was the sugar mill's commissary and "cottage" probably the superintendent's or manager's home. The store stood near the St. Cloud Canal connecting East Lake Tohopekaliga and Lake Tohopekaliga. About three miles long, the canal was completed in 1884 by Disston Dredge No. 2 and was originally thirty-six feet wide by six feet deep, although it tended to have sandbars.

5. The Italians, believed from Philadelphia and New Orleans via Tampa, had been brought by Disston to work at the sugar plantation. The railroad was the St. Cloud Sugar Belt Line, built by Disston about 1889. Dodson, "Hamilton Disston's St. Cloud Sugar Plantation," 362.

it. Finally we gave it up & unshipping our mast passed under it. We had, however, one consolation, for our trouble, we had left the bridge in a decidedly unsafe condition. We passed on after fervently blessing it. The next bridge occasioned some difficulty as it was very low. We blessed it too. 11.45 a.m. we anchored just above the R.R. bridge & had lunch. Having an hour or so to wait before we could get this bridge open, Bob & the General grouped themselves on the bridge & made a very effective picture, the latter cutting the former's hair. 3 p.m. Mr. Williams & his gang of darkies . . . opened the bridge for us. Mr. Williams came on board to wish us good luck & kindly lent us three of his men to ship our mast again. I then went into St. Cloud on train to pick up some things we had forgotten— leaving the others to take the boat on. When I caught them up again they had just passed through the last bridge having swung it with the help of some Italians. It was now getting dark. Down by the pump house to our disgust we struck a footbridge. By this time we were tired of bridges so we destroyed this one & set it floating down the stream. . . . Had almost got clear of the canal when a long black object loomed up ahead of us. This turned out to be a 40 ft barge laden with cordwood moored right across the stream. Being somewhat out of temper by this time we viciously cut it loose hoping it wld float down & leave us room to pass, but it did not. . . . Showering blessings on it we moored it again so as to leave us a passage. In a few minutes we were in the lake.<sup>6</sup> Altogether today has not been unmitigated bliss. There has been a considerable percentage of alloy in our joy. Viewed as a course for an obstacle race— the canal would be a triumph of human ingenuity; but as a navigable stream even the Company<sup>7</sup> I think, must admit that it needs a little improving to make it a success. . . . (To Mr. Tutweiler many thanks are due for sending so pleasant & courteous a foreman to open his bridge.) Clear & bright. Wind N.N.E. very light. Distance 4 miles.

Nov 28th/91 Saturday . . . . On reaching Steer Beach Point the wind settled down to blow from exactly where we wanted to go.<sup>8</sup> By 4.30 p.m. we were becalmed within 2 miles of Southport.

6. The party entered Lake Tohopekaliga (24,000 acres) at Goblet's Cove, an eastern arm.

7. Either the Disston company operating the sugar mill or the one which cut the canal.

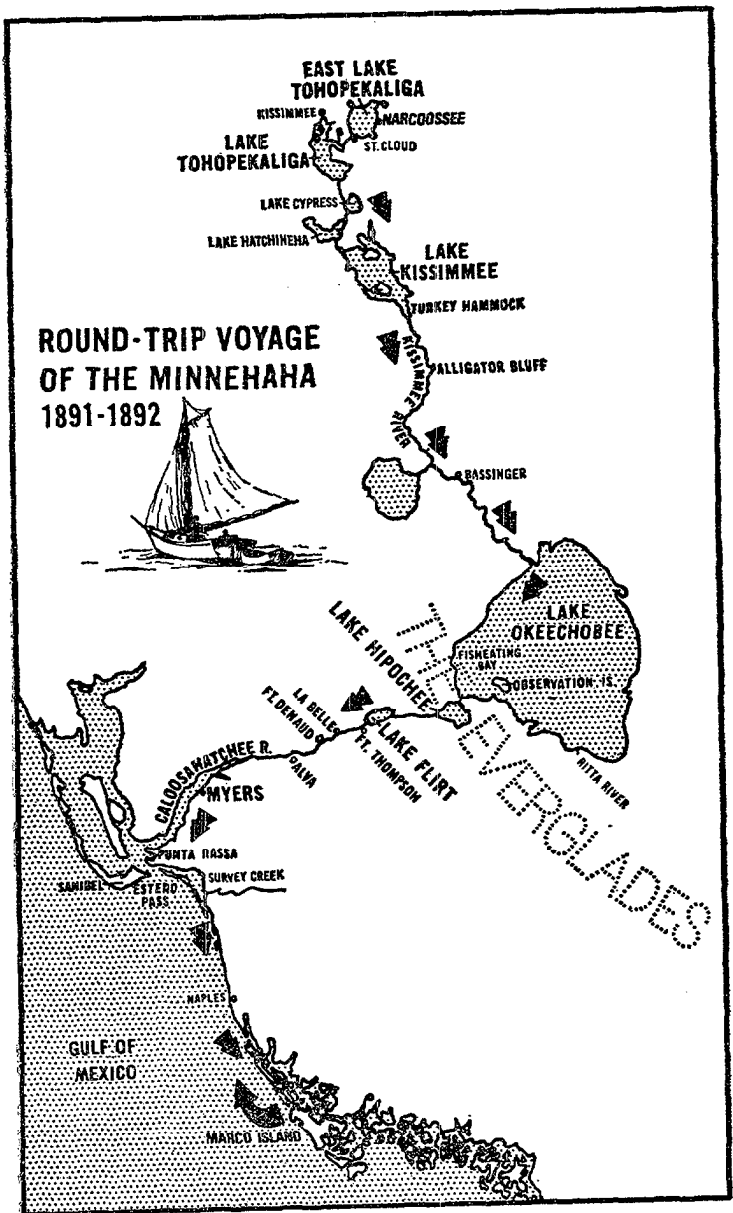
8. Steer Beach is on the southeast shore of Lake Tohopekaliga.

Noticed a small steamer bearing down on us. Proved to be "Little Tampa" crew all more or less tight.<sup>9</sup> As she passed we threw her a line & were towed into the canal where we anchored for night.<sup>10</sup> Clear & fine. Wind S.S.E. to S.S.W. very light. 63° 81° 70° Distance 16 miles.

Nov 29th/91 Sunday . . . . Drifted down canal & crossed Cypress Lake with a stiff S.S.W. wind. On reaching the next canal we found wind too strong ahead to go on so laid up & went ashore.<sup>11</sup> A small sailboat passed bound for Kissimmee & the "Little Tampa" on the home voyage . . . . A.E.W. surpassed himself in the concoction of a duck stew. Clear & bright. Wind S.S.W to W very fresh, 65° 75° 70° Distance 8 miles

Nov 30th/91 Monday. Heavy norwester sprang up in the night. Started about 9 a.m. to cross Hatchineehaw Lake, two reefs.<sup>12</sup> Very cold, directly we got out into the open a heavy squall struck us & Bob who was steering broke the tiller trying to hold down to it. Lowered away mainsail & ran across under jib steering with a monkey wrench. Made E. Gardiner 10.15 a.m. without further mishap.<sup>13</sup> Went ashore & killed some duck. Met Hyde bird collector.<sup>14</sup> Clear & bright. 45° 60° 45° 8 miles

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9. *The Tampa*, a small charter craft painted vermilion, owned by Solomon B. Aultman, of Kissimmee. For information on steamboats along route of *Minnehaha*, see Edward A. Mueller, "Kissimmee Steamboating," *Tequesta*, XXVI (1966), 53-87. One of Mueller's sources is correspondence and interviews in the 1960s with Captain Edward H. Hall, one of the last Kissimmee steamboat captains.
  10. Southport Canal, about four miles long, between Lakes Tohopekaliga and Cypress (6,000 acres), had been completed in 1882 by Disston Dredge No. 2. The canal was cut through Gum Swamp parallel and west of the stream called Little River or Kissimmee River. *The Atlantic and Gulf Coast Canal and Okeechobee Land Company* (Philadelphia, 1885) reported the first phase of Disston's canal-digging operations from 1882 to 1892. The Southport Canal is designated C-35 in the Central and Southern Florida flood control project.
  11. The Hatcheneha Canal, about three miles long and east of the old river between Lakes Cypress and Hatcheneha (10,000 acres) dug by Disston Dredge No. 2 in 1882. Now designated as C-36 in the C&SFFC project.
  12. To reduce the area of sail exposed, they took it apart, folded, or rolled it, and tied it down. This is called "reefing."
  13. Probably named for Captain George W. Gardiner who was killed in the Dade Massacre in 1835. Fort "Gardner," as it was often spelled, was built by Colonel Zachary Taylor in 1837 on the west bank of the Kissimmee south of Lake Hatcheneha. East Gardiner was a landing about a half mile down river from West Gardiner. The fort was south of West Gardiner, present-day Camp Mack in Polk County. For this and other Seminole War references along the *Minnehaha's* route see John K. Mahon, *History of the Second Seminole War* (Gainesville, 1967).
  14. Probably a plume hunter.



Dec 1st/91 Tuesday. Found piece of iron & worked all day by turns converting it into tiller. S.S. Cincinnati passed at 5.30 p.m. south bound.<sup>15</sup> This is a splendid camp. A small hammock of large oaktrees on the edge of River with pine woods behind. Altho' the wind has been bitterly cold all day we have kept quite warm in camp . . . Cold & cloudy. Wind N W very strong. 45° 60° 50°

Dec 2nd/91 Wednesday . . . . Passed W. Gardiner 10.20 a.m. Reached Kissimmee Lake 11.05 a.m. Found the lake dead calm so we had to lay up. W & self rowed up old river to get some duck.<sup>16</sup> Found an old deserted steamer<sup>17</sup> lying in the reeds. Climbed on board & hunted about for something to steal, but found nothing worth taking . . . . Clear & bright. Wind S.E. hardly perceptible. 60° 88° 66° Distance 4 miles.

Dec 3rd/91 Thursday. No wind all the morning. Rowed ashore & shot some duck. About 2 p.m. slight breeze from S.S.E. By steady beating managed to pass Floradelphia, a small settlement on W coast & anchored for the night about a mile below it at 5 p.m.<sup>18</sup> Warm & bright. Wind S.S.E. very light. 65° 88° 70° Distance 10 miles

Dec 4th/91 Friday . . . . Arrived at Stewart's place about 11 a.m. Anchored off his wharf & went ashore. Found the place quite deserted. Only a few sheep & hogs about. Were just making up our minds to kill a sheep when a Cracker named Johns rode up. He informed us that Hammond, who was in charge of the place, had moved higher up the lake &, with the help of two Englishmen, was building a house. After we had taken on some firewood we ran back to pay them a visit. Found D'eeth, Tellard and

15. A sternwheeled steamboat (34.6' x 9.9' x 3.4') built in Chicago in 1889. At the time of the *Minnehaha's* trip she was owned by James Ritty of Cincinnati, who operated a sawmill at Rosalie on Lake Kissimmee. The *Cincinnati* towed barges, carried supplies, and was chartered out to hunters and fishermen. Captain Clay Johnson moved her machinery to at least two more boats, including his *Roseada*, before finally shipping it to the Henry Ford Museum at Dearborn, Michigan.
16. Woodham and the logkeeper rowed up the old Kissimmee River between Lakes Hatcheneha and Kissimmee (36,000 acres). Disston Dredge No. 2 had cut the Kissimmee Canal just to the west.
17. Apparently a predecessor to the thirty-foot sidewheeler, *Tallulah*, built by the Gilbert Brothers at Kissimmee about 1892, this steamer carried the same name.
18. Floradelphia was a sportsman's resort on Brahma Island in Lake Kissimmee owned by an Ohio company. Although the island was stocked with pheasants, and a 105 foot cabin sternwheeler also named *Floradelphia* ran back and forth to Kissimmee, the venture failed.



Hammond— busy carpentering . . . . Tellard and D'eeth came on board after supper & we sent them home about 12 rejoicing. Clear & fine. Wind N.N.W squally. 70° 85° 60° Distance 12 miles

Dec 5th/91 Saturday. Ran across to Bremer Isle & hunted around there all day without much success.<sup>19</sup> Game (except rabbits) seemed scarce. We cld have filled the boat with rabbits had we wished to. Clear & bright. Wind E by N strong. 66° 90° 70° Distance 3 miles.

Dec 7th/91 Monday . . . . Anchored off Turkey Hammock 11.45.a.m. & paid the store a visit . . . .<sup>20</sup> Made River 2.30 p.m. Anchored & fished. Clear & bright. Wind S.E by E. squally. 70° 85° 75° Distance 7 miles

Dec 8th/91 Tuesday. Heavy norther sprang up in the night. Took in 2 reefs & started down river. Very exciting work. All hands on deck. The river twists & turns in every direction . . . . About 1.30 p.m. arrived at Cabbage Bluff & being somewhat exhausted concluded to stay over night.<sup>21</sup> On the ponds & marshes round here we found plenty to shoot. Duck (teal, wood-duck, pintail, mallards) curlew, snipe were here in thousands. The river here touches the prairie & pine timber is only about ½ mile back . . . . 50° 65° 45° Distance 18 miles.

Dec 9th/91 Wednesday . . . . Passed Alligator Bluff 9.40 a.m. Made Orange Hammock 10.20.a.m.<sup>22</sup> Went ashore to see Drigg's grove. Well worth a visit, 15 yrs old. Planted on rich hammock. Has very nearly every variety of orange. Satsuma especially fine. Over-eat ourselves. Left Drigg's 1.15 p.m. . . . Past Brown's grove 2.15.p.m. . . . Damp & Cloudy. Wind NE heavy squalls. 45° 60° 45° Distance 12 miles

Dec 11th/91 Friday. . . . Passed Oak Bluff 12 o'clock . . . . Heard Johnson's steamer coming up river. Bob & A.E.W. rowed down in dingy to meet him to send up some mail. They rowed about 2 miles down stream & found that J. had taken a short

19. Small island in northeast Lake Kissimmee, also known as Rabbit Island.

20. Landing on east bank where Lake Kissimmee flows into Kissimmee River, now at east end of Florida S.R. 60 bridge in Osceola County. Supplies for Whittier and Keenansville were landed here.

21. Landing on west bank in Osceola County owned by Jack Whidden (in 1899).

22. Alligator Bluff is a landing on the east bank of the river in south Osceola County. Orange Hammock is a landing on the west bank, now in the northeast corner of Highlands County, three and a half miles north of old Ft. Kissimmee.

cut and missed them. They did not find rowing back quite so easy. Clear & bright. Wind S to E light. 75° 85° 75° Distance 12 miles.

Dec 14th/91 Monday. Till 1.30 p.m. we were still windbound. By dint of much hard work made about 4 miles and camped on Hammock 2 miles above Bassinger.<sup>23</sup> Splendid fishing. Clear & bright. Wind S to E strong. 60° 80° 60° Distance 4 miles

Dec 16th/91 Wednesday. General & Ned went across to the [Bassinger] store to purchase a few little tricks. Paid Chunk a visit. 1.50 p.m. weighed anchor & half sailed, half drifted on . . . Wind S.W strong till noon then light. 70° 85° 70° Distance 2 miles

Dec 20th/91 Sunday. Cold damp morning. Underway at 9 a.m. Wind light but favourable. Saw nothing of any interest until we struck [Lake] Okeechobee 12.30 Had lunch & drank success to our voyage across, then set sail and headed about S.W. To the N a big range of Cypress borders the lake. The W shore is less heavily timbered, here & there nothing but marsh . . . 55° 65° 60° Distance 48 miles

Dec 21st/91 Monday . . . Whilst supper was going on we noticed a bright light just over the top of the point. Appeared to be a light high up on mast of some vessel. It caused considerable excitement on board until we at last found out that it was only a very large star showing thro' the clouds. Cold & cloudy. Wind S.W very light. 55° 60° 65° Distance 8 or 9 miles

Dec 22nd/91 Tuesday. Perfect calm, lake like a mirror. Despairing of a wind we polled round the point & found ourselves in a cove out of which a blind creek ran some way back into the marsh. Here we stayed till 1 p.m. and caught some tremendous fish. (We found out later that Fish-eating Creek also ran into this cove a little S. of the Creek we were in) . . . <sup>24</sup> Amused ourselves by feeding a small bird of the gull species. It got quite tame & would come close alongside to pick up crumbs, etc. The

23. Bassinger or Bassenger, a landing on the river's east bank, across from Ft. Bassinger, an outpost built in 1837 by Zachary Taylor and named after First Lieutenant William E. Bassinger, killed in the Dade Massacre. About thirty-seven and one-half miles north of Lake Okeechobee, Bassinger was one of the river's main stops until the railroad reached Okeechobee in 1916. Now the site of bridge on U.S. 98 in Okeechobee County.

24. Apparently old Fisheating Bay on the west shore of Lake Okeechobee (1,080,000 acres).

amount that bird managed to stow away was perfectly astonishing. Saw a brace of bald headed eagles & were considerably disappointed in them. They look clumsy & heavy. None of the "kingly grace" about them that one generally associates with the idea of an eagle. If a buzzard were to chalk its head & look as if it took an interest in something it would beat the bald headed eagle to fits for beauty. Weather bright. Wind N E very light. 60° 85° 70° Distance 3 miles

Dec 23rd/91 Wednesday . . . . Duck in thousands all round us. Occasional grass patches away out the lake. Took soundings on running through one & found only 6 ft shoal. Considering this was 3 or 4 miles from land it gives one an idea how shallow the lake must be. About 9.15 a.m. the wind sprang up from the SE so we closehailed & ran on. All the time we were studying the coast through the glasses trying to see a Cypress tree with a barrel on it which we knew was at the head of the canal.<sup>25</sup> Could not see it anywhere & having run down till Observation Island was to the E of us we concluded to put about & coast along back . . . .<sup>26</sup> Cruized along & at last saw the tree we were hunting with a small nailkeg on it. We had passed within two miles of it about 4 hrs before. At 2 p.m. we reached the canal & found it was only about 20 ft wide . . . . The banks of the canal are all thickly overgrown with mangoe bushes, beyond which heavy sawgrass marsh extends away off to the horizon. All the way down the canal we had spinners out astern & caught more fish than we knew what to do with. Made Lake Hicpochee at 3 p.m. . . .<sup>27</sup> Our maps gave us a due westerly course for the next canal & having an aft wind we were not long in getting across but devil a bit of canal could we see. Coasted along for about 6 miles in a S. E direction with a man at the masthead looking out. Put about & beat back to N E corner of lake but saw no canal so we anchored . . . . 70° 80° 60° Distance 70 miles

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25. The lone cypress with the old keg was a well-known navigator's landmark in 1880s and 1890s. Later the tree carried a flag signal. Called the "Sentinel," "Flat Top," or "Lone Cypress," the tree is now in the center of Moore Haven, founded in 1914 by James A. Moore. For a photograph see Alfred J. and Kathryn Hanna, *Lake Okeechobee, Well-spring of the Everglades* (New York, 1948), opp. 62.

26. Low, marshy island earlier called "Bird Island."

27. Also spelled Hicpochee and Hickpochee and known as "Little Prairie Lake," a shallow lake then of about 9,000 acres with soft mud bottom, connected to Lake Okeechobee by Everglades sawgrass until Disston

Dec 24th/91 Thursday . . . Had only just started on our round trip when A.E.W. with the aid of a telescope sighted a dredge away off to the S. A vote that we should run down & explore it was carried unanimously & . . . Found it quite deserted. After thoroughly exploring everything & stealing whatever we thought might be handy we rowed ashore & robbed the woodpile to replenish our store.<sup>28</sup> Had lunch & resumed our search for the canal which we found at last much further S than we expected. This canal proved a perfect treat after the last being broad & open & no bushes on either side to cut off the wind. About 200 yds from where it leaves Hicpochee we found another canal intersecting it at right angles.<sup>29</sup> Had some splendid fishing whilst sailing down. Passed a small creek some way down opening into the canal. Just as we crossed the mouth of it we heard a splash & saw a big fish (bass) jump out of the Creek mouth into the Canal. A lot more followed jumping in precisely the same manner. Altogether we must have seen about 50 to 100. After about 8 miles of canal we struck the River (no name) & soon after ran onto a bad shoal & had quite a lively time getting off again. Thousands of duck of all description were flying around here but we were too busy to kill any. Soon after we came to Blacksmith Hammock (also called Coffeepot Hammock).<sup>30</sup> It was dark when we reached it & noticing several boats

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Dredge No. 1 operated by Captain J. Fred Menge cut connecting canal in late 1882.

28. This apparently was Disston Dredge No. 1, used to work the Caloosahatchee (1882-1890) by Captain J. Fred Menge who had arrived from New Orleans in 1881. Starting from Fort Myers it first removed the snags and logs from the Caloosahatchee River, then dredged out the falls at Fort Thompson, dug Reedy Canal from Lake Flirt through Lake Bonnet to Lake Hicpochee, and finally Three-Mile Canal from Hicpochee to Okeechobee. Later work included river straightenings, Nine Mile Canal from Lake Hicpochee to Sand Point (Clewiston), and Woodyard Canal. For accounts of federal examinations and improvements on the Caloosahatchee see the following reports: *House Executive Document 1*, pt. 2, 46th Cong., 2nd sess.; *House Executive Document 1*, pt. 2, 48th Cong., 2nd sess., *House Executive Document 1*, pt. 2, 50th Cong., 2nd sess.
29. Apparently the Woodyard Canal, dug for about a mile southwest by Disston Dredge No. 1 to reach the timber needed for fuel. Lawrence Will, *A Cracker History of Okeechobee* (St. Petersburg, 1964), 111.
30. Coffee Mill Hammock (earlier called Seminole Hammock) consisted of a small grove of cabbage palms on high rock about eleven miles east of La Belle and Fort Thompson. A few trees still remain here a mile west of the Ortona Locks on the Caloosahatchee Cross-State canal, C-43 of C&SFFC project. Sugar Berry Hammock is about four miles east of

tied up here we resolved to anchor & see what they were in the morning. Back in the hammock we could see a large fire & hear a crowd holding high revel, evidently celebrating Xmas Eve. Clear & bright very hot. Wind E strong till noon then light. 70° 90° 75° Distance 30 miles.

Dec 25th/91 Xmas. A lovely morning. Hardly a typical Xmas morning, however . . . . Leaving Ned on board to superintend breakfast we took up stands along the river prepared to shoot anything we saw . . . . Curlew, duck, herons & all sorts of waterfowl soon came flying out of the mist & for a while we kept up a regular fusillade. On returning to the boat we saw quite a curious sight. Ned was seated on the cabin pensively gazing at a group of Indians who were standing on the bank staring stolidly back. All seemed quite absorbed & contented. Our arrival broke the spell so far as Ned was concerned. The Indians only stared the harder. We proceeded to wash & get breakfast which operations afforded our visitors the liveliest interest. I noticed several of them smile when I brushed my teeth. Breakfast was not a success. Every mouthful was carefully noted by our inspectors & it quite took the edge off our appetites altho' we did our best to appear at ease. We tried to talk to them but with little success. One of them knew a few words of English & by dint of signs & gesticulations we interchanged a few remarks. I tried some Indian words out of Longfellow's "Hiawatha" but could not make them understand so concluded that my accent was not correct. A squaw . . . leading a child joined the group . . . . About noon an old man turned up leading another squaw. He was dressed in an ordinary shirt with a belt round his waist, a long cloak reaching to his ankles & a kind of head-dress composed of red store handkerchiefs. As the others wore nothing but a short & belt we concluded that the old man was chief. We invited him & his squaw on board . . . She wriggled & sniggered in the most affected manner in fact behaved in quite the orthodox civilized manner. Her costume consisted of a decidedly drowsy looking skirt & a bodice made of yards and yards of dirty linen wrapt round her . . . . We began making preparations for departure after they had been on board a little while as a gentle hint for them to go as they were pleasanter at a distance. We

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Coffee Mill Hammock, or about three and a half miles west of Lake Hicpochee.

found out that the old chief's name was Tony, tribe Seminole, usual haunt Okeechobee . . . .<sup>31</sup> About ½ mile of river brought us to Bonnet Lake, a small patch of water covered with lily-pads with a channel leading thro' the middle.<sup>32</sup> About half way across we ran into a shoal but by dint of some little hard work got off again without mishap & sailing on passed thro' about 2 miles of canal & found ourselves in Lake Flirt, also called the "Broads." This is quite a big sheet of water but so cut up by grass islands etc. that it is hard to correctly estimate its area. It is also absurdly shoal, being nowhere over 3 ft deep. About 3 p.m. we came to the head of the Caloosahatchie R. The water rushes out of the lake into the river like a mill-sluice & as the banks are composed of hard rock & the bends very sharp, we had quite an anxious time especially as the wind was too light to handle the boat well. Camped about ½ mile down river. One could almost imagine we were now in a different country the scenery is here so utterly changed. The river, clear as crystal, flowing swiftly through a rocky channel. On each side a wide stretch of beautiful green grass & behind that dense cabbage woods.<sup>33</sup> As we found out later on the river is much the same for a long way except

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31. A seventy year-old Seminole in 1891 could have fought in the Seminole Wars (1835-1842, 1855-1858). Tony may have belonged to the Big Cypress Seminole settlement located in "Devil's Garden," southwest of Lake Okeechobee in what was Monroe and what is now Hendry County. Clay MacCauley, "The Seminole Indians of Florida," *Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, 1883-84* (Washington, 1887), 477-78. These Seminoles may have been related to the "Spanish Indians" of the lower west coast who were intermarried with Cuban fishermen. Tony's father might have been named Antonio, and Tony may be the Indian for whom "Tony's Mound" or "Big Circle Mounds" on the eastern edge of "Devil's Garden" are named. These earthworks were built by pre-Columbian Indians with Carribean contacts, but the Florida archaeologist, John M. Goggin, told the editor on an aerial inspection in 1954 that the mounds received their name from an old Seminole who once raised cattle in the vicinity.
  32. Five hundred-acre lake named after lily pads called "bonnets." Captain Menge's main cut (described in January 20 entry as "8 mile canal,") connecting the Caloosahatchee and Lake Okeechobee was here between Lakes Hicpochee and Flirt (1,000 acres). Lake Flirt had been named by crewmen from the U.S.S. *Flirt*, the schooner operating at mouth of Caloosahatchee in 1841. Florence Fritz, *Unknown Florida* (Coral Gables, 1963), 58.
  33. Woods of *Sabal palmetto*, native palm from which "swamp cabbage" was cut by settlers for food. Also called "heart of palm," the unborn central bud of the tree which tastes somewhat like thick cabbage leaf. The "cabbage shack" in December 27 entry was thatched on roof and sides with cabbage palmetto fronds.

that the cabbage woods gradually approach the river. In fact most of the way the trees are right on the edge. The banks, too get higher & higher & in some places must stand up 20 ft above the water presenting a hard wall of gravel & rock to the eye. Indeed were it not that the river is never straight for more than 100 yds one could almost imagine the channel was the work of man so sheer & steep are the banks. Well, we had our Xmas dinner without a turkey certainly, but duck, snipe, & fish & plum pudding furnished us a very good meal. We drank the usual toasts & after a long talk reluctantly left the fire & turned in. Clear & bright. Wind E light, 70° 85° 75 Distance 10 miles.

Dec 27th/91 Sunday. . . . About 1.30 p.m. sighted a new cabbage shack & as we were passing some crackers hailed us. We tied up & they came on board. Told us the place was called Belle City & asked us to carry their mail to Myers.<sup>34</sup> They were all drunk so we hastened on leaving them drivelling on the bank. By the bye they persuaded us to taste their whiskey which made us feel sickly. Drifting on down we made a few miles before evening & camped on a sloping bank. We were rather at a loss what to name this camp until we found several old socks hanging on a tree . . . . Old Sock Camp we christened it. The river here makes a tremendous curve & right off where we were camped the water instead of flowing past formed a kind of whirlpool . . . . 70° 80° 70° Distance 12 miles

Dec 28th/ 91 Monday . . . . Passed Fort Denaud . . . . Alva 3.30 p.m.<sup>35</sup> Camped just below Langworthy's grove on a small clearing in among a lot of guava bushes. A man named Haw-

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34. La Belle had been platted, and perhaps named for his daughters Laura and Belle by Confederate Captain Francis A. Hendry (1833-1917), cattle king, citrus grower, fighter and friend of the Seminoles, director of one of Disston companies, and state legislator. Hendry County is named for him. Another daughter was the wife of river captain, J. Fred Menge. Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 85, 130, 135. In 1898 shipments from La Belle included 30,000 alligator hides, 335 deer hides valued at fifty cents each, otter at five dollars each, and raccoon at twenty-five cents each. "Examination and Survey of Kissimmee River," 12. Harry A. Kersey, Jr., "Educating the Seminole Indians of Florida, 1879-1970," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLIX (July 1970), 19-21, describes Hendry's relations with the Seminoles.
  35. Fort Myers had been built by the army in 1850 on the site of old Fort Harvie. Named after Lieutenant Abraham C. Myers, then chief quartermaster in Florida, it was stubbornly called "Myers" by the post office department for twenty-five years prior to 1901. Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 64, 77, 107.

thorne paid us a visit. He was living with a man called Bailey who was in charge of the Langworthy grove. Invited us up to have some oranges. After supper both of them came down to our camp & we had a slight carouse. Bright & warm. Wind E light. 70° 80° 70° Distance 24 miles.

Dec 29th/91 Tuesday. Did not start before 10 am. Half sailed half drifted till 1.30 p.m. when we anchored about ¼ mile above a phosphate dredge. Small steamer passed us (no name) up bound. Two Indians in dug out sailed past about 4.30 p.m. also up bound. Rowed down to dredge to see them at work. They were pumping up sand, mud & phosphate from the bottom which they separated by a process of washing. It seemed rather a slow & elementary process. The hands seemed very comfortably lodged in a kind of house barge.<sup>36</sup> Bright and hot. Wind E. to S.W light. 70° 80° 70° Distance 5 miles

Dec 30th/91 Wednesday . . . . With every stitch of canvas spread we scudded away . . . through a big wide stretch of river reaching Fort Myers<sup>37</sup> at 11 a.m. Here we anchored & sent ashore for a blacksmith to fix our tiller. We then all crawled below & dressed up to go ashore. The General was the last to appear on deck & struck us all perfectly dumb with surprise. He appeared resplendent in full yachting costume making us all feel shabby & untidy to look at him. We loafed about Fort Myers till supper time & after eating rather a poor meal at the Hendry House<sup>38</sup> established ourselves on the verandah of the hotel to enjoy the post-prandial pipe (General smoked cigarettes). Over the way

36. Established in 1837 and named for an Indian trader, Pierre Denaud, who owned the land, Fort Denaud had been an outpost on South bank of Caloosahatchee, active in Second and Third Seminole Wars and later held by the Confederacy. In the 1890s a large sawmill at Denaud produced as much as 500,000 ft. of lumber a year. Its site is on S.R. 78A about three miles southwest of La Belle in Hendry County.

37. Alva, named for a native wildflower, had been founded by Captain Peter Nelson in 1883 and had a smaller sawmill in the 1890s. Located today about seven miles downriver from Denaud in Lee County north of S.R. 80. Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 8, 13, 54, 65, 71, 91; "Examination and Survey of Kissimmee River," 8, 13.

38. Discovered a few years earlier., the Caloosahatchee phosphate deposits were soon classified "river pebble," blue, black, or dark gray outside, gray or yellowish brown inside, ranging up to an inch in diameter and found with remnants and teeth of various animals and the phosphatized casts of shells from the Pliocene and post-Pliocene periods. George H. Eldridge, U. S. Geological Survey, "A Preliminary Sketch of the Phosphates of Florida," quoted in Rowland H. Rerick, *Memoirs of Florida*, 2 vols. (Atlanta, 1902), II, 294-96.



was a church. Soon the sound of prayers & hymns were wafted across to us by the evening breeze. Bob and the General went over to the church, whilst Ned and I not feeling the need of spiritual consolation, wandered around picking up scraps of information about the coast hunting, fishing, etc. . . .<sup>39</sup> 70° 85° 65° Distance 25 miles

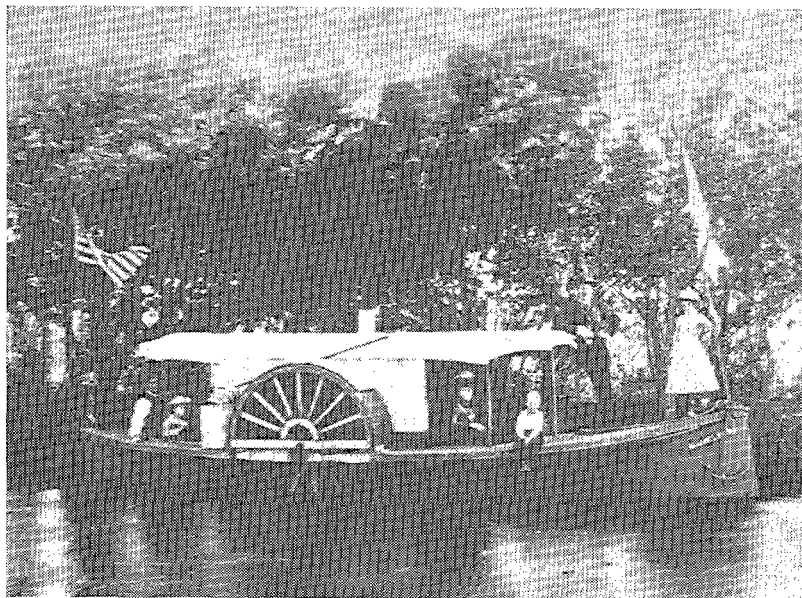
Dec 31st/91 Thursday. Bob & General came on board about 7 a.m. . . . An old Cuban Captain named Gonzales paid us a visit & gave us a lot of information about the coast etc. . . . Sailing under short canvas (1 reef) we made tremendous pace down the bay. The course is very intricate here & is marked out with red and black flags . . . . Mistaking our channel we ran onto a bar just as we sighted Punta Rassa.<sup>40</sup> Quickly lowering away we managed to get off again but had hardly got under way before we found ourselves once more aground. We tried moving in every direction but seemed to be locked up a small basin with reefs all around. At last . . . we anchored for the night. Soon after supper the wind died down & we spent a pleasant evening on deck filling our lungs with the sea air & making plans for the morrow. . . . We discussed Fort Myers. None of us were greatly impressed by our visit. The town seemed very dead & uninteresting. One main street parallel with the water & one or two side streets comprise the whole settlement. The buildings are poor very few of them of brick & the whole town seemed in need of paint & repairs. There are a few good houses scattered around within a little distance but we did not visit them . . . Bright warm. N E very strong. 70° 80° 75° 25 miles

Jan 1st/92 Friday. We were on deck by daylight. To the N of us was a small cat-boat picking her way thro' the shoals. Carefully noting the course she took we succeeded in getting out of our prison. Punta Rassa was on our port beam at 7.35 a.m. &

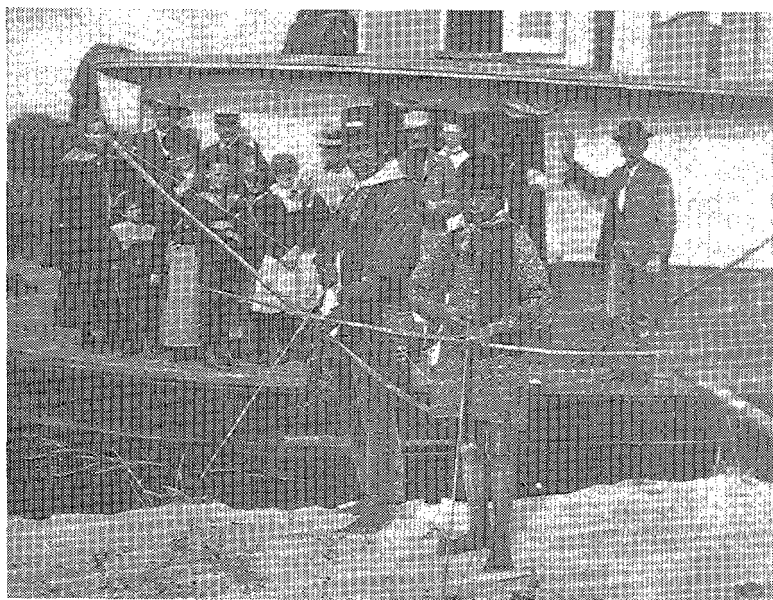
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39. This building could have been Fort Myers' old officers quarters rebuilt in 1870 by Captain Francis A. Hendry for his family home and apparently turned into a hotel after he moved to his ranch at Fort Thompson. Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 76, 135; Lloyd G. Hendry to editor, October 22, 1971:

40. Site of a "Spanish Indian" fishing village as early as the 1830s and by the Civil War it was a major shipping point for cattle to Cuba from Lee, DeSoto, and Osceola counties. *Punta Raza* is Spanish for "Cattle Point." E. A. Hammond, ed., "Sanibel Island and its Vicinity, 1833, A Document," *Florida Historical Quarterly*, XLVIII (April 1970), 392-411; Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 69-75, 81-85.



Captain Johnson, with his wife in stern, aboard the *Mamie Lown*. Captain Menge was running this boat when he was encountered by the *Minnehaha*.



Seminole Indians on Kissimmee River  
Captain Clay Johnson is the man on deck to the right.

we shaped our course for Sanibel cooking breakfast as we sailed.<sup>41</sup> On arriving at Sanibel 8.25 a.m. we moored to the wharf after some trouble as the tide was running very fast. Spent our day fishing & strolling about the beach picking up shells and curios. Sanibel Island is a pretty little place as seen from the water. The lighthouse with its cottages looks very trim & neat . . . 70° 85° 75° Distance 6 miles.

Jan 2nd/92 Saturday . . . . An easterly course was decided on as we wished to get along the coast in order to look out for the various passes, etc. we had been told of. Directly we got from under the lee of the Island the full force of the Gulf [of Mexico] swell struck us and we thoroughly realized how small our boat was . . . . We certainly saw a pass as we expected but between us & it was a long line of breakers running away out to sea. A hurried consultation was held & we decided to try & cross this bar. Our rate of speed soon carried us there & in a few minutes we were among the breakers. Twice we felt the boat settle with a thud on the sand but the next wave lifted her on & in less than two minutes we were in deep water running right before the storm. The water seemed to fly past & every moment we expected to see our mast snap off & go overboard. Getting under the lee of an island we headed round & having our jib stowed, dropped an anchor & drank success to the boat adding as a rider to our toast that we hoped she would always get out of difficulties with the same luck as she had today. Nearly hidden in the trees on the island we discovered a small shack. Bob & the General volunteered to go ashore & explore. They came back in about an hour & reported that a Portuguese lived there who informed them that we could sail about anywhere inside the Mangoe Islands without difficulty. He also told them that we had just come thro' Estero Pass & were then in Ostego Bay.<sup>42</sup> We concluded to run

41. Once a haunt of the Caloosa Indians, Sanibel Island shields the mouth of the Caloosahatchee (San Carlos Bay) from the Gulf of Mexico. The name may have been derived from Point y Bel, then San y Bel, etc. Sanibel had been settled in early 1880s, the lighthouse built in 1885. Today largely a National Wildlife Refuge, it is connected to Punta Rassa via Florida S.R. 867. Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 26, 89.

42. Apparently the crew sailed off Estero Island south and came through Big Carlos Pass into Estero Bay, of which Ostego Bay is a part. They then ran "down the Bay," which was Estero Bay (from Spanish, *astillero*). Ostego Bay was named after the U.S.S. *Ostego*, a schooner which operated against the Seminoles in 1841. Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 58, 90.

down the Bay & explore. The wind had been getting stronger & stronger and was now blowing a perfect gale . . . suddenly we felt a shock which nearly sent us all overboard; then a jarring & scrunching below told us that we were hard & fast on an oyster bar. Fortunately these bars are all shelving & a boat running on to them simply runs almost high & dry . . . We now decided that we had had enough excitement for one day so crawled below for a round of grog and solemnly anathemized our friend the Portugee. It may seem strange that we kept running onto the bars but the water is completely land locked & studded with Mangoe Islands amongst which we have been dodging all day. No sea could therefore get up but the wind which has been terrific all day kept the surface covered with a fine spray which prevented us entirely from noticing the shoals . . . Distance in a straight line about 20 miles.

Jan 3rd/92 Sunday . . . We lay low till the sun was high up in the heavens hoping it would turn warmer but the cold seemed to increase. Finally on going on deck we were astonished to find we were aground. The tide had run out & we were on the mud. All around us were oyster bars showing with just streams of water running between . . . The tide rose high enough towards evening to float us much to our relief so we poled Minnie under the lea of an island to get shelter from the wind. Clear & bright. Very cold. Wind NW tremendous. 40° 50° 55° Distance 0.

Jan 4th/92 Monday. The wind moderated towards morning but the cold was still intense. A.E.W. & self rowed up Surveyor's Creek to try & catch some fish but did not get a single bite.<sup>43</sup> We returned to the boat about mid-day & as the wind had almost died out we poled to the nearest pass leading to the open & anchored there for the night. Here we saw a number of pelicans fishing at the mouth of the pass. We were much amused by their curious & grotesque gestures. They are the ugliest and most awkward birds imaginable. They are all bill & pouch. Having filled their pouches they fly ashore & sit in a row eating the fish they have caught. This pass we think is Big Hickory Pass. A deep narrow channel through which the tide rushes with incredible

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43. Survey Creek, now the Imperial River flowing through city of Bonita Springs and into Estero Bay.

rapidity. Right across the mouth of the Pass about 30 yds. from where it runs into the Gulf is a sandbar on which the surf is breaking . . . . Clear, bright, cool. Wind NW slight. 40° 60° 50° Distance 2 miles.

Jan 5th/92 Tuesday. The wind veered round to the S.W. during the night & by the time we got underway was blowing up fresh . . . . Minnie rising like a duck over the breakers not taking a drop on board. On getting within a few yds of the bar we put about & ran parallel with it. The breakers were now right on our beam & it took very careful sailing to avoid shipping a sea . . . . Finally we concluded to make a run for our last anchorage<sup>44</sup> which we reached in a very short while without accident altho our dingy was nearly swamped several times. Took a walk along the beach where we saw plenty of cat sign & also unmistakable bear sign. Bear & panther are said to be plentiful all along this coast but are very hard to find as they spend the day mostly in the mangrove thickets which are absolutely impenetrable for human beings . . . . 55° 65° 50° Sailed over about 16 miles

Jan 8th/92 Friday . . . . About 2.50 p.m. we reached Naples & anchored a short distance from the wharf . . . .<sup>45</sup> The Lillian of Tampa (mailboat) arrived soon after & we went on board her & borrowed an old anchor. After supper we went ashore & were regaled by some very *tall* stories of hunting, fishing, etc. by the natives. Naples is a most extraordinary little place.<sup>46</sup> The wharf is its principle feature. Built of enormous piles & running out into 20 or 30 ft. of water it presents a most imposing appearance. Really it is the finest of its class that any of us had ever seen. Ashore, a little distance S of the pier was a most gorgeous hotel of about 100 ft front & four stories high. We did not go into the building as it seemed to be closed up but if the interior were half as nicely arranged as the exterior it must have been a

44. Apparently Big Hickory Pass leading into Estero Bay.

45. Straight water distance from Big Hickory Pass to Naples is fifteen miles. The crew estimated they sailed about twenty miles.

46. Named after the Italian city, Naples had been founded in 1887 as a winter resort by some Kentuckians which included W. N. Haldeman, former publisher of the Louisville *Courier-Journal*; Henry Watterson, journalist; and General John S. "Cerro Gordo" Williams, a Mexican war hero. The wharf was built as a fishing pier, something the young men did not understand. The hotel was the Naples Hotel, built in 1889, but the resort's early growth had been retarded by lack of transportation.

perfect palace. The gardens were nicely laid out in flower beds & shell walks. A few cracker shacks scattered around are the only other buildings. We were much puzzled by the whole place. Why the devil anyone shld build such a magnificent wharf in such an exposed position. No boats could anchor there with any degree of safety. And then again what was the hotel for? . . . Clear & bright, cold. Wind NE light. 40° 50° 45° Distance 20 miles

Jan 9th/92 Saturday. . . . We sighted John's, Gordons & Little Marco passes in passing. Off Gordon's Pass we ran full tilt onto a turtle.<sup>47</sup> It must have been an enormous beast as the collision was distinctly felt by all on board. On arriving off Marco Pass we were somewhat in difficulty. We wanted to run up the Pass to Marco but for the life of us could not find the way in. Water seemed very shoal & every here & there buoys were anchored in a haphazard sort of a way. We imagined that the buoys were placed there for some purpose— probably to mark out the channel so we hovered around trying to make them out. Before very long however, we found out our mistake— they were anchored there for no reason at all, some were in deep water, others almost on the ground . . . . By keeping a bright look out for shoals we succeeded in making up the Pass & 10 a.m. saw us anchored off Marco.<sup>48</sup> Soon after taking up our moorings a cry of fire was raised & smoke was seen issuing from the hatches. In less than ½ a minute everyone was at his post & prepared to meet anything. The fire was traced to the midship section of the vessel & was found to have originated in a box of Blue hen safety matches. It was soon extinguished by being thrown overboard. This suggested itself as a better plan than scuttling the vessel & running into shoal water. There was no panic. This excitement being over we went ashore & found plenty to look at. To begin with we found a general ship-chandler's, a most useful kind of an establishment. We purchased a couple of 25 lb. anchors. Attached to the store is a shipyard & drydock. A large sloop— Gipsy of N.Y. — was in drydock being painted. We climbed into her & examined everything. She was cedar built, 50 ft. long and 20 ft. beam, beautifully fitted up all over. We saw quite a number of boats

47. These passes cut through the coastal islands by the Gulf of Mexico in Collier County.

48. Marco Island apparently had been first settled in 1870 by Captain W. D. Collier from Tennessee. Marco, formerly known as Malco, is another Caloosa Indian site. Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 17, 23, 76.

today Lillian of Tampa, sloop, carrying mail between here & Punta Rassa. Fleetwood— large schooner from Key West. Pilots Pride— large sloop from same place.<sup>49</sup> Besides these we saw a number of smaller craft. Altogether we think this a most interesting little place. Beyond the store, etc. there are no other buildings. A man who hunts a good deal round here has promised to bring us some venison tomorrow. We have been out of meat so long that it will be quite a treat. Clear & bright. Wind S.E fresh and steady. 45° 80° 70° Distance 17 miles.

Jan 10th/92 Sunday. Last night about 12.30 we were all sleeping the sleep of the just & virtuous when our slumbers were broken into by a loud crash & a noise as of a heavy chain being dragged across the boat. We rushed on deck and found a large sloop, Pilot's Pride had run foul off us. The wind being very light & the tide strong she had evidently become unmanageable. A very profane man & a diminutive boy seem to comprise her entire crew. We shoved her off & prepared to vent our feelings but were forestalled by the profane one. Hardly had he got clear when he launched a volley of choice & original oaths at the boy. Without the slightest interruption or hesitation he kept relieving his feelings until his voice died away in the distance. We, seeing he needed no assistance, kept silence altho' we envied him his flow of language. About 6 a.m., having received a fine haunch of venison on board, we weighed anchor & running out of the Pass shaped our course for Sanibel. Passed Naples 10.15 a.m. The wind was at first SE very light & gradually worked round to S.W as the sun got higher. During the day we sighted a steamer hull astern of us. She overhauled us towards 3 p.m. & as she was flying American colours we dipped our ensign. She politely answered our salute. As she forged ahead we made out her name - Sanibel. She was about as ugly a craft as one cld imagine, painted white all over with a tremendous square stern. Towards sundown the wind died out completely so we anchored in the open about 4 miles S. of Sanibel . . . Clear & bright. Wind S E to S W light. 70° 85° 75° Distance 40 miles.

Jan 11th/92 Monday . . . . Stood across to Punta Rassa with a

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49. The *Fleetwood* had been built the previous year at Marco, a 50.4' x 17' x 5.5' vessel of 26.66 gross tons; *Pilot's Pride* (34' x 12.5' x 3' sloopyacht of 5.6 gross tons) was built in 1886 at Cedar Key, 1892 *List of Merchant Vessels of the United States* (Washington, 1893).

stiff E wind. S.S. Sanibel was lying off the wharf there . . . . On reaching open water near Myers we shook out our reef & ran for that place closehauled . . . Dressed up & went ashore. We interviewed several parties to ascertain how much it wld cost to be towed up to Okeechobee. The lowest bid was \$32, pretty steep we thought. Having nothing better to do we paid the skating-rink a visit & had great fun watching the skaters. General at last summoned up courage to join the performers much to our amusement. Leaving the rink we paid Capt. Gonzales a visit & stayed with him for an hour or so. Clear & warm. Wind E strong, heavy squalls. 70° 85° 75° Distance 25 miles.

Jan 12th/92 Tuesday. Capt. Gonzales came on board early this morn & offered to help us to Fort Thompson for \$2.00/100 per diem. After some hesitation we closed with him & 10.30 saw us underway again . . . . Passed Parkinson's 4.15 p.m. Dredge 4.45 p.m.<sup>50</sup> Tied up off old Cracker house for the night at 5.30 p.m. . . . 75° 85° 80° Distance 18 miles.

Jan 13th/92 Wednesday. Made an. early start & polled hard all day against a very stiff current. Only stopped once for about ¼ hr. to cut some longer poles. Our own poles are 15 ft long & those we cut today are 25 ft. No child's playing with these all day. We are all, however, in splendid fix & have managed a heavy without extraordinary fatigue. About sundown we camped about 2 miles below Fort Simmons. Clear & bright. Wind E light. 70 80 75 Distance 24 miles.

Jan 15th/92 Friday . . . . Polled up to Fort Thompson<sup>51</sup> against heavy wind . . . . As we have seen the last of Capt. Gonzales today it wld perhaps be as well to insert a short description of him here. To begin with Portugal is his native country, I believe. He is about medium height & was evidently when younger, a powerfully built man, but age has shrunk his

50. A. T. G. Parkinson, a citrus grower on Caloosahatchee at Twelve Mile Creek as early as 1870s. He was also operating a ferry here at the site of Olga in 1880s. Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 77, 91. The dredge was the phosphate dredge encountered December 29.

51. Forts Simmons and Thompson were Seminole War outposts. Simmons apparently was named after an army sergeant tortured to death by the Seminoles after the Caloosahatchee Massacre in 1839. Named after Lieutenant Colonel Alex R. Thompson, killed in 1837 in the Battle of Okeechobee, Fort Thompson was founded in. 1854 about twenty-three miles west of Lake Okeechobee at the falls where Lake Flirt flows into the Caloosahatchee, on the south bank. Now on Florida S.R. 80 a half mile east of La Belle. Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 63.



frame & gives him a somewhat decrepit appearance altho' he seems capable of plenty of work. His face is a perfect study, covered with wrinkles like one of Rembrandt's pictures & dark as an Indian. His black hair & beard were streaked freely with gray. All in all he was not a very pleasant man to be with in a small boat. He chews very rank tobacco & has all the nasty proclivities attendant on that habit. In the cabin this was somewhat disagreeable. And again he was a very wearisome old man in his conversation, telling the same yarns over and over until we dreaded to see him open his mouth. So far as seamanship is concerned, he appeared to us to be very efficient. He seemed to think very favourably of our boat but suggested various improvements we could make in the sails & rigging. His life seems to have been adventurous from the tales he told us, he having been employed most of it in running a contraband business on the coast.<sup>52</sup> Cloudy & very cold. Wind N W strong. 50° 50° 40° Distance 3 miles

Jan 16th/92 Saturday. We only got as far as the top of the river today. Across L. Flirt the channel is very narrow & it was impossible to beat against the wind & current. Hunting was therefore the order of the day . . . curlew in thousands, duck, (teal and mallard) snipe ordinary & whistling, any quantity of herons of all descriptions & simply armies of scout-abouts (coots) & a great number of hooper. Damp & cold. Wind N W strong. 40° 50° 40° Distance 1 mile

Jan 18th/92 Monday . . . Got out of main channel after the first few miles & found ourselves in about 1 ft. of water & 4 ft. of soft mud. All hands overboard shoving & clearing away floating

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52. Captain Manuel A. Gonzalez was born in the province of Asturias, Spain, in 1833 and came to Cuba in 1847. With his wife he ran the mail in a small sailboat between Tampa and Fort Myers during the Third Seminole War. He apparently became a blockade runner during the Civil War. In 1866 he sailed from Key West and with his brother-in-law, John A. Weatherford, and Joseph A. Vivas, became the first permanent settlers in Fort Myers. In 1890 when Captain J. Fred Mange purchased Disston's work boats, the *Mamie Lown* and the *Gopher*, he hired Gonzalez as a second pilot on the first regular freight run on Caloosahatchee. The *Gopher* probably towed the *Minnehaha* up the Caloosahatchee. In 1901 Gonzalez captained the *H. B. Plant*, with Thomas A. Edison as a passenger. Mrs. W. Stanley Hansen, Jr., great-granddaughter of Gonzalez, to editor, October 26, 1971; Fritz, *Unknown Florida*, 76, 10, 107; Thomas D. Gonzalez, *The Caloosahatchee: Miscellaneous Writings Concerning the History of the Caloosahatchee River and the City of Fort Myers, Florida* (Esteco, 1932), 60.

lettuce etc. It was most disagreeable work. The mud on being stirred up gave out a nasty smell – besides which it was quite a struggle to move around up to one's waist in filth. We managed to make the channel after about an hour's very hard work. We reached the canal very soon after all & found a tremendous stream rushing into the lake. We tried to pole against it once or twice but could not get round the sandbar. At last we were compelled to get out an anchor ahead & haul up to it. As soon as we got into the straight run we got out our poles and made up to Bonnet Lake by slow & steady work. Across Bonnet Lake we sailed or rather drifted & then worked up to Blacksmith Hammock where we tied up at 2.30 p.m. . . . 70° 80° 70° Distance 12 miles.

Jan 19th/92 Tuesday. Very heavy wind blowing down stream. On this account & because shooting was exceptionally fine we agreed to stay on here for the day. Bob & the General did a tremendous curlew shoot. We have salted all the breasts down which gives us a good supply of meat to carry us on. Fine. Wind S. by E very strong. 75° 80° 70° Distance 0

Jan 20th/92 Wednesday. We left Coffee-mill Hammock at 8 a.m. The wind was westerly but too light to help much so we had to resort to poles making the first canal about 9.45 a.m. Then we had to work up 3 or 4 miles of river to the 8 mile canal leading into Hicapochee. Half way up this canal is a horse-gannet rookery. Here the wind veered round to S.E & we were able to sail closehauled up to the lake & across to the dredge where we anchored for the night at 4.30 p.m. It seems strange that this machine should be left to go to rack & ruin. Most of the machinery is still intact but of course in bad condition owing to the long exposure. Some of it must however be of considerable value. We were sorry to see so much waste & so stole as much as we could carry . . . . 70° 80° 75° Distance 15 miles

Jan 21st/92 Thursday. Quite early we started out to hunt in the pine woods but altho we walked about 15 miles we got nothing but curlew & quail. On returning to the boat we found Capt. Menge with the S.S. Mamie Lone<sup>53</sup> taking on wood prepara-

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53. S. S. *Mamie Lown*, a small (28' x 8'), oil-burning, sidewheel steamboat brought down to Kissimmee from Wisconsin with her sister sidewheeler, the *Schipman*, in mid-1880s. Captain Clay Johnson was her first captain. Edward H. Hall to Edward A. Mueller, January 16, 1963.

tory to running to the dredge on S.E. Okeechobee.<sup>54</sup> We sailed across to the mouth of the canal & anchored there for the night. The mud here is something extraordinary. Not more than 3 ft of water & at least 12 ft of loose mud. A boat in sailing across evidently disturbs the mud & liberates some gas or other for the water all round her bubbles just as if it were boiling. Cold and Cloudy. NW to NE slight. 55° 65° 75° Distance 8 miles

Jan 22nd/92 Friday It took 2½ hours hard poleing to make Okeechobee, not only is the stream very rapid but the mud at the lower end is very bad. It improves however about half way up. We made the lake at 10.30 & stayed for nearly an hour off the mouth of the canal renewing the flag & scratching our names on the big cypress . . . .<sup>55</sup> We shaped our course N by E for the Kissimmee River. Just after dark we were bowling along merrily, all of us below discussing our evening meal, except Ned who was at the helm, when we felt a jar & heard Ned shout "all hands on deck." We scrambled out in a hurry & found a squall had struck us all aback, jibeing the sail over & making a mess generally . . . . Wind N E – E.– S E light. 60° 75° 70° Distance 25 miles.

Jan 23rd/92 Saturday . . . . On approaching the river the coast appears very irregular forming a series of pockets with grass points running out into the lake. To the N can be seen the immense cypress fringing the N end of Okeechobee. This is said to be the finest belt of timber in the state. The river itself is at the N W end of a deep bend on the extreme N pt of which is a thick bunch of small cypress. The water in the bay is considerably cut up by grass islands & bonnet patches. On one of these islands is a lone squat cypress tree & right off the mouth of the river are four more lone trees. The river is by no means easy to find, one could easily sail past without noticing it.<sup>56</sup> We anchored in the stream at 9.30 a.m. the wind being right in our teeth & very strong. Clear, cold. W to N W very strong. 70° 65° 50° Distance 5 miles

54. Disston dredge which was cutting Twelve Mile Canal to the southwest from Lake Okeechobee starting in the mouth of Ritta River (now at Lake Harbor on U.S. 27). Its first eight and one half miles later became the north leg of the Miami canal through the Everglades. "Report of the Secretary of Agriculture, 1891." *House Executive Documents*, 52nd Cong., 1st sess., XX, 166.

55. "Sentinel Cypress" first encountered December 23.

56. Buckhead Ridge is on the south at the river's mouth, Lookout Point on the northeast.

Jan 28th/92 Thursday. Poleing again was the order of the day. The river here is very intricate. We got off the main stream into what we thought wld prove a short cut but found after an hour's work that it led nowhere ending abruptly within a few yards of Pine Reach. Had we been able to cut a channel thro' about a dozen yds of sand we should have saved a lot of time but as it was we had to run back to where we left the main river. Had lunch at Pine Reach. After lunch the wind favoured us a little & we were able to sail a little. Passed Dawdrey's at 3.30 p.m. Early this morning we heard Johnson's boat whistle in Bassinger so we have quite given up all hope of catching him. About sun-down two Indians sailed passed in a dug out. Made out from them that Johnson left Bassinger this morning. We are camped about 8 miles below B. Have laid in a new stock of firewood. Clear & bright. NE very light. 55° 80° 65° Distance 16 miles.

Jan 31st/92 Sunday. Had splendid fun shooting curlew this morning. They kept flying right over the boat so we had only to lay low to get as many as we want. About 1.30 p.m. we took advantage of a slight change of wind & ran up to the Bassinger. warehouse where we stayed over night.<sup>57</sup> Whilst we were discussing our evening toddy we heard a boat coming up stream. It turned out to be a man named Chandler who had been down otter-hunting on Okeechobee. We warmed him up with a bowl of hot toddy & sent him rejoicing on his way. It promises to be a bitterly cold night. Clear & bright. N light. 50° 85° 40° Distance 1 mile.

Feb 1st/92 Monday. Bitterly cold last night. About 10.30 a.m. we sailed on up the river with a light easterly wind. Passed Lyneer's at 11.30 a.m.<sup>58</sup> Lost our way several times & had to put back. At sundown anchored off Oak Reach for the night. Fine. NE-E very light. 50° 85° 75° Distance 12 miles.

Feb 4th Thursday. About 11 a.m. heard Johnson whistle up stream. Ned rowed up in the dinghy to meet him. A.E.W. & self perched ourselves up at the mast head. We soon caught sight of him threading his way through all sorts of little channels & cut off. Much to disgust just before he got to us he turned of down

57. Built two miles upriver from Bassinger, a warehouse for hides and other wilderness products and "store" goods landed from steamboats. The hammock where the men had camped December 14.

58. A landing about four miles upriver from Bassinger owned at the time by Hardy Lanier.

a narrow channel & ran past without seeing us. As soon as Ned got back we poled back to Lyneers wood landing where we tied up to catch Johnson as he came past.<sup>59</sup> Soon after dark we heard him whistle his departure from Bassinger & very soon after he tied up a little way below us. We paid him a visit & made all arrangements for being towed up to Kissimmee. \$15.00/100 is what he is going to charge. Fine. No wind. 60° 85° 75° Distance (8 miles).

Feb. 5th Friday. Johnson ran up alongside at 6.20 a.m. & took us in tow. We were obliged to make the towline fast high up on the mast to clear the sternwheel. Sometimes it was awkward work making round the bends. The steamer would at times be round the bend & therefore on our beam pulling us sideways. When this occurred our boat wld take a sheer & rush across the river making steering a very difficult performance. After a while the river got so bad we had to pole about a mile after which getting into a good wide stream we lashed alongside one of his barges & made splendid time till about 10 p.m. when we tied up off Dawdrey's.<sup>60</sup> It was very enjoyable being pushed up the river without any work or trouble, I spent most of the day sitting in the pilot house potting at everything I saw with my rifle. Capt. J. is one of the pleasantest men imaginable. Every one at all the landings on the river seems to do their best to try his patience but he never loses his temper— in fact he is what one might truthfully call a perfect tempered man. Our route today was entirely different to the one we pursued on our way down. Capt. J. knows the river by heart. Day or night he rushes his 100 ft. of barges along swinging them round all sorts of corners never

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59. Johnson came to Kissimmee from New Orleans in 1883 at the urging of his brother-in-law, Rufus E. Rose, a Disston engineer. He first worked for Disston, then moved into steamboating. By 1889 he was captain of the *Cincinnati*; his later boats included the *Roseada*, *Osceola*, and *Lillie*. The log keeper's description of Johnson as "a perfect tempered man" contrasts with local tradition that when Johnson had steamboat trouble he cursed "until the air turned blue." Interview with Mrs. George Steffee, Johnson's daughter, August 13, 1954. See Mueller, "Kissimmee Steamboating," 82-86; Lawrence E. Will, *Okeechobee Boats and Skippers* (St. Petersburg, 1965), 30-40; Hanna, *Lake Okeechobee*, 177-73.

60. There were two or three landings on the river occupied by the Daughtery Clan (see Jan. 28 entry). As early as 1875 Tom Daughtery owned the landing on the west bank a little north of Bassinger. It was described by A. M. Conklin in *Forest and Stream* (December 30, 1875) as near "the largest and most important" Indian mound of many on the Kissimmee River.

a mistake however dark it may be. He says he prefers dark nights to moonlight ones. Fine S fresh. 70° 85° 70° Distance 111 miles.

Feb 6th/92 (Saturday) We made up to the Southport canal without any worry but here the water was so low on the bar we were obliged to uncouple & pole over . . . . Half way up the canal we fouled our rudder and bent the post badly . . . . Johnson dropped us off Paradise Island where we anchored for the night. Fine NE light. Strong wind from the S. after dark. Distance 65 miles.

Feb 7th/93 Sunday . . . . the wind had sprung up pretty brisk from E. We tried for a few minutes to pole against it to the canal but directly we struck the sea running out of the cove the boat became quite unmanageable so we hoisted a jib & ran for Kissimmee steering with an oar.<sup>61</sup> Capt. Johnson seeing us running in under this rig came down to the wharf to meet us & rendered us most valuable assistance in fixing up a steering apparatus which altho effective enough was very hard to hold in a wind as one had to stand on deck to work it & when the boat was lying down the chances were that the steersman wld find himself thrown overboard . . . we got along all right and reached the [St. Cloud] canal towards sundown . . . We demolished the first footbridge & anchored for the night below the next bridge. 75° 85° 75° Distance 12 miles.

Feb 8th/93 Monday. Today was more or less a repetition of our first day out except that we stuck on the bar & had to get a yoke of oxen<sup>62</sup> to help us over. Looking over towards Narcoossee we could see a small boat beating across to meet us. The wind was dead fair for us so we did not take long in running across, picking up the small boat on our way. It contained Garret & son, Haycock Stogden & a whiskey bottle which we drained for them. Well, here we are again at our old moorings so with a parting glass we separated & made for our several homes . . .

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61. This entry and the following one were mis-dated in the log. Named after the lake twenty miles south, Kissimmee was founded by Major J. H. Allen of Kentucky about 1880, and it became headquarters of Disston's drainage and land operations in Florida the following year.

62. This was a common method of getting a boat over sand bars near or in this canal. *Kissimmee Gazette*, March 5, 1936, quoting from interviews with Captain George Steffee.

## EPILOGUE

A. E. Woodham and his brother had a well developed grove when the freeze of 1895 struck. Likely the two returned to England, eventually to lose contact with the English settlers in Osceola County. After the freeze, Bob and Ned prospected for gold in Rhodesia. They joined the British South African police and were with the reinforcements at the Matabele tribal uprising. They also fought in the Boer War (1899-1902), then separated. Bob became a mining engineer, and in 1904, on a trip back to Florida, he married Lena Constance Cline, sister of his brother Harry's wife. He returned to Rhodesia, where he died in 1946 at the age of seventy-four.

Ned left South Africa after the Boer War for Northern Ireland. In World War I he served in a New Zealand machine gun unit and later as an interpreter. He was gassed and spent more than a year in an English hospital. He returned to Florida in the 1920s, and died in Augusta, Georgia, in 1930.

In 1893 Harry married Edith Cline, daughter of an English army captain. After 1895 they moved to Paradise Island in Lake Tohopekaliga, and Harry commuted by boat to Kissimmee. After two years he moved to town where in 1902 he built a home which became a local cultural and social center. Harry was in the turpentine business, served in county government, and was prominent in community affairs. He died in 1934.