IN MEMORY OF

HENRY GILBERT GIBSON MARTHA HIGHSMITH GIBSON ELIZABETH LEE GIBSON RUTH DEAN GIBSON

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FOREWORD

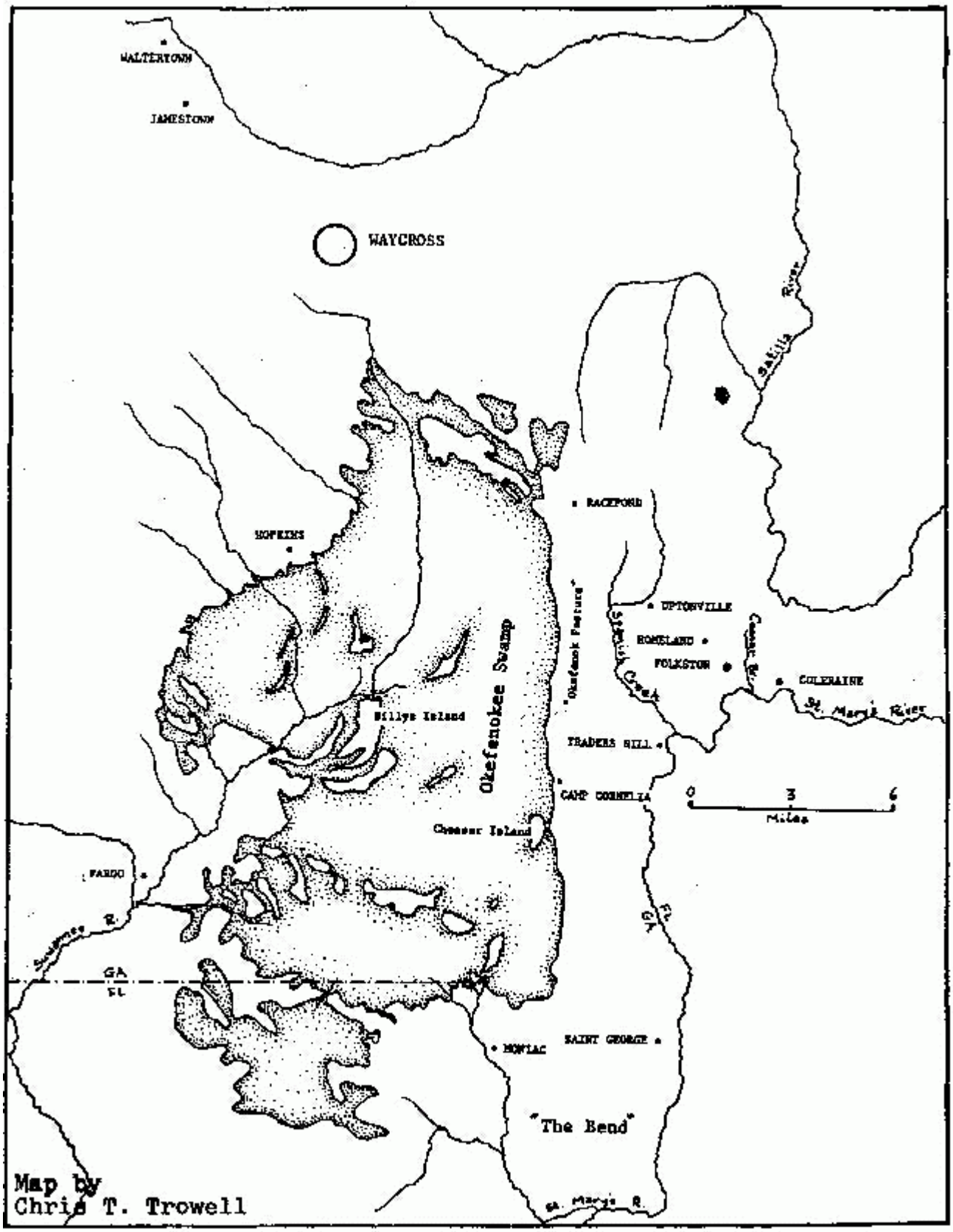
Madison Gibson has often said that he would like to write a book, one telling of the people of Charlton County and their customs and traditions in the years he was a child and young man. For about a year, I enjoyed weekly conversations with him, listening to him tell of his experiences, then writing them. This booklet is the result of those conversations and fulfills Mr. Gibson's ambition to have his recollections recorded.

His memories portray the character of the people of Charlton in the early part of the twentieth century. They tell how the people lived, worked and played, and how they worshipped. The pace of life has changed, but the characteristics of the Charlton pioneers remain. Fiercely loyal to the county that claims most of the great Okefenokee Swamp, they continue in a heritage of family love, humor and honest toil that is deeply rooted in the early days of Charlton County.

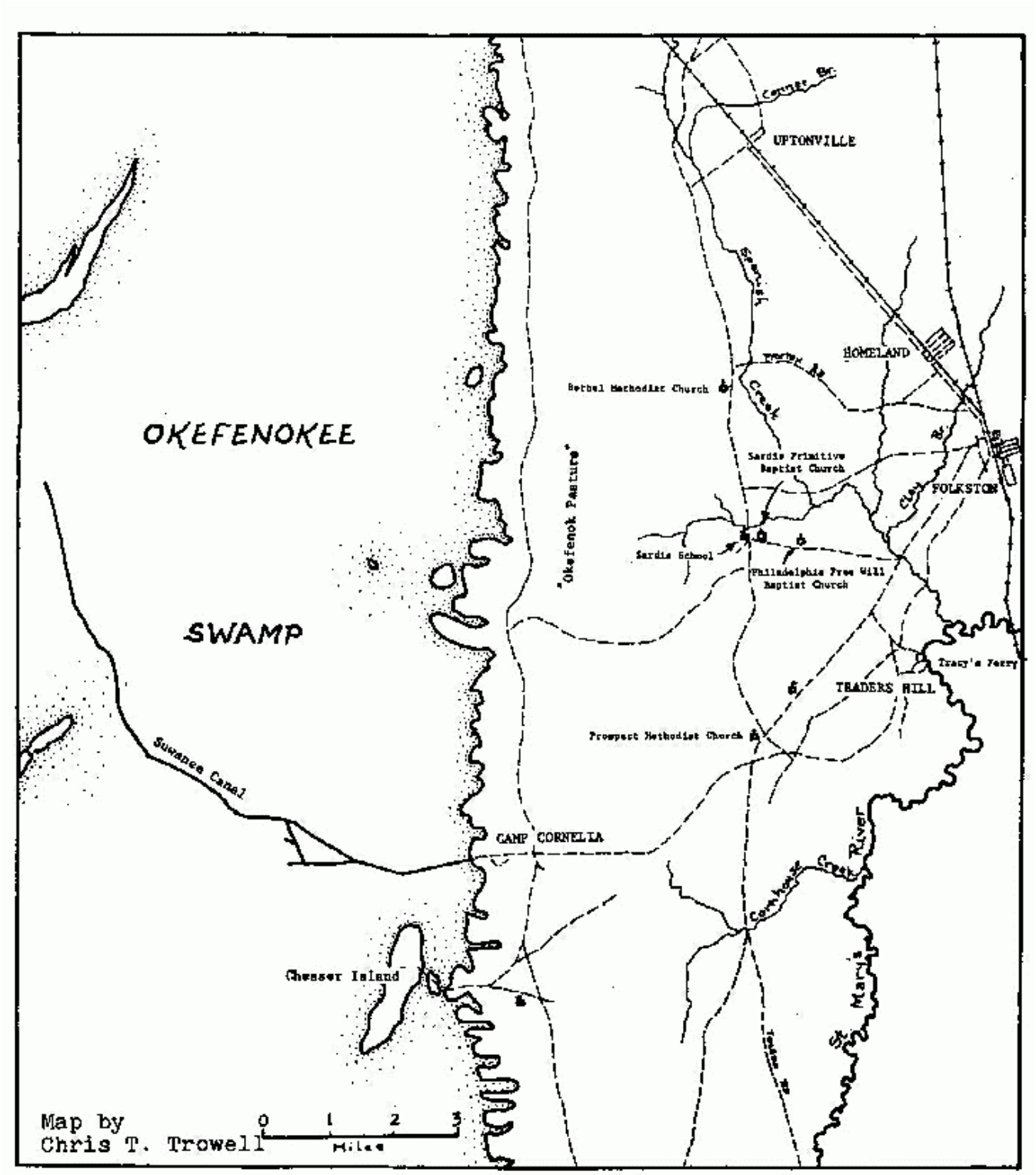
Madison Gibson is a native and life-long resident of the Okefenokee area. He was born October 28, 1895 in Ware County but his family moved to a log home on a farm in Charlton County when he was a small boy. He spent his early manhood in Charlton County working in the pine forests, hauling bridge pilings out of the thickets, loading barrels of turpentine on river barges, dynamiting lightard stumps, cutting firewood, or bird hunting beneath the towering long-needled trees.

We are all fortunate that he has shared his memories of the days of a more simple life when young men worked and played with an enthusiastic spirit, and many hardy families scratched out a living near the great Okefenokee.

Lois Barefoot Mays
Folkston, Georgia
January 1989



Communities of Charlton County in the Okefenokee area



Roads of Charlton County in the Okefenokee area

MY FAMILY

I was the eighth child of Henry Gilbert and Martha Highsmith Gibson. Papa's parents were John Ellis and Emily Leigh Gibson and Papa's brother was William Owen Gibson.

It sounds strange, but it's a fact that my Uncle Owen and Papa were born in the same room, but in different counties! Uncle Owen was born in 1852 in Camden County and Papa was born in 1855 in Charlton County in the same bedroom of their home located west of Coleraine. The reason they were born in different counties was that

after Uncle Owen was born and before Papa was born, the new county of Charlton was organized in 1854, from a part of Camden County which included my parent's residence known then as the Joel Brown home place.

My grandmother, Emily Leigh Gibson, died soon after Papa was born and her mother raised Uncle Owen and Papa. My grandfather, John Ellis Gibson, returned to Pembroke, where he had been raised, and found that a former sweetheart had married a Mr. Donaldson, had three sons and was already a widow so he married her. Her three sons and his two sons were never under the same roof at one time. We tried to arrange this when they were getting old, but it was too hard to get them all together for it was a long distance between Folkston and Pembroke.

Grandfather Gibson visited his two young sons, Papa and Uncle Owen, several times, corning from Pembroke on horseback. Once Uncle Owen rode back with him on a horse all the way to Pembroke. John Ellis Gibson was killed in 1862 in the War for Southern Independence when Papa and Uncle Owen were still children.

Papa married my mother, Martha Highsmith, and their children were Horace, John, Charlie, Bessie, Harry, Lillie, Elvie, Madison and Mattie. My mother died a few days after Mattie was born. Papa later married Elizabeth Lee and their children were Ena, Anna and Henry.

In 1921, I married Ruth Dean, daughter of Rev. and Mrs. E. F. Dean, and we had five children. Our first child, a daughter, died when only one day old and the other children were Fleming, Horace, Kenneth and Martha Mae.

OUR LOG HOME

The first place we lived in Charlton County after we moved there from Ware County when I was a small boy was a farm on the Paxton Road, not very far from Bethel Methodist Church.

We had moved from Jamestown where Papa was in the dairy business, hut he wanted to move back to his home county, and came looking, in 1905, for a place to live. He brought me with him and we looked over the old Jim Baker place which had about four hundred acres and a log house. We were happy when we found five great big fig trees, each about eight or ten inches around, in the back yard. Those trees meant that we would have plenty of fig preserves, which we all liked. The big field had not been tended in several years and was full of gophers and rattlesnakes. We later raised turkeys there and could always tell when a rattler was near for the turkeys would gather in a cluster in the grass and stare at it.

Papa had lots of friends in Ware County and every fall he would engage turkeys by sending postal cards. He wrote his friends telling them when he would be in Waycross with the turkeys and they sent cards back telling him how many to bring. During the weeks of Thanksgiving and Christmas we loaded the truck with live turkeys and delivered them all over Ware County.

There was a small cemetery in the field which contained the graves of the Heck Petty family. Five of the graves were for children who had died. That part of the cemetery had been kept up nicely but the rest was overgrown in big and little oak trees. There were about a dozen graves altogether and one hole that had been dug for another one. The owner of the property at that time refused to let anyone else be buried there and the hole never was covered up. Later when we were hoeing peanuts in the field, Papa let us rest in the shade of the big oaks of the cemetery and we played in the hole that had been dug. Wide thick boards that were carved with names were used as tombstones and some were rotten, but a few were still standing.

Our home was a story and a half log house with a big front porch. The kitchen was not built onto the house but was connected by an eight foot covered walkway. We cooked and ate in the kitchen which had a big wood stove. Mama was the only one in the family that liked coffee and she ground the coffee beans each morning. She liked the Arbuckle brand of coffee.

Papa bought a pump organ before we moved to Charlton County and brought it in the wagon all the way from Jamestown, but no one in the family learned to play it very well. When Anna Dean was teaching at the little one room school, she stayed with us for several weeks at a time, and she could play the organ nicely, Papa would get her to play and sing every night after supper until we all went to bed. I think Jim Jacobs may have that organ now.

We had to keep the yards just as clean as the floors in the house. Brooms for the yard were made of gallberry bushes, which we whipped over stumps in order to remove the leaves. We kept the yard swept all the time and if blades of grass came up, someone would come with a hoe pretty quick and take care of them.

MEMORIES OF A SMALL BOY

When I was a small child, dentists made house calls. Whenever folks had a toothache they sent for the dentist and when he came, he brought his tooth-grinding machine with him. The machine was operated with "foot power" since there was no electricity back then. The dentist pumped the floor pedal on the grinder and that provided the power.

One of my very earliest recollections is when I was about two years old and the dentist came to our house to fill one of Mama's teeth. I was allowed to lie on my belly on the floor and watch the dentist's foot as he pedaled the grinding machine. That looked like a lots of fun to me!

When I was very small Christmas was the best part of the year. I always jumped right out of bed on Christmas morning, anxious to see what Santa Claus had brought me. Although we didn't have a decorated tree like most families have now, we did hang our stockings up by the fireplace on Christmas Eve. Each of us children usually found one orange, one banana, one apple and some raisins in our stocking. We thought Santa had only fruit tress and very few of them at that!

One Christmas Eve Papa let me and my brothers, Harry and Elvie go with him to town. We were just yearlings back then. Papa's custom was to bring home a sack the day before Christmas that only he carried, and he didn't 1st the rest of the family know what was in it. On the way home, as we were sitting with him in the wagon, Papa asked us if we knew who Santa was. Elvie and Harry said they knew and Papa said that since I didn't know, he would tell me.

That conversation took all the joy out of Christmas for me and after that day, I didn't care for a long time if I even got out of bed on Christmas day.

I got puny once when I was very small and Papa decided that the best thing he could do for me was to take me to Dr. Wright's office and get him to give me a physical examination. At that time Dr. Wright had a drug store in connection with his office.

Dr. Wright led me into the back room of the store and sat me down and said, "Stick out your tongue." I did. He said "Way out" and I did. He said loudly "As far as you can!" and my tongue wouldn't go out any further. He looked down my throat and said "Uh-HUH...Uh-HUH...Uh-HUH..." Then we left the examination room and went hack into the drug store where he gave me a dose of liver regulator.

He charged Papa fifty cents or a dollar, but I'm inclined to think Papa paid a dollar for my physical examination. I was soon just as healthy as the rest of the children in the family!

THE DANGER OF FIRE

When I was growing up, houses were made of logs or wood with cypress shingles. Many of the homes burned because of faulty fireplaces or sometimes because of the carelessness of those who lived there.

My brothers and I nearly burned our house down when we were children and it scared us half to death. Papa had bought us a violin but none of us could learn to play it. Not a one of us could make a tune. Harry was pretending to play a song and the rest of us were trying to sing the words when he said he needed the rosin to rub on the bow. This was kept in the trunk in the loft of the house so Elvie and I ran up the stairs to get it. Elvie had the lamp and he and I were scrapping to be the first one to get to the rosin and one of us knocked the lamp over.

The loft was full of cotton we had picked that year and since we had filled the cotton house and had given out of room there, we had piled the rest of it in the loft of the house. The lamp turned over on the cotton pile and it began to burn. We ran down for buckets of water but didn't need much as the fire just singed over the top of the cotton and it quit burning.

Papa was in Valdosta serving on the federal jury at that time and was dreaded for him to come home and find out what we did. But he was so proud the house hadn't burned down that he didn't spank us.

Another time fire did get out of control and it burned Uncle Owen's house down, It was just after daylight when it burned and Uncle Owen was still in his sleeping clothes. Jim Gowen was going to the Paxton Place that morning and went by Uncle Owen's house and saw the family and others gathered up in the yard. The roof was just falling in as Mr. Gowen got there. He took two twenty-dollar bills from his pocket and gave them to Uncle Owen and

said, "Take that and buy yourself some clothes." No one got hurt and none of the other farm buildings burned, just the dwelling house.

I did a very destructive thing one time and I felt real bad about it. I was working for Emory Dean at Bertha Mineral Camp between Silco and Kingsland. A family of Cottles lived out there on their farm, Emory had the flu and wasn't able to go to work and he told me to go saddle up the horse and ride all around the Cottles farm and strike matches and throw them out about every twenty-five to thirty feet. He wanted me to burn those woods clean.

I said, "Emory, I can't do that! I can't set those woods on fire! It would burn those people's house up, along with their rail fences." Emory said "When they see the smoke they'll get out there and keep it off their farm." But they didn't!

The woods fire burned the rail fence all around that field. When Emory got better he went to see Mrs. Cottles and apologized. He told her to go to the store and buy enough of wire to fence that whole place and have it charged to him. She was tickled to death for she had much rather have wire than a rail fence.

I still think we should have notified her before I set that woods on fire.

CALAMITIES AND COMMOTIONS

I have had some terrible experiences in my life, and one of them happened when I was about fifteen years old.

Sheriff Wiley Wainwright told Papa one day, "Come with me and bring Madison with you." So Papa took me with him to the courthouse in Folkston for there was a big event happening that day -- a public hanging.

There were people everywhere, just like they were attending a picnic. Why in the world people would go to a thing like that, I never understood. A gallows with a platform had been built about three hundred feet in the woods behind the courthouse, and a man stood there with his ankles tied together and a rope around his neck. He had murdered a man.

When Sheriff Wainwright asked him if he had anything to say, the man gave a mighty good talk. He told those on the ground. "Keep good company. That's the reason I am here, I didn't keep good company."

Then the sheriff asked the murdered man's widow if she wanted to cut the rope to the trapdoor and she said "No!" I stood by a post and watched him drop. It was awful to watch a person die like that. I left and didn't stay to see them cut him down.

Another dreadful event happened when I was working for my brother, Elvie Gibson, at Hopkins, Georgia in the Okefenokee Swamp. There was going to be a big picnic on Billy's Island and lots of people were going.

At that time the log trucks ran on the tram road rails and they were constructed with two sets of wheels which were connected with a twenty-foot flat-sided sill of wood. The trucks were pulled by a steam engine and one was on its, way to Billy's Island. Instead of hauling logs, it had a load of happy men, women and children. They were all sitting on the wide sill that connected the front and rear wheels. Hamp Colson or Joe Colson, one or the other, was the engineer that day.

A sapling which was growing in the marsh near the tram tracks had been leaning toward the rails for a long time, but just before the train came by, had fallen even further. As the engine moved by, it pushed the tree forward and then as it passed, the tree flew backward with a terrible force, sweeping all the people from their places into the water. Many were killed and some were badly hurt. That was a terrible calamity and an awful day for us at Hopkins.

The Charlton County courthouse burned in 1928 and that also created a big commotion. I was living in Waycross at that time but was visiting Papa who lived near Homeland. He was serving as the county Ordinary with an office in the courthouse. We could see smoke from Homeland and knew that there was a big fire in Folkston so I drove there to find out what was burning.

The courthouse was on fire and people were carrying out everything that could be picked up. Under the oak trees on the courthouse square were piles of furniture and equipment and record books that had been rescued.

In one corner of the yard were the books and furniture from Papa's office. Mr. Billy Mizell, who owned the bank, stood there and when I drove up he said, "Where's your daddy?" I told him he was at home and didn't know about the fire. Nr. Mizell then told me, "Well, go get him and we'll haul this stuff to the bank."

I drove back home and got Papa. We put all of his record books in the back of Mr. Mizell's car and took them to the Citizens Bank. Mr. Mizell opened the bank and we stacked the books in a corner. That was an upsetting time for those working in the courthouse. But within a week or two temporary offices had been set up in the bottom floor of the Masonic building. The county commissioners held their meetings upstairs in the Masonic hall. A new courthouse was soon built right where the old one was.

HAPPY TIMES

I have had some mighty happy times in my life. Growing up with a big bunch of brothers and sisters, and enjoying the children that lived on neighboring farms are some of my fondest memories.

One of the happiest times in my life was when my little sister Anna was born. I was sent to get Dr. Wright in the middle of the night, but after I woke up the Wright family, I found that he had gone to Hortense to treat a sick person. There was nothing for me to do but go to Dr. Williams' house and wake him up. I was embarrassed to do this for we never had used Dr, Williams, but when he was awakened, he came out and said "Madison, you'll have to take me. My horse is crippled." I was happy to do that and took him to my house as fast as our buggy would go! About daylight, I had a new baby sister and Dr. Williams was ready to go home.

My sister, Lillie, had breakfast cooked and she asked Dr. Williams to sit down and eat, but he only drank a glass of milk. I took him home in the buggy but we weren't in as big a hurry as when he came to our house. He really was a nice man and I never forgot how he came at midnight to help when Anna was born.

When we lived near Bethel Methodist Church our neighbors were the Jesse Grooms family who lived on the old Paxton Place. Their boys, Earnie, Billy, Eugene and Ralph and the boys in our family were very good friends and since we lived only about a mile from them, across Spanish Creek, we saw them nearly every day.

At noontime all of us boys got two hours off for dinner, when we could do what we wanted to, before going back to the farm chores. In the summer as soon as we had eaten our meal we listened for a special holler from the rooms boys, which meant they were on their way to the small lake on Spanish Creek. This was a signal for us to meet them there for a good time in the swimming hole. If we finished our meal first we would holler for them to come meet us there. We spent some mighty happy hours with the Grooms boys as we were growing up.

The Grooms family was the only one with a Victrola and the neighbors that lived anywhere reasonably close would gather up at their house and listen to their record player. It had a crank, just like an automobile, and had to be wound up. You'd wind it up tight, go and sit down and it would play all kinds of gospel and funny songs. Papa like to hear the song called "The Preacher and the Bear" which concerned a preacher going hunting on a Sunday morning and was confronted with a big bear. He kept saying to himself, "Oh Lord, if you can't help me, don't help that bear!" When Papa heard this part, he would laugh and laugh. I loved to hear my Papa laugh.

WOODEN SIDEWALKS AND THE FIRST TELEPHONE

When I was a boy, Folkston didn't look anything like it does now. The streets were just sandbeds and, the few sidewalks that were there were only two wide boards that had been put side by side. These were in front of the stores and were used by everyone, for it was much easier to walk on the boards than trying to walk in the sand.

The town's streetlights were lanterns mounted on pointed posts. The lantern's base was shaped like an upside-down funnel and it fit over the top of the post, which was about six feet high. Each corner in the business section of Folkston had a post with a lantern on it.

The city policeman went around each evening and lit the lanterns and then blew them out, the next morning.

The street light posts also had another useful purpose in those days. They made handy hitching posts for the horse and wagon when we came to town.

One of the first hotels in Folkston was the wooden two-story Durden Hotel on the west side of the railroad tracks. Mrs. Durden's husband had owned lots of land and cattle near Racepond, and when he died she sold all of that and built the hotel.

There was a big room upstairs with about a half dozen beds in it. Elbert Altman and I once spent a night there when we were young men. We had been in Folkston and stayed until it was late and we decided that instead of going home, we would spend the night at the hotel, Elbert slept in one bed, I slept in another and Professor John Harris, who had moved to Folkston from St. George, slept in another. L. E. Mallard was in still another bed.

We paid what we thought were outrageous rates for the privilege...fifty cents. Mrs. Durden charged twenty-five cents for the bed and twenty-five cents for the breakfast the next morning.

Sometime later the hotel caught on fire and was destroyed. Ed Davis was city policeman at that time and he helped the boarders get their belongings out of the burning building. It was such hot work that he took off his coat and put it on the ground so he could work faster. When the hotel was burned up, Mr. Davis looked for his coat, but found that it burned up along with the building.

Folkston had only one telephone at that time and it was in T. L. Pickren's store. I didn't have much use for a phone, in fact I was afraid to use one.

I was in Folkston one day when Mr. Pickren took a long distance message. He saw me on the sidewalk and called me to his store and told me to use his telephone and call a person in Waycross who had a death message for the Gibson family. One of my stepmother's nieces in Waycross had died or been murdered, and they wanted us to know about it. I had to call Waycross for information concerning the young woman and was mighty uneasy while doing this. The idea of hearing someone talk over the phone scared me, but I made the call anyway.

We never did know whether the girl died or was murdered. That was always a wonderation.

GOOD NEIGHBORS

We had some mighty good neighbors when I was growing up in Charlton County. The Grooms family that lived on the adjoining farm had children about the same age as my family so we really enjoyed our friendship with them.

Mr. Jesse Grooms and Mrs. Grooms, --we called them Uncle Jesse and Aunt Vinie--were about the best, most respected people that I knew. He was a wonderful, good man and she was a specially good wife and mother.

They had a big family. The Grooms girls were Ollie (who married Jim Mattox), Idella (who married Bailey Gay) and Bertie who was the youngest. Bertie was Andrew Gowen's second wife and she was Shep Gowen's mother. Then there were four boys: Ernie, Gene, Ralph and Billy.

Uncle Jesse looked after Jehu Paxton's cows, and when it was branding time Papa and all of us Gibson boys helped the Grooms boys mark the cattle. That was a good farm with over two hundred head of cattle, lots of pretty timber and a log dwelling house.

Uncle Jesse also had extra income for he was the Treasurer of Charlton County for many years. He was already an old man when I was growing up.

We had lots of good times playing with the Grooms children. Most any time that we weren't working at the farm chores, we were together, either at our house or at their house, about a mile away. A creek separated the farms. The lived on one side of the bridge and we lived on the other.

Mrs. Grooms was a prayerful woman. She was the life of the church at Bethel and kept the Sunday School going. If some of us Gibson children were over at the Grooms' house after supper, we were called inside with her children and she read the Bible and had family prayer. She led Bible reading and prayer every evening for her family.

Before Aunt Viney died the Georgia-Florida Investment Co. bought the Paxton Place. They put in a turpentine still and my brother Elvie and his wife Emma lived there for several years. A commissary was built for the people that worked for the company and my good friend Guy Dean had a job there.

When old man Paxton sold out to Georgia-Florida, Uncle Jesse bought himself a farm of his own near Sardis Church, not far from Uncle Owen Gibson's home. He bought the Robinson place which was next door to the Jim Robinson farm. (These Robinsons were brothers.) Jim Robinson's two younger daughters were Mary and Bessie and Ralph went with Mary and I dated Bessie.

The Grooms boys were like brothers to me. Earnie Grooms married Uncle John Vickery's daughter, Ola and they had a boy and four daughters. Earnie lived near Emory Dean in the Prospect Methodist Church community and was a farmer. In his older days he moved to Folkston and lived there.

Billy Grooms married and moved down in Florida and I never saw him again.

Another of the Grooms boys was Eugene but we called him "Doc." He worked for the Hebard Cypress Company the same time I did and then later he got a job as a street car motorman in Waycross. Some time later he moved to Savannah and I never saw him but once after that until I want to his funeral.

Ralph and I were about the same age and he was the youngest of the Grooms boys. He married Mary Robinson and they had several children. Mary was sick once and was taken to Waycross. At that time I was living there and working in the office of the Gibson Gas Company. My brother, Charlie, called me on the phone from the King's Daughters Hospital and said "Madison, come over here quick and bring help! The hospital is afire!" So I hurried over there with several friends and helped carry out some of the equipment, but the building burned down. They set up a temporary hospital in a big vacant dwelling house and when Mary got bad off sick Ralph brought her to this hospital. After she died he moved to Florida and I never saw him again.

For some reason Mr. Grooms didn't join the church till he was an old man. When Gene decided to join, the preacher talked about baptizing him until his mama spoke up. "He's already been baptized. He was christened when he was a baby," she said.

Aunt Viney was sick for a long time and I think she probably had a stroke. She couldn't eat and the family fed her some kind of special soup that kept her alive. She was a wonderful woman and everybody loved her. I can't recall when Uncle Jesse died...I don't remember if it was after I got old enough to ramble or not.

Uncle Jesse was a veteran of the Civil War. I only remember one conversation we had about his service in that war. It was after I had come home from the Marines in World War One and he said "Madison, how did you pick your officers in the Marines?" I told him that our officers had to be college graduates and those were the only ones chosen. He said, "The war I was in was different. We appointed ours. We just chose those who we felt would be good leaders and made them our officers."

THE FIRST CAR JOHN GIBSON EVER SAW

Back in the early part of this century the only transportation besides walking or riding a horse was paddling down the river in a boat or riding in a buggy pulled by a mule. Automobiles and airplanes were mighty scarce.

My cousin, John S. Gibson, who was the son of Uncle Owen and Aunt Julia Gibson, was the first one in his family to see a car go by his house. A sandy lane ran in front of Uncle Owen's house and one day John happened to be in the front yard when he heard a strange noise. He looked down the lane and saw a car coming, just churning up the dust. John didn't know a thing about an automobile, but he did have a loud voice. He yelled out "Look ayonder, Papa! Look ayonder! There comes a train just atearing up the road!"

I remember when I learned how to drive. I was just a young boy and was living with Emory Dean on his farm in the Prospect community. I worked for him for $15.00 a month and board and washing. I was surprised one morning, as Emory and I were going to town, when he told me to get in the driver's seat for I was going to learn to drive his truck. I had no idea he wanted to teach me how to drive but I got in on the driver's side and he taught me. It wasn't hard to learn, with only three gears. There were no graded roads then, mostly three-path tracks that ran around through the saplings. Once in a while there was a little strip of good road, but many of us learned to drive before the right-of-way was cut, the roadbed fixed and it paved.

Emory had a Model T Ford truck with no hood or windshield and it was hard to start. But he had a special way to get the engine working, if one hind wheel was jacked up, and the choke pulled as far as it would go. Emory could turn the crank in front of the truck and the minute the engine started, he could run around the truck, reach in the window, reduce the gas and throw it out of gear, and the engine would work just like it should.

One morning when it wouldn't start, Emory jacked up a hind wheel, turned the crank and when he started to run around to the driver's side to reduce the gas, the truck took off after him. He finally outran it then circled around, jumped in it and turned it off. If he had fallen down in that sandy road, that truck would have run over him!

One year Emory planted a great big patch of cabbage on his farm. He was in the open field, about in the middle of it, plowing with a fat, lazy old mule one day and did not know there was an airplane in the sky. The plane didn't make any noise as the aviator had deliberately cut off the motor. The mule was the first one that noticed the plane and he backed his ears and took off in a trot. About that time the plane was directly over Emory and the aviator turned its motor back on. It frightened Emory and the mule so bad that the mule ran one way and Emory went another. I remember telling Mr. Page at the train depot about it and he smiled and said he bet that aviator laughed all the way to Miami about the trick he played on that farmer!

SOME OF MY FIRST JOBS

When my brothers and I were growing up we learned to do most all of the farm work around our home. We didn't get paid for this as it was expected of us, but I can remember some of the jobs that I had which resulted in receiving some spending money.

The first time I worked and received pay for it was when Papa, Henry Gilbert Gibson, was in the firewood business. Papa cut trees and split the wood and shipped it to Jacksonville for folks to use in their fireplaces. That was about the only way houses were heated at that time.

Papa sent me to Homeland to meet the freight train and to give the conductor a message. He wanted the railroad to leave an empty car the next day so he could load it with firewood and send it on to Jacksonville.

When I got to the Homeland depot, an elderly man who owned a little store nearby told me it would be two hours before the train would come and he also said he needed his garden plowed and would give me fifteen cents an hour to do that. Since I had to wait for two hours, and thirty cents looked like a lot of money to me, I hitched up his mule and plowed out his corn patch and the rest of the garden. Instead of giving me thirty cents when I finished, he made me take fifteen cents worth of candy and fifteen cents in money. This arrangement suited me fine, for I never would have bought fifteen cents worth of candy at one time!

When I was a young man and the crops had been harvested on the farm, I earned money in the fall by taking a team of mules and the wagon out to the woods and leading it up with lightwood and pineknots. I sold this to the people in Folkston who used this fat wood to get the fires started in their cookstoves and fireplaces.

One day, after getting an order for wood from Mr. Billy Mizell, I drove up to his home and began tossing lightwood over the fence and Mr. Mizell came outside. He wanted to tell me about a new invention he had just bought. It was called a "radio" and it seems that you could hear people from another town speaking through it.

I said, "Can you actually hear people talking over it?" Mr. Mizell replied, "Madison, you've heard a person get up to make a speech and the first thing they do is clear their throat? Well, before this man began to speak yesterday, I heard him clear his throat! And this man was talking in Jacksonville when I heard him!"

A short time after that I was working for Georgia-Florida Investment Company on still another job helping herd up about five hundred cows so they could be dipped to get rid of the wood ticks. We began near Racepond and rode horses trying to gather the cows together. We were about half way to the dipping vat when we stopped to spend the night at the Archie Dinkins home. After supper that night, we were sitting on the porch and I told the Dinkins family about Mr. Mizell's new gadget called the radio. I didn't convince everyone that heard me.

The Victrola and records were reasonably common at that time and Mrs. Dinkins said, "Madison, you might make some people believe that, but you can't make me. It was probably a record in Mr. Mizell's machine that sounded like a person talking. You know they can't just send voices through the air!"

MAKING CANE SYRUP

Each farm had its own syrup shelter and cane patch and the farmers made a year's supply of syrup and brown sugar every fall.

Most of the folks would cut their cane just before time for the first frost. We stripped each cane of its leaves and cut off the top six or eight inches for that part wasn't sweet, and we piled the stalks on the ground. We covered that with the fodder we had pulled from the stalks, so the frost wouldn't get to the cane and ruin it. Then we hauled the stalks to the cane mill as they were needed. The cows chewed on the top part that we had cut off.

We usually cooked two boilings a day, sometimes three, but that meant starting before daylight and getting through after dark. On the three-boiling days, Papa got us children up early, before day, and he hooked up the mule to the mill and by the time the sun was up we had a barrel of juice ready to cook. Some of us kids fed the cane in the mill as the mule walked around and turned the sweep. One end of the sweep was' long and low to the ground where the mule was attached to it, and the other end was short and high. The pommey, which was the mashed cane, went out the back of the mill and the juice came out the front into a barrel which had a croaker sack stretched over it. The sack strained the trash out of the cane juice.

We put that juice in the sixty-gallon cooker and started a fire in the furnace under it and it would soon start boiling. It had to be skimmed as it boiled, for that's how the rest of the trash was removed from the syrup. The skimmings were put in a bucket and fed to the hogs, but sometimes we would put it in a barrel, and if it sat long enough, it would make a pretty decent drink, but if it sat too long, sipping that stuff would make a person drunk.

When the juice had finished cooking we let the fire die down and took the syrup up in kegs or barrels. Then just as soon as the last drop was taken out of the boiler we poured in another tub of juice and started all over again. We usually waited till another time to put the syrup in bottles, when we weren't so busy, maybe on a rainy day when we couldn't do other farm chores. We stored this in the smokehouse along with the sausage and hams and jars of vegetables Mama had put up.

I don't know why, but the syrup that came off Chesser Island was the best syrup to be sure, and everybody in Charlton County knew it. Folks would begin carrying their bottles out to the island before the Chessers ever started cooking the syrup! They knew that the first bottles taken out there were the first filled and there was most always more bottles than they would have the syrup to fill them. It was the best syrup I ever ate. And the sweet potatoes from Chesser Island were the same way! It probably had something to do with the swampland they were grown on. I could pull one end off one of their baked sweet potatoes, mash the other end and that red potato would just pop right out of the hull. I could get some hog cracklins in one hand and one of those sweet potatoes in the other hand and have the best between-meals snack you ever ate!

The Chessers only cooked one boiling of cane juice a day and they did something else different from my family. They washed each stalk of cane before they ever put it in the mill to grind juice.

I guess that most everyone knows that when syrup gets old, it can be cooked over again and made into new syrup. And I suppose that everyone also knows that cold syrup doesn't take up nearly as much space as hot syrup does. Old man Dan Dinkins, who was known for his stubborn streak, had some old syrup one time. He took that thirty-gallon keg out to the syrup shelter and his wife, Miss Orpha, asked him what he was doing and he said, "I'm cooking this keg of syrup again."

She said, "You can't cook that whole keg at one time!" And he told her, "I guess I know what I'm doing!"

So he dumped that syrup in the boiler, set a fire in the furnace under it and before long it was cooking. It boiled and bubbled and began coming over the edge of the cooker. Uncle Dan saw that he needed help and hollered out "Come here, Miss Orpha! And bring the dish pan, foot tub and water bucket!" I think it even got in his shoes! He learned the hard way that hot syrup takes up more room than cold syrup does!

THE BUGGY WHEEL JOKE

When I was growing up men spent a lot of time thinking of ways to play pranks on their friends. Everybody liked a good joke, especially if it was played on someone else.

There used to be a couple of fellows who lived in the Sardis community that just took a great delight in pulling pranks on others. They were both married men and had families but they loved to have fun. One was Solie Chancey and the other was Frank Murray. These two liked to pull pranks when it wouldn't hurt anyone.

Everybody in that country would go to town of a Saturday if they had a horse and buggy. One time there was a farmer named Frank Roddenberry (old man Frank, there were two of them). It was Mr. Roddenberry's habit to

hitch up his horse and ride to town every Saturday, and Solie and Frank knew this. They also knew that Mr. Roddenberry was one of the best-natured friends they had, so they decided to pull a joke on him.

One Friday night after Mr. Roddenberry had gone to bed, Solie and Frank slipped up to his barn and took the front buggy wheels off (they normally were about six inches lower than the back ones) and put them on the back. They put the back, higher wheels on the front of the buggy.

The next morning Frank and Solie spread the word among their friends that they had changed Mr. Roddenberry's buggy wheels so several of them had gathered at Mr. Jim Mattox's to watch as Mr. Roddenberry passed by on his way to town. Mr. Roddenberry got up that Saturday morning, took his horse out, put the harness on him and hooked him to the buggy. He got in and started on his way to Folkston. Mr. Mattox had a little store at his home and as Mr. Roddenberry came down the road he saw a number of his friends gathered up there, but he figured they had come to trade. He had driven about a mile from his house to the Mattox store, riding in that buggy with the wheels changed around.

Little Jesse Mattox was about seven years old and was playing in the yard when Mr. Roddenberry drove up. Jesse said, "Hey Mr. Roddenberry, what you got your front wheels on the back and your back wheels on the front for?" Mr. Roddenberry said "Well I declare! I have been riding in this buggy for a mile trying to figure out what was wrong!" All the men standing around laughed and laughed.

It was a funny trick and Mr. Roddenberry knew right off who had done it. He took it good-natured, like they knew he would, for even though he was much older than Frank and Solie, he was full of fun himself.

Those folks were all the time pulling a trick on someone.

A HUSTLING LITTLE FELLOW

I was single when I worked for Georgia-Florida Investment Company but I didn't spend much money. I usually made $15.00 a month and gave Papa $5.00 of that. I didn't have to buy very much...a pair of overalls and a shirt once in a while and a pair of shoes about every year and a half and I bought that in the commissary at Traders Hill. That was a big store and had as much stuff on the shelves as the stores in Folkston did. I didn't have a regular payday; just any time I wanted some money I told Jim Gowen, who owned half of Georgia-Florida, and he'd give it to me.

I helped in the construction of the first bridge over the St. Marys River near St. George. Rev. E. F. Dean and his son, Emory, had the contract to build the bridge and I worked for them and boarded with a Burnsed family. Leonard O'Cain was a piledriver on this project. My job was hauling the pilings out of the woods and down to the bridge site and we used a three mule team with a timber cart that had wheels about eight feet high. The pilings which we pulled from the nearby river swamp were so large we could bring only one at a time.

Emory hired Harry Everetts, a boy about eleven years old, to take care of the eight mules which were used on the bridge project. He rented a large barn at St. George for these mules. Nassau County paid one-half the cost of the bridge and Mr. King, who was a Nassau County Commissioner at that time, lived about two miles away. One day Emory and I walked the railroad trestle into Nassau County and went to see Mr. King about the bridge. When we got to his house, we found that he wasn't home, so we spent the night there so we could talk to him the next day.

On the way back to St. George, Emory suddenly remembered little Harry who had been left with nothing to eat. He hurried to the barn and found him asleep in the feed room with a half can of sardines by his side. Harry said he had gone to Mr. Norman's store and told him that he worked for Emory Dean and was hungry. Mr. Norman had let him have crackers and sardines, which cost five cents a can, on credit.

When I was a real young man one of my earliest jobs was working for Walton Vickery, Jesse Vickery's brother, for fifty cents a day and board. Walton was running the canning factory, which was right next door to the Charlton County Herald building. He had an acre of tomatoes next to the factory and that is what he canned. He also furnished the cans and put up tomatoes for those who grew their own, taking half of them as his pay.

Dr. Wright grew some tomatoes one year and brought them to the cannery to put up but got real mad with Walton later. When Walton canned for the public he just mixed everyone's tomatoes all in one batch and canned them. So when Dr. Wright came for his, he didn't like it at all that he didn't get to take home the tomatoes he had brought, for Walton had not kept them separate from the others.

Eustace Wainwright, one of my cousins, was running the Herald at that time and printed an article about me working for Walton. One sentence in the article said, "Maddie Gibson is a hustling little fellow." When Papa read that he said, "It would have been a pretty good send-off if only Eustace had gotten the name straight!"

PAPA AND THE FARM

Papa was a mighty good farmer and we always had plenty to eat. We might not have had many other things we wanted but we had plenty of good food. There was always meat in the smokehouse, potatoes in the bank, cane syrup on the shelf, vegetables from the garden and all the milk, cream and butter we could use. Mama (actually my stepmother, Elizabeth Lee Gibson) was one of the best cooks in the county. My very favorite dish that she made was egg custard and I always wanted to have the chance to eat a whole custard all by myself, but that never happened. There were too many of us.

Papa really did know how to grow sweet potatoes. He planted them in the spring, gathered them in the fall and banked them by putting a layer of straw on top and than a later of dirt over that to keep them from freezing. Later someone in the community would come and spread the news that a buyer would be in Folkston on a certain day to purchase loads of potatoes. Many of the farmers, including Papa, dug the potatoes out of the bank, put them in croaker sacks and took them to Folkston. Papa would take a wagonload at a time and the buyer would bargain with the farmers for train carloads at a time. Some years Papa would sell as many as four hundred bushels of sweet potatoes. He got paid the market price for them...sometimes thirty cents a bushel and sometimes sixty cents.

Another crop that Papa grew was just plain old field peas. He let them dry in the field and then they were picked, brought to the barn and shelled. We had a big pea sheller as high as my shoulder with a hopper on top and a big wheel on the side. One person would crank the wheel and a blower would send the dry hulls out the side and the peas would fall into a basket underneath the sheller. Papa sold dried peas by the bushel and many of his customers came from the ads he put in the Georgia Market Bulletin. He shipped bushels of peas all over Georgia.

As I was growing up in the early part of this century, I helped Papa with the farming but there were times when the children got together and played games. We liked "Drop the Handkerchief," when we would ring up and chase the one who put the handkerchief on the ground. If he was caught, he was put in the soup pot in the center. We also played "Stealing Wood" which was a game when two teams piled wood at the foot of a tree and one team tried to get the wood back to their side before the other team overtook them. That was a rough game.

THE CHESSERS OF CHESSER ISLAND

When I was young, there were two sets of Chesser families that lived on Chesser Island, and I visited there many times, spending several days hunting and fishing with the boys that lived there. The Robert Allen Chesser family and the Sam Chesser family lived near one another and each had sons about my age.

Uncle Sam Chesser had a son named John who was in the military service during World War I and after the war he was discharged and came home on the train. Emory Dean happened to be at the depot when the train came in and when he saw John get off, he told him he would take him home in his car. Emory took him to Chesser Island that day and then decided to go back out there the next day to listen to John tell about his war experiences. When he got there, John was dead! He had lied that night and I never did know what killed him unless it was something he ate.

I loved to bird hunt and fish and remember walking out to Chesser Island one time to spend several days hunting and fishing. Harry and I, along with the rest of the two Chesser families, had been to church at Sardis on Sunday.

The older men and women and the girls rode in wagons on the way home and the boys and I walked behind them all the way to the island. It was a long walk and it was dark when we got there and we were all as hungry as could be.

We had to go through a slough before we could get on the island. They had corduroyed the narrow part of it by cutting poles and laying them side-by-side and this made a firm passageway for the wagons.

When we crossed the slough the older men began to holler "HOO AAAYE HOO! HOO AAAYE HOO!" I said, "Harry, what are they hollering about?" He told me it was to let the boys at home know that they were coming. It was their custom to always leave one son in each family in charge of the stock when the rest left the island to go

to church. They took care of the chores while the others were gone and they had supper ready for them when they returned.

After we crossed the slough we could see the two houses which were about a block apart. Those that had stayed at home met us and took the horses and wagons to the barn. They said "Youall go on in. Supper is on the table." We went in and found the table loaded down with sausage, sweet potatoes, rice and hot biscuits. They made the best sweet potatoes and syrup that could be found anywhere. And those biscuits were as good as any woman could make.

I remember till now that that was the best supper I ever ate!

WHEN PAPA CRIED

Papa was a gentle person and most everyone liked him. He liked to laugh and have a good time but I also remember two times when he cried.

The first time was when I was just a very small child, three or four years old. My mother had died when Mattie was born and soon after that Papa sold his part of the dairy to Uncle Jim Leigh and moved to a farm in Jamestown.

When families planned to move, they notified their neighbors and early in the morning on moving day wagons would be in front of the house ready to move the furniture. Each neighbor was responsible for transferring one room of furniture and after they had put it on the wagon they took it to the new home and put it inside. The neighbors could clear out a house in one day and the family would be housekeeping that night in the new home.

When I got big enough to sit up in the wagon seat Papa took me with him everywhere he went. We passed near our old homeplace one day and when we got in sight of the house where we used to live, I recognized it. In my childish way I said to Papa, "Oh there's the old place! We're going back to get Mama!" I can still remember the wrinkles in Papa's face and how he broke down and cried. It brings tears to my eyes now to remember how Papa cried when I said that.

The other time Papa cried was when we were building what is now known as the Chancey Place. It was built between the log house we lived in and the road to the Paxton Place. I was thirteen or fourteen years old -- big enough to haul brick from Conners Mill for the two chimneys of the house. Conners Mill is called Mattox now and there used to be a brick kiln there. I hauled two hundred bricks with a blind horse each trip.

Uncle Jim Leigh had helped Papa's grandmother raise Papa and Uncle Owen, and had also been in the dairy business with Papa. Now Uncle Jim was very old and sick so Papa sent me to Folkston one morning to find put how Uncle Jim was getting along.

When I came back home Papa was up on a scaffold on the side of the house and was nailing wood shingles on the roof. I drove up and stopped the horse and Papa said, "How was Uncle Jim? Was he living or dead?" I said, "Papa, he died last night." Papa just fell over on the roof of the house and cried and cried. Uncle Jim was like a daddy to Papa and it broke his heart when Uncle Jim died.

MILK, EGGS AND BROWN SUGAR

We had plenty of nourishing food when I was growing up and we raised most of what we ate right on the farm. Good old biscuits, eggs and home-made butter was some of the best food that could be found for growing boys.

Most families had a cow in their hack lot or bought milk from a neighbor that had more than they could use. A milk cow was an essential part of a homestead, especially if there were children in the family for dairy trucks didn't come to Folkston.

We usually had two or three milk cows and had more milk and butter and buttermilk than we could use, so Mama sold butter to the boarding house in Folkston. Laura Gowen's two old-maid aunts ran the boarding house which was about where Rodgers Department Store is now and Mama had a standing order with them for her home-made butter. I took it to the boarding house twice a week, Mama shaped it by using a little wooden mold which held a half pound of butter. It had a decoration carved in the top and when the butter was taken from the mold the design was printed on the top of it. I took two or three pounds a week to the boarding house and I believe we got thirty cents a pound for it.

If we couldn't have eggs for breakfast, we felt like we hadn't had a real meal. I and about a half dozen of young men about my age were working on the St. Marys River bridge near St. George, renting a little two-story house there, and once found ourselves without eggs for a Sunday breakfast.

L. E. Mallard, county school superintendent, had come to visit the schools in the St. George area and instead of driving on home, he had spent the night with us. He knew that John Harris, in addition to teaching school, also had a chicken farm, so he suggested we get the eggs for our breakfast from him. The place we were renting was pretty close to Mr. Harris' house so we walked down there and told, him we wanted to buy some eggs. But he didn't want to sell them to us because it was Sunday. We told him we really wanted them for our breakfast and he said "Well, boys, I see you are stranded and need the eggs," so he sold us two dozen. They were cooked and eaten before the hour was up.

We used store-bought white sugar, however Papa would occasionally make a barrel of brown sugar from the juice of the cane we grew, and we ate it like it was candy. We would just dig out a lump of whatever size we wanted and pop it in our mouth. The children really liked that.

We were all partial to cornbread and biscuits and didn't have much use for lightbread at all. One time Bob Jones, Harry Snowden and Jim Jones were buying something to eat so they decided on cheese and crackers. One of them said "Let's get a loaf of that lightbread." And Jim made the others laugh when he said "No! That's too much like eating cotton!"

SUNDAY SCHOOL PICNIC AND TRAIN WRECK

When I was a teenager two exciting things happened to me in one day. I was on a train when it wrecked and I saw the Atlantic Ocean for the first time in my life.

For several weeks we had been planning a Fourth of July excursion to Green Cove Springs and all of the Sunday Schools in the Methodist and Baptist churches were working together for this big outing. Over two hundred people brought picnic baskets and early in the day we got on the train at the Folkston depot.

Everything went just fine and we were having a great time on the train when suddenly the coaches jolted hard and stopped dead still. The engine had gone over an open drawbridge near Green Cove Springs and fell, pointing down into a creak. The tender was halfway between the bridge and water and was tilted, blocked by the engine. If the creek had been two feet deeper the tender and engine would have piled into the water.

The engineer and firemen were injured in the wreck. Luckily there were two fellows fishing nearby and when they saw what had happened they paddled the boat up to the engine and got the two men out and to shore. The engineer was badly hurt but no one in the passenger cars received any injuries.

We thought that was the end of our Fourth of July picnic but the railroad sent another engine and rerouted the train. But instead of going to Green Cove Springs, we went to Pablo Beach. That was the first time lots of those people, including me, had seen the Big Water. We really had a good time playing in the ocean.

At the beach there was a long row of little old houses where the people changed into their bathing suits. I rented a life preserver and was told to be careful and keep it around my waist, and not let it get up around my neck or I might drown, Elbert Altman was on the excursion and Little John Roddenberry and R. T. O'Quinn were there. So was Anna Dean and Ethel Williams and Ruth Dean. Ruth was the prettiest of all the girls on the train.

Little Joe Mizell and his family were there and also Aggie Mallard. Practically all of the Sunday School members of the Folkston churches were on the train. We all had a wonderful day. I asked a conductor on another train a few days later how the engineer was doing, who was hurt so bad in the wreck. I said "Did he live?" and the conductor said "Did he live? You couldn't kill that fellow, he's tough. It would take more than a train wreck to keep him down!"

OLD CHURCH CUSTOMS

Services at church were important to my family as I was growing up, for all of us looked forward to the singing and preaching and fellowship on those Sundays. Young people especially liked church meetings as they did lots of courting at Sunday School and church in the early part of this century.

We attended Bethel Methodist Church when we lived at what's now known as the Lee Chancey place, and I attended Prospect Methodist Church when I was a young man and worked for Emory Dean. We came to town and visited Folkston Methodist Church many times when it was on the west side of the railroad. I've always loved all the good old church hymns but I think my favorite one is "Amazing Grace."

There were no Sunday School classes at Bethel when we moved to Charlton County when I was very small but shortly after that, Eustace Wainwright got religion and decided to become a minister. He began preaching in the local Methodist churches and he organized the Sunday School department at Bethel. We were some of his first Sunday School scholars. We had Sunday School in the afternoon and I was appointed as treasurer of it. But many times I didn't attend for I was running around with John and Owen Gibson, Uncle Owen's boys. When I wasn't there, one of the Dinkins boys took the money up and kept it till he saw me again, then I'd turn it over to Eustace for him to buy literature.

Bailey Gay, who married one of Mr. Jesse Grooms' daughters, preached at Bethel two or three times a month. He was a good local preacher.

The Folkston Methodist Church was on a dusty, sandy road and was separated from the railroad tracks by an oak thicket. It had a center aisle down the middle of the church and rows of pews on each aide, with women sitting on one side of the building and the men on the other. The amen corner consisted of about three homemade benches on each side of the pulpit. Usually Mr. Dan Dinkins and Mr. Jesse Grooms sat there and when they agreed with the preacher's sermons, they encouraged him with a loud "Amen!." Sometimes women would also sit in the amen corner and respond to the preaching like the men. Once in a while the benches would be filled with singers, and their music would really liven up the church service.

A few years before the first World War it was decided to move the church across the railroad tracks, hut Mr. Jehu Paxton, who was a member, didn't like that at all. He lived right next door to the church and was getting old and feeble. He wanted the building to stay where it was because it was easy for him to get to the services, but it was moved anyway. He said he wouldn't attend if it was moved, and I don't know if he ever did or not, for ha died shortly after that.

Just before the church was moved, Rev. Arthur J. Moore, who was later elected Bishop, came to Folkston for a great revival and he held services every night, A tent was set up about where the Johnson Brothers Hardware store is and we sat on benches made of boards held up with blocks of wood on each end. Arthur Moore was such a good preacher that a hunch of us boys walked the five miles to town each evening during that revival. I think he was the hest preacher I ever heard!

When we were courting we also attended Philadelphia Freewill Baptist Church. I was there the Sunday that Ernest Altman preached his first sermon. He was a smart man and a good preacher and had been raised out in the Altman settlement. I took one of the prettiest girls in Folkston, a Robinson girl, with me to church that Sunday.

One of the best-liked preachers when I was a young man was Rev. Emory F. Dean. He lived just a short distance from the Prospect church, across the branch. He was an all-round workman and was highly educated. He was the hardest working man, to be sure. He would read books and write sermons till it was too hot to do that and then go plow in the field! I told Mrs. Dean one day, "He's crazy! He sits in the shade in the cool of the day, writing and reading and now that it's too hot to be in the field, he's working out there!" She didn't like that a bit, and she told me off!

He was a real good preacher but he had a habit at prayer meeting that made the service last much longer. As he was finishing up with his sermon, he would say "Now Brother Jacobs may have something to say." And Rev. G. H. Jacobs, who also lived near the church and was a good preacher too would say "No, I don't know as I have a thing to say," and all the time he was getting up out of his chair and going to the front of the church. This made prayer meeting last a lot longer.

A steeple was added to the church when I lived in the Prospect community and I helped Rev. Dean with the project. We made the frame on the ground and got it up on the roof with a rope and pulley and then nailed the boards on it.

When the Dean children were small Rev. and Mrs. Dean and the family took the wagon to prayer meeting. At that time people prayed by kneeling by the pews. After prayer meeting one Wednesday night the family went back home and Mrs. Dean put all the children to bed but found one vacant place. They counted and found that a child

was missing and it was Emory. Rev. Dean went back to the church house and found Emory there. He was on his knees with his head on the pew and was sound asleep!

REV. G. H. JACOBS

We had a wonderful local preacher that lived out in the Prospect Church community and near the Brock settlement. He didn't move every few years like the rest of the Methodist preachers did so he was always available to fill in whenever the regular pastor was away. Everyone loved him and he was the one who married Ruth and me. His name was Rev. G. H. Jacobs.

He was as honest as the day is long...a real good man.

Mr. Jacobs's neighbors had a cow one time that want around and jumped in other folks' fields and ate the corn. It got in Mr. Jacobs's green corn field one day and brought its yearling with it. This got Mr. Jacobs all wrought up so he got his gun and killed that cow with one shot. He didn't know the yearling was on the other side of the cow and when he shot, it went through and killed the yearling too. His neighbor wanted Nr, Jacobs to pay for the two animals that had been killed but he only paid for the cow. He wouldn't pay for the yearling and told his neighbor that he only meant to kill the cow, not both of them. But it wasn't long before his conscience began to bother him and he went back and paid for the yearling too.

He preached a whole lots at Prospect and many of his sermons were directed to the young folks. He called them "Children." He would, say "Now listen, Children!" in order to get their attention. One time he said that and at the same time a stallion that was hitched to a pine tree just outside the church whinnied real loud. That made all the children laugh. They teased him about that for a long time.

The Jacobs family had several children including Ollie who married a Ricketson; Jim who was one of my good friends; Charlie, Fred, Bob, Curt, and they also had an afflicted son. Mr. Jacobs thought I was going to marry Ollie, but we weren't sweethearts. I just rode her around in the buggy.

After Ruth and I moved up to Waycross, Mr. Jacobs said his farm and bought a place near Folkston. We often went back to Prospect Church to hear Ruth's daddy, Rev, Dean, preach and many times we passed the Jacobs house on our way. We saw Mr. Jacobs at most of the services so we hardly ever went to his house. One day we were going to Prospect and as we were about to pass Mr. Jacobs's house the car just automatically turned into his driveway. I hadn't planned on stopping. But I got out and knocked on the door and when I did, Mr. Jacobs called out "Coma in, Madison. Will just died and you must help me lay him out." Will was his afflicted son that he had taken such good care of for about sixty years. Will had fallen on the floor and we put him on the bed. I said "Nr, Jacobs, what can I do to help?" and he said "Go get Mrs. Raynor. She'll know what to do." And I did. I have never understood what made me stop at Mr. Jacobs's house. I hadn't planned to do that!

WORKING WITH DYNAMITE

Like most of the other men my age I had outdoor work, usually having something to do with pine trees. It was hard work but I enjoyed it.

When I was a very young man, I worked down in Lawtey, Florida for several months in a logging operation. They had a tramroad with spurs and had two engines. The large engine ran on steel rails and could pull several carloads of logs, and the small engine, called the Dummy, ran only on the spur tracks and couldn't pull as much weight as the large one could.

The rails for the Dummy weren't made of steel but instead were made of long wood logs that had been hewed flat on the .top and inside and the wheels of the engine and cars were made with wide flanges that kept them on the rails. This was fine as long as the weather was dry, but during rainy times the logs sometimes separated and the engine dropped down between the rails. When this happened the engineer blew the train whistle alerting those working in the woods nearby and they came and used jacks to raise the engine back onto the rails.

Ny first job there was working as the fireman on the main engine. I kept the fire hot so there would. be plenty of steam. I liked my work but was soon promoted to a job I liked even better. The engineer on the Dummy was continually coming to work drunk and when the boas saw that he was so undependable, He fired him and put me in his place. That job nearly ruined me! Being in control of the Dummy meant that I was an engineer and I thought I was hot stuff!

The woods of Charlton County were full of stumps when I was a young man and I worked for Emory Dean when he supplied the Yaryan Company with these. We had a machine on wheels with a gas engine and an auger that Jim Jacobs and his cousin used to bore holes in these stumps. Then Mr. Keen' packed the holes with dynamite.

When three long rows of stumps, sort of like rows of corn, were bored and filled, Emory, Jim and I each took a row, called a drift, and we lit the dynamite fuses. As soon as the fuse began to spew like a firecracker we left that one and lit another. We ran from one stump to the next one lighting fuses until we came to the end of the drift. It sounded like a war out there in those woods when the explosives went off..BAM!...BAM!...BAM! We were mighty careful with our work and no one ever got hurt.

The dynamite would blow some stumps as high as a house, but the real big ones would just pop up and roll out on the ground. Bob Roddenberry also worked with us dynamiting stumps and he was such a comedian that he kept us laughing. When a nearby stump flew up out of the ground he would spread his arms wide and look up at it, pretending to catch it.

After all the big stumps were sold to the Yaryan Company, there were acres and acres of scattered small pieces of lighterwood left. I was boarding at Emory's house and he provided me with my first good paying job by letting me have all the wood that was left. He also let me use his mules and wagons without charge. For quite a while Jim Jacobs and I worked those woods, picking up wagon loads of lighterwood which I shipped to Brunswick. The Yaryan rail line ran from just south of Folkston through the woods, passed right by Emory's farm and went on out to the Okefenokee Swamp. We stacked the wood by the railroad tracks until there was enough to fill up a box car. There was so much wood laying out there on the ground that I shipped I don't know how many railroad carloads to Brunswick.

One day two men I had hired as helpers loaded a boxcar and the engine had already hooked it and was ready to take it to Folkston when I rode up on my horse. Otto Martin was the engineer that day and I asked him to let me check the boxcar before he left with it. It was a good thing I showed up when I did for wood was piled to the ceiling in the center of the car but both ends were empty. I made those men, who were paid $2.00 for each car they filled, unload it, start all over again and fill it up right.

During the time we were dynamiting the stumps, one of Jim's friends and his wife asked to see how the operation was done, and came out one day to watch. Jim told them to park the horse and buggy out a good little piece from where we were blowing up the stumps. They watched until the stumps started exploding and it frightened them so bad that Jim's friend put the buggy whip to his horse and left from there. As far as Jim could see them down the road, he was still whipping that horse to go faster!

WHEN THE CAR GOT STUCK IN COONER BRANCH

When I was a young man, square dancing was one of the most popular events for me and my friends and we spent many nights dancing to the fiddler's tunes.

Guy Dean and I could b. found almost any Saturday evening at the closest square dance gathering. We would go to Kingsland, Hilliard or St. George and we also had some good times in Folkston. The section house by the railroad going to Homeland had a big room in it and we had dances there many weekends, I liked to call the sets. Jim Wainwright would begin playing his fiddle and to get the folks to dancing, I would sing out "Hit the floor! Partners to their places like horses to their traces! Swing your partner and promenade!"

We had some music makers for the dances that could play the violin nicely and some that couldn't play very well at all. When we knew a good fiddler was going to be at a particular dance, we went out of our way to go there, for lively, peppy music made the dancing lots more fun. A group of us from Folkston went to Kingsland one winter night for we knew the fiddler, had danced -a his tunes and knew he would make good music for us.

Sol Mills, my cousin Owen Gibson, Guy Dean, Bob Allen and I went to the dance in Kingsland when cars were beginning to be a common sight on our roads, but bridges weren't so common. We had enjoyed our dancing and were on the way home when we got stuck in Cooner Branch. There was no bridge there, just a ford with logs laid cross-wise in the bottom of the creek so the tires wouldn't sink down in the mud. We had crossed easily on the way to Kingsland but somehow got stuck going back home.

Each time we came to a creek we would stop before we got to the water and one of us would get out and hang a large piece of oilcloth over the radiator. This helped keep the water from getting on the fan which would have

sprayed it on the spark plugs and drowned out the motor. The oilcloth didn't help in this case and the car stopped in the middle of the stream. It then cranked up but wouldn't pull out as the wheels had settled in the sand between the logs.

Hawley Wright was parked on the Folkston side of the water, having just gone through the branch without getting stuck. He had been peddling fish and was on his way home. Hawley said "I'll come get you, boys!" and started pulling his shoes off. Sol, Bob and Owen were in the back seat and they took their shoes, pants and underwear off and got out in that water to help get the car onto dry land. Guy was driving and had to guide it and I was in the front seat pretending to have trouble undoing my shoelaces. I was just getting over a bad cold, and sure didn't want to get in that icy water.

Hawley set a turpentine box afire at the edge of the hill so they could see what they were doing and those boys pulled, the car out of the branch. Guy and I never got wet. The boys stood around the fire drying off before they put their clothes back on and they were a ridiculous sight, all dressed up in white shirts and nice jackets, naked as jaybirds from the waist down. It was so cold it didn't take them long to get dry enough to get their clothes back on.

Sol played a trick on us one time. If the fiddler was an especially good musician, someone in the crowd would go around and collect money for him. At one dance Sol got a fifty-cent piece from me and from each of my friends, to pay the fiddler, Jim Wainwright. When I saw Jim later in the week I asked him how much money he got for playing at the dance. He told me he didn't get paid anything. Sol had collected the money and kept it!

THE WATER TANK IN THE MIDDLE OF MAIN STREET

When I was a young man I worked at any job that I could find and most of them at that time paid about fifty cents a day.

One of my jobs was helping put up a water tank in the middle of Main Street near Stapleton's Drug Store. There had been a small tank that had pipes to several houses but the city needed a larger one. Emory Dean contracted the job and Mack Wildes, R. D. Bowman and I worked for him.

We put down four pilings about 10 by 12 inches thick, using a mule to help us get them in the ground. Then we braced them and put sills on top. Then we put flooring on the sills and that made the bottom of the tank. Then we built a platform around the outside to stand on, and put up the wall of the tank with tongue and groove boards. We finished it by putting a roof on top, just like the covering of a house.

Mack and I did most of the work. He was so particular. Everything had to be done just right when he worked on it. I scared him once when I dropped a board from the roof onto the floor of the empty tank and it made an awful racket. He said "What happened?" He thought something was coming apart. Mack was a surveyor but when he wasn't doing that he worked on carpenter jobs.

After we finished building the tank we began laying pipe and started digging our way through the A.C.L. park where the post office is now, to the back of H. J. Davis' store. But V. A. Hodges, the roadmaster, stopped us. We had not gotten permission from him to lay the pipe, for the railroad owned the park.

Colonel A. S. McQueen, who was probably the city's attorney, came to the park when he saw that the work had stopped. As we were discussing it, Mr. Hodges absent-mindedly picked up one of the workmen's wrenches and Colonel McQueen said "Now you've got him! Now you've got him! He's trying to carry away your tools!" Mr. Hodges put the wrench down and gave permission for the work to continue.

The little water tank was torn down after the new one was built.

I also helped put up a water tank at Jim Gowen's house. It wasn't as large as the one in Main Street. It worked fine but a year or two later the water smelled bad and wasn't fit to drink. They got up there and checked it and found that yellow jackets had fallen in and drowned and ruined the water. It had to be cleaned out before they could drink the water again.

PORTE TRACY'S FERRY

My friend Porte Tracy operated a ferry at Traders Hill before there were bridges over the St. Marys River. Using the ferry far getting the horse and buggy from one side to the other was about the only way you could cross rivers when I was young.

Porte's ferry was about twenty-four feet long and about ten feet wide and was a platform with ramps that slanted down toward the large center section that held the cargo. The sides weren't very high, maybe twelve or fourteen inches, just enough to keep the wheels of a vehicle from rolling off the ferry. It would hold a horse and buggy or a four wheel wagon, and the trip from one side of the river to the other cost a quarter.

The ferry was attached to a steel cable that was anchored to a tree on each aide of the river. After Porte put his customer and the wagon or buggy on the ferry, he pulled hand over hand on the cable and by his own strength, got the ferry from one side to the other.

Emory Dean and Porte were good friends and Porte let Emory keep some of his mules at his house when he was working on the Florida side. One day Emory pulled his wagon onto the ferry and then put a pair of mules on it. As they were going across the river Emory kept the mules still by holding their bridles, but one began cutting up. It started backing up and Emory was doing his best to hold onto him. The mule just backed right off the end of the ferry and splashed into the river. They finally got to the other landing without letting the mule drown for Emory had hold of the reins and held the mule's head above water till they got across.

I enjoyed swapping things with Porte. We were always trading. I remember half of a swap we made once. I can't remember what he gave me but I gave him a quarter of a fresh-killed beef for it. One of the best swaps I made with him was when I exchanged a hunting dog for an unreasonably long cow whip. I really needed that whip for I was working at that time gathering up cows for Georgia-Florida Investment Co. and getting them to the dipping vat every two weeks to get rid of the wood ticks.

Porte was a good bit older than I was and I had known him nearly all my life. He had lived in Waycross for a time and had worked at Papa's dairy there when I was just a small child.

He had been the Postmaster at Traders Hill for a long time and had a little post office building not far from the ferry. It was just a tiny thing; not much larger than a chicken house, no longer than ten feet. When I worked as a range rider gathering up cows, the post office had already been discontinued and it wasn't being used so I never went inside. Port was a resident of Florida, living on the other side of the river but was a Georgia postmaster.

When the river got exceedingly high after long periods of rain, it would overflow its banks and just cover the yard around Porte's house. Porte was a good sport and all of us liked a good joke. This is one that was told on him: It was just after an extended rain and water was everywhere. Porte could paddle his boat from Traders Hill, cross the river, go right up to his house and step from the boat to the front porch. A friend was going down the river and saw Porte out in his yard in his boat with his fishing pole. He was using the pole to punch straight down to the ground. His friend asked him what he was doing and he said "I'm looking for my well. I need some water!"

RAFTING CROSSTIES AND TURPENTINE DOWN THE RIVER

When I was a young man our rivers were used for more than just fishing boats or pleasure boat as they are now. They were water highways that we used to get the pine products from one place to another.

I worked for L. T. McKinnon, a millionaire and half owner of the Georgia-Florida Investment Co., and I helped raft crossties and barrels of turpentine down the St. Marys River all the way to Brunswick. Mr. McKinnon owned a tremendous amount of land and he sold the turpentine and ties to the Downing Company in Brunswick. In fact he usually met us on the Brunswick dock when we pulled up with two loaded lighters.

Three of us usually made the week-long trip down the river...Ed Peeples, who was captain of the little tugboat, Guy Dean and me. We left at the Traders Hill dock and always went out when the tide did. Before we left though, we cut enough firewood to last for a week and we loaded this on the boat, for we did our own cooking along the way. The boat had a small cook stove and while we were on the river, we cooked once a day, fixing enough for all our meals at that time.

We pulled two lighters with the tugboat. A lighter was a flat bottomed raft about sixty by thirty feet and each one held very heavy loads of crossties or turpentine. When they were empty, the lighters would rise way up in the water, about eight feet higher than water level; but when they were loaded the tops were only about three feet out of the water.

The tugboat would pull the lighters as long as the tide was going out, and then when it changed we would buck the tide for about an hour, then we tied up to the bank to wait till the tide changed again.

That's when we cooked and slept. Then when the tide started going out again, we took off down the river.

Sometimes we got stuck on mud banks and had to use long poles to push off. We used the poles mostly to keep the load in the main channel, but if we got stuck too hard, we had to wait until a better tide came before we could move.

After the' crossties and the barrels of turpentine were loaded onto the dock in Brunswick, we turned around and pulled the empty lighters back to Traders Hill. It took nearly as long to get back as it did to get to Brunswick.

Once we were caught in a honey of a storm while we were in the St. Andrew's Sound near Jekyll Island. It was so rough that the waves would pick the boat right up out of the water. We had to turn around and pull into a small creek and we stayed there a week before it was safe enough to leave. We used up all our food supplies while we were waiting for the end of the storm.

When we did get to Brunswick, a happy Mr. McKinnon met us at the dock. He said "Well boys, I didn't think I'd aver see you again. I thought you were blowed out to sea!" I know he was glad to see his crossties and turpentine but he was even happier to see us. He told us he had taken insurance out on the cargo but none on us three men in the boat!

Mr. McKinnon asked us if there was anything we needed before we made the trip home and we said we needed food that was easy to heat up and told him we could use come cans of corn beef. He was real close with his money and we expected him to buy us two or three cans, but he bought a full case and put it on the boat. When we got back to Traders Hill and told Jim Gowen about the corn beef, which was pretty expensive, he said "I'm going down to the boat and steal me some of that. I've never bought a can of corn beef in my life!"

WHEN JOHN JUMPED OFF THE TRAIN

My cousin, John S. Gibson, was the son of Uncle Owen and Aunt Julia Gibson. John had bought an old worn-out, half-starved, slow-moving mule to pull his wagon, which was needed in his new job. He had the contract to put up the telephone lines between the Paxton Place and Folkston and his mule pulled the wagon full of poles as he worked.

The mule was also used sometimes when John went to the square dances held regularly around the county, and I went with him many times for we both loved to dance. John and I took in all the square dances from Uptonville to Moniac, about 41 miles apart. Many times we'd take the mule and buggy to the dance, get there about nine o'clock, put the mule in the stable, dance till daylight, go to bed and wake up at dinner time, eat and then go home. We really loved to dance.

Another friend who enjoyed dancing was Newt Murray, but he was married and had a family and didn't get to attend as many dances as John and I did. John and I had gone to a dance on an awfully cold night and were on our way home in his buggy, pulled by that slow-moving mule and as we got close to Newt's house, John said "Let's tease old Newt!" Now for those who don't remember John, it must be said here that he had the biggest mouth of anyone in the county. He was always the loudest one in the crowd, no matter how many were there.

We came closer to Newt's house and John hailed him and Newt answered by coming to the door in that icy cold night time and said "Who is it?" Instead of telling him who it was, John hollered "You got plenty of firewood?" and then tried to get that slow old mule to pick up some speed so Newt wouldn't know who it was that got him out of a warm bed. Newt knew that someone was just joshing him and said some words a Sunday School teacher wouldn't approve of. Meanwhile John made that mule move on and tried to keep from laughing too loud.

A couple of days later Newt asked John if that wasn't him that made him go to the door on that cold night and John assured him it wasn't. But Newt apologized to him anyway for not being a good sport for he knew it was John because he couldn't disguise that loud voice.

When we were teenagers John, his brother Owen, and I made our spending money by hunting coons, possums and polecats, then selling the hides. We shipped them by train to D. Strickland in Savannah and got $3.00 for coon and possum hides and $7.00 for skunks. Sometimes the dogs caught and killed a polecat and when this

happened they were a sick bunch of smelly dogs. Before we could sell the hide we had to get the awful odor out of it. We made a fire of lightard knots and put green pine limbs on it to smother it and make a white smoke. Then we cut a long cane from a nearby bush and tied the dead polecat in the middle of it. Two of us held the cane over the lightard knots and in about five minutes the pine smoke took the odor out of the fur.

We knew how to have good harmless fun back when I was young and debating was a popular way of passing the time. I remember one moonlit night when Owen, John and I were walking through the woods coming home from hunting and we decided to have a debate. We went inside a little unlocked one-room school house and John stood on one side at the front of the room and Owen stood on the other while I sat at a desk in the back. They had a loud debate with one another discussing opposite sides of an issue and I was the judge and gave points to the one who made the best argument. I often wondered years later if these debates we enjoyed had influenced John in his choice of an occupation. He became a trial lawyer and debated many cases in courtrooms in south Georgia.

I was real sorry for John one night. It was yearly meeting time at Sardis Church and everyone in the country was there.

There were just hundreds of people who never even went in the church house. Sardis yearly meeting and Christmas were two days we all looked forward to.

John and I took two girls from Hickox to the meeting and they had spent the night at Uncle Owen's house. When it came time for them to go home, we took them to the depot and got them seated in the coach. Now I had been around trains more than John had and knew when I felt the coach move that I had to leave. It began moving and I made for the door. I also knew how to get off a moving train by holding on the hand rail and running with it as it went down the tracks.

John had a little more to tell those girls and when he got off the train it was picking up a good bit of speed. Since he had no experience in getting off a moving train, he just jumped right straight out. He hit the ditch and turned head over heels a couple of times. It was dark but I didn't have any trouble finding him several blocks down the track. You could have heard him in the next county yelling "I think my back is broke!" He wasn't hurt but he learned in one lesson how not to get off a moving train!

HUGH McLEAN AND THE ELECTRIC LIGHT BULB

One of my best friends when I was a young man was Hugh McLean. We were buddies and had lots of good times together. I was living in Waycross when my brother, Elvie, was very sick in the McCoy Hospital and I went down to Folkston to see him every day.

Sheriff Jim Sikes was also very sick about that same time. Each day I visited the hospital I saw a nurse that was working there. I had known her when he was a little girl but hadn't seen her for years and didn't recognize her. I got up the nerve one day to ask her "Don't I know you?" and she said "I don't know. Do you know Hugh McLean?" I answered "I reckon I do!" and she told me she was his daughter, Helen. I thought about an experience Hugh and I had in Jacksonville and told Helen about it. This is it: "When we were young men we were looking for work so we went to Jacksonville and rented an upstairs room in a cheap boarding house. This was before there was electricity in Folkston and we didn't know a thing in the world about electric lights.

Over the middle of the bed was a light bulb hanging from a cord. Hugh had just got in bed and said "Madison, I can't blow that light out!" I said "Well, let me try." I took my hat and fanned it and it didn't flicker. I couldn't put it out either so I said "Hugh, I'm going to cut that string and put this light in the dresser drawer so we can get some sleep." So I got my pocket knife and cut the cord.

When I came to I had been knocked under the bed and the room was full of lightning coming from the cord over the bed. People in the boarding house were making lots of noise running down the hallway hollering "Fire! Fire!"

Hugh and I jumped into our clothes and ran to the door and saw folks going out the window at the end of the hall. I thought they were jumping out of that two-story house but when it came my turn I saw there was a tin chute to slide down. Everyone was stampeding, trying to get out before the others did and the boarding house owner was afraid someone was going to get hurt. He was standing on the ground where they landed after sliding down the chute saying "Don't rush, plenty of time! Don't rush, plenty of time!"

When I slid down the piece of tin, Hugh came right after me. As soon as I got over the shock of hitting the dirt I said to the boarding house owner who was still telling folks to take their time, "Well, if there's plenty of time, why didn't you put your britches on?"

When Helen, the nurse, got through laughing about her daddy's experience with electricity in Jacksonville, I admitted to her that I had made it all up!

DIPPING COWS IN THE SUMMER TIME

Ticks got so bad in the woods once that there was a law that said all cows must be dipped every two weeks in order to try to get rid of the pests. I thought that most of the farmers would be glad to be able to dip their cows, for this service was free, but when the law came into effect many owners of cattle didn't like it at all.

The county commissioners built the dipping vats. They were put, as much as possible, close to the farms and each rural community had a dipping vat. They were made of concrete with the top of the vat level with the ground. The vats were about twenty feet long and were narrow with steps leading in and out of them. The cows were herded to the vat and one at a time they went down the steps and swam through the tick-killing solution and walked out the other end into the drain pit. Someone stood nearby and as the cows left, he touched them with a brush dipped in a bright colored paint. This showed they had been dipped. They used a different color each two weeks. After they were dipped the cows were let out into the woods again. It was no trouble getting them hack to the farmer who owned them for they all knew the way home.

Cows usually sold for $10.00 a head but after the law came into effect, they went down to $5.00 a head, Some farmers had wild cows and didn't want to get them to the dipping vat, so instead of going to the trouble of rounding them up, they sold them. One farmer who lived down below St. George didn't want to go to the trouble of dipping his cows so he sold his herd at $5.00 a head to Emory Dean. Dempsey Snowmen, Emory and I drove them up to Emory's house in one day. It was compulsory to dip and many farmers fought it; some even destroyed the vats with dynamite before they could ever be used.

I was working for Georgia-Florida Investment Co. and they had hundreds of woods cows. Most of them were in the Okfenok Pasture that stretched all the way from Racepond to Camp Cornelia. Sometimes this was called the "Big Pasture." It was my job to round the cows up every two weeks and get them to the vat. The company had a thoroughbred Hereford bull and the first time it 'was dipped it was gentle as a cat. I just got a bundle of oats from the stable, which was about 100 yards from the vat and he followed it and I ran him through the vat with no trouble whatsoever.

When the next dipping vat day came I got a bundle of oats, turned the bull out and he started to follow me and looked up and saw that dipping vat. He took off with me and Theo Dinkins chasing him on our horses and we didn't catch up with him till we got to Corn House Creek. We turned him back and as we passed Jim Gowen's house we picked up two shotguns and a hand full of shells. The bull ran in the river swamp near Lester O'Quinn's place and I jumped off my horse and shot him in the side. It didn't hurt him bad but it did calm him down. I broke off a little switch and walked him up the hill and on towards home. When he got there he swam through the vat and laid down, tired out, in the drain pit. I never did have any more trouble with that bull.

Theo Dinkins was the range rider and if he found a cow that wasn't painted, he would drive it to the vat and dip it. His job was to see that all the cows were dipped. One day Bob O'Quinn and his daughter drove his cows up and were late getting to the vat, for everyone had gone, including the man with the paintbrush. So they just ran the cows through the vat and went on home. Several days later Theo went to see Bob and told him he had to get his cows dipped.

Bob told him that he had gotten to the vat late but had dipped them anyway. But Theo told him he had to have a witness, the one that marked cows with the bright paint. Theo then started walking back to his horse and Bob was about ten feet behind him, Theo laughed when he told me what happened next.

Bob was disgusted with Theo and his rules that made him take his already-dipped cows back to the vat and was muttering to himself, not knowing Theo could hear him. He said, "There's lots of things I'm proud of, but the very best thing is that my name is not Dinkins!"

FIFTY WHEELBARROWS AND FIFTY SHOVELS

The roads in Charlton County used to be little more than paths through the woods but they started being improved when automobiles became more common. I helped build the roadbed for the ten-mile section of U.S. One between Racepond and Uptonville.

Emory Dean, R. D. Bowman and I contracted the roadbed job which was a necessary procedure before it could be paved. We bought fifty wheelbarrows and fifty shovels and hired fifty men from Silco to dig the ditches on each aide of the road. The sand they took from the ditches was used to build up the roadbed.

I was the straw boss who looked after the men and kept the work going, I picked the work crew up on Mondays in Camden County and brought them to the construction site and they camped in the woods in tents during the week, cooking their meals over campfires each evening. Then I took them home on weekends.

When we came to a creek as we were building the road we hauled dirt with a mule and wagon and filled it in, Later, after a good rain, the road washed out and the cars that traveled through there just took to the woods, went through the saplings the best way they could and then got back up on the road.

When we completed this project my partners and I divided up everything and I got a third of the wheelbarrows, a third of the shovels, a third of the profit, a two-horse wagon and a truck.

Before there were many cars we used a buggy pulled by our horse, Buck. Riley Roddenberry had a candy-pulling one evening with lots of people attending and I took Laura Gowen to the party in our buggy. As we were going back to her home we came to a crossroad and Buck turned the corner too sharp and the buggy wheels bumped up over a mound of dirt. This turned the buggy over on its side and dumped Laura and me out on the ground. We weren't hurt, neither was Buck. But one of the buggy shafts was broken.

It was nearly midnight and since we weren't far from Pearce Lambert's house, I told Laura to stay with the buggy and I would go to Pearce's and borrow a set of shafts so I could take her on home.

I woke up Pearce and we went to his barn and got the shafts. (Laura was afraid to stay with the buggy and hid behind an oak tree in Pearce's front yard.) Pearce helped me turn the buggy back on its wheels and we put his shafts on it, and I took Laura on to her house.

Pearce laughed about that afterwards, saying that he had never heard of anyone borrowing a set of buggy shafts before, much less doing it at midnight!

WORKING AT HOPKINS, GEORGIA

For several years I lived in a small town that doesn't even exist now. In fact, I came close to being the postmaster there. It was on the edge of the Okefenokee Swamp and was called Hopkins, Georgia. The Hebard Cypress Company employed many people for its work in the swamp and everyone that lived in Hopkins either worked for the Hebards or were kin to those that did.

I worked for my brother, Elvie Gibson, who ran the Hebard commissary at Hopkins. I was a clerk in the store and the only other one that worked there was Mr. Edwards, the bookkeeper. I slept in a little side room attached to the commissary and ate my meals with Elvie and Emma, his wife. My sister-in-law, Emma, was one of Bud Altman's daughters.

I loved to bird hunt and would go to the woods with my gun every chance I got. I remember one winter weekend when I went duck hunting on Billy's Island. A tram road ran into the swamp from Hopkins to the island and Harry Quarterman, camp superintendent, let us borrow the motor car that ran on the tram rails.

Mr. Edwards, the only other person that could operate the motor car, took Seward Lee and me to the island after we promised to bring him a duck in exchange for the ride. Seward, who worked during the week for the Hebards, had been raised on the island and knew where the ducks roosted. After we got to Billy's Island we got some more Lee boys to go with us and by Sunday morning we had killed 140 ducks, though there were very few of them that I shot down. We hunted ducks early of a morning and late of an evening. They came in to roost like doves to a baited field and every time a Lee would shoot, down would come a duck. That night we camped in a shelter with a floor and roof that two moonshiners had put up in the swamp. We drawerd (cleaned out the insides) the ducks and filled them with salt to help preserve them. When we fixed our camp supper Saturday night we cooked duck gizzards, which are a good bit larger than chicken gizzards. I like fried gizzards but for once in my life, I got all of those I wanted to eat at one time.

We brought those 140 ducks out of the swamp and the Lees gave me six of them. I gave two to Mr. Edwards, two to Emma and Elvie and two to a family named Young that lived at Hopkins. The Lee boys took the rest to Fargo and sold them.

When I worked at Hopkins, we didn't have a post office in the town. When a mail bag was delivered it was opened and dumped out on one of the counters of the commissary, then everyone pawed through it to get their mail. We all thought this was highly unsatisfactory so someone asked the government to set up a post office there and the request was approved. I was asked to he the postmaster and agreed to this, but never served a day, for there was a long delay in getting the commission of the postmaster. We even received a big crate and when it was opened we found that we had a cabinet full of pigeon-holes for letters. This was put over in a corner for a couple of months till the authority came so that it could be used, and about that time World War One started.

My friend, Guy Dean, who was later my brother-in-law, challenged me to join the Marines with him. We both joined the service and were gone several years, so I never did serve as the postmaster at Hopkins.

THE PROTECTION OF PAPA'S BLESSING

It was in June, 1917, while I was clerking in the commissary at Hopkins and waiting on an official commission as the Postmaster that Guy Dean and I decided to join the Marines. I went to Folkston to discuss the decision with Papa and he told me "Go, and may God always be with you!"

At the recruiting office in Savannah, Guy was accepted but I was turned down because of my slight build. When Guy refused to enlist unless I could come with him, the recruiters relented and said that they would try to fatten me up and they let me join also.

When we enlisted we had the understanding with the Marine recruiters that we would be in the same unit at Paris Island, but I was put in one group and Guy was in another. But Noah Stokes, also from Charlton County, was a drill sargeant (sic) there at that time so Guy asked him to try to get us in the same company. Noah said he would do better than that, he would put us in his company. And he did.

Guy and I nearly starved to death during basic training as we were used to good home cooking, not military meals. I wrote Mama about the poor food we were getting and she sent cakes in the mail. Noah had an office attached to the bunk house and he was in charge of mail call each evening. If I got a package from home (usually it was a cake Mama sent), Noah would say the box was for him and set it aside, Then after the rest of the men left, Guy and I would go to Noah's office, open the package and eat the cake without having to share it with the other men.

I had learned the hard way about sharing good things that arrived in the mail from home. Papa had sent me a quart of Georgia cane syrup and I took it to the mess hall. The boy next to me wanted some and then he passed it on down the table and when the bottle got back to me it was empty. After that I didn't share any food from home and whenever Papa sent me some syrup, Noah kept it in his office.

Guy stayed in the United States and I was soon shipped to France as a mule skinner. That was the last I saw of him until I got back to Folkston after the war, I drew hazardous pay of $6.00 per month in addition to the regular pay that Marines received.

My duty was delivering cooked rations to the front lines of the 82nd Company, 6th Regiment, at night and hauling food supplies from the quartermaster depot to the rolling kitchen in the daytime. The kitchen was equipped with a large iron stove on wheels, and was used to prepare meals in ten gallon pots which were then transferred to my wagon. Because it was safer at night I drove the mules at that time, taking the food to those on the front lines, many times being surrounded on three sides by artillery fire.

Six or eight Marines from the front would come with poles, putting one can on each pole and two men carried each pot back to the hungry, fighting men. They received this hot food only once a day. A typical day's rations would be stew beef and gravy, rice cooked with raisins, boiled prunes, coffee and all the loaves of french bread they could carry. The food was transported in the same ten gallon pots in which it had been cooked.

I took shelter under the wagon, which was partly protected by oak thickets, and waited for the Marines to bring the empty containers back. I was by myself most of the time and would remember Papa's blessing on me. I felt that I

was being protected even though shells sometimes landed close to me. I never fired a shot, never missed a day and I never got wounded.

Often when I carried rations to the front, I would have to leave my containers and go back the next day for them. On the way one evening, going back for my cooking pots, I saw a German balloon which I knew was watching me. Just as I was going down a steep hill where the pots were hidden under a concrete bridge, about a dozen artillery shells came over my head and exploded not over a hundred yards from me. The firing then stopped for a few minutes but about the time I finished loading my containers they began raining down again. On the way up the hill one came just over my head and hit about ten feet from my wagon. he shell exploded and pieces of gravel flew up in the air and hit me. I was driving as fast as I could and by the time I reached the top of the hill, shells were falling very close to me. But I got back safely.

Sometimes at night I ran into fogs of poison gas which would sour the food and make it unfit to eat. When I knew I was in a dangerous area I put my gas mask on and also put masks on the mules.

On another trip to the front, one I won't ever forget, I had a four-mule team and the wagon got stuck. I was accompanied this time by two guides, and the three of us worked all afternoon, all that night and until late afternoon of the next day before fixing the wagon so we could move forward again. That night, just before reaching the front, we had to go down a very steep hill. The guides had instructed me to not speak to the mules because the Germans could hear us. On the way down, the lock broke and the wagon began running and pushing the mules down the hill at a very rapid rate of speed.

About half way down the hill a mule fell and the wagon turned over. During this time, machine gun bullets were hissing over our heads...hundreds of them...and artillery fire was exploding all around us. We sent for a detail of men from the front lines and they picked up our wrecked wagon, reloaded the food and helped us get to the bottom of the hill. The chief cook took me to a cellar to give me a meal while the men unloaded the wagon. I had eaten only one meal for two days and nights and was so sick from excitement that I couldn't eat then. After drinking a cup of coffee I started back with my team, reaching headquarters after daybreak the next day.

After several days of fighting, sections of Marines would go to the rear and reorganize, replacing those killed in action. My job at that time was feeding the hungry men before they went back to the front lines at night. On one occasion the captain had been killed and was replaced by a young officer that had never been under fire before. After their hot meal and just before they left for the front lines, I heard the captain give a short speech to those who were there to fight with him. Ha said "You know what war is but I don't. Let's go up there and take possession and if I don't do what's right, you are to shoot me." I have always regretted that I never knew how that officer fared on the enemy lines.

THE FIRST ARMISTICE DAY

On the last day of fighting in World War One, a messenger on a motorcycle came to the front lines and told us the war would end and the last shot would be fired at 11:00 that night. We all just went wild, hollering and shouting. We were in an oak thicket very close to enemy territory and that night we listened for the last shot at 11:00. We heard it and then everything got very, very quiet, and we didn't hear any more guns going off. As soon as it sunk in that the war was really over, we sang and hollered and shouted till we were hoarse.

For months we hadn't been allowed to strike a match after dark because the enemy was so close, but after 11:00 that night we all lit up cigarettes and every one of the men built a bonfire. Each man had a separate fire and the woods were lit up all around with the light of them. They did that just for the joy of being able to have a light after the sun went down.

I thought I would be going home as soon as the Armistice was signed but instead of that our regiment followed the German army all the way back to its homeland and we stayed there for more than seven months.

After spending eighteen months of wartime duty without sleeping on a bed, a buddy and I suddenly found our chance for a good night's rest. We were following the retreating German army through Belgium and Luxemburg and one evening the rolling kitchen was parked near a house that had been completely deserted. We picked out a nice bed in one of the bedrooms but after spending so many nights on uncomfortable cots and the cold ground, we both found we couldn't sleep on the soft bed and we spent a miserable night there.

After I got back to the United States I spent a week on Long Island and paraded with other Marines for a hundred blocks in 'New York City, with President Woodrow Wilson watching us from the reviewing stand. Thousands and thousands of people lined the streets to watch us go by.

I was discharged in 1919 and rode the train to Folkston. Jess Brooks was the first person I saw at the depot when I got back and the next one was Donald Pearce who took me home in his car. My family didn't know when I would be getting back and Papa was the only one at home, He was sitting in the porch swing all by himself for Mama was visiting her folks in Waycross. He was so glad to have me back home that he wired a telegram to Mama telling her to hurry back to Folkston to see me!

MOLLY AND BULL AND OTHER ANIMALS

Animals were almost as important to us as people, and for this reason we took especially good care of our dogs and horses and mules.

We had a dog once that pulled a cart for the children. I had bought him from a fellow that used to come through Folkston like the goat man, except that instead of goats he had a team of dogs. The wagon that he lived in was pulled by a four-yoke team of eight dogs. He came through south Georgia going to Florida every year and he sold me one of his big Eskimo dogs for $25.00. Jim Gowen's boys built the cart and the dog pulled it just like a horse would pull a wagon. The children rode in it. I kept this dog until ha began to eat the chickens. One night I heard the hens raising sand in the chicken house and knew the dog was after them, so I got my gun and went out in the yard intending to shoot him, but instead I put the rifle on a stump and decided to try to sell him, If someone else would buy him, I could get my $25,00 back. I took him to the St. Marys River bridge and left him with the man that collected tolls there. He tried to sell the dog but couldn't. He finally agreed with a tourist to swap my dog for a Kodak camera.

I had another dog, named "Bull" who joined the Marines with me. He was a good farm dog and could catch a cow or hog, no matter how big. He would catch them on the nose and they couldn't sling him off. When Guy Dean and I left home to enlist in the Marines in 1917, Bull went under my bed and didn't come out for the week I was gone, except to eat. After I told my family goodby, I went back to boot camp and took my bull terrier with me. Everybody there loved him and he took care of me. If anyone touched me, he would jump for their throat.

The kitchen crew fed him and gave him meat skins and he ate so much he got sick. He was taken to the sick bay just like a person and the doctors treated him but he died there. Everyone on Paris Island thought a lot of that dog.

When I was growing up, Papa had a blind horse named Molly. She was a wonderful animal and pulled the wagon wherever we wanted to go. Papa had bought her from old man T, Mizell and we had her for a long time. When she got older, we talked to Papa about selling her, but he wanted to keep her, Papa would say "She's been a good horse and she's old and blind now. We ought to take care of her. Now when I get old and blind I'd sure hate for youall to throw me out!" He thought a lot of that horse, but later sold her to Archie Dinkins for $30.00. But he knew Mr. Dinkins would take as good care of old blind Molly as he had.

I helped Emory Dean re-name a hunch of his mules one time. The government had taken over the railroads and Mr. V. A. Hodges, the roadmaster, had been assigned to fill in a big hole beside the railroad track. Mr. Hodges knew Emory always had a big bunch of mules so he contracted with him to get the hole filled in. The workers used the mules and dragmen, machines similar to wheelbarrows without wheels, to scoop up the dirt to fill the hole. When Emory went to settle up with the roadmaster, Mr. Hodges asked "What's the names of those mules? We have to give them a man's name or the government won't pay. They will pay for men's work but not mule's work." So I helped Emory think up first and last people names for all of his mules.

SQUARE DANCING WITH ETHEL

My cousins and I were the first ones in this section to learn to square dance and we were willing to teach it to anyone who wanted to learn. We looked forward to going to the dances all over the county and considered it the greatest fun there was. However, some of the older people of the county didn't approve of this. They thought it was scandalous behavior.

These dances were special events for when I was young we didn't have many holidays. The Fourth of July and Christmas were the only holidays we celebrated. There was no such thing as Halloween when I grew up, and we had never even heard of taking vacations.

When I was just a young man one of my girlfriends was Ethel Williams who was a school teacher in the Bend, and she was the one who taught me to square dance. We would take the horse and buggy and go to the Boulougne dance hall for picnics and dances.

When the young people of Folkston saw what good fun square dancing was, they wanted Ethel and me to teach them. Julia Belle DeGraffenreid and her friends were some of the first people we taught in Folkston. They really enjoyed square dancing.

Ethel was my girl until a new teacher came to work at the Sardis School. He thought he was a hotshot but he was just a little fellow, His name was Jim Thomas and he married Ethel.

It never mattered to Ethel or the rest of us that the older generation didn't approve of square dancing. In fact it was not long before some of the folks older than us were dancing, such as Joe Allen, Homer's daddy.

One evening Ethel asked me to go to church with her and I did. She played the piano for the service and asked me to sit on the front row, and when we were through singing, she sat by me.

Instead of a sermon the pastor opened a conference looking into the matter of the church's piano player being a person who danced. Several of the members objected to what they thought was Ethel's outrageous behavior and they wanted to remove her name from the church roll.

After the members had. finished with their objections the preacher asked Ethel if she had anything to say. She said "I sure do have something to say! Yea, I danced! In fact I danced with the chairman of the board of deacons of this church!" (It was Joe Allen!)

That shocked some and made others laugh, and the church conference concerning Ethel's so-called disgraceful conduct was called off.

MARRYING MY SWEETHEART

My sweetheart, Ruth, was one of Rev. and Mrs. Emory Dean's daughters and we had courted for two or three years. She had about decided I wasn't going to marry her but I had made up my mind that I wouldn't marry till I had saved enough money to buy furniture for us. I wanted a stove to cook on, a table to eat at and a bed to sleep on.

I used an old truck and went to Waycross and bought some secondhand furniture a few weeks before we married. As I was going to Waycross that morning I passed Uncle Owen Gibson's house and he was sitting on his porch. I drove up to the gate and said "Come go to Waycross with me." Uncle Owen said "When are you coming back?" and I said "We'll be back by one o'clock." And sure enough, we drove back up to his house right at one o'clock. Uncle Owen said "If someone had told me they could make a wagon that you could drive to Waycross and back in half a day, I would have told them I wouldn't believe that! And if they had told me that they could make a machine that would fly through the air, I'd say that I knew that wasn't so!"

I got a good bit of furniture in Waycross but most of what we used carne from Uncle Owen's son, Owen, who had gotten a job in Jacksonville and was selling his household stuff. I bought his furniture which included a stove, dining room table and rocking chair and my daughter, Martha Cannon, has some of that old furniture in her home in Waycross now.

My brother, Elvie, had volunteered to get the marriage license for us. Neither Ruth nor I had to go to the courthouse to get it. Elvie had gotten it from Judge J. J. Stokes who was Ordinary at that time.

Ruth and I didn't take anyone with us when we went to get married. We went to Bro. G. H. Jacobs' house after dark on July 3, 1921 and told him we wanted him to marry us. He called his son, Jim, to come in and witness the ceremony, I didn't save the marriage certificate and don't even remember if Elvie ever got us one or not. I have said that if something happened to Jim Jacobs, I probably couldn't prove we ever got married!

We didn't go anywhere on a honeymoon. We had rented a house on the Emory Dean farm and hadn't been there long when a crowd of friends came to serenade us. Jim Jacobs had spread the news of our wedding and had brought a bunch of friends with him that night. Charlie and Anna Jacobs were there too, I wouldn't open the door for them to come in so they beat on pots and pans and shot off guns to make as much racket as they could, They took a 2x6 plank and slid it in the bedroom window and underneath the bed. Then they pulled the board up and down till they broke the bed down, Before they left they stuffed the kitchen chimney with a croaker sack and I didn't know about it till the next day when we tried to cook our first breakfast on the wood stove. Smoke filled the kitchen and I had to crawl up on the roof and pull that sack out.

We were happy in our first home, with the secondhand furniture. Ruth went to cooking and cleaning and I went to farming.

WHEN BABIES WERE BORN

When babies were born the families rejoiced when the mother and child were all right, for many times women died at childbirth. My own mother died three days after the birth of my sister, Mattie and my grandmother died right after Papa was born.

The first child that my wife, Ruth, and I had was a little girl who died when only one day old. A doctor didn't tend to Ruth at that time but a granny or midwife did. We lived in a house that hadn't been ceiled overhead and it was a very cold day, The granny took the baby to the fireplace soon after it was born and bathed it there. I thought then that it was too cold to do that. The baby died of pneumonia the next day and we always thought that was the reason.

When my sister, Ena, was about to be born Papa sent me very early one morning over to Uncle Jesse Grooms' house to get Aunt Viney. As she was leaving the house in a hurry to get to Mama, Ralph, her youngest boy, sent Ena her first gift. He handed Aunt Viney an apple and said "Here, take this present to the baby."

Aunt Viney, Uncle Jesse and I walked back to my house and Aunt Viney hurried right along while Uncle Jesse and I strolled together behind her. Uncle Jesse was smoking a pipe and as we got to a little crossroad he dropped it in a bunch of palmettos right in the corner. He told me "I hope I don't forget where I put this pipe, but if I do, you won't!" He didn't want to go in the house with it because the women didn't like the small of it.

Ena was the cutest thing when she was little. Emory Dean was already a member of our family as my sister, Lillie, had married him. There was a song we learned at church called "My Redeemer." We all knew it and must have liked it for we hummed it around the house.

Some of the words were "I shall know my Redeemer when I reach the other side by the prints of the nails in His hands. My Redeemer! My Redeemer!" Ena was a little bitty toddler at that time and had her own way of singing the last line. She said "Emory Deaner! Emory Deaner!"

Before World War I, when I was living in Hopkins, on the edge of the Okefenokee Swamp, a lady living there knew her baby was going to be born soon so the family sent for the doctor. The one that took care of Hebard Cypress Company employees had a Ford car with railroad wheels on it and when he needed to tend to those that were sick at Hopkins or those on Billy's Island, he would put the car on the railroad tracks at the Hebardville store and he'd go down those rails aflying.

When the doctor got to Hopkins to tend to the lady that was in labor he opened the door, took his hat off and threw it right in her face! In a few minutes her baby was born. As he was leaving after the baby and mother were tended to, he said "Now lady, I ought to explain why I threw my hat in your face. If I hadn't adone that and made you mad your baby wouldn't have been born till tomorrow!' She replied "Well, in that case, next time I have a baby, don't forget to bring your hat!"

THE PIG THAT ATE CHICKENS

Farmers were good traders and buying or swapping farm animals was an every-day happening. Each trader did his best to make a good swap, sometimes fair and sometimes not.

One time I had an old sow that I had to get rid of. She ate chickens and since I let all the animals and chickens range around the farm together I needed a mother pig that didn't bother the chickens. I sold her- and shortly after that Frank Mills and Mrs. Belle Roddenberry's husband and I were talking and I remarked that I needed a Poland

China sow. Frank said he had one to sell and so did Mr. Roddenberry. I said "Well, will it eat chickens?" and Frank said "Yeah, mine will eat chickens." Mr. Roddenberry said that hie wouldn't. Frank kept repeating "Mine will eat chickens." And Mr. Roddenberry kept saying "Well, mine won't eat chickens, I know she won't." So I bought the one from Mr. Roddenberry, for $10.00, and carried her home in my truck.

When I put her in the hag pen there was a chicken scratching around in there. Just as soon as that hog hit the ground she went for the chicken. I knew then I had to take her back. No money had passed hands so far, as I had told Mr. Roddenberry that I would take him a check the next day. I just loaded her right back on the truck and took her back to Mr. Roddenberry's house on the corner of Main and Magnolia and told him what had happened. He said "Well, she's YOUR hog!" I said "Well, I'm not agoing to pay you for her. You told me distinctly that she wouldn't eat chickens and she caught one as soon as her feet were on the ground and I had to get it before she killed it. Now I'll just put her back in your lot." He said "No you ain't going to put her in MY lot!" So I just opened the truck and let her right out in the street.

Mrs. Roddenberry who had been watching from the house came out and said "I guess I'll have to take her." So I helped her get the sow back in the lot behind their house. There was a cow and chickens there too.

A day or two later I saw Frank Mills and he had already heard about what had happened. He said "Madison, I kept telling you that mine would eat chickens. I knew she would and I knew Mr. Roddenberry's sow would too, because Mr. Ed Davis told me a few days ago that he had walked by Mr. Roddenberry's and saw that old sow with a chicken in its mouth, and he had to take it away from her to keep her from killing it."

We all stayed good friends for that didn't amount to anything.

Frank Mills was a regular horse and mule trader himself. He had a horse to sell one time and a man that wanted to buy it asked "Is it scared of trains?" And without batting an eye Frank said "No Sir!" and he sold him the horse. The buyer found out later that the horse had been so afraid of trains when Frank got it that he had to hitch it up to a pole near the railroad tracks for three days to get it used to the engines!

UNCLE OWEN

At one time my Uncle Owen Gibson was about the most influential and respected person in Charlton County. He was a very smart man and was a minister of the Primitive Baptist Church.

Uncle Owen had some pretty strong opinions and one of them was his choice of the person his daughter, Alice, would marry. Alice was courting a fellow that Uncle Owen didn't approve of and he found various ways of expressing that disapproval.

One Sunday afternoon in the fall of the year Alice and her friend were in the living room of Uncle Owen's house and out on the front porch were several of his friends that were visiting that day. Uncle Owen tried to figure out a way to prevent the young couple from being alone so he pretended to be cold and went in the living room and built a fire in the fireplace, interrupting Alice and her friend's conversation. Uncle Owen asked his visitors to come inside but none would for they wanted to let the two young people be alone. Uncle Owen stayed inside, poking at the fire.

Alice and her friend moved to chairs and a table on one side of the room and began communicating by writing notes to one another. When Uncle Owen saw this he whipped out his pencil and pretended to be figuring something on a paper. He intentionally broke the point of his pencil, then went across the room and borrowed Alice's pencil. Her boyfriend finally took the hint and left soon after that.

Alice never did get married.

Papa once told me about Will, Uncle Owen's son, and his coat. Papa was a very good natured man and it didn't take much to make him smile and laugh. When something funny happened, Papa laughed and laughed. One very cold day, around 1880, Papa and Uncle Owen were working outside at Uncle Owen's farm. Will was a small boy and he came out to watch them and was wearing an unusual coat. His mother had sewed croaker sacks together for an overcoat to keep him warm. Papa thought that was one of the funniest things he had ever seen and he laughed and laughed. Will left them but came back a few minutes later dragging Uncle Owen's gun. He wasn't big enough to carry it. When Uncle Owen asked him why he had the gun, he replied he was going to shoot his Uncle Henry for laughing at him. Uncle Owen spanked him and made him take the gun back to the house.

One time the members of Uncle Owen's church were having a baptism at the creek near the church and a large crowd was gathered at the edge of the water. It was a spot where there had been a ford for many years and people were standing on a bridge that had recently been built. Along came a man I'll call Fred, in a buggy pulled by two horses. Like many men at that time, Fred did not mind sipping strong drink and he had tasted some that day before he went for a ride.

Fred was driving the buggy right on down to where the baptism was taking place when old man John Rogers stepped out in front of him, stopped the horses and told him to get his team away from there. Fred immediately backed his horses out and left. But that wasn't the end of the matter for during the church service that followed the baptism, Fred and strong drink was the subject of Uncle Owen's sermon.

Several weeks later Fred and old man Herrin who sold sewing machines were on their way down to the Suwanee canal to fish for a while. As they got near Uncle Owen's house, Mr. Herrin suggested that they stop and ask him to come along with them. Fred said, "He won't go fishing with me! He preached a sermon about me last month!" But Uncle Owen surprised them and agreed to come along.

After they were in the canal fishing Fred tasted some more of his strong drink and got so carried away he began preaching a sermon to the men in the boat and to the cypress trees.

After they got back home Uncle Owen acknowledged that it was one of the best sermons he had ever heard!

THE WEDDING THAT DIDN'T TAKE PLACE

Uncle Owen Gibson married many couple in Charlton County and had one experience in which he came within a minute of marrying two young people, but didn't.

A young couple who lived near the edge of the Okefenokee Swamp had been courting a short time and had decided to get married. She was much too young to marry and he wasn't any prize, since he didn't have an abundance of brains. In fact he was a Cobbtown sport with just a little too much sense to be put into an institute. He once bought a pair of gloves and was soon invited to Rev. E. F, Dean's home for Sunday dinner. He thought he looked so stylish that he didn't take his gloves off, even to eat. Mrs. Dean suggested that he would be more comfortable if he removed his gloves but he wouldn't.

The couple told Uncle Owen that they wanted him to marry them, but it was going to be a very quiet wedding and that not many of their friends or relatives knew about the plans. The wedding was to be held at her home and when Uncle Owen rode up with his horse and buggy that evening, several other buggies and wagons were already there. A few friends were in the house and several men were out at the cane mill in the back yard sharing a bottle of whiskey. Four or five neighbors were gathered with the couple in the parlor when Uncle Owen came into the house.

The groom nervously told Uncle Owen to proceed with the ceremony and Uncle Owen said to the bride, "Well, where's your daddy?" and she said "Oh, he's in the bedroom!' "Well, why don't he come in here?" Uncle Owen demanded.

"Oh, it don't make no difference whether he's in here or not," she replied. Uncle Owen said "Now I can't marry you people with your daddy in the next room and him not knowing anything about it! I just can't do that!"

So someone went into the next room and told her daddy to come into the parlor. When he came in and found out what was about to take place, a fist fight erupted, along with screams and shouts. Uncle Owen couldn't separate the groom and his future father-in-law, and when the front door was jerked open the fight exploded out onto the front porch and into the yard. Other men began to take sides and a general free-for-all developed, helped along in a splendid way with the spirits they had been sipping.

Uncle Owen left at the first opportunity, for he had little reason to stay, saying as he climbed into his buggy that there'd be no marriage ceremony there that night.

Tempers were a long time cooling down and feelings were so wounded that the groom sought grand jury action against one of his opponents. The groom testified in the grand jury room that he was trying his best to get away. He said he ran and Bob Jones "persooted" after' him and knocked him down. Jim Gowen was a member of the grand jury and never missed a chance to have some fun so he reported to his friends that what had actually happened was that the groom had run into the cane mill sweep and he had hit the pole so hard that it circled all

the way around and caught him on the back of the head and knocked him down. That wasn't so, but that was Jim Gowen's version of it ... he always had to fix things up!

The young girl never did marry that smart aleck who wore gloves to dinner. When she did marry, she picked one of the finest men in Charlton County and they raised a large family on their farm on the edge of the Okefenokee Swamp.

THE TOWN DOCTOR

There were very few doctors in our area. Most of them lived in the larger communities so we felt like we were very fortunate when one came to Folkston to live and work.

Dr. A. D. Williams, who lived near the railroad in Folkston, was one of the beat doctors I knew and when anyone got sick, the family sent for him. Jim Gay, Bailey Gay's brother, who was living with the Henry Johnson family out near our farm got very sick one day. They sent me to town to get Doc and I took him out to the Johnson place in our buggy. It was the hottest kind of weather. I think Jim had typhoid fever, he'd been sick a long time, but there was nothing Dr. Williams could do and Jim died that night.

I took the doctor back to town about midnight when the air was fresh and it felt good to us as we went down the road. It was a lots cooler than it was in the middle of the day. He said to me "Madison, it sure is a good night for sleeping for those that are able to be in bad. But poor devils like you and me have to be up and working and doing the things that must be done."

I want to Doc's house one day asking for a favor. I wanted him to fill out a paper so that I could file for a World War I soldier's pension. Mrs. Williams was getting ready for a ladies' party at her house that day, probably the missionary society or sewing club meeting, so Doc said "Let's just go on down to the office and I'll fill out your paper there." And we did.

Soon after that I took him a ham for his help and, a week or two later when I saw him he told me "Madison, I believe that was the best ham I ever ate!"

Dr. Williams hadn't been in Folkston long before he bought a cow so the family could have all the milk and butter they needed. He had probably been raised in a city for he didn't know a thing in the world about a cow. But Frank Mills did, and he was an expert cow and horse and mule trader, and he knew Doc had a real nice cow.

Frank tried to buy that cow from Doc but he said he didn't want to sell her. Frank knew Doc didn't know a good cow from a bad one and said "Well, I don't really care whether I buy her or not. Why that cow's so old I bet she ain't got a tooth in the top of her mouth!" Doc didn't know that cows naturally don't have upper teeth in the front of their mouth and he went and looked at his cow, and sure enough she didn't have teeth where he thought they should have been, Doc was outsmarted by Frank after all. The next time he saw Frank he said "I've decided to sell you that cow!"

A TRAGEDY IN THE PONSELL FAMILY

After I moved to Waycross to work with my brothers in the gas and oil business, and sometime during World War II, one of the most awful things happened one day to some of my good friends, the King Ponsell family. King's brother, Ben, and two of King's children drowned in the Satilla River.

Ben and his wife didn't have any children but King and his wife had several. Two of King's little girls were just foolish about their Uncle Ben who took up a lots of time with them. King owned our old homeplace out near Waltertown, and one day Ben went by his house and picked up the two little girls for he had promised to take them for a swim. They drove to the Satilla River, for that was a favorite spot. Not far from the usual swimming area was a treacherous current that was known as the whirlpool and somehow, even though Ben knew of the danger of that spot, he and King's two little daughters were drawn into the whirlpool and were drowned. It's possible that the children drifted into the dangerous area and Ben drowned when he tried to rescue them.

Ruth and I went to King's house that evening to be with our friends during their trouble and I never saw so many cars at any one place, There were cars everywhere! The Ponsells had many, many friends. It was bad enough to know that such a tragedy had happened to this family, but to make it even worse, the bodies were still in the river

and weren't recovered until later in the night. King said that as much as those little girls loved their uncle, he thought they would be found with their arms around his neck.

That evening out at King's house I met the mail carrier that delivered the Ponsell's mail and he told me what cute children they were. "I guess I knew those kids better than anybody in this country," he said. "Every time I stopped at the Ponsell's mailbox, they clum all over my car!"

When the funeral was held, it was for all three of them at the same time. They were buried at the little cemetery just across the river from the Ponsell farm.

I don't remember the names of the little girls. I do remember how people were trying to kill one another in the war that was going on overseas, and right here we had lost two precious children and their uncle in this awful accident at the river. It was hard to understand for it seemed like terrible things were happening everywhere.

WHEN HENRY RAN AWAY FROM HOME

When my brothers and I ware children we did some foolish things. Our parents usually found out about them but sometimes they didn't.

Jesse Mattox and I were good friends and we spent a lot of time together. His grandparents were Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Grooms who lived near us, and Jesse and I played together whenever he visited them. I also visited at his home. We were about the same age and enjoyed one another's company.

Jesse's daddy, Jim Mattox, always ran a sawmill and was hardly ever at home except on weekends. He kept a box of cigars on his dresser and that was quite a temptation to us. When I was at Jesse's house we would steal one of the cigars and run to the big barn on the Mattox farm. Jesse, his sister Myrtle and I would climb up in the loft and, we would smoke that cigar. We never did get caught!

My youngest brother, Henry, ran away from home once and he did get caught. Henry was a teenager when he decided to leave home and he took one of Tom Wrench's boys with him. They said the reason they left was because Mrs. Belle Roddenberry, their school teacher, was too strict. (She was one of Papa's good friends and he said she was a number one good school teacher.)

Night caught them after they had passed Patterson and they decided to sleep in a little wooden school house out in the country. It got cold and they built a fire in the school's heater, a pot bellied stove. They had gone out to look for fuel and had found five or six turpentine cups on nearby pine trees. They put all of the gum cups in the stove and lit a match to that and before long they were getting warm. Soon they were getting too warm as the heater turned red and then the stove pipe got red hot right up to the ceiling. They were frightened half to death as they thought they ware about to burn the school down. Henry said he had never bean so scared in his life. But the heater finally cooled and they slept there without putting any more fuel in the stove.

Henry and the Wrench boy got a job with a farmer near Patterson. Someone told my brother Charlie where they were and he went to get them. The farmer thought he was about to get in trouble and said "I want you to understand now, we didn't kidnap those boys! They came up here looking for work and we gave them a job."

Charlie took Henry to the warehouse behind our gas plant in Waycross. Then he called me and another brother, John, and together we gave him such a chastising talk that Henry finished high school, with Mrs. Roddenberry as his teacher, and even went to college.

WHEN TOM CHESSER'S WAGON FLOATED DOWN THE CREEK

One of my best friends was Tom Chesser who lived nearly all his life on Chesser Island in the Okefenokee Swamp. I often stayed two or three days with him and his brothers on Chesser Island and we would spend our time duck hunting or fishing.

Later, after I had moved to Waycross, Tom got sick and was put in the Waycross hospital. I went. to see him often for we had lots to talk about. I told Tom about Pearce Lambert loaning me some buggy shafts in the middle of the night and I said "Tom, did you ever know old Pearce?" Pearce was one of the best persons I ever knew. He was accommodating and was respected by everyone that knew him.

Tom said "I reckon I do remember him!" and told me of an experience he had one day near Pearce's house. Tom's daddy had just bought a brand new wagon and Tom was using it for the first time. It never had been wet, had never sat in the sun and it was water-tight just like a boat.

Tom started to Folkston on the first trip with that wagon and just before he got to Pearce's house he came to the creek. He began guiding the mule through it for there wasn't a bridge there at that time. As he was crossing the stream the water was so deep it picked the wagon up off the frame and floated it downstream. Tom jumped out and pushed it up against some bushes so it wouldn't go any further. He tied the mule to another bush so it would stay in the water and he walked up to Pearce's house and told him what had happened.

Pearce was glad to come and help and he and Tom waded down there and floated that wagon body back to the mule. The frame had four corner posts which were used to keep the body secure and they put it back between those posts and led the mule on out of the water.

That was a tight wagon but not unreasonably so for they made good wagons back then. But after any wagon sat in the sun or got rained on, it would get cracks here and there and then it wouldn't be watertight. This particular wagon had not taken any abuse at all. It was just like a boat.

Pearce Lambert was respected by everyone in the county and Tom never forgot how helpful he was when he needed him.

My friend Joe Morton was in the hospital the same time Tom was and I visited him often. He had worked for the Department of the Interior and had spent nearly every day in the Okefenokee Swamp, and Tom went with him guiding him around. Morton told me he would tease Tom saying "I'm going back in the swamp tomorrow and I think I'll get Harry to go with me." Tom would get all put-out and say "I don't know why you want to do that! I know lots more about that swamp than Harry does!" Then he'd laugh when he realized Morton was teasing him.

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