

0. Lostman's River:

In 1879 (?) while en route to Key West in a sail boat loaded with 15 to 20 barrels of oysters, Mr. Allen noticed someone waving a white cloth from the shore in the vicinity of present Lostman's River. Mr. Allen ran his boat into Rogers River and found three U.S. sailors who had deserted their ship at Key West. The sailors had hired a man to take them to the mainland from Key West. As they were proceeding to the mainland, the hired captain noticed smoke on the horizon from the direction of Key West and, believing that the Navy had sent out searching parties, the captain put into land and put the sailors ashore. He told the sailors there was a town nearby further back in the mainland. The sailors had been there for several days when Mr. Allen picked them up and brought them to his place at Everglades. He was forced to dump his oysters in shallow water in order to take the sailors aboard and went back to reload them after putting the sailors ashore at Everglades. While Mr. Allen was away regathering his oysters, Mr. William Rigby, father of Wade Rigby, picked the sailors up in a sloop at Everglades and carried them to the mainland north of here. As a result of this episode, Mr. Allen named the place where the sailors were picked up as Lostman's Key and Lostman's River. Mr. Allen entered the three sailors' names in his log as John Lostman, Bill Lostman and Sam Lostman.

0. The Shands' Survey:

The area now known as Collier County was surveyed by Townships and Sections in the 1880's by the following:

Henderson, to Henderson's Creek.

Apthrop, to Fakkahatchee.

Hopkins, to about the Monroe County line.

1116



The Storters and other settlers tried to get the islands surveyed but the State advised that the islands had been declared swamp and overflow lands and owned by two railroads. The railroads would not deed any lands except for agricultural purposes -- no tidewater land--, and refused to make the survey. Dr. Shands, an attorney, took the matter up with the railroads and the State. The result of his negotiations was that the railroads agreed to deed the land if the settlers would pay the cost of the survey and provided Dr. Shands made the survey. The survey was started from a point established by Hopkins on the County line, and the cost was pro-rated among the settlers. Hopkins survey showed the County line crossed Rabbit Key. Claims on Chokoloskee Island were staked off with bumbo limbo stakes which had taken root and grown into firm established markers. Mr. R.B. Storter had to buy about 45 acres of land to get 8 acres, due to pro-rating the cost of the survey.

#### R. B. Storter in Hurricane of 1910:

While Mr. R. B. Storter was returning from Marco, after having taken E. J. Watson there on his way to Fort Myers, he was caught in the hurricane of the night of October 18, 1910. Mr. Storter put in at Fakahatchee Island and tied his boat to a stake with 30 feet of 3/4" line doubled. He and his son, Claude, who had accompanied him from Everglades to Marco and return, took refuge in a small concrete house about 10 feet square on the highest point on the island. They spent the entire night on the island in rising water with the \_\_\_\_\_ family consisting of \_\_\_\_\_, his wife \_\_\_\_\_, and five small children. When the water rose to about two feet deep in the house, one of the children fell off of a barrel into the water and the resulting splash put out the fire they had built in the house, leaving them in total darkness. The father handed each of the children through a window to the Storters who were standing outside. After everyone got out of the house they placed sticks in the ground to determine whether the water was still rising. When the water had almost completely covered the island, it began to recede and the height of the storm had passed. Mr. Storter's boat was smashed and washed away during the night. Before the wind changed and the water began to rise, almost all of the water had been blown out of the bay and, according to Mr. Storter, one could have walked across it. As Mr. R.B. Storter was away from Everglades during the storm, his wife and other children took refuge with Capt. Geo. W. Storter and his family, all of whom weathered the storm in a scow 10' x 26' which was used for hauling sugar cane to the mill. Both Storter families rode out the storm in the small boat referred to in Barron's River near the site of the present Everglades school building.



Lee County was formed in May 12, 1887 and, in 1890, the people in and around Everglades participated in their first election in Lee County, at which election Frank Tippens was elected Sheriff. Prior to this time the area had been a part of Monroe County. The census enumerators from Lee and Monroe Counties met at Mr. Storter's house in Everglades on election day, and attended a picnic dinner and food sale for the benefit of the Methodist Church at Everglades.

As a matter of interest, Mr. R. B. Storter crossed the Florida-Georgia State line in July, 1937, and did not cross it again until July, 1946.



from reference CCLXXVIII, (Ms. Interview 1947.)

- a) Notes on Early Days on Marco Island, Collier County, Florida, as furnished by Mr. Walter C. Collier, Tamiami Trail at Heitman Street, Fort Myers, Fla., and Mr. John L. Collier, 1200 Monroe Street, Fort Myers, Fla., at interviews by D. Graham Copeland on April 3, 1947.
- b) The first Collier to arrive on Marco Island was W. T. Collier. He was born in Tennessee in 1815, married Barbara Hedick of North Carolina at Gainesville, Florida, in 1848. He died at Marco, Fla., in 1902. His wife was born in Newburn, North Carolina, date not recalled, and died in 1900 at Marco, Fla.
- c) Of this marriage, the following children were born:

James Monroe, born at Clearwater, date (about 1850) and married Rebecca Stanton of Newburn, North Carolina. Both now dead.

William David, born at Clearwater, in 1852; married Margaret McIlvane of North Carolina, at Cedar Keys, Florida. Both now dead.

Benjamin Franklin, born at Clearwater, in 1854 and was drowned some years later at Cedars Key, Fla. about 3 weeks before he was to have been married.

Sarah, born at Clearwater, in 1856; married Eddie Gore of Caxambas, from whom she became separated, and later married Stickney Roberts, with whom she lived at Caxambas. Both now dead.

Thomas, born at Clearwater, in 1858 and, while hunting with friends in the woods near Henderson Creek, became separated from his companions, was lost and died several days before his body was found.

Mattie, born at Clearwater, in 1860; married Dave Stanton of North Carolina, at Marco, where they lived. Both now dead.

Laura Ann, born at Clearwater, in 1862; married John Lewis of North Carolina at Cedar Keys, Florida. Both now dead.

Barbara Frances, born at Clearwater, in 1864; married Victor McIlvane of Cedar Keys, where both lived. Both now dead.

John Laud, born at New Smyrna, July 23, 1867; married Lillie Daniels of Marco, who was born at Chokoloskee, Fla., in 1892. She died January 16, 1943. He is living in Fort Myers at 1200 Monroe Street, at the age of 80.



Walter Columbus, born at Marco in 1871; married Susan Williams, who was born in Manatee County in December, 1869, at Marco in 1890. Both living at corner of Cleveland and Wisler Avenue, Fort Myers. The family (Williams) of Mrs. W. C. Collier moved from Fort Myers to Marco in 1882 and grew vegetables for shipment to Northern markets.

Nellie, born at Marco, Fla., in 1873; married Tom Ramsey, and both now live in Tampa, Florida.

Mary Helen ("Mollie") was born at Marco in 1875; married Charles Rawls of Marco. He is now dead and she is living at Homestead, Florida.

11/8



- ) Mr. W. T. Collier was a well educated man and travelled throughout the then known portions of Florida, including New Smyrna and Cedar Keys. Neither of his sons could tell why he decided on settling at Marco, and stated that this was a family question which was frequently asked but the answer to which was never known to them.

Mr. Collier, his wife and 9 children, came to Marco on the sailing schooner "Robert E. Lee" named for the famous General of whom he had the fondest recollection. The family first landed at the mouth of Orange River, or, as it is known today, 12 Mile Creek, where they remained for a short time before proceeding to Marco. The family, including 9 children, arrived in Marco in 1870.

They first settled on the high ground immediately west of what is known today as Collier Creek, which separates the Marco townsite from the neck of land north of Collier's Bay and immediately south of Marco Pass.

Here they lived until shortly after the terrible hurricane of 1873. During this hurricane, the water rose well above the floor of their house and, at one time, it appeared that everything would be washed into the sea. Mr. Collier threw a chair into the swirling water and found that it drifted seaward, which showed that the water was receding and some hours later, the family was able to get out of the house.

Three children, Walter Columbus, Nellie and Mary Helen were born at Marco.

- ) At the time of the Collier family arrival at Marco, there were no white persons living on the mainland or islands south of Punta Rassa. Four negro families were living on Marco Island at the northern end -- some doubt exists as to whether they were on Marco Townsite itself or near the beach --, the names of none of whom are recalled. Mr. Collier purchased whatever claim they may have had at a small figure and took the negroes back to Fort Myers, from which it appears they came originally.

- ) The first home of the Collier family on Marco was on the high shell mound near the east center of present Marco Townsite, near the home of the present Sawyer family.

Mr. Collier engaged extensively in the growing of vegetables and other produce, all of which he conveyed in his schooner "Robert E. Lee" to Key West and sold it there. As other settlers arrived, additional farms were started and considerable produce, as well as furs and fish were handled in Key West on one of several schooners built by Mr. Collier subsequent to the "Robert E. Lee".



The present concrete general store was built by Mr. W. T. Collier's son William David, about 1890. This son also started the present Marco Lodge about that time.

- g) Mrs. Barbara Hedick Collier, wife of Mr. W. T. Collier, lost her life at the age of 63, being burned to death when she threw some kerosene on what she thought were dead wood coals. The fire spread rapidly to her clothing and she perished before the fire could be put out.



In the shell mounds and rich soil of present Marco Townsite, vegetables grew with great ease and Mr. Collier's produce found ready sale in Key West. It is said that the first cabbage raised in South Florida was grown at Marco by him. After the "Robert E. Lee", another schooner used by Mr. Collier was "The Guide". Except for infrequent trips to Key West and Fort Myers, Mr. Collier remained at Marco until his death, except for one visit of about three years in Mississippi.

At the time of Mr. Collier's arrival in Marco, there were no white settlers between Punta Rassa and Marco. Also, as far as these persons can recall, the only settlers on the entire coast from Punta Rassa to Key West consisted of the four negro families at Marco, Captain Allen and a Mr. Weeks on the present site of Everglades, a few settlers, whose names are not recalled, at Chokoloskee, and possibly a few fur hunters at Pavilion Key and at the mouth of Lostman's River, none of whose names are recalled.

The first arrivals at or near present-day Naples were Matherson Weeks who lived at Gordon's Pass at about the time General Halderman began the development of present-day Naples.

Among the early arrivals after the Colliers came to Marco at Henderson Creek were the Kirkland, Carol and Walker families. Henderson Creek was named for the surveyor Henderson who surveyed that part of the mainland for the U. S. Government.

Mr. S. E. Williams began his mango and fruit grove about a mile north of the old ferry landing some years after Mr. Collier arrived at Marco.

Immediately across the creek from the Williams' place was another small grove started by the Walker family.

In the 1880's the Calhoun, Thomas Hart, Jack Weaver and Addison families arrived at Marco. At about this time a fish company based at Key West operated sailing vessels for fish in the Marco area, and this attracted additional settlers.

The Eubanks, Olds and Tyler families came still later.

At Goodland Point, the first settler known to the Colliers was Tom Roberts, who sold out to Harry Pettit, father of Mr. Harry Pettit who now lives on Goodland Point.

What is now known as the Georgia Fruit Farm was started by Albert Addison, who later sold out to the Stephens family.



The first settler, recalled by the Colliers, at Caxambas was the Johnson family who lived on the high hill at Caxambas now owned by the Woods family. Mr. Johnson was living there when the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey made their first survey of Caxambas Bay and one of their survey stations on the hill is named Johnson and is still monumented with a white marble monument. It is thought that Mr. Johnson sold to a Mr. Green and all of the hill property was later acquired by the late J. M. Barfield. Another settler at Caxambas was William Roberts who came from Key West.

The first settler on Horr's Island, as recalled by the Colliers, was Captain Horr. The "Blue Hills" plantation at the extreme northern end of Horr's Island was really no plantation but was farmed by 4 young men, one of whom was a Roberts.



At Royal Palm Hammock, according to the Colliers, the first persons were James Cannon and Frank Futch, who hunted in that territory for furs.

About 1885, the Barnes family established themselves on what is now known as Grocery Bay at the mouth of Royal Palm Hammock Creek.

The first settler on Dismal Key was named Newell who came there about 1890.

On Fahkahatchee Island were the Yeomans, Hall and Chamberlain families.

On Panther Key Juan Gomez was established. He was a very old man with extremely peculiar characteristics. Although very aged, he was possessed of great strength and frequently rowed to Marco for groceries -- a distance of about 12 miles. He always came alone and his wife was understood never to have left their little place on Panther Key.

Some years after the Colliers arrived at Marco, James L. Collier and his family settled on a shell mound on what is now called Addison's Bay. After they left, this place was occupied by an Addison, from which the name is derived.

Victor McIlvane and his wife Barbara Frances Collier, shortly after their marriage, settled on a shell mound on what is now called McIlvane Bay. They were the first settlers on that mound and they remained there for several years until she died, whereupon the place was left without settlers.

Sam E. Williams bought his place about a mile north of the old ferry landing on Marco Channel from Bob Everett. Mr. Williams is still living and is the brother of Mrs. Walter Collier who lives in Naples.

Across the bay from the Williams or Everett place, a point was settled by Chris Johnson, who lived there for many years until his death about 10 years ago.

- (j) According to the Colliers, very few Indians ever came to Marco, although many traded at Chokoloskee and at the Allen and Storter store on the site of present-day Everglades. Neither brother had any recollection of Indian engagements during the Seminole War.



From reference CCLXXIX, (Ms. Interview 1947)

(a) Notes on Early Days on Marco Island, Collier County, Florida, as furnished by Mrs. Florence E. Cannon, 937 Edison Avenue, Fort Myers, Florida, at interview by D. Graham Copeland on April 3, 1947.

(b) Mrs. Cannon was born Florence Gruber in Jacksonville, her husband, the late Cannon, having been born in 1856 and died at Marco, February 2, 1920.

Mrs. Cannon's parents were from Columbia, South Carolina and left that city after the Civil War to begin life again in Florida.

(c) Following her marriage, Mrs. Cannon and her husband and their 5 children sailed from Crystal River, Florida, on the schooner "Luttie". While off Little Marco Pass on July 15, 1900, the schooner lost its rudder in a sudden squall and was overturned.

The family in the boat at the time was:

Minnie, born 1885, now Mrs. M. G. Wiggins of Lakeland, Fla.,

Gertrude, born 1887, now Mrs. A. W. Roberts of Miami, Fla.,

Roy, born 1892, now living at Fort Myers.

Dana, born 1894, now living at Fort Myers.

Renn, born 1897, now living at Naples.

(d) When the schooner was overturned, the entire family was thrown into the surf which, fortunately, was very shallow and the parents waded ashore carrying their children with them. On the shore were Mr. Harris and several members of the Robertson family, who lived on an island just inside the pass. The family were hospitably received and remained with Mr. Harris and the Robertsons for some time. A few months afterwards, the Cannons made their way over land to the site of present-day Royal Palm Hammock, where the only living beings at the time consisted of bears and panthers, some of whom came almost nightly to the palmetto shacks in which the family lived. They remained at Royal Palm Hammock until 1901, when they constructed several skiffs and made their way down Royal Palm Hammock Creek to the Grocery Place and thence to Marco.

(e) At that time the Grocery Place, which sets today on a high shell mound on the north bank of a fork in Royal Palm Hammock Creek, was operated by Andrew Barnes.

(f) At Marco on her arrival there in 1901, were Captain Walter Collier, Captain Bill Collier, Sam Williams, the Newells and Judge Addison, who lived on a creek.



Others who probably arrived later were James Daniels, Dr. Olds and the Eubanks and Tyler families.

- (g) At Caxambas, the Barfields were living, as well as A. T. Stephens who came from Homosassa and the Ludlow family, who engaged in pineapple planting. Mr. Ludlow came from Indiana or Illinois and married Emma, daughter of Captain Bill Collier.

On Horr's Island, Jack Helviston was living about 1902.