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THE HISTORY OF MULBERRY AND FRONTIER
FLORIDA: A MODEL FOR THE
TEACHING OF LOCAL HISTORY

James Arthur Fisher

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Doctor of Arts

August, 1974

THE HISTORY OF MULBERRY AND FRONTIER
FLORIDA: A MODEL FOR THE
TEACHING OF LOCAL HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

THE HISTORY OF MULBERRY AND FRONTIER FLORIDA: A MODEL FOR THE TEACHING OF LOCAL HISTORY

by James Arthur Fisher

There are basically two purposes for this study. In the first place, it presents a history of Mulberry, Florida, and the surrounding area and its development as a frontier community. Also, based on the research done, the study presents a model of the historical inquiry method of researching American history as it might be applied for use in teaching a college class. Both of these purposes are in keeping with the theme that local history plays an important role in developing an awareness of historical concepts in students. These concepts may be better explained to students through the teaching of local history because it is the one aspect of history that is closest to most individuals.

Local history is the starting point for much historical research. From its roots grow the trees and branches of national history. By presenting the processes by which local history is researched, this study serves as a guide for undertaking historical research. This guide is based upon a teaching model of historical inquiry.

James Arthur Fisher

Very little has been done in the United States with regard to the teaching of local history. This study is an attempt to help remedy this unfortunate fact. Chapter I of this study answers the questions "What is local history?," "Where can local history be found?," and "Why teach local history?" Chapters II through VII incorporate the actual history of the Mulberry area from the pre-Columbian era through the great depression of the 1930's. The final chapter of the study is a model for historical inquiry designed to teach research in the discipline of history. This historical inquiry model is based upon the methods used in researching this particular study.

This study should be viewed as a part of the overall frontier development of the United States. Communities that developed on the American frontier created a nation that was uniquely different, influenced by Europe, but more so by the geographical factors of the North American continent. Most American historians have depicted the frontier as a westward movement, generally ignoring the southward thrust into Florida. The fact that much of peninsular Florida was settled more than one hundred years after the Revolutionary War gives the region a strong kinship to trans-Mississippi America. The fact that it was settled almost exclusively by settlers from the southern states bound it to that region, making it a rather unique frontier.

James Arthur Fisher

Mulberry, because of its many similarities with the West (mining, Indians, cattle), and the South (farming, Negroes, Confederates), is ideally situated as being truly characteristic of the Florida frontier. The history of Mulberry is a micro-cosm of the development of the Florida frontier, and in effect, of the frontier in American history. The similarities between the Florida and western frontiers are far greater than the differences which make the Florida frontier unique. Therefore, this study is useful not only for its historical content, but as a model for teaching an important phase of American history through the use of a teaching model for historical inquiry.

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This study was made possible by the efforts of many persons to whom this author is deeply grateful. They include: Mrs. Margie Fisher, who spent many hours typing and proof-reading this paper; Mrs. Stevie Powell, the librarian at Polk County Historical Library, without whom I could never have found the necessary information; Dr. Frederick Rolater, Dr. Ralph Fullerton, Dr. Ronald Messier and Dr. Donald Lau of Middle Tennessee State University, whose criticisms, advice and considerate understanding enabled me to complete the study; and lastly my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth F. Fisher, and my grandmother, Mrs. David T. Blose, whose encouragement was greatly appreciated. It is my hope that this story is not a disappointment to those who have earned my unending gratitude.

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CHAPTER I

LOCAL HISTORY

Purpose of the Study

The history of Mulberry, Florida, and the surrounding area can, like many local histories, be used in conjunction with the teaching of American history survey courses. The history of this area is a microcosm of the broader picture of the history of the United States. The story of this nation's past is the story of a frontier society pushing not only westward (as our history is usually depicted), but also southward. The purpose of this work is basically twofold: first, to present the history of Mulberry and the surrounding area, and second, to organize this information into a model of the historical inquiry method of researching American history. To this end, this author will present the history of Mulberry as a frontier community, as well as a model for historical inquiry that can be used in teaching a college class of American history.

To begin with, it is appropriate to answer several questions. The first question is "What is local history?," the second, "Where can local history be found?," and third, "Why teach local history?" The first chapter of this work will attempt to answer these three questions. Chapters II

through VII will incorporate the actual history of Mulberry and its development as a frontier community. The final chapter is a model for historical inquiry designed to teach research in the discipline of history.

What is Local History?

Local history is the history of a particular, usually small, geographically circumscribed area. In a society that has become accustomed to thinking in terms of vastness (witness the exploration of space), the continuing significance and importance of local history is far too often overlooked in favor of larger fields. The irony of this is that local history is the one aspect of history that is closest to most individuals.¹

Local history represents the smallest geographical unit of the study of history. It is the history of the community, the town, the city, the local area, the county, or the neighboring region. It is a field that is smaller than state history, and larger than, but often including, biography or genealogy. Its topics are those of history in general: economics, politics, social-cultural affairs,

¹Marcia M. Miller, Collecting and Using Local History (Santa Fe: New Mexico Research Library of the Southwest, 1971), p. 7.

education, science, the military, religion, medicine, and ideologies, among others.²

Local history cannot be divorced or dissected from general history. It is always a part of something larger, and to ignore the more complete frame of reference does violence to the total picture. "The part cannot be understood without a knowledge of the whole."³ Wars, economic conditions, and revolutions all have their effect upon the local scene. It is then impossible to escape totally the impact the larger scene has upon the smaller.⁴

To some extent then, all history is local history. "To a European the history of England might well be only local history, so to a 'citizen of the world' might be the story of Europe itself. Even world history could be local history--to a denizen of Mars."⁵ This implies that local history "may not be local at all, but may be only a focusing of attention upon a certain aspect" of a much more extended historical situation. In local history, research is directed in such a manner as to "bring a detail into the foreground, while subordinating other details to a background position.

²Clifford L. Lord, Teaching History With Community Resources (New York: Teachers College Press, 1967), p. 8.

³Philip D. Jordan, "Local History," Social Education, XVIII (May, 1954), 196.

⁴Miller, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵W. H. Burston and C. W. Green, eds., Handbook for History Teachers (London: Methuen and Co., 1967), p. 75.

The national or broader history gives attention to the whole wide sweep of panoramic proportions."⁶

Local history has most of the values of national history. It brings about an understanding of one's own existence in a more intimate manner than national history. It gives man perspective and humility and "a sense of inheriting and participating in an ongoing project of some antiquity--something of peculiar importance to the mobile and rootless young."⁷

The interest expressed by college students in local history is an indication of its relationship to one's own experience. Recently, students in an urban community college in the Maryland suburbs of Washington, D. C., ran a feature article in their school newspaper about the history of the town in which their college is located. The author of that article, Fred Shuttlesworth, wrote that his article was being published "in the hope that it will promote greater interest in our community (Takoma Park, Maryland)." He continued: "In discovering its historical roots, we are given insight into its early development and its present state of life and growth."⁸ Local history, then, can be seen as a means of understanding man's present place in the world.

⁶Jordan, op. cit., p. 196.

⁷Lord, op. cit., p. 8.

⁸Fred Shuttlesworth, "Takoma Park," Excalibur, March 28, 1974, p. 7. Excalibur is the college newspaper of Montgomery College, Takoma Park, Md. Shuttlesworth is a journalism student at the college.

Most persons are readily aware of what local history is. They are not so aware of what history itself is. This author asked seventy-three persons on the streets of Washington, D. C., to answer two questions. The first question was "What is history?" The second question was "What is local history?" Seventy-one people gave some variation to the effect that local history was the story of a town, county or small unit. However, there were no less than seven different answers to the first question, running the gamut from "Something I hated in school" to "The recorded story of mankind." People seemed able to respond immediately to the question on local history, but had to grope for an answer to the broader question. This points out that local history is something more readily identifiable and more easily related to by the majority of persons than history in general.

This author defines local history as the starting point for most historical research. It is the roots from which the trees of national history grow. It is more personal because it is a history which everyone can at some point relate to his own past, especially if it is the history of his own local community or county. Local history does not have to be the history of one's own community, as a historian might write a local history of some distant community. While this certainly is not as personal as the

history of his own community, it is still a starting point for historical research.

Where Can Local History be Found?

Available sources for the study of local history differ from one locality to another. The explanation of where this author went to obtain material for this history of Mulberry and frontier Florida can serve as a guideline for the research of the local history of any American community. Some sources mentioned here will not be available or even pertinent to other local histories, but in general, most sources are basically the same.

It was first necessary to determine whether or not anything had been written about the area to be researched, and if it had, to determine the reliability of the existing research. In this case, the first step was to ask the historian at the Polk County Historical Library in the courthouse at Bartow what books had been written about Polk County in general. The librarian, Mrs. Stevie Powell, said that there had been only two works on the history of Polk County, and both were old enough to be of value as primary-source material. Both books, Polk County, Florida: Its Lands and Products (1883), by G. W. Hendry, and History of Polk County, Florida (1928), by M. F. Hetherington, were no longer in print. Mrs. Powell said that there had been no specialized

research done on the history of Mulberry or any part of southwestern Polk County.⁹

The county historical library had many files available for research, all of which were checked for pertinent material. Many public documents had been filed there, including old census returns. The census returns were especially helpful in determining when the first settlers came to the county, what their livelihoods were, where they came from, what their race was, and other facts of interest.

The library had on microfilm many of the old newspapers from Bartow as well as other nearby communities. Such papers as the Polk County News, Bartow Courier-Informant, Fort Meade Leader, and Mulberry Herald all contained articles of great historical value. Articles in these papers referred to other papers which were also on microfilm. The Deed Record Book of Polk County was also recorded on microfilm and used extensively. It should be noted here that obtaining information of this sort cannot be done overnight. To do a thorough job may take several years. Of course, if the researcher can devote full time to the effort, the job can be completed much more quickly.

After exhausting the sources in the historical library, the next logical place for research was the city records

⁹Stevie L. Powell, Polk County Historian, personal interview with the author, Bartow, Fla., Oct., 1970.

of Mulberry. The city employees were eager to help and allowed open access to all records. Of particular value were the Mayor's Docket and the Council Minutes of the city council meetings.

Florida Southern College in nearby Lakeland had a good selection of books on general Florida history. These were used to gain an overall view of the history of the state.

Local businessmen were often helpful in telling the details of the establishment of their businesses, although some did not want to be bothered, and one was even hostile to granting an interview. Visits to area churches turned up some good information, especially at the First Baptist and Mulberry Methodist Churches. The others either had lost their records or said they were unavailable.

Some citizens eagerly contributed old letters and pictures. Mrs. Roy Gladney and Mrs. John Mitchell had the most pertinent information of this type. Personal interviews were held with many of the citizens. Quite a few of these proved helpful while others were of little value. A visit to the Mulberry city library yielded only minimal useful information.

While the above-mentioned sources dealt exclusively with Mulberry and the surrounding area, certain types of resources are commonly available. In any given locality

there are innumerable sources of local history. Naturally there will be variations in types and amounts of material available according to the area. It is logical that there will be more material available to the researcher living in an historically famous spot. Towns with battles, famous people, and nearby natural attractions will have more written material available for research than those in relatively remote areas. Therefore, the sources and content of local history are often determined by the location of the historian.¹⁰

What, then, are some of the best places to look for sources of local history? In questioning Dr. Daniel Roselle, Editor of Social Education, the official journal of the National Council for the Social Studies, this author asked him who he felt was the foremost authority on the subject of local history. Dr. Roselle was of the opinion that Dr. Ralph Brown, Chairman of the Department of History at the State University of New York at Cortland, was the man.¹¹

In a 1974 interview with Dr. Brown, this author was informed that "the use of local biography is one of the most important sources" in gathering information about a community.¹² Local biography is, of course, a part of local history.

¹⁰Miller, op. cit., p. 11.

¹¹Daniel Roselle, Editor, Social Education, personal interview with the author, Washington, D. C., Feb. 26, 1974.

¹²Ralph A. Brown, Chairman, Department of History, State University of New York at Cortland, telephone interview with the author, Feb. 28, 1974.

Dr. Brown felt that the "study of the lives of individuals who have participated in the development of a given area cannot be dissociated from the history of that area."¹³ Local biography becomes, then, a means for utilizing some of the values of community study within the framework of American history. Almost every community can provide a large amount of biographical material to be used by researchers, not only in making the past seem more real, but as starting points for a study of that community.

The next logical source is the newspapers. The local paper is the diary of the community, telling day by day (or week by week) what has happened in the community. The back files of these papers often can be found at the local historical society, the public library, or the newspaper office.¹⁴ The researcher should inspect all the issues covering the period in which he is interested. If he is fortunate, the files will be complete and the newspapers will be microfilmed making them easier to handle.

Letters, journals, and diaries are significant sources of history. They are available in most communities. Information in such sources may relate to the unusual and exceptional rather than to day-by-day, normal happenings that also constitute a legitimate record of history. The rambling

¹³Ralph A. Brown, "The Local Scene in American History Teaching," Social Education, XVI (Jan., 1952), 20.

¹⁴William T. Alderson, Tennessee: A Students' Guide to Localized History Series (New York: Teachers College Press, 1966), p. v.

"letters of a school boy to his pal, the secret diary of a school girl, the carefully noted record of the daily activities of the local blacksmith, storekeeper, clergyman, or doctor" provide a wealth of details about the local past.¹⁵

One problem for the person planning to use local materials is that letters with information about community life are usually mailed to some other area. Conversely, the community receives letters from other spots. Correspondence from a soldier on duty in some distant post or from an adventurous youth in search of wealth in California minefields contain references about completely different areas. However, these documents do relate to a part of the community experience, and the fact that they came from a local resident can reinforce or reawaken interest in some subjects that would appear to have only a remote relationship to the immediate surroundings.¹⁶ Frequently, people save letters written to them by loved ones in the home community, and when they return home, they bring these letters with them. In this way, events of the community have been chronicled by the letter sender and saved for posterity by the letter receiver and his descendants.

¹⁵William G. Tyrrell, "Local Resources for Teaching American History," Interpreting and Teaching American History, Thirty-first Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies (Washington: National Council for the Social Studies, 1961), p. 418.

¹⁶Ibid.

School and church records often contain information about life in a community. Churches grow, move, branch out, decline, merge and disappear, altering their responsibilities and activities. Records that throw light on these changes are valuable sources for local social history. Churches with a strong central organization usually have preserved source materials more carefully than those under more local control. For example, the Southern Baptist Historical Commission in Nashville, Tennessee, provides extensive microfilms of many local church records. School documents, such as yearbooks, handbooks, and other records, often provide valuable information on curriculum offerings and the need for such offerings. Official correspondence of school officials can help determine attitudes of the community toward the school.¹⁷

Depending on the topic there are many other places in which to look for information. If the writer is working on the impact of transportation upon the community, he could visit the railroad offices, the gas stations, the shipyard or the trucking depot. If he is working on the history of mining in the area, the logical place to visit would be the mining company's office. Business records--ledgers, journals, daybooks and budgets--document economic history.

¹⁷Ibid.

Old photographs often tell things that the newspapers don't mention such as the conditions of roads, sidewalks or buildings or even the type of uniform worn by police or firemen.¹⁸ Of course, some businesses or government agencies do not relish the thought of an "outsider" going through their records. If this is the case, the researcher has no alternative but to go elsewhere in his search.

Local offices of government contain historical materials with a close relationship to several subjects in history. Minute books specify in detail, chronologically, administrative actions and decisions and local laws and ordinances. These basic sources of information trace the expansion of functions and responsibilities that are characteristic in every level of government. Annual and special reports are additional sources of information about governmental affairs. Many government offices have long given careful attention to preserving records about the sale and transfer of public and private property. Along with assessment rolls and official maps and surveys, these records are substances for showing changes in the community. Census records and vital statistics, after their preservation was formally required in the late nineteenth century, combine a personal approach to history with statistical data. They both verify and measure population changes and sources.

¹⁸Alderson, op. cit., p. viii.

Judicial records are significant for studying legal concepts and shifts in moral standards.¹⁹

Unfortunately, many government offices suffer from gaps in their records because of the loss or destruction of documents. Also the records do not always explain why decisions were made nor indicate the conflict and arguments that were involved in reaching a particular decision. These conditions remind the historian that he cannot be satisfied with one source of information but must search many places for materials on which to base his own interpretations. In recent years, many decisions have been made by telephone calls, and these impermanent conversations provide no evidence for the historical record. At the same time, government offices acquire such a quantity of materials in correspondence, routine records, and reports that research is now much more difficult. The person who plans to use government records should know what materials are available and in which office they are located. Public officials are busy people, but when approached properly they can furnish valuable sources of information bearing on political history and on many other developments in the past.²⁰

If this author's experience can be assumed as typical, a researcher might be appalled at the condition in which he

¹⁹Tyrrell, "Local Resources," p. 420.

²⁰Ibid.

finds some historical material in government offices. The city of Mulberry did not have any system to the way they kept their documents. Many rare papers were simply folded and piled in a closet. At least they were in a relatively safe place. The county courthouse, due to overcrowding, had volumes of court cases and land records sitting in the hallways where some dishonest person could easily walk away with a valuable historical document. Even in the historical library there was only one woman to keep all the records straight and in place. When she retires it will be next to impossible to locate anything, as there is no filing system for old documents. Only the microfilm and bound volumes of books are in some semblance of order.

Other possible sources for research include county histories, city and village histories, state and regional histories, family albums, guide books, travelers accounts, genealogies and telephone books.²¹ One very helpful source is old maps of the area to be studied. Areas of settlement, growth, early roads, original boundaries and old land grants can be found on these maps.

One of the most recent additions to the list of resource material available to the researcher of local history is the taped interview. Informants in oral interviews "can delineate segments of history that might never be disclosed except in diaries or other autobiographical accounts,

²¹Miller, op. cit., p. 11.

personal historical documents that are less common now than in earlier generations."²² Taped interviews with persons "whose experiences were once essential to the life of the community, can provide the sense of process so vital to understanding the past."²³ Recorded interviews can provide narratives dealing with causes, motivations, and personal relationships. Thus, they can answer questions about the "how" and "why" of history.²⁴ These recordings, called oral history, set visual displays in their historical context. Moreover, they can capture aspects of society which are difficult to display. "A case in point is the passenger agent who can describe for an interviewer how he serviced the trains passing daily through a community where the only visual clue to the railroad's former activity is a weed-choked embankment." Another example is auctioneering, an occupation vital to the economic and social life of American communities which is "based almost entirely upon verbal communication."²⁵

The researcher of local history cannot expect to find taped interviews ready for his own personal use. They are

²²William G. Tyrrell, "Tape Recording Local History," Technical Leaflet 35, History News, XXI No. 5 (May, 1966), 2.

²³Gould P. Colman, "Taped Interviews and Community Studies," Social Education, XXIX (Dec., 1965), 537.

²⁴Tyrrell, "Tape Recording Local History," p. 2.

²⁵Colman, op. cit., p. 537.

usually something which he, himself, must record. Some schools, notably the University of Florida and Columbia University, are developing extensive files of taped interviews, but in most areas, such tapes are generally unavailable.

The taped interview has become an accepted method of obtaining information, and researchers can benefit from meeting and questioning individuals and from seeking to determine the validity of their statements. Portable cassette tape recorders particularly facilitate and encourage the utilization of this source. As in all examples of historical investigation, the researcher must have certain basic ideas about the sort of information he hopes to elicit, and "guidance in effective and tactful ways of obtaining it."²⁶

There are undoubtedly additional sources for the researcher to "find local history" that have not been mentioned here. As stated previously, all of these sources mentioned here might not be available, or might not pertain to every particular area or subject in local history research.

Why Teach Local History?

The teaching of local history in the United States is still in its infancy. European universities are far

²⁶Tyrrell, "Local Resources," p. 422.

ahead of their American counterparts in this field. M. W. Keatinge, a professor of education at Oxford University, believed as early as 1913 that local history should not be omitted from a university. He felt that for a student to understand English mediaeval history he needed knowledge of the history of mediaeval London.²⁷

Some British universities endow a chair in local history while others offer courses in local and regional history under the auspices of the department of English history. W. E. Tate of the University of Leeds said twenty years ago that the best way to learn something of local history is to teach it to one's pupils. He said that "local history, taught and studied with discretion, is not only of great cultural value, but also can be a very activating and enjoyable undertaking to both the teacher and his pupils."²⁸

The eminent British local historian, H. P. R. Finberg believed that professors of history needed "to work out and persistently expound a theory of local history that will provide a sound basis for the work of its practitioners both inside and outside the university." Finberg believed that local history could be used in university history

²⁷M. W. Keatinge, Studies in the Teaching of History (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1913), p. 220.

²⁸Burston and Green, op. cit., p. 89.

classes to lighten the tedium and increase student interest in history.²⁹

Contemporary English historian Lawrence Stone felt in 1972 that local history should be taught because it has encouraged important politico-economic studies of towns such as Exeter, Leicester and Newcastle. These studies presented a more complete picture of the national history of England. Stone believed that the French were ahead of the English in realizing the importance of teaching local history.³⁰

The prominent French local historian, Pierre Goubert recently saw the teaching of local history as serving "to destroy many of the general conceptions that once seemed so strong and were embodied in so many books, papers, and lectures."³¹ He also believed that the teaching of historical demography was an important asset in furthering the study of local history.³²

In the United States, existing curriculums in colleges have developed "partly out of identifiable needs in American society and partly out of the rapid expansion of knowledge

²⁹H. P. R. Finberg and V. H. T. Skipp, Local History, Objective and Pursuit (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, 1967), p. 65.

³⁰Lawrence Stone, "English and United States Local History," in Historical Studies Today, ed. by Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1972), pp. 315-319.

³¹Pierre Goubert, "Local History," in Historical Studies Today, ed. by Felix Gilbert and Stephen R. Graubard (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1972), p. 306.

³²Ibid., pp. 308-309.

which has characterized the past century." The purposes of higher education have generally been recognized as at least threefold: to preserve the country's heritage; to pass on the country's heritage; and to augment, organize and utilize that heritage.³³ The teaching of local history is ideally suited to each of these purposes.

"Every college should examine the various needs of students and reach some accord on a hierarchical order."³⁴ The teaching of local history can be something which is relevant to the needs of the community. It makes sense that a black student in a community college in Harlem would find more of interest to him in the history of Harlem than in the history of ancient Greece. Likewise, the Indian of the Southwest would probably relate better to the history of his tribe or region than to the history of the Napoleonic Wars. However, interest in a subject does not always mean that there will be a need for it in the curriculum.

It can be assumed that American history will always have a place in college curriculum in this country, and the "study of American history can be facilitated greatly by wise use of local resources."³⁵ yet "the use of local history

³³Paul L. Dressel, The Undergraduate Curriculum in Higher Education (Washington: The Center for Applied Research in Education, 1963), p. 1.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Tyrrell, "Local Resources," p. 415.

as a point of departure for the study of various phases of American history has been too little appreciated by teachers of the social studies."³⁶ Though this writer chose a community in Florida, the history of any community in any one of the fifty states affords an excellent opportunity for humanizing and interpreting the national scene. If a student enjoys a good mystery story, or likes to follow clues to see where they lead, or is thrilled at being a successful arm-chair detective, then he would enjoy local history--the story of his own community.³⁷

There are no good textbooks for local history (except for a few large cities), and no easy way to find out about it. The student must find out for himself. By doing this research himself, he finds out a great deal not just about his community but about American history,

about the great drama of our country's transformation from a transcontinental wilderness into the world's most powerful nation; from a primitive subsistence economy into one producing the world's highest standard of living; from a colonial monarchy (part French, part English, part Spanish) into a democracy where every individual, through the ballot and freedom of speech, assembly, and petition, has the right to a voice in his government; from a rather rigid society structured on

³⁶William J. Petersen, "The Use of Local History as a Tool in Studying American History," The Utilization of Community Resources in the Social Studies, Ninth Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies (Cambridge, Mass.: National Council for the Social Studies, 1938), p. 101.

³⁷Alderson, op. cit., p. v.

European models into a highly fluid society in which a man can in general rise according to his ability.³⁸

The student can discern these changes dramatically and without much difficulty because he can see how it happened, and who made it happen, right in his own community. Certainly a course in local history would be appreciated more in a college where a large number of students were indigenous to that community. For this reason virtually all community-junior colleges would benefit from such a course, while some four-year schools might find less value in a course of this type.

Florida Southern College, a four-year liberal arts college in Lakeland, Florida, is only 10 miles from Mulberry, yet there would be little interest in the history of that community because there were only two students from Mulberry enrolled in the college. Furthermore, there would be little interest in the local history of that area at Florida Southern because less than 15 per cent of the full-time students were residents of Polk County, in which the college is located.³⁹ However, Polk Community College, located in Winter Haven, Florida, about 20 miles from Mulberry, had a student body

³⁸Ibid.

³⁹Charles T. Thrift, President, Florida Southern College, personal interview with the author, Lakeland, Fla., Feb. 8, 1974.

of which more than 90 per cent were residents of Polk County. Neither college offered a course in local history.⁴⁰

Both schools would benefit from the offering of such a course from the standpoint that the students could learn pragmatically how to do historical research. This author thought it might be interesting to survey student opinions at both schools with regard to the possibility of taking a course in local history. Fifty students were randomly selected from the campus of both colleges. They were asked two questions: "Would you be interested in taking a course in the local history of this county and/or community?," and, "If a course in local history could be substituted for any one of the required history courses, would you sign up for it?" Fifty-eight per cent of the Polk Community College students answered affirmatively to the first question. Their answer to the second question was even more encouraging-- 76 per cent said they would sign up for such an elective. At Florida Southern only 12 per cent answered affirmatively to the first question while 46 per cent gave a favorable reply to the second.⁴¹

⁴⁰James O. Niswonger, former Dean of Instruction, Polk Community College, personal interview with the author, Winter Haven, Fla., Feb. 8, 1974.

⁴¹Survey administered by author, random selection of fifty students on the campus of Florida Southern College, Lakeland, Florida, and fifty students on the campus of Polk Community College, Winter Haven, Fla., Feb. 8, 1974.

This survey was by no means done on a large enough scale to offer conclusive reliability. It did point out that there was, as this author suspected, enough interest in the history of the area among the students in the community college to make it worthwhile for college officials at least to consider the possibility of offering such a course. It is the opinion of this author, as a result of this survey, that there also existed sufficient interest among the students at Florida Southern to offer a course in local history.

Considerable interest in a local history course also seemed substantial in other community colleges. The same questions were asked to one hundred students at Montgomery College, a two-year community college in Takoma Park, Maryland. The response was overwhelming--82 per cent answered yes to both questions.⁴²

At Lees Jr. College in Jackson, Kentucky, a course entitled "Appalachian History and Culture" was one of their more popular offerings in the early 1970's. In this particular course, students were trained in oral history methods and other historical research techniques, and executed research projects on aspects of local history as an integral part of their course work.⁴³

⁴²Survey administered by author, random selection of 100 students on the campus of Montgomery College, Takoma Park, Md., May 1, 1974.

⁴³Lees Junior College Bulletin, XXII, No. 1 (Fall, 1973), 55.

Kennesaw Jr. College in suburban Atlanta, Georgia, offered a course called "History in Biography," a course in which the major developments in history were taught through biographies of local and other persons.⁴⁴ Monroe Community College in Rochester, New York, offered a course entitled "The City in American History" in which the city of Rochester and other cities, were used as examples of the rise of the city, its contributions to American life, urban reform and "the historic roots for the present crisis" in cities.⁴⁵ Urban history is a variety of local history that has had some attention in the United States, particularly in the urban Northeast.

These examples point to one of the main reasons for teaching local history--student interest. If the students were not interested in such a course offering, they would not have indicated that they were in the surveys, nor would they sign up for the courses offered in those schools where they were afforded the opportunity to do so.

Dr. James C. Olson, in his presidential address delivered at the twenty-fourth annual meeting of the American Association for State and Local History on October 29, 1965, at Oklahoma City, addressed his audience on the question: "Why teach local history?" He gave three primary reasons.

⁴⁴Kennesaw Junior College Bulletin, VII, No. 1 (1973-74), 103-104. Kennesaw Junior College is located in Marietta, Georgia.

⁴⁵Monroe Community College Bulletin (1974), 37.

First, local history provided recreation. Many people are interested in history and tourists often come to a community because of some event that occurred there. Secondly, he believed that local history promoted patriotism. He said that it "inculcates pride of place," which is valuable in a society which moves and changes as rapidly as ours. Olson's third point was his main reason for teaching local history. He said that "Local history provides one of the essential keys to an understanding of our national history, and indeed, to the whole history of man." He said that, "because of this, it is an important academic discipline, and must be fostered as such."⁴⁶

Dr. Ralph A. Brown, in his 1974 interview with this author, reiterated his reasons for teaching local history. He felt, then, as he did twenty years ago, that local history arouses interest, stimulates critical thinking, and provides historical continuity.⁴⁷

According to Dr. Brown:

The use which teachers make of local history will be determined by their attitude toward their subject matter and by their primary objectives. If the teacher is interested in having his

⁴⁶James C. Olson, The Role of Local History (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1965), pp. 4-6.

⁴⁷Ralph A. Brown, "The Local Scene in American History teaching," Social Education, XVI (Jan., 1952), 19-22; "Local Biography Arouses Interest," Social Education, XVI (Feb., 1952), 65-67; "Local Biography Provides Historical Continuity," Social Education, XVI (Apr., 1952), 150-156; "Local Biography Stimulates Critical Thinking," Social Education, XVI (May, 1952), 209-211.

students learn to think critically and carefully, to develop a feeling for their community and their nation, to understand the world about them in terms of cause and effect, to develop ideals of loyalty, integrity, and responsibility, then using the data of local history will help the pupils reach these objectives.⁴⁸

Miller R. Collings, in How to Utilize Community Resources suggested the following "beneficial outcomes generally recognized" from the teaching of local history:

1. In-school work becomes more meaningful because of out-of-school experiences. Concrete situations form bases from which to build new learning concepts.
2. There is some general improvement in citizenship as students become aware that they are actually involved in meaningful learning experiences.
3. Students demonstrate greater proficiency in problem solving. Experiences in real situations such as selecting the appropriate visit making arrangements, and carrying on the follow-up activities are actual living, not playing at living.
4. Groups show superior ability in getting along with others. Better human relations are demonstrated.
5. An increased interest in school is evident. Pupils rarely miss the opportunity for a trip. General attitude is better.
6. Students are increasingly aware of the ability of many groups to contribute to the total community good.
7. Increased cooperation results in better understanding of the school and its problems on the part of parents and others in the community.

⁴⁸Ralph A. Brown and William G. Tyrrell, How to Use Local History, How To Do It Series, No. 3 (Washington: National Council for the Social Studies, 1966), p. 1.

8. Students acquire greater knowledge of the functions of civic and governmental agencies and the specific services of these agencies to the total community.

9. Students gain firsthand experiences in determining available job opportunities, necessary qualifications, working conditions, remuneration, existence of employee benefits, and retirement plans.

10. Students acquire the concept of giving something to their community through participation in appropriate volunteer service activities and membership in community organizations. They obtain enriched understandings of the possibilities within the community for profitable use of leisure time.⁴⁹

Programs for teaching local history in the Mulberry area, or any area for that matter, should be planned according to the students' abilities and interests. "Some of these activities may stress visual interpretation and the expression of historical information by mechanical or artistic skills, as in pictures, models or dioramas." Many others, however, "must stress the exploitation of verbal sources in interpreting some phase of history."⁵⁰ The sources available in Polk County make possible the convenient attainment of these goals.

On all levels and for all abilities, local resources, such as those available in Mulberry and Polk County, contribute

⁴⁹Miller R. Collings, How to Utilize Community Resources, How to Do It Series, No. 13 (Washington: National Council for the Social Studies, 1967), p. 3.

⁵⁰Tyrrell, "Local Resources," p. 425.

"to the development of many necessary skills and to acquiring information and ideas about both past and present that are essential for sound, effective citizens."⁵¹

An historical inquiry model designed to teach research in the history discipline can be a first step in the search for truth. This search for truth must be based on the solid foundation of historical fact, but not always does this amassing of facts yield understanding or even agreement. The facts of the history of Mulberry and frontier Florida are presented in this work, but each student could presumably interpret the facts differently. The college history teacher's goal is more than a mastery of the facts. "However stumbling and artless their approach, students must be helped to make a start in assessing, analyzing, and interpreting historical data."⁵² One of the best ways to achieve this goal is through original historical inquiry and research.

The teaching of local history provides those students who are interested in history with an opportunity to study at first-hand, actual research materials such as old newspapers, records, magazines, church minutes, and other documents

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²John H. Haefner, "American History in the Senior High School," Interpreting and Teaching American History, Thirty-first Yearbook of the National Council for the Social Studies (Washington: National Council for the Social Studies, 1961), p. 365.

available in the community,⁵³ and encourages them to interpret and analyze them for themselves.

Teachers of history on the college level should strive to make the world understandable to their students. "The study of historical development near at hand can be a valuable aid in achieving this goal." In the community, whether it be town, city, or county, is "a quantity of authentic evidence of its past development." Use of these materials can stimulate greater interest and lead to a clearer understanding of the meaning and importance of historical change.⁵⁴

The need for local research is a definite one for history majors, and all students can benefit from such research. The greatest value of including local research in an American history class would be teaching the students how to utilize community resources.

This author first became interested in teaching local history in 1971 while teaching an advanced senior social studies class at Bartow Senior High School in Bartow, Florida. Turning the eyes of the students toward their own backgrounds, that is, to the development and uniqueness of their own community, gave them a feeling of pride, responsibility, and belonging that made not only for a better understanding of history, but for alert, active citizenship.

⁵³Arthur Gittus, "A Course in Local History," Social Education, XXVII (Mar., 1963), 147.

⁵⁴Brown and Tyrrell, op. cit., p. 1.

Students in this author's class did papers on such topics as "Early Doctors in Bartow," "A History of the Catholic Church in Bartow," "Lynching in Polk County," and "Indian Battles in Central Florida," to name a few. The interest that this project generated among the students was extremely rewarding to the teacher. They had to work from the beginning as none had ever done any local research before. They were fortunate in that they had the advantage of being situated in the same town where the county historical library was located.

In conversations with two of these students two years later, both replied that they had never enjoyed a history assignment as much as they had the one in local research. Both students were sophomores in college and felt they had gained more appreciation of history in their high-school class than they had since. They said that college classes consisted simply of "note taking and memory work" and they saw little real value in that type of class.⁵⁵ It was this conversation which made this writer believe that one of the greatest things a history teacher could do was teach the students how to use history. If they can be taught where to go for research, they can look up the things in which they are interested.

⁵⁵James D. Hunt and Michael P. Caswall, former Bartow High School students, personal interviews with the author, Bartow, Fla., Aug. 28, 1973.

A study such as one on Mulberry and frontier Florida could be used by elementary and secondary students in Polk County, as well as by students at any one of the five colleges in the county. More importantly, the methodology used in gathering material for this study could be of help to any student in the country doing research in local history, and as a model of historical inquiry.

Local history and local biography are means for utilizing some of the values of community study within the framework of American history. The bringing of the community of Mulberry, or any community, into the content of an American history course can add to the value and effectiveness of that course by serving as a model of how to do original historical research.

While many reasons have been mentioned for the teaching of local history, the one which will be emphasized in this work is the fact that a course in local history can teach students how to improve their information-processing capabilities. Information processing means the ways in which students "handle stimuli from the environment, organize data, sense problems, and generate concepts and solutions to problems."⁵⁶

⁵⁶Bruce Joyce and Marsha Weil, Models of Teaching (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p. 9.

By learning not just the history of one small area (Mulberry and frontier Florida), but how this information was obtained and how this process can be used under similar circumstances, students should become familiar with historical inquiry and a research model for the discipline of history in general. If students learn pragmatically how to do such research, they open a whole new field of interest for their own personal use.

History teachers often explain developments in terms of generalities. Local history deals with specifics and is often more easily understood by the students because it is easier for them to associate with something familiar than with something foreign. The local history of Mulberry, which developed as a frontier community in Florida, can be used as a microcosm of the development of much of the Florida peninsula, as well as the development of much of America.

American history has been seen by many historians, including Frederick Jackson Turner and Ray Allen Billington, as a continual progression westward. Turner believed that the frontier made America what it is. Theories such as this become more vivid when explored in specifics rather than in generalities. From the study of Mulberry, students should gain an understanding not only of the frontier, community development, and economic and social life in early Mulberry, but also of the use and value of local history.

Communities that developed on the American frontier helped create a nation that was uniquely different, influenced by Europe, but also by the geographical factors of the North-American continent. The Atlantic seaboard has generally been depicted as being more closely bound by tradition to the mother country than were the western sections of America. Florida is an Atlantic state, but the fact that peninsular Florida was settled more than seventy-five years after the Revolutionary War gives the region a strong kinship with trans-Mississippi America. The fact that it was settled almost exclusively by settlers from the southern states bound it to that region, making it a truly unique frontier.

Mulberry, because of its many similarities with the West (mining, Indians, cattle), and the South (farming, Negroes, Confederates), is ideally situated to exemplify much of the Florida frontier.

Frederick Jackson Turner, for all his writings on the frontier, never mentioned the Florida frontier. Ray Allen Billington in his standard work on the settlement of the frontier, Westward Expansion, mentioned only one sentence about the settlement of Florida.⁵⁷ Carl Bridenbaugh, in his works about frontier development, made no mention of Florida because the period of which he wrote was prior to

⁵⁷Ray Allen Billington, Westward Expansion (New York: The MacMillan Co., 1963), p. 324.

American ownership of the peninsula. Robert Hine and Edwin Bingham in their excellent collection of readings and documents entitled The American Frontier concerned themselves only with the western frontier. Even Herbert E. Bolton's The Spanish Borderlands deals almost exclusively with the area of the southwestern United States, mentioning Florida only in terms of Spanish influence there very briefly.

The movement southward into Florida has been all together ignored by many historians of the American frontier. It has seldom been expounded upon but is important. A peninsula 150 miles wide experienced a frontier environment similar to the western frontier which was ten times as wide. R. R. Palmer's Historical Atlas of the World showed the western frontier line at about the 100th meridian in 1850, while showing the Florida frontier line at about the 29th parallel in the same year.⁵⁸ The student of American history should be made aware of the total American frontier, western and southern.

The frontier is not something which is arbitrarily determined by the number of people per square mile, nor is it simply the point where civilization meets untamed wilderness. "The long shadow that comes down from the American frontier--a strange shadow, half darkness and half

⁵⁸R. R. Palmer, ed., Historical Atlas of the World (New York: Rand McNally and Co., 1971), p. 21.

tantalizing gleams of light--was always more a matter of the emotions and the mind than of simple geography." The frontier was an attitude toward life--"a state of mind, even a state of the heart," a belief that "life is both plastic and perfectible, an intense and often inarticulate feeling of kinship and unity with men facing a world which they can shape as they please."⁵⁹ It is this frontier spirit that helped shape Mulberry and much of Florida. This frontier history should be read with the realization that it is a part of the overall history of America.

⁵⁹Bruce Catton, "Reading, Writing, and History," American Heritage, XII (Dec., 1960), p. 111.

CHAPTER II

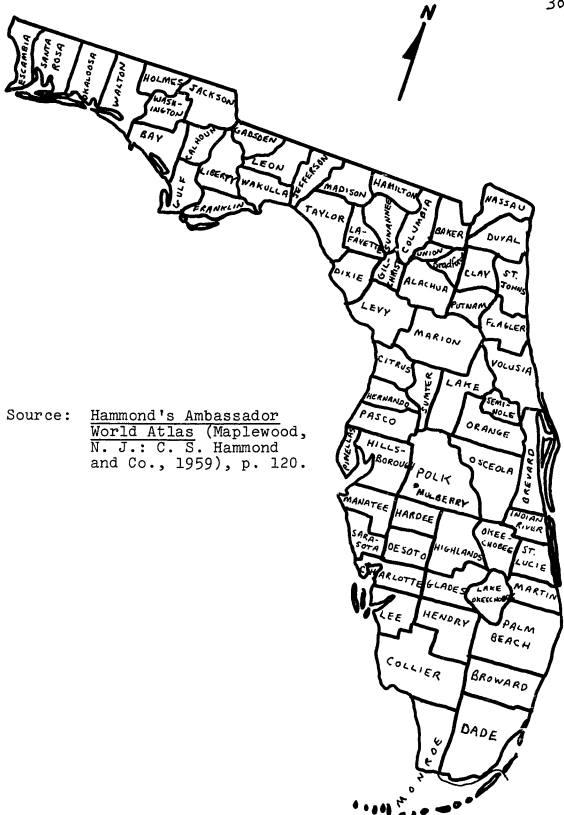
EARLY SETTLEMENT

Geography

In order to gain an understanding of any area on the globe, it is first essential to have some knowledge of the geography of the area concerned. The geography of Mulberry and the rest of Florida played an important part in the way it developed and prospered.

Perhaps nowhere in North America, with the possible exception of the desert Southwest, has climate been such a factor in the lives of people from the first comers to the present inhabitants. But climate is only one feature of the natural endowment of land, water, plants, birds, and fishes that help to explain man's life in the peninsular state. The region's natural resources were the other key to its development.

Florida lies between 24° and $31^{\circ}30'$ north latitude and between $79^{\circ}48'$ and $87^{\circ}38'$ west longitude. Mulberry lies on the $27^{\circ}50'$ north latitude and the $82^{\circ}00'$ west longitude. This is farther south than the southern tip of California and farther west than Cleveland, Ohio. Mulberry is at the same latitude as the Sahara Desert, New Delhi,



Source: Hammond's Ambassador World Atlas (Maplewood, N. J.: C. S. Hammond and Co., 1959), p. 120.

Fig. 1.--Map showing location of Mulberry and Polk County

India, and Corpus Christi, Texas.¹ The city is situated on the southern edge of the "Cfa" climate zone, meaning it has a warm, temperate, rainy climate with a long hot summer, where the average temperature of the warmest month is above 72° and where there is sufficient rainfall in every month. This climatic zone extends north to include Maryland and Tennessee. In actuality, Mulberry's climate is more similar to the "Afw" climate zone which begins roughly 50 miles south of Mulberry and includes Cuba, Hispaniola and Puerto Rico. This zone is characterized as hot and wet with a rainy season in autumn and a drier winter than summer.²

The influence of the waters of the Gulf of Mexico on the west and the Atlantic Ocean on the east tends to moderate extremes of heat and cold. The warming influence of the north-flowing Gulf stream and the prevailing winds from the southeast make for a higher temperature in winter than is characteristic of an inland climate at the same latitude.³ The mean annual temperature of Mulberry is 72.6 degrees and the average annual rainfall is 51.8 inches.⁴ Rainfall in Mulberry can vary greatly from year to year,

¹Hammond's Ambassador World Atlas (Maplewood, N. J.: C. S. Hammond and Co., 1959), pp. 12-13.

²Ibid., p. 18.

³J. Russell Smith, North America: Its People and the Resources, Development, and Prospects of the Continent as an Agricultural, Industrial, and Commercial Area (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1925), p. 277.

⁴Facts About Mulberry (Los Angeles: Empire Producing Co., 1967), p. 4. Pamphlet distributed by the Greater Mulberry Chamber of Commerce.

due to the influence of hurricanes which often bring abnormal amounts of precipitation. Snow is extremely rare in Polk County. The last time a flurry occurred was in 1960. North Florida may get 1- to 3-inch snowfalls, but they are not frequent.

The total area of Florida is 58,560 square miles, of which 4,298 are water. It is a state of great distances. From the Georgia border to the southernmost key is 444 miles, and Miami is 700 miles from Pensacola. Florida's shape accounts for its long coastline (second only to that of Alaska): 472 miles on the Atlantic and 674 on the Gulf of Mexico.⁵

Polk County is 1,863 square miles in area and contains more than 600 lakes. The county is midway between both coasts and the north-south boundaries of the state. Iron Mountain, about 25 miles east of Mulberry, at 325 feet of elevation, is the highest point in the state.⁶ Mulberry is 125 feet above sea level and is 1.5 square miles in area.⁷

The Florida peninsula is the highest portion of a submerged plateau that rises above the sea to form the state. The area of the continental shelf, 500 feet or less

⁵Charleton W. Tebeau, A History of Florida (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1972), p. 3.

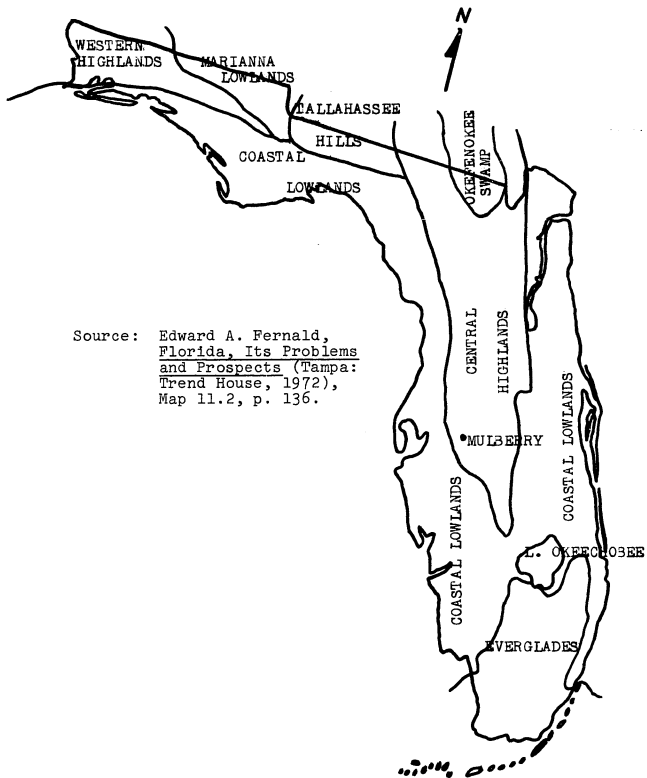
⁶Ed McNeely and Al. R. McFadyen, Century in the Sun: A History of Polk County (Orlando: Robinson's, 1961), p. 43. Official publication of the Polk County Centennial Commission.

⁷Facts About Mulberry, p. 4.

below sea level, is equal to that of the land area. During the Ice Age when the great polar ice mass picked up so much of the seawater, Florida may have been almost twice its present size. Fossil remains found in the phosphate pits near the present city of Mulberry indicate that horses, bears, wolves, large armadillos, saber-toothed tigers, sloths, camels, mammoths, and mastodons inhabited its forests. The great ice sheet melted and re-formed several times. In the melting stage the sea level rose and the waves cut bluffs and, washing against them, formed terraces on the shorelines. When the ice formed again and the waters fell, shorelines were left far inland. There are eight clearly recognizable terraces of this nature. Geologists have named them Brandywine, which is 270 feet above present sea level: Coharie, 215 feet; Sunderland, 170; Wicomico, 100; Penholoway, 70; Talbot, 41; Pamlico, 25; and Silver Bluff, only 10.⁸ Mulberry and most of southwest Polk County lie in the Wicomico terrace.

Geographers generally assign six natural physical regions to the state. These regions are sometimes given differing names, but each basically include the same physical areas. These regions are: the Coastal Lowlands, which form the entire coastline and reach inland as much as 60 miles at some points; the Western Upland, which includes most of the panhandle west of the Apalachicola River and north of the Coastal Lowlands; the Marianna Lowlands, which is a low,

⁸Tebeau, op. cit., p. 4.



Source: Edward A. Fernald,
Florida, Its Problems
 and Prospects (Tampa:
 Trend House, 1972),
 Map 11.2, p. 136.

Fig. 2.--Florida Landforms

rolling sinkhole region in the northern panhandle; the Tallahassee Hills Region, which is between the Apalachicola and Withlacoochee Rivers north of the Coastal Lowlands to the Georgia border; the Swamp Region, which includes the Everglades in the south and the Okefenokee in the north; and the Central Ridge and Lakes Region, which reaches from the Tallahassee Hills in the north to Lake Okeechobee in the south.⁹

It is the Central Ridge and Lakes Region with which this work is concerned, as Mulberry and Polk County lie entirely within this region. Nearly one fifth of the surface of Polk County is water, in lakes of every conceivable size and shape, from Lake Kissimmee, 18 miles long, to little pools in savannahs. The Kissimmee River, mainly a succession of lakes, is navigable to the Gulf, through Lake Okeechobee and the Caloosahatchee River. Peace River is navigable for small boats to Fort Meade, and ultimately flows into Charlotte Harbor and the Gulf of Mexico. Its tributaries, with those of the Alafia and Withlacoochee rivers, drain a wide region in the southern and western part of the county. The Alafia River used to be navigable from Tampa Bay to Mulberry, but mining and natural silting over the years have closed much of the river to anything larger than a canoe.

⁹Ibid., p. 6.

The prevailing soil in Polk County is sandy or sandy loam. The usual variety of high and low hammock and the three grades of pine land are well distributed throughout the county. The northern portion is high rolling land, the bluffs rising sharply from lake shores sometimes as much as 60 feet.¹⁰

In the southwestern part of Polk County near Mulberry lie the great phosphate deposits which were so important to that city's growth. In many sections of the county stand thousands of acres of pine, cypress and other hardwoods, from which were drawn stores of turpentine, rosin and raw material for the lumber mills which at one time manufactured millions of crates, boxes and other containers for the citrus wealth of the county.¹¹ Unfortunately, the long-leaf pine forest of Florida was "exploited as ruthlessly as any other American forest," and Florida as a whole "passed its peak of lumber production in 1916."¹² An encouraging note is that many of the phosphate companies have recently reclaimed much of the mined-over land and planted it with pine seedlings. Some of the new trees are already (1974) large enough to be harvested for lumber.¹³

¹⁰ Harry G. Cutler, History of Florida Past and Present (Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1923), p. 449.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Smith, North America, p. 286.

¹³ Facts About Mulberry, p. 4.

The People

The writing of Florida's history frequently begins with the coming of the first Europeans to its shores around the year 1500. This practice overlooks the fact that the first true Floridians were the Indians who "discovered" Florida and began to occupy it at least ten, some say twenty, thousand years ago. By the beginning of the Christian era, Indians had occupied the entire peninsula and the Florida Keys and by 1500 had reached a population estimated at 25,000 persons.¹⁴

The rolling hills, savannas, and swamps which are now Polk County had a rich and colorful history thousands of years before the first American settlers hacked their way into Florida in the early 1800's. Much of this history has been buried with the people who made it, but bits and pieces of it are continuously being dug out of the phosphate beds which surround the city of Mulberry.¹⁵

The first citizens of the Mulberry area were Indians who arrived in the area perhaps as much as twenty thousand years ago. These first Indians who came to the area--long before the Seminole tribes--were probably the same Indians who roamed from the Mississippi River to Key West, for they brought with them the same type of arrow. These Indians were known to be good hunters and lived in villages around the shores of lakes, with some building crude huts on sticks

¹⁴Tebeau, op. cit., p. 3.

¹⁵McNeely, op. cit., p. 1.

out over the water.¹⁶ They traveled through the swamps in canoes that were hewn from cypress logs. These canoes were of relatively light weight, and could easily be transported over any necessary portage areas.

These Indians left many artifacts dating back to 1500 B. C., and the stone tools and weapons they used were about the same as those used by the early European cavemen. There is evidence that these Indians lived on the shores of most lakes in central Florida. Recent excavations by the phosphate companies have unearthed ancient Indian artifacts throughout the Mulberry area.¹⁷

At the time of the earliest migrations into north Florida thousands of years ago, when many large animals now extinct still lived there, the Indians were almost exclusively hunters. They used flesh for food, skins for clothing, and bones and sinews for tools and ornaments. They had wooden thrusting spears of javelins tipped with distinctive, fluted, stone points. These points, called Clovis points, were found in association with bones of extinct animals, thus showing the presence of man at that early time. Interestingly enough, the horse was becoming extinct at about the time man appeared in Florida and was

¹⁶Nell Thrift, ed., This Was Yesterday (Lakeland, Fla.: The Junior Welfare League of Greater Lakeland, Inc., 1973), p. 2.

¹⁷Ibid.

not reintroduced until the Spaniards arrived in the sixteenth century.¹⁸

Sometime prior to the fifteenth century, a new group of Indians arrived in central Florida from the South. These were the Caribs, who probably originated in the Orinoco River valley of Venezuela. The Caribs were noted for their ferocity and practiced cannibalism. They were expert canoeists and their fleets sometimes included one hundred canoes. They lived in small settlements and practiced fishing and agriculture. When the Caribs established themselves in Florida, the earlier tribes were driven out.¹⁹

There were two tribes that were apparently contemporaries of the Caribs--the Maskakis and the Tomokans. These Indians probably did battle with each other, for arrow points of all three tribes have been found in the same areas throughout the vicinity. Little is known of either the Maskakis or the Tomokans, other than that they were hunters known for their ferocity.²⁰

At the time of the discovery of Florida by Juan Ponce de Leon in 1513, the native population of Florida was of three different linguistic stocks: Timuquan, Calusan, and Muskogean. The Caribs belonged to the Cariban linguistic

¹⁸Tebeau, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁹Nell Thrift, op. cit., p. 3.

²⁰Ibid.

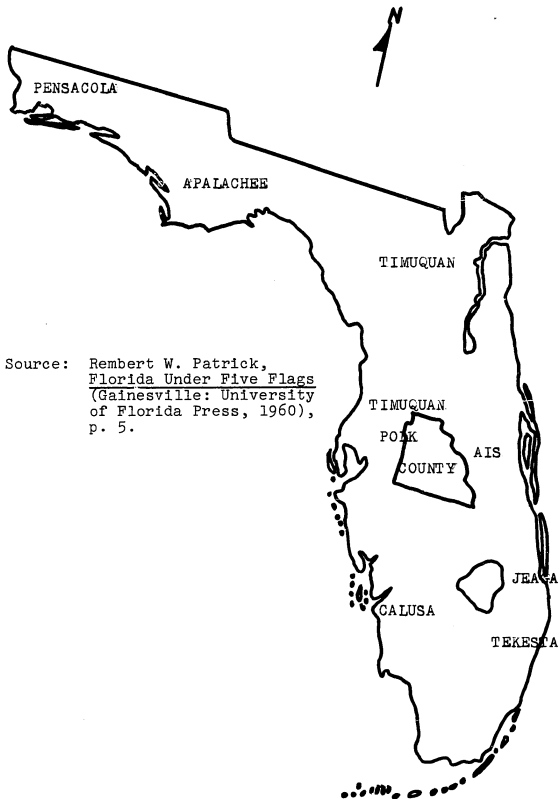


Fig. 3.--Location of Indian tribes in Florida about 1513

stock, and had been driven back to the islands of the Caribbean Sea by the time of the Spanish arrival. The Timuquan Indians lived in the valley of the St. Johns and westward across the Suwannee; the Calusan tribes occupied the area from Polk County southward; and the Muskhogean were along the west coast, from Apalachee Bay to the Apalachicola River.²¹

These three linguistic groups were divided into at least nine tribes: the Pensacola, Apalachee, Timuquans, Ais, Jeaga, Tocabago, Tekesta, Mayuca, and the Calusa tribes. The Ais, Timuquans and Calusas all lived in the vicinity of what was to become Polk County.²²

The French and Spanish observers who left descriptions of the Timuquan Indians in their primitive state were in general agreement concerning their physical characteristics. The men were tall and strong. The women "possessed unusual grace and comeliness." The hunters were armed with wooden bows, "so sturdily fashioned that they could be bent only by a powerful man." With feathered arrows, and arrowheads made of flint or fishbone, "perhaps tipped with a vipers tooth," the weapon "was deadly up to 200 yards." The women were almost as strong as the men, and Spanish invaders were

²¹Edwin C. McReynolds, The Seminoles (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), p. 5.

²²Rembert W. Patrick, Florida Under Five Flags (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1960), p. 5.

astonished to see native women cross a wide stream by swimming, at the same time holding a child aloft in one hand.²³

Bishop Gabriel Díaz Vara Calderón, who died in 1676, left a vivid record of his life in Florida, with valuable information concerning the Indians of his period. He wrote that the natives were "commonly naked, or clothed only in the skin of an animal from the waist down." Some of the women dressed themselves in "a tunic made of Spanish moss," which covered them from head to toe.²⁴

Their principal foods were beans, pumpkins, fish, game, and a "porridge which they made of corn with ashes." The Timuquans and their neighbors drank a hot beverage called cazina, a "bitter draught" made from a weed that grew along the coast. The drink was described as "non-intoxicating,"²⁵ and was used ritualistically and was a purgative.

Their houses, made of straw on wooden frames, had no windows, but each had a door "about 3 feet high and half as wide." Inside the house, "in bad weather, they slept on a barbacoa, a bed consisting of a timber frame and coverings of bear skin." Through a large part of the year, they slept outside on the ground.²⁶

²³McReynolds, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

²⁴Gabriel Díaz Vara Calderón, "17th Century Letter," Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections, Vol. XCV, No. 16, Washington, D. C., p. 12.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

Near the middle of each village was a large, round structure used for meetings of the council and general assemblies of the people. The largest of these buildings would accommodate about 3,000 persons; and, like the dwellings, "they were built with a wooden framework covered by cleverly fitted grass," with an opening in the top to allow smoke to escape.²⁷

The Florida Indians of the seventeenth century showed little interest in gold or silver as ornaments, or for other purposes. The Spanish goods which caught the attention of native traders were knives, scissors, axes, hatchets, hoes, glass beads, bronze rattles, coarse cloth, and a variety of garments.²⁸

The first white men ever to set foot in present Polk County were the Spanish conquistador, Hernando De Soto, and his men. July, 1539, was probably the month they crossed the county, in a southwest to northeast direction.²⁹ The Spanish never settled the interior of the state, and Spanish influence on the culture of the Mulberry area was nil.

The Spanish found the Florida Indians to be both peaceful and warlike, depending upon which area of the state they were describing. De Soto and his men had freely shed

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid., p. 13.

²⁹W. T. Cash, The Story of Florida (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1938), p. 900.

Indian blood in the Tampa Bay area, so the natives of that area did not welcome white men into their domain.

Ten years after De Soto traversed central Florida, the Spanish approved another expedition to the west coast. In 1549 the captain and crew of a small, unarmed vessel sailed from Havana with orders to place Father Luis Cancer de Barbastro and four monks on "some hitherto untouched Florida shore," but the pilot instead steered to Tampa Bay. There, two monks were put ashore, and before long, word came that "their scalps were decorating Indian wigwams." Despite this tragedy, Father Cancer was determined to go ashore himself. He walked across the beach to a group of natives and offered prayer. "A native came forward, embraced Father Cancer, and led him to the other Indians who, without a word, clubbed him into eternity."³⁰ Later attempts by the Spanish to "civilize" the Indians were not as ill-fated.

The Seminoles

The exact relationship between the Indians of Spanish Florida in the seventeenth century, and the people who came to be called Seminoles in the late eighteenth century is not known. Creeks from Georgia invaded the peninsula and practically exterminated the natives. It is certain that the Seminole Indians at the outset of the American

³⁰Patrick, op. cit., p. 3.

Revolution were a mixed people. There were elements of Muskogean stock--Apalachicolas and Apalachees--whose language was related to that of the Creek invaders. There were Timuquan remnants, and there were descendants of the wild Mayucas and Ais of the east coast, and of the Tegesta tribe in the southern peninsula.³¹ There was also a small element of Negro blood because some runaway slaves had taken refuge among the Florida Indians.³²

The early history of the Seminoles is closely associated with that of the Creek tribe. The word Seminole comes from the Creek "sim-a-no-le" or "is-ti sim-a-no-le," meaning runaway or separatist. They were originally made up of immigrants from the Lower Creek towns on the Chattahoochee River in Georgia and Alabama, who moved down into Florida following the destruction of the Apalachee and other native tribes. They were first classed with the Lower Creeks, but began to be known by their present name about 1775.³³ Those still residing in Florida call themselves Ikaniuksalgi, or peninsula people.³⁴

While still under Spanish rule, the Seminole became involved in hostility with the United States, particularly

³¹McReynolds, op. cit., p. 11.

³²Bureau of American Ethnology, Handbook of American Indians, Bulletin 30 (Washington: U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, 1910), p. 1.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Thomas Gaskins, owner of Cypress Kneeland, personal interview with the author, Palmdale, Fla., Feb. 14, 1974.

in the War of 1812, and again in 1817-18, the latter being known as the first Seminole War. This was quelled by General Andrew Jackson, who invaded Florida with a force exceeding 3,000 men. As a result Spain ceded the territory to the United States in 1819. By the Treaty of Fort Moultrie of September 18, 1823, the Seminoles ceded most of their lands to the United States.³⁵ They were allowed to remain on land in central Florida, including present-day Polk County.³⁶

Another treaty was negotiated at Paynes Landing in 1832, by which the Seminoles were bound to remove themselves beyond the Mississippi within three years. The treaty was "repudiated by a large proportion of the tribe, who under the leadership of the celebrated Osceola, at once prepared for resistance."³⁷ The second Seminole War began in 1835 with the killing, by Osceola and his followers, of Chief Emathla, "the principal signer of the removal treaty," and of United States Army General Wiley Thompson, who "had been instrumental in applying pressure to those who opposed the arrangement."³⁸

On the same day on which General Thompson was killed (December 28, 1835), Major Francis L. Dade and 139 American

³⁵Handbook of American Indians, p. 2.

³⁶Cash, op. cit., p. 900.

³⁷Handbook of American Indians, p. 2.

³⁸Ibid.

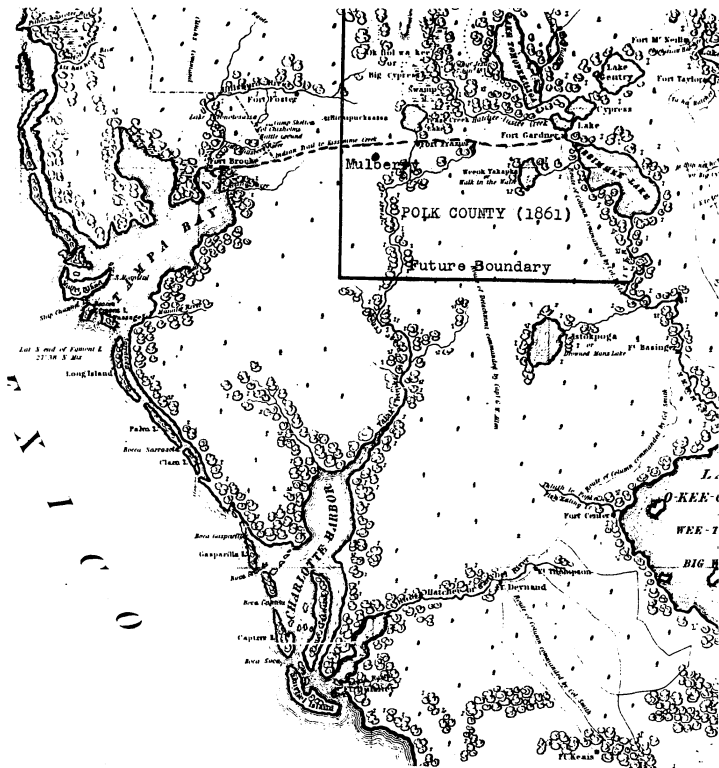


Fig. 5.--"Map of the Seat of War in Florida," compiled by Joel R. Poinsett, Secretary of War. (Washington: Bureau of U. S. Topographical Engineers, 1838). Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

soldiers were ambushed and killed near the Withlacoochee River.³⁹ This river forms the northern boundary of present Polk County, and the battlefield, now a state memorial, is in present Sumter County. After this Seminole victory, the Indians moved south through Polk County, probably remaining in the general vicinity of the future city of Mulberry for several months. The war lasted nearly eight years, ending in August, 1842, "with the practical expatriation of the tribe from Florida for the West," but at the cost of nearly 1,500 American troops and the expenditure of \$20,000,000.⁴⁰ The end of the war did not mean the cessation of all hostilities between the Seminoles and the United States. This would not come for another sixteen years.

The Seminoles who were removed to Oklahoma at the end of the second Seminole War were subsequently organized into the "Seminole Nation," as one of the so-called "Five Civilized Tribes." In "general condition and advancement" they were on about the same level as their "neighbors and kinsmen of the Creek Nation." In common with the other tribes they were party to the agreement for the opening of their Oklahoma lands to settlement, and their tribal government came to an end in March, 1906. At that time there were 2,138 Seminoles

³⁹Francis Densmore, Seminole Music (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1956), p. 4.

⁴⁰Handbook of American Indians, p. 3.

in Oklahoma, "largely mixed with negro blood, in addition to 936 'Seminole Freedmen.' A refugee band of Seminoles, or more properly, Seminole negroes," was located "on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande in the neighborhood of Eagle Pass, Texas."⁴¹

Those Seminoles who avoided being shipped to the West took refuge in the swamps of south Florida. At the conclusion of the war in 1842, only a small remnant of the tribe was left. Of the 1,500 warriors at the commencement of hostilities, only one hundred or so remained in the state at the war's close. The remainder had either been killed, carried into captivity, or compelled to emigrate.⁴²

The Seminoles had constantly received additions to their numbers from the Upper Creeks who were driven south by the whites, from vagrants and outlaws of other tribes, itinerant white men, and escaped Negroes. Their country was a place of refuge for all. This intermingling continued long after the greatest part of the tribe was removed to Oklahoma. This refuge was offered because the Seminoles were "essentially and peculiarly, a peace-loving and agricultural nation from the first." They resided in thatched roof log houses,

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Bartow Courier-Informant, Feb. 11, 1882. Hereafter referred to as Informant.

cultivated crops of beans, potatoes and corn, and lived a life of peace, so far as they were permitted.⁴³

Even though many Negroes had fled for protection to the Seminoles, and had been received as equals, the Indians also held some of them as slaves of their own. Although whites could claim, with truth, many of the Seminole Negroes, they also claimed and sought to obtain possession of many owned by the Indians, which had been bought and paid for by them. As white settlers began moving into the area, this "slave-napping" became more of a problem between the whites and the Indians who remained in Florida.⁴⁴

The White Settler

The earliest white residents of central Florida were the nomadic cowhands who herded cattle on the grassy plains between Ft. Meade and the Caloosahatchee River. These rugged men wintered their herds in the sand hills of the ridge section, camping along the ridge only in the winter months and driving their herds back into the grassy plains during the summer months. These few pioneers, and others who came after them, were "hardy souls, who sought the adventure of a wild country, which provided a paradise for the hunter and fisherman, and which afforded freedom from the restraint and conventions of civilization." A little later soldiers who participated in

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

the Indian wars, and "who grew attached to the country during their period of service, with the return of peace elected to remain in the land they had learned to love." Some of them went back to their homes in the northern part of Florida or in other states, and "loading a few effects upon wagons, usually drawn by oxen, returned with their families to make crude homes in the wilderness."⁴⁵

The earliest census returns available are the 1830 returns for Alachua County, from which Hillsborough, and eventually Polk Counties, were formed. In 1830 there were 345 people in the Tampa Bay area, many of whom were military personnel assigned to Ft. Brooke, later known as Tampa. Of these inhabitants, 232 were white, 109 were Negro slaves and four were free blacks. There were no reported inhabitants east of the immediate Tampa Bay area.⁴⁶

In 1834, Hillsborough County was carved out of Alachua County and named in honor of Wills Hill, Viscount Hillsborough of England.⁴⁷ This new county included most of what was to become Polk County, as well as much of southwest Florida.

The 1840 Hillsborough County census listed 452 people in the entire county, almost all of whom lived in or near Ft. Brooke (Tampa). Only thirteen of these inhabitants were

⁴⁵M. F. Hetherington, History of Polk County Florida (St. Augustine: The Record Co., 1928), p. 14.

⁴⁶U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Fifth Census of the United States, 1830: Alachua County, Florida.

⁴⁷Patrick, op. cit., p. 144.

slaves, and there were no free blacks in the county. Most of the slaves in the earlier census were in that portion of the area which remained with Alachua County to the north, while many others undoubtedly were owned by military personnel who had left the area. There were no persons listed anywhere in the present limits of Polk County.⁴⁸

Jacob Summerlin

As was pointed out earlier, the first white settlers in the area were cowboys. One of the first white children born in Florida after it was ceded to the United States by Spain became the "cattle king" of central Florida. He was Jacob Summerlin, Jr., son of Jacob and Nancy Hagan Summerlin. Young Summerlin was born at Alligator, now Lake City in 1820.⁴⁹

Jacob, Sr., died in 1842 at the age of 65. Jacob, Jr., married Frances Knight Zipprer, widow of A. Z. Zipprer and mother of Zipprer's infant son, Gideon, in 1844. Jacob and his family left Alligator and made their first home at Knight's Station, then known as Cork, near Plant City, about 12 miles west of the present city of Mulberry.⁵⁰

The 1850 census of Hillsborough County (Itchpocesassa Settlement) listed Jacob as a planter. Besides his wife

⁴⁸U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Hillsborough County, Florida.

⁴⁹Polk County Democrat (Bartow), Oct. 8, 1973, p. 4-A. Hereafter referred to as Democrat.

⁵⁰Democrat, Oct. 11, 1973, p. 4-A

and stepson, the family then included Mary Ann, 4, Jasper, 3, and George, 9 months. The census listed a total of 1,633 persons in Hillsborough County. There were three settlements in what was to become Polk County. They were the Alafia settlement (south of Mulberry); the Peace Creek settlement (near Ft. Meade); and the River settlement (at Homeland, south of Bartow). Every one of the approximately 100 settlers in future Polk County were born in the southern states, primarily Georgia and Florida. Of the persons in the settlements nearer Tampa Bay, 195 were born in northern states and 358 were foreign born (including 179 born in Ireland). The families listed at the Alafia (Mulberry) settlement were those of Levy Pearce, Daniel Carlton, Jeremiah Hayman, Alderman Carlton, Andrew Wiggins, James Whidden and Robert F. Prine.⁵¹

Jacob Summerlin and his family moved from Cork to Tampa in 1856 and remained there for several years. Subsequently they lived at Fort Ogden (De Soto County) for some months, then moved to "the Whitney place" near Fort Meade. From there they moved (probably in 1861) to Fort Blount.⁵² Continuous movement of families was not unusual on the frontier. The mild climate made permanent shelter less

⁵¹U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Hillsborough County, Florida.

⁵²Democrat, Oct. 11, 1973, p. 4-A.

important in Florida than it was on the more climatically harsh western frontier.

Fort Blount, now Bartow, was first settled in October, 1851, when Readding Blount of Alligator, and his family of twenty-one persons (plus twelve slaves) settled about a mile west of the present (1974) courthouse. The actual fort was not built until 1856, and then as a private fortification. However, it was used by Federal troops during the Seminole uprising of 1855-58 and later by the Florida Volunteers (Confederate) in the Civil War.⁵³

When Jacob Summerlin moved to Ft. Blount he bought the Riley Blount property. Riley was one of the four sons of Readding Blount, and had obtained the land to raise cattle.⁵⁴ The 1860 census listed Summerlin as a "farmer and butcher: value real property, \$4,500; value personal property, \$48,000."⁵⁵ This was in an era when real estate sold for 25 cents to \$1 an acre.⁵⁶ By 1861, Jacob Summerlin, then only forty-one, had amassed a substantial fortune, by the standards of the times--more than \$50,000, mostly in cattle.

⁵³McNeely, op. cit., p. 7.

⁵⁴Democrat, Oct. 11, 1973, p. 4-A.

⁵⁵Seventh Census, 1850: Hillsborough County, Florida.

⁵⁶Democrat, Oct. 11, 1973, p. 4-A.

Life of the Settlers

Fort Blount was not the first white settlement in Polk County. The 1850 census indicated that the first whites settled in the Fort Meade and Mulberry areas. Most of the early settlers were grouped around the headwaters of the Alafia River (Mulberry) or along the upper end of Peas Creek (Fort Meade). Many, if not most, of these settlers lived along the military roads the United States Army had constructed during the Seminole Wars. These facts indicate that the Mulberry area was one of the earliest settled areas in south-central Florida.⁵⁷

In frontier Florida, as on the western frontier, the desire for human companionship would tend eventually to lead to the location of several dwellings within a radius of a few miles, and thus would be formed a settlement. A man's "next-door neighbor" might live a mile, or 5 miles, distant; but for the day and the conditions that was close enough.⁵⁸

Aside from the inconveniences of pioneer life, existence was far from unpleasant. Life was simple, and great effort was not required to meet its demands. A patch of sweet potatoes furnished a staple article of diet, "as well as a coffee substitute--the potato, cut up into small cubes

⁵⁷Seventh Census, 1850: Hillsborough County, Florida.

⁵⁸Leader (Fort Meade), April 6, 1916.

and dried, then parched and ground, providing a not unsatisfactory beverage." Another patch--of cane--gave either "long-sweetening," as the syrup was called, or "short-sweetening," the name applied to sugar. Clothing came from another patch--of cotton; and "almost every home was a factory in a small way," wherein the women and children, "with spinning wheel and hand loom, wove fabrics from which all articles of wear were fashioned, besides sheets, pillow cases, tablecloths and other household necessities."⁵⁹

The farmer on the Florida frontier developed an ingenious method of fertilizing his land that was apparently unknown in the West. The fertilization of these patches, by the "cow-pen" method, was a simple matter. Cattle were impounded in an enclosure, fenced in with poles or split rails, and when the area enclosed in a pen was sufficiently fertilized, it was ready for planting, and another enclosure was given over to the fertilization process. Here, then, with very little labor, were provided all the requirements of clothing and the necessities of food. "But the luxuries of the table did not cost even the small effort that was expended" on the necessities--they were provided by a brief hunting trip. The woods abounded with every kind of desirable game. Venison, wild turkey, quail, squirrel, and water fowl

⁵⁹Hetherington, op. cit., p. 14.

were items of the daily menu. Then, every stream and lake was alive with fish, and a hunting trip of several hours could provide a welcome change of diet for a large family.⁶⁰

When men settled the frontier they brought their religion with them. As best can be determined, the first preacher in this area was J. M. Hayman. Hayman was born December 28, 1822, in Bryan County, Georgia. His work, like that of many pioneer preachers, was that of missionary and pastor. He lived in the community of Alafia, about 20 miles west of Mulberry when he was ordained as a Baptist preacher. He began preaching at Socrum, a settlement about 20 miles north of the present city of Mulberry, in 1850.⁶¹ It was at Socrum, on June 18, 1850, where Joseph R. Frier was born.⁶² Frier was the first white child born in what was to become Polk County. Frier, himself, later became a Baptist preacher, known as "Uncle Joe" to his friends.⁶³ In June, 1852, Hayman preached a service at Peace Creek, near the present site of Bartow, where he received \$6.25 for his efforts. In 1854 he built a house at Socrum, but in

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹A Memorial Sketch of the Life and Ministerial Labors of Rev. J. M. Hayman, One of the Pioneer Baptist Preachers of South Florida (Nashville: Marshall and Bruce Co., 1901), pp. 1, 9.

⁶²Seventh Census, 1850: Hillsborough County, Florida.

⁶³Bethel Baptist Church News, Vol. 3, Dec. 1946. Bethel Church is about 20 miles north of Mulberry in rural Polk County.

the fall of 1855, "the brethren at Peace Creek prevailed on him" to move to a farm there, where he remained until 1883.⁶⁴

By the mid-1850's the white man had succeeded in establishing himself in central Florida. His position in the former domain of the Indian was not yet secure, but soon he would be master of his domain. The ensuing thirty years would bring more white settlers to help tame the central Florida frontier.

⁶⁴A Memorial Sketch, pp. 11, 14.

CHAPTER III

OPENING THE FRONTIER

The Indians' Last Stand

The second Seminole war ended in 1842, with some one hundred Indians managing to elude federal authorities. White men began moving into the area at the end of that conflict, and experienced little trouble from the remaining Indians. Then, in 1855 the Indians decided once again to try and regain some of their lost territory. The first news articles pertaining to the central Florida frontier originated in Tampa during the Seminole uprising of 1855-58. The War Department in Washington sent instructions to the army to "adopt coercive measures for the removal of the remnant of savages occupying the extreme southern portion of the state."¹

The army had constructed several forts in what was to become Polk County. Fort Frazier on the headwaters of the Peace River near present Highland City and Fort Gardner on the Kissimmee River near Lake Kissimmee had been constructed during the Indian wars of the 1830's. They were built on

¹Florida Peninsular (Tampa), Feb. 2, 1856. Hereafter referred to as Peninsular.

the main Indian trail between Tampa Bay and Lake Kissimmee.² Fort Clinch, near the present site of Fort Meade, was built by the U. S. Army in December, 1849, and abandoned five years later. Fort Nichols, about 5 miles west of the present site of Mulberry, was established by the army in 1850. In 1856 Fort Clinch was reopened during the final Seminole uprising and renamed Fort Meade in honor of General George Gordon Meade.³ General Meade had been responsible for removing a group of Seminoles from Florida in 1836 after the second Seminole War.⁴

Fort Blount, mentioned previously, was used by federal troops during the third Seminole uprising. Troops moved from fort to fort during this uprising and records of who served are incomplete and spotty. This is due to the fact that many of the men were in the local militia, and fought only when they felt their immediate vicinity was threatened. This was not unusual, as it was done in the Revolutionary War, War of 1812, the Civil War, and Indian wars in the West.

The only muster roll for the Seminole War of 1855-58 for eastern Hillsborough (later Polk) County can be found in

²Joel Poinsett, Map of The Seat of War in Florida (Washington: Bureau of U. S. Topographical Engineers, 1938). Map can be found in Polk County Historical Library.

³Hetherington, op. cit., p. 42; Lakeland Ledger, Feb. 5, 1961, p. D-4. Hereafter referred to as Ledger.

⁴McReynolds, op. cit., p. 171.

the Hillsborough County Court House at Plant City. It comes from the files of the late Ernest B. Simmons of Lutz. It is unknown where the original document is located, and there are apparently many errors in this roll which is as follows:

A SEMINOLE WAR MUSTER ROLL

STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF HILLSBOROUGH.

Know all men by these presents, that we, the undersigned of Capt. Wm. B. Hooker's company of volunteers, in service in the Seminole War of 1856 in Florida, have been made, constituted and appointed, severally and collectively, William B. Hooker of the County of Hillsborough in the state aforesaid our true and lawful attorney for us and in our names individually to sign the pay rolls for such pay as may be due to us, from the United States or from the State of Florida, for such service in said company as aforesaid, and to receive the same for us; giving and granting unto our Attorney full power and authority to do and perform all and every act and thing whatsoever requisite and necessary to be done to obtain said pay, which includes all emoluments and allowances whatever may be due to us as aforesaid, hereby ratifying and confirming all that our said Attorney shall lawfully do, or cause to be done by virtue hereof, and this Power of Attorney shall be irrevocable to all intents and purposes.

In witness whereof we have hereunto set our hands and seals this twenty-third day of January, one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six.

- | | | |
|-----|------------------|--------|
| 1. | A. W. Ounant | (Seal) |
| 2. | H. B. Orr | (Seal) |
| 3. | G. W. Hendry | (Seal) |
| 4. | James A. Moody | (Seal) |
| 5. | William B. Moody | (Seal) |
| 6. | Jacob Driggers | (Seal) |
| 7. | Andrew Canova | (Seal) |
| 8. | Henry Brown | (Seal) |
| 9. | John O'Neal | (Seal) |
| 10. | William Whittier | (Seal) |

Witness Henry A. Crane
 John I. Hooker (Seal)
 Joseph Moore (Seal)
 Joseph M. Pearce (Seal)
 S. F. Howard, M. D. (Seal)
 S. F. Harvard (Seal)
 William L. Murphy (Seal)

11. John McDonald
12. Richard Pellam
13. Thomas Collins
14. Bennett Whidden
15. Luke A. Johns
16. Francis A. Ivey
17. John (his mark) Whidden (Seal)
18. Benjamin Hilliard
19. John H. Hollingsworth (Seal)
20. (Name scratched off)
21. Marquette Whidden
22. W. J. Ivey
23. Jas. W. (his mark) Thomas (Seal)
- Levi (his mark) Weeks (Seal)
- Nathan (his mark) Gilley
- Jacob R. (his mark) Raulerson (Seal)

ACKNOWLEDGED in the presence of me this 21
 day of August, 1856.

John C. Oats
 Justice of the Peace.⁵

There are others not listed on this muster roll known to have taken part in the fighting. Dispatches from Tampa newspapers in 1856 show that the following persons took part in at least some of the action: Capt. William H. Kendrick, Capt. Francis M. Durrance, Lt. John Parker, Lt. Edward T. Kendrick, Lt. Alderman Carlton, Gen. Jesse Carter, Pvt. Robert Prine, Pvt. George Howell, Pvt. William McCollough,

⁵"A Seminole War Muster Roll," Miscellaneous Archives, Hillsborough County Courthouse, Plant City, Florida.

Pvt. John C. Oats, Lt. Streaty Parker, Pvt. James Whidden, Pvt. William Brooker, Pvt. John L. Skipper, Capt. Leslie, Lt. Sparkman, Pvt. William Parker, Pvt. Lott Whidden, Sgt. Boggess and Col. Monroe.⁶ Most of the fighting did not take place in Polk County, but at points farther south in the state.

In 1856, Captain Casey, the Agent for Indian Affairs in Florida, was authorized by the United States government to offer a per capita reward for living Indians who were captured, or induced to come in, for emigration to Oklahoma. The following rates were to be paid for Indians delivered at Fort Brooke or Fort Myers:

For each warrior--from \$250 to \$500

For each woman--from \$150 to \$200

For each boy over ten year--from \$100 to \$200

The highest rate would be paid for "all except the infirm, bed ridden and helpless, in which cases, the rate (not less than the minimum above) would be fixed by the Agent or Board."⁷

If Indians were "shamefully abused" by the white man in the West,⁸ they were not much better off in frontier Florida. The obvious hatred by the whites in the area of the

⁶Peninsular, Feb. 2-June 21, 1856.

⁷Peninsular, March 29, 1856.

⁸Ray Allen Billington, The Far Western Frontier 1830-1860 (New York: Harper and Row, 1956), p. 238.

Seminoles was evidenced by the accompanying statement in the Florida Peninsular, referring to the government money being offered for the capture of Indians:

This may sound harsh, but the antecedents of this bloody race would justify such course. What has the Seminole done to cause us to deal with him with such lenity? He has never spared the tomahawk or scalping knife, when an opportunity offered. He has smitten us from the left cheek and we have turned the right, and we have been the recipients of his deathful blows, and now, with all the philanthropy of a saint, our Government has exhibited its nether extremity, and after the following of this manoeuver is shown, we think that some of the bad policy will have been reached, and that a charge will be the result, which will soon eradicate this curse. If the Indians have determined to remain in Florida, they will not be taken alive. It is not our object to forestall public opinion, but will await with patience the result.⁹

The only incident to occur, in what was to become Polk County, in this final Seminole struggle was an Indian attack on the home of Willoughby Tillis on June 14, 1856. The following report of the event was written by Captain William B. Hooker and printed in the Florida Peninsular on July 5, 1856:

On the 10th inst. I marched with a detachment into the woods, in search of Indians, as I supposed they would make an attack on some places at the full of the moon, and I would be on the alert for them, and by chance might come upon them before they made their attack. We scouted down the Alafia river to where the Indian trail crossed the river just above Roe's, there finding, as we thought, Indian signs, our opinion was that they had gone south with the intention of making

⁹Peninsular, March 29, 1856.

an attack on Manatee, so we forced our march to that place. When we arrived there, finding no signs, and all quiet, we proceeded backward for Horse Creek, as it was a resort for Indians, who had been in the habit of furnishing themselves with potatoes therefrom. On reaching it, we made a thorough examination of the premises, and finding no prints or marks of the foe, and it being late in the day, we halted, and encamped and sent two men to Fort Green as express, to know if there were any accounts of the Indians.

Captain Hooker did not have to wait long to find out about the activities of the Seminoles. He wrote:

About 12 o'clock that night, they returned, bringing the thrilling news of the attack on the Tillis house on the morning of the 14th, about 7 o'clock, where Mr. Tillis, his son and Thomas Underhill fired on the Indians from the inside of the house, and that they wounded 5 of them, two or three mortally; one of them shot by a musket fell to the ground, but he got off.

The injury to us done there, was a negro woman wounded in the head; all the horses about the place were killed, and a mule wounded; the Indians backing off a little, and encircling around the house, but still keeping up their firing, when a sudden surprise seemed to come upon them and they ran briskly across the field, making for a hammock; so those penned up in the house, supposing there was help coming, looked in the direction of Fort Meade, and saw seven mounted men coming as fast as their horses could carry them.

As soon as the soldiers arrived at the Tillis homestead they asked Tillis where the Indians had gone. He replied "Through the field." No sooner than "these seven brave men" heard the word

they dashed off--four on one side of the field and three on the other, until they came up with the enemy, when the conflict commenced, terminating

in the death of Lieut. Carlton and Lott Whidden, both of Captain Durrance's company, and William Parker of Capt. Hooker's company. These men, with John C. Oats, of Capt. Leslie's company, and McCollough and H. J. Hollingsworth of my company were all engaged against from 40 to 50 savages. Lieut. Carlton, after securing William Parker, was shot down, and gave his gun to Oats, saying: "I am done, take my gun and kill one." Oats ran up and said, "Give me Parker and I will try to carry him away." Oats then picked up Parker to pass him along to Carlton, who immediately said, "I have got it, too." So he laid Parker down, and Oats ran in between the Indians and Hollingsworth, whose wound at first only allowed him to crawl; getting better, he was able to pull himself up by a small tree, where Oats helped him on his horse, and when the Indians would charge them, Oats would present his gun as if he were going to fire on them, then they would fall to the ground. In this way he got off with the wounded Hollingsworth. During this time, the Indians would curse the white men--one, behind a stump, being wounded, cursed Oats and tried to throw rotten wood in his face, till Oats left him for dead. One charged on William McCullough, as in a fisty-cuff fight, they striking and fending with the empty guns, had it round and round, till McCullough threw down his gun, clenched with the Indian, and threw him down and caught and held his wrists until Daniel Carlton ran to his assistance and cut the Indian's throat, leaving him for dead. The Indians were heard several times to say, "Watch that fellow," meaning the wounded Hollingsworth.

Captain Hooker continued:

The little band left with their wounded, leaving three dead men and three horses on the battleground, and it appears that the savages were willing to be getting off, too, by their leaving one on the ground with his gun beneath him. This Indian was afterwards found by those of our party who went to look for the dead, and the doctor had him hitched to the axletree of the cart and hauled into camp for anatomical purposes. In this gallant fight we had three men killed and three wounded; Oats slightly, by a ball passing near the left

corner of the left eye; Daniel Carlton, wounded in the arm, between the wrist and elbow. They will soon recover. Hollingsworth's is the worst, the ball being lodged against the backbone, under the shoulder-blade; but it is thought he will recover.¹⁰

There were five white men killed in the Tillis incident, all local residents. They were Lt. Alderman Carlton, Pvt. Lott Whidden, Pvt. William Parker, Pvt. Robert F. Prine and Pvt. George Howell. Sixteen Indians were killed in the attack.¹¹

Other skirmishes with the Indians occurred, primarily to the south of the Polk County area. By 1858 the white men were successful in ridding central Florida of most of the Seminoles. Some few remained in the area near the Kissimmee River, but most had been driven into the Everglades or deported to Oklahoma. The number of Seminoles residing in southern Florida was 358 in 1900. This number was reduced to 275 in 1908.¹² Today most of the Seminoles live on three reservations in south Florida. These are the Brighton Reservation, northwest of Lake Okeechobee; the Big Cypress Reservation, in the Everglades near the Tamiami Trail; and the tiny Dania Reservation, near the town of Dania on the southeast coast. As best as can be determined, there are about 1,000 Seminoles presently (1974) in Florida. These people were still technically at war with the United States until

¹⁰Peninsular, July 5, 1856.

¹¹Peninsular, June 21, 1856.

¹²Handbook of American Indians, p. 2.

1962 when they signed a peace treaty. Some, especially from the Brighton Reservation, are taking advantage of the public-school system of Glades County.¹³

In 1860, the Indians no longer posed a threat to the settlers, and frontiersmen began turning their interests toward government, resulting in the birth of a new county.

Polk County is Formed

Polk County was born during the outbreak of the War Between the States. The county was carved out of the eastern reaches of Hillsborough County and the southwestern tip of Brevard County. Hillsborough covered most of the south-central region of Florida at this time, and residents of the cattle regions in central Florida had little in common with the business and shipping interests on the west coast. The area around Tampa alone had five times as many people as all of Polk County. (There were 2,527 people in Hillsborough County in the 1860 census.)¹⁴ The most practical reason for desiring a separate county was the fact that the distance from some sections of Polk County to Tampa was 75 miles. This was a long way to travel by horse and buggy, especially when there were few good roads.

¹³Thomas Gaskins, owner of Cypress Kneeland, personal interview with the author, Palmdale, Fla., Feb. 14, 1974.

¹⁴U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Hillsborough County, Florida.

The 1860 census showed that 1,366, or more than half, of the residents of Hillsborough County were native Floridians. Another 1,006 were born in other southern states, 593 of these in Georgia. Sixty-two persons were born in northern states and ninety-three in foreign countries. All of the northern and foreign born resided in the Tampa area. There were approximately 500 persons in the area that would become Polk County, all born in the South, primarily in Florida and Georgia. Almost the entire population of the Polk region was listed as farmers or farm laborers, while the Tampa area listed a great deal of merchants. The number of foreign born in the Tampa area had greatly decreased from the 358 reported in the 1850 census.¹⁵ This is probably because Tampa was a port of entry for many people who remained only a short while and then moved to other parts of the country.

Some sources inaccurately gave the date of Polk's founding as 1860, but it was actually in 1861. The act creating the county was passed by the Florida House of Representatives on January 30, 1861, and signed by John B. Galbraith, Speaker of the House; it was passed by the Florida Senate on February 4, 1861, and signed by T. J. Eppes, President of the Senate. It was approved and signed on

¹⁵Ibid.

February 8, 1861, by Matthew S. Perry, Governor of Florida.¹⁶

Polk County held its first election on Saturday, April 13, 1861. Only 136 people in the whole county voted in the balloting which elected the first County Commission.¹⁷ This was only about half of the number who could have voted. Poor transportation and indifference on the part of many of the residents accounted for the low turnout.

The first meeting of the Polk County Commission was on June 17, 1861. Members of the Board of County Commissioners were Joseph Mizelle, Readding Blount, James Hamilton, and Issac Waters, all cattlemen. L. W. Cornelius was county judge. Polk was "laid off" into four voting districts, called precincts. The area that was to become Mulberry was in precincts number one and three.¹⁸

The Civil War

The Civil War had less effect on sparsely populated Polk County than on most areas of the South, though many young men enlisted in the Confederate Army. In 1860 a militia company was organized with Captain W. B. Varn as its head. The company practiced drilling at the new county

¹⁶Peninsular, March 2, 1861.

¹⁷Peninsular, April 20, 1861.

¹⁸Polk County Record (Bartow), Oct. 28, 1921. Hereafter referred to as Record. It is interesting to note that the financial statements from this meeting authorize payment of salaries and mileage totaling \$26.60 for county commissioners.

site of Mud Lake. They practiced at various times "until the more serious phase of the war changed the prospective into actual hostilities." At that time, the old militia company was reinforced and reorganized under Captain N. S. Blount. They "left the vicinity of Bartow after a great dinner had been given them early in March, 1862."¹⁹

The members of the company needed to be fortified with that dinner, for they set out on a march through the woods to Gainesville, where they were mustered into Confederate service as Company E, 7th Florida Regiment. The following muster roll of the company was furnished by G. W. Hendry to the Bartow Courier-Informant in 1893. The notation "killed" was placed after the names of Lt. Henry Mansfield, William Hooker, W. P. Rogers, Albert Seward, Jim Smith, Simon Turman, and George Woodard. "Missing after battle" was the notation after the names of L. W. Cornelius and Joe Varn:

MUSTER ROLL

N. S. Blount, Captain
 J. W. Whidden, First Lieutenant
 Z. Seward, Second Lieutenant
 Henry Mansfield, Third Lieutenant
 Hamp Johnson, First Sergeant
 William Gay

Altman, Luke	Brown, Daniel
Blount, J. J.	Cornelius, L. W.
Blount, O. R.	Cathcart, William
Bulloch, A. J.	Crum, Daniel
Brown, William	Cook, Wilson
Brown, Rig	Carlton, Wright
Brandon, Dave	Carlton, Reuben

¹⁹Hetherington, op. cit., p. 16.

Davis, Edmund	Marsh, Put
Davis, James	McClelland, Mac
Driggers, Henry	McClelland, William
Durrance, Rafeord	O'Neal, John
Ellis, Jack	Pat, David
Fletcher, James	Pollard, John
Ferguson, Daniel	Pitts, Jim
Gaskins, James	Patrick, Vick
Guy, William	Pearce, T. C.
Hendry, William	Rogers, W. P.
Hendry, Albert	Rimer, Alex
Hendry, J. M.	Seward Jim
Hendry, J. W.	Seward, Felix
Hooker, William	Seward, Albert
Hooker, Stephen	Smith, Jim
Hancock, Martin	Sheppard, Wash
Hancock, Sam	Sheppard, William
Hull, Stephen	Turman, Simon
Hillard, William	Underhili, John
Hill, Henry	Varn, W. B.
Jackson, William	Varn, Joe
Johnson, Sol	Williams, Lew
Jordan, Daniel	Williams, Nath
Keen, A. J.	Williams, John
Keen, Jim	Williams, Jim
Henry, D. T.	Waldron, Daniel
McAuley, Robert	Whidden, Max
McAuley, Will	Weeks, Cary
McClelland, Si	Woodard, George ²⁰
McClelland, Joe	

In November, 1861, another election was held for a full set of county officers, which resulted in the choice of H. S. Seward for the legislature; J. J. Blount, clerk of the circuit court; L. W. Cornelius, judge of probate; H. L. Mitchell, state solicitor; E. T. Kendrick, sheriff; F. A. Hendry, Reading Blount, Isaac Waters and Joseph Mizelle, county commissioners.²¹

²⁰Informant, May 25, 1893.

²¹Hetherington, op. cit., p. 20.

The sheriff was ex officio tax assessor and collector. "He made his lists and kept his books according to his own choice of style, and made his records and turned over moneys when called upon by the county commissioners." After the organization of Major Blount's company in March, 1862, William Durrance acted as sheriff and John Davidson was clerk of the county until the end of the war.²² There are no records known to exist in the county that give any account of the assessed valuation of property up to several years after the war. "The taxes collected in any one year up to 1866 for all purposes never amounted to \$1,000. No courts were held in these years of strife, and all the taxes collected during that time, after paying the commissioners and sheriff for their services, were used in supporting the poor soldiers' families." Committees were appointed for each commissioner's district to look after their wants, and the tax money was turned over to them for that purpose by the sheriff. "Spinning wheels were provided for the soldiers' wives, and James B. Crum was elected wheelmaker at a cost of \$8.50 per spinning wheel, and he did his work faithfully and honestly."²³

Cattleman Jacob Summerlin was easily the wealthiest man in the county during the Civil War. There are differing

²²Ibid.

²³Ibid., p. 21.

accounts of how he got started in the cattle business. Most records agree that he inherited twenty Negro slaves worth about \$1,000 each. "Having no taste for plantation life, he traded them to a Tampa man for six thousand range cattle which were roaming over the broad plains stretching from Fort Meade to the Caloosahatchee River." In the 1840's and 1850's, he built up a phenomenal cattle business with Cuba.²⁴

During the Civil War Summerlin was one of the principal contractors to furnish beef to the Confederacy. He was allowed to take a detail of twenty-four men from among the 4th and 7th Florida regiments to help him, some of whom were members of Captain N. S. Blount's Company E. Several other cattlemen participated in supplying beef, but Summerlin was "entrusted with the supervision of the project." About six hundred head a week were driven from the Caloosahatchee River to Baldwin, just below the Georgia state line--a forty-day trip. He set up headquarters at Fort Ogden on the Peace River, where he assembled trail herds for the long drive northward.²⁵ Thus, the long drive began in Florida several years before the better-known drive in Texas which began in 1865.

During the first two years of the war, Summerlin provided the Confederacy with 25,000 steers, for which he

²⁴Democrat, Oct. 15, 1973, p. 4.

²⁵Ibid.

was to be paid \$8 apiece. "In the end, patriotic Jake netted exactly nothing, for none of the amount was paid in cash, and when it would have been paid, the cash was worthless." By the fall of 1863, both Union and Confederate interests were being supplied with beef from south Florida.²⁶

When Summerlin had discharged his meat-procuring contract with the Confederacy--probably in 1863--he engaged in blockade running with Capt. James McKay of Tampa. Their shallow-draft sidewheel steamer, called the "Scottish Queen," is believed to have eluded Yankee gunboats on patrol between Key West and the Dry Tortugas "no less than ten times during the last two years of the Civil War."²⁷

They carried boatloads of Summerlin's range cattle, "much in demand by the Spanish forces then stationed in Cuba," and returned with flour, bacon, sugar, salt and tobacco, which were sold at premium prices to Florida settlers. The project reportedly made McKay rich and Summerlin even richer than before. Near the end of the war, Summerlin foresaw increased trade with Spanish-owned Cuba after hostilities ceased. He built a wharf at Punta Rasa, where the Caloosahatchee River empties into the Gulf of Mexico near the present site of Fort Myers.²⁸

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Democrat, Oct. 22, 1973, p. 4.

²⁸Ibid.

The cattle frontier was in full flower in Florida following the Civil War. Jacob and his son, Sam Summerlin, started their cattle drives near St. Augustine. Local cattlemen rounded up their animals at specified points where the Summerlins bought what they wanted, then moved on. Large operators built pens, spaced at intervals representing a day's drive, in which the animals were kept for the night while they and the drivers rested.²⁹

One major difference between the Florida and western cattle frontiers was the use of the railroad. The railroads' commercial involvement in the cattle-town livestock market of the West was considerable.³⁰ In Florida, the shipping industry played the role of the western railroad. The main Florida cattle trail commenced near St. Augustine and went southward down the St. John's River, through the Kissimmee Valley in eastern Polk County, south to Fort Bassinger, around the northwest shore of Lake Okeechobee to Fort Thompson, then to Punta Rassa, near Fort Myers.³¹ From Punta Rassa, the cattle were loaded on ships for sale in Cuba or other areas. Later the stockyards and shipping center moved to Tampa, where slaughter houses exist to this day.

After the Civil War, carpetbaggers did not descend on Polk County, as they did on some other parts of the

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Robert R. Dykstra, The Cattle Towns (New York: Athenium, 1972), p. 79.

³¹Democrat, Oct. 22, 1973, p. 4.

state. There was as of yet very little to attract anyone other than cattlemen or hunters. Negro office holders were by no means rare throughout the state, but none ever held local office in Polk County. During Reconstruction Polk County was represented in the U. S. Congress for two terms by a Negro, Josiah T. Walls of Gainesville. The first superintendent of schools for the state, Jonathan C. Gibbs, was also a Negro. The third time Walls ran for Congress he was defeated by a white man, Silas L. Niblack of Columbia County. Niblack was the father of the late Silas S. Niblack who was Superintendent of Public Instruction for Polk County for several years in the early part of the twentieth century.³²

Carpetbag rule in the state continued until 1878, when the Democrats united to elect the conservative Democrat, George F. Drew, as governor. The Reconstruction government was credited with establishing free public education in the state, but this was not done in Polk County. In fact, Polk County was affected very little by either the Reconstruction or the conservative governments.³³

The population of Polk County in 1870 was 3,169, of which 481 persons were listed as black. Most of the settlers were from north Florida and Georgia, with the bulk of the

³²Record, May 31, 1933.

³³McNeely, op. cit., p. 4.

rest coming from other southern states. Only two inhabitants were northern born, and twelve were foreign born.³⁴ The 1870 census, however, is not reputed to be very accurate. Some persons listed as white in 1860 and 1880 were listed as black in 1870.³⁵

Early Life in Polk

One of the best accounts of early life in the Mulberry area comes from a 1933 interview with George R. Fortner of Bradley. Fortner was born in Irwin County, Georgia, near Tifton, on January 8, 1858. His father was a Captain in the Confederate Army. The elder Fortner remained in Georgia for a year after the war, then "whipped and disgusted, he concluded to hunt new country and new surroundings." Leaving home on December 20, 1867, the family took nineteen days to reach old Fort Socrum, 10 miles north of the present city of Lakeland. "There was not a house nearer to Lakeland than two miles and not a railroad nearer than Gainesville."

³⁴U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870: Polk County, Florida. This was the first census for Polk County. There were several inconsistencies noted, but these were of relatively minor importance. Mrs. Stevie Powell, Polk County Historian, seems to feel that the census taker was a scalawag who delighted in clasifying certain whites as black in his tally.

³⁵Eighth Census, 1860: Hillsborough County; Ninth Census, 1870: Polk County, Florida; U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Polk County, Florida.

Fortner declared that he "was a grown man" before he saw a railroad train.³⁶

Fortner stated that "there were only two roads from Bartow to Tampa, one by way of Medulla, south of Plant City, the other by Keysville on to Tampa." The latter road passed very near the present site of Mulberry. When the Fortners settled in the Mulberry area, they began raising cattle, which they sold to make a living. The nearest stores were in Bartow, where there "wasn't a painted house in town." There were only two stores in Bartow, one owned by a David Hughes, the other by a man named Carpenter. According to Fortner, "flour was \$18-\$20 a barrel of 200 pounds. If we get out of coffee or tobacco and Mr. Hughes or Mr. Carpenter didn't have any, our next chance was Tampa and there were only five stores in Tampa."³⁷

At the close of the Reconstruction era, the area was experiencing difficulty in its growth. Polk County "had noble and good citizens," but the county labored under more disadvantages than almost any other county in the state, in that there was not a steamboat landing nearer than Tampa, 50 miles away and not a railroad depot nearer than Gainesville, 160 miles distant.³⁸ Like most places on the

³⁶"Reminiscences of George R. Fortner," Record, May 4, 1933.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Florida Immigrant (Tallahassee), 1877. No date given on newsclipping found in Polk County Historical Library other than year.

western frontier, Polk County was basically isolated from the outside world.

Characteristic of most frontier areas, the Polk area did not have a favorable public image as late as 1877. As in the West, the settlers apparently resorted to vigilante justice to deter criminals. It was said that "some people living in other counties object to Polk saying they like the county, but are afraid of the people." When asked why they were afraid they replied that "the Polk citizens kill people and are not punished by the law." This accusation was answered by a man identified only as "F. S." saying:

I beg leave to correct such reports before they get cold. People that abide by our laws are never molested in the least. Any people that are killed in the county were, generally speaking, very bad desperadoes, and the people could not live in peace and safety for them. Nearly every one of them were murderers of the deepest dye, consequently people were afraid of them. Polk County is not a good place for bad men to locate in and begin their rascality. We have a good sheriff and he is not afraid to arrest a man because he has murdered someone.³⁹

Other accounts of the area were even more discouraging to the prospective settler. George M. Barbour, a correspondent for the Chicago Times, visited the area just to the north for the first time in January, 1880. His journey took him through Sumter and Hernando Counties, but his descriptions were meant for all of central Florida. An idea of the poverty and improper diet of the people can be seen from his description:

³⁹Ibid.

...clay-eating, gaunt, pale, tallowy, leather-skinned; stupid, stolid, staring eyes, dead and lusterless; unkempt hair, generally tow colored; and such a shiftless, slouching manner. Simply white savages--or living white mummies, would perhaps better indicate their dead-alive looks and actions. Who, or what, these "crackers" are, from whom descended, or what nationality, or what becomes of them, is one among the many unsolved mysteries in this state.

Barbour continued, "stupid and shiftless, yet sly and vindictive, they are a block in the pathway of civilization, settlement and enterprise wherever they exist."⁴⁰

Barbour, it should be pointed out, was accompanied by the former President, Ulysses S. Grant, when he made this journey and his obvious hostilities toward the South were not at all uncommon in the years following Reconstruction. Barbour also described the homes of the "crackers" in much the same way:

Their cabins were bare log structures, with low roofs, no door or windows--merely openings or fireplaces; no filling between the logs, and usually no floors; no outhouse, wells or fences; and no gardens or plants, except a sweet potato patch. A near lake or spring supplies their water; hogs, cattle and game their meat; and the tops of cabbage palmettoes, sweet potatoes, and wild fruits, form almost their only diet; while pellets of clay eaten as seasoning ingredient take the place of needed salt and pepper.⁴¹

⁴⁰George M. Barbour, Florida for Tourists, Invalids and Settlers (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1882), p. 54.

⁴¹Ibid.

A different view of the early settlers of the central Florida area was given by Ernest B. Simmons of Fort Meade, himself one of Polk County's earliest pioneers. Simmons attested to the "excellent character of the first settlers of Polk County." He said that these pioneers "were sturdy, honest, God-fearing men and women, who respected and trusted each other. There were no locks on the doors in those days and a man's word was considered as his bond." Simmons believed that of all the settlers in the area prior to the Civil War, "there were only three families who were at all roguish." Simmons stated that "On the other hand, I have only to call attention to such families as the Blounts, Whiddens, Durrances, and Tillises to show the beneficent effect of good blood and correct early training."⁴² Simmons's views were probably as lopsided as Barbour's. The truth probably was somewhere between the two accounts.

Settlement of the area was progressing slowly but not surely. Bad publicity was of course one factor, but the greatest factor was the inaccessibility of Polk County to other parts of the country. Settlement in central Florida was not unlike that of the American West. Settlers came by covered wagons and were at times met by hostile Indians. Early newspapers gave somewhat sketchy accounts of Seminole

⁴²Leader, April 6, 1916.

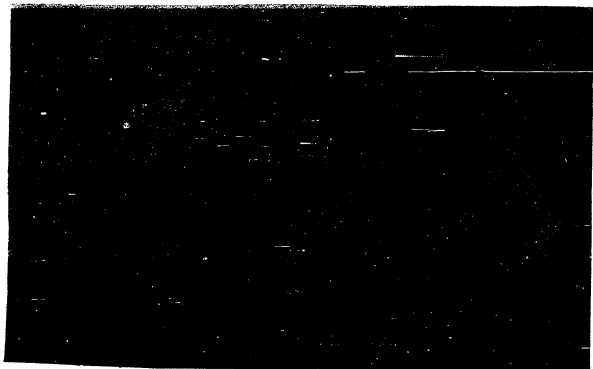


Fig. 6.--Scene in Fort Meade about 1881. Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

attacks on white settlers. In the early 1850's there were only about 100 Seminoles in the area, and by the outbreak of the Civil War, most of these had been pushed into the Everglades. By 1880, there were only twenty-eight Indians residing in the county.⁴³

Through Reconstruction, Polk County remained unknown except to a comparatively few cattlemen and old settlers. The population, as late as 1880, was only 3,206, all but 13 of whom were southern born, and only 108 of whom were Negro.⁴⁴ It was evident that the rich lands and delightful location could not long remain unnoticed, and in the 1880's change began rapidly. Edward W. Harden, writing in the Times-Union of Jacksonville in 1888, stated: "The nearest railroad to this point (Bartow) ten years ago was more than 100 miles, and mails came not oftener than once or twice a week."⁴⁵ By 1883, the nearest railroad was only 15 miles from Bartow. The point on the railroad nearest Bartow was called Bartow Junction, now Lake Alfred. The line, built by Henry B. Plant, ran from Jacksonville to Tampa.⁴⁶

⁴³Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Polk County Florida.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Bartow Advance Courier, June 12, 1888. This was the first regularly published newspaper in Polk County. It was published for less than one year. Hereafter referred to as Courier.

⁴⁶Ibid.

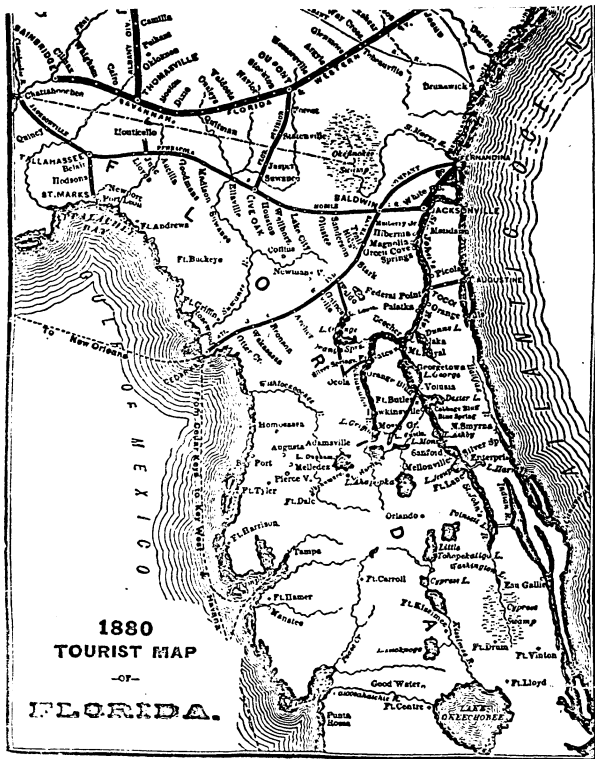


Fig. 7.--Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

Tampa

Post-war stagnation in Tampa was overcome in 1883 when Henry Bradley Plant pushed his railroad line into the city from Sanford. Several years later Vicente Martinez Ybor moved his cigar factory from Key West to a 40-acre site north of town now known as Ybor City. Cuban cigarmakers poured in as other factories were set up. Handrolled cigars became symbolic of the city.⁴⁷

Plant opened the palatial Tampa Bay Hotel in 1891, by which time Tampa's population had increased more than 600 per cent in a decade--past the 5,500 mark. By 1890, the city had its first waterworks, first organized fire department, first paved streets, first sewers and first electric lights.⁴⁸

Record freezes of 1894-95 brought snow and the citrus industry to the Tampa area, as growers moved south. The Spanish-American War in 1898 put 30,000 troops in tents there awaiting ships to Cuba. The railroad had made this movement of troops possible. Teddy Roosevelt and Clara Barton were among the notables on the scene.⁴⁹ What was happening in Tampa was being paralleled, on a smaller scale, in Polk County.

⁴⁷ Tampa Tribune, Feb. 8, 1972, p. 24-A. Hereafter referred to as Tribune.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

The Railroad

The "boom" in Polk County was not as drastic as that of Tampa, but every bit as important. It began when the South Florida Railroad Company put in a branch line from Bartow Junction to Bartow in 1885. A passenger could now travel from New England to Bartow by a single mode of transportation for the first time.⁵⁰

In a 1961 interview, Mrs. Daisy Booth, then eighty-five and residing in Bartow, told reporter Ed McNeely of the Lakeland Ledger that she remembered the coming of the railroad, and that the tracks were laid by Italian crews. Mrs. Booth was the daughter of Streety Parker who was one of the first settlers of Fort Blount.⁵¹

Soon after the completion of the Bartow branch of the South Florida Railroad, the Florida Southern Railroad began its survey of the Charlotte Harbor Division, running from Bartow south to Punta Gorda, a distance of about 70 miles, and connecting at that point with the steamship lines running to Key West and Havana. "The building of the road was pushed rapidly to completion, forming the most southern railroad line in the United States, and making Punta Gorda the most southern point having a railroad connection." The completion of the railroad meant a great increase in the volume of business in the area around Bartow.⁵²

⁵⁰Courier, June 12, 1888.

⁵¹Ledger, Feb. 5, 1961, p. D-12.

⁵²Courier, June 12, 1888.

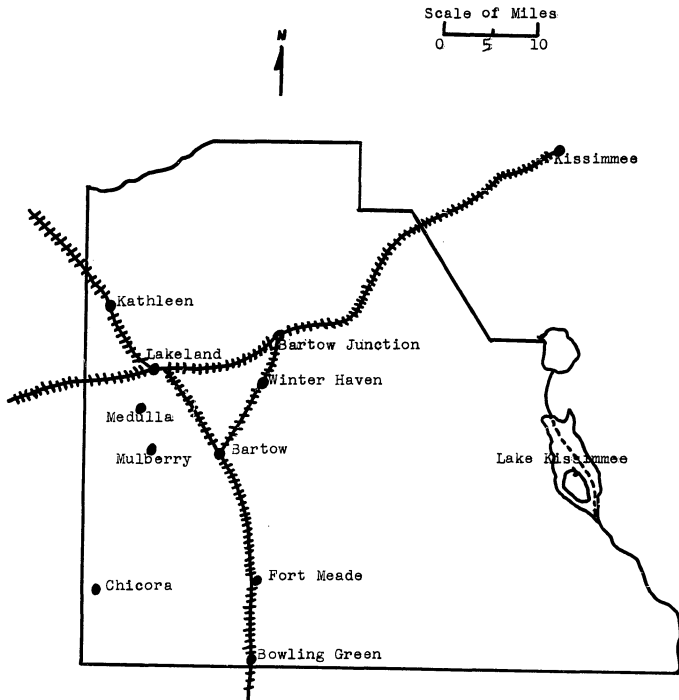


Fig. 8.--Map of Polk County railroad lines in 1890

Source: Charles L. Norton, A Handbook of Florida
(New York: Longman, Greens and Co., 1891),
p. 77.

The Citrus Frontier

The cattle frontier was about to give way to the farming frontier. St. Augustine was the center of the first orange belt in Florida, which extended along the St. Johns River. The first great freeze of 1835 drove the thoughts of orange growers toward the more southern country, and as the citrus farmers pushed south along the Indian River, the citrus frontier gradually moved toward the state's interior, and Polk County. Some of the first citrus groves in central Florida were planted by the pioneer settlers of Polk County in 1850. Even before the first railroad was built into the county in 1883, the fruit was produced in sufficient quantities to justify hauling it 50 to 75 miles to Tampa, in wagons "laboriously pulled across the sandy trails by oxen." From Tampa it was shipped to ports in the northern part of the state served by railroad lines, such as St. Mark's, Apalachicola, or Pensacola.⁵³

The industry rapidly expanded with the better transportation facilities and the consequent growth of markets. The disastrous "big freeze" of 1894-95 wiped out thousands of acres of groves throughout the state. Damage was so extensive that it was not until 1911 that the citrus industry recovered to the point it had reached in 1891, three years

⁵³Cutler, op. cit., p. 451.

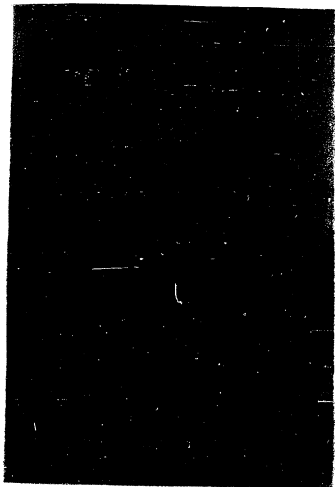


Fig. 9.--Grapefruit tree in Polk County after the big freeze of 1895. Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

before the disaster.⁵⁴ Observation and reflection convinced the citrus men of Polk County that the freeze had done less permanent damage to their groves than in most other sections of the belt.⁵⁵ This observation caused the citrus farmer to be optimistic about growing the fruit in Polk County. Citrus is of prime importance in much of Polk County today. Only the eastern part of the county, where cattle remained king, and the southwestern area near Mulberry, where the mineral beneath the soil would prove more valuable than what could be grown above ground, were unaffected by the growth of the citrus-farming frontier.

The citrus-farmer was advancing steadily through central Florida, but much of the Florida frontier was still dominated by the cowboy and cattle rancher in the late nineteenth century. Jacob Summerlin was referred to as "king of the Crackers, cattle baron, benefactor, patron saint of the open range--to mention only a few of the names attributed to him."⁵⁶ Summerlin offered Polk County 120 acres in Bartow "for county, school, and church purposes, which was gladly accepted by the county commissioners."⁵⁷ This author taught for two years at Summerlin Institute in Bartow, named in

⁵⁴Democrat, July 19, 1973, p. 4-A

⁵⁵Cutler, op. cit., p. 451.

⁵⁶Democrat, Oct. 18, 1973, p. 4-A

⁵⁷Hetherington, op. cit., p. 20.

honor of the "cattle king" who died in Orlando in 1893. There were other influential cattle families in central Florida such as the Whiddens, Lykes, Peoples, Griffins, and Blounts, but none could be called "king" on a level with Jacob Summerlin.

The citrus-farming frontier had pushed the cattle frontier farther south, but the day of the cattle frontier was not over in much of central Florida. In southwest Polk County, as in many parts of the American West, the cattle frontier was about to be replaced by the mining frontier. In this instance the mineral discovery was not as glamorous as the gold of Sacramento or the silver of the Comstock lode, but the discovery of phosphate in central Florida was every bit as important. It was this discovery of phosphate, coupled with the extension of the railroad, that would lead to the establishment of the community of Mulberry.

CHAPTER IV

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHOSPHATE INDUSTRY

The Discovery

The discovery of phosphate in Florida did more to enhance the establishment of the community of Mulberry than any other single incident. No other country approaches the United States in known phosphate rock resources. The lime phosphate rock in this country was found so near the surface that it could be dug from pits. The phosphate industry started near Charleston, South Carolina, but its greatest development was to be in the area around Mulberry, Florida. By 1923, five-sixths of the entire United States output of 3,000,000 tons would come from central Florida. Most of the remainder was mined in Tennessee.¹

The Florida phosphate beds contained great stores of phosphorus preserved in fossil bones--"jaws of rhinoceros and crocodile, teeth of mastodon and shark, ribs of whale and myriads of small crustaceans whose remains give us the most important element in commercial fertilizers."² It was

¹J. Russell Smith, Industrial and Commercial Geography (New York: Holt and Co., 1928), p. 625.

²Smith, North America, p. 288.

this type of fossil bed which J. Francis LeBaron stumbled upon in the winter of 1881. LeBaron, a civil engineer in the U. S. Army Engineer Corps, was surveying a canal route from the headwaters of the St. John's River in south Florida to Charlotte Harbor on the Gulf Coast, when he discovered the fossil beds in Peace River. LeBaron knew the importance of the "find" and confided his secret only to a few wealthy gentlemen whose assistance he hoped to enlist in securing and developing the property. But the capitalists were timid, if not skeptical, and a golden opportunity was lost.³

Prior to this discovery, very little was known about the geology of Florida. Superficial examinations of the Florida Keys and some portions of the coast line led to the theory that the peninsula of Florida was merely a coral formation overlaid with sand and clay--nothing more valuable. This theory had crystallized into a semblance of established fact by the time the public learned that phosphates had been found in south Florida. It was the sensation of a day, however, and awakened no general interest. It was supposed that the phosphate deposits, if they existed at all, were confined to a small area in Peace River.

³Manufacturer's Record (Baltimore, Md.), April 16, 1891. Partial copies are in the Polk County Historical Library, and in the possession of Mrs. John Mitchell of Mulberry.

The discovery of phosphate did not have as immediate an impact on Florida as did the discovery of gold on the West. The mining of phosphate required more men and machinery than the mining of gold. A single miner could mine enough gold in one week to become quite wealthy.⁴ It was practically impossible for one person to dig enough phosphate to become a rich man. It was necessary to hire other personnel to make a phosphate mine function prosperously.

LeBaron evidently did not have enough money to mine the phosphate he had discovered. His hesitation in beginning operations worked to the advantage of other more prosperous and experienced individuals such as T. S. Moorhead of Pennsylvania. Moorhead somehow obtained information about LeBaron's discovery and began production. He acquired land, including some of the richest beds in the Peace River, and in May, 1888, made the first shipment of phosphate that ever went out of Florida.⁵

Early mining techniques in Florida, like those in the West, were very crude. The phosphate was conveyed to the railroad over a wooden tramway, for, as yet, Moorhead was not a "phosphate king," and his resources were limited. Powerful steam dredges, fleets of barges and lofty draglines such as are seen today, then found place only in dreams

⁴Louis B. Wright, Life on the American Frontier (New York: Capricorn Books, 1971) p. 161.

⁵Manufacturer's Record, April 16, 1891.

of future development. The reality was about twenty shovels, as many Negroes and a mule. The total shipments of that first year of operation weighed less than 2,000 tons.⁶ Such was the humble beginning of the pioneer phosphate company of Florida--the Arcadia Phosphate Company.

The demand for phosphate was great, and its value as a fertilizer was already known to farmers. The Peace River Phosphate Company and the DeSoto Phosphate Company, both on the Peace River south of the present city of Bartow, entered the field in 1889, but not early enough to greatly increase the total output for the year. The exact figures were not obtainable, but the aggregate production of all three companies probably did not exceed 6,000 tons.⁷ It was in this year that Florida's newly discovered mineral wealth began to attract the attention of local capitalists. The three plants then in operation were all owned by people of other states.⁸ Many mines on the western frontier were owned by persons from the East.⁹ This was also true in Florida.

LeBaron's discovery had been of nodular, or pebble, phosphate. "Hard rock" or "boulder" phosphate was discovered

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Polk County News (Bartow), Feb. 6, 1891. Hereafter referred to as News.

⁸ Manufacturer's Record, April 16, 1891.

⁹ Billington, Far Western Frontier, p. 236.

in May, 1889, when Albertus Vogt and an unknown Negro helper dug gypsum from a well he was deepening on his farm at Dunellon near Ocala. Vogt carried this strange-appearing gypsum to John F. Dunn, an Ocala banker. Dunn "did not have much faith in the appearance of the stuff," and after it laid on his desk for some time, sent it to a chemist to please Vogt. The chemist said it was "a very rich sample of phosphate of lime," and said that, if there was much of a deposit, "secure it as it was exceedingly valuable." Dunn gave Vogt \$800 for half interest in his little 10-acre farm where the sample was found. It was not very long before the presidents of both of the most important fertilizer manufacturing companies in the country, the Baldwin Company of Savannah, and the Bradley Fertilizer Company of Boston, visited Vogt to make substantial offers for the purchase of phosphate.¹⁰

Vogt's discovery was quickly followed by others nearby as well as in adjoining counties. Nodular phosphate was found later in the season in many localities in Polk County. Knowledge of these rich finds--though at first suppressed by local capitalists--eventually spread over the state, germinating into a phosphate fever that raged like an epidemic through the 1890's.

¹⁰News, Feb. 13, 1891.

This phosphate fever was as rampant in Polk County in 1890 as gold fever was in California in 1850.¹¹ Newspapers were full of notices about phosphate. The Polk County News on September 12, 1890, ran an advertisement for "pure hard rock phosphate" land for sale by George W. Land of Bartow. J. H. Tatum advertised that he had \$100,000 waiting "to be invested in practical mineral lands in Polk, DeSoto, Hillsborough or Manatee Counties."¹²

On September 19, 1890, it was announced that Major B. F. Jones and Isaac Whitaker of Kansas City, Missouri, had arrived in Bartow to visit the land they had bought near Homeland on the Peace River. Jones said that he was well pleased with Florida and said that Florida's future was a bright one and "it will have immense wealth flow into its boundaries because of the development of phosphate lands."¹³

On September 26, 1890, the Polk County News reported that thirty cars of phosphate were being shipped every day from the South Florida Railroad depot in Bartow. It was shipped down the South Florida Railroad to Punta Gorda, then shipped to Baltimore where some was retained for commercial fertilizers, but most of it was shipped across the Atlantic to England and Germany.¹⁴

¹¹Wright, op. cit., p. 170.

¹²News, Sept. 12, 1890.

¹³News, Sept. 19, 1890.

¹⁴News, Sept. 26, 1890.

A large number of companies filed articles of incorporation in Florida in 1890, but only four of them got their plants into operation before the close of the year. The total production was stated as 15,000 tons, but this was erroneous, as that was the amount exported to England alone. Large shipments were made to Germany, and still larger quantities were absorbed by American farmers for use as fertilizers. The total amount was probably in the neighborhood of 65,000 tons, estimating the output of some mines by the known production of others.¹⁵

Three more companies filed articles of incorporation in Polk County in 1890. The first of these was the Fort Meade Fertilizer Company, near Fort Meade, which began operation on February 1. The incorporators were J. E. Robeson, Wemps Jackson, A. F. Webster and C. W. Parsons, all citizens of Florida. This was followed by the Blue Rock Phosphate Company of Covington, Kentucky, which began operations on July 15. Incorporators were L. N. Crigler, A. R. Mullins, J. S. Pence, E. T. Woodcock and J. W. Janes, none of whom were Floridians. The last company to incorporate in 1890 was the Fort Meade Phosphate Fertilizing Land and Improvement Company of Fort Meade. Six companies, including the Florida Phosphate Company, Ltd., filed articles of incorporation in

¹⁵Polk County Miscellaneous Record Book No. 1, p. 195; Manufacturer's Record, April 16, 1891.

Polk County in 1891.¹⁶ By the spring of that year, the companies operating in Florida had an aggregate capital of \$7,840,000 and an estimated daily capacity of 2,000 tons.¹⁷

In January, 1891, there was a court case concerning the right of the state to levy a royalty of \$1 a ton on all phosphate taken from river or stream beds. The Black River Phosphate Company of Clay County challenged the state's right to this tax. Their main argument was that land nodule mines did not have to pay this tax, therefore, it was unfair to river nodule mines.¹⁸ Judge W. B. Young of Jacksonville, in a decision later upheld by the state supreme court, ruled that the owners of land adjacent to waterways had the riparian rights to the waterway, and could not be so taxed by the state. The decision was hailed throughout the phosphate regions of the state. The text of the decision is as follows:

This cause came on to be heard upon the demurrer to the bill to be filed herein, and was argued by counsel. Upon consideration thereof the court is of the opinion that chapter 791 of the Laws of Florida, vested in the riparian proprietors the fee in all lands covered by water lying in front of any tract of land owned by any citizen of the United States, situated upon any navigable stream, as far as the edge of the channel. While the act is entitled "An Act for the benefit of commerce," and the Legislature deemed it for the interest of commerce that "all submerged lands and water

¹⁶Polk County Miscellaneous Record Book No. 1, pp. 207, 219.

¹⁷Manufacturer's Record, April 16, 1891.

¹⁸Ibid.

privileges should be improved," they granted "the full title to the same," to the riparian proprietors to induce them to incur the expenses of making the Improvements which the Legislature deemed important for the benefit of commerce. This seems to be the view entertained by the Supreme Court of this State, in so far as it has expressed any opinion on the subject. Entertaining this view of the law, the court does not deem it necessary to express any opinion upon the question as to whether or not the State owns the soil in the channel of rivers and streams in which the tide does not ebb and flow. The court is of the opinion that the demurrer is well taken. It is therefore ordered, adjudged and decreed that the demurrer to complainant's bill herein be sustained. Done this the 3d day of January, A. D. 1891.¹⁹

On January 16, 1891, J. A. Fortner reported the finding of rich phosphate land on the Alafia River below present-day Mulberry. The land was placed in the hands of the W. T. Rutledge Company.²⁰

The Polk County News reported that phosphate was rapidly becoming one of the "most gigantic industries in the world." Most phosphate at this time was being mined in the Peace River Valley. By March, 1891, there were twenty-three phosphate companies operating in Polk and DeSoto Counties. Arcadia was called the home of the phosphate kings. Most plants were located along the route of the South River Railroad. So important was phosphate becoming in the lives of the people of this area that, from September 1890

¹⁹News, Jan. 23, 1891.

²⁰News, Jan. 16, 1891.

until March 1891, every issue of the Polk County News had a front-page article on phosphate and its importance to the region.²¹

To define the boundaries of the phosphate region of Florida with anything like precision would be very difficult, as there are entire counties intervening between detached portions of the known phosphate strata; yet, in a general way, it may be said to comprise all the counties on the Gulf coast from Leon to Lee, inclusive, and the counties of Polk, Sumter, Marion, Alachua and Clay, all of which are situated on the Gulf side of the peninsula except the last named, which is in the northeastern part of the state.²² It must not be inferred that all of the counties contained in this vast territory are rich in phosphatic material, for while a few of them, notably Polk, DeSoto and Marion, have surprisingly large deposits, others have only isolated beds of little value.

Types of Phosphate

The phosphates of Florida are of two distinct forms--hard rock or boulder phosphate, and nodular phosphate. There are two varieties of the latter--land nodules and river nodules or river pebbles, both of the same physical

²¹News, Jan. 23, 1891; Feb. 13, 1891; March 6, 1891.

²²Smith, North America, p. 288.

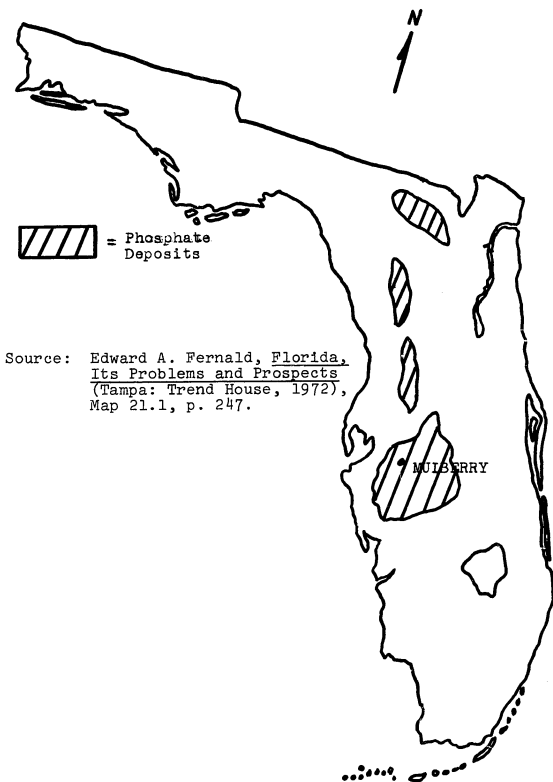


Fig. 10.--Florida phosphate deposits

structure, but differing in color and in percentage of phosphoric acid.²³

Hard-rock phosphate is usually creamy white, pinkish white or light buff in color. It occurs in the form of boulders with rough, uneven surfaces and of all sizes associated with soft phosphate rock of inferior grade, carbonate of lime, sandy or clay. The best of it tests very high, frequently over 80 per cent phosphate of lime, and in rare instances samples have analyzed 90 per cent. However, it shows great lack of uniformity. Specimens giving 80 to 85 per cent calcic phosphate may be taken from the same pit along with others of no commercial value, though so closely resembling the former in color and physical properties, that only an expert can distinguish them. A single boulder of small size will sometimes analyze 70 or 75 per cent on one side and 40 or 45 on the other, but such instances are rare. On the other hand, huge rocks are often found weighing a ton or more and need to be blasted with dynamite. These as the miners express it, are "straight goods" all the way through.²⁴

Nodular phosphates were found nowhere north of Polk and Hillsborough counties while "hard rock" was not known to

²³Robert Reynolds, personal interview with the author, Internation Mineral and Chemical Corp., Bartow, Florida, Feb. 10, 1974.

²⁴Phosphate Facts, (Florida Phosphate Co., Ltd., Nov., 1892), p. 17. Pages of this publication can be found in a scrapbook belonging to Mrs. John Mitchell, of Mulberry, Florida.

exist south of the northern boundaries of those counties.²⁵

In other words, as the southern portion of the Florida peninsula is supposed to be of more recent origin than the northern part, nodular phosphate began where the hard rock left off. Another peculiar thing is the total absence of organic remains in the hard-rock region, while bones and teeth of land and marine animals and reptiles everywhere abound in the nodular district.

The land nodules are the type of phosphate mined in the Mulberry area, and vary in size from that of a pea to that of a walnut. They are irregular in form, and often have a polished surface. In most localities they are either white or buff colored, but are sometimes either tan or light brown.²⁶

Land nodules occasionally contain as much as 75 or 80 and in rare instances 85 per cent phosphate of lime with little more than a trace of iron and aluminum; but the average is 68 to 70 per cent phosphate and between 1 and 2 per cent oxide or iron and aluminum.²⁷

Pebble phosphate is the name applied to the river nodules to distinguish them from land nodules. They differ from the latter in being darker colored and containing about

²⁵Ibid., p. 18.

²⁶Robert Reynolds, personal interview with the author, International Mineral and Chemical Corp., Bartow, Florida, Feb. 10, 1974.

²⁷Phosphate Facts, p. 17.

10 per cent less phosphate of lime. The most remarkable deposits of pebble phosphate (or "bone pebbles," as they are also called) ever discovered were those of the Alafia and Peace River. In 1890, in the Peace River, 3,600 tons were taken from a bar about 100 feet wide and about 200 feet long, the deposit being 18 feet deep. This was on the property of the Arcadia Phosphate Company, where the first mining in Florida was done.²⁸

By far the most extensive continuous deposit of phosphate in the state was that of the nodular field, which began a little north of Bartow in Polk County with a breadth of many miles, and continued with gradually diminishing width almost without a break to Charlotte Harbor.²⁹ This field, of course, included both land and river nodules, as the territory referred to was traversed by the Alafia, Manatee and Peace rivers and their many tributaries, which were as rich in pebble phosphate as the country through which they flowed was in land nodules.

This section was hilly in some places, but was generally "flat woods" land interspersed with numerous ponds and marshes. In and around these marshes the phosphate mineral was sometimes struck within a few inches of the surface and rarely at a greater depth than 3 feet. In the more elevated lands there was from 3 to 5 feet overburden, or

²⁸Ibid., p. 19.

²⁹Manufacturer's Record, April 16, 1891.

non-phosphate dirt, before reaching the valuable mineral. The overburden was generally less than 3 1/2 feet thick.³⁰

Mining the Phosphate

There were four nodular phosphate mines built about 9 miles west of Bartow that were in operation in the early 1890's. These mines were all located less than 2 miles from each other. They were the Palmetto Phosphate, the Kingsford, the Bone Valley, and The Land Pebble mines. When the railroad first extended its line to reach the immense output of these four phosphate mines, there was a centrally located point near a large mulberry tree. Trains stopped at this point to put off freight, and goods were frequently marked "put off at the big mulberry tree." Around this tree began a small mining camp, which would take the name Mulberry from the old tree. The first business located in the immediate area was a saw mill, which was used to saw wood for the construction of houses.³¹

In 1893 C. Gustavus Memminger of South Carolina purchased land at the headwaters of the Alafia River for the Palmetto Phosphate Company. In 1894 he designed and built the Palmetto Phosphate plant among the richest deposits of phosphate he could find. He called it Memminger but the

³⁰Phosphate Facts, p. 12.

³¹Record, Dec. 19, 1935.

name was soon changed to Palmetto.³² Memminger was the son of the late Confederate Secretary of the Treasury, C. G. Memminger, a Charleston lawyer.³³

Early mining processes were certainly not very sophisticated. In the hard-rock mines, hand labor had to be relied upon for the greater part of the work "as no dredging machines had been devised that could penetrate the hard strata or detach the boulders," though at some of the mines "steam derricks were used to hoist the rock after it had been loosened and partly broken up with picks and sledges, blasting being resorted to in reducing the larger boulders, while rakes were used to bring out the very small ones."³⁴

In other mines no machinery whatever was employed. Picks, sledges, shovels and wheelbarrows were the only implements in use. Some white men were employed in all the mines, but in most of them, especially in the hard-rock district, much of the work was performed by Negroes. These Negroes, like most of the whites, had moved south from Georgia and north Florida looking for work. Their wages were \$1.25 for ten-hours work.³⁵ Compared to miners in the West, Florida miners were underpaid.

³²Polk County, Florida, Deed Record Book (1893), LII, 635; LIV, 275; Informant, Nov. 14, 1900.

³³William B. Hesseltine and David L. Smiley, The South in American History (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1960) p. 288.

³⁴Manufacturer's Record, April 16, 1891.

³⁵Phosphate Facts, p. 18.

After the miners removed the rock and broke the larger pieces, they subjected it to a process to expel moisture and destroy any organic substance which was attached. This was done in kilns or in drying chimneys or by placing the rock in layers on piles of wood, "which were then fired and consumed."³⁶

Early methods of nodular mining were primitive by today's standards, yet in some respects similar to present practices. In the mining and manipulation of land nodules, machinery was chiefly employed. A floating dipper dredge, working in a canal, which it deepened and extended as it removed the phosphate nodules, brought up the phosphate and dropped it into a crusher, out of which the nodules and matrix (natural material in which the phosphate is encased) passed into a revolving washer mounted on the same barge with the dredging machine and crusher. From the washer the matrix and water returned to the canal, while the clean nodules were carried by a spiral conveyer to a steam-heated dryer on another barge. From the dryer they fell onto a revolving screen, which removed any particles of adhering sand; the then marketable phosphate was caught up by elevators and delivered on board railway cars standing on a track parallel with the canal. Steam power did it all; the average capacity was 300 tons a day, and "a car load of 20 tons could

³⁶Manufacturer's Record, April 16, 1891.



Fig. 11.--Early phosphate mining operation on the Peace River. Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

be raised, washed, dried and ready for market in forty minutes."³⁷ The canals referred to were simply trenches, which, due to the low elevation of the land, rapidly filled with water.

Quite a different process was adopted in river mining, which required far fewer workers than the land mining. Instead of the dipper dredge or steam shovel, a powerful centrifugal pump was mounted on the bow of a boat, with a suction pipe, 8 inches in diameter, extending to the bottom of the river in front of the boat, and capable of being adjusted to any depth by means of ropes and pulleys connecting its outer extremity with a spar or carrier. The pebbles, together with sand and water, were drawn up with great speed and discharged into a revolving screen, from which the washed and separated pebbles passed down a chute to a barge along side. The loaded barge was either towed or floated to the elevator or steam-hoisting apparatus, and from the barge the washed pebbles went to the dryer. From the dryer they were elevated to the upper part of the building and dropped onto inclined screens over which they slid into the storage bins and were ready for shipment.³⁸

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid.

New Settlers and New Companies

Mining naturally caused the value of land to increase. Like gold and silver in the West, phosphate caused the value of land to rise rapidly. "Old" settlers such as J. A. Fortner, Isaac Whitaker, James G. Maxcy, and others became wealthy overnight. Land for which they had paid from 50 cents to \$3 an acre and which could not be sold for \$4 an acre in 1889 was selling for \$100 an acre by 1891. Some of the wealthy families of Polk County acquired their fortunes at this time.³⁹

Some phosphate land sold for as much as \$1,000 an acre. The usual selling price was from \$25 to \$200 per acre in 1891, depending on whether it was purchased from the original owner, or from the first, second, third, or fourth speculator.⁴⁰

Large numbers of settlers began moving into the area in the 1890's. Some of these were from the North, but most came from other southern states. More settlers meant more workers for the mines. A few of the new settlers were foreign born. The Aggelis' (Greek), Cristafaro's (Italian), and Henriquez' (Cuban), can trace their families to this period. The extent of this foreign immigration was very small compared to the influx of Chinese, Mexicans, Chileans, French

³⁹Deed Record Book (1889-91), XXXI-XLIX.

⁴⁰Ibid., (1891), XLVII.

and others into the mining communities of the West.⁴¹ The foreign immigrants that did come to the phosphate area of Florida were all basically Caucasian and were readily assimilated into the culture without any prejudice developing. This was quite unlike the West, where certain racial patterns which developed in the nineteenth century have not yet disappeared. Of course, the Negro was not allowed to assimilate on the Florida mining frontier, and remained an "outsider" on the social level. This was due to the large number of Negro immigrants in the 1890's and to the "Southern" culture of most of the whites.

With multitudes of new settlers and with numerous phosphate companies in operation, Polk County presented a scene of commercial activity and undreamed of prosperity. A new impetus had been added to all spheres of business; laborers were supplied with steady and profitable positions and upon the whole, phosphate accomplished more in the long run for Polk County than gold or silver did for California and Nevada a few decades earlier.

By 1893, the following companies had been organized in Polk County:

Bartow Phosphate Company
Pharr Phosphate Company
Homeland Pebble Phosphate Company
Whitaker Phosphate and Fertilizer Company

⁴¹Charles Howard Shinn, Mining Camps: A Study in American Frontier Government (New York: Harper & Row, 1965) pp. 212-218.

Moore & Tatum Phosphate Company
 Virginia-Florida Phosphate Company
 Fort Meade Phosphate Company
 Florida Phosphate Company
 National Peace River Phosphate Company
 Excelsior Phosphate Company
 Lake Hancock Pebble Phosphate Company
 Terracea Phosphate Company
 Bone Valley Phosphate Company
 Land Pebble Phosphate Company
 Cowles & Jordan Phosphate Company
 Wilson Bros. Phosphate Company
 Foote Commercial Phosphate Company⁴²

In May, 1893, the first edition of the Bartow Courier-Informant, which for years would be the main paper serving Polk County, had as its subtitle, "The Great Phosphate Journal of Florida," signifying the importance of phosphate to the area.⁴³ In just ten short years, phosphate had replaced cattle as the economic "king" of Polk County. Many acres of good grazing land were dug up for the valuable pebbles beneath the soil.

Phosphate Literature

Two interesting old poems included here give an insight as to the influence of phosphate upon the citizens of the area. The first poem was by an anonymous author, obviously from DeSoto County. The second poem, entitled "Phosphate Ravin" was by a man identified only as "Mose Likely" and was dated "Winter Haven, January 28, 1890."

⁴²Deed Record Book (1893), LIV-LV

⁴³Informant, May 11, 1893.

What makes a country famous?
Was a question asked of old;
And a wise man quickly answered,
'Tis bright and shining gold.

And so it was, and so it is,
The whole broad world around,
That country is most famous
Where the greatest wealth is found.

Just look at California,
Ere eighteen hundred and forty-eight,
Before gold was discovered there,
Few knew of such a State.

But when the proclamation
Went forth the broad world o'er,
How many thousand started
To seek that famous shore.

How is it now in Florida,
This bright and sunny land,
Where phosphate has been discovered
So thick on every hand?

Where phosphate has been discovered,
the richest ever found,
And in such great quantities,
'tis piled up on every hand.

You may talk of California,
With a gold mine here and there;
But she's not with sunny Florida,
And her Phosphate now compare.

And if riches make a country
So famous and so great,
Of course so rich and famous,
It will also make a State.

And just here within our county
(DeSoto is its name)
Lies greater wealth in Phosphate
Than from California came.

For from one plant just started,
Not yet a full year old
More wealth has now been taken
Than all California's gold.

Phosphate will soon be taken
 All over our broad land,
 Likewise to foreign countries--
 For there's great demand.

And besides her Phosphate,
 Which equals shining gold,
 The rich fruit of the tropics,
 On all sides we behold.

Our oranges are the finest
 That ever have been found
 In any other country,
 The whole broad world around.

Our lemons, limes and grape fruit,
 And other fruits more rare;
 The famous fruits of Italy
 Can not with them compare.

And soon our State will take the lead
 In wealth, as she has done
 In climate, fruit and flowers,
 And her bright health-giving sun.⁴⁴

PHOSPHATE RAVIN!

Once upon a midnight dreary, as I pondered
 weak and weary,
 O'er many of life's problems (which I've never
 solved to date),
 As despondent and dejected, I pondered and
 reflected
 On things quite close connected with my
 impecunious state,
 There came an apparition like the harbinger
 of fate
 And his only salutation was the simple word,
 "Phosphate!"

Ah, distinctly I remember, 'twas the last night
 in December
 And my household, every member, unconscious lay
 in slumber sweet;
 "O, world!" I muttered, "Who can know the breadth
 and depth of human woe!"
 Quoth the Apparition quickly: "I bored it more
 than thirty feet!"

⁴⁴Poem found in clipping dated 1893, handwritten on page was: "From the Arcadia Real Estate Journal." This poem can be found in the Polk County Historical Library.

His cheeks were pale, his head was bare; his eyes
 through matted locks of hair
 Shot forth a restless, frenzied glare.
 Thus I spake: "What fate hath sent
 Thee forth a wanderer, alone; hast thou no
 kindred, friend or home?
 How much of happiness hast known?"
 "Nearly eighty-eight per cent!"
 Thus he answered, in a whisper: "Nearly
 eighty-eight per cent!"

Thus I quizzed him (to catch the trend of his
 vacant thoughts): "Pray, my friend,
 What compensates the sons of toil who work
 from dawn to set of sun?"
 A poor wretch grubs, or swings his axe, or digs
 and delves "till his back bone cracks
 To earn the bread his household lacks; but what
 does he get? tell me--come!"
 Then replied the sun-of-a-gun!
 "Twelve dollars and a half a ton!"

"Child of misfortune, speak me fair; what
 is that gem of ray so rare,
 "Twill purchuse all possessions else,--the
 power and wealth which all men seek,
 Distinction, fame and magics, where lies
 concealed the magic key,
 Will ope earth's treasure house to me?"
 A sickly smile o'erspread his cheek,
 As he replied in accents weak: "I found it,
 Sir, down on Peace Creek!"

"Madman, lunatic, imbecile--answer to what
 name you will--
 What is this thing of which you prate?
 What's turned so many head of late?
 What makes a man a billionaire, and takes
 from him each cross and care?
 I'll tell it not, I asserverate!" not a
 moment did he hesitate,
 But promptly gave the answer straight,
 in one symbolic word: "PHOSPHATE!!!"

MOSE LIKELY⁴⁵

⁴⁵Mose Likely, "Phosphate Ravin" (Winter Haven, Fla.: Jan. 28, 1890). Old copy available at Polk County Historical Library.

Poetry is an indication of the life of the people during the period in which it was written, but even better indicators are letters written describing conditions as they were.

James H. Driggers was a member of a pioneer family of Polk County. Like many of his contemporaries when phosphate was discovered in the area, he hoped to make his fortune. His wife went to stay with relatives in Georgia while he hunted for a prosperous mine to associate himself with. He went to work at Pebble Mine about 4 miles from the present city of Mulberry. He wrote "I have got a job and don't have anything to do but to tend to the cars and horses and hunt hogs and I have a horse to ride anywhere I want to go."⁴⁶

Two days later Driggers next letter had more excitement in it. The phosphate camps, like the mining camps of the West, had their share of violence. Driggers said that "Section Boss Bailey's Negro played sick yesterday morning, and when Bailey and the rest was gone, He went in the house" where Mrs. Bailey was, "caught her and beat her pretty bad. She hollered and he turned her loose and run off. She reported it as soon as possible and I suppose in eight hours time there was 150 men after him." He continued, "they run him in the swamp--it come up a rain and they lost him, but they caught him today about 70 or 100 miles from here."

⁴⁶ Letter, James H. Driggers to Mrs. J. H. Driggers, July 23, 1899, Mulberry, Florida, Private collection of Mrs. Roy Gladney.

He was captured by the sheriff at Inverness, who wired he would bring him to Lakeland to meet the Polk County sheriff. Driggers wrote "there is gone about a hundred men to Lakeland to meet the train--they are going to take him and lynch him--every man in this country is gone to Lakeland tonight." Driggers protested that he wanted to go, but could not get off as he was on the "night-run." He admonished his wife "to be careful up there for you know that is a bad place for Negroes to cutup like that."⁴⁷

Driggers tired of his job at Pebble and worked for a while at Kingsford, 1 mile south of the site of Mulberry. His wife joined him there, but it was not long before he was off looking for a new job. He went to Tampa where he took "pleasure this morning in writing and telling you (his wife) that I have got a job. I am to go to work in the morning on the dredge, Port Tampa." Driggers said that he would be paid \$2.75 (presumably per week) which was more than he made running a dredge in Polk County. He said the machinery would "be awkward for me at first--it is worse than running a steam shovel--I have nine levers to handle but I am going to try." Indicative of the size of Tampa at the turn of the century was Drigger's closing remark, "Just direct your letters to Tampa, Fla."⁴⁸

⁴⁷Letter, James H. Driggers to Mrs. J. H. Driggers, July 25, 1899, Mulberry, Florida, Private collection of Mrs. Roy Gladney.

⁴⁸Letter, James H. Driggers to Mrs. J. H. Driggers, Nov. 6, 1900, Mulberry, Florida, Private collection of Mrs. Roy Gladney.

The phosphate mines, together with the establishment of the railroads described earlier, had set the stage for increased settlement and development of the Florida mining frontier. This pattern would lead to the establishment of the town of Mulberry.

CHAPTER V

THE FRONTIER FADES

Small communities developed around Florida's phosphate mines, much as they did around the gold mines of California. With four mines in a radius of as many miles, the development of a town at the site of the big mulberry tree, where the railroad crossed the Alafia River, was inevitable. In the early 1890's, miners first erected shacks with whatever material was available, and the new town of Mulberry resembled a boom town of the old West and was every bit as wild.

One of the first businesses in the community was a sawmill which "could not keep up with the demand for boards for new houses." Nearly all of the first residents in the town were miners, except for a few railroad workers.¹

In 1895, Mulberry was fortunate to get its first doctor, A. F. Fletcher of Georgia. Fletcher had his hands full, primarily due to the number of shootings in the area. One early observer believed that if the state of things

¹Record, Dec. 19, 1935.

"should continue around Land Pebble Mine, the doctor should have his hands full of patients, and his pockets full of bullets."²

One of the most influential early settlers in Mulberry was Luther Nathan Pipkin, born in Alabama in 1866 to Nathan and Margaret Hart Pipkin. His family came to Florida when he was seventeen years old and homesteaded 3 miles northeast of Mulberry in the present Mockingbird Hill area. He was engaged in the butcher and meat business in Lakeland and Bartow from 1889 to 1894, when he established a mercantile business in Mulberry. This was the first store of any consequence in the new town.³

Luther Pipkin became the town's leading citizen in its first years. In 1896, as a member of the Central Executive Temperance Committee, Pipkin circulated a petition to allow the people to vote whether or not they wanted licensed saloons in the county.⁴

Another prominent person to make his home in Mulberry was Ben Hill Griffin, Sr. Griffin was born in Decatur County, Georgia, in 1876 and moved with his family to Mulberry in 1891 before there were any businesses in the community.

²Informant, April 24, 1895.

³Hetherington, op. cit., p. 309.

⁴Informant, June 10, 1896.

He was connected with the Palmetto Phosphate Company for eighteen years. He married Sarah G. Maxcy of Mulberry. They had four children, including Ben Hill Griffin, Jr., one of the wealthiest men in the state. The family moved to Frostproof around 1912.⁵

Elections

By August 1896, Mulberry was the fifth largest voting district in Polk County with a total registration of fifty-four persons in the district, which included not only Mulberry but the surrounding area. The Temperance Committee was evidently effective, as Polk County voted for prohibition by a large majority of 450 dry votes to 213 wet votes in the special August election. However, Mulberry, apparently apathetic on the issue, cast only 9 dry votes as opposed to 7 wet votes. One possible reason for the low voter turnout was that many people had not paid their poll tax, recently passed by the state legislature in an attempt to keep Negroes from voting.⁶

One month after the vote for prohibition, the 1896 gubernatorial campaign was in high gear. The citizens of Mulberry took an active interest in the campaign. On September 12, Byron Ashley spoke in Mulberry for the Peoples

⁵Hetherington, op. cit., p. 247.

⁶Informant, July 15, 1896; Aug. 5, 1896; Aug. 12, 1896.

Party, followed on September 14 by W. H. Reynolds speaking in behalf of the Democratic candidates. By late September, there were seventy-three registered voters in District 18, including such early settlers as: L. D. Anderson, James R. Caruthers, Dr. A. F. Fletcher, J. A. Fortner, J. G. Maxcy, L. N. Pipkin, and G. W. Watson.⁷ In the October 6 election there were sixty-nine votes cast for governor with William D. Bloxham, the Democrat, receiving forty-one to twenty-one for A. W. Weeks, the Populist and only seven for E. R. Gunby, the Republican. In the November presidential election there were forty-three votes cast for the Democrat William J. Bryan and only fourteen for the Republican William McKinley.⁸ The outcome evidenced the traditional southern preference for the Democratic party as well as the typical miners preference for Bryan that also prevailed in the West.⁹

Republican support dwindled to nothing in the 1900 Presidential election. Mulberry cast fifty-seven ballots for William J. Bryan, the Democratic nominee for President. Typical of the deep South at this time, there were no Republican votes, reflecting the effect of the poll tax and other restrictions passed by the state legislature.¹⁰

⁷Informant, Sept. 23, 1896.

⁸Informant, Oct. 7, 1896; Nov. 4, 1896.

⁹Hesseltine and Smiley, op. cit., p. 430.

¹⁰Informant, Nov. 7, 1900.

There had been much talk of moving the state capital from Tallahassee to a more central location, preferably Jacksonville or Ocala. This proposal was put on the same ballot, and state voters narrowly decided to keep the capital in Tallahassee, although the combined votes for other locations represented about 60 per cent of the vote. Mulberry had little enthusiasm for moving the capital and cast fifty-four votes for Tallahassee and only twelve for all the other possibilities combined.¹¹

Business Growth

In the closing years of the nineteenth century, the citizens focused their attention on the growth of business. All the local communities were growing at this time. Neighboring Bartow got electric lights in February, 1897.¹² It would be ten years before Mulberry would have this luxury.¹³ In September, 1897, Fred Gemme, Jr., opened a barber shop in Kingsford.¹⁴ Citizens of Mulberry desiring a haircut either cut their own or traveled the 2 miles to Kingsford until 1901, when Ed Keene opened the first "tonsorial parlor" in Mulberry proper.¹⁵

¹¹Informant, Nov. 14, 1900.

¹²Informant, March 3, 1897.

¹³City of Mulberry, Council Minutes, May 16, 1907.

¹⁴Informant, Sept. 15, 1897.

¹⁵Informant, March 13, 1901.

It would be several years before the town would have its own newspaper to help encourage the growth of business. However, on April 5, 1899, the Bartow Courier-Informant announced that it would carry news from Mulberry, "the rapidly growing community 9 miles due west of Bartow on a branch of the Plant System," on a regular basis. The unknown correspondent in Mulberry said that the "famous Palmetto Phosphate Plant is only 1/2 mile southwest. Kingsford Plant is 2 miles south, and Bone Valley and Land Pebble Phosphate plants are 1 1/2 miles northwest and northeast." He further noted that "all roads cross right through our limits. The payrolls from these four plants amount to \$1,000 cash per day." This description certainly gave the community a promise of growth and prosperity.¹⁶

The town was booming by the spring of 1899. Construction was seen everywhere. New residences were built by many leading citizens, including Dr. A. F. Fletcher, A. J. McAullay, W. R. Langford and J. H. Driggers. L. N. Crigler of Bartow announced plans for a new residential addition on the highest and best-drained point in the vicinity. Crigler announced that these homes would be available on the installment plan. Amos Randall and L. M. Ballard completed new buildings for business use.¹⁷ Hendry B. Blount of Bartow

¹⁶Informant, April 5, 1899.

¹⁷Ibid.

bought out the only drug store, and two men named Pearce and Booth opened a general store in the new Webster building. H. W. Snell built a general store near Luther Pipkin's store.¹⁸

In July, 1899, L. N. Crigler contracted for lumber to build "at once" a ten-room hotel and three cottages to rent. Construction on Crigler's hotel began the first week in August, 1899. There was a definite need for a hotel in Mulberry due to the number of phosphate men visiting the area looking for investment opportunities. On the same day construction of the hotel began, Joseph Hull, "famous in the phosphate and fertilizer field, was in town to begin building a fifth phosphate plant for Mulberry."¹⁹

Phosphate mining was going strong, and four boat loads of phosphate from the Mulberry area were loaded in the first week of July. Palmetto Mine announced that it would close down in August to move machinery from an old to a new dredge. W. W. Clark joined Joseph Hull and other northern men prospecting for a site for a new phosphate plant. Strangers coming into town were saying the town should change its name to Phosphate City. There was talk of combining Mulberry, Kingsford and Palmetto into one city.²⁰

¹⁸Informant, May 24, 1899; June 14, 1899.

¹⁹Informant, July 19, 1899; Aug. 9, 1899.

²⁰Informant, Aug. 9, 1899.

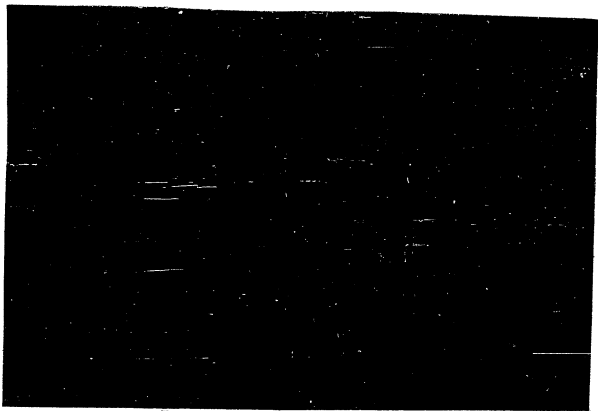


Fig. 12.--Mulberry Hotel about 1900. Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

The fifth phosphate plant in Mulberry was organized as Prairie Pebble Phosphate Company. Joseph Hull was president and W. W. Clark was general manager.²¹ The output of the four operating mines was 1,200 tons every day in October, 1899. Great steam shovels were in use to remove the phosphate from the earth. The day "of the wheelbarrow and mule scraper" was past. There was talk of need for another railroad due to the increased output of phosphate. The companies were said to "pay good money, and most of the money" was spent in Mulberry, which meant that most items of necessity were available in Mulberry's growing business section.²²

The mines were bringing prosperity to the new town, but as late as September, 1899, Mulberry was still rather difficult to reach by road, and there were no really good roads leading into the community. The announcement on September 20 that the county bridge on the new road to Bartow would be completed the following month was a joyous one. This news, coupled with the announcement by J. J. Purdon, Superintendent of the Plant Railroad, that a site for their depot had been selected in Mulberry and would be constructed at once, "settled the location of the phosphate town for all the future." The depot site was to be only a few yards from

²¹Informant, Aug. 16, 1899.

²²Informant, Oct. 11, 1899.

the big mulberry tree. These were signs of a healthy future for Mulberry, but there were still not enough houses for the people wishing to locate there, and citizens said that another sawmill was needed to supply the demand for lumber.²³

Joseph Hull's new Prairie Pebble Mine was only 1/2 mile from the new depot site. A Mulberry citizen identified only as J. B. said that there was room for two more phosphate plants to be erected within a mile of Mulberry. The new public bridge completing the road between Mulberry and Bartow was finished on October 20, 1899. The much-needed second sawmill was built in early November of the same year, allowing new construction to move ahead at a quicker pace. The new sawmill was too late to help L. N. Crigler's hotel since it had been completed the same week. Many people from Bartow were investing heavily in Mulberry land.²⁴

On Tuesday, April 3, 1900, J. H. Phillips, an auctioneer for L. N. Crigler, accompanied by a large crowd from Bartow, visited Mulberry. In a few hours he sold sixty-five lots in town for a total of \$1,250. Phillips always gave away a free lot at these auction sales, and J. C. Morris drew the lucky number. At noon Phillips treated all the participants to a free barbecue.²⁵

²³Informant, Sept. 20, 1899.

²⁴Informant, Oct. 26, 1899.

²⁵Deed Record Book (1900) LVII, 64-72; Informant, April 11, 1900.

Not only were land sales booming, but business in Mulberry was also flourishing at the turn of the century. L. N. Pipkin's store was the busiest and best established. His bookkeeper was Will Hicks and other employees were John Rischer, John Potter, Charlie Dickerson and Mrs. Hayman. H. W. Snell opened a general store in November, 1899. Booth and Pearce and the Collins brothers operated shops advertising "wagons, buggies, shoes, harnesses, and watches sold and repaired."²⁶ In the spring of 1900, L. N. Pipkin had his store enlarged by L. M. Ballard, to make more room for his stock of dry goods and notions. He also had "Colonel" Logan and Bob Claxton put in an "incandescent gasoline vapor light machine" for him, and "now his immense establishment literally blazed with radiance."²⁷

Hendry Blount's drug store soon had competition, as Stevens and Rockner's Drug Store opened in early October, 1900. Dr. A. F. Fletcher also had competition, with the opening of a practice by Dr. Ben Morgan from Statesville, Georgia. St. Elmo Gibson's mercantile establishment was doing a good business and had competition from A. W. Winn and Thad English.²⁸ DeVane and Payne were doing a bustling business in groceries and meat in their new two-story building.

²⁶ Informant, Nov. 15, 1899.

²⁷ Informant, Sept. 26, 1900.

²⁸ Informant, Oct. 3, 1900; Oct. 10, 1900.

Their rival was the Mills Brothers, who had recently enlarged their stock. In early 1901, Hendry Blount built a new drug store, and the Mills brothers moved their grocery store into the old drug store. Both businesses were still very profitable.²⁹

L. N. Pipkin lost one of his most industrious employees when John B. Potter was appointed postmaster of Mulberry. Previously, the post office had been at Kingsford, but that was closed in October, 1897. E. E. Webster handled the mail in the interim period. The area was without an official post office until the one at Mulberry was established on May 11, 1900, with Potter as postmaster.³⁰

Shortly after Potter's appointment as postmaster, C. G. Memminger, manager of the Palmetto Phosphate Plant in Mulberry, resigned from the position he had held since the mine was constructed in 1894. He was one of the pioneers of phosphate in Mulberry. Memminger decided to go into land speculation and in the next two decades bought and sold thousands of acres of valuable phosphate lands, a course of action which made him an extremely wealthy man.³¹

In 1901, business continued to grow rapidly in Mulberry. The growth of the town meant rapid growth of the

²⁹Informant, Feb. 6, 1901.

³⁰Informant, Nov. 3, 1897; May 23, 1900.

³¹Informant, Nov. 14, 1900; Deed Record Book (1900-1917), LIV-CLIV.

lumber industry in the vicinity. This meant an increase in lumber-related businesses, such as the first turpentine distillery. Colonel Ralph B. Lutterlow sold his turpentine stills in north Florida and came to Mulberry with most of his employees to begin a similar business. Other businesses also prospered. Gus DeVane sold his meat market to M. R. Holland, and Frank Maxwell sold his share of the bicycle and harness shop to his partner, P. W. Wiggins. Both sales were "profitable." W. W. Clark quit as Superintendent of Prairie Pebble Phosphate Company for a better position at Land Pebble Mine. J. B. Hud of Savannah succeeded Clark at Prairie Pebble.³²

Mike Crown, the Superintendent of the newly completed Winston and Bone Valley Railroad, a part of the Plant line which ran from Mulberry to Lakeland, said that he was having trouble supplying enough freight cars because "phosphate was booming and the mines were shipping heavily."³³ The railroad depot agent at this time was R. E. Styvender, who resigned in December to take a job with Western Union in Tampa. The Winston & Bone Valley Railroad built a packing house in Mulberry for the citrus grown in the area. Previously, all citrus in the area had been shipped from Plant City.³⁴ Citrus did not become important to the economy of Mulberry.

³²Informant, Dec. 11, 1901.

³³Informant, Dec. 4, 1901.

³⁴Informant, Aug. 7, 1901; Dec. 4, 1901.

In 1899, there were only about 5 miles of improved roads in Polk county, but the completion of the clay road from Bartow to Mulberry in 1900 tripled this mileage. It was 1901 before the first automobile found its way into Mulberry. W. C. Sprott built a new livery stable at this time and little attention was paid the "horseless carriages."³⁵

Hendry Blount's drug store had met severe competition when Stevens and Rockner's drug store opened for business in October, 1900, and suffered another setback when W. C. Sprott opened a drug store next to his livery stable in March, 1901. Even more tragic was the loss of Blount's infant child in December of the same year. These reverses forced Blount to close his drug store and accept a profitable position as bookkeeper of Luther Pipkin's expanding mercantile establishment.³⁶

As the phosphate companies and other speculators grabbed up the land, farming and ranching decreased in rate of growth. Cattle raising was still an important and lucrative business, but a rancher could do better to allow his land to be mined for phosphate. Citrus farming was rapidly becoming an important industry and this, too, used former grazing land. Because there was more money in phosphate than in either citrus or in cattle, the land where phosphate was more easily obtained seldom was used for agricultural purposes. Citrus groves as well as cattle ranches could be

³⁵Tribune, Jan. 7, 1923; Informant, March 13, 1901.

³⁶Informant, March 13, 1901; Dec. 4, 1901; Dec. 11, 1901.

found within 20 miles of Mulberry in any direction, especially to the east. These, however, had little effect on the economy of the town due to its preoccupation with phosphate. Citrusmen did most of their business in Lakeland and the newly formed town of Winter Haven.

Like the West, cattle was not the only livestock raised on the Florida frontier. In June, 1897, the Bartow Courier-Informant reported that O. H. Albritton of Chicora sold 6,743 pounds of wool to Maas Brothers dry goods firm in Tampa. Mr. Albritton had over 1,000 head of sheep on his ranch as opposed to 100 head only three years earlier. Albritton said that it was a "financially paying industry and so far had doubled itself" each year. Cattle sold for from \$15 to \$18 a head while sheep sold for about \$3 a head.³⁷ Probably due to both economics and climate, Albritton's idea never caught on among the other ranchers in the area. Sheep raising never became an important industry in southwestern Polk County, avoiding the cattle-sheep controversy which sparked violence in the West.³⁸

Frontier Violence

Attention turned from business and farming when the outbreak of war with Spain in 1898 created somewhat of a war

³⁷Informant, June 23, 1897.

³⁸Wright, op. cit., pp. 223-24.

fever in central Florida--due in main part to the proximity of Spanish-owned Cuba. An article in the Bartow Courier-Informant stated that Bartow was an excellent place for "Key Westers" to live during the war and that quite a few had already arrived there. Bartow gladly welcomed them. Mulberry still did not have enough homes even for its own workers, so it is doubtful that any influx of south Florida residents occurred. Many area residents looked forward to the arrival of United States troops because of the additional money that would come into the town.³⁹

This desire for troops evidently did not include Negro troops, especially after an incident in nearby Lakeland in which a white man, Joab Collins, was shot and instantly killed by some drunken Negro soldiers. The Negroes had entered a white barber shop and demanded to be shaved and were refused. They came back, smashed the shop and began shooting their guns into the air. Collins and T. F. Griffin came out to see what was going on. Griffin was grazed by a bullet and Collins fell dead instantly. Two Negroes were arrested and turned over to Sheriff Dallas Tillis by Colonel Young, troop commander. All Negro troops were immediately disarmed and confined to their camps. Talk was rampant in Mulberry and other towns about organizing a party to lynch the guilty Negroes. A special police guard of fifty men was

³⁹Informant, April 30, 1898.

put on duty around the Negro camp, both to keep them under control and to protect them from possible angry mobs.⁴⁰

The two Negroes were later turned over to the troop commander for a military trial. This event was significant in that it was similar to several other events of the period. The most notable of these was the Brownsville (Texas) affair of 1906. The Lakeland affair ended in the same way as the Brownsville affair, with the dishonorable discharge of the Negroes without a trial.⁴¹ Events such as this were not rare in the Spanish-American War years, due to the presence of Negro troops in hostile environments, and because many Confederate veterans and sons of Confederate veterans were commanding officers of these troops.⁴²

In what might have been retaliation for the murder of Joab Collins, Charlie Pinckney, a Negro, was shot and killed five nights later when someone came to his door and "emptied a load of shot into his heart." Pinckney was employed at Kingsford mine and the incident occurred at his home less than a mile south of Mulberry. His assailant was never found.⁴³

⁴⁰Informant, May 17, 1898.

⁴¹Hesseltine and Smiley, op. cit., p. 485.

⁴²Ibid., p. 434.

⁴³Informant, Aug. 24, 1898.

Many Americans assume that violence and lawlessness have been a characteristic of westward expansion,⁴⁴ and the Florida frontier is no exception to this. Enforcement of the law fell into the hands of Dallas Tillis who served as sheriff of Polk County from 1896 to 1904. In a 1938 interview with Loyal Frisbie of the Bartow Polk County Democrat, Tillis recounted some of the events of the period. In 1896, when Polk was legally dry, "liquor violators were the most frequent offenders of the county's laws, particularly in the wild and woolly phosphate section around Mulberry." Sheriff Tillis said that "drinking, gambling, and killing were the regular order of the day around the still young phosphate mines. Forerunners of the modern 'juke joints' flourished, and the miners coming to town on Saturday nights to spend their wages were a dangerous crew."⁴⁵

As Mulberry entered the twentieth century, the frontier spirit of violence still clung to the community. Much of the violence concerned the black residents of the community, and Dr. Fletcher was kept busy "fixing wounds of many blacks, brought to him from the Lobby," the black settlement west of town. The fact that the Lobby was an unusually rough place was attested to by the fact that the school board in 1899

⁴⁴Robert V. Hine and Edwin R. Bingham, eds., The American Frontier (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1972), p. 480.

⁴⁵Democrat, Aug. 26, 1938; Tribune, Aug. 28, 1938.

closed the recently built Negro school there. They feared for the safety of the children. The new school was to be located "beyond the contaminating influences of the Lobby."⁴⁶

The first time Mulberry made front-page headlines in the Bartow Courier-Informant was on December 6, 1899. The incident, a shooting murder, was apparently not an unusual one in those days. Mamie Delone, a Negro, shot and killed Lizzie Sessions and Calvin Gray, both Negroes from Mulberry. The incident occurred because Gray, who had been living with Miss Delone, left her for Miss Sessions. The murders occurred at Miss Sessions' house, and Miss Delone said she did not mean to kill them, just scare them.⁴⁷ Miss Delone was taken to the county jail in Bartow, but this author was unable to find any records on either her trial or sentencing.

Two weeks earlier another murder had occurred in Mulberry at Lockwoods Camp on Land Pebble Company lands. A Negro, Morris Wilson, was shot and killed, and another Negro, Ed Jennings, was shot in the leg and badly crippled by Jim Williams, also a Negro, "who seemed to be simply on the warpath, wanting to kill somebody or anybody for the sake of killing." The shooting occurred when Wilson did not pay Williams 40 cents he owed him. The posse searched for Williams with dogs, but he was never found.⁴⁸

⁴⁶Informant, Nov. 15, 1899.

⁴⁷Informant, Dec. 6, 1899.

⁴⁸Informant, Nov. 15, 1899.

Violence again made the news when late on Monday evening, June 25, 1900, Sam Smith, a Negro, sank an axe blade into the chest of Joe Hendricks, white, killing him. Sheriff Dallas Tillis sent his deputy, Burt Childs, and two other constables to the scene. They found Smith locked in a Negro Freemason lodge, 5 miles west of town. The deputies were taking Smith back to Bartow for incarceration when, while passing Palmetto Mine, Smith was forcibly taken from the deputies and carried off, lynched and shot. As was typical of both the western frontier and the post-Civil War South, the leaders of the lynching were not punished.⁴⁹

The year 1902 was a relatively quiet year as far as violence went. There were a few stabbings and shootings, none of which commanded much public comment. Most of the incidents grew out of Saturday night drunken brawls. In fact, the last few months of the year were basically uneventful.

This false sense of serenity disappeared rather abruptly with the killing of one white and two black men in May, 1903. The incident was one of Mulberry's most notorious, and as pieced together from old newspapers and the recollections of Sheriff Dallas Tillis, this is what happened. Amos Randall, a white liquor dealer and operator of "a regular Hell's half acre of vice" at Mulberry, and a Negro employee, Henry Golding,

⁴⁹Informant, June 27, 1900.

tracked down Barney Brown, the town's white blacksmith, who was driving his horse and buggy to Bartow, "waylaid him midway the journey, and shot him down."⁵⁰ Two days later, Golding, and another Negro, Don Kennedy, were brought before Justice M. C. Cain and questioned regarding Brown's murder. They claimed they knew nothing of it. The people believed they were lying, and "blew out the lights and told them to 'fess up' or suffer the consequences." Golding broke down and said Randall killed Barney Brown. At 3:00 a.m. a crowd of twenty-five to fifty men made a raid on Randall's place firing "hundreds of shots." Randall escaped and hid under a church. He was found a few hours later and shot to death. Kennedy was taken to a swamp and shot and killed, and Golding was hung from the mulberry tree.⁵¹ John B. Mitchell, a teenager at the time, recalled seeing Golding hanging from the mulberry tree.⁵²

The difficulties had begun six weeks earlier when Randall beat a youth named Lige Connell over the head with a gun after a dispute. Then sixty-five sticks of dynamite were found on Randall's porch a few nights before the murder of Barney Brown. Randall apparently thought Brown had something to do with the dynamite and killed him. Randall was about

⁵⁰Informant, May 20, 1903.

⁵¹Democrat, Aug. 26, 1938.

⁵²Mrs. John B. Mitchell, personal interview with the author, Mulberry, Florida, Aug. 30, 1973.

forty years old and had come to Mulberry in 1896 from Pennsylvania where his wife and daughter still lived. Sheriff Tillis said he did not know who composed the mob, and no one was ever punished.⁵³ This "vigilante justice" was frequent on the western frontier and not unheard of in central Florida.

The three things which aided the most in taming both the western and the Florida frontiers were religion, education, and government. All three of these were becoming institutionalized in the Mulberry area around the turn of the century.

Religion

The Methodists were the first to organize a church in Mulberry, but the Baptists built the first church building. First Baptist Church was built in 1898, six years before the Methodists had a church building. The current pastor of First Baptist, Rev. Max W. Holleyman stated that "Elder W. M. McDonald led the fellowship of sixteen members to seek and receive membership in the South Florida Baptist Association on November 9, 1898." There are no records listing the names of the original members or confirming their number at the time of organization, nor is there any record concerning the organization of this group into a regularly constituted Baptist Church. During McDonald's ministry, which ended in

⁵³Informant, May 20, 1903; Democrat, Aug. 26, 1938; Tribune, Aug. 28, 1938.

1903, the church met one Sunday out of each month and the first meeting house, valued at \$400, was built on the north-east corner of what is now Canal Street and Church Avenue.⁵⁴

By 1904, the community still had very few active churchmen, as most miners and cowboys were not yet the church-going type. However, organized religion was slowly becoming established in the young community. The Baptists had the only church building, but the Methodists were building one. Evidencing the increasing religious influence, all businesses in town closed from 11:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Thanksgiving day. A community Thanksgiving service was held at the unfinished Methodist Church with T. E. York preaching the sermon.⁵⁵

The Mulberry Methodist Church was organized as a body at least as early as 1896. Rev. J. T. Mitchell was listed as the first member with six other charter members. The church first occupied a building formerly used as an illegal saloon. When this building became a private residence, services were held in a bush arbor until the completion of the public school building in 1896. The school building housed the church until 1904 when the new church building, costing \$1,000, was completed. Luther N. Pipkin preached several services in the new church building, which became too small for the congregation within two years after it was built. The

⁵⁴Max W. Holleyman, First Baptist Church Historical Sketch (Mulberry, Fla.: First Baptist Church, 1967), p. 2.

⁵⁵Informant, May 18, 1904.

earliest-known Methodist preacher in Mulberry was J. T. Mitchell in 1896. B. J. Sumner followed him from 1896-98. He was followed by J. D. Martin until 1900 and J. J. Whidden and L. W. Higgs until 1902. Rev. T. E. York led the church from 1902 until 1905. In 1907 when H. P. Blocker was pastor, the first parsonage was purchased for \$1,500 from W. P. Pratt and his wife.⁵⁶

Due in part to the completion of the Methodist Church, the membership of the First Baptist Church had dropped to six members by 1904 when E. J. Barber was called as pastor. During his ministry the congregation began meeting two Sundays out of each month for preaching services. At the close of Barber's pastoral service in 1910, the fellowship boasted eighty-five members.⁵⁷

Mrs. Estelle I. Chandler of Hope, Indiana, gave a musical concert at the Baptist Church on February 21, 1905. The event was called a "happy affair" and was attended by a large crowd, including many people from Bartow. Rev. S. W. Christian from Kentucky pitched a big tent in Mulberry two weeks later and held gospel meetings there. The Women's Mission Society was organized at the Methodist Church in May of the same year.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Informant, May 18, 1904; May 24, 1905; June 7, 1905; Mulberry Press, June 13, 1954. Hereafter referred to as Press.

⁵⁷Holleyman, op. cit., p. 2.

⁵⁸Informant, Feb. 15, 1905; Feb. 22, 1905; March 15, 1905; May 10, 1905.

Education

The civilizing effect of education began to make its imprint on the young community as early as 1895, when construction began on the first public school building in Mulberry.⁵⁹ The school was finished in 1896 and R. W. Proctor was the first teacher.⁶⁰ A public school was also constructed at Kingsford and opened in 1897 with the widow of W. F. Johnston as schoolmistress.⁶¹

By the spring of 1899, Mulberry School was going strong and its prospects were bright. Trustees elected for the school were M. C. Cain, G. W. Anderson, and L. N. Pipkin.⁶² In 1899 a literary society was organized in connection with the school. The society's first program was held on Friday, October 6, and included recitations, music, and debate.⁶³

Like the schoolhouses of the early West, Mulberry School was only a one-room affair with one or two teachers who were expected to give instruction in everything from the ABC's to Latin. Nevertheless, it served as a gathering place where people met on Friday and Saturday nights to practice home-talent plays or to hold song recitals. Sundays

⁵⁹Informant, Aug. 21, 1895.

⁶⁰Informant, July 15, 1896; Aug. 5, 1896; Aug. 12, 1896.

⁶¹Informant, Sept. 15, 1897.

⁶²Informant, June 14, 1899.

⁶³Informant, Oct. 11, 1899.

were occasions when young people could "meet for a bit of surreptitious courting under pretense of practicing for the choir or getting ready for some extra service at Christmas or Easter."⁶⁴

School enrollment in Mulberry for the 1899-1900 school year had risen to eighty by November, and would be eighty-six by December with a projected enrollment of one hundred by January. The honor roll for November included Della Collins, Mary Collins, Edgar Webster and Newton Hall. Professor Cox and Miss Rodgers were the teachers. Attendance was hurt by an outbreak of influenza that winter.⁶⁵

The first mention of a Mulberry student's going to college was in September, 1900, when Miss Carrie Spencer left to attend Wesleyan Female College in Macon, Georgia.⁶⁶ That same month the Mulberry school reopened with nearly one hundred students in attendance. Professor Cox was still headmaster, but Miss Rodgers had resigned and was replaced by Miss Louise Moore. Another teacher was needed for the rapidly growing enrollment. In October Professor Cox was successful in finding a third teacher, Miss Alice Lindsey, for the school.⁶⁷ It is interesting to note that female

⁶⁴Wright, op. cit., p. 230.

⁶⁵Informant, Nov. 15, 1899; Dec. 6, 1899.

⁶⁶Informant, Sept. 26, 1900.

⁶⁷Informant, Sept. 19, 1900; Oct. 10, 1900.

school teachers in Mulberry, as elsewhere, were traditionally single.

Arbor Day, 1901, was the setting for a program at the school in honor of trees. The school personnel urged citizens to plant trees throughout the community. Dr. Fletcher, St. Elmo Gibson, and L. N. Crigler each planted a large number of water oaks. Crigler planted a double row of oaks running south from his Mulberry Hotel. The main topic of discussion at the Arbor Day celebration was not trees, however. The following week the community would vote upon incorporation, a step that would gain the support of most citizens and would mark the official beginning of the Town of Mulberry.⁶⁸

By 1902, increased enrollment at Mulberry School required the addition of two new teachers, A. H. Durrance and Miss Lula Johnson. The school ranked third in enrollment in Polk County. Durrance resigned in February, 1903, to teach in Mississippi and was replaced by Mrs. M. H. Terry, a widow from Orlando.⁶⁹

School opened for the 1904-05 term on September 5 with a new faculty member, Miss Verda Kelsey of Linnville, (now Linnville) Tennessee. She was head of the school's first music department.⁷⁰ The school was reputed to be rather

⁶⁸Informant, Feb. 6, 1901.

⁶⁹Informant, Oct. 22, 1902; Feb. 25, 1903.

⁷⁰Informant, Aug. 31, 1904.

efficient, but not much can be said for the education of many of the adults in the community. Misspellings were frequent in the Mayor's Docket with words such as "dismisted" for dismissed, "gilty" for guilty, "marshell" for marshal, and "conduck" for conduct, just a few of the examples. Since the "leading citizens" of the town could do no better than that, there was obviously much to be desired in the educational field.

Government

On Tuesday, February 12, 1901, Mulberry had begun a new era. The voters had "nearly unanimously" incorporated themselves into the Town of Mulberry. The town was immediately placed under municipal law with a full board of officers. L. M. Ballard was elected mayor, and L. N. Pipkin, Dr. A. F. Fletcher, M. C. Cain, H. P. Payne, and H. B. Blount were elected aldermen. The town marshal was Silas Clark, and town clerk was John B. Potter.⁷¹

Incorporation meant that there inevitably must be two new buildings--a town hall and a jail. Mulberry solved the problem by combining the two in one building. The lower story housed a "strong jail" and the town fathers met upstairs.⁷²

⁷¹Informant, Feb. 13, 1901.

⁷²Informant, March 13, 1901.

Of course, local government did not mean an end to the common disorders of a frontier society, and the young town still had its share of drunkenness and disorderly conduct. The first item on the Mayor's Docket was dated February 19, 1901. Will Moore was fined \$5.50 for disorderly conduct. Most of the early court cases were for drunkenness, profanity or disorderly conduct, though charges did include such items as adultery, keeping a house of ill fame, gambling, and selling goods on Sunday. L. M. Ballard was the judge who tried all cases in 1901, as he was mayor.⁷³

In 1902, H. L. Rockner was elected mayor. It is interesting to note that the first case brought before the new mayor was the "Town of Mulberry vs. L. M. Ballard," on February 11, 1902. Ex-Mayor Ballard pleaded guilty to a charge of selling goods on Sunday and was fined \$4.50.⁷⁴

In 1903 M. C. Cain was the new mayor and J. L. Tyson replaced Silas Clark as town marshal. On February 21, Marshal Tyson arrested ex-Marshal Silas Clark on a charge of drunk and disorderly conduct to which Clark pleaded guilty and was fined \$1 by Mayor Cain.⁷⁵

In June, 1903, L. N. Pipkin was mayor pro tem for a few days, and then J. Bunyan Smith served as mayor pro tem

⁷³City of Mulberry, Mayor's Docket, Feb. 19, 1901.

⁷⁴Mayor's Docket, Feb. 11, 1902.

⁷⁵Mayor's Docket, Feb. 21, 1903.

for the remainder of the year. Mayor M. C. Cain had resigned for personal reasons. Not until Smith occupied the mayor's chair was there ever any sentencing of criminals in city court other than a fine. Smith began a "get tough" policy charging violators "with fines up to \$100 or sixty days on the streets at hard labor and in jail." The policy evidently worked since the number of arrests for disorderly conduct and drunkenness decreased by more than 50 per cent.⁷⁶ The town was at last beginning to get some semblance of law and order.

In 1904 S. L. Caulin became mayor and continued the "get tough" policies of his predecessor, J. B. Smith. Caulin continued as mayor until the end of 1905 when Luther N. Pipkin once again served as mayor pro tem for a few months.⁷⁷

Disaster Strikes

The year 1902 brought the new town its share of disaster. The frame buildings of Mulberry were open invitations to fire. Mayor L. M. Ballard was the first victim when shortly after midnight on January 9, a fire began in some loose hay in a small house 15 feet behind his store. Ballard and his wife lived on the second floor of the store building, to which the fire quickly spread. The buildings were a total loss and they escaped in only their night clothes.

⁷⁶Mayor's Docket, June 13-Dec. 25, 1903.

⁷⁷Mayor's Docket, Feb. 15, 1904-Dec. 21, 1905.

Ballard said that the store had stock valued at about \$2,500, out of which they carried out and saved about \$1,000 worth. Mayor Ballard had "not a cent of insurance" as his policy had elapsed, and he was "going to get a new policy" on the weekend. A. H. Devane, who also lived over Ballard's store, came out penniless. He brought out his month-old baby, "but not a rag of clothing." The fire leaped across the street and engulfed Payne's livery stable, also uninsured. Payne did manage to save all his stock, horses and vehicles. Mayor Ballard was grateful "for the kindness of the Mulberry citizens and could not find the words to express" his gratitude. He felt that the fire was set and hoped the criminal would be caught and punished. Ballard set up business in a small building in the rear of his former store.⁷⁸

Fire again struck the community at 2:00 a.m., Monday, March 17. W. A. Florrid carried about \$500 worth of insurance on his general-store building and \$3,000 on his stock of merchandise, all of which was a total loss. The Mulberry Furniture and Wagon Company next door had \$300 insurance on the store building and \$700 on their stock. The building was a total loss, but they managed to save about half of their merchandise.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Informant, Jan. 15, 1902.

⁷⁹Informant, March 19, 1902; March 26, 1902.

The last week of November, 1902, a destructive fire extensively damaged the Land Pebble Mine. It supposedly began from hot rock. The company had no water tank, and the fire spread to the mill, machine shops, and company office. They did save some of their valuable papers. "So wild, and with such force did flames leap that phosphate pebble was carried 400 yards" through the air. The loss was estimated at \$150,000, and they had only \$60,000 worth of insurance. It took two months to rebuild the damaged portions of the mine.⁸⁰

Continued Growth

Fires did not slow the growth of new businesses in the community, and in 1904 Henry S. Badcock founded a furniture store that was to become the largest employer in Mulberry other than the mines.⁸¹ A year later, in July, 1905, Mulberry got a third doctor when E. K. McMurray and family moved to town from Bartow. He was said to be a "skillful physician," and bought the H. B. Canter place for a residence. Shortly before the arrival of Dr. McMurray, J. L. Wirt opened the first undertaking firm in Mulberry.⁸² Previously, undertaking services could be found only in Bartow or Tampa, and most

⁸⁰Informant, Nov. 26, 1902.

⁸¹Wogan S. Badcock, Sr., President of Badcock Furniture Co., personal interview with the author, Mulberry, Florida, Aug. 29, 1973.

⁸²Informant, July 5, 1905; Aug. 17, 1905; Dec. 14, 1905.

people did not avail themselves of this service. The dead were often buried without any post-mortem preparation.

Shortly after Dr. McMurray's arrival, Luther N. Pipkin announced that he had arranged with Yonge and Cline of Ocala to put down about 600 feet of water main and connections for any who apply. It was Pipkin's hope that this would give Mulberry a chance to equip itself against fire damage. Pipkin announced on January 4, 1906, that the main should be completed in about ninety days and that W. J. Whidden would help in the construction. Mulberry was at the same time contemplating the lighting of the town with electricity "in the near future."⁸³

The town had grown from a few shacks in 1895 to one of the largest communities in the county in ten years. Education and religion were finding their way into community life, but the violent ways of the frontier were not yet dead. One of the most conspicuous monuments to the violent past (which was by no means finished) was the old mulberry tree near the center of town.

Legends had grown around this mulberry tree, and as early as 1904 people were urging its preservation. The Bartow Courier-Informant of May 18, 1904, said that the "tree had been struck by lightning a time or two, riddled with bullets more times than you can count on your fingers, and worst of

⁸³Informant, Jan. 4, 1906; April 12, 1906.

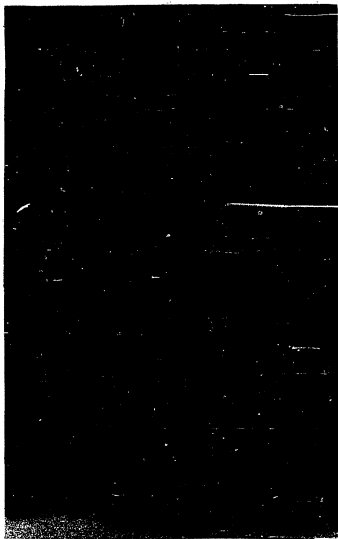


Fig. 13.--1908 post card showing the original mulberry tree. Courtesy of Mrs. Roy Gladney.

all, a Negro was swung to one of its limbs on the occasion of a certain lynching bee." They said that "if the authorities of Mulberry are wise, they will protect the old tree," and ended the article with: "Woodmen spare that tree,/ Touch not a single bough."⁸⁴

⁸⁴Informant, May 18, 1904.

CHAPTER VI

BOOM TIME IN MULBERRY

The Business Scene

By April, 1906, Mulberry was surrounded by the largest phosphate plants in the world. On all sides could be seen new buildings in the process of construction, with many recently completed, and contracts were being let for new brick store buildings. One block of cement-block buildings called the Williams' block was already completed. The firm of McKillop and Swearingen had begun construction of another brick block. Luther N. Pipkin's water works was almost completed, the engines and pumps were being placed, and the piping had been set in and hydrants were placed in convenient places in case fire broke out. The water works was a private enterprise. Pipkin wanted to be sure his store did not burn down and ran pipes over the entire roof on his store, the largest in Polk County, so that he could flood the building in the event of a fire.¹

¹Informant, April 26, 1906.

Mulberry now had several large grocery stores, two drug stores, and a number of dry goods, clothing, and shoe stores. The town also had J. Bunyon Smith's Cola Bottle Works, two livery stables, several cold-drink establishments, a jewelry store, three resident physicians, a millinery store and a meat market. Mulberry was then the "most important town in the production of phosphate" in the county. The shipments of phosphate from the depot were steadily increasing each month of the year. The Winston & Bone Valley Railroad had just laid heavy iron tracks between Mulberry and Winston on the Plant line and ran three of their heavy engines daily on the route, giving a much-improved service.²

The Prairie Pebble Mine was the largest phosphate mine in the world, and the Palmetto Plant was also very large. There were eight plants in operation in the vicinity, and the prospect was that in a short time Mulberry would "find herself the largest phosphate center in the world."³

All these phosphate plants meant that there was a lot of money circulating in the area, and the following year, 1907, the Bank of Mulberry was established, with L. N. Pipkin as president. In the same year, E. H. Dudley came from Bartow and established the Mulberry Ice Works. Dudley doubled the capacity of his plant in 1910.⁴

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

⁴Hetherington, op. cit., p. 162.

One of the greatest boosts to business in the community was the arrival of electricity in June, 1908.⁵ The town council granted a twenty-year franchise to Ose O. Hubbard for the operation of an electrical system on May 16, 1907.⁶ The company was known as the Mulberry Electric Company, and was purchased by the Tampa Electric Company in April, 1926. A new twenty-year franchise was issued to Tampa Electric Company at that time by the city.⁷

Telephone service arrived in the community at about the same time as electricity. The Peninsular Telephone Company opened an exchange in Mulberry in 1907. It was the third telephone exchange constructed in Polk County. Lakeland and Bartow had phones as early as 1902. The new Mulberry exchange had twenty-four subscribers. Peninsular Telephone Company was eventually bought out by General Telephone and Electronics Company, which now serves the area.⁸

The town council took great pride in the arrival of these two new conveniences. Mayor John Potter was joyful that, while "business in some parts of the state was in a depression, Mulberry was thriving." Town Council President A. S. McKillop and Town Clerk W. P. Read were gleeful at the

⁵Informant, May 7, 1908.

⁶Council Minutes, May 16, 1907.

⁷Press, Aug. 27, 1926.

⁸Dennis R. Cooper, The People Machine (Tampa: General Telephone Co. of Florida, 1971), p. 58.

Bartow Courier-Informant's statement that it was "a revelation to an outsider to see the volume of business transacted in this city."⁹

The building boom continued into 1908, and in May, St. Elmo Gibson erected a brick drug store which is still standing today (1974) on N. W. First Street. In that same month, twelve prominent Mulberry businessmen organized the Mulberry Furniture Company with a capital investment of \$10,000. L. N. Pipkin was one of the partners in this venture, and the furniture company set up operations in his building.¹⁰

Nothing helps to boost business like a newspaper, and finally, in June, 1908, Mulberry had its own weekly newspaper, the Mulberry Journal. The editor was L. Z. Overbay and Robert Q. Gresham was owner and manager. An earlier attempt at a newspaper by John B. Howe in 1907 had failed as had T. A. Bivin's, Phosphate Era, published at Kingsford in 1900. The Era and Howe's Mulberry Times each only published a few editions and ceased publication because of lack of interest and finances.¹¹

The Journal was not to be much more successful than the Times or Era. This, however, was not due to lack of interest or capital. At 4:00 a.m., July 7, 1910, fire struck the

⁹Informant, May 7, 1908.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Informant, June 11, 1908; Hetherington, op. cit., p. 163.



Fig. 14.--1908 post card showing the Alafia River.
Courtesy of Mrs. Roy Gladney.

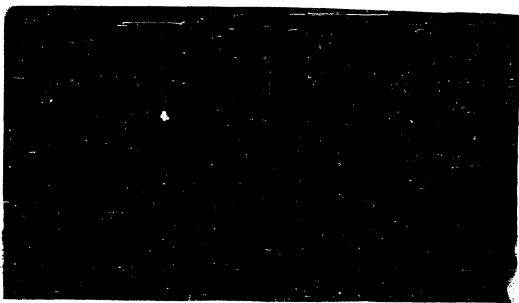


Fig. 15.--1908 post card showing Main Street,
Mulberry, Florida. Courtesy of Mrs. Roy Gladney.

Mulberry Journal building. The entire plant, including accounts and subscription books, was destroyed. The origin of the fire was unknown, and the plant was only partially insured. Robert Q. Gresham, the owner of the plant and manager of the newspaper, said he had been "doing a fairly good business." Thus, exactly two years after Mulberry got its first regular newspaper, the town was again without one.¹²

Nine months after the office of the Mulberry Journal burned down, the town got another newspaper. The Mulberry Enterprise was founded in March, 1911, and was published for less than a year by Col. Byington, who was editor and publisher.¹³

A few months after the failure of the Mulberry Enterprise, the Mulberry Herald began publication in May, 1912. E. S. Feuerlicht was the newspaper's manager and was "an experienced newspaperman." From that time to the present, Mulberry has had a regular newspaper, though the name often changed when a new owner purchased the plant.¹⁴

In 1910, the town was financially booming even though it was temporarily without a newspaper. At the close of the fiscal year on June 30, 1910, the Bank of Mulberry had assets of \$272,403.46. W. P. Read was cashier and Henry Sapp was notary public. The Board of Directors were L. N. Pipkin,

¹²Record, July 8, 1910.

¹³Informant, March 23, 1911; June 11, 1912.

¹⁴Mulberry Herald, May 30, 1912; July 11, 1912; Hetherington, op. cit., p. 164.

H. K. Murphy and P. B. Haynes.¹⁵ By the fall of that year, the following firms were engaged in business: S. Rosin & Company, I. Stalberg, R. B. White, W. G. Overstreet, H. B. Blount, Satchell and Mitchell, Payne and DeVane, Wolf Bargain Store, W. S. Yates, A. Mendelson, Whidden & Whidden, Houghton Clothing Company, Mulberry Furniture Company, W. W. Matchett, J. J. Peoples, O. C. Parrish & Company, R. L. Baker, S. E. Gibson, J. L. Miller, T. C. Bass, Prairie Trading Company, W. C. Harris & Company, H. S. Badcock & Company, George Nicopopulos, S. Daniel and Bank of Mulberry.¹⁶ As the names of some of these businessmen indicate, the community was developing a broader ethnic base.

The 1910 census showed Mulberry to be the third largest town in the county, after Lakeland and Bartow. The population of the Mulberry area was 3,169 and in the town limits, 1,418. There seemed to be no letup in the growth of business and industry.¹⁷

Increasing population meant greater demand for hotel rooms. In 1908, L. N. Crigler's Mulberry Hotel received its first competition with the completion of the new West Side Hotel, run by Mrs. Ella Fletcher. The competition did not remain long, and in December, the new hotel, the West Side Sample Room, and the residences of S. Daniel, H. M. Wood, and

¹⁵Informant, July 14, 1910.

¹⁶Informant, Dec. 22, 1910.

¹⁷Leader, Dec. 14, 1911.

Hamp Levings were burned to the ground. Pipkin's water main did not reach that part of town, and only with the aid of hoses and men from Prairie Pebble Plant were they able to save many other nearby buildings.¹⁸

More than two years passed before a new hotel was completed. The new hotel, called the Juanita Hotel, had thirty rooms for guests. The building formerly occupied by the Prairie Trading Company was moved beside the hotel building and was renovated to make the hotel larger. The enlarged edifice was ready for occupancy by February 11, 1911. The manager was Robert Scott. The hotel stood where the Tampa Electric Company is now located.¹⁹

One month later, Mulberry's third hotel, the Excelsior, opened with Mrs. Belle Marsh and her son Lucian Marsh as managers. They resigned in June to run the Oaks Hotel in Bartow, and Mrs. William Hicks took over operation of the Excelsior.²⁰

The growing community held an election on Tuesday, January 9, 1912, and Dr. H. K. Murphy was elected mayor over W. C. Sprott by a vote of 49 to 39. The vote for marshal was: John Browning 52, O. C. Ivey 26, and J. C. Henry 12. H. J. Koerner was elected clerk-treasurer, and E. H. Dudley and W. P. Read were elected councilmen.²¹

¹⁸Informant, Nov. 19, 1908; Dec. 31, 1908.

¹⁹Informant, Jan. 19, 1911.

²⁰Informant, March 23, 1911; June 8, 1911.

²¹Informant, June 11, 1912.

Dr. H. K. Murphy remained as mayor of Mulberry for only six months and resigned in June 1912, to become postmaster, succeeding John B. White. He said that he "did not feel he would have time for both jobs."²²

Shortly after Murphy's resignation, the Mulberry Herald announced the opening of a new bank in town. Col. S. C. Wilson organized the Citizen's Bank of Mulberry in July. The officers of the new bank were: E. E. Skipper, President; G. B. Skipper, Vice President; and L. C. Morrow, Cashier. The directors were E. E. Skipper, G. B. Skipper, L. S. Morrow, L. C. Morrow, W. M. Mills, J. Bunyon Smith, and Col. S. G. Wilson.²³

The first edition of the Mulberry Herald noted that Wolf Abramovitz of Tampa had begun operating a concrete-block factory in Mulberry. On May 30, 1912, he had 20,000 blocks in the yards but "would not sell them until he had 100,000." The plant capacity was 1,000 blocks per day, and Abramovitz hoped for 10,000 per day in the very near future. The concrete blocks were made of "sand, cement and lime."²⁴

Abramovitz's business was doing so well by the fall of 1912 that he sold his store in Tampa and moved to Mulberry to personally oversee his factory. He did not live to see

²²Mulberry Herald, June 20, 1912. Hereafter referred to as Herald.

²³Herald, July 25, 1912.

²⁴Herald, May 30, 1912.

his business become the success he thought was inevitable. He was driving his buggy on the Bartow road in November, 1912, when his horse became frightened and threw Abramovitz from the buggy, fracturing his skull and breaking both his arms and legs. He died six hours after the accident and was buried in the Hebrew Cemetery in Tampa.²⁵

The dangers of horse and buggy travel on rough roads were in the process of being eliminated. During the summer of 1912, \$464 was spent on county roads in Mulberry. By August, a Bartow-Mulberry automobile line had been established by the McCormack Company of Bartow. The "Model T" Fords left Bartow at 7:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. for Mulberry, where railroad connections could be made to Tampa.²⁶

The Plant System of railroads became part of the new Atlantic Coast Line Railroad which offered the citizens of Mulberry their first rail passenger service in 1912.²⁷ Mulberry had been a railroad center for several years, but only so far as freight was concerned. The limited passenger service offered by Atlantic Coast Line was supplemented by the new Seaboard Air Line Railroad on March 9, 1913. The Seaboard trains left Bartow at 7:55 a.m.; left Mulberry at 8:20 a.m.; left Nichols at 8:32; and reached Plant City at 9:27 and

²⁵Informant, Nov. 7, 1912.

²⁶Informant, July 18, 1912; Aug. 15, 1912.

²⁷Informant, Aug. 15, 1912.

Tampa by 10:20. Thus, the Mulberry to Tampa run took exactly two hours. At Plant City the train made connections with trains to Washington, D. C., and the North. The train service was described as "strictly a high-class passenger service."²⁸

Improved railroad service gave added impetus to the business boom, and in July, 1913, the Mulberry Herald announced that Mulberry, the "hub of Phosphate Territory," was to have "another spoke in her wheel." The Export Phosphate Company was going to build a plant 3 miles southeast of town. The officers of the new plant were H. L. Pierce, President; H. B. Rust, Vice President; H. G. Lowe, Treasurer; and Norton P. Weber, Assistant Treasurer and Clerk. The land for the new plants was purchased from L. N. Pipkin. Around this plant grew the town of Pierce.²⁹

Pierce as well as Bradley Junction, Nichols, Kingsford and other smaller mining communities depended on Mulberry for much of their trade. They depended on the weekly Mulberry Herald to keep them abreast of events in the area, sales, and other items. Increased population naturally meant increased circulation for the newspaper. In December, 1913, the Herald announced that Will H. Bulloch, formerly business manager of the Bartow Courier-Informant, who for the past two years had been associated with the Tampa Times, would become publisher

²⁸Herald, March 13, 1913.

²⁹Herald, July 18, 1913.

of the Herald that month. Bulloch who had many friends in Mulberry, said he was pleased to be returning to Polk County.³⁰

The week before Christmas the Courier-Informant announced that the town council of Mulberry let contracts for a sewerage system. The system would "be modern and complete in every respect and adequate for a city of 10,000 people." The sewerage bonds were approved and work began in early January, 1914.³¹

The business boom continued into 1914. The Hub Cafe advertised regular meals for 35 cents, oysters in all styles, and weekly meal tickets for \$5. The Herald reported that the Chero-Cola Bottling Company of Mulberry, operated by Harris & Turner, was doing a good business, and W. C. Sprott's Garage advertised "first class repair work" on automobiles.³²

By 1914 Mulberry was definitely the center of the phosphate industry in the world. In 1912 Polk County produced 48 per cent of the world's supply of the mineral. Of a total output of 2,579,865 tons of phosphate in 1912, one third, or 732,651 tons, were shipped abroad, chiefly to Germany, Great Britain and Belgium. There were twenty mining companies in Polk County, ten of them within 4 miles of Mulberry.

³⁰Herald, Dec. 12, 1913.

³¹Informant, Dec. 25, 1913.

³²Herald, Jan. 23, 1914; Menu from "Hub Cafe" about 1915, owned by Mrs. John Mitchell of Mulberry, Florida.

"The extraordinary rapid growth" of Mulberry was "due to the impetus received from this profitable industry."³³

Most of the phosphate area of Polk County was in County Commission District Number One, represented by E. S. Whidden. The Polk County Record said that Whidden represented the "most important and wealthiest section of Polk County, that in the southwest, where the great bulk of the phosphate mining of the county" was done. The phosphate industry employed between three-and four-thousand men and had built up several thriving towns, "principal of which" was Mulberry. Other towns in the district were Medulla, Christina, Nichols, Pebble, Pierce, Bone Valley, and Bradley.³⁴

Religious and Social Life

During the boom years of the early twentieth century, religious and social organizations grew along with businesses. As prosperity came to the community of Mulberry, there also developed a different social class. These wealthy merchants felt that the evangelical religions already established in Mulberry did not suit their needs. Some of them, led by the Badcock family, organized an Episcopal church. The first Episcopalian services were held in Mulberry on Sunday, May 10, 1908, in the Methodist Church building. Frank Mercer, also

³³Record, May 15, 1914.

³⁴Ibid.

rector of Holy Trinity Episcopal Church in Bartow, conducted the services.³⁵ It would be five years before the Episcopalians would have their own church building. St. Luke's Episcopal Church was finally dedicated on Sunday, April 13, 1913. The Bishop of Southern Florida conducted the service, assisted by the church rector, Rev. Frank Mercer. "The Bishop was presented at the door with the keys of the church, after which the procession moved up the aisles to the altar rails, where the instruments of donation were read by Mr. Henry S. Badcock. Mr. A. D. West, the other warden, was also present." A class for confirmation was presented by the rector, after which a large number remained for communion.³⁶

The older churches were increasing their membership at this same time. It was hoped that increased religious influence would help curb much of the violence for which Mulberry had become noted. The Methodist's new church building had been completed in 1904 and expanded upon in 1907.³⁷

First Baptist Church received a new pastor in 1910 when S. R. Skinner replaced E. J. Barber. In 1911, the Baptists built a parsonage next door to the church at a cost of \$2,500. A \$1,500 addition was made to the church building, and the membership of the church stood at 134. During this

³⁵Informant, May 14, 1908; Hetherington, op. cit., p. 163.

³⁶Herald, April 17, 1913.

³⁷Informant, May 18, 1904; Press, June 13, 1954.

time, the church began meeting every Sunday for regular worship, and a Women's Missionary Society was organized. By 1914, under the ministry of J. S. Day, the congregation had grown to 150 members.³⁸

In 1914 the Methodists decided to erect a new church. Bishop H. C. Morrison of Leesburg and Rev. J. R. Cason of Bartow were in Mulberry on Sunday, April 5, to raise funds to erect the new building. They raised \$6,000 at the morning service. Quite a few of the most influential members were not present at that meeting, and no difficulty was experienced in raising the remaining funds. The new church cost between \$12,000 and \$15,000. Rev. G. S. Roberts was pastor of the church.³⁹ It was evident that the churches were finally playing an influential role in the community.

The churches were by no means the only outlet for social activity in the growing town. In November, 1908, the Odd Fellows organized a chapter in Mulberry. Their chapter was Lodge 57 and boasted twenty-three members. Their opening banquet was held at the ill-fated West Side Hotel shortly before it burned.⁴⁰

Another new fraternal order, the Mulberry Knights of Pythias, Lodge 18, met January 19, 1909, to install new officers

³⁸Holleyman, op. cit., p. 3.

³⁹Informant, April 9, 1914; Press, June 13, 1954.

⁴⁰Informant, Nov. 19, 1908.

in their new lodge room. Mr. Henry S. Badcock was master of ceremonies. Since the occasion was Robert E. Lee's birthday, Mr. Badcock led the group in the singing of "Dixie."⁴¹

The women were not about to be left out, and in May, 1912, the Mulberry Herald noted that the Bartow chapter of the Eastern Star had come to Mulberry to install the officers of the newly formed Eastern Star of Mulberry. There were twenty-one members, including Mrs. John Mitchell, the only surviving member.⁴²

By 1914, Mulberry had eight active fraternal organizations. They were the Odd Fellows, Masons, Eastern Star, Woodmen of the World, Woodmen Circle, Red Men, Knights of Pythias and Fraternal Union of America.⁴³

Education

On January 19, 1909, the new Mulberry School was dedicated. The day was the anniversary of the birth of Robert E. Lee. With an obvious burst of pride in the South, the Mulberry Journal reported: "What more appropriate day could have been chosen from our calendar than this 19th day of January, the 102d anniversary of our Southland's most honored general; this is the day when the sons and daughters of Dixie soil are effervescing with patriotism." The Journal continued,

⁴¹Mulberry Journal, Jan. 21, 1909. Hereafter referred to as Journal.

⁴²Herald, May 30, 1912.

⁴³Herald, May 15, 1914.

No grander sight could well greet the mortal eye than these children of Mulberry as they gathered on the school grounds to salute "Old Glory." "Dixie," that soul-stirring national air, was sung and afterward played on piano and cornet. The storms of applause that followed were all but sufficient to shake Mulberry to its foundation.

Professor O. J. Moore was the principal and presided at the dedicatory program of the school which housed grades 1-12.⁴⁴

The new school stood at the site of the present city hall. High-school classes had been started in the old building in 1907, and the new building allowed more badly needed space for instruction.⁴⁵ The first trustees of the high school were L. N. Pipkin, H. S. McKillop and E. S. Whidden. The first graduating class, in 1911, consisted of two girls and one boy. They were Selma Allene Smith, Maude Davis, and James Bond Gibson. O. J. Moore, principal of the grammar school, was also principal of the high school. Mulberry High School is the third oldest in the county, preceded by Bartow and Lakeland.⁴⁶

James Bond Gibson, Jr., the first male graduate of Mulberry High School and youngest brother of businessman St. Elmo Gibson, went to the University of Florida immediately upon graduation from high school. Two years later he graduated from the University, "where he took a high stand in all his

⁴⁴Journal, Jan. 21, 1909.

⁴⁵Informant, Feb. 2, 1911.

⁴⁶Informant, Feb. 2, 1911; Ledger, Feb. 5, 1961.

classes," and opened up a law office in Mulberry. He formed a partnership with a fellow Florida graduate, Frank Riherd. Their law firm opened for business in July, 1913.⁴⁷

The school board met August 1, 1910, in Bartow to name the teachers for the 1910-1911 school year. Thomas B. Kirk was county superintendent of schools. O. J. Moore was reappointed principal of the Mulberry School, and all the teachers were new ones. They were J. N. Rodgers, Miss Virginia Collier, Mrs. Branning, Miss Estelle Epperson, and Mrs. O. J. Moore. Teachers at the new Mulberry Colored School were W. T. Young and Sadie Young.⁴⁸ The Mulberry Colored School ran into trouble only four years after it was opened, and in February, 1914, the school was closed by the county because it did not have the required monthly attendance. The new superintendent of schools, C. A. Parker, said that the school's officials had been padding their rolls. One other colored school in the county was also closed.⁴⁹

Educational opportunity was a different story for the white children. The Mulberry High School in 1914 entered a new two-story brick building with an auditorium seating 350 people on the upper floor and with six classrooms on the first floor. The cost was approximately \$12,500. "Doc" McBeth was

⁴⁷Herald, July 4, 1913.

⁴⁸Leader, Aug. 4, 1910.

⁴⁹Informant, Feb. 12, 1914.

the head of the school at that time. The late Carl S. Cox succeeded McBeth, coming from Birmingham Southern College in 1914. He taught math and coached the first team sports in town, baseball and basketball, as well as being high-school principal. There were no graduates in 1912, but four in 1913. They were Louise Bowman, Louella Bowman, Hugh Dickinson and Emily Badcock. In 1914 there were two graduates, David Bishop and Luther N. Pipkin, Jr. The school showed steady growth until the outbreak of the First World War.⁵⁰

Crime and Violence

Mulberry was very definitely a southern city, not only in location, but in sentiment. The days of the old Confederacy had been gone for nearly a half century, but partisan feeling still ran high. Even though black and white worked side by side in the mines, there was little understanding between the two races, and the town's next six years would see as much violence and unpunished crimes as its first eight years. Although all such crimes did not have racial overtones, many of them did.

On January 30, 1909, two Negroes burned to death in the Mulberry jail. They had been jailed earlier that evening for drunkenness by the marshal. The Mulberry Journal said that they were "supposed to have been responsible for their

⁵⁰Ledger, Feb. 5, 1961.

own terrible end. Whether they made a fire to warm themselves, or whether they aimed to burn their way out will never be known," as no jailer was on the premises at the time. The little frame building which served as a jail was situated "some little distance" from the residential section of town, and by the time it was discovered to be on fire, "nothing could be done to reach the two men, as the structure was a mass of flames." The two men were phosphate hands from the nearby mines, and their names were not known.⁵¹

A little over a week later, on February 9, 1909, sixteen-year old Irma Newell of Lakeland was on her way to school when she claimed a Negro man tried to rape her. Feelings were high throughout the whole area, and it was feared that innocent Negroes might be killed. On February 10, this almost happened when a white mob was ready to burn Charlie Crumpley for the crime. At the last minute, Miss Newell's grandfather arrived with Sheriff John Logan and declared that Crumpley was innocent and he was set free. Several Negro suspects were being held in Lakeland jail. Mr. Newell had worked in Mulberry for several years, and a mob from Mulberry reached the Lakeland jail at 3:00 a.m., February 10. "It was suspected they would attack the jail later that night." Sheriff Logan called the state militia to protect the Negroes. The following Saturday, a Negro named Jack Wade was identified positively by Miss Newell as her assailant. After he was

⁵¹Journal, Jan. 21, 1909.

positively identified, the mob hung him from a tree and then pumped him full of bullets. They were going to burn him, but Miss Newell said that hanging and shooting would be quicker.⁵²

Two weeks later, in a supposedly unrelated incident, a fire broke out in the Negro section of Mulberry and raged for some time, destroying five houses and one church before the flames were brought under control. L. N. Pipkin's water main did not reach into the Negro part of town. Another fire broke out in the business district of Mulberry in April, causing the destruction of the Barger's buildings, Charles Fisher's bakery and Mrs. Exler's millinery store.⁵³

In November, 1909, Ed Sims, a Negro, murdered S. M. Redd of Mulberry and fled to Charleston, South Carolina, where he was apprehended. Sheriff John Logan refused to bring him back to Polk County Jail for fear that some Mulberry citizens would lynch him. Instead he was brought to Jacksonville and imprisoned there. Sims was legally hanged on June 3, 1910, at Bartow.⁵⁴

Law enforcement officers, church leaders, and other citizens hoped that violence could be curtailed if the sale of liquor was prohibited. In November, 1910, Florida voted on an

⁵²Informant, Feb. 11, 1909; Feb. 18, 1909.

⁵³Informant, March 1, 1909; April 15, 1909.

⁵⁴Informant, Nov. 18, 1909.

amendment to prohibit the sale of alcoholic beverages. The amendment failed in the state by a vote of 22,931 for and 27,707 against. Polk County favored the amendment by a majority of more than 800 votes. Mulberry was the only community in the county to vote against the amendment with a vote of 43 for and 44 against, evidencing the popularity of liquor in the partially tamed community.⁵⁵ This dashed the hopes of the prohibitionists for the time being.

Violence again came to Mulberry on the night of Saturday, January 14, 1911. This incident concerned three white men. Ben Turner, employed by the grocery department of Prairie Trading Company, was held up on his way home and was literally cut to pieces by S. S. Driggers and T. C. Cannon. Turner died the following Monday afternoon. He was apparently hauled and knocked down without a warning and when he arose was knocked down a second time. After he got up the second time, he ran to a neighbor's yard and hid until he thought the men had left. He started home but was dragged and held by one of the men while the other cut him up. He regained consciousness after the cutting and identified the two men. He said he knew of no reason for the attack. Driggers and Cannon were arrested and taken to the city jail but were removed to the county jail at Bartow because of much talk

⁵⁵Informant, Nov. 10, 1910; Nov. 24, 1910.

about lynching.⁵⁶ They were later brought to trial and received lengthy sentences in the county jail.⁵⁷

Crime in Mulberry seemed to take a more sophisticated turn when, on Tuesday, August 15, 1912, John B. White, the former postmaster of Mulberry, was arrested in Dothan, Alabama, on charges of embezzling private funds left in his custody when he was postmaster. He was held under \$1,000 bond to await action of the United States Grand Jury at Tampa. White had undertaken to "set himself up in opposition to state and national banks and United States savings depositories." There was a United States savings bank in the post office part of the time, but White declared that the "White Depository" was safer and better than the government vaults. When patrons wanted to buy a money order or patronize the government, White would tell them it was "useless and extravagant to waste money" in fees, when he would keep "their funds for safekeeping, and not charge anything therefor." He slipped away with all this money (the amount was never mentioned), but the United States Secret Service captured him with the help of "its wireless telegraphy." White was given the opportunity to return the money in lieu of receiving a jail term, an opportunity of which he availed himself.⁵⁸

⁵⁶Informant, Jan. 19, 1911.

⁵⁷Informant, Feb. 24, 1911.

⁵⁸Informant, Aug. 15, 1912; Jacksonville Metropolis, Aug. 15, 1912.

The money was entrusted to White "largely by Negroes, who placed implicit faith in him on account of the fact that he was postmaster." The Mulberry Herald added that "the impression left in the dispatch that white folks deposited moneys with White is erroneous. The Negroes deposited with ex-postmaster White and not with the postal savings bank."⁵⁹

Crime returned to the more traditional frontier variety in January, 1914, when two Negroes were lynched for the attempted slaying of a white man, John Collins. The Negroes, Lewis Peck and Will Johnson, thought that Collins was the man who testified against them in court and was instrumental in their conviction for illegal whiskey dealings. Collins did resemble the man but had just moved to Mulberry since the Christmas holidays and was employed by Meritt and Gilbert Company. The men were ready to slit Collins' throat when another Negro came along causing the men to run. "Not more than six men" lynched the two Negroes and left their bullet-riddled bodies near the scene where they assaulted Collins. No attempt was made to punish the members of the lynching mob.⁶⁰

Though violence was still a fact of life in the phosphate region of Florida, incidents of such violence were decreasing. Education and religion were partially responsible

⁵⁹Herald, Aug. 15, 1912.

⁶⁰Informant, Jan. 18, 1914.

for this decrease. The violent acts of a few did not deter business and the boom-town atmosphere continued unabated.

Mulberry was the picture of prosperity in early June, 1914, and little did anyone suspect that the boom was about to be interrupted. Events taking place in far-away Europe would have a profound effect on the bustling central Florida town. On June 28, 1914, the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife were assassinated by a Serbian patriot while visiting in the Bosnian town of Sarajevo. The effect this double murder would have on the phosphate industry would in turn affect the whole economy of Mulberry.⁶¹

⁶¹Henry F. Graff and John A. Krout, The Adventure of the American People (Chicago: Rand McNally and Co., 1964), p. 158.

CHAPTER VII

TOWARD MODERNITY

World War I had a profound effect on the phosphate area. In August, 1914, the phosphate companies began laying off employees. Prairie Pebble laid off five-hundred men on August 8 but continued to operate on a short schedule. The other mines in the area were forced to do the same thing. All mines remained in operation but with greatly reduced work forces. The Mulberry Herald was forced to suspend publication on August 20¹ for over six months due to the economic depression that set in with the outbreak of war.

The depression was short-lived, however, and the Herald resumed publication in March, 1915. The paper's new owner-managers were E. S. Feuerlicht and J. E. Lancaster. According to the Herald, business was on the upswing again by March, 1915.²

Germany and other nations wanted American phosphate, but there were no ships to transport the mineral. The reason for this was that shippers preferred to carry freight that

¹Informant, Aug. 13, 1914; Aug. 20, 1914; Herald, Aug. 20, 1914.

²Informant, March 11, 1915.

brought higher prices. It was felt that, if England declared a general contraband against cotton and foodstuffs designed for use in Germany, it might be possible to ship the rock.³

By May, 1915, phosphate had begun to move again. Germany was not molesting American shipping, and the amount of mineral exported to foreign countries in May was almost double the monthly average from January through April. In June, Henry Pierce, the phosphate magnate, announced plans to build a railroad from Bartow to Tampa that would be 10 miles shorter to deep water than the Seaboard line, 19 miles shorter than the Atlantic Coast Line, and 95 miles shorter than the Charlotte Harbor and Northern Railroad. The Charlotte Harbor and Northern began in Mulberry and ran 100 miles south to South Boca Grande.⁴

In June, 1915, phosphate production in Polk County increased 100 per cent over the previous months. Unhappily for the mineowner, though, railroad freight rates had risen 300 per cent since August, 1914.⁵

German firms had placed orders for over 400,000,000 pounds of phosphate by March, 1916. Polk firms promised delivery at the end of the war and were eagerly waiting for

³Informant, Feb. 25, 1915.

⁴Informant, May 25, 1915; July 1, 1915; Herald, Jan. 23, 1914.

⁵Informant, June 29, 1915.

the war to come to a close.⁶ Due to the fact that phosphate could be used in the making of incendiary devices, the United States did not desire to export the mineral at that time. Of course, with the outbreak of war between this country and Germany in 1917, all hopes for sending phosphate to Germany were ended for the duration of our involvement.

The residents of Polk County had hoped that the "Great War" in Europe would be a short one so that phosphate could be shipped to Germany once again. Few, if any residents of Mulberry, desired for America to be drawn into the war, but when the United States declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, Mulberry, like most American towns, rallied to the cause. One hundred and ten citizens of Mulberry petitioned the county commissioners to form a company of Home Guards in the town. In response to the petition, the commission authorized the forming of such an organization in July, 1917. The commissioners voted to furnish uniforms, "to consist of hats, shirts, pants, and shoes, provided the federal government furnish the balance of the necessary equipment." Company "A" Home Guards was the first in the county, and three other communities soon followed Mulberry's lead. The officers of Company "A" were as follows: J. W. Keel, Captain; A. L. Campbell, First Lieutenant; and D. S. Craig and Simon Loeb, Second Lieutenants.⁷

⁶Informant, March 7, 1916.

⁷Informant, July 10, 1917; Feb. 22, 1918; Graff and Krout, op. cit., p. 592.

Mayor E. F. Carter of Mulberry organized a Red Cross chapter in town in June, 1917. The headquarters was in the Deane Building on Polk Street and was "full of activity." Mrs. C. C. Martin of Tampa helped to organize the chapter. Many Mulberry people were members of the earlier-formed Bartow chapter and were urged to transfer their membership to Mulberry.⁸

The Selective Service Act of May, 1917, provided for a draft for the United States Army. Polk County initially had to provide 277 men. It was assumed that 1,200 or 1,300 men would have to be examined to get 277 who were eligible. Each man was given a number and was called for a physical examination in the order the numbers came up. The first man called from Mulberry was Percy Fewox. Of the nearly fifty Mulberrians called, only twenty did not claim an exemption. The Bartow Courier-Informant accused Clyde Amlong, Francis Dossey, Nathan Milter, Henry McQueen, and Thomas M. Riherd from Mulberry of being draftdodgers. Of the first 370 men called in the county, 273 appeared and 141 of these filed claims for exemptions, many of which were upheld.⁹

As of September 20, 1917, Jim Mitchell, Charles Levins, William Jones, and Ethan C. Allen of Mulberry had enlisted in

⁸Informant, June 19, 1917.

⁹Informant, July 24, 1917; Aug. 14, 1917; Aug. 28, 1917; Sept. 3, 1917.

the United States Navy. Dr. Albert Parker left Mulberry and enlisted at Camp Wheeler as a first lieutenant in the Dental Corps of the United States Army. Dr. E. Honeywell from Atlanta came to take Dr. Parker's place as town dentist.¹⁰

In March, 1918, Dr. P. L. Goss, Mulberry's newest physician, was elected Grand Master-at-Arms of the Knights of Pythias, at the thirty-fourth annual convention of the Florida lodge, which was held at Jacksonville. Dr. Goss later enlisted in the United States Army and was killed in action in the war.¹¹

The war was a major concern of the people in the town, especially among those who had loved ones in the service. Life, however, had to go on, and people did not seem to be preoccupied with the war's activities, although the area newspapers gave weekly accounts of the battles until the war's end.

New Roads

The main topic of discussion around town in the fall of 1916 was not the war but good roads. The Good Roads Association met in Mulberry in December. The association had been formed in June, 1914, with A. J. Holworthy of Lakeland as permanent chairman. Holworthy urged the people to vote for

¹⁰Informant, Oct. 10, 1917; Nov. 28, 1917; Dec. 10, 1917.

¹¹Informant, March 15, 1918; Council Minutes, April 19, 1921.

bonds to finance the roads, but E. S. Whidden, former county commissioner from Mulberry, opposed this method, saying that many people would pay for roads they would never use.¹²

J. E. Lancaster was the county commissioner for the first district, which embraced southwest Polk County. He announced in March, 1915, that convict labor was paving the road from Lakeland to Mulberry, and on to Brewster, with a hard surface. This highway was the forerunner of State Road 37. The phosphate plants were helping in the construction by giving the county some of the supplies. The businessmen of the area heartily approved of the new road.¹³

In the spring of 1916, the county commissioners were in session practically the whole week of April 18. They awarded contracts for 217 miles of standard asphalt highways at a cost of \$150,000,000. This was called the "largest transaction of this sort ever entered into by any county in the South." Bonds were needed to finance these roads, and the voters of Polk County approved them by more than a two-to-one margin in the June 1, 1916, election. The vote in Mulberry was 144 for and 81 against.¹⁴ Polk County's interest in better roads was part of a national trend. In 1916 Congress passed the Federal Highway Act, and much of the nation was preoccupied with the desire for improved roads.

¹²Informant, Dec. 7, 1915; Dec. 14, 1915; Herald, Dec. 10, 1915.

¹³Informant, March 25, 1915.

¹⁴Hetherington, op. cit., p. 175.

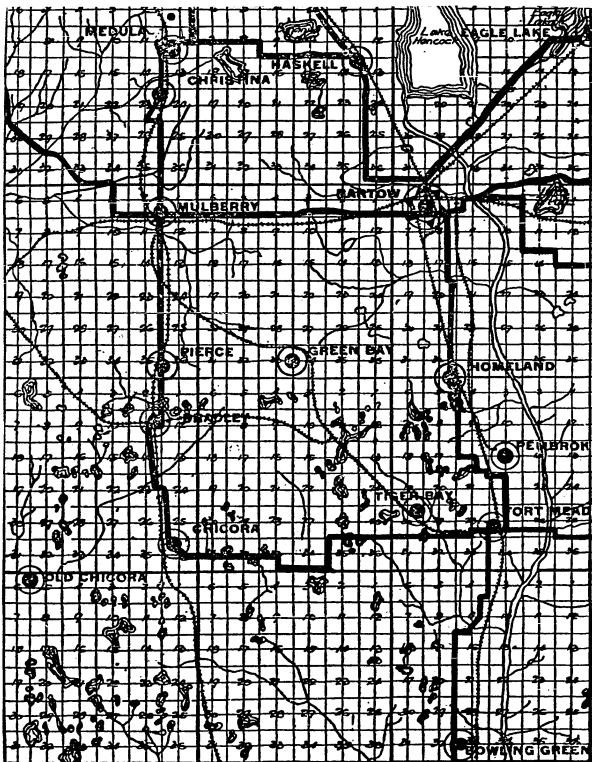


Fig. 16.--Proposed roads for paving in southwestern Polk County, March, 1916. Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

In July, 1917, an automobile bus service was established between Brewster, Mulberry, and Plant City by W. C. Sprott of Mulberry. The bus was "similar to the machines used on the Mackay Line between Lakeland and Tampa via Plant City." Sprott was also owner of Mulberry's first automobile service station.¹⁵ In less than one year, the new roads would be completed, making the bus ride a smooth one.

In April, 1918, the Edwards Construction Company completed the road from the Hillsborough County line to Fort Meade by way of Mulberry and Chicora. The E. C. Humphrey Company had also just completed asphalt roads from Socrum to Mulberry and from Bartow to Mulberry. Mulberry now had paved roads leading in all directions from the town. Polk County was "proud of its asphalt roads," but many of its bridges left much to be desired. The bridge on the Bartow Road at the eastern edge of town was badly in need of repairs. The planks were loose, and whenever automobiles and other vehicles passed over them, it caused considerable noise which was "especially objectionable at night" because it awakened many people from their sleep. The town council urged County Commissioner J. A. Robinson to have the bridge repaired. E. H. Dudley, owner of the Mulberry Ice Works, was president

¹⁵Informant, July 17, 1917.

of the town council, and D. S. Craig was town clerk at the time.¹⁶ The bridge on the Bartow Road was repaired within a year, "providing a quieter and smoother" ride for the motorists.¹⁷

As the number of automobile owners increased, the necessity for better roads and more regulations likewise increased. On July 13, 1920, the town council passed a law prohibiting persons under the age of sixteen from operating an automobile unless they were accompanied by a parent, guardian, or owner of the car.¹⁸ According to most "old timers" in Mulberry, this ordinance was not strictly enforced. In 1921, Councilman A. E. Graham was instructed by the town council to take charge of the installation of the first automobile speed-limit signs on town streets.¹⁹ The need for these signs was proof of the increased use of the automobile in the town.

In the summer of 1925, Mayor T. M. Reynolds and the city council passed an ordinance authorizing the city to borrow "the sum of \$59,000 for the purpose of paying the city's share of the cost of improving" the streets in town. It was decided that the residents would vote on August 25 whether or not to allow the city to borrow the money for

¹⁶Informant, April 12, 1918; Council Minutes, July 8, 1919.

¹⁷Council Minutes, March 5, 1920.

¹⁸Council Minutes, July 13, 1920.

¹⁹Council Minutes, March 8, 1921.

these improvements. The voters, with only two negative votes, overwhelmingly approved the bond issue for road improvements. The job was awarded to the West Construction Company of Chattanooga, Tennessee. Also approved by the voters were bonds to raise \$24,000 for improving and repairing the water system, and \$8,500 for lighting certain streets in the business area.²⁰

The end of horse and buggy days came "officially" in Mulberry on July 13, 1926, when, in the words and spelling of city clerk E. S. Whidden, "The Ordinance Committy presented and ordinance to the council to protect the hard serficed streets of the city of Mulberry prohibiting Automobiles without rubber tires, and all other vehickles from using said streets that by such use would damage said streets." (The errors were Mr. Whidden's.) The ordinance passed unanimously.²¹

A full set of traffic regulations were set down by the city council in Ordinance 135 on November 9, 1926. Speed limits in the business section were set at 15 m.p.h. "No parking" areas were designated, as well as how cars were to be parked at certain locations. Stop streets were also listed in the ordinance. Violation of any of these traffic laws was punishable by a fine of "not more than \$100, or by imprisonment at hard labor on any city works for not more than thirty days."²²

²⁰Press, July 23, 1925; Aug. 27, 1925; Council Minutes, Oct. 27, 1925; Nov. 13, 1925.

²¹Council Minutes, July 13, 1926.

²²Council Minutes, Nov. 9, 1926.

In 1932, the main road to Tampa and Bartow from Mulberry was widened into a three-lane highway. The point 2 miles west of Mulberry, where the highway crossed the Seaboard Railroad tracks near Prairie mine, was described in the Polk County Record as "a very dangerous intersection."²³ Even today (1974), that railroad crossing has been the scene of more serious accidents than any other crossing in the Mulberry area, although warning lights and crossing rails have been installed.

The roads in southwest Polk County had improved greatly in the first third of the twentieth century. As recently as 1915 there were no paved roads leading from Mulberry in any direction. By 1932, paved highways led out in all four directions from the city, although the paved road to the south did not yet reach the Hardee County line.

Education

Better roads meant that schools were more accessible to the students, and with the dedication of Fort Meade High School on March 2, 1916, Polk County had five high schools. This was more than any county in the state. The schools were Bartow, Lakeland, Mulberry, Winter Haven, and Fort Meade. Dr. John A. Thackston, the state high-school inspector, was in the county for the dedication and described Polk's

²³Record, Nov. 30, 1932.

educational institutions as being "among the best" in the state.²⁴

The 1920's saw education in the community growing along with post-war business prosperity. In 1921, the first edition of the Mulberry High School yearbook was published. The yearbook was named the Mulberry Tree in honor of the famed tree and was dedicated to T. W. Yarbrough, Principal, and to the faculty of four women teachers: Miss Pearl Shankel, Miss Alice Hall, Miss Alice Tyre, and Mrs. Paul Fatic.²⁵

The following year, Luther N. Pipkin donated some land on the east side of what is now Northeast First Avenue for the building of a new high school, which was completed in 1924. Pipkin dedicated the site, which had six classrooms, a library, and an assembly room that would seat 180 pupils. The approximate cost of the building was \$200,000. The enrollment in grades 9-12 was 115. The courses offered were primarily of a college-preparatory nature.²⁶

Football became an interschool sport in 1924 and has been the chief sport in Mulberry ever since. Marion Wiggs was the captain of the first football team. Games were played on the athletic field which was at the Haynsworth Heights area just north of the city.²⁷

²⁴Informant, Feb. 29, 1916; March 7, 1916.

²⁵Ledger, Feb. 5, 1961.

²⁶Press, Clipping dated only "1924," can be obtained from Mrs. John Mitchell of Mulberry, Florida.

²⁷Marion Wiggs, personal interview with the author, Mulberry, Florida, Feb. 18, 1974.

In the school year 1925-26, Mulberry was fortunate in that \$40,000 was spent on school improvements.²⁸ The community was continually striving for better education for its students.

The course of study at Mulberry High School remained virtually unchanged until 1932, when, under the administration of Principal H. B. Mullon, one of the first diversified training units was set up under the direction of C. O. Pinch, Co-ordinator. Instruction in shop and other commercially related subjects was carried on in a building on Phosphate Boulevard that is now a storeroom for the W. S. Badcock Furniture Company.²⁹ In 1937, diversified training was changed to a full-time commercial department at the high school. Wilbur H. Purcell became supervising principal at that time.³⁰

During the depression, Mulberry High School operated a full nine months while many other schools had short terms, and some lost their accreditation. The district taxes paid by the phosphate firms enabled the high school to stay open even when the state ran out of money.³¹ Most residents of Mulberry recall the depression as being less severe in their region than in most parts of Florida and the nation, due to

²⁸Leader, May 20, 1926.

²⁹Press, Sept. 9, 1932.

³⁰Wilbur H. Purcell, personal interview with the author, Lakeland, Florida, March 6, 1971.

³¹Ledger, Feb. 5, 1961.

the operation of the mines. Some men were able to work only one or two days a week, but most had regular jobs.³²

Further building expansion occurred in the 1938-39 school term when Mulberry School District Number Thirteen, as it was designated, voted to bond itself 55 cents on the dollar, with the federal government paying 45 cents per dollar on a \$55,000 bond issue for the construction of two high-school classrooms, a gym, re-roofing of the high school, the elementary school, and the colored school. An auditorium-classroom combination was also added to the Negro school. The projects were done under the federal Works Progress Administration program. School trustees at that time were J. W. Daughtery, Dr. Henry Fuller, and R. N. Bryan. The new gym and classrooms at the high school were occupied in February, 1939. There were 165 students in the high school and 270 in the combined elementary and junior high in the old buildings on Canal Street where the city hall now stands.³³

Education in the community had come a long way from that day in 1896 when R. W. Proctor welcomed the first students into the little one-room school house in the frontier town of Mulberry. The community now offered a good education and improved facilities for every child in the community.

³²Jack Mitchell, personal interview with the author, Mulberry, Florida, Feb. 18, 1971; Ruth Johnson, personal interview with the author, Mulberry, Florida, March 29, 1971.

³³Press, Feb. 17, 1939; Nov. 18, 1955.

Education and religion were two of the main factors in the taming of the Florida frontier just as they were in the West.³⁴

Religion

Religious influence in Mulberry increased rapidly in the early twentieth century. The community saw the organization of its fourth Protestant church in the summer of 1917 when the Christian Church was established. Rev. W. F. LaRowe, who came to town on August 20, 1917, quickly built up the membership of the new church from five to seventy "working members." LaRowe rented the building across the street from the post office and conducted weekly services.³⁵

The Baptists were still the largest and most active group in town. The Ladies Aid Society of First Baptist Church met December 7, 1917, at the home of Mrs. Jake Levins. Among those present was Mrs. T. J. "Minnie" McLaulin.³⁶ When Mrs. McLaulin died in June, 1969, she was the oldest member of First Baptist Church.³⁷ C. L. Hammock was pastor of First Baptist in 1917, and the church reported a membership of 220.³⁸

³⁴Frederick J. Turner, Rise of the New West: 1819-1829 (New York: Collier Books, 1962, p. 89.

³⁵Informant, Oct. 17, 1917; Nov. 28, 1917.

³⁶Informant, Dec. 10, 1917.

³⁷Mrs. Roy Gladney, personal interview with the author, Mulberry, Florida, April 1, 1971.

³⁸Holleyman, op. cit., p. 3.

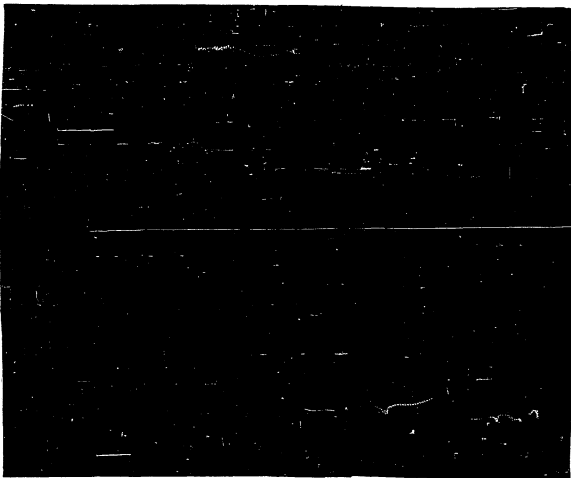


Fig. 17.-- The Minnie McLaulin residence about 1920. Courtesy of Mrs. Roy Gladney.

Religion was definitely playing a more influential role in the community. Under the five-year ministry of Rev. C. C. Evans from 1920-1925, First Baptist Church reached a peak membership of 328. By this time the house of worship included four Sunday-school rooms, and was valued at \$6,000.³⁹

Good fortune did not shine on the Baptist church during the business boom of the 1920's. In fact, it seemed as though prosperity and boom were being felt everywhere in town with the exception of the Baptist church. First Baptist had suffered a loss of membership, and by 1926 had dropped to only 189 members compared with 328 less than two years earlier. Rev. Dewey Mann inherited the task of rebuilding the church, and by 1928, the membership had grown to 272.⁴⁰ At the regular church conference on April 4, 1928, E. W. Jackson made a motion that a new church be built. Plans were made to sell the old property for \$10,000 and purchase two lots from L. N. Pipkin on University Street (now Northeast First Avenue) for \$3,000.⁴¹ These plans were not carried through until six years later.

On September 4, 1929, R. E. Reed began a ministry that would last for seven years at First Baptist Church. It was during Reed's ministry that the present church building

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹First Baptist Church, Minutes, April 4, 1928.

was begun. In August, 1933, it was recommended again that church property be sold and that a new house of worship be constructed. In September, 1934, the sale was authorized with the transaction being completed in October. The old building was wrecked, and the school auditorium was secured as a temporary place to hold worship services.⁴² This arrangement continued until the end of July, 1935, at which time the new building was sufficiently completed. The church minutes stated:

At this date the windows to our building are boarded up, we have sawdust for our floor, some pews from the old church, chairs and temporary benches for our seats, the Lord of Glory for our Father and great Helper, in Whom with faith and confidence we press toward completion of the fine temple which we erect to His name and honor.⁴³

The building was completed during the ministry of S. E. McLaughlin in 1936 and is the basic building of the present church at the corner of Northeast Second Street and First Avenue.⁴⁴

Mulberry Methodist Church, with a smaller but growing membership, was pastored by Fred Pixton in the early 1920's. From 1925-31 the Methodists were led by Revs. W. J. Churchwell, J. E. Shepherd, L. B. Simpson, and Jesse E. Jones. Each man served one year, except Jones who served three.

⁴²Holleyman, op. cit., p. 3.

⁴³First Baptist Church, Minutes, July 27, 1935.

⁴⁴Holleyman, op. cit., p. 3.

During the pastorate of Rev. J. E. Jones, the front of the church building was remodeled. Jones stated in the Quarterly Conference records that the ladies of the church repaired and remodeled the church. The men helped, but Jones said that "the ladies deserve the credit."⁴⁵

J. F. Clark served as pastor at Mulberry Methodist Church from 1931-35, during which time the Methodist church in Medulla, 6 miles north of Mulberry, was razed and the material used to build an addition to the Mulberry church which was called "Clark Annex." Clark was followed by R. T. Caldwell, who pastored from 1935-1940. Caldwell is the only minister in the history of the church to stay five years. Miss Martha D. Alman served as the church's first deaconess, beginning in 1938. On December 10, 1939, the third Quarterly Conference of the Methodist Church granted Caldwell permission to organize a mission at Springhead about 8 miles west of Mulberry.⁴⁶

The Episcopalians were not as fortunate as the Baptists and Methodists. On June 9, 1921, a fire destroyed the Episcopal church building and an adjoining dwelling. For a time the fire threatened to spread throughout the entire southern section of the city. The fire originated in a rental house belonging to L. N. Pipkin and occupied by the Drowdy family. It was separated from the church by about 35 feet. When the firemen arrived, the flames had spread to the

⁴⁵Press, June 13, 1954.

⁴⁶Ibid.

church, and it was too late to save the house. The firemen "gave their attention to trying to save" the church and to keep the fire from spreading to adjoining property. A call for assistance was sent to Bartow, and that city responded by sending their "auto-hose truck," and a crew of firemen. They arrived at about six-thirty but found that their hose was the wrong size to be connected to the Mulberry hydrants. Both buildings were a total loss. The loss of the church, valued at \$8,000,⁴⁷ meant the end of regular Episcopalian worship in Mulberry for thirty-four years until a new church was built in 1954.

Religious life on the Florida frontier had developed much in the same manner as in the West. Baptists and Methodists were particularly successful in recruiting adherents to their faiths. In both regions the frontiersmen gradually built churches which were supplied by itinerant or circuit-riding Baptist and Methodist preachers.⁴⁸ It is of little wonder that the two main churches in Mulberry in 1974 were First Baptist and Mulberry Methodist.

Labor Trouble

While the influence of organized religion continued to grow, so did the influence of organized labor, though the similarity between the two ended there. Unions were still

⁴⁷Record, June 14, 1921.

⁴⁸Wright, op. cit., p. 73.

frowned upon in many parts of the country, often because of the not unfounded fear that they brought violence. Mulberry was no stranger to violence, and threatened union violence was not something which people wanted, but it seemed to fit in with the town's violent past.

In 1919, Mulberry was torn apart by a miners' strike led by the Mineral Workers Union. On April 26, more than one-thousand men held a noonday parade in the town. The miners were working for \$2.50 a day for a ten- to twelve-hour day. They demanded an eight-hour day with a minimum wage of 37 cents an hour, as had been recommended by the National War Labor Board. The strike spread rapidly into adjoining Polk and Hillsborough counties and aroused statewide comment. Counsel for the mineowners was quoted by the Tampa Tribune as saying "there are, of course, going to be no conferences nor any adjustment of matters between mineowners and the union because there is nothing to confer about, nor is there anything to discuss." At a mass meeting in Tampa, Governor Sidney J. Catts stated: "I know the strikers are right; if the other fellows had any right on their side, they would be perfectly willing to arbitrate."⁴⁹

There were numerous disorders and a considerable amount of violence incident to workers who came in to take the place of the strikers. Mulberry was "shot-up" by mine guards

⁴⁹Tribune, April 29, 1919; Hetherington, op. cit., p. 35; Federal Writer's Project, Florida, A guide to the Southernmost State (New York: Oxford Press, 1939), p. 369.

in a powerhouse at the edge of town. Shortly afterward, a train was stopped, fired upon, and tank cars of oil were emptied. Strikers claimed that this was done by strikebreakers to prejudice the public against them. Four persons were killed during the strike, "notably among them, Rodney Wilson, member of a prominent county family," who was stabbed while acting as a peacemaker in the course of the difficulty. On August 12, four companies of Home Guards were called out, but negotiations between officials, representatives of the operators, and the strikers led to their being dismissed. Governor Catts removed Sheriff John Logan from office, much to the disapproval of the citizens of Polk County. Catts felt that Logan had not been doing enough to prevent violence during the strike. A "mammoth meeting" was held in Bartow on August 24 to voice disapproval of the governor's action. J. M. Langford was appointed sheriff by Catts, but served only two months when Logan was reinstated on October 25. Finally a court injunction was ordered against the strikers, and the strike was broken. The strike had been partially successful, and the men returned to work at an increased wage scale of \$3 for an eight- to ten-hour day. The strike ended on December 11, 1919.⁵⁰

Nothing ever divided the community as badly as the miners' strike of 1919. Mrs. Leslie B. Gibson, daughter-in-law

⁵⁰Hetherington, op. cit., p. 35; Federal Writer's Project, op. cit., p. 369; Tribune, Aug. 13, 1919; Aug. 25, 1919; Dec. 12, 1919.

of St. Elmo Gibson, said that her husband told her of many parents sending their children to live with relatives in other parts of the state for fear they might be harmed. Mrs. Gibson said that there were still families in Mulberry not on speaking terms with other families because they were on opposing sides in the 1919 strike. Mrs. John Mitchell, one of the city's oldest residents, agreed with this estimation.⁵¹

Government and Business

On Tuesday, February 3, 1920, the town of Mulberry held its elections. None of the candidates publicly had taken sides in the strike, and it was apparently not an issue in the election. In fact, the newspaper mentioned no issues in the campaign in which J. C. Whidden was elected mayor over Dr. H. K. Murphy. D. S. Craig was elected town clerk and treasurer; D. Hunt was elected marshal, and E. H. Dudley and A. E. Graham were elected town councilmen. Other councilmen not up for election were A. S. McKillop, E. M. Watts, and W. C. Sprott.⁵²

In April, 1920, the town council authorized the purchase of 200 feet of "Red Cross" (brand) fire hose to be shipped immediately and 200 feet to be shipped in August. The hose was purchased from the United States Rubber Company of New

⁵¹Mrs. Leslie B. Gibson, personal interview with the author, Mulberry, Florida, Dec. 6, 1970; Mrs. John B. Mitchell, personal interview with the author, Mulberry, Florida, Aug. 30, 1973.

⁵²Council Minutes, Feb. 5, 1920.

Jersey with the hope of being able to cut down on fire damage in the community.⁵³

On July 13, the town council passed Ordinance 107 unanimously. Ordinance 107 made it illegal for anyone to handle, have in his possession, or about his person, intoxicating liquors and beverages, and "prescribing a penalty therefor." This was logical, since the year before, the Eighteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution had made the same thing illegal in the whole country.⁵⁴ Some citizens felt it necessary to revise local laws in accordance with federal ones. The town was still the scene of an occasional drunken brawl, much to the dismay of some of the religious leaders of the community.

By 1920, the population of the town of Mulberry had grown to 1,499. There was nothing spectacular about this, but it was indicative of the fact that the town was slowly but surely attracting more residents.

Town elections were again held on February 1, 1921. J. C. Whidden was reelected mayor, and D. S. Craig was reelected town clerk and treasurer. John Browning was the new marshal, and Simon Loeb, H. K. Murphy and R. A. Waters were new town councilmen. A. E. Graham and E. H. Dudley were

⁵³Council Minutes, April 2, 1920.

⁵⁴Council Minutes, July 13, 1920.

carry-over council members. Mr. Dudley was reëlected president of the town council by the council members.⁵⁵

The fire which destroyed the Episcopal Church on June 9, 1921, evidently touched off a flurry of activity at the next town council meeting. The council approved an extension of the water main "so as to protect the school house and other buildings in its vicinity." They gave Dr. H. K. Murphy permission to cut in on the water main opposite his residence "and run a line to the rear thereof in order to assist in extinguishing a fire that might occur in that vicinity." The water committee was requested to investigate what could be done in the way of giving better fire protection to certain parts of town. Finally, the superintendent of water works was authorized to purchase a release valve so that direct pressure could be had from the pump without injury to fixtures.⁵⁶

A major event in the business community occurred in 1921 when Wogan S. Badcock, Sr., bought out his father's furniture store and founded the W. S. Badcock Corporation. The firm grew to be the largest business in Mulberry other than the phosphate companies.⁵⁷

In 1922, the town officials were as follows: J. C. Whidden, Mayor; D. S. Craig, Town Clerk and Treasurer;

⁵⁵Council Minutes, Feb. 8, 1921.

⁵⁶Council Minutes, June 14, 1921.

⁵⁷Wogan S. Badcock, President of Badcock Furniture Co., personal interview with the author, Mulberry, Florida, Aug. 29, 1973.

D. Hunt, Marshal; and E. H. Dudley, H. K. Murphy, E. E. Whidden, R. A. Waters, and C. C. Pearce were town councilmen. C. C. Pearce was also the town's newest doctor. In 1923, Mayor J. C. Whidden decided against reelection and did not run. F. B. Miller became the new mayor, and Craig and Hunt retained their respective positions. Pearce, E. E. Whidden, and Dudley were still councilmen and were joined by new members, H. A. Ford and S. E. Booth. J. T. Haynsworth was the new superintendent of water works, replacing Ose O. Hubbard who had resigned.⁵⁸

On March 29, 1923, the town council adopted unanimously a resolution changing the charter of Mulberry to make it officially the "City of Mulberry." The town had been calling itself a city for several years, and now it was made official. The resolution was approved by the state legislature that spring after being introduced by Thomas W. Bryant, Polk County's representative in the state legislature. The charter change was approved by the voters of Mulberry on September 20, 1923, by a vote of 47 for and 0 against.⁵⁹

The boom of the twenties brought continued activity in the city council. In 1924, the city officials were exactly the same as in 1923, until the resignation of Councilman H. A. Ford on March 8. Ford moved to Gainesville and cited ill health as his reason for moving. He was replaced

⁵⁸Council Minutes, Feb. 9, 1922; Feb. 13, 1923.

⁵⁹Council Minutes, March 29, 1923; Aug. 14, 1923; Sept. 20, 1923.

on the council by J. W. Keel.⁶⁰ Another unexpected change occurred when D. S. Craig, who had served Mulberry as city clerk and treasurer for nearly a decade, died suddenly on December 21, 1925. The city council paid tribute to him for his faithfulness and devotion to duty at their January 12 meeting. E. S. Whidden was appointed to fill out the unexpired term of Craig.⁶¹

The boom saw new businesses established in Mulberry, and the city was bustling with the spirit of capitalism. In July, 1926, A. M. Seigler announced that he was quitting his job as manager of the Success Furniture Company in Mulberry to enter the undertaking and embalming profession for himself. He opened for business in the end store of St. Elmo Gibson's building. "An up-to-date ambulance, equipped with the latest improvements" featured the opening of "A. M. Seigler's Funeral Parlors." Up to this time, Mulberry did not have an ambulance service.⁶²

The Mutual Store was the largest grocery store in Mulberry in the 1920's. It occupied the building that presently houses Motsinger's Hardware Store.⁶³

The Mulberry (Ford) Motor Company offered new 1926 cars for the following prices: Model T Chassis, \$300;

⁶⁰Council Minutes, Feb. 6, 1924; March 8, 1924.

⁶¹Council Minutes, Jan. 12, 1926.

⁶²Press, July 30, 1926.

⁶³Ibid.

Roadster, \$360; Coupe, \$458; Fordor Sedans, \$545; and a "truck with starter," \$375.⁶⁴

The 1910's and 1920's could possibly be called the "urban frontier" in Mulberry. The city was a crossroads of commerce because of the phosphate in the immediate vicinity, the citrus groves and cattle ranches which were not too distant, and because of the railroads and highways which bisected the community. The urban pioneers in Mulberry, as in the West, served as importers to supply farmers and businesses with machinery, furniture, food and luxuries no longer produced on the farms. Some of these people were "restless seekers after wealth who, driven onward by failure at home or the hope of greater profits" in a new region, "deliberately selected a promising frontier community as the site of their next experiment in fortune making."⁶⁵

The year 1930 found Mulberry with a population of 1,774, and the depression had brought a halt to the boom period. However, things were not as bad in the phosphate area as they were in other areas of the country. There were even some new businesses built during this period of time.

In November, 1932, A. J. Pedy of Lakeland leased property at the junction of the Nichols Road with the Tampa Highway (now State Road 60) about a mile west of Mulberry on which he planned to create a new community. Pedy had

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Billington, Westward Expansion, p. 7.

already completed the erection of a commissary building he named A. J. Peddy and Son. (The store later housed the McGinnes Lumber Company until it was destroyed by fire in 1968). Peddy planned to erect a planing mill and turpentine still on the property and to employ about fifty men there. He also planned to build several business houses.⁶⁶ Apparently, the depression caught up with Peddy, as only the commissary was built, and nothing ever came of his planned community.

In 1935, the R. H. Clark Equipment Company established an office in Mulberry. The company, still operating, supplied the mining companies with specialized mining and processing machinery. Several types of pumps, screening equipment, several lines of valves, wire rope and industrial rubber products were carried by the company.⁶⁷

People in Mulberry were more thankful than ever for phosphate during the depression. The valuable mineral had spared them much of the agony experienced by other areas. In the late 1930's people began to wonder how much longer the phosphate on which they were so dependent would hold out. They were relieved to read Frank P. Stockbridge's book, So This is Florida, published in 1938, which said that the phosphate mines of western Polk county contained enough phosphate rock to supply demand at the current rate of

⁶⁶Record, Nov. 30, 1932.

⁶⁷Ledger, Feb. 5, 1961.

consumption for 150 years.⁶⁸ The best estimates today are that, by the end of the twentieth century, most of the area mines will be nearly depleted.

In 1938 there was talk of construction of a ship canal 40 miles long to connect Mulberry with Tampa Bay. This would be done to furnish water transportation for phosphate from the surrounding mines. Such a mode of transportation would have been cheaper, but the project never got underway.⁶⁹

Prosperity and the automobile were causing Mulberrians to venture outside of the city to shop. The proximity of Bartow and Lakeland, both which had been courting Mulberry shoppers since the mid 1920's, led to much capital flowing from Mulberry. Mulberry businesses were advertising "Try Mulberry First" and said that "money spent in other towns never comes back to buy better equipment for home school buildings and grounds." The merchants urged that "cooperation was the key note in the building of communities." They said that, "if Mulberry makes your paycheck possible, then Mulberry has every right to share in the benefits of that check. Earning money in one place and spending it in another is a slow but sure means of killing the goose that lays the golden

⁶⁸Frank P. Stockbridge and John H. Perry, So This is Florida (Jacksonville, Fla.: J. H. Perry Co., 1938), p. 163.

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 21.

egg."⁷⁰ This sums up one of the reasons for the business decline in Mulberry through the 1960's.

By the 1940's, Mulberry was like most other southern towns. There were no more Saturday night shoot outs, mob lynchings or violent labor strikes. The rugged frontier life was then only a memory in the minds of the town's older citizens, some of whom had come to the area sixty years earlier by horseback or in covered wagon.

A Changing Society

Much had happened in the preceding century. By 1841 the cattle frontier had pushed into the county bringing the first white settlers. Within a few years pioneer farmers had established small settlements along the Alafia and Peace rivers. In 1861, Polk County was formed, bringing government and a semblance of law and order to the frontier. In 1881 phosphate was discovered in the Peace River, and the period of the mining frontier had begun. Shortly thereafter the railroad pushed its way through the county on its way to Tampa.

By the end of the nineteenth century the citrus industry moved into the area and with it a group of pioneers referred to by Ray Allen Billington as the "equipped farmers."⁷¹

⁷⁰Press, Feb. 20, 1941.

⁷¹Billington, Westward Expansion, p. 6.

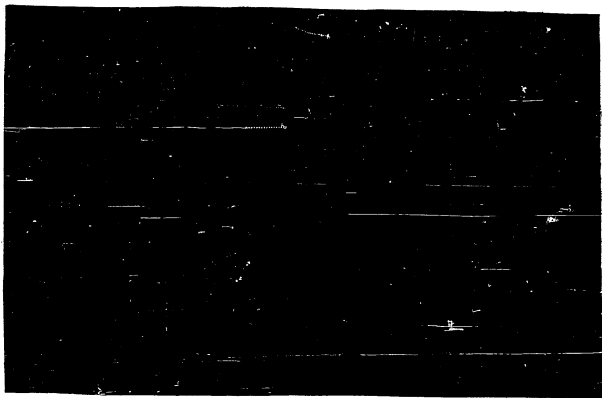


Fig. 18.--Citrus grove in northern Polk County
about 1930. Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

These people settled in most of Polk County except the Mulberry area where mining continued in the forefront of importance.

In 1901 Mulberry was incorporated as a town, bringing more law and order to the community and further diminishing the frontier atmosphere. The next twenty years saw the development of what Billington called the "urban frontier."⁷² This period of time saw a gradual decrease in violence, corresponding to an increase in religious activity, until by 1921 religious influence reached a peak. The 1920's and 1930's brought periods of boom and depression, but more importantly they brought the age of the automobile. The frontier was fast disappearing, but its memories and legacies were not.

The frontier in southwest Florida developed along the same lines as first set down by Frederick Jackson Turner in his "frontier thesis," that is that the advancement of the American settler westward explains America's development. In the case of Florida, the progression was southward, however, not westward. The pattern was similar, though not identical. Ray Allen Billington believed that there were seven frontier "zones."⁷³ The initial zone was that of the fur trader, and for practical purposes did not apply to Florida, although the Spanish probably did obtain some fur in the peninsula,

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³Ibid., pp. 3-8.

and later hunters did deplete the numbers of alligators in south Florida by skinning them for their hides. The warm climate meant less fur on the animals and less need for fur for clothing by the settlers.

The second frontier was that of the cattle frontier, and in essence this was the first frontier in central Florida. Billington said that the third frontier was the mining frontier followed by the pioneer farmers. In the area around Mulberry, these two frontiers were reversed, with the farmers arriving before the miners. The fifth frontier zone was that of the "equipped farmer"--in this case the citrus farmer, although his effect on the immediate Mulberry area was negligible. The "urban frontier" did not begin at any set time in Mulberry, but can be said to be an appropriate name for the era of the 1910's and 1920's. The seventh frontier zone, according to Billington, was that of the "town frontier."⁷⁴ When applied to the West, this meant that to the west of a string of towns lay a region where the frontier process still operated; to the east lay a fully settled region. In applying this to Florida, one must exchange the word "south" for "west" and "north" for "east." If this definition was applied to central Florida, then Mulberry was still in the last phase of frontier development as recently as 1950.

Even in 1974, the people of southwestern Polk County, and most of south-central Florida were still fiercely

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 8.

independent and often unwilling to give up many of their old ideas. They were not Westerners, they were Southerners, though not of the genteel Tidewater or Charleston variety. Their fathers and grandfathers fought Indians and cleared the land upon which many of them still lived. Some citizens still obtained more of their meat from the woods and more of their staples from their gardens than from the grocery stores. There were very few men over fourteen who did not own their own rifle or shotgun. This was almost as true of the blacks in the area as it was of the whites.⁷⁵

By 1974 things had visibly changed a great deal from thirty years earlier. New businesses, highways, mines, and homes had been erected, but the people kept their individualistic lifestyles. Even this, however, was about to change. Descendants of original families accounted for an overwhelming percentage of the population in 1970. The boom in central Florida which began with the opening of Disneyworld in the early 1970's showed signs of erasing all vestiges of the last frontier east of the Mississippi. Many new residents from other states began moving into the area in the early 1970's, promising a cosmopolitan atmosphere in place of one of the last strongholds of the "Florida cracker." The frontier was gone, its spirit was going, but its history has been recorded as a part of the great American experience.

⁷⁵Thomas Gaskins, owner of Cypress Kneeland, personal interview with the author, Palmdale, Florida, Feb. 14, 1974.

CHAPTER VIII

MULBERRY AS A MODEL FOR TEACHING

LOCAL HISTORY

An important part of any historical work is research. In most works of history, the method of how this research is obtained is usually "relegated to prefaces and footnotes." The "how-to-do-it" problems are considered by many historians to be only incidental to historical scholarship.¹ This author feels that the history of Mulberry is in itself important, but it becomes much more important when it can be applied as a paradigm, or model, for historical inquiry.

When an educator "possesses identifiable focuses and a frame of reference which rationalizes them," it can be said that he has a model for teaching. Other teachers can model themselves after his stance toward learning. For centuries men have proposed general strategies designed to socialize children toward an improved social order or to prepare citizens who will develop a better society. Today, however, educational models are being used "in three ways: for making curriculum plans, as guidelines for the teacher's

¹Gene Wise, American Historical Explanations (Homewood, Ill.: The Dorsey Press, 1973), p. vii.

interaction with students, and as specifications for instructional materials."²

There have been many teaching models developed for use in the classroom. This author cannot take credit for originating the inquiry model, but as best as can be determined, there has been no inquiry model written for use in local history. The inquiry model was developed originally for scientific inquiry by J. Richard Suchman from a general analysis of the methods employed by creative research personnel. He developed a training program in scientific inquiry and later created a series of material for teaching, built around the inquiry training concepts.³ Suchman believed that the goals of his "Inquiry Training Model" were

to develop the cognitive skills of searching and data processing, and the concepts of logic and causality that would enable the individual child to inquire autonomously and productively; to give the children a new approach to learning by which they could build concepts through the analysis of concrete episodes and the discovery of relationships between variables; and to capitalize on two intrinsic sources of motivation, the rewarding experience of discovery and the excitement inherent in autonomous searching and data processing.⁴

²Joyce and Weil, op. cit., pp. 5, 7.

³Ibid., p. 137.

⁴J. Richard Suchman, The Elementary School Training Program in Scientific Inquiry, Report of the U. S. Office of Education, Project Title VIII, Project 216 (Urbana: The University of Illinois, 1962), p. 28.

The inquiry model begins with the assumption that inquiry is "the pursuit of meaning."⁵ Suchman felt that "man feeds his expanding intellect through the process of inquiry." These processes are carried on through "three interacting and complementary functions: (1) encountering the environment, (2) processing the data obtained, (3) reorganizing one's own knowledge."⁶

Educator Thomas Kuhn referred to the scientific inquiry model in his book, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. Kuhn contended that scientists addressed their research through paradigms, which were subject to change. These paradigms underwent changes which permitted new understandings on the part of the researcher.⁷

Gene Wise appears to be the first historian who thought that the views of Suchman and Kuhn could be applied to history as well as science. What Kuhn called "paradigms," Wise called "explanation-forms." In his book, Kuhn developed what he called "strategies for inquiry." Wise put Kuhn's strategies for inquiry to work in the last half of his book,

⁵J. Richard Suchman, "A Model for the Analysis of Inquiry," in Analysis of Concept Learning, Herbert J. Klausmeier and Chester W. Harris, eds. (New York: Academic Press, 1966), p. 178.

⁶J. Richard Suchman, Inquiry Box: Teacher's Handbook (Chicago: Science Research Associates, 1967), p. 1.

⁷Thomas Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1970), pp. 180-81.

American Historical Explanations, by extending his observations into case studies.⁸

This author preferred to base his model on Suchman's work. Suchman's strategy for building an inquiry model was based on the following format. "First, materials for encounters were developed and presented to the student; second, the student was led to inquire into the puzzling situation; and third, he was prompted to examine his process of inquiry." The student was helped by the teacher to identify how he inquired and formulated more effective ways of inquiring.⁹

The three steps in Suchman's strategy can be easily implemented in an historical inquiry model in local history. The role of the teacher is extremely important. He must lead the students to initiate inquiry as often as possible. The teacher's role begins with identifying for the students the problem to be researched. This, in effect, is the students' encounter with the problem. The teacher must then help the students move into the second phase of the problem, that is, the actual inquiry through questioning, collecting and analyzing data, and generating a hypothesis. Finally, the teacher must lead the student to analyze the process through which he obtained his information, and through such analysis to determine if a more effective strategy can be discovered.

⁸Wise, op. cit., p. viii.

⁹Joyce and Weil, op. cit., p. 139.

The principles of reaction to Suchman's model require that the teacher:

1. Insures that questions are phrased so that they can be answered in yes or no and that their substance doesn't require the teacher to do the inquiry.
2. Acts to provide a free intellectual environment.
3. Responds to learner's requests for information and provides maximal stimulus for inquiry by focusing, refocusing, or summarizing the inquiry.

The social system of Suchman's model is highly structured. The teacher "is the controller of the interaction and prescribes the inquiry procedures. However, the norms of inquiry are those of cooperation, intellectual freedom, and equality." The optimal support system "is a prepared set of confronting materials and a training agent who understands process and strategies of inquiry."¹⁰

Thus far this discussion has dealt with generalities, not specifics. In this case, the specific is the history of Mulberry and frontier Florida. Five examples of how each phase of this model can be applied to local history in general, and Mulberry in particular, will be discussed here. The five examples of sources of inquiry used in the following model were chosen because they can be used in any local history research. These five concern public documents, newspapers, maps, oral history and slides.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 139.

Source of Inquiry: Public Documents

Phase One--Encountering the Problem

The problem is for the students to do original research with public documents. It is the responsibility of the teacher to place certain material before the class as a focal point for beginning their inquiry. An effective means of achieving this goal is the construction of a file. In assigning research in public documents, the teacher would make available a long list of places for students to visit, so arranged that the addition or deletion of individual sources would not disrupt the master plan.

A five-by-eight card file is placed in the classroom. Sources are alphabetized or grouped by units of work. Individual sources, however, would frequently apply to several units.

Information about each place is organized under a ten-point system.¹¹ Obtaining and retaining in a personal file all the information suggested in this ten-point plan places at the teacher's fingertips the information necessary to refresh his memory about the relative merits of individual excursions and the procedures for arranging future visits. It also enables the student researcher to have a guide for his inquiry problem.

¹¹Collings, op. cit., p. 3.

Information about each place includes location, telephone number, person to contact, when to call, length of visit, maximum number of students acceptable, materials and services available, and a brief resume of what should be seen. There is also space for a record of the trip after it is taken and for the teacher's comments and impressions.¹²

In explaining this system, a visit to the Polk County Historical Library serves as an excellent example.

The ten-point system:

1. Location--Polk County Court House, P. O. Box 60, Bartow, Florida 33830. Perhaps a note about distance and travel time could be included. An accurate address is helpful in correctly routing thank-you letters and requests for additional information.

2. Telephone number--813-533-1161, Extension 235. A complete telephone number including extension number, if there is one, is a timesaver.

3. Contact person--Mrs. Stevie Lou Powell, Librarian and Polk County Historian. Get the full name, with title, of the individual who is in charge of handling your type of request. This helps in future telephone conversations and is essential for written correspondence.

4. Time to call--8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. This is merely a record of the office hours of the

¹²Ibid.

person or organization involved. Since many instructors have little free time during the school day, a notation about Saturday is helpful.

5. Length of visit--Unlimited, preferably before noon. Many organizations will be able to say how much time they can give, and some even have a timed tour. Most organizations, however, will fit the time limit to the teacher's convenience, but it is best when arranging the trip to specify the time of arrival and departure. Failure to do so can upset transportation plans and may involve prolonged waiting upon arrival while an escort or guide is located.

6. Number of students--No more than six at a time. Many places can handle an average-sized class and some can take care of larger numbers. The maximum number is worth knowing if two or more teachers wish to plan an excursion together. Where a source can accommodate only a few visitors, such as this historical library, arrangements can be made for an interview or tour by a class member or committee who can report back to the rest of the class.

7. Materials available--Microfilm of old county newspapers, United States Census returns, Polk County deed and record books, old maps, genealogy records of all southern states, cemetery records, county and community histories, various Florida histories, ledgers and files of old articles, and countless other items of historical significance. Many organizations will supply explanatory booklets, folders,

pictures, charts, or souvenir materials. A few are able to supply motion pictures, filmstrips, or other materials which may be used for pre-planning or evaluation work. Care should be taken to note in the permanent record whether or not these materials seem biased in any particular direction. If biased, the class should recognize and discuss the bias.

8. Services available--Xeroxing and photostating of materials, research by the county historian, advice and help in finding materials. These services often include willingness to grant interviews, to conduct groups through facilities, to prepare special demonstrations, and records of periodic or seasonal events of special interest to college groups. Some organizations will send a lecturer to the college as part of the pre-planning. Some prefer groups at certain times of the day. All special information of this nature should become part of the record.

9. Trip outline--How microfilm machine is operated and how film is filed, how to research genealogy, lecture on local history. A description of what was seen and done is an integral part of the permanent file. A brief outline of the highlights of a tour is good for reference in years to come. It can help in making wise decisions concerning future experiences.

10. Dates of trips, other comments--February 8, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 18, 1974. Visits were to obtain additional material on the history of Mulberry and southwestern

Polk County. It is wise for the teacher to record for future reference the dates of the trips, the groups of students involved, and his own impressions or comments.¹³

Of course, the Polk County Historical Library is only one of many places that could have been used for inquiry about public documents. Others include the Mulberry City Hall, other offices in the Polk County Court House, the police station, and Florida Southern College library to name a few.

Phase Two--Inquiry Through Questioning, Collecting and Analyzing Data, and Generating Hypotheses

Phase One showed the students exactly where to go and what to expect in their encounter with the problem. Through the second phase the pupils gradually and cumulatively learn that history is a way of work as well as a body of information. "A genuine notion about historical method can be supplied at an early stage of schooling; but it needs to be subjected to analysis and application in order to become fully understood and functional."¹⁴ The historical method has many aspects which must be stressed and repeated under different circumstances, and the use of an inquiry model in this connection cannot be overemphasized.

The inquiry through questioning could contain questions such as:

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Brown and Tyrrell, op. cit., p. 7.

Where are the public documents for Polk County prior to 1861?

Why was the grammar in the early public documents so poor?

Why were there inaccuracies in the 1870 census?

Why aren't there any census records beyond 1890?

Why does the county keep a record of land sales?

Why aren't there any census records for Polk County in 1860?

Why isn't there any mention of Indian land ownership in the Deed Record Book of Polk County?

The data that could be collected in the historical library would have to be done by taking notes, since no materials are allowed to be checked out. In answer to the questions above, the students should discover through inquiry that there are no public documents for Polk County prior to 1861 because the county was not formed until that year. Mrs. Powell tells them that earlier records can be found in the Hillsborough County Court House at Plant City because Polk County had earlier been a part of Hillsborough County. The students ascertain that the education level of the persons recording the early documents was not very high because of the poor grammar they used. Inaccuracies existed in the 1870 census because, according to Mrs. Powell's theory, the census taker was a person who delighted in embarrassing some of the families in the area by calling them black when they were

actually white. The students find out that there were no census records beyond 1890 because they have not yet been released by the Bureau of the Census. They discover that records of land sales are kept so that the county will know who to tax and who to see if some sort of arbitration becomes necessary. They also find out that there are census records for Polk County for 1860 and earlier, but since Polk had not yet been formed, its census is included in the rolls of either Hillsborough or Alachua counties. The students should surmise that either the county did not recognize any Indian land claims or there were no Indians in the county. Since they can see from census returns that there were at least a few Indians in the county, they should reach the conclusion that the county did not recognize their claims to land ownership.

When the students analyze their data, they arrive at certain conclusions or hypotheses. These might include: there were no schools in early Polk County; population increase in the area led to the formation of a new county; there was prejudice against Negroes and Indians; the county imposed a tax on land; and there was little done to check the accuracy of some public documents.

Phase Three--Analysis of the Inquiry Strategy

An analysis of the inquiry strategy ought to emphasize the development of more effective strategies. It should be determined if the strategy used was effective, or if it was in need of improvement. It is the responsibility of the

teacher to keep inquiry turned back onto the process of investigation itself. The teacher should not try and defend the process of inquiry from examination, but should respond to questions from the students in such a way as to turn the students' attention to their own processes of thinking and to the process which might have been used in place of or in addition to that which was employed in phase two.¹⁵

In this example, if the proposed questions were thought by the students to be inappropriate, or not suitable to their research, they should be discarded if better ones could be decided upon. Also, if the strategy for inquiry did result in independence or autonomy in learning, then it was successful. However, if the teacher, and not the students, arrived at the hypotheses from the analysis, then it was not successful and changes should be made. If the ten-point system aided the students in their inquiry but the questions asked in phase two did not generate inquiry and analysis then the ten-point system can remain, but the questions must be changed. If the whole system failed to generate any analysis or hypotheses, then it should all be discarded and a new idea drawn up. However, since this author knows that this particular system worked for himself, it probably will be of value in teaching local history.

¹⁵Joyce and Weil, op. cit., p. 149.

Source of Inquiry: Newspapers

Phase One--Encountering the Problem

The students must find newspaper accounts of their community's past, and determine what sort of information they can obtain from these newspapers. As with the source material for public documents, a file should again be constructed. In this case the ten-point system is also used and is identical to the one used for public documents, as the newspapers are also on file in the Polk County Historical Library. The students are therefore given the identical information as in the previous problem. Students are also given information about the newspaper offices in the county as well as the Bartow, Lakeland, and Winter Haven public libraries, as all have some old newspapers on file and on microfilm.

Phase Two--Inquiry Through Questioning, Collecting and Analyzing Data, and Generating Hypotheses

Inquiry concerning the newspapers could include the following questions:

When was the first newspaper published in the county?

Why wasn't there one before this?

How do we know whether or not the reporting is accurate?

What political views did these papers hold?

What was the first regularly published newspaper in Mulberry?

What can newspapers tell us about early life in the community?

As with the previous example for public documents, all data collected from these newspapers must be done by note taking. Most of the information must be obtained from microfilm rolls in the library. Through inquiry, the students learn the answers to the above questions. They learn that the first newspaper published in the county was the Bartow Advance Courier, published in Bartow in 1888. The students cannot be sure why there was not one published before this, but the most obvious reasons are lack of population and demand. The students determine accuracy in reporting by cross-reference research. That is, they compare certain items such as population, official governmental actions and certain prices on land etc. with the figures given in the public documents they have already researched. The students will be quick to discern a strongly pro-Democrat bias in all of the local newspapers in Polk County. Checking the microfilm they will find the earliest newspaper for Mulberry was the Mulberry Herald of 1912. This would not be entirely accurate, as the Mulberry Journal published regularly for several months in 1909, but the students would not find that information in the newspaper files there. This should be used by the teacher to emphasize the need to check more than one source to determine a fact.

The last question is the most important in this section. Newspapers tell a great deal about early life in any community. The students will enjoy reading the prices in advertisements,

and announcements of meetings, rallies, revival meetings, faith-healers and other groups. They will be amazed at the articles about the Negro and of the low esteem in which he was held. They will quickly find that the newspapers gave a nearly complete story of the social life of the town.

After analyzing the data from this inquiry, the students generate certain hypotheses. Among these are that newspapers give a fairly detailed picture of political, social, and economic life in the community. They also conclude that newspapers are, in general, very biased in what they report. They see that the cost of living was much lower and that public racial slurs were not only tolerated, but frequently expressed.

Phase Three--Analysis of Inquiry

In this particular case the students inquire as to how would they know if the Bartow Advance Courier was the first paper in the county and that the Mulberry Herald was the first in Mulberry? They would be entirely correct to ask such a question. The teacher should then remove those questions from the inquiry at that time because, even though the Bartow Advance Courier was the first paper in the county, there is nothing on the microfilm to indicate that it was. The fact that the Mulberry Herald was not the first regularly published paper in Mulberry points out the fallacy in such a question. The Polk County Historical Library has no copies of the Mulberry Journal, the actual first paper in Mulberry.

The teacher can reintroduce the question later to provide further inquiry until such time that the truth is reached.

Through analyzing their inquiry, the students constantly learn to improve upon the inquiry method. Questions which are unanswerable at first often become answerable after additional inquiry, thus promoting accuracy in historical inquiry.

Source of Inquiry: Maps

Phase One--Encountering the Problem

The problem, basically stated, is to find out what maps tell about local history. The geography of Mulberry, as of any community, is an important part of its history. The rivers, swamps, phosphate pits, mineral wealth, and climate are just a few of the things that maps show about the development of a community. Old maps are a valuable source of local history, and display certain facts which are part of the history of the community. "No local history study will have maximum effectiveness without the use of maps. Proficiency in reading maps and interpreting map symbols are essential skills"¹⁶ that the history of Mulberry and frontier Florida help promote. Orienting the pupils to the Mulberry of the past in relation to the Mulberry of the present is an important aspect of the use of maps.

For this particular "explanation-form" in historical inquiry, this author has chosen five maps showing the Mulberry

¹⁶Brown and Tyrrell, op. cit., p. 8.

area at different points in history. These maps may be distributed to each student, or by modern means of reproduction, slides may be made from the maps so that they can be displayed for general viewing. Whichever method is used, the students will come up with many of the same questions.

Phase Two--Inquiry Through Questioning, Collecting and Analyzing Data, and Generating Hypotheses

A variation of the inquiry questioning is employed here, allowing the students to come up with questions from the maps, and address their questions to other students in the classroom.¹⁷ The students' questions might include the following: Were the boundaries of Florida the same in 1765 as today? (Fig. 19); What names on the 1794 map are still in use today? (Fig. 20); What settlements were there in Polk County in 1882, and what do they tell you about life in the area at that time? (Fig. 21); Where was the nearest railroad to Mulberry in 1886? (Fig. 22); What was the name of the railroad from Bartow to Punta Gorda in 1886? (Fig. 22); What can you learn about the subdivision of Florida land? (Fig. 23); How accessible was Mulberry by automobile in 1917? (Fig. 23).

All of these questions can be answered by looking at the maps on the following pages. All students might not be equally experienced at map reading, and this must be taken

¹⁷It is very effective if the teacher provides a current map of the area being studied, so that students compare the past with the present. Local gasoline stations are generally willing to supply these maps.

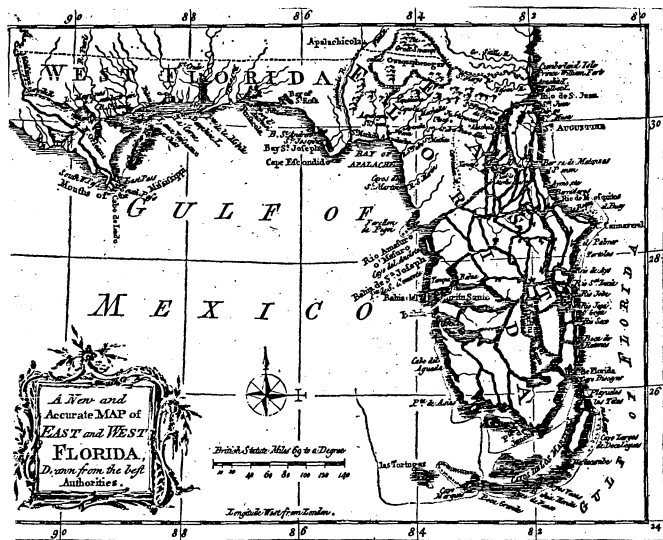


Fig. 19.--Map of Florida drawn for the March, 1765, edition of London Magazine. Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

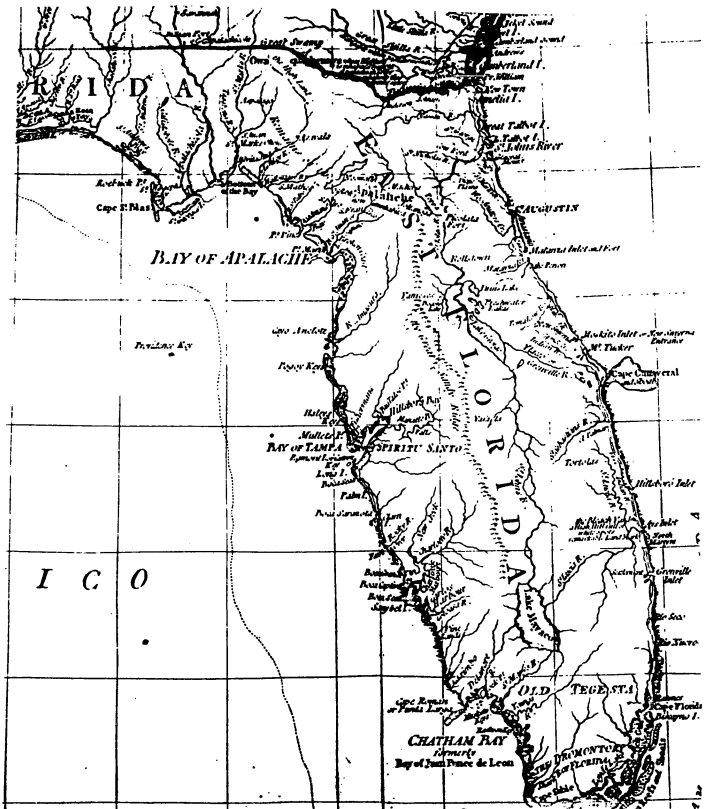


Fig. 20.--1794 map of Florida by Laurie and Whittle of London. Courtesy of Polk County Historical Library.

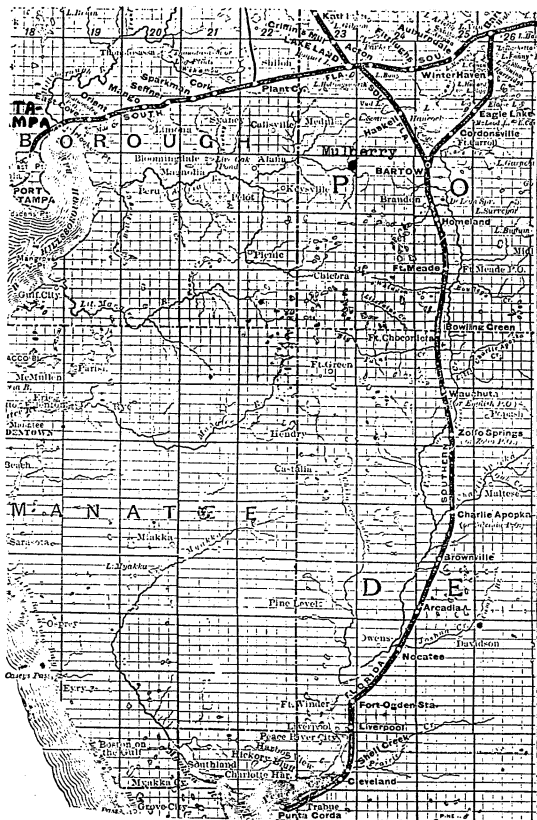


Fig. 22.--Railroads in southwestern Florida about 1886.
Courtesy of Thomas Gaskins.

into consideration by the teacher. During this second phase, it is essential to remember that the teacher is only to help the students to inquire, and to be sure not to do the inquiring for the students. The teacher can keep the inquiry moving by making new information (i.e., new maps) available to the class, and by "focusing particular problem events or raising questions."¹⁸

Phase Three--Analysis of the Inquiry Strategy

The students decide whether or not their inquiries taught them anything of historical value. If there were some maps that were not helpful in the inquiry process, they were discarded and new ones brought in. The students may decide that there are certain things they would like to know that their maps do not show. It is the duty of the teacher to tell the students where to find maps that will answer their questions. In this way those students who are interested in doing so will have the opportunity to become involved in further inquiry and analysis of maps as a source for local history.

Source of Inquiry: Oral History

Phase One--Encountering the Problem

Oral history is the name given to the process of acquiring historical information by conducting personal interviews with citizens having a first-hand knowledge of

¹⁸Joyce and Weil, op. cit., p. 149

certain historical events. The use of portable cassette recorders greatly enhances this method of inquiry. The problem is for the students to obtain complete and accurate information during their interview. To achieve this goal, they "must establish a situation that will be conducive to free and uninhibited discussion." The student interviewers must constantly "strive to obtain from the informant an easy flow of accurate ideas, facts, and statements."¹⁹ The use of the ten-point system for each interview is helpful. In the case of an oral interview, some modifications in the system are necessary, as indicated below.

1. Location--Tom Gaskin's Cypress Kneeland, Palmdale, Florida. This tourist attraction is approximately two-hours driving time from Mulberry on U. S. Highway 27, about 40 miles south of Sebring.

2. Telephone No.--813-675-2952.

3. Contact person--Thomas Gaskins, Sr.

4. Time to call--8 a.m. to 7 p.m., seven days a week.

5. Length of visit--Unlimited.

6. Number of students--no more than twenty at any one time.

7. Materials available--Personal interview with Thomas Gaskins, Sr. Gaskins settled on Fisheating Creek forty years ago when it was frontier wilderness much like

¹⁹Tyrrell, Tape Recording Local History, p. 2.

Mulberry had been fifty years before that. He relates stories of Indians, cowboys, and frontier living experienced by him as well as stories he heard from his father who had settled on the Peace River near Arcadia in the 1880's. Gaskins made his own house out of hand-rived cypress shingles and still lives in it with his wife. He evinces the extreme individualism of a bygone era.

8. Services available--Oral interview and picture taking.

9. Trip outline--Tour of Gaskin's shop, home and museum, as well as taped interview.

10. Date of trip, other comments--Feb. 16, 1974. Visit and interview gives the students a vivid mental picture of how life must have been on the Florida frontier.

Of course, the interview with Gaskins is only one instance of an oral interview. There are people like him in nearly every corner of this country.

Phase Two--Inquiry Through Questioning, Collecting and Analyzing Data, and Generating Hypotheses

By questioning persons such as Gaskins, students become aware of the process of oral history through inquiry. This is one example where historical inquiry is made most explicit to the student. When questioning someone who obviously has knowledge of the past, the students sense that the historical process is a vibrant, living thing. It is no longer something written by someone else about something that is not contingent with current life.

The two chief methods of obtaining information by interview are the autobiographical inquiry and the topical inquiry. In the autobiographical, as in the interview with Thomas Gaskins, the interviewer is encouraged to speak freely and in detail about his experiences and observations. Often, because he relates incidents as he remembers them, his account is rambling and contains many irrelevancies. The major advantage of this method is that the informant frequently discloses particulars that he might not otherwise reveal. The student interviewer is not actually essential to the interview.²⁰ This author simply left a tape with Gaskins and asked him to record things as he thought of them, and then later picked up the tape. This is not as effective if the interviewer has certain questions he wants answered, as is generally the case with the topical approach.

In the topical approach, the interview is limited to specific topics. The student interviewers go into the interview knowing exactly what they are going to ask, and do not vary appreciably from their intended form of questioning.²¹

After successfully interviewing several persons, the students sift through their information to see what they have found out by obtaining from living citizens their remembrances of the past. After analyzing the information from all the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 5.

²¹ Ibid.

interviews, the students propose certain hypotheses of what they feel the interviews have shown. Their hypotheses, if their interviews were inconclusive or contradictory, might be that the interviewees were too old to be considered accurate sources of inquiry. Hopefully, this is not the case and the students conclude that historical inquiry through oral interviews are valid means of historical research.

Phase Three--Analysis of the Inquiry Strategy

If the interviews were successful, the students will be satisfied with their work. More times than not, however, they will discover that some of their questions were irrelevant and through trial and error they will develop more effective strategies.

The oral interview does not have to be obtained by the students themselves. A tape can be played in class by the instructor and inquiry will result from listening to the tape. The instructor may have made the interview himself, or he might have obtained it from another source. Columbia University has prepared a list of organizations throughout the country that have collected oral history which relates to a number of topics. Among the organizations listed are the American Psychiatric Association, with recordings of the recent history of psychiatry; the Eleutherian Mills-Hagley Foundation, with recordings of regional history; the Ford Motor Company, with recordings of the life and times of

Henry Ford; and the John F. Kennedy library, with more than 150 interviews on President Kennedy's life and administration.²²

Recordings such as these, as well as recordings taped by the students themselves, can be played before a class with much effectiveness. The researcher must take special care to make sure that the sound quality on the tapes is good. It was the experience of this author that much good information was lost because of poor sound quality on the tapes making them hard to understand and of little value in the classroom. This experience was an excellent example of how analyzing the inquiry strategy led to the development of a more effective strategy. Future recordings by this author will be checked at intervals to assure that the audibility of the tapes is such that they can be used in a classroom situation.

Source of Inquiry: Slides

Phase One--Encountering the Problem

Slides can be used either as a data-gathering operation, whereby the students take pictures for use in explaining local history, or as a presentation program, where the teacher invites inquiry from the students. The data-gathering operation provides the students with another example of historical inquiry through research, while the teacher-prepared slide

²²Oral History in the United States, a report from the Oral History Research Office of Columbia University (New York: University Press, 1965).

presentation invites inquiry as to the "how" and "why" of gathering slides. The problem here is for the student to obtain slides which can be used in presenting local history in the classroom.

The development of a good slide presentation involves a number of factors including "format, audio considerations, intended use, budget, script, source of materials, production problems, and presentation methods."²³ The students work out a system whereby they present their own slide program.

Phase Two--Inquiry Through Questioning, Collecting and Analyzing Data, and Generating Hypotheses

The students first inquire as to what makes good material for slides of local history. They begin by taking pictures of any old buildings they can find. The architecture of a town can often tell an interesting story. In the case of Mulberry, when the students see pictures of some of the homes, they become aware of the fact that the standard of living in Mulberry is not very high. A look at the business section of town would show the students that there appeared to be a declining economy. Slides of the present state of the Alafia River demonstrate that navigation is no longer possible, a further cause for decay. Pictures of phosphate operations show the condition of the land during such

²³Arthur L. Smith, "Producing the Slide Show," Technical Leaflet 42, History News, XXII No. 6 (June, 1967), 1.

operations, while pictures of land mined decades ago illustrate the long-range results of mining on the land.

After the students have taken pictures of every feasible present structure or area, they take pictures of early scenes in the community. If the college provides appropriate camera equipment, this can be done right on campus. Otherwise, the student either rents a camera, or hires the services of someone skilled in the art of photography. Imagine the inquiries resulting from slides showing a picture of Main Street in Mulberry with horses at the hitching post, or of an old dredge on Peace River, or of the citrus trees after the "big freeze" of 1895, or of J. Driggers standing in a dragline bucket, or of Fort Meade in 1880. All of these scenes are photographs obtained from citizens of the community and reproduced as slides for viewing in the classroom. These slides cannot stand alone--there must be information given about them. "Who or what is the subject; where and when was the scene made? Complete information must accompany the view if it is to stand as historical evidence."²⁴ Unfortunately, complete identification is not always possible, but whatever information is known should be given by the student giving the presentation.

The possibilities of combining slide presentations with oral taped interviews is an exciting one. When an "old-timer" is talking about some past incident, a slide of

²⁴Brown and Tyrrell, op. cit., p. 7.

the location of the event or of a person involved heightens the interest of the viewers. Stories of refugees from justice hiding in swamps become real when the class is confronted with a picture of some of the swampland in the area. Orange groves and cattle grazing both become more vivid when projected on the screen. Taped interviews can often be integrated with slide presentations. When Tom Gaskins spoke on tape about building his own home out of cypress logs, the students appreciate seeing a picture of the house while Gaskins talks about it. When he spoke of the old highway through Polk County to Arcadia, a slide of the remains of that highway gives the class an excellent idea of what it must have looked like.²⁵

The hypotheses reached through developing a slide program are that slides are of use not only to inquire into the local past, but to serve as an instrument of historical preservation. The student has experienced not only the "how and why" of inquiry, but the value of preserving pictures of the present (and the past) for use by future historians.

Phase Three--Analysis of the Inquiry Strategy

When the students prepare their own slide shows and present them before the class, they are exposed to twice the amount of historical inquiry as when the instructor does the preparing. The students must inquire as to where to get the

²⁵Thomas Gaskins, owner of Cypress Kneeland, personal interview with the author, Palmdale, Florida, Feb. 14, 1974.

slides, how to present them, whether they are historically relevant, and what use can be made of them in the future. When the students watch a classmate's presentation, they inquire as to his sources, methods, etc., so that by the time the unit is completed, each student will have learned a great deal about historical inquiry through the procurement and use of slides.

If certain slides do not suit the intended purpose, they are either removed or used in a different context. "Few if any slide productions achieve perfection upon first assembly."²⁶ Time should be allowed for remakes, additions and deletions. If this is done, it will greatly reduce the amount of strategy revision usually necessary in phase three.

General Applicability of the Model

The five examples of a history inquiry model that have been presented here are only a small sample of what can be done with local history. This model is designed for and is most useful for attempts to teach students some methods of historical inquiry. It helps the students analyze their own inquiry and compare the effectiveness of different methods of inquiry. At the same time, however, the model is applicable for the teaching of an open-ended attitude toward inquiry, a receptivity to the examination of one's own research

²⁶Smith, "Slide Show," p. 3.

by others, and a willingness to examine it oneself. Consequently, side effects of the inquiry training model should be "improvement in interpersonal relations and in the openness of the self toward new possibilities, especially new possibilities for organizing data and relating to other people over it."²⁷

This model was designed specifically to teach college students to improve their strategies of historical inquiry and to nurture a spirit of creativity and independence in learning. There are other possible values, but these two are so predominant and clear that any other possible effects seem subordinate.

In some areas of the country, or in some colleges, a unit in local history might not prove effective, but it is worth experimenting with to be sure. Such an experiment would not be without its difficulties. Materials for student use in some areas might be difficult to find. Student interest might not be as high in some places as in others, though it can be made higher if materials are available and the instructor is sufficiently enthusiastic. Motivation in a history class could be enhanced greatly by centering historical inquiry projects, such as those suggested previously, on the study of the region.²⁸ Properly planned, any unit in local history will focus on important historical skills and help familiarize

²⁷Joyce and Weil, op. cit., p. 150.

²⁸Haefner, op. cit., p. 383.

students with significant primary sources in their area.

"Whatever promises to help resolve the perennial problem of 'depth within breadth' in the American history course is worth trying experimentally, no matter how difficult."²⁹

There are a number of models by which a teacher can teach other than by lecture. The college history teacher must "bring his venerated lecture notes up-to-date in the light of recent historical research." He must reassess his methods and purposes, re-emphasize fundamental concepts, take advantage of the values of biography, maximize the use of historical inquiry, and stimulate creativity in his students. He must never forget that many of his students will become high-school classroom teachers who should be "more effective teachers because they have been under his instruction."³⁰

The story of Mulberry and frontier Florida is a part of the story of America, just as all local history is a part of national history. This story, and the teaching model of how it can be used, can be helpful to any college teacher of history. Naturally, because of its narrow scope, it is more valuable to historians and teachers in Polk County and the immediate vicinity. Any of the five colleges in Polk County could use this model to teach their students not only how to use historical inquiry, but to nurture creativity and

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 387.

independence in learning while finding out something about the past of where they are living.

The specific example of Mulberry and frontier Florida can be used as a local history of southwestern Polk County, and a model for teaching historical inquiry. It can also be used in an American history survey course to teach generalizations about the American frontier. The similarities between the Florida frontier and the western frontier are numerous, as this study has shown. The use of this story as a microcosm of frontier America can be a valuable asset in any American history class. This use of local history, both as a microcosm and as a teaching model, will hopefully create additional interest in the teaching of local history--not only in Polk County, but in colleges throughout the country.

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