

# A School Teacher's Diary

186 Days of the Life of Frank Watt Hall,  
Teacher of the Little Marco Community  
Lee County, Florida

*This is the transcribed diary of Frank Watts Hall who from October 17, 1898 through April 13, 1899 was the school teacher for the Little Marco community of Lee County Florida, now Collier County. A copy of the original document was donated to the Marco Island Historical Museum by Mr. Byron Hall, great grandson of Frank Watt Hall.*

*Henderson Creek was newly settled in 1898-1899. The first homesteads had just been perfected and for the first time private land sales were possible. At this time the Little Marco community was one of several "centers of population" in south Lee County, the others being in the vicinity of and in connection with the Naples Hotel, at Old Marco Village in conjunction with Capt. Bill Collier's store, at Everglade on the Allyn River and on Chokoloskee Island.*

*There were no roads of any kind. All commerce was by water in shallow draft boats; rowing or sailing. There was no hard currency. It was a time of subsistence living. People hunted, speared or netted fish (in cast nets), gathered oysters and clams and tried to garden. There was almost no livestock as farm animals were quickly consumed by panthers, foxes, raccoons, opossums, alligators, snakes, mosquitos and horseflies. Any excess was taken to be sold at Capt. W. D. Collier's store in old Marco Village for credit. There was no way to preserve fish except salting and no way to catch many fish in the first place.*

*Cindy Carroll transcribed the original hand written diary in early 2013. Ray Carroll added these comments and together they added footnotes, images, maps and such. Cindy and Ray are the great grandchildren of Jim Carroll (James Madison Carroll) once mentioned herein and Walter Carroll is their great uncle; the younger half-brother of James Madison Carroll.*

*In February 1896 the Carroll family left Limestone near Arcadia and traveled by ox cart intending to homestead land at Royal Palm Hammock. When they reached Henderson Creek the Kirklands informed them that there was no road to Royal Palm Hammock. Today the Carroll family owns Bear Hammock on Henderson Creek Bay, about 1.5 mile downstream from the Kirkland home site that was teacher Hall's temporary residence.*

Here begins the diary..



This picture of Alice Eliza Baldwin Hall and Frank Watts Hall was taken April 26, 1928 in Lake Worth, Florida.

Alice Hall, my grandmother, was a state licensed 18 year old 1<sup>st</sup> grade teacher in Surveyors Creek, Florida (later called Estero) before marrying my grandfather Frank Watts Hall. Alice Baldwin's family homesteaded in Ft. Denaud and owned citrus groves. Frank Watts' family homesteaded property near the little community of Caloosa now known as Alva, Florida. His family had citrus groves and a nursery. After marrying Alice they lived in Caloosa until they built and moved into a large two story house in LaBelle, Florida across from what is now the Swamp Cabbage Celebration Park. They had 5 sons and 1 daughter. During their lives, they owned the LaBelle Mercantile building and business, the local Texaco Service Station, the local movie theater that was often operated by my father when he was an early teenager. They owned substantial local property, two community developments, and other business activities until the great depression made life much more difficult.

Alice passed away in 1954 and Watts in 1939.

FROM FEB. 5 TO OCT. 10 many funny things have occurred.

October 10, 1898 Tuesday

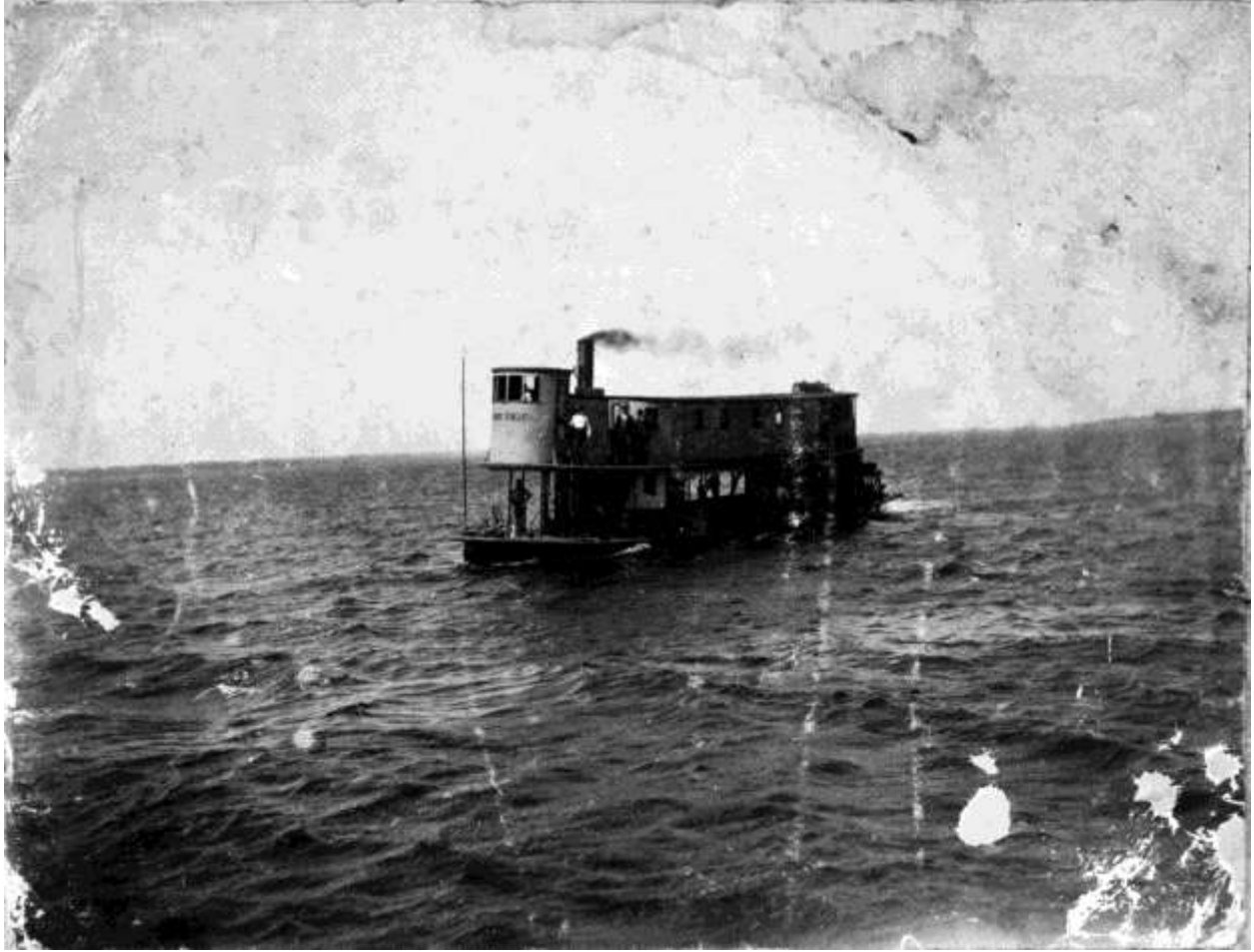
Left wharf on Louise<sup>1</sup> at one o'clock. Had pleasant trip until just below jetties when crank pin of engine broke. Tied up to channel stake and waited until Grey Eagle came and towed us into Myers. Busy all evening.



*The Louise in dry dock at Miami 1901*

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<sup>1</sup> The Louise, the Grey Eagle, and the Caloosa were paddle wheel steamboats of the Menge Brothers Line carrying passengers and freight on the Caloosahatchee River and along the Gulf coast.



*Grey Eagle 1890*

October 11, 1898 Wednesday

Left Myers on steamer Caloosa. Met Mr. Sparkman, Senator Pasco, and Mr. Call. Annie A. was going to her school at Boca Grande. Reached Punta Rassa on time. Went to see Sallie Kellum (Kallum). Found her somewhat changed, but a very good girl. Spent nearly all my time in her company, had a pleasant time. W.



*The Caloosa in about 1900*

October 11, 1898 Wednesday (second entry for this date)

Spent most of day with Sallie. Near made her mad before I knew it by saying “mean things” about girls in general<sup>2</sup>. Left Punta Rassa at dark just after a little boat ride with Laura Gonzalez. Wind held up until six miles off Naples and then died out.

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<sup>2</sup> Apparently nothing about life has really changed

October 12, 1898 Thursday

Were becalmed off Naples until half past one in afternoon. Sailor Four and I rowed into Naples with the mail. Met Ed Blount and family there and ate dinner with them. Jennie Moore (of Joe Bostick fame; wow!!) was one of their party. Rowed out two miles and met schooner coming in, boarded her and went on to Marco, got there at 4:30 in the evening. Saw Miss Vick<sup>3</sup> very soon after landing. Capt. Collier<sup>4</sup> and wife are very pleasant. Had a good time with them for the Halls<sup>5</sup> came over bringing their musical instruments.



*Capt. Collier's Store at Marco*

## **TWO DAYS MISSING HERE?**

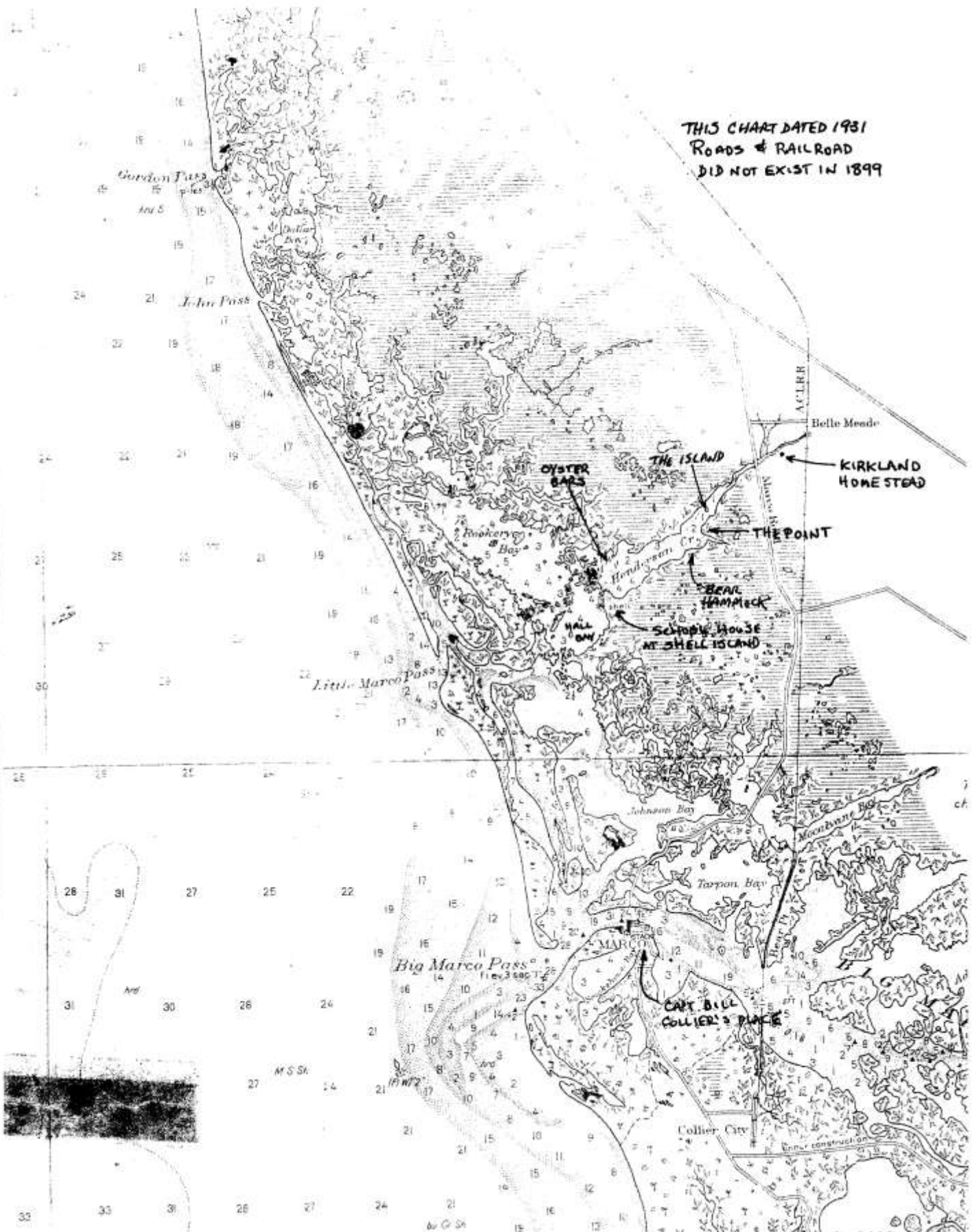
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<sup>3</sup> Mayme Vick was a school teacher based at Old Marco Village on Marco Island.

<sup>4</sup> Capt. Bill Collier who had a general store at Old Marco Village

<sup>5</sup> Probably the F. Hamond Hall family (no relation to Frank Watt Hall)

THIS CHART DATED 1931  
ROADS & RAILROAD  
DID NOT EXIST IN 1899





October 15, 1898 Sunday

Capt. Collier took me through his grove of three thousand cocoanut trees. A beautiful sight seen from water side. Secured some nuts to eat. Mr. Hart took Miss Vick and I to Little Marco<sup>6</sup> in his boat. Reached there at 10:30am. Ate dinner with Mr. Hart. Went over and looked at school house. Palmetto shack 20' x 30', modern seats, no stove, my desk a pine box on slender legs, no stove, water like tea after it has stood all day in kettle. In afternoon came on up to Mr. Kirk<sup>7</sup> (Kirkland) where I am to board. Five boys<sup>8</sup>, one roomed house, four beds, two trunks, one table, nine cats, four dogs, Hunters by trade, plenty of venison to eat, Two boys each killed a deer today. Odor of dead meat all around, several million of "skeeters". Felt sad and wrote to Penny; wanted to see her mighty bad.

October 16, 1898 Monday

Wrote to Alice<sup>9</sup> and to Helen, did a little washing this morning and patched two holes in the seat of my winter pants<sup>10</sup>. My first attempt at patching and think I did very well. There was a slight pucker around patches but that did not matter. The boys went to town to do business, this day (Sunday) being the chief business day in this section.

October 17, 1898 Tuesday

My first day as a teacher. Had eight pupils and they were very good, all are bright children. I will try to make my pupils learn something; but somehow I seem incompetent. I must learn. All the pupils are young except one girl of 17; she reminds me of Stella M. Had to keep a smoke in the school house all day to drive out the mosquitoes and sand flies. It rained in the afternoon and made the walk to the boat very unpleasant. I rowed nearly all the way home.

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<sup>6</sup> The place referred to as Little Marco is the Little Marco community composed of the group of homesteaders and squatters along Henderson Creek, on Hall Bay and including Johnson Island, Cannon Island and Little Marco island.

<sup>7</sup> Every mention of "Kirk" should be taken to mean Kirkland

<sup>8</sup> Reece Castillar, Noah William, George Washington, Daniel Jackson & Chester Arthur

<sup>9</sup> This is probably the Alice who later became Watt's wife.

<sup>10</sup> Two pairs of pants? Consider the amount of time Watt spent in those pants rowing while seated on a wooden bench. None of the seats were cushioned except for the fine alligator skin seats in the Kirkland home.

October 18, 1898 Wednesday

My second day gone. Things are beginning to run more smoothly. The pupils have studied their teacher and are now beginning to be mischievous. One child absent. Mosquitoes were terrible this morning but a wind sprang up near noon and by evening the mosquitoes had quieted down. We sailed most of the way home this evening. While writing this the smudge is nearly putting my eyes out but the "skeeters" have skipped out. The old man went hunting today but was unsuccessful. I discovered that my large pupil, Cora, has a lover. Am afraid she won't study much. Sailed all the way to school this morning; while sailing wrote two pages to Miss Andrew. The morning was cool and for once the "skeeters" were quiet. About noon a few began to visit the school.

The day was quite windy. I discovered a piece of an old sail which dropped down over the doorway and kept the wind out; a piece of scantling at the lower end held it down.

School is running more smoothly and I am feeling better over it.

October 19, 1898 Thursday

School went finely today. I forgot my umbrella this morning and before I reached school the rain began to fall and it has drizzled and poured all day long. We came home in the rain tonight. Sailed to the Point.<sup>11</sup> Secured the Ft. Myers Press today. "SKEETERS"! "SKEETERS"!! "SKEETERS"!!!

[October 20, 1898 Friday] (date missing)

No school today because it has rained nearly all the time. The rain began last night and just poured for several hours. Yesterday the woods were dry, and this morning everything was under water. The boys and I went hunting this morning for quail. We waded for several miles and secured a few birds. I also killed a rabbit. Nearly all my clothes are wet and things are very disagreeable. I see a northwest squall coming which means cold weather for a few days.

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<sup>11</sup> The Point is probably at the head of Henderson Creek Bay where Bear Hammock Creek and Henderson Creek come together and where Henderson Creek narrows.

October 21, 1898 Saturday

Today was Saturday but I had school in order to make up for yesterday. Had a fine sail down this morning for the wind was fair, had all I could stand and nearly upset the boat. After reaching Mr. H's (F. Hamond Hall's place on Shell Island) we had to go over to Mr. Hart's after the children. The day was very disagreeable and the children were very uncomfortable for the wind whistled in at all corners. Sailed nearly all the way back to the Island.<sup>12</sup> Cold enough to settle the "skeeters". Will try to finish my letter to Miss Andrew.

October 22, 1898 Sunday

Sunday, my second at Marco. I went to town<sup>13</sup> with Mr. Kirkland and the two boys today. We sailed down and beat all the wind we could stand. When just entering the Marco Pass a squall struck us and nearly capsized us. We were forced to let go the sheet rope and then we were driven on to a sand bar.

I took some books, The Religion of Geology, The Conspirators and The Conscripts to Miss Vick for her to read. I was at Capt. Collier's most of the time for we had to wait until the tide turned before we could beat back up the channel and bays. I brought some cocoanuts from Capt. C., six for a quarter, big fine ones. Ate dinner at Collier's and had a fine dinner too; was very glad to get it too after a week of greasy food.

We left Marco half hour by sun and tried to sail home, but the wind was too strong so we rowed; reached home at seven o'clock. Saw Capt. Hendry and Harvey Heitman in Marco. I met Mr. Ludlow and his wife. He has a pineapple farm at Caxambus.

October 23, 1898 Monday

School passed off well today, had some trouble with Ruby, Velma and Pearl, but only because they are so full of life. The morning was clear and fair, but near noon it became squally and rainy. Had quite a storm this afternoon. Sailed down this morning but had to beat and row back this evening. Discovered today that I

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<sup>12</sup> The Island referred to is a small island in Henderson Creek just northeast of The Point where the Creek narrows.

<sup>13</sup> Going to town consisted of rowing or sailing the 6.5 nautical miles from the Kirkland homestead to Capt. W. D. Collier's place on Marco Island.

do not understand teaching Grammer to beginners. It is the hardest study I have to teach well.

October 24, 1898 Tuesday

School progressed finely. I did not eat so much as usual and found my brain to be clearer. Sailed down this morning but had to row back this evening. Mosquitoes very bad today. A heavy rain falling tonight. Plenty of venison for Mr. Kirkland killed a deer yesterday which makes five since I came. Rover disappeared and has not been seen today.

October 25, 1898 Wednesday

No school today owing to the bad weather. Will have to make up for lost time next Saturday. A North Wester is coming up and the weather will be cold tomorrow I fear. We, the boys and I, practiced a few shots with the rifle today. I find I am not a very good marksman. Rover was found dead today and the boys think he was killed by a blow on the back of the neck which Mr. Kirkland struck him with a hatchet while in a fit of passion. The old man has a fierce temper and is continually yelling at the dogs and sometimes curses them. Everything is swimming and the water is all around the house. Pieces of dead meat are lying about the place making things somewhat disagreeable. Bah! How some people live. I would often write more of my mind but the boys are so impolite that they crowd around and begin to read what I write as soon as I start.

October 27, 1898 Thursday

School went well today. Had a spell of the "giggles" today and was as bad as my pupils almost but did succeed in keeping my dignity most of the time. Had only ½ hour of noon and no recess this afternoon so got out half hour sooner by so doing. Went past the bar and secured some "isters" (oysters) this evening and had a roast and a "raw gobble" after supper. I succeeded in disposing of at least twenty myself. Sailed down this morning with a fair wind. Claude's and Norah's books came today, also the Hart's children books.

October 28, 1898 Friday

Sailed down this morning with a fine wind. Stopped at Haymen's with some flour and lard for her to keep the family on until her hubby gets back, he having gone away to be gone for two weeks without leaving her or the children anything to eat. His father-in-law is not afraid to say that his son-in-law is one of the laziest and most shiftless of men<sup>14</sup>. Such is life. This evening as we came past we saw a fire near the bank and George said he supposed Mrs. Hall was cooking oysters for her and the family. Her name is the same as mine but I do not claim relations with her husband!!!

Will have no school tomorrow for some of the pupils wanted to work. Will have school next Saturday. Cora was sick today. I discovered that she knows Alice her family having lived at the Garvey's place at Denaud.

Mr. Kirkland came in this evening with two deer. He had left half of one in the woods it being too much for him to carry with the other. May go hunting tomorrow. Stopped out of a rain at Walter Collier's this evening. Rained for an hour.

October 29, 1898 Saturday

Went hunting today with the three oldest boys. Walked about 15 miles and saw nothing but an alligator and some bear signs. Shot at birds some this evening and the dogs treed a coon which I shot at long range. The boys led me to a place where a deer had been killed and I got the horns which are fine ones. We were caught in a rain and quite thoroughly drenched. Wasted much ammunition at trees and birds; killed a few larks. Did intend going down the bay and catching some mullet this evening but we finally decided not to.

Received a letter from home this evening. The boys were very much interested in whether my parents could read and write as well as I could. Their parents can't read or write very well and they seemed surprised that my parents could do such a thing. They gage the lives and accomplishments of other people by their own narrow and ignorant lives and environments. When I write in this diary of

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<sup>14</sup> Francis Hamond Hall was the son-in-law of Reese Kirkland having married Susan Ardella Kirkland March 9, 1893.

evenings, the boys say I am “letting my pig root a little” meaning the pig carved on the end of my log-oak pen staff which “Penny” brought from Ireland for me. Thoughtful, kind “Penny”.

October 30, 1898 Sunday

Went to the beach by Little Marco pass this morning and we three went bathing in the surf. Had a fine time against the breakers and enjoyed ourselves greatly. Found a few shells but nothing fine. I found a vine on the beach which was 111 feet long. It’s name I do not know but there are lots of them growing there.<sup>15</sup> Got a little wet coming back this evening for it is the wet season I know; still raining and likely to continue so for a few hours. Saw Jean<sup>16</sup> Johnson this evening. Discovered that Claude wants to be an officer in the Navy; hope he will get there. Had my algebra along but did not succeed in working the problem of the planets and sun.

October 31, 1898 Monday

Cool and windy with a north wind blowing today. Had a fine sail down this morning and a very nice time beating back this evening. Did not quite hit the landing this morning and were run into the bushes in a double quick hurry. The boat turned broadside to the waves and we shipped<sup>17</sup> considerable water before we could get out. The children built a table outside the school house today. Coming home Arthur said he “felt cold and wanted to fuzz up like a bird” ; a queer little fellow but spoiled and petted; rather shrewd for a ten year old. Teaching grammer is getting interesting now.

November 1, 1898 Tuesday

School went smoothly today, had a little trouble with Ruby, Velma and Claude, but only mischeviousness. Strong wind today, had a nice time to beat back this evening; got somewhat wet from waves and we took aboard some water. Wrote

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<sup>2</sup> This is probably Railroad Vine (*Ipomoea pes-caprae subsp. Brasiliensis*), a variety of morning glory commonly found on the beach berm.

<sup>16</sup> Later the author spells it Gene and that explains a lot. Apparently, Gene Johnson was Cora Hart’s “lover”. This would explain why Jean (or Gene) Johnson is mentioned to be at the Hall place so much.

<sup>17</sup> Took in water over the side.

part of a letter to my mother. The boys killed a turkey and squirrel today and were going fishing tonight but I had work to do.

November 2, 1898 Wednesday

Sailed down this morning with fair wind and the old boat; she is more steady than the other one. School ran smoothly but some of the children were inclined to be lazy. Will have to make them study tomorrow. Cora is drawing a map of N. America. Claude thinks I am holding him back in fractions to enable Cora to catch up with him. He is mistaken. Had to row up this evening and I broke an oar; the wind was furious. Went fishing with the boys tonight. We caught about thirty little mullet; no big mullet in the creek or bay. I threw the net a few times and succeeded in catching one little mullet. I think I will soon learn to cast the net but it is hard on ones teeth to hold a sinker between them. We cleaned the fish after returning home at ten o'clock. Had a hard row up the bay tonight, wind strong.

November 3, 1898 Thursday

Pupils became very restless and hard to manage this afternoon. Hope for better results tomorrow. Sailed down this morning but his evening had to come back against a furious wind. George broke his oar and we having nothing but paddles to pull with went back down the bay for the boat was unmanageable. After a few minutes I got the sprite<sup>18</sup> pole and poled up to Haymen's where we found a pair

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<sup>18</sup> The "sprite" or "sprite pole" is mentioned several times. The proper term is spritsail and sprit. The spritsail is a form of three or four-sided, fore-aft sail and its rig. Unlike the gaff where the head hangs from a spar along its edge, this rig supports the leech of the sail by means of a spar or spars named a sprit. The forward end of the sprit spar is attached to the mast but bisects the face of the sail, with the after end of the sprit spar attaching to the peak and/or the clew of the sail.



of oars in the old boat Black Maria. We borrowed the oars without asking permission. Had fish today and I ate a lot you bet! The boys killed a turkey today and they discovered where three deer had been feeding in Reese's potato patch<sup>19</sup>.

November 4, 1898 Friday

Sailed down this morning had some trouble with Ruby and had to spat her hand with a ruler. I felt worse than she did I know, and hope I will not have to do any more punishing. Had a good row back this evening but got caught in a slight shower. Ate some cane<sup>20</sup> when I got home and shot once with the 22. The boys killed two turkeys and three squirrels today. When I got home I tried to patch two holes in the seat of my winter pants, but the patches had such a pucker that I gave Mrs. Hall – no relation of mine – 10 cents to pat them for me. The boys are talking and their coarsness disgusts me. Have been reading to the whole family and the report of any uprising of negroes in a certain section of Mississippi interested them more than anything else. The boys all want to go and "shoot niggers" for they regard the shooting of a "nigger" with as little seriousness as the shooting of a bird. Haymen wants to shoot "niggers" too.

November 5, 1898 Saturday

Sailed down today and for a wonder had a wind to sail back with this evening. Miss Vick was waiting at Mr. Hall's for me when I passed this morning and went to the school where she stayed until noon. She thinks her former pupils have improved and I hope they have. Mr. Weaver came at eleven o'clock and stayed until noon when he took Miss Vick home – to Mr. Hart's I mean. She wanted me to change m/n to a fraction whose denominator is 100. Will try to do it soon.

Had some trouble with Claude and Pearl, Ruby and Arthur. Claude is mean and needs a good thrashing.

Mr. Weaver brought some mail for me, papers and a letter from Alice, letters from "Penny", Sam White, Genivieve, mother and Mr. Lees of Sanibel, who wants

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<sup>19</sup> Almost certainly sweet potatoes, another variety of morning glory.

<sup>20</sup> Sugar cane



to be member of the school board. I learned today that Miss Stella Baston<sup>21</sup> had been very easy on the pupils and had spoiled them; they had better look out for me for I am getting out of humor with them.

Noah, Reese and I went bathing this evening and while we were in the water, Mr. Bill Kirkland happened to come down the creek and warned us that his wife and Mr. Kirkland were coming down in a boat just behind. We boys crawled in under the mangroves like otters and hid there until Mr. Kirkland and his sister-in-law were past. We were so amused at our position that the boys exploded with laughter just as the boat was passing. I was as much tickled as the boys for I was standing on my toes in the mud with my head stuck out of the water and all bunched up.

November 6, 1898 Sunday

Stayed at home and read, wrote letters, made out an order to Montgomery Ward & Company and had the dickens of a time with the boys. They are awful coarse as most ignorant people are. They wanted to go swimming today but I did not go. Mr. and Mrs. Kirkland went to Marco today to buy provisions. I did some washing this morning, it being Sunday, but the only day I have had this week. Read to the family some tonight. Wrote to Sam W., Alice B. and my mother. The boys have been spending most of their day hunting around and shooting birds with a 22 caliber rifle. They are awfully cruel.

November 7, 1898 Monday

The wind is blowing a gale today and we nearly ran the boat under this morning. Went from the little island to landing in 15 minutes<sup>22</sup>; had a hard pull back this evening. Had five visitors today and one of the boys remarked that "the NE gale had blown the people into the school house", just as it blows the mosquitoes from place to place. Reese killed a small deer today and wounded two big turkeys but they got away from him.

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<sup>21</sup> Apparently the teacher before Watt Hall.

<sup>22</sup> If the Little Island is at the head of Henderson Creek Bay and the landing is at Shell Island SW of the location of the FDEP concrete floating dock, then the distance is about 7,150 feet or 1.2 nm. To cover that distance in 15 minutes yields a speed of 4.8 knots, almost enough to plane a small boat.

November 8, 1898 Tuesday

No school today for it was Election day which is a holiday. I went to Marco in the good boat, had a big wind and made most of the run with a mutton-leg sail<sup>23</sup>. Tried to beat up<sup>24</sup> the channel but found I could make the stretch better with the oars so took down sail and rowed. Everything was quiet in Marco and after voting I went up to see Miss Vick. Stayed an hour or more and at 11 o'clock started back home. Came through little cut at Ole (?) Hall's place, but found the water so shallow that I had to get overboard and push the boat through. It was hard work. I made good time up Calhoun Channel but the wind was so strong I could keep my sail only half or a third full. Nearly capsized several times but kept such a sharp eye on the wind and boat that I kept from taking in water. Made 3 short tacks to get around Umbrella Point and also made 3 short tacks through Hall's Bay. Had to get out and pull the boat through the Auger Hole<sup>25</sup> for the current was swift and shallow. Two boys went hunting today and secured a squirrel and two gobblers. They shot down a deer but it got away from them. Received a letter and book from Alice. The book to be read to "my heathens" as she calls them. Am tired tonight.

November 9, 1898 Wednesday

Sailed down to school this morning with a good wind and succeeded in sailing most of the way back this evening. The boys went to the bird rookery to shoot Curlews this evening. They have not yet returned. School went very well this evening but I had some trouble this morning with the Hart children who are quarrelsome and are always hurting each other. Had no oil<sup>26</sup> this evening so went up the creek to Bill Kirk (Kirkland?) and then to Demerritt's<sup>27</sup> to borrow oil. We went in the little canoe and fairly run her under we went so fast. I steered and did not strike a snag nor a bush although it was dark and I am not acquainted with the creek. Little Lillie Demeritt looks so lonesome. I believe I will give her a doll

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<sup>23</sup> A Leg-of-mutton sail is a triangular sail with its apex at the masthead.

<sup>24</sup> To "beat up" is to tail upwind by tacking.

<sup>25</sup> The Auger Hole is apparently the local name for one of the creeks at the mouth of Henderson Creek Bay. This might be the creek also referred to as Big Creek which was dynamited some time later. Until the shell mound was breached in about 1908, passage from Henderson Creek Bay was tortuous and difficult.

<sup>26</sup> Probably lamp oil

<sup>27</sup> I wonder if this is the Demere family that turns up later around Chokoloskee.

or picture book to amuse herself with Christmas. She is a very pretty and sweet child.

November 10, 1898 Thursday

Studied Grammar this morning as we sailed down to the landing while Dan handled the boat. Took my Montgomery & Ward Catalogue to Old Mrs. Hall. Had some trouble with the pupils this afternoon until after recess and this morning I was forced to punish Ruby with the ruler. Claude brought some N.Y. Worlds and a letter for me this morning. War seems imminent between England and France. The boys went hunting today but did not kill anything. Dan sent off his Press items this evening. Mosquitoes are terrible now and the smudge is worse for the smoke hurts my throat. Am now reading The Swiss Family Robinson a chapter at evening to the "Heathens" as Alice says.

November 11, 1898 Friday

School went well this morning. This afternoon my pupils spoke pieces and did very well except Arthur who became frightened and set up a boo-hoo after speaking two lines. Little Velma did very well also. Lillie Demerritt spoke a little piece also. Mrs. Almeda Kirk and Mrs. Kirkland "motioned her piece"<sup>28</sup> to the great delight of the members of the Kirk family. She did very well for one without an education. After the speaking was over I read two selections for the people and they seemed to enjoy the reading as they did the speaking. The school was nearly full of visitors today and the people seemed to enjoy "speaking day" at the school.

After school, as we were all leaving the school house, I met Mr. Harris, a man of fifty-odd years and his 1 [other numeral missing at margin of copy] year old wife. Mr. Harris wants to send his child wife to school, also her little brother which will make two more pupils and take up time. Mrs. Harris is the most bashful person I have ever seen. She looked like a scared deer today and I could hardly get a word out of her or get her to raise her eyes from the ground. Nobody seemed to take any notice of her.

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<sup>28</sup> Pantomimed?

November 12, 1898 Saturday

I rose very early this morning and after a poor breakfast, two of the boys and I went hunting. The woods is full of water yet and the mosquitoes are terrible. We saw no game but in Middle Hammock<sup>29</sup> saw plenty of bear signs. We reached home shortly after noon. Mr. Kirkland went hunting this morning also but he did not return until after dark this evening. He killed three deer and brought one in with him, the other two he hung up on trees and left in the woods until tomorrow morning.

This afternoon, the two oldest boys went Curlew hunting up Bear Hammock Creek<sup>30</sup> and killed three. I took everything out of my trunk and looked for moth but found none. I also chewed a lot of cane and wrote letters to mother, Alice and part of a letter to Penny. I also did some washing.

November 13, 1898 Sunday

This morning the two boys and Mr. Kirkland went into the woods and brought back the two deer which Mr. Kirkland had left last night. They left two hours before day break. I finished my letter to Penny and as the elder Kirks were going to Marco I sent the letters to the office by them. I spent the day at Harts today and got home at sundown. Mr. Hart brought up some books and papers for me. The papers and one book, Gulliver's Travels, were from home, while the school books I ordered from Myers also came. Little Velma and Ruby seem to like me very much. I had a little scuffle with Cora over a rose and I have been ashamed of it ever since. It is very hard to keep my dignity as a school teacher should. Cora seems to like me better than she likes Jean and I must be careful or she will think

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<sup>29</sup> Where is Middle Hammock? Two other hammocks are mentioned in connection with hunting. They are Rattlesnake Hammock, about 4.3 miles north of the Kirkland place and Royal Palm Hammock, about 7.7 miles southeast. The deer hunting was done in the pine woods, in cypress swamp, or along the edge of McIlvaine marsh, respectively north of the creek, up the creek to the NNE, and to the ESE. This trip to Middle Hammock lasted several hours. If it was as much as six hours then the total distance traveled was probably less than 10 miles. That, and the name Middle Hammock suggests a location in between the other two named hammocks. There was a beautiful hammock about 4.1 miles NNE, or north of what is now the Verona Walk development. Another possibility is a high sandy ridge and hammock that might have existed just north of where the SR-951 canal crosses US-41.

<sup>30</sup> Bear Hammock is a remnant dune on the south shore of Henderson Creek just where the creek widens to form Henderson Creek (or Bear Hammock) Bay. A Mr. Disbrow owned and cleared a portion of Bear Hammock at about the time of this story. Bear Hammock Creek is east of Bear Hammock. The creek is narrow but deep. It drains an area of brackish marsh on both sides of SR-951 south of Championship Drive.

more of her teacher than her books. When I got home, I found letters from Helen, home, and Miss Andrew. Miss Andrew is in as bad a place as I am in. I read two chapters of the Robinson book this evening then read my letters.

November 14, 1898 Monday

Had to row nearly all the way down to the bay this morning for the wind was light. We were 15 minutes late but got out on time. School went very well, but I had to teach against my feelings for I do not feel well today. Had no trouble with the pupils and the lessons were good. Claude was somewhat sulky(?) over his lessons. Saw the Press and thing Foster is elected for member School Board. Have a boil<sup>31</sup> on my hand and a boil inside my nose which makes me very cross. Had trouble with Arthur coming home tonight but he had to obey me. He has had his own way at home so long that it hurt him mightily to have to do as I said. I wish he was my boy a few weeks; he would learn to think there was somebody else in the world besides himself and that the whole world was not made for him alone. The boys have gone gator hunting tonight. Little Lillie came to school this afternoon.

November 15, 1898 Tuesday

The boys rowed down this morning but we sailed nearly all the way back this evening. School went well but having a boil on my hand and one in my right nostril, I didn't feel very well; feel little like fever was in my system tonight. Wrote to Mr. Bostic today and sent an order to him to draw out my first month's pay and send it to me. Had to nearly smoke my eyes and throat out to drive out the "skeeters" this morning. This evening Noah played his harp and the smaller boys and little Reese Hall had a "hoe-down". It is very amusing to see the little fellow dance jigs especially little Reese. We are going to have a dance sometime this winter and I have said I would buy the lemons to make lemonade for the dancers. I must learn to dance a jig too. The boys have gone gator hunting tonight; they killed one gator today.

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<sup>31</sup> A painful, suppurating, inflammatory sore forming a central core caused by microbic infection.

November 16, 1898 Wednesday

Felt bad all day, for my hand has been worse, but my nose is nearly well. Will put a poultice on the boil tonight. Mosquitoes are very bad tonight. All the big boys have gone hunting to stay overnight. The two Mr. Kirks also went. School went well but Velma was a little contrary, she hid under the seat to make me think she hadn't come in and I pretended to get very angry with her but I felt much amused nevertheless. I will spank her someday. Nobody can have their way in my school even if I am fond of them.

November 17, 1898 Thursday

Have had a bad day of it today owing to my hand which is very painful. School teaching was hard but got through all right. Have had high fever all afternoon and evening, expect a bad night tonight.

November 18, 1898 Friday

Slept badly last night and found my hand greatly swollen and inflamed this morning. Day was cloudy and rainy this morning but windy and clear this afternoon. We sailed up with a strong south wind this evening, the first time we have yet had a strong fair wind all the way home. My hand is open and much less painful this evening, but is still inflamed and swollen. Cora dressed it for me today and she did it in a very gentle and excellent manner. The hunters have not come in yet. Feel better this evening.

November 19, 1898 Saturday

Stayed at home and wrote letters today for it is Saturday. My hand is much better but is still painful and swollen. Tried to catch some snappers this morning as we had nothing much to eat. No success. The hunters came in this evening at dark with one deer and a turkey. They have killed six deer and several turkeys but secured only 1 deer and 2 turkeys. Noah and Reese were hunting one morning, yesterday I think, and they heard a panther jump on a deer and kill it two hundred yards away but instead of running toward the noise of the fight they hesitated for a few minutes and then sneaked up but the panther had dragged his deer off into the swamp by the time they arrived on the grounds and they wouldn't go in after

him. They were very particular about their own skin. I sculled up to Demeritts this evening for exercise.

November 20, 1898 Sunday

The boys and old man went back to the woods again this morning to stay several days. I went to Harts and then Claude Hart and I went on to Marco in his boat. We had a fine sail and on the way met Jean Johnson and the sloop returning from Marco. He had a bundle of papers and two letters from me; one letter from Annie S. and one from Iris. Reached Marco about twelve and finished my business and then went on up to Collier's to see Miss Vick. Claude and I stayed there for dinner and I payed for both.

I asked Miss Vick if she would help us with our Sunday School but she didn't want to. She didn't seem to think much of Sunday School. I asked her how it was I had seen her in Sunday School several times and she said she did go those times "but not from choice". When I heard that, my opinion of Mayme Vick turned three summer saults and then fell flat. I always did think well, very well indeed of her but I somehow have a different feeling entirely toward her now. Mr. Collier said he "thought Sunday Schools were pretty good things". He didn't believe much in religion himself but he "noticed that it had the affect of making other people pay him the money they owed him" and "kept them from stealing his cocoanuts and fruit" so he "thought they were useful things in a manner". Claude and I sailed up Marco Channel on our homeward way and then came through a lot of narrow "creeks" and small bays<sup>32</sup> until finally we came out into Johnson's Channel near Johnson's house. I stopped at Harts for a while this evening. Mr. Weaver and Jean J. were there. When I came away Claude and Jean raced with me up to the middle of Henderson Bay. Jean was first, I second and Claude last to the Auger Hole but hey both beat me in the bay. We had oysters for supper. I took up to Mr. Demeritt some of the papers I got today. Very few skeeters today. My hand is greatly improved and I can use it. Miss Mayme Vick sent me up a Review of Reviews, November number. Thanky, Miss Vick; I'll read it with pleasure. Sent Washburn the money for those books and then also returned one book I did not

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<sup>32</sup> This would be through what is now Isles of Capri. The Johnsons lived on the large island in Johnson Bay which is east of Calhoun Channel and south of Umbrella Point.

need, a physiology; sent him a dollar which is 5 cents too much. Saw Davis news items in the Press and the one item about our school house being tilted over and having been propped, looked very funny.

November 21, 1898 Monday

Sailed down with a fine wind this morning and most of the way back this evening. Took my washing down to Mrs. H. Hall this morning and got the washed clothes as I came by this evening. School went very well today because I had more energy than I had last week. My hand is much better but I fear I will have trouble with it yet. We had clam fritters for supper and I didn't like them much – only ate seven. The boys ate beans(?) and so I had most of clams to myself which didn't please me a bit.

November 22, 1898 Tuesday

School went well today and grammar pupils did exceedingly well. Lassa Williams who came in last Thursday left today for Ft. Ogden where her mother lives. Her father and mother have separated; her mother is a good woman so they say, but her father is a libertine and is now living with another man's wife. Lassa is a good girl and a bright student. She cried, Cora and the other girls cried and I felt sorry for them all. Had oysters for supper. Sailed part of the way up. Mr. and Mrs. K. went to Marco, but did not bring me any mail. Hand is getting better.

November 23, 1898 Wednesday

School went well today. Only eight were present but they studied well. Claude prepared his article for the Press. Got some oysters as we came home this evening and then George and I opened them up. Dan sailed the boat up the creek. Tomorrow is Thanksgiving and we will have a roast turkey instead of a boiled turkey and dumplings.

November 24, 1898 Thursday

Thanksgiving day this is and a very pleasant day I have had. This morning the three oldest boys and I went to the beach where we spent the day in fishing and



having a good time generally. We had a grains<sup>33</sup> and in a little lagoon we found some young saw fish six or seven of which we killed. I killed two by jumping on them with my big shoes. I saved four saws but the saws are too young. We fished at the mouth of the lagoon which is about 15 feet wide and four feet deep and we caught four big redfish and two catfish. We lost two hooks and the fish that had them in their mouths. I caught a young shark and in the afternoon tried to spear several more little ones but missed them all. I pulled off my pants and wading the little bayou went along the beach trying to spear redfish but the water was too muddy. The boys said I looked funny and I expected I did. When I came back I took off my sweater and threw it to the boys on the other side, then I took a running jump and landed in the middle of the lagoon. The redfish all left for they thought it was a shark. I had sailed the boat out of the pass in the morning and had a lively ride. About noon we pushed the boat out through the breakers and two of us sailed back to the pass while the other two ran along the beach. We had for dinner turkey dressed with rice, bread, and venison. After dinner we caught some fiddlers and fished for sheepsheads of which we caught ten or more. Noah with a can of fiddlers was running to the pass when he caught his foot on a stick and measured his length on the beach upsetting the fiddlers which scampered for shelter. We had a good sail home where we arrived near sundown.

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<sup>33</sup> A *grains* is an iron instrument with four or more barbed points, and a line attached to it, used at sea for striking and taking fish. A metal spear with several points, half-barbed inwardly. The metal point (pictured below) it made to be fixed onto a wooden shaft for throwing.



November 25, 1898 Friday

School went well today but the pupils didn't have very good lessons this morning. Received a letter and a recitation from Alice today. Jean brought them up yesterday evening. I feel very well today but the boil didn't feel well this morning. Mr. Kirk and Reese went on a camp hunt today. This afternoon I asked Dan what "trousers" were and he said "little dogs ain't they". I then asked him what the word "foundry" means and he said "a place where you git foundered ain't it?". We got caught in a heavy shower this evening but I jerked the sail down and we made a tent over the boat with it till the rain went past. Yesterday morning as we were going through the bay Noah shot twice at what he took to be a big gator swimming rapidly but which turned out to be the top of a small oyster bar out of the water. The boys nearly died with merriment when they discovered their ridiculous mistake.

November 26, 1898 Saturday

I washed several pieces this morning and sewed on my necktie putting on new piece over the worn part at the top. I wrote to Helen, David C. Cook & Company, Iris Cornelius and Alice. I went back in to the woods for a half mile and dug up some *Stillingia*<sup>34</sup> roots to make some blood purifier. My blood is bad, for two boils are coming, one on each hand in exactly the same place. Have read some and studied some and prepared some pieces for my pupils to use Christmas.

November 27, 1898 Sunday

Read and copied pieces all day until about four o'clock when I took a sail down to Hart's. Jean Johnson brought a bundle of papers and a letter for me. I stayed for supper and about seven o'clock started and rowed for home. Had a moonlight row and it was just beautiful on the bay. My hands are quite sore and Velma procured rags and bound them up soon after I got there.

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<sup>34</sup> This is *Stillingia sylvatica*, commonly called queensdelight. The USDA Plant Profile indicates it is native to the southern and central US as far west as Colorado. It is found in the pine forest on poor, well-drained soils. This herb has long been recognized to have properties to cure infections.

November 28, 1898 Monday

Slept badly last night for my hands hurt me. School went well but I couldn't get much energy in my teaching because my hands hurt me so much and I had fever.

This afternoon Mr. Bostick visited the school for two hours. He spoke to the pupils and his talk was a good one. Had a high fever when I got home. I read Spooftrendykes Suspenders and several other funny things to the Kirks and I think their sides are sore.

November 29, 1898 Tuesday

Slept badly last night for my hands hurt me greatly. Have been nearly sick all day with the boils and a high fever caused by them. The day has been rainy and windy but this evening we had a clear spell to sail up in. The wind was fair and we sailed clear up. I let out half an hour early this evening for I was afraid we would get caught in a squall and also because I was too sick to teach longer.

November 30, 1898 Wednesday

My hands are much better today and I feel like a different man today. School didn't seem to go well today for I didn't seem to have my usual control over the children or else they were unusually mischevious. I had to take away Dan's and Claude's knives<sup>35</sup> today and Dan seemed to think I had taken his for good. He became very spunky and refused to receive back the knife after school. George nearly broke his desk by jerking it down too hard this evening and so I made him fan it up and down a dozen times to the vast amusement of the other pupils. I smiled a little myself for I couldn't help it. Sailed most of the way home this evening.

December 1, 1898 Thursday

Hands much better and school went much better today. I nearly had to whip some and expect I will have to tomorrow for they have grown careless since I have been sick. The Grammer and reader I ordered for Lassa Williams came today only the reader was a Fifth instead of a Fourth. Received a letter from Alice also.

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<sup>35</sup> All good cracker boys (and sometimes girls) carry pocket knives. These are essential survival tools, not weapons, though on occasion they are useful in self-defense.

December 2, 1898 Friday

Just discovered that I had lost a day somewhere and had to hunt it up. I find I am one day nearer Christmas than I thought. The day has been rainy and we were caught in a tremendous rain this morning. George and I stopped in the old shack at Mr. Hall's and waited for an hour then went into Mrs. Halls and talked to the old lady until the rain ceased. We then went down to the bay and whistled for the Hart Children. They came all bundled up in their father's coats and looking very comical. Ruby had a coat, Pearl had a hunting jacket and Velma was almost lost in a coat. The coats reached to their heels. I taught from ten o'clock to three fifteen and then let out for the old school house was too wet to be healthful.

December 3, 1898 Saturday

Did some washing this morning and then worked on a Montgomery Ward order. After that wrote to Alice and Genivieve. I went sailing this afternoon and beat clear down to the lower end of the bay, then sailed up to the oyster bar and got a few oysters. Read some tonight to the family. Nearly upset in the creek today and had to be lively about jerking loose the sheet rope which I have cleated down.

December 4, 1898 Sunday

Got up late this morning and after breakfast spent the whole morning in working out Mr. Kirkland's account. Found that Mr. Collier has certainly made some mistakes in the account which do not help Mr. Kirkland. After dinner I made a kite for the boys and it was the first the two oldest had ever seen. It was quite a marvel to all of them and they had a great time with it until they tore it up. Noah and I went sailing down the Bay. We had a fine wind. It is now turning cool very fast and I danced a jig a few minutes ago to get warmed up. Everything is as wet as it has been this year for we had a tremendous rain last night and yesterday and this morning.

December 5, 1898 Monday

Weather cold and windy. School was small today, only seven. The pupils were cold and shivered all morning and I was none too warm myself. After dinner I moved two benches outside and we all stayed out on the south side in the sun

until half hour before turning out time. The children looked funny bundled up and sitting around in the scrub<sup>36</sup> out of the wind. The old school yard is all scrub behind the house. I do not like teaching outside but it was certainly better than staying inside and freezing. Two of the boys stayed at home to gather rice today and only Dan went with me. We had a tremendous wind to go down with and a very good one back to the island. I received mail today from home, Alice and Miss Vick. I heard one of the boys say this evening that he was “going to spoil out” something his brother was writing; this is a common expression among them.

December 6, 1898 Tuesday

Cold this morning and I was glad to wear an overcoat. The boys were nearly frozen with their thin clothes. Mr. Kirk went hunting this morning and has just returned without a deer. School has gone well today but some of my pupils were lazy and I had to be a little stern with them. The pupils were cold much of this morning and I think that is what ails Dan for he was sick this afternoon. I am surprised no more of them are sick. Today Cora brought an egg and some salt and made a poultice from the white of the egg and the salt for my hand. The poultice is the most effective I have ever seen, for in an hour's time the boil was open and I felt much relieved.

December 7, 1898 Wednesday

The morning was cold and cloudy and we all shivered. The mast hole<sup>37</sup> broke out and we had to row both ways this time. School went well today and I had only one bit of trouble. I had to shake Ruby for not studying. Will read some tonight to my “heathens”. Haymen Hall is beating rice outside in the mortar. Mr. Kirkland killed a turkey today.

December 8, 1898 Thursday

Sailed down with a fine wind this morning and rowed back again a finer wind this evening. School went well today. I received a letter and check for \$35.00 from Mr. Bostick today, also a letter containing 25 cents from James Kellum to pay for

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<sup>36</sup> The ‘scrub’ is xeric vegetation at the top of the sandy dune where the school house was located.

<sup>37</sup> This hole is probably through a short, wooden foredeck which served to stiffen the bow and provide support for the mast 12” to 24” above the foot where the mast is stepped to the keel.

my bike pump. I also received a letter for “Mr. F. W. Hall” which I discovered to be for some other F.W. Hall than myself, and as it seemed to contain a good many sweet secrets I did not read it, but will send it back without being read.

December 9, 1898 Friday

School went well today. Dan and Arthur played sick this morning and got to stay at home. This evening as George and I were coming home we stopped at a bar and got a lot of fine oysters. I ate a pint of raw oysters for supper. Wrote out my order to Montgomery Ward & Company tonight. The order came to \$34.11 and I send \$35.00 to pay for goods and freight charges.

December 10, 1898 Saturday

Started early and rowed to Marco this morning. Had a strong tide to row against and no wind. Reached Marco about 11 o'clock. Got Mr. Hart to sign my monthly report. Sent off my order. Sent \$10.00 to Charley Foster to pay debt I owed him. After eating my dinner I went up to see Miss Vick and we arranged our program for Christmas. Miss Vick, Miss Walker and I practiced on a song “Joy to the World” for an hour or two. It rained for three hours this afternoon and after the rain I started home. Rowed all the way except through Hall’s Bay and Henderson Bay. Reached home about an hour after sundown. Camilla Shaw recited her recitation for me this afternoon. She speaks very well. She is a beautiful child.

December 11, 1898 Sunday

Sunday today and I have read nearly all the afternoon. This morning Noah and I went sailing in the old yawl<sup>38</sup> of Walter Carroll’s. We nearly upset in the Bay, and for a minute the water just poured in over the railing of the half-deck. Noah grabbed lively for the sheet rope which he had cleated down. I was in such a position that I could do nothing but sit up on the high side and look on. I was amused but was glad we didn’t capsize; because a cold wind was blowing and I was wrapped up well in overcoat, sweater, and other clothes. I might have had difficulty in swimming. The whole day was cold and unpleasant. In the warmest

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<sup>38</sup> A yawl is a two masted sailing vessel with the second mast stepped aft of the rudder post. This boat was probably longer than the 14-16’ rowing/sailing skiffs referred to elsewhere.

part of the afternoon I took a bath in the creek. I read for an hour this evening to the Kirk's.

December 12, 1898 Monday

I was cold nearly all night, last night, although I had enough cover. The day has been very pleasant, but a little cool. School went well today and I had time to have my pupils rehearse their recitations several times. I think they are going to do finely, especially Velma. I found that Mamie had the same "piece" that a pupil at Marco has. We sailed part of the way home this evening and rowed the rest.

December 13, 1898 Tuesday

Weather warm and pleasant today. We had to row down to the Bay this morning and then we beat the rest of the way. School went well today, but Ruby wouldn't study much. I shook her a little but ought to have shaken her hard. A storm came up this evening and we sailed up the Bay with a strong, fair wind, but in a hard rain.

December 14, 1898 Wednesday

Cold this morning and the boys shivered. I felt cool myself and thought it better to build my pupils a fire outside and let them sit around it. Sailed down this morning with a fine wind, but had to row back this evening. Mr. Kirkland came in this evening with two deer on his mule and he will go to Marco tomorrow. Children practiced their pieces this evening and are improving.

December 15, 1898 Thursday

Windy and somewhat unpleasant today. School went well today and I allowed a little relaxation to my pupils this afternoon by permitting them to draw and read in the physiology. This evening coming home we stopped at the bar and secured some big oysters. Oysters are plentiful here. Received a letter from Alice, and also received some sample literature from Cook & Company. Received Fourth and Fifth Reader from Washburn.

December 16, 1898 Friday

Got up before daylight this morning because Mr. Kirkland and the boys wanted to go on a camp hunt. We boys got started to school early this morning and as I had

some time I spent it in cutting up some wood. School went well today and Ruby astonished me by working all her problems at a great rate. She is a queer, nervous little piece, but I like her much for she is lively and merry. Learned today that Claude may go with me to Alva Xmas week.

December 17, 1898 Saturday

Went to Marco today and sailed all the way down. I went in the old boat and it was terribly soppy and nasty. Miss Vick had a bad cold. Mrs. Walker has given up her part of the entertainment and so our song has "gone up the spout". I left Marco at twelve o'clock and went out of Big Marco Pass and rowed up the coast to Little Marco Pass.<sup>39</sup> The tide was coming into Marco Pass and I had to pull my boat against a terrific current. The current was so strong that I finally had to run up on the beach and get out and wade and pull the boat by hand. I had to row four miles but the gulf was very smooth. After reaching Little Marco I fished for three hours and got a number of bites but only caught one sheephead and one redfish. Had to row home and was very tired. The boys were so lazy that I thought they would not clean my fish. They are so worthless that they are not worth the powder it would take to blow them up. Got a letter from home and "Pen". Reese & Noah came in this evening with two deer and a turkey. Plenty of meat.

December 18, 1898 Sunday

Stayed at home today and did a little washing this morning, then I helped George and Dan make two kites. Dan's kite was about 27 inches and George's nearly 4 feet. Bad business for Sunday but I had no other day to do it before Christmas. After dinner I read until night in Cosmopolitan and Review of Reviews.

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<sup>39</sup> At that time Little Marco Island was a coastal barrier island (see copy of nautical chart prior to October 15 entry) extending south with a continuous beach all the way to Big Marco Pass. A hurricane in 1946 cut through this barrier island forming Hurricane Pass at what is now (in 2013) the south point of Little Marco Island. In 1898-1899 the south end of what we call Keewaydin Island ended north of the north point of Little Marco Island and it is there that Watt left the Gulf and started east toward Hall Bay. Erosion and southerly movement of sand along the beach over the last 100 years or so has grown Keewaydin island extending it south so that today Little Marco Island is behind the beach.



December 19, 1898 Monday

School went well today. Had to shake Ruby for laziness. Received a letter from Alice and one from Susy today. Got oysters this evening at the bar and shelled a quart which I ate raw for supper. The boys had come in with two deer and we had fresh venison for supper.

December 20, 1898 Tuesday

Rowed down this morning and sailed back with a fine wind this evening. Had some trouble today with Claude for he struck little Ruby a fierce blow in anger. I shook him good. -go? was sorry to do it. Dan was sick today.

December 21, 1898 Wednesday

The boys came in this evening with three deer which they are going to take to Marco tomorrow. School went well today and I had no trouble with my children. It drizzled a little today.

December 22, 1898 Thursday

Good school today. Little Lillie Demeritt came and I think she will come regularly. She is a cute little child. Sailed up this evening with a fine wind. Had a slight race with the boys who came out of the creek just as we came to the landing.

December 23, 1898 Friday

Rowed down this morning but sailed back this evening. Practiced all afternoon on our Christmas "pieces". I learned today that Mr. Demeritt will give me little Lillie if she will consent to go with me<sup>40</sup>. If I...

*The out of order part originally found at February 6, 1899 seems to fit here*

...take her may Gold help me to care for her well. I will do my best. I am young but I know I can do well with her. I fear I am going to have a N.W. wind when I go up the coast next Sunday.

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<sup>40</sup> Sounds like the Demeritts lived further up Henderson Creek. They were willing to "...give me Little Lillie if she will consent to go with me" meaning that Watt would transport Lillie to school with him daily if she would consent to ride in the boat with him.

*Back to the original order*

I tried the big kite of George's and nearly broke it up before it would fly. Dan was sick today. Little Lillie said "Mary Had a Little Lamb" today, which was my first speech nearly 17 years ago<sup>41</sup>.

December 24, 1898 Saturday

I arose early this morning and after breakfast made myself ready to go to Marco to help with the Christmas Tree<sup>42</sup>. I went with the two oldest boys, who were taking four turkeys down for sale. The rest of the family went in the old boat. I helped with the tree until two o'clock then Miss Vick and I had our pupils practice their recitations for an hour or more after which I again helped with the tree until supper time. I took supper at Collier's. I shot a Roman Candle and sent up a paper balloon after supper. The exercises commenced at eight o'clock for we were delayed by two of the Collier girls. The entertainment was good and I think everyone enjoyed themselves. Mr. Ludlow brought in two chairs and seated his wife and colored servant (nurse) in the front part of the audience, as there was no place else for them. I thought nothing of it, but Mr. Dick Hall – no relation of mine – was greatly offended that a "nigger" should sit down in front of him. He at once jumped up and with his wife was going to leave. Mr. Ludlow learned what was the trouble and became so angry that I feared he would thrash Mr. Hall then and there, but he finally quieted down and taking his wife and the nurse girl, went home. He was half drunk but Dick Hall was silly. The tree was loaded with presents and after distributing them the people were dismissed. After the entertainment the people went over to the hotel and had a dance. I watched them for a while, then went to my room and got ready to go home. The Kirklands stayed an hour and then we started reaching home about 1 o'clock. I at once tumbled into bed.

December 25, 1898 Sunday

Christmas day but a very disagreeable one to me. I left Kirklands as early as I could get away, to go to Alva, to spend my holidays. I rowed to the Gulf then

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<sup>41</sup> Watt must have been about 25 years old at this time.

<sup>42</sup> Really? A Christmas tree?

sailed for a mile or two, then rowed until five miles north of Naples where about four o'clock I encountered a NW squall which kicked up quite a sea. I rowed for two hours against wind and waves and made only about two miles. Darkness came on and the wind changed to NE and it began to rain. I put up my sail and sailed to Punta Rassa where I arrived about to o'clock Monday morning. I was so tired, cold, wet and miserable that I could hardly walk and I staggered all over the beach. Just as I reached Punta Rassa a North Wester came up which would have stopped my travel if it had caught me a few miles down the coast.

December 26, 1898 Monday

I couldn't sleep well so I got up and put on dry clothes. My kitten was sleeping on top of me when I awoke. The family were all away from the boarding house so I went over to Shultz and secured some breakfast which made me feel much better. I was dressed rather oddly for my pants were too short and came away above my old wet brogans one of which had no clasp on it and was tied with a piece of white cord. I had on my old red sweater with the collar outside my coat, and a pair of 5 cent socks wet and discolored with salt water curled down over my shoe tops exposing my dainty (?) ankles. At Shultz they must have taken me for a tramp for they all looked curiously at me. The noted linguist and translator of Quo Vadis, Dr. Binion is at Shultz's spending the winter. He looked curiously at me and made some casual remark about the weather. If they all did think me a tramp they were not far wrong.

I left Punta Rassa as soon as I could and reached Myers at sundown, after a tiresome day of rowing and beating against a head wind. I dressed for supper and found my face nearly blistered by the sun. After supper I went to the M. E. Church<sup>43</sup> to attend a Xmas tree which I enjoyed greatly. After the entertainment I walked up to Mr. Henderson's with Dora W. whom I met at the church. I was so dizzy from having been on the waves all day that I sometimes staggered which made me ashamed of myself and for which I apologized to Dora by explaining the cause of my seeming intoxication. I took all my Roman Candles to Henderson's

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<sup>43</sup> This would be the Methodist Episcopal Church at Ft. Myers

and Dora and I had fireworks. I tried to tune Dora's new guitar but two of the strings broke so I gave it up and went to my room at Hill's and tumbled into bed.

December 27, 1898 Tuesday

I left Myers about eight o'clock this morning and reached home just at dark this evening.<sup>44</sup> Part of the time I rowed and part of the time I sailed. I sailed about 13 miles but the wind was very mild. I passed the Grey Eagle and the Louise. I nearly got lost after leaving the boat for father has had all the "cabbage" trees cut down that stood near the little gate and I couldn't find the gate in the darkness and high grass. Mother was very glad to see me and was much surprised too. Father was glad to see the kitten which I pulled from my jacket where I had stuck it for convenience in carrying.

December 28, 1898 Wednesday

I have cut cane all day and find some of it frozen. I felt very well after my tough trip from Marco. I called at Miss Peards this evening. Mrs. Evens is there and the ladies played and sang. I enjoyed the music as well as the conversation.

December 29, 1898 Thursday

I cut cane this morning and this afternoon I planted some. I was invited to take supper with Brutons this evening which I did. Mr. and Mrs. Wilfred Raymond were there and we had a pleasant evening. Miss Pearde and Mrs. Evens took supper at our home.

December 30, 1898 Friday

I have planted cane all day, the cane ground is so hard and soddy that I have difficulty in securing enough soft dirt to cover the cane seed with. Mother and I went over to Earnest Kinny after supper. He looks bad(?).

December 31, 1898 Saturday

I have planted cane all day and am now done. I have been writing ever since supper and will soon go to bed.

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<sup>44</sup> So, the trip home (alone) for Christmas took a full three days to cover approximately 60 nautical miles by rowing and sailing.

January 1, 1899 Sunday

Just one year ago today I began to keep this diary but I have been careless and have allowed the events of several months to go unrecorded. I wish I had all the event of my like trip up the state herein written for they would be interesting. I am going to try to do better in the coming year of 1899. Mother and I went to Denaud and spent the day with Baldwins. We had a most excellent dinner which was prepared by Alice and of which I partook so freely that for some hours afterward I had a smothered feeling under my vest. We had strawberries which is something unusual at New Year's day. Mr. Baldwin has a fine strawberry bed with lots of berries on the plants. His place is improving rapidly under his constant attention and labor. Alice had on a long dress, the first I have seen her wear. She looks very womanly now. The evening was cool for a strong N.E. wind has been blowing nearly all day.

January 2, 1899 Monday

I banked<sup>45</sup> trees all day. The day has been windy.

January 3, 1899 Tuesday

I hoed strawberries, dug sweet potatoes and got ready to go back to Marco.

January 4, 1899 Wednesday

I started for Marco today and sailed all the way but five miles to Myers. I stopped in Myers for an hour on business. I couldn't sell my potatoes so I took them on to Punta Rassa where I sold them to a schooner. I reached Punta Rassa at dark having traveled 40 miles today.

While coming down the river I met a large sloop beating up. Her crew had whisky aboard and were all drunk. They came near me and luffing their boat called to me "Come aboard pardner! Come aboard!" They wanted me to have a drink with them but I had no time and said so. The "cussed" me a little and then went flowing on their way up the river, tumbling about on the deck, kicking up their heels, and yelling in drunken merriment.

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<sup>45</sup> Meaning to put material, usually mulch, around the base of the trunk.

January 5, 1899 Thursday

I had a bad night of it for a half dozen drunken sailors made the night hideous with their yelling and cursing. I arose early and started down the coast with a fair wind. The wind shifted when I was about a mile from Carlos Pass and I had to row and tow the boat into the pass. I had a nasty time getting there. I found some of the Koresians<sup>46</sup> had built there and two of them were still living there. I took dinner with a Mr. Mayo, a privileged character among the Koreshians. He tried to implant some Koreshian doctrines in my mind but his seed fell in stony ground and has not yet sprouted nor never will. Mr. Mayo seems to be a good sort of a fellow but one of that class of people who are easily humbugged by any slick (slick?) tongued rascal. This afternoon I went down inside Hickory Island to Big Hickory Pass, six miles from Carlos and there I will spend the night with a fisherman named Crump. One of the Koresians, Karl, and his little son came down here this evening and I have written a letter to mother which I will send to the Koresian P.O. by Karl. Crump has a pet cat and is keeping the fish camp until his comrades come back from Cuba where they went to sell a schooner load of mullet. The schooner was the Three Brothers and has not been heard from since she left Cuba and they fear she is lost.

January 6, 1899 Friday

I arose before daylight, bade Mr. Crump good bye, and sailed down to Wiggins Pass six miles on down the coast. I reached the pass a little while before the wind shifted to the S.W. and went in. I found the family of Baxters there who used to live at Denaud and I learned from them where a Mr. More lived. I wanted to get Mr. More to take me to Little Marco and so walked four miles to his house through rosemary scrub to see him. I found out that Mr. Moore had a very nice

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<sup>46</sup> The Koreshan Unity was a communal utopia formed by Cyrus Teed, who took the name "Koresh", the Hebrew version of his name Cyrus. The Koreshan Unity started in the 1870s in New York, where Teed started preaching his beliefs. He formed short-lived groups in New York City and Moravia. He later moved to Chicago. Teed's followers formed a commune in Chicago in 1888 called Beth-Ophra. Some followers also formed a short-lived community in San Francisco (1891-2). Small church groups existed in other towns. Eventually, Teed took his followers to Estero, Florida, to form his "New Jerusalem" in 1894. The community was at its peak 1903-1908, when it had over 250 residents. There were apparently another 4,000 believers around the country. Teed had a vision in which he was to establish a utopian city of 10,000,000 with streets up to 400 feet (120 m) wide. Membership declined following his death in 1908.

grove on Surveyors Creek<sup>47</sup> and he had 175 boxes of oranges this season. He couldn't take me to Marco, so I went back to Baxter's and waited there until nearly sundown. After sundown I sailed down to the mouth of the Pass and waited there until an hour after dark. I made a fire, heated some water and ate supper, then walked on the beach for a while, after which I rolled up my sail and waited until time to start.

About an hour after dark, I rowed out of the Pass and started for Little Marco. The wind had fallen and the waves had run down so rowing was easy. I stopped for a few minutes at Naples dock<sup>48</sup> and examined the weather. The sky was clear so I went on and about three o'clock on the morning of January 7 I reached Little Marco Pass. I nearly got lost in Little Marco on account of a dense fog and I was forced to jump over board on the bar and pull my boat over. I had to pull my boat through the Auger Hole and about daylight I reached Kirkland's.<sup>49</sup> I was terribly tired and went to bed at once.

January 7, 1899 Saturday

Part of today's happenings have been recorded with those of yesterday. I went to bed as soon as I got there this morning, but I slept only an hour and then got up for breakfast. I slept some today, but not much, yet I do not feel so very bad after my night row.

January 8, 1899 Sunday

I felt better today after a good sleep last night. I wrote a letter to mother and one to Helen. Helen's letter had 21 pages. I read some and washed out my wet pants.

January 9, 1899 Monday

School began again today and went on just as it used to do. We have a new blackboard and little vest pocket heating stove in the school. Some new fans<sup>50</sup> have been put along the north side and over the holes so altogether our school house looks quite well. Mrs. H. Hall made one of Lillie's dresses for me today; she

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<sup>47</sup> Bonita Springs

<sup>48</sup> The Naples Pier at the foot of the Old Hotel.

<sup>49</sup> The trip home took three full days one of which was all-night down the coast.

<sup>50</sup> Palm fronds

is a neat worker and the dress looks very pretty. I read some tonight to my "Heathens" in Gulliver's Travels.

January 10, 1899 Tuesday

After school today I rowed to Marco and got my mail. I saw Miss Vick. She gave me a grapefruit, I arrived at home about an hour after dark and ate a hearty supper of turkey and venison. The boys came in this evening with 4 deer and while I was away he killed two others. I received a note from Helen a letter from Sam. I bought some candy and crackers.

January 11, 1899 Wednesday

The boys went to Marco today and brought back my box from Montgomery Ward & Co. and I have spent all evening in unpacking and checking off the articles. Everything came but my shoes, a hat of Mr. Weaver's and some books. I think there was \$3.00 freight on the two boxes.

School proceeded well today. We had to row down and row back this evening.

January 12, 1899 Thursday

The wind was fair this morning and we sailed down with our flag up. I took Mrs. Halls goods to her and she seemed well pleased with them. School was as usual today. I took Lillie's dresses and her book up to her tonight and had her put on the red dress. The dresses are so pretty and Lillie looks so well in them. She liked her book and I took her on my lap and read to her for a half hour or more. She seems to be very shy of me and said but little so I couldn't tell whether she much pleased or not. Her eyes sparkled so I think she was. The boys went out and brought in two deer and a turkey. Mr. Kirk and Haman came in just at dark. Mr. Bill Kirk got his goods this evening and paid freight.

January 13, 1899 Friday

We sailed to school this morning and rowed half way back this evening. I received a letter from mother and Miss Andrew this evening. School proceeded very well today but I had to punish Ruby for laziness this morning. I found a peculiar kind of air plant in the swamp today but do not know the name of it.



January 14, 1899 Saturday

I went hunting today with Mr. Kirk and the two eldest boys. We went to hunt otters but we found none for the creatures all seemed to have run out of the country. We found three squirrels and the dogs routed out some coons which we did not shoot. The dogs also routed out two deer which got away. We walked about fifteen miles and part of the way was through the thickest jungles I have ever been in and part of the way was through muddy salt water marshes and flats<sup>51</sup>. I saw some big moccasins and some small gators. I received a shock this morning when I fired the 22 caliber rifle for the shell bursted and some powder spatted me in the eye. When I came in this evening I found fourteen big volumes of United States Records of Education which Mr. Pasco sent me.

January 15, 1899 Sunday

This morning I went to Sunday School and organized it. We will try to make the SS go. The people did not "turn out" very well but I think there will be more next Sunday. Reese went up to spear fish with my spear when I went to SS and we had fish for dinner and supper. I read some and wrote three letters.

January 16, 1899 Monday

Mr. Kirk and the two eldest boys went out on a camp hunt this morning. School proceeded better than usual today. Mr. and Mrs. Hart visited us this morning. Lillie came today and had on her new red checked dress. We sailed home this evening with an aft wind.

January 17, 1899 Tuesday

I rowed down this morning and the morning was very warm. I suspected a storm before very long. School progressed well only some of the pupils were a little lazy. Claude and Ruby were touchy and consequentially very mean and disagreeable. Coming home this evening a north-wester came up and we had to jerk our sail out and let it go overboard. Walter Carroll took out his sprite and let his sail flap but didn't take it down. He nearly capsized and at last the mast broke and he had to drift into the bushes and take to his oars. One squall went across

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<sup>51</sup> Probably across the salt pans or "sand flats" of McIlvaine Marsh currently developed as Fiddlers Cove.

the bay making a white cloud of spray in the air. If that had struck us or Walter the result would have been a capsized boat. I took some food up to Mr. Demeritt's dog this evening and the old dog seemed glad to see me.

January 18, 1899 Wednesday

The morning was very rainy and only George went. School progressed in good order. We had a row home this evening for no wind was blowing. I went out in the boat to spear some fish by torch light. The two boys went with me, one to hold the light and the other to pole the boat. I speared only one mullet. Mr. Kirk and the two eldest boys came in from their hunt tonight. They had three deer and five turkeys. I have been sick all day; the bad water and the grease has upset my stomach.

January 19, 1899 Thursday

The weather is cold for a north wester has been blowing all day. We had a fire in our new stove at the school house today but it did very little good for the wind came through the door and blew all the heat out of the window. We sailed most of the way up this evening to the Island<sup>52</sup> and then the mast fell on my head and we had to row the rest of the way. We had squirrels for supper this evening and I ate my share.

January 20, 1899 Friday

The weather has been cool today and we have had a fire. The pupils have behaved themselves quite well considering that they could all sit around the stove together.

January 21, 1899 Saturday

Saturday today and I went to the beach and tried to spear some saw-fish but the water was too cold and the weather too cloudy so I saw none. I spent three or four hours on the beach and gathered some shells and "sand-dollars" but the wind was too strong and cool for pleasure. The wind was fair and I sailed entirely

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<sup>52</sup> This island (sometimes the Little Island) is referred to several times in connection with sailing or rowing up and down Henderson Creek Bay. Undoubtedly, it is the island at the head of the bay where Henderson Creek narrows.

home this evening. I did some washing this morning and I boiled the clothes in Mrs. K's big pot in the yard.

January 22, 1899 Sunday

I went to SS this morning and on the way my writing tablet and two letters fell out of my pocket and were lost in the creek. Velma wanted me to "shave off the mustache on my chin". SS was a fairly good one but no more people were present than were out last Sunday. After Sunday School I came home and found all the family gone and nothing left for me to eat except some scraps left from breakfast. I wrote two letters and made out another report and then went to Mr. Hart's where I remained until eight o'clock. I rowed home by moon light.

January 23, 1899 Monday

We sailed down this morning but rowed back this evening in the rain. School went along very well only one or two of the little girls seemed to be very full of the giggles. I haven't felt very well today.

January 24, 1899 Tuesday

It rained all last night and it has been raining nearly all of today. We had to sail down in the rain and sail back in the rain. We had a quartering head wind this morning and a quartering aft wind this evening and they were both as much as we could stand. We shipped several gallons of water this morning and had to beat some. School was a little disorderly for some reason this afternoon. Mr. Kirk and the boys have not yet come in and grub is getting scarce. There was nothing for supper except sweet "taters", coffee, heavy biscuits, rice and some grease.

January 25, 1899 Wednesday

School has gone along very well today for I have had a good deal of vim and have taught with some energy. Lillie came up to the school house this afternoon and brought my mail to me. There came two letters, one from mother and one from Helen and each one bore the tidings of Uncle A. C.'s death. Poor Genivieve and poor Aunt Cora. I must write to them tonight. I tacked Mr. Kirk about my board

and I think he will try to get some more food for me<sup>53</sup>. He nearly got mad but I was cool and so he kept down. Mr. Kirk and the three fellows came in this evening with two deer and three turkeys besides two coon skins – the result of a five days hunt.

January 26, 1899 Thursday

The weather has been cold cloudy and disagreeable today and it has rained considerable. Mr. and Mrs. Kirk went to Marco and they got something to eat too this time. They took the old boat to have it repaired but had to bring it back and get Haman H. to fix it for them. I had to punish Ruby today for laziness. She is the laziest child I have seen. Mr. Kirk received a letter today which he got me to read for him. It was from a Mrs. Marah Roach in ? Delaware asking Mr. Kirk to write her some of the details of her husband's death for she wants to get an increase in her pension.

January 27, 1899 Friday

It has rained nearly all day and has been a raw cold day. We have had a fire all day which made it quite snug. School went very well today. I went up to Mr. Demeritt's with Mr. and Mrs. K. I broke one of Mr. Kirk's oars this evening I must be strong.

January 28, 1899 Saturday

Rain fell all night and until nine o'clock this morning then the weather cleared and a strong NW wind sprang up. I took a sail this afternoon but the wind was so gusty and strong that I didn't go far. I nearly capsized several times and shipped considerable water. Mr. Kirk and the boys went on a hunt to the Big Swamp this morning. I have worked some in algebra this evening. I am now working in Radical Equations, having just finished Rationalization and Properties of Quadratic Surds.

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<sup>53</sup> Probably there was an arrangement between Mr. Kirkland and the Lee County Public Schools to room and board the teacher with the school system paying the teacher's salary.

January 29, 1899 Sunday

I went to SS this morning. There were more people out than any time yet and we had a good SS. I have felt well today and have felt very well for the last week. I have studied this afternoon. We had oysters for supper which I ate a quart. The boys just came in with three deer.

January 30, 1899 Monday

School has proceeded in a very encouraging manner. The boys and Mrs. Kirk went to Marco today and brought me some mail; one letter from Alice and one from my mother. Lillie came to school today. Claude and Cora are having a tough time with their arithmetic.

January 31, 1899 Tuesday

All the pupils were present today except Arthur. School has proceeded in a good manner today. George is just having a fuss with the family on account of slate pencils which he eats as if they were candy. He has eaten a dozen or more since school began and shows the affects of such nice food. Why these people have such distorted appetites I do not know unless it is because they eat so much grease and greasy meat. Lillie came home with us this evening. I think she will go with us in the mornings after this.

February 1, 1899 Wednesday

It does not seem a month ago since New Year's day and yet it seems to have been six months ago. Time goes so fast and yet it drags. It drags owing to the kind of people I have to live with. This morning Mr. Demeritt brought Lillie down to our landing and we took her to school. School went along well today. I had a little trouble with Arthur this morning but he had to mind me.

February 2, 1899 Thursday

This has been a very warm day and the children have been restless. I could not keep them still nor very attentive to their lessons but never-the-less they had very good lessons. Ruby and Velma and Lillie had to stand in the corner for whispering. I tried to spear some mullet this evening after supper but did not get any.

February 3, 1899 Friday

Today was Arbor Day and we had no school but the boy pupils and I did work enough to make up. We grubbed<sup>54</sup> all around the school house and planted fifteen trees; five mangos, six guavas, one tamarind, two lemons and one sapodilla. The girls helped us a little by throwing the roots out of the way but they had too much plat to do much work. I read two stories this evening before dismissing which were our only literary exercises. I sailed up this evening with a lively wind. Mr. Kirk and the boys came in with four deer and seven squirrels this evening. The law is now out<sup>55</sup> and they call deer "goats" now and turkeys "limpkins".

February 4, 1899 Saturday

This is Saturday and I have stayed at home and rested. This morning I did my washing and then read the news papers. I learned of the death of Senator Chas. Dingly of Maine. He died twenty days ago but I learned of it only today. This morning the two boys went hunting and killed one squirrel. Mrs. And Mr. Kirkland went to Marco but they brought me no mail. The boys shot a wild duck and George and I waded the creek to get it but it dived and escaped. I wrestled and scuffled a little with the boys this afternoon and they thought they were doing a great deal when I let them throw me twice. I could handle six like them in a genuine scrape. I wrote to Miss Andrew a long letter. I drew her my picture thus.



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<sup>54</sup> Turned the earth with a grubbing hoe to remove unwanted roots.

<sup>55</sup> The legal hunting season is over now?

February 5, 1899 Sunday

Sunday today and I went to SS this morning. George and Noah went too. There were more people out than usual. We sailed back and also most of the way down. This afternoon I read the news papers and letters I received this morning. Jean Johnson came up and the boys and I all joined in some athletic exercises. We ran two races, I beat each time. Tonight I have just finished writing a long letter to Helen. I received a long and interesting letter from her, also one from Anna and one from my mother. Kirk Sr. went to Marco to bring up some "Yankees" whom he is going to pilot in the woods tomorrow.



*This photograph taken January 8, 1908 is a typical hunting party scene. Daniel Jackson Kirkland is at left, James Madison Carroll is at right and Reece Kirkland is at center. The only "Yank" identified is E. W. Schwab sitting atop Mr. Carroll's ox.*

February 6, 1899 Monday

School has proceeded very well today. The pupils were very much more studious than they are all the last of the week. Mrs. Hall and old Mrs. Hart visited the school this afternoon. My clock got the "grippe"<sup>56</sup> this day at noon and will not now run a bit. I'll return it, you bet! Mr. Kirk brought up his "Yankees" and took them out to the Big Swamp. I stopped at Haman H's and put in a few buds<sup>57</sup> for him this evening. He has a grove of three trees. Miss Vick sent up a Cosmopolitan and Little Women.

February 7, 1899 Tuesday

We had a head wind this morning and got there late. We tacked down the bay. This evening we had a fine wind and broke the boom<sup>58</sup>. Little Nellie Hall is now a member of my school. They have taken her from Mrs. Vick's school and sent her to mine. The day has been very windy and the palmetta fans have made so much noise that it was hard to hear any thing. The first reader I ordered for Lillie came today, also the report card and letter from Aunt Maggie.

February 8, 1899 Wednesday

Last night a north-wester came up and the wind was blowing a gale when we arose this morning. A drizzling rain fell for an hour or more but about seven o'clock it cleared and the wind increased. George and I risked going to school but the others stayed at home. We went with full sail to the island but the wind became so fierce that we couldn't manage the boat and we had to take down the sprit. George's hat went over board and sunk before we could tack back to it. When we got out into the bay the waves were running high and the wind was furious. Soon the boat began to take in water on one side and the waves flew in great clouds of spray over the other side. I had to bail all the way down for George was handling the boat. The boat plunged and pounded at a great rate and we were both wet to the skin. None of the other pupils came this morning so George and I stayed an hour and cleared out the "girls road"<sup>59</sup> then went back

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<sup>56</sup> A cold or the flu

<sup>57</sup> Budded fruit trees, probably citrus

<sup>58</sup> This was probably the sprit.

<sup>59</sup> The footpath the Hall girls used to get to school.



home. We had a bad time getting out from the landing and were driven ashore twice. When we did get out we were nearly swamped several times. Once the boat was half full but when I bailed it out and took the helm it went better for then we both could sit on the high side. We fairly flew back home but were very wet from the flying waves. Noah and I hunted ducks this afternoon and sailed up and down the creek four times. It is cool tonight and we are all in the kitchen around the stove. Food is scarce.

February 9, 1899 Thursday

The weather was almost freezing this morning and I put on some warm clothes. George, Arthur and I went to school. We have had fire all day. The tracks of a very large panther were in the road from Mrs. Hall's to the school house. I am afraid it will catch some of my little pupils. I rowed up this evening against a head wind. The "Yankees" and Mr. Kirk came in this evening. Each of the young fellows killed a deer and Mr. Kirk killed two deer and several squirrels. The "yanks" went to Marco this evening but I fear they will get lost or stuck in the creek. The weather is cold tonight. I nearly froze last night.

February 18, 1899 Friday

The weather was much warmer tonight and this morning. We went in the new old boat to school. She leaks very much but rows finely. School has progressed tolerably well today. I have contracted a slight cold some how. This evening I put a patch in my coat sleeve elbow but it looks somewhat puckery. I received some mail today, a Mr. Geo. Christian of Everglade sent me thirteen Christian Heralds to distribute among the people. He writes like a "Dutchman".

February 11, 1899 Saturday

I have had a sore throat today the first since I came from Ohio. School has been rather stupid for all the pupils have had bad colds. I shot at the ducks this evening but the gun does not shoot well and I killed none. I wrote to Mother this evening.

February 12, 1899 Sunday

My cold is bad today and I feel bad tonight. I couldn't sing a bit in S.S. today. The singing was very poor because so many had colds.

February 13, 1899 Monday

A northwester came up last night and the wind has been blowing furiously all day. I did not go to school today for I knew the children would not go either. The two boys, Walter Carroll<sup>60</sup> and I raced down to the back landing and back. Walter and Noah beat down, but Reese and I beat them back by a quarter of a mile. The bay was rough and the waves broke over the boats side in sheets; we were all wet in a little while. We dipped several times; and one man in each boat was kept busy bailing all the time. The weather is cold tonight and I am almost sure it will freeze before morning. We have all hugged the stove today and have also shivered. My cold is better. The boys killed two ducks this morning and we had them baked for supper. I say baked but there were burnt almost to a cinder as all their birds are. Reese and Noah went to the beach this morning and George and I went there after S.S. I found a few shells, sponges, and “sand dollars” and secured two saw-fish saws and two “porcupine fish”. The boys fished and caught some fish and I giggered a saw-fish – bad Sunday business. A squall came up this evening as we were coming home and it is now raining. I received some mail from home and a bunch of 18 valentines from Aunt Mag for my pupils. This morning Noah and Reese told how Mr. Kirk pounced on Noah one day last year. They fell to the floor, the old man trying to pound Noah’s head against the floor. Noah hugged tight to Mr. Kirk and Mrs. Hall, the daughter, thinking that Noah needed help, pitched in and hit the old man several blows. The old man didn’t know it was his daughter who struck him but thought it was the boy and doesn’t know any better yet. A great family this!

February 14, 1899 Tuesday

Valentines day and a cold and disagreeable day it has been. There was ice this morning here and I fear all our grafts and buds are dead for it must have been 4 degrees colder at home than here. My cold has been better today but this evening it grew worse. The boil on my temple is painful and I have fever blisters on my lips. School has not been very enterprising for we all had colds and each had to toot his own trumpet. The boys grained 26 red snappers<sup>61</sup> and other fish

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<sup>60</sup> Walter Carroll was the younger half-brother of James Madison Carroll.

<sup>61</sup> Probably Mangrove snapper

this morning; among the fish was a saw fish with a 13 inch saw. I purchased the saw from Reese for 10 cents. I gave each of my pupils two valentines today and I found that none of them knew what Valentine's Day was. They had never heard of it before. We "beat" home this evening.

February 15, 1899 Wednesday

Last night was a bad one for me for I dreamed and kicked all the time. My "pet" on the temple is worse and I have felt miserable all day. I could hardly teach but I stuck it out. I sailed the boat home this evening but was sick. I have spent the evening in making out a M & W order. This order will amount to nearly \$50.00.

February 16, 1899 Thursday

My "pet" is better and I am better. The morning was cloudy but the day has been beautiful. Only seven pupils were present. Their colds are better. I will finish the order tonight. Mr. Kirk and the boys came in this evening with 5 deer and will go to Marco in the morning.

February 17, 1899 Friday

School went very well this morning but this afternoon the pupils grew very restless and were full of fun. I sent away my order this morning. There was no mail for me at Marco.

February 18, 1899 Saturday

This is Saturday. I wrote a letter this morning to mother. This afternoon I went up the creek to hunt for fish. I grained only some gars but I went away up the creek. It is a queer place for the mangroves are so thick and tall along each side that they form a continuous wall interlocking at the top. There are many kinds of air plants in full bloom up there and some plants that are new to me. I have not read any today.

February 19, 1899 Sunday

Sabbath has not seemed like Sabbath for the boys have been shooting and whooping until it seemed like the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. Gene<sup>62</sup> Johnson and Reese traded

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<sup>62</sup> See, here it is as "Gene".

guns and they have been trying the guns. We all went to S.S. this morning .  
"Bud", George and I went in the little boat with a ten yard sail. The little thing  
nearly turned over with us before we reached the landing. There was a good  
"turn out" today. I received letters from Mother, Mrs. Baldwin, Alice being on  
Surveyor's Creek and from Howard Adams (sp?). Also a bundle of papers and  
freight rates from M. & W. & Co. Tonight I went up to old Mr. Hall's and read to  
him and his wife from the bible. They seemed so glad to hear the holy word read.

February 20, 1899 Monday

School again today. I had a slight fever today and fear I will have more tomorrow.  
I hear that there is dysentery in the neighborhood. I fear it will get into my school  
and if it does I will have a vacation. When we came home this evening George  
and I each shot a marsh hen. George's hen was struck in the middle by the bullet  
and was all gone except a leg, the head and some strings of skin. My hen was  
some better for I only shot away its back.

February 21, 1899 Tuesday

The weather has been fine for the day. School has gone very well today. We  
sailed home this evening with a fair wind. The boys had a quarrel caused by  
Arthur as usual. I have not felt well today.

February 22, 1899 Wednesday

The weather was cloudy this morning and I expected bad weather but it has  
cleared and is now very nice weather. I felt quite sick this evening when I reached  
home but after supper I felt better and went down and sculled about in the little  
canoe. Mrs. Kirk has a very severe cold. Food is getting scarce you bet! I am  
getting tired of this school on account of my boarding place. I will be glad when I  
get away from here.

February 23, 1899 Thursday

School has gone very well but Claude and Pearl have felt very quarrelsome and  
have kept up a continual disturbance. I would like to give them a good switching.  
Velma has been sick today. I fear she has that disease. I sailed the old boat up

the bay with a north wind which was very good for a boat without a centerboard. Mr. Kirk and the boys came in with two deer and a turkey.

February 24, 1899 Friday

The weather was somewhat cool and we had quite a strong wind. We fairly flew to school and reached there an hour before time. School proceeded quite well. I had seven pupils today but yesterday I had only six, the smallest number yet. Mr. Kirk brought me quite a pile of mail today. I received letters from Miss Andrew, Helen, Mrs. Baldwin, Alice and my Mother. Alice is in a worse place than I am and I pity her. I had a hard row home this evening.

February 25, 1899 Saturday

Saturday and I did not teach as I had intended. I washed several pieces this morning and then read until noon. This afternoon I went in the little boat up to the head of the creek. It is a pretty creek and is a very picturesque place. I found a pretty open hammock near the head of the creek where I sat under the trees and studied my Sunday School lesson for an hour or more. Mr. Kirk grew angry at the little pups this evening and kicked one of the poor creatures half crazy. He is a brute. I found five different kinds of air-plants on one tree today and I found then [ten?] different species up the creek. The boys went to Marco today and I sent a letter to mother and had them bring me a lamp chimney.

February 26, 1899 Sunday

Today has been very windy and we had a lively sail to and from S.S. this morning. Sunday School was rather small for all the Harts were sick except Claude and the Johnsons did not come. I received a package of papers from Mr. Christian for distribution in my S.S. The boys went boat racing, fish graining, and are now out on a gator hunt up the creek. They have no regard for the third commandment.<sup>63</sup> I have been reading all afternoon and feel rested enough to begin school tomorrow.

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<sup>63</sup> "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain."

February 27, 1899 Monday

School had progressed very well. I expected only two pupils but when I reached school I found all but Pearl there. I fear they will all be sick tomorrow for they have the disease that appeared in the neighborhood some time ago. The family went fishing today and we had fish for supper. I am getting uneasy about my shoes for I should have received them some time ago. I half fancy that Capt. Collier might delay them for purposes of his own. I hear so many things of him that I can easily suspect anything. The boys this evening told me of a girl of ten years old who still nurses at her breast. She must be a queer creature. Mrs. Kirk talks about it without any embarrassment whatever.

February 28, 1899 Tuesday

Fine winds both ways today. I heard that we were going to have only five months of school. This evening we all went up to Mrs. B. Kirks to pay an evening call. Food is getting somewhat scarce again. I had a marsh hen for supper this evening.

March 1, 1899 Wednesday

School has been very good today. We had to row down this morning but sailed back this evening. Reese came in with four turkeys this morning and Mrs. Kirk and the two boys went to Marco this afternoon. They brought me some mail among other things was a comic valentine from "Gen" guying me about bicycle riding. I must be a bike crank for I recd. A similar valentine last year. Mr. Kirk came in this evening with two deer; both big bucks.

March 2, 1899 Thursday

School has been very well today but I think most of us have had the "spring fever". I have felt decidedly lazy and the pupils were all sick or very lazy. Tonight Noah, Reese and I went gator hunting up the creek. The creek looked weird in the light of the dark lantern, with the mangrove roots like ghostly ribs reaching down into the water. We saw no gator but heard Haman H. shoot. The boys told me that he (Haman) and his wife will get their three babies to sleep and will then go off up the creek gator hunting and will be away for an hour or more. If they were

my children I would never leave the little things alone after night in a country where panthers are as numerous as they are here.

March 3, 1899 Friday

Today has been quite warm. This morning was very foggy and we seemed to be going out on the gulf when we entered the bay. Mr. Kirk and Reese have gone fire-shinning<sup>64</sup> tonight. I have had had a little spat with Arthur. He is the most contemptible, mean, and ill natured child I have ever seen. He will "die with his boots on" I am sure.

March 4, 1899 Saturday

Today was Saturday but I taught to make up a lost day. I received a letter from Mother day. I am tired after having taught for six days in succession. Mosquitoes are getting very numerous.

March 5, 1899 Sunday

I went to S.S. this morning and we were caught in a rain on the way home. It has been rainy all day and is turning cool this evening. I took a nap this afternoon and was awakened by Mrs. Kirk switching the boys<sup>65</sup>. I have not felt well today and have read only a little and studied but little. I am studying Proportion in Algebra. After supper the boys and I raced up and down the creek in front of the house. We made the boats fly. I pulled off a row-lock<sup>66</sup>. We had more singing than usual at S.S. today.

March 6, 1899 Monday

A northwester has been blowing today and tonight it is increasing to a gale. We had a fire all day in the stove at school and were quite comfortable. Pearl was sick today. The two boys and I went sailing after supper to the lower end of the bay in a half gale. We had a fine time but the folks at home were terribly uneasy about Noah and all but the old man were in tears and he was cussing they say.

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<sup>64</sup> Fire hunting; using a light to shine the eyes of a deer.

<sup>65</sup> Punishing with a switch.

<sup>66</sup> A row lock is the swivel yoke (pivot point) into which an oar fits.

March 6, 1899 Monday (second entry for the 6<sup>th</sup>?)

My latest about Miss Vick is what she said about dying. It seems that she wants to be cremated for she said she wanted her body to be burned in a brush pile and then for her bones to be ground up and used by people as a fine kind of baking powder for their biscuits for the dead shall rise again.

March 7, 1899 Tuesday

The wind sprung up early this morning from the N.W. and has been blowing a half gale all day. The wind rattled the fans so that I was forced to squall when I said anything and the pupils had to yell back at me when reciting. I fastened down the awning at the door and the children would go in and out of the window or would drop on the floor and lower themselves to the ground at the edge of the floor where the fans do not fit tight. It looks very funny to see their heads pop up at the edge and also to see them roll out. After school I went over to Hart's landing to help the children. The bay was full of choppy waves which wet us all in both boats. I had a hard row back, although I was in a round bottomed...

*This part which was found out of order at the April 6, 1999 entry fits well here*  
...narrow skiff boat of Haman Hall's. After we got out into Henderson Bay on our way home, we had a bad time. We had to make one tack then we fairly flew up the bay until a flaw struck us and pulled out the "step" of the mast. I then held the mast in position until another flaw came along and filled the boat half full. We bailed out the boat then went on up to Haman H's near which place the sail twisted around causing one of the boom "jaws" to split off. The mast next bent over and came near splitting the piece where the mast hole is and I was forced to jerk the whole mast, sail and all, out and allow it to go overboard. We then secured Reese's boat at H's and sailed on up home. The boys were nearly frozen but I was quite warm. I am sure it will freeze tonight and then good bye to our trees at home. I heard that Miss Vicks school is ended.



March 8, 1899 Wednesday

The weather was cool this morning and there was frost. There has been a strong N.E. wind and I had to row against it today. This evening, coming home, George caught his hand between the boat and the lighter at H. H's. place and had it badly bruised. I started a letter to Helen. The tide is lower than I have seen it before and all the oyster bars are high and dry.

March 9, 1899 Thursday

I have not felt well and have had some fever today but succeeded in teaching with energy enough. I rowed home this evening against a head wind. Mr. Kirk and the boys came in this afternoon with two deer, two turkeys and six squirrels.

March 10, 1899 Friday

I have had fever all day and sometimes felt that I could hardly sit up. Tomorrow I am going to Palm Hammock<sup>67</sup> with the boys and I hope I will be well. Noah and I loaded some shells for the 38 carbine. I received word that we were to have our 6 months of school and also received letters from my mother and Anna. I am getting disgusted with things in general here. I found some very thick, black snail shells<sup>68</sup> which are quite pretty.

March 11, 1899 Saturday

Today is Saturday and Noah, Reese and I went to Palm Hammock.<sup>69</sup> We killed eleven squirrels and one turkey and walked about 22 miles. We were all very tired when we reached home but after supper we felt better. We found the woods nearly dry and could get water to drink only twice, once in Palm Hammock lake and once in a hole which we scratched in the mud of a swamp. We found the palms in the hammock. They are the Royal Palm and there are only three or four little clumps of the trees in the United States and they are all in South Florida. The Royal Palm is one of the most beautiful of the palm family. The trees we saw were about 60 feet high and two feet in diameter at the ground. The trunk is very

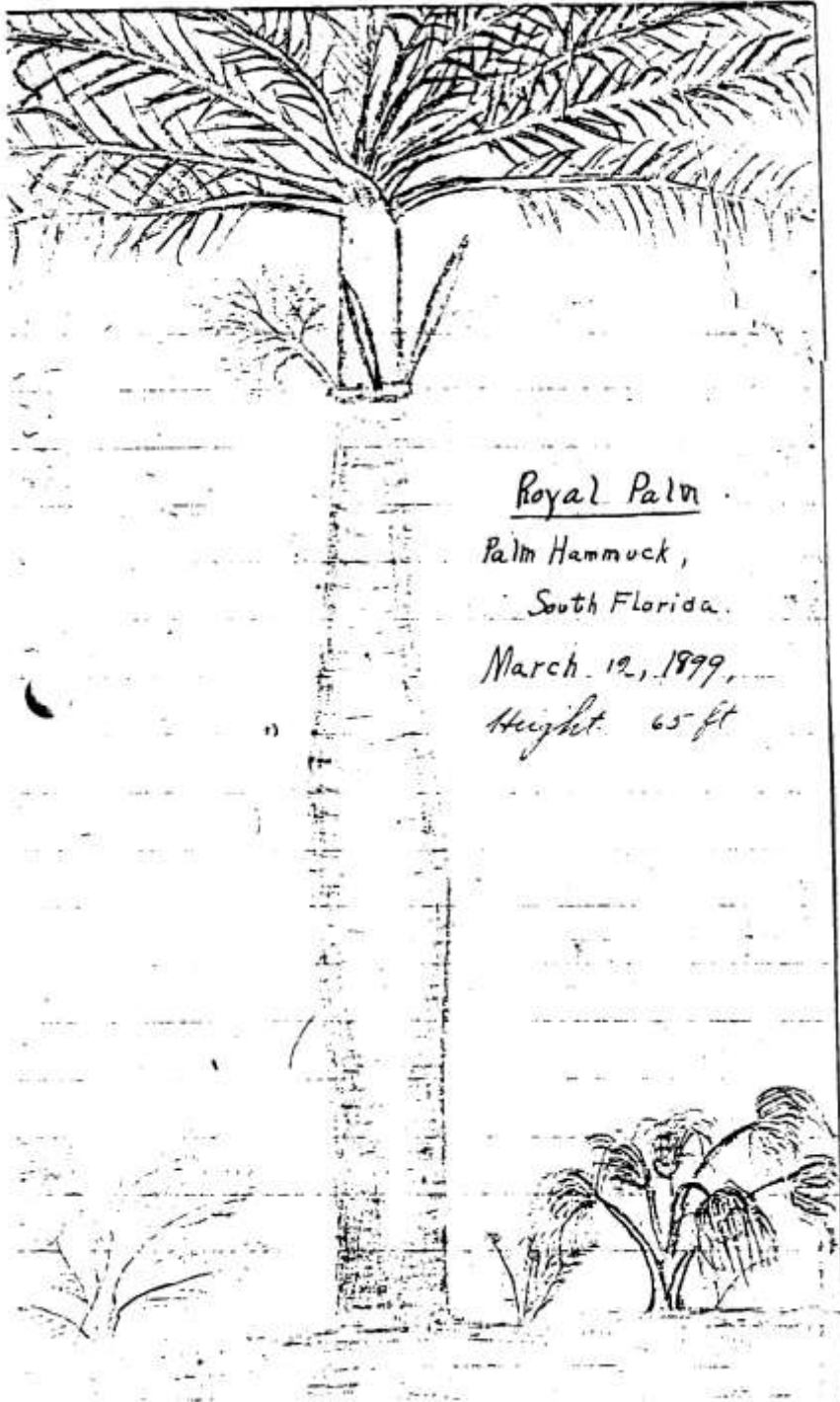
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<sup>67</sup> Royal Palm Hammock where the State Park of the same name is located.

<sup>68</sup> These would be apple snails, *Pomacea paludosa*, which are found throughout the Everglades, the cypress strands and other freshwater bodies.

<sup>69</sup> This is Royal Palm Hammock; about eight statute miles SE of the Kirkland place. It is now the site of Royal Palm Hammock State Park.

smooth and about fifteen feet from the ground they bulge out like a bottle and then gradually taper until within four feet of the place where the leaves spread out like a fan. The upper four feet is a smooth, polished, green bud, about 12 inches in diameter. The leaves are somewhat like the cocoanut leaves only they are more blunt on the outer end while the stem is thicker and heavier. The leaves come out of the bud almost horizontally making a beautiful umbrella like head. From the lower end of the polished green bud, the bloom stems spring. Each bloom stem is wrapped in a thick green shuck, until the bloom bursts out and then the shuck falls off. The blossoms are tiny flowers of a creamy color, and the berries are about the size of a hack-berry. I tried to shoot a bloom stem off but did not succeed, for it was very tough and fibrous although we cut it nearly off with six shots. We saw two deer and some signs of a huge panther. Mr. Kirkland went hunting today, killed one deer and saw seven more. We shot two mullet coming down the creek.



March 12, 1899 Sunday

Today I learned that Mr. Kirk thinks the women ought to be last in everything. At his table if there is more than a table full, the men and children eat first and the women have what is left. Mrs. Kirk<sup>70</sup> has told me all of their family affairs. They tell me that Mr. Bill Kirk once stole some money from a poor old man who was almost helpless and who could hardly earn any money at all. After stealing the money he hid it in a cavity which he had cut in the butt of his gun stock underneath the butt plate. He must be a rascal and I am not much pleased with the fact that I am indebted to him for his boat for two weeks. This morning I went to S.S. in Walter Carroll's boat, for all the other boats were gone. The boat is a good sailor and I sailed both ways with a fine wind. S.S. was a very good one this morning. We sang better than usual. Walter Carroll moved up the creek a mile or more yesterday and today he moved back down here and is now living in Jim Carroll's little shack back in the woods from Mr. Kirk's. I am a little stiff from my yesterday's walk and took a nap today. The boys broke my grains and payed me for it. I gave them to Haman H.

March 12, 1899 Sunday (second entry for March 12)

I heard Mr. Kirk talking about his brother William and among other remarks he said that "kin folks are the poorest property any one owned in his life".

March 13, 1899 Monday

Today I had only six pupils. Velma was sick and George was sick also. Tomorrow I hope to have more present. I met the taxidermist Mr. Tollins when I came home this evening. He showed me a horned lobster from the keys of Florida. It was one of the queerest creatures I have ever seen. I received the invoice of the goods from M. & W. and also a paper from Aunt Maggie.

March 14, 1899 Tuesday

I have had fever nearly all day. Only six pupils were present and they had the spring fever or something else for it was very troublesome to keep them at their lessons. The mosquitoes are very bad and are growing more numerous. We

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<sup>70</sup> Mrs. Kirk is never named, but she was Dyce Caroline Wiggs who married Reece on August 18, 1873 in Holmes County, Florida. She was known as Caroline.

sailed both ways with a fine wind. I took old Nick home through the hammock this evening<sup>71</sup>.

March 15, 1899 Wednesday

School has progressed tolerably well. I heard that Miss Vick's school was out owing to the diminution of the number of pupils. I sailed both ways today. Was sick for a while this morning.

March 16, 1899 Thursday

Started to school today but Mr. Joe Williams told me that my freight was at Marco and had been sitting out on the wharf all night. I took the boys on to Marco, got the freight and came home. Reached home about two o'clock and I have been distributing the goods, unpacking good, and figuring freight all afternoon. One box of goods has not yet arrived. Reese came in with two deer and went to Marco this afternoon. He killed both the deer at one shot and didn't see one either when he shot.

March 17, 1899 Friday

School progressed well today. A squall came up this evening and we were wet a little by rain. The wind did not annoy me much for we were far enough up the bay to be under the lee of the bushes. There as a heavy shower today and the air has been very pleasant since. The Kirks put up their paper ceiling today and the house now looks quite civilized. When they get the whole thing papered then indeed it will look quite presentable. Mr. Kirk and Reece came in this evening after dark with two very fine deer and five turkeys. Two of the turkeys were huge gobblers.

March 18, 1899 Saturday

Today I have not felt well, but I have succeeded in teaching with some degree of vigor. Mr. Kirk brought the other box of goods and some mail for me. I have been busy all evening making out freight bills and unpacking the box. Every thing was on hand this time.

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<sup>71</sup> Old Nick? What hammock? I wonder if this was the name of the Demerritt's old dog.

March 19, 1899 Sunday

I went to S.S. this morning. Reece and I went in his boat. We had to beat against a strong S.W. wind and the waves wet us thoroughly. Miss Vick was at S.S. today. It did my heart good to see her for it has been nearly 1 weeks since I last saw a young lady – except my pupil Cora – and I still have a warm place in my heart for the opposite sex. S.S. was a very poor one because most of the people forgot their quarterlies and song books. We had but little singing and a very poor lesson. This afternoon Noah and I went sailing in Walter Carroll's boat. We had a fine sail to the lower end of the bay and back but we got somewhat wet. Reece tried his jib today but it did not work, and so he took it off. I am stuck on my algebra in proportion.

March 20, 1899 Monday

I have felt well today and have taught with some degree of energy. All pupils were present. The boys went fish spearing tonight but did not get any fish. When they came back to the landing they caught eight little "chubs" by blinding them and I am going to have them for breakfast.

March 21, 1899 Tuesday

I have had fever and have felt bad all day. My teaching was not very good in consequence thereof. We sailed both ways today. This evening just as we were approaching the landing George ran up on the bow by the mast. I turned the boat suddenly into the landing and George took a header over the side into the creek. He was somewhat wet as he came sputtering to the top. I made out the pupils reports last night. We are going to catch "chubs" after dark.

March 22, 1899 Wednesday

Today I have had fever most of the time. The boys came in with six turkeys and went to Marco this afternoon. There's no flour in the house and we waited until nine o'clock before we at supper expecting the boys to bring some from Marco. Reece came in this evening with one big deer and the "yankee" they took out a few days ago.

March 23, 1899 Thursday

Today has been one of the warmest we have had this year. The pupils were full of meanness and it was very hard to keep them straight.

March 23, 1899 Thursday (second entry for this date)

I have felt better today than I did yesterday. We have had but little food today except "taters", crackers and sausage.

March 24, 1899 Friday

I have felt well today. The day has been rainy and disagreeable. We got in a rain coming home but did not get wet. Mr. Kirk came in this evening with a turkey, a buck and a little fawn. I will write a letter to my Mother tonight.

March 25, 1899 Saturday

Today I went to Marco with Mr. Kirk and then I walked out on the beach in search of shells. I found no extra shells but found some fine specimens of the "Sunset Muscle". Miss Vick went down to Marco with us from Harts. She seemed to want to argue on certain religious theories and I was shocked to hear her express several atheistic ideas. I fear she has been reading some of the writings of that grand infidel – now converted to Christianity – Robert Ingersol. Poor girl, she is now standing on the edge of a precipice, in the dark; afraid to step forward or backward and groping for light. For her soul's sake I hope she will receive the light of Christ's love. We sailed all the way home this evening with a fair strong wind.

March 26, 1899 Sunday

Went to S.S. this morning. The school was the smallest I have yet had only eight being present. I rowed down but sailed back. This afternoon Ed Johnson and Claude came up the creek and several of us young fellows went sailing. We had four boats and they looked pretty as we tacked down the creek and bay. After coming home, I shaved off both my beard and mustache. They make much fun of me and say I look ugly, that my lips stick out too far, that I look like Capt. Collier's female cook and numerous other complimentary things.

March 27, 1899 Monday

The children had much fun today because they thought I looked very odd since I have shaved. They were inclined to "snicker" every time I caught their eyes. I have not felt very well today so could not teach as well as I like to teach. Everything smells of paint, for they have been painting the doors and wall paper today. The children all have paint dabbed over them and are as dirty as hogs. Bah! What a nasty place this is. Only three weeks more. The day has been very warm; yes hot!

March 28, 1899 Tuesday

School has progressed very well today. I felt very well myself, but the pupils were lazy. When we came home this evening we were told that Reece, on Sunday morning, had killed a very large old panther. Sunday evening he and Mr. Kirk went back to the swamp and killed three more half grown panthers. They sold the skins to the taxidermist Mr. Tolbin (sp?). They also killed four deer and the two boys have gone to Marco to sell the meat. This evening I found Mr. Tolbin's (sp?) boat full of water and bailed it out.

March 29, 1899 Wednesday

I have felt tolerably well today but part of the time I very badly. We cleaned out the school well and have had not water to drink at all today. I watered the trees around the school house this morning. Mr. Black the Methodist Pastor for the Marco and Chuckoluskee circuit came to the school today to see me; he is a pleasant man but not very well educated. I know he is a good man and hope he can help this neighborhood some. The family here think that a "nigger" is in the neighborhood and they think of course that he is dangerous and ought to be shot like a dog.

March 30, 1899 Thursday

Today has been very warm and the pupils have been quite lazy. I had to punish Velma for a show of temper and for story telling. I paddled her hand good. Claude had to sit in the corner for whispering. He is lazy and has been quite hateful today. This evening I took Noah's grains and stuck them into a little shark



thinking it was a big mullet. The shark promptly cut the line and swam away with the spear; so I am 20 cents poorer than I was when I came home. We then went fishing but caught nothing. I will read in Uncle Tom's Cabin tonight.

March 31, 1899 Friday

Today has been a long one. The pupils were lazy and I was unwell. This afternoon I read from the Youth's Companions to the pupils and had only one recitation. I read for nearly two hours and was quite tired. This evening Mr. Kirk, Mr. Tollin (sp?) and the two boys came in from the woods. They brought three deer one of them being a beautiful little fawn. I saw the panther skins which Mr. Tollin had ready for mounting. The huge claws and grinning teeth were savage looking enough to be alarming. The large panther was seven feet long. I will write a letter to Mother tonight. Two more weeks of school!!!

April 1, 1899 Saturday

Noah, Reece and I had the energy to go hunting today. We started early went straight to Rattle Snake Hammock where we found a pond with several gators in it. I did most of the grunting and Reece and Noah shot most of the saurian. I waded around in the water, moss and mud up to my waist and I waded out and got three gators the boys had killed. While after one dead gator a live one with its eyes shot out suddenly popped up in front of me and I grabbed it by the nose and took it ashore. I stood in one place and shot three gators but was able to get only one ashore. There were great numbers of huge, ugly cottonmouth moccasins in the swamp but none of us were bitten. We saw an old wood duck with about ten little ducklings swimming behind her. I got in a terribly thick place one while following the dogs after otters and I thought I never would get out. Once I started to wade across a little open place when suddenly the dirt under my feet caved in and I went suddenly up to my waist in a gator's cave. I tumbled out of that cave much faster than I went into it. Coming home we saw one deer and the boys shot five times at it but I did not get a shot. We killed two squirrels. I secured a specimen of an airplant that was new to me. We told the people at home that we had seen three big panthers and had them fooled for this is April fool's day.

April 2, 1899 Sunday

This is Sunday and this morning I went to S.S. and church. Today is the first time there has been church here since I came and for a year before too. After church I went home for dinner with Hart's folks. Miss Vick was at S.S. this morning and she afterward came home with Mr. Kirk and is here now. I let her see some of the things in this diary that I have written about her during the last eighteen months. She was greatly amazed over some of the things I said especially where I said "she is a nuisance to my unromantic mind". She is going to stay here until Tuesday. Oh my!

April 3, 1899 Monday (*In different handwriting*)

The other night I had a dream. A dream of my friend Watts.

I thought he was a handsome dog. Though on his fame were many blots.

But on his face there was a grin, 'twas truly diabolic,

and down the furrows rolled the tear for doggie had the colic!!!!

Doggerel suggested by reading the account of Mr. Hall's New Year contained in this volume. Mayme Vick

Someone else has begun the record of this day for me. M. Vick has condescended to write a little for me and has graced my diary with the only poem there will be in it. Today school has gone well. This evening I took Miss Vick riding in the boat to Little Island. We had a pleasant chat and row. I showed her some more of my diary. She saw what I had written about Annie on a former occasion and I wish she had not seen it. I am "scart" awfully. When Annie sees this I hope she will know I am only the same Watts that I use to be. What a queer thing this life is and what a queer thing we can make of it. What a queer mortal I am. Mr. Kirk and the boys went hunting and killed five gators and some squirrels.

April 4, 1899 Tuesday

School has passed off very pleasantly. Miss V. went with us this morning and I bade her good bye with best wishes for her future. I may see her again but I never expect to. Lives are like lines in space, they cross and pass on into eternity, some lives are like curved lines passing each other at one point and aging at

another on the side of the curve. Still others might be compared to parallel lines reaching into eternity side by side. Mr. Kirk and the boys were in the woods today and killed four gators and a deer.

April 5, 1899 Wednesday

Time is flying swiftly, only seven more days until school ends. We secured some oysters this evening and I ate two or three. The boys killed a gator and two big otters. Mr. Kirk went to Marco today and he capsized the boat in the creek this morning.

April 6, 1899 Thursday

School has progress as usual. I had some trouble with G. for he thought he knew more than I did about Arith. The boys went hunting and bought in one otter and seven gator hides.

*This passage is disconnected from other text.*

*It fits well into the entry for December 23, 1899:*

...take her may Gold help me to care for her well. I will do my best. I am young but I know I can do well with her. I fear I am going to have a N.W. wind when I go up the coast next Sunday.

*The next page starts with another section out of order.*

*This part seems to fits into the entry for March 7, 1999:*

...narrow skiff boat of Haman Hall's. After we got out into Henderson Bay on our way home, we had a bad time. We had to make one tack then we fairly flew up the bay until a flaw struck us and pulled out the "step" of the mast. I then held the mast in position until another flaw came along and filled the boat half full. We bailed out the boat then went on up to Haman H's near which place the sail twisted around causing one of the boom "jaws" to split off. The mast next bent over and came near splitting the piece where the mast hole is and I was forced to jerk the whole mast, sail and all, out and allow it to go overboard. We then secured Reese's boat at H's and sailed on up home. The boys were nearly frozen but I was quite warm. I am sure it will freeze tonight and then good bye to our trees at home. I heard that Miss Vicks school is ended.

April 7, 1899 Friday

Having used up all of my other diary I will continue this year's record of events in this book. Today school has proceeded very well. I have felt well and so have the pupils. Food has been somewhat scarce but this evening Mr. Kirk came in from the woods with a big buck so we had venison for supper. After coming home from school I packed my trunk preparatory to leaving for home next Friday. One more week in this place! I washed some hand kerchiefs this evening. Will write a letter to Annie this evening.

April 8, 1899 Saturday

This has been a windy Saturday. A northwester came up last night and has been howling all day. I have taught today because by so doing I will succeed in leaving here next Friday. Supper was late this evening for Noah and Mrs. Kirk went to Marco today and did not get back until late. They brought me two letters, business letters. This evening I showed the boys how to balance a needle on its point and also how to turn a glassful of water upside down without spilling any.

April 9, 1899 Sunday

This morning I went to S.S. and taught the lesson and we also elected a Supt. For the S.S. after I am gone. Mrs. Hart was elected. After S.S. we all went to the beach where we stayed for two hours or more gathering shells. I found no new varieties of shells but found quite a number of "sand dollars". The wind was furious and we had a good time sailing today. Coming up Little Marco Pass we had only a "muttonleg" (sp?) sail but the boat nearly ran under. The water came in once over both bow and stern and at another time a wave rose high up on one side striking my hand and sending a shower over us all. The boat rocked so that we all expected to be capsized but by good management we stayed on top. When we reached Hall's Bay, we had a bad time "beating" through it. The waves drenched us all and we were kept bailing continually. While coming through the "Little Creek" we met Reece and John Demeritt on their way to Marco with two deer which Mr. Kirk had killed. Reece told me he had secured a twelve foot gator and that he had bought the head in for me. We came through Henderson Bay at a tremendous speed. The gator's head is a huge one and I have spent the whole

evening in taking the flesh off it. I will try to keep it with the skin on instead of boiling it as I had at first intended. I washed the salt water out of my clothes after reaching home.

April 10, 1899 Monday

Today I have not felt well. The wind has been cool and we have had fire. We have had two good sails today, going and coming. I packed some more on my trunk?<sup>72</sup>....finely and will soon be ready to pack. The air is quite cool tonight. The boys came in from the woods this evening with three deer and some gator hides. They used the hide of the big gator that owned the head I now have for putting new bottoms in the old chairs around the place. Gator skin makes very fine chair bottoms.

April 11, 1899 Tuesday

Today I have not felt too very well. School has proceeded about as usual. Mrs. Hart came over this afternoon to pay us a visit. After school I fought fire for a while for one (a fire) was going down the prairie toward the scrub around the school house. I feared it would burn the place up. We got home quite late. Fried venison, cabbage, biscuits and coffee for supper. I received a letter from my Mother today.

April 12, 1899 Wednesday

I have fever blisters on my lips and teaching today has been hard for I have had fever too. The pupils have been so excited today that I could get hardly any study from them. They have annoyed me much. This evening coming home I was rowing. Once I made a big stroke, the oar stuck in the mud, flew from the oar lock and allowed me to shoot off the seat and flop on my back in the wet bottom of the boat, with my heels straight up in the air. How the kids did laugh.

April 13, 1899 Thursday

Today was the last day of my school and I was glad of it too. I had no literary exercises but as the children wished me to read to them I read some stories and some fables from Aesop. I was somewhat sorry to leave my pupils, yes, very

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<sup>72</sup> Writing is cut off at top of the page

sorry. Little Velma after reading her last lesson this evening ran to her seat and cried some. I hate to leave my little pupils. When we reached home this evening we found that Mr. Kirk and the boys had come in from the woods with three deer, two bears and one turkey. The bears were the first I have seen in this country and are of the black species. They are small of size and when grown the largest only weight about four hundred pounds. The largest of the two only weight 200 lbs. I finished packing my things and am now ready to leave in the morning. The bear skins are hanging outside the house and I dislike the smell of them very much. These people like to smell blood I believe! I am not well and fear I will be sick before I reach home. Mr. Kirk saw another bear which he did not shoot because his cartridges were all gone.

April 14, 1899 Friday

This morning I arose early, shaved and then prepared to take leave of my delightful (?) boarding place. Mr. Kirk took me and my baggage to Marco in the old boat. We sailed part of the way. I stopped and said good bye to the Harts. I felt sad upon leaving little Velma. She nearly hugged my neck off. Claude gave me an orchid which he had found in the swamp blooming. When we reached Marco I saw a hammerhead shark lying at the edge of the water. The creature had been captured the day before. The shark was a queer looking animal and it's eyes seemed to be out on the ends of its ears<sup>73</sup>. I took dinner at the hotel, read some and talked awhile to Mayme Vick<sup>74</sup>. At four o'clock the mail came about the schooner, the anchor was raised and after much fuss and work the schooner slipped out of the little channel into Marco Channel. The wind was S.W. and we had to beat out of the channel and round the buoy farthest out before the wind was fair for us. The wind died out about sundown and for two hours we lay perfectly motionless except as the tide carried us up the coast. About nine o'clock an off shore wind sprang up and we proceeded on our way.

Here ends the Diary.

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<sup>73</sup> Probably a hammerhead or shovel nose shark.

<sup>74</sup> So he does see her again after all..

*Several things about this story are remarkable.*

*The pace of life was exceedingly slow and the scope of life was narrow. Nevertheless, there was a fullness of human interaction sometimes missed in our “modern” world. It is clear that there was real affection between Mr. Hall and his pupils. Ignorance, bigotry, education, honesty and love appear to be battles each generation has to fight for itself.*

*The coastline north of Marco Island has changed so much in the last 100 years that the diary doesn’t make sense without an early chart. Shore erosion is nothing new, and the process of sand moving south along the beach is well established.*

*The author mentions a total of 81 deer killed over a period of 186 days and it is likely that all of the game killed probably was not mentioned. During the same time period 38 turkey were harvested, two bears, four panthers and numerous squirrels. This seems excessive until one considers that hunting was the principal source of protein for a large family and there was no refrigeration. It sounds like there were only a few times when there was enough extra to send some to Marco for sale, and the author mentions being hungry more than once. There was no thought of conservation of things like panthers, bears and alligators that had economic value and which were competing directly with these people for survival.*

*Head colds, boils and general malaise were common and there wasn’t much one could do about them. Discomforts we would not tolerate (mosquitos, smoky rooms, heat, cold, dampness) were taken for granted because there was no alternative, and thus nothing to pine over.*

*What people did to travel from place to place would make the news today.*

*Not everyone survived. There were several children of the community who died before adulthood. George Washington Kirkland who was about 17 when this story was told, died before his eighteenth birthday crushed by a fallen tree while clearing land. He is buried in the graveyard on Shell Island. Reese and Florie Hall both died in 1900; Reese of drinking a lead solution and Florie of a burn.*