

"In order to make the trip from Fort Winder to Everglades, the senior Mr. Storter traded a single ox-cart for a sloop made from a yawl. John Cash, of Key West, (who had married a Miss Waterson and Captain George W. Storter later married her sister) sailed the boat from Charlotte Harbor to Everglades. After using the boat for his own purposes while the crop was being harvested, John Cash returned to Everglades, picked up Mr. Storter and his two sons and sailed them back to Fort Winder. The party stopped en route, both ways, in lee passes at night. At that time, the only inhabited places en route were:

Punta Rassa, where a telegraph office was in operation

Marco, where Captain W.T. Collier and his son, Capt. Bill Collier, were living at the time.

Wiggins Pass, where Joe Wiggins, who had settled there in 1880, was engaged in operating an apiary.

It is interesting to note that, in those days, mail was delivered via Morgan Line steamer from New York to Cedar Key thence via small boat to Punta Rassa. The father of Captain Charley Boggess distributed the mail from Punta Rassa to Fort Myers, Charlotte Harbor and Fort Meade.

Everglades, on East Bank of Barron's River:

According to Mr. Storter, Mr. William Clay was the first settler in Everglades, Mr. Allen having purchased his property at Everglades from him about 1873.

- (a) William S. Allen property and present Rod & Gun Club site:
Mr. William S. Allen, one of the first white settlers in Everglades, built the first Rod & Gun Club when he settled at the site of the present Club in 1873. Mr. Allen, a widower at the time he moved to Everglades, had four children:
George W. Allen, a banker in Key West,
William Allen, Collector of Customs at Key West,
Ruth Allen, who married a man named Jefferson B. Brown,
Dwight Allen, the youngest son, who was about 18 years of age when the Storter family arrived in Everglades, and who now resides in Palm Beach, Florida.

Mr. Allen's first wife died before he moved to Everglades. His second marriage was to the daughter of the then French Consul at Key West. This marriage ended in tragedy as the new wife committed suicide rather than leave her family and friends at Key West to settle in some strange and sparsely settled location.

Shortly after the elder Mr. Allen completed his home on Allen's River, (later named Barron's River), the hurricane of 1873 flooded the site to a depth of 6 feet and, as his house was anchored to blocks 2 feet high, the water rose to a level of four feet inside the house. After this experience, Mr. Allen and one helper raised his house by jacking and blocking until the floor was 6 feet above the ground. The area escaped further storms until the severe hurricane of 1910 struck.

Mr. Allen planted his crops along the riverfront from the mouth of the River to duPont, on the East bank of the river. The first crop harvested by the Storters consisted of tomatoes, cucumbers and eggplants. The tomatoes and cucumbers were shipped in peck crates 6" x 8" x 16" while the eggplants were shipped in bushel crates. The yield from this first crop was about as follows:

800 crates of tomatoes	@ \$1.00 per crate.
350 crates of eggplants	@ \$1.50 per \$2.00 per crate.
100 crates of cucumbers	@ \$1.75 per crate.

The cucumber crop was a failure the first year. The eggplants were planted in rows about six feet apart and the cucumbers were planted between the rows of eggplants. All of the above produce was shipped via schooner from Everglades to Key West where it was transferred to a Mallory Line steamer bound for New York. The schooner operating on the Everglades-Key West run was owned and operated by Mr. Allen's son, G.W. Allen.

(b) Present Everglades school-house site:

Mr. Allen also owned this property and rented it to a negro named Mauei Dean who was sharecropping with Mr. Allen. Dean was living with a white woman on the property. Mr. Allen, being desirous of removing Dean from the property, and, acting in his capacity as Justice of the Peace, had Dean arrested for living with a white woman and had him removed from the property.

(c) Opposite present duPont site, near bridge:

This site was the original home of the Storter family, the senior Mr. Storter living on this property from 1883 to 1891.

(d) Present Seminole Lodge site:

Mr. R. B. Storter first settled this location in 1897. In the spring of 1891, when Mr. R. B. Storter married _____, the senior Mr. Storter built a house for the newly married couple on the property opposite the present duPont site. The house was 12' x 24', and consisted of two rooms and kitchen. In 1897, Mr. R. B. Storter moved this house from its original location to the Seminole Lodge site and rebuilt it to a size of 12' x 30'. Later, in 1898, Mr. R. B. Storter again rebuilt his house providing several rooms of 12' x 18'. Mr. R. B. Storter acquired the Seminole Lodge site from his brother, Captain George W. Storter, who, at that time, owned all the former Allen property.

(e) Mr. William S. Allen owned and occupied all of the present Everglades townsite from 1873-1889, when he removed to Key West where he died. At Mr. Allen's death, Captain George W. Storter purchased all the Allen property from George W. Allen for the sum of \$800.00. Captain Storter set up his residence on the present Rod & Gun Club site and also operated a store on the property. In 1898 Capt. Storter planted the large Madeira tree now growing in front of the Rod & Gun Club.

• Everglades, on West Bank of Barron's River:

(a) Bruner property at mouth of River:

In 1879 Mr. and Mrs. Madison Weeks and their 3 sons and 2 daughters moved to Everglades from Fort Winder and settled at the mouth of Allen's (Barron's) River on the west bank thereof, where they raised cabbages and turnips for shipment to New York. The Weeks' house consisted of two 12-foot square rooms with a passageway between and was constructed of palmetto logs with cabbage palm fronds for a roof. Madison Weeks died some years later in Naples, where one of his sons, A.J., now resides. In 1883, John J. Brown bought the Weeks' property and moved his family to Everglades from Halfway Creek, where they lived until J. J. Brown died. About 1914, one of his sons, C. M. Brown, sold half of the property to Bruner and later sold the other half to Mr. Collier.

(b) Opposite present Rod & Gun Club:

i. Mrs. Willie Gandeas, a widow, first occupied the property from 1887 until 1897, when she sold it to Capt. G.W. Storter.

ii. In 1898 Captain G. W. Storter sold the property to S.K. Stevens who occupied the property until the 1910 hurricane when he abandoned it, and the property reverted to Capt. Storter.

iii. In 1911 Capt. Storter sold the place to Mr. Kingston, who, in turn, sold it to Mr. Barron Collier some years later. While on the property, Mr. Kingston planted several Royal Palms and Madeira trees, which are still on the property.

(c) Present-day duPont site:

A negro couple, Augustus Swycover and his wife, first settled the present-day duPont site in 1882 and planted crops, consisting entirely of sugar cane, along the west bank of the river from the present bridge to the present location of the old A.R. & K. Warehouse. Swycover shipped his sugar cane to Key West in a boat carrying from 1,200 to 1,500 canes. In the fall of 1887 Captain George W. Storter bought the property from Swycover and it was on this property that Capt. Storter's second child, Frances Eva, was born January 1, 1889. Frances Eva Storter was the first white child born in the region then known as the Ten Thousand Islands. She married Walter Bostick and is now living in Fort Myers.

Early Schools in Everglades:

(a) The first school in Everglades was taught by a Mr. J. W. Todd, a native of Tennessee. Mr. Todd was appointed teacher for Everglades by the Monroe County School Board and took passage in Mr. R.B. Storter's boat from Key West to Everglades. The first school class, consisting of about 12 pupils, was taught by Mr. Todd in 1893-94 in one room in the Northwest corner of the Rod & Gun Club. After this term, Mr. Todd then left Everglades and taught at Goodland Point.

(b) The first teacher in this area, was Mr. D. W. Black who taught a 2-months term at Halfway Creek in 1888.

(c) The first school house (which was the second school taught) in Everglades was built in 1895-96 on the point where the present Golf course is located. This building was demolished by a tornado some time in 1896. Mr. Allen B. Claire, later Mayor of Key West, was the first school teacher in the first school house. Mr. Claire came to Everglades from Key West and was succeeded by Mr. G. W. Gantt in the old location on the point.

(d) Following the destruction of the original school house by a tornado, a new school was erected on the present golf course site near the intersection of McGee Street and South Riverside Drive and Mr. Gantt taught the first classes held in the new school. Gantt was succeeded by a Miss Crowe from Fort Myers, who, in turn, was succeeded by Miss Lettie Nutt in 1909. The school was abandoned after the school-house was washed away by the 1910 hurricane.

Early Churches in Everglades:

(a) The first church in Everglades was of Methodist denomination and was located on the golf course site at the same location as the second school house and was constructed about 1894. The first Minister was Rev. George W. Gatewood who was succeeded by Rev. H.S. Miller in 1891. Rev. Gatewood first preached at Mr. William F. Brown's place at Halfway Creek in 1889 and moved to Everglades when Seventh Day Adventists moved into Halfway Creek.

(b) The first church was built on the east bank of Barron's River in 1890 and the first Minister in the Church at Everglades was Rev. James H. Owen. Rev. Owen was then succeeded by Rev. Gatewood who was returned to Everglades. Rev. Gatewood was succeeded the second time by Rev. H.W. Baker from Key West, who was followed by Rev. J. W. Weatherford, also from Key West. An Englishman by the name of Sleighmaker preached in Everglades about 1914. There were no other churches in the area until about 1916 when the Pentecost Church was erected at Chokoloskee Island. As many of the inhabitants of the Island were Catholic, Priests from Key West also made visits to Chokoloskee.

Early Post Offices in and Around Everglades:

The first post office in this area was established on Chokoloskee Island in 1893-94 and Mr. C. G. McKinney was appointed Postmaster. Mr. R. B. Storter was the first mail carrier, his compensation amounting to 2/3 that of the Postmaster's. Mr. Storter carried the mail from Chokoloskee to Key West and, during the first three months, his compensation amounted to \$3.50.

Capt. George W. Storter sponsored a petition for a post office at Everglades in 1895 and was known as Chokoloskee. When the Post Office Department asked that a new name be given to this post office, Mr. R. B. Storter suggested the name "Everglade" which name was assigned to the office. In 1896 Mr. R. B. Storter obtained the first contract for carrying mail from Everglades to Key West, the contract amounting to \$1,100 per year. In 1897 a new postal route was established running from Punta Rassa to Chokoloskee via Marco.

Upper Reaches of Barron's River:

In 1883, Joe Wiggins settled on a shell mound near the head of Barron's River where he raised cabbages for shipment to Key West. Wiggins also operated a small trading post for doing business with the Indians at this location. Several years later, about 1886, after Wiggins had moved to Sandfly Pass, a Mr. Lennart of Tampa bought the old trading post location from Wiggins. After living there only about one month, Lennart abandoned the place and went back to Tampa. The property then changed hands many times and finally Captain George W. Storter bought it and traded it to a man by the name of Thomas Myles of Bartow in exchange for 5 acres of land near Bartow. Myles did not cultivate the property and finally abandoned it.

Wiggins Pass:

Some time prior to 1882, Joe Wiggins settled at what is now known as Wiggins Pass, where he operated an apiary. In 1882, while en route back to Fort Winder from Everglades, the Storters stopped at Wiggins Pass and Joe Wiggins told them he was selling his place to Joe Williams, father of S.E. Williams who is now a resident of Naples. Wiggins moved to the shell mound up Barron's River when Williams bought the apiary location.

• Halfway Creek:

There were a number of settlers in the early days on Halfway Creek. The families are given in order beginning at the mouth of the river and going upstream:

The first settlement on the right hand side of the river belonged to John Weeks.

Mrs. Eliza Hall, mother of Mr. Charley Boggess, had the next settlement, having moved to Halfway Creek about 1880.

Levi Pender, a negro from Key West, was engaged in operating a schooner between Key West and this area at the time.

The following families lived on the opposite, or left hand, bank of the river:

John Roan, a widower, and his son George, who were engaged in farming here. Roan had 5 boys: George, Henry, John, James and Charlie, all of whom were boatmen except George. Henry and John Roan operated a freight schooner between Cedar Key and Charlotte Harbor at this time. The Roan family also owned a steamer which they operated between Fort Myers and Punta Gorda. The elder Mr. Roan left Halfway Creek about 1883 and went to Fort Myers where he died shortly thereafter. The Roan place was taken over by a man named Lott and his wife. They were from Georgia and had no children. After two years, they left for parts unknown.

The next settlement was that of John J. Brown and his sons, William F. Brown, C. Melvin Brown and Benjamin B. Brown, and two daughters. John Brown lived at Halfway Creek from 1882 to 1885 when he bought the Madison Weeks place at the mouth of Barron's River, where he lived until his death some five years later. His old Halfway Creek place was abandoned.

Arnola Brown, one of the daughters, married William Gardner who had the place next above John Brown. They, subsequently, separated and she married a man named Stephens, who became Chief of Police in Miami. William Gardner went to Key West about 1894 and was killed in a negro riot there in 1895.

John Gardner had the next settlement up from William Gardner. He left in 1884 and moved to Key West where he married several years later.

Josephine Brown, the other daughter of John Brown, married James O. Lockhart, who had the next settlement upstream. Lockhart left Halfway Creek in 1898 and went to Tampa where he died. He left no family, his wife having died before him.

William F. Brown lived at Halfway Creek in the John Weeks place, for about 10 or 12 years, until his death. Later, Captain George Storter bought all the Halfway Creek claims with the exception of the Roan place.

Turner's River:

Originally this river was known as Chokoliska or Chokoloskee River. A man by the name of Richard Turner, (familiarily known as "Captain Dick"), moved to this location from Sandfly Pass and settled on the right hand side of the river, going upstream, near the shell mounds, between $1\frac{1}{4}$ and $1\frac{1}{2}$ mile from the mouth of the river. Apparently the "Captain" turner was an honorary title.

(Mr. DGC: Refer to your report concerning soldiers stationed at Chokoloskee). Due to lack of fresh water on the Island, it was necessary for the soldiers to transport drinking water from a point well up Turner's (or Chokoloskee) River. One way, while searching for water up the river, the soldiers were ambushed by the Indians and one man was killed.

Chokoloskee Island:

In 1882 there were five families either living on the Island or who owned property there:

- (a) Adolphus Santini, his wife and 5 or 6 children.
- (b) Nicholas Santini, his wife and 5 or 6 children.
- (c) William Bartley, an Englishman, who married a sister of the Santini brothers and by whom he had two sons and a daughter.
- (d) J.C. Carroll, lighthouse keeper at Key West, who visited on the Island, and
- (e) William H. Von Phister, who owned land on the Island but never lived there.

Later, the following families located on Chokoloskee:

- (f) Charles Smallwood, father of C.S. Smallwood, bought the Santini places about 1893 or 1894.
- (g) Captain George W. Starter bought the Carroll or C.M. Brown place
- (h) William Wiggins, father of Raleigh Wiggins, acquired part of the old Von Phister place by "squatter's rights". Frank Hamilton, Jack Daniels and then C.S. McKinney, succeeded Wiggins in that order on Chokoloskee about five years before the Shands' survey, McKinney moving there about 1895 from Fort White.
- (i) Jenkins, stepfather of Jan Daniels, who originally had the Von Phister place, later committed suicide and was buried on the Island, after which his family left.
- (j) In 1879 Gregordia Lopez was living at Charlotte Harbor where, in 1880, he married a sister of Louis Daniels. Lopez and his wife moved to Chokoloskee about 1892."