

HISTORY OF THE EVERGLADES

Their First and Only Thorough Exploration.

Life Led by Two Banished Seminoles Who Were Not Without Family Pride.

A few years ago the writer joined a party sent out by the New Orleans Times-Democrat for the purpose of exploring the Everglades, a feat which up to that time had never been successfully accomplished. We started from the Atlantic coast, 200 miles south of St. Augustine, and crossed to the Gulf of Mexico, a distance, on a straight line, of less than 80 miles, but by the wanderings we were forced to follow many times that distance. We started on December 10th and expected to reach the Gulf in time, by catching a convenient steamer from Key West, to reach home by way of Tampa, in time for Christmas. There were four of us, all newspaper writers, in the party besides four negroes who were taken along to do the heavy work. Before being out a week we realized that the undertaking was a much greater one than we had anticipated, and we further realized that if we gazed at the blue water of the Gulf by the first of January we would be fortunate, for way was beset by cypress swamps, marshes and lagoons to such an extent that our progress was very slow, some days not over two miles headway being made. On the 11th day out and nearly in the very center of the Everglades we came upon the remnant of that once powerful and warlike Indian tribe, the Seminoles, the village at that time consisting of about 300 souls, many of them descendants of the old warriors famed in history, Chiefs Micanopy and Billy Bowlegs. Many of the women and younger men of the tribe had never before seen a white man, but were too curiously disposed to manifest curiosity to any extent. When they found they could not sell us alligator hides, about the only article of commerce they had, they had no further use for us with the result that we soon continued our journey. For the first two days after leaving the Seminole village traveling was fairly good and we covered in that time about 25 miles, as nearly as we could estimate from the cyclometers on our wading boots.

About noon of the 24th we came to a small island perhaps half a mile across and several feet higher than the surrounding country. It was thickly grown over with palm, date, cabbage-palmetto, cocoanut and banana trees, the fruit of the last two being perfectly ripe and very abundant. Major Williams who was city editor of the Times-Democrat and whose guest I was on the expedition, suggested that, as we were not to enjoy Christmas dinner in civilization, we camp on the island until after that festive day and until the morning of the 26th. As the entire country abounded in wild turkeys I volunteered to supply one for our Christmas dinner and for that purpose shouldered a gun and left camp about the middle of the afternoon, promising to return by 6 o'clock. I left the island on which we were camped by a log which lay across a dark, deep, "inking" lagoon, thinking, of course, that I would have no trouble in finding the natural foot bridge when I wished to return. I had probably gone a mile or more when my search for a turkey was rewarded, and I brought down a fowler that, were he in Dawson today would be worth \$20.

With the trophy of the hunt swinging from the barrel of the gun on my shoulder I started to retrace my steps, expecting to reach the foot bridge in 15 minutes and the camp a half hour later. As I walked briskly along I probably spent more time in thinking of a dark-haired maiden in the north and wondering how she would appreciate some alligator jewelry I had sent her as a Christmas present than I did to following the route I had passed over in quest of the turkey I carried. My mind must have been wandering, for, after walking fully an hour without coming to the foot bridge I suddenly realized that I was lost and that in another hour the sun would have gone to rest and I would be alone in the Everglades where in the dark hours of night slimy snakes of the most poisonous varieties glide hither and thither and the heavy, malaria-laden air was resonant with the scream of the panther.

There was no time to be lost, so altering my course I rushed in another direction but in a short time to a lagoon in which alligator noses were as

numerous as stars on a clear night, and I was again forced to change my course. By this time the sun was getting very low and, as for myself, I was hopelessly lost. Still I wandered on, now wading through dark serpent infested water from two inches to two feet deep, now plunging through a cane brake and now climbing over fallen timber on higher ground. But to no avail. The more I tried to put myself right, the more hopelessly I appeared to lose myself. I fired my gun to signal anyone within hearing and several dozen owls laughed around me and a snake rattled angrily within six feet of where I stood and immediately in front of me. By this time the sun was down and, as there is but little twilight in that country, darkness was rapidly coming on. But I changed my course and got some distance away from the spot where I had heard the rattle and sat down on a log to study the situation which was made all the more perplexing by the fact that a couple of panthers, one on each side of me, hopped up on the log and joined me in my study of the situation as they complacently licked their chops and fanned the breeze with their long, striped tails. My quarters were beginning to get very uncomfortable when an approaching light gleamed through the gathering malaria. Nearer it came and I muttered a brief prayer of thanksgiving as I realized that it was a light wood torch borne by an Indian followed by his squaw, who was carrying a number of birds valuable only for their plumage.

As the light approached the panthers slinked off into the brush from whence the gleaming of their eyes, like beacon lights, could be distinctly seen. I arose from the log and made my presence known to the Indian couple and had but little difficulty in gaining their consent to take care of me for the night, the old man understanding and speaking English quite well. Telling me to follow them they proceeded and in a few minutes walk we reached their home which was an ingenious structure made from bamboo and Spanish moss. Without going into detail regarding the surroundings of this peculiar family I will relate its rather strange history as gleaned by me from the old man while the old woman, her feet encased in rattlesnake skin moccasins, was worming some half dried fish and otherwise preparing a late supper.

Okeechoee, which was the name of the man, had, with his wife, Withlacoochee, been banished from the Seminole village half a century before owing to the belief of the chief of the tribe that Okeechoee had designs on his position. The old man's story was substantially as follows, Withlacoochee turning every few moments to give a silent nod of approval.

"For 50 years I have not visited my tribe or in any way associated with its members. The chief was not afraid of me getting his place; it was her he wanted (nodding his head towards Withlacoochee, who in turn smiled softly to herself) and when she chose me we were banished and came here and settle where we have ever since lived, going to Tampa once each year to sell plumes, the collection of which has always been our occupation. As the country abounds in game and fish we have managed to live easily and without great effort.

"The losses by death of our children have been the greatest trials of our lives. Of 18 children born to us, but two ever lived to grow up, the remaining 16 being removed by alligators while in the toddling days of young childhood. The two who grew to manhood, Chatlahasee and Okifinokee, were the pride of our lives and when Chatlahasee was taken, our pride and love all centered in Okifinokee. While engaged in his usual business, capturing snakes, which he shipped to the Smithsonian Institute, he was bitten by a cotton-mouth moccasin and ten minutes later was dead. Okifinokee was all we had left and on him we lavished all our love and affection. During two years he made the annual trading trip to Tampa and made good bargains, but it was his ruination. On his return, the last time he brought with him a package of cigarettes. Two days later he took to saying 'eyther' and 'neyther.' He was nothing more to us, and, while he slept, we placed our moccasins near his nose and he was asphyxiated.

Having finished his story the old man hove a sigh and was silent. Withlacoochee turned to, tell us supper was ready and on either cheek was a clean streak by which I knew that tears had been flowing.

Next morning the old couple conducted me back to the island and to my comrades who had given me up as having gone to the better land via the alligator route. For their kindness to me I presented Okeechoee with my shotgun and Withlacoochee with my pocket knife and six-bits. To me that day was not only Christmas, but Thanksgiving as well. The turkey I had brought back, however, turned out to be a turkey-buzzard instead of the table variety.

On December 30th we reached the Gulf coast, being the first and only ex-

pedition to penetrate the Everglades from coast to coast. The following winter I returned by way of Dry Tortugas and had the pleasure of killing what I believe to be the identical pair of panthers that kept me company on the log: I preserved their skins and but for them I honestly think I would have frozen last night. E. J. W.

Prefers Death to Cold.
Spokane, Nov. 22.—George Melvin, a well-known miner, lost in a snow storm and suffering from exposure, ended his suffering by placing a revolver in his mouth and sending a bullet into his brain. Melvin, with a companion named J. G. Ranson, left Republic Monday on a deer hunt. The next day they were caught in a storm, and after hours of wandering Melvin's strength gave out.

Ranson left him to search for help, found his way back to Republic and started out with a rescuing party. Melvin's corpse was found a few miles out from the town, the body still warm.

Divorce Troubles Ended.
Spokane, Nov. 22.—The divorce troubles of William J. Harris, the wealthy mining man, ended today when Judge Prather approved stipulations dismissing six suits aggregating nearly \$300,000 brought against Harris by his wife, and Judge Richardson granted her a decree of divorce. Harris agrees to give her \$125,000, as provided in the original agreement, and settles \$25,000 upon her daughter Louise, besides paying the wife a large additional sum, the amount of which is kept secret.

Harris made his money in Rossland mines, being associated with Senator Turner and others in the War Eagle and Le Roi.

Robbers Got Dough.
Little Rock, Ark., Nov. 22.—Reports tonight from the vicinity of last night's train robbery on the St. Louis, Iron Mountain & Southern Railway, show that the robbers are still at large. The posse today was close to the fugitives and it was thought capture was certain.

Officers are confident that the robbers are still around Gifford, where the robbery occurred, and it is suspected one or more of the gang joined the posse to throw the authorities off the clue they are working on. Accurate descriptions of the men have been secured from the train crew and several arrests are likely to be made soon.

Gov. Jones could offer no reward today, the state's reward fund having been exhausted.

A Gazette special from Hot Springs tonight says:

"The indications are that the robbers of the express car on the Iron Mountain train last night near Malvern secured a large sum of money, though it was reported that only a small sum was taken. It is known positively that a man in Hot Springs telephoned to Malvern, just before the north bound train arrived yesterday afternoon, to ascertain if the express company would have the large safe in the car en route north opened and deposit therein \$15,000, which he desired to send away. The agent at Malvern replied that the safe was to go through and would not be opened.

The money was sent and hence must have been placed in the small safe, which was blown to pieces and robbed of its contents.

That Second Avenue Blaze.
Dawson, Y. T., Dec. 15.

Editor Nugget:

In your last night's issue it was stated that the A. C. Co. had a stream of water at work on the O'Neil building before the department hose arrived. This is absolutely untrue. The fire department made the run from No. 2 hall in the quickest time on record, laid hose from the engine, stationed at the foot of Fourth street and took their stream in the alley between First and Second avenues (which was the only place from which water should have been directed, as it was a natural safety break between the two halves of the block), and had their water before the A. C. Co. had their's. Further No. 2 hose had both their regular hoses. How your correspondent obtained his information is a mystery, as I was present and saw the thing from start to finish. Yours very truly,
A. W. H. WORLD.

Notice.

Notice is hereby given that a list of all placer mining claims in the Yukon territory which were sold at public auction and which have not been taken up, is being prepared for publication at once, and after the first publication thereof no grant will be issued, under such sale as aforesaid, for any claim so advertised. All purchasers are, therefore, notified to apply for their grants immediately.

(Signed) J. LANGLOIS BELL,
Assistant Gold Commissioner.
Dated at Dawson this 14 day of December, 1900.

Six varieties fresh vegetables at Meeker's.

Going to Whitehorse with a fast dog team; one passenger wanted. Apply E. M. Culbertson, Belmont, Third avenue.

Meeker delivers fresh vegetables up creeks.
\$3—Mumm's extra dry champagne, \$3 per bottle, at Aurora No. 1.

Public Notice.
Under ordinance No. 38, of 1900, an ordinance respecting vaccination, two public vaccinators have been appointed, namely, Dr. Macfarlane, First avenue, Dawson, for Dawson and neighborhood, and Dr. La Chapelle at Grand Forks, for Bonanza and Eldorado with their tributaries.

All residents in those districts who have not complied with the said ordinance in procuring declaration or cer-

tificates according to schedules A or B of said ordinance before the end of the year shall be dealt with according to the provisions of said ordinance.

Dated at Dawson this 13th day of December, 1900.

J. H. MACARTHUR, M. C. H.
Dr. Macfarlane's hours in office daily, 10 to 12 a. m., 2 to 4 p. m., 6 to 8 p. m.

A new and large jewelry store now occupied by Lindeman; Monte Carlo building.

Mumm's, Pomeroy or Perinet champagnes \$5 per bottle at the Regina Club hotel.

THE TACOMA BOYS

YOU CAN HOLD US UP

If we don't succeed in Pleasing and Satisfying You in every particular.

CLARKE & RYAN, GROCERS
Corner 6th St. and 2nd Ave.

For the Best Bargains in Groceries and Provisions to be obtained in town.

OUR MONEY IS YOURS

THE TACOMA BOYS

Now Girls

If you're going to give Benny or George or Charlie a Christmas Present, just let us whisper a word of advice.

Cut Out....

Those silk cuff boxes, handkerchief cases, embroidered neckties.

GIVE HIM a Good Pipe or a box of Good Cigars, if he smokes; A Razor or Shaving Set, or may be a pair of Military Brushes will be appreciated by him.

We have just what he would like.

Alaska Commercial COMPANY

Telephone 23

"White Pass and Yukon Route."

A Daily Train Each Way Between Whitehorse and Skagway

COMFORTABLE UPHOLSTERED COACHES

NORTH—Leave Skagway daily, except Sundays, 8:30 a. m., Bennett 12:15 a. m. Arrive at Whitehorse, 5:15 p. m.

SOUTH—Leave Whitehorse daily, except Sundays, 8:00 a. m., Bennett 1:25 p. m. Arrive at Skagway, 4:40 p. m.

E. G. HAWKINS, General Manager S. M. IRWIN, Traffic Manager J. H. ROGERS, Agent

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Telegraph Is Quicker

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And All Way Points.

Have a 'phone in your house—The lady of the house can order all her wants by it.

Business Phones, \$25 Per Month
Residence Phones, \$15 Per Month

Office, Telephone Exchange, next to A. C. Office Building.
DONALD B. OLSON, General Manager

Xmas Goods

I have just opened a case of Quadruple Plate Silverware in

Jewel Powder Boxes
Smoker Sets
Moccasin Jars
Children's Mugs
Photo Frames
Ink Stands, Etc., etc.

I have a large line of useful articles for Christmas Gifts

Cies, Fur Mitts
Slippers, Handkerchiefs
Smoking Jackets, Etc., etc.

J. P. McLENNAN.

Miners Attention!

MEET THE BOYS AT HOME
When in town they stop at

Hotel Flannery

HADLEY'S STAGE LINE Leaves Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for Gold Run, Dominion, Etc., reasonable rates from Hotel Office.

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SECOND ST. G. Vernon, Prop.

Wall Paper... Paper Hanging

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WE HAVE

1 40 H. P. Locomotive Boiler

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also TWO 12 H. P. PIPE BOILERS

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