

COMPLETE STORY OF PIONEER TRIP ACROSS THE EVERGLADES AS TOLD BY MR. FRANK S. LEWIS OF EVERGLADES, WHO WAS A MEMBER OF THE ORIGINAL TAMiami TRAIL BLAZERS. THIS ARTICLE IS REPRODUCED FROM THE MIAMI HERALD, SUNDAY APRIL 22nd, 1923.

All the rigors and hardships experienced by the Ft. Myers Tamiami Trail blazers - 23 men and 10 automobiles - the humorous happenings and semi-serious events which transpired during the 18 days of travel, are contained in the diary of F. S. Lewis of Estero, who recorded in detail the story of the trip.

A forest fire which threatened for a time to wipe out the camp of sturdy pioneers blazing their way through the virgin territory in the heart of the Everglades - Seminole Indian lore - road building - under a blazing sun, chopping a path through giant cypress strands - digging for water - exhausted and badly in need of food - all these incidents Mr. Lewis relates in a vivid, graphic manner.

LEAVE FORT MYERS.

Wednesday, April 4. - Left Ft. Myers at 7:30 A.M. Arrived at Estero 8:30 A.M. Greeted by a delegation. After a short stop went to Bonita Springs, Townsfolk greeted us. Stopped at Royal Palm Hammock for a lunch of bacon, eggs, coffee ~~and~~ etc. Roads getting rougher. Several cars stuck in heavy sand. As we near the end of grade we are finding difficulty in crossing ditches and it is necessary to fill in some places and we constructed several bridges, reaching the end of the grade just before dark. We decided to camp here for the night.

To ascertain the condition of the prairie the Florida Grower car started forward equipped with ropes on the tires but found it possible to make only about 200 yards from the end of the grade when it mired to the axles. It was left there for the night. We made camp on the grade. We sang songs, told stories, had a good supper. There are practically no insects. We saw one moccasin. During the evening we saw lights in the west which appeared to be a car approaching and we endeavored to signal it with spotlight and revolver fire but without results.

SCOUT FOR ROUTE.

Thursday, April 5. - We sent out Stanley Hanson, Charley Hunt and Allen Andrews to scout for a route. At this time Abraham Lincoln, Seminole Indian guide with our party, showed up and we fed him.

Last night was moonlight and beautiful. We had supper of bacon and eggs, coffee and bread and butter over a campfire, four of us. We set up mosquito nets over our blankets and fastened them from the tail of our car with stakes driven in the ground and four of us slept there. A wildcat howled nearby in the night.

Friday, April 6. - We were up at 5:00 A.M. and had an early breakfast. This is the prairie and we are at the end of the grade. We have come 70 miles and still have 78 miles to go before we reach Miami. There is a big ditch along the grade and it is full of catfish, crabs, moccasins, etc. - thousands of small fish and innumerable crabs. We will have to go over soft ground and the Florida Grower car is now ahead 100 yards but mired in the marshy ground. In the night we saw lights at times from a dredge in the river a few miles south.

This morning we sent two men back two or three miles to see if they could ascertain the cause of the lights we saw last night which we thought were those of an approaching automobile, but no signs of it could be found.

WILD TURKEY TRACKS.

There is a big cypress swamp north of us and numerous clumps of trees a few acres in extent all around us like islands in a sea of prairie grass. We have seen tracks of wild turkey, wildcats, coons, etc., but have seen no game yet. Saw one alligator so far, also two king snakes and some moccasins. There is a delightful breeze blowing from the south and it is cool and fine. At a meeting this morning, Stanley Hanson was put at the head of the expedition. We can see the dredge a mile away to the east, the one which has been idle for some time, since it stopped working on the grade. The railroad which runs from Everglade to Deep Lake is about a mile further on, and it is believed that if we can make the railroad we can get the rest of the way across the state to Miami.

One car, George Dunham's has become disabled and was abandoned about two miles back, which leaves us now nine cars, all of them Fords, except and Elcar and one Overland.

Saturday, April 7 - At 5.00 A.M. every one was up cheerful and hungry, 23 of us, a fine looking bunch of men, representing the progressive element of southwestern Florida. Mr. Van Duyle makes good coffee and the fellows all call for more. Mr. L. A. Whitney is now famous with the party as a bridge builder. At 10:15 A.M. our scouts are showing up in the distance and we should soon get moving. Another Indian has joined the party, "Billy Kumpatchie." At 10:40 A.M. we started forward, but all soon bogged down in the soft ground and at 4:45 P.M. a "Cletrac" caterpillar tractor from one of Barron Collier's camps came and pulled us through the marshy ground.

"SOMEWHERE IN FLORIDA."

Three miles across the prairie, past the cypress swamps and palm tree "islands" to "somewhere in Florida." It got dark as a pocket and the seven cars were then in a row waiting for the tractor to bring up the Overland and the big Elcar. After a while the tractor came and reported the Elcar "bogged" to her axles and stuck fast until daylight. Our friends Cosden and Prime came to our car, got the last loaf of bread in camp, a can of herring, our can of coffee and winked for Alfred and me to go back on the trail half a mile to where they had a campfire and we had a fine supper with them. We then returned to the big party and I built a fire and helped Russel Kay to make two pails of coffee - otherwise the party went hungry for the bread had been left back in the Elcar.

SLEEP IN CARS.

Most of the party slept that night in their cars as the ground was wet and the grass head high, but Charley Hunt, our guide, objected to sleeping on the wet ground and took Allen Andrews, Alfred Christensen and I back on the trail half a mile to a palm hammock where we made our camp and slept fine on beds of cabbage palm leaves covered with our blankets. We heard the cry of a wildcat very close by, also the bellow of a wild bull, and we were all alert, but found later that it was Clark Taylor who made the sounds on his way back to the Elcar for the box of bread. Clark would make a good ventriloquist - Charley Hunt said, "here we are without a gun" - so I kept my axe handy ready to repel and attack a wild beast.

Sunday April 8 - We were up at 5:30 A.M. There is no water in camp, so one of them dug a well, but the water is salt. Alfred Christensen estimated that I walked at least 10 miles yesterday carrying one side of a five gallon can of water most of the way, and it was precious. At 6:15 A.M. we all started moving east, ran about a mile and a half and stuck fast in the mud of the prairie. We are now all mired and waiting for the tractor, in thick prairie grass shoulder high and soaked with heavy dew. We are wet to our hips.

SUNRISE IS BEAUTIFUL.

The sunrise is beautiful. This is a wild country and no vehicle except the caterpillar tractor ever went over it. Indians tramp it, also some few daring white men have gone through. We are now on our way to Lemon Camp an Indian camp, for breakfast. The two Indians, Abraham Lincoln and Billy Kumpatchie, are with us and will go through with the party. Christensen is doing some very valuable work as a mechanic on the various cars from time to time. At 10:30 A.M. we have reached Seminole City, which is a station on the railroad, and consists of one signboard only. Lemon Camp is in sight. We have now come 72.2 miles and are engaged in building two bridges with timbers over the railroad ditches.

Billy Kumpatchie was put in the head car and went on to lead the way with Charley Hunt. In the next car was Christensen and myself. Billy Kumpatchie had dug a water hole and we all had a drink of brackish water. We reached the Seminole Indian "Lemon Camp," which consists of one cabbage shack, on the ground of which was an Indian postoffice consisting of a slanting stick stuck in the ground, with a letter in the forked end and leaning to the west in the direction which the Indians were to take to meet us - and the mark on the ground under the stick showing the distance they were to go to join our party.

NOTE FROM HANSON.

The letter in the "Postoffice" was a note from Hanson to the Indians to meet us. Mr. Scott, superintendent for Barron Collier at Everglades came along the railroad in his yellow auto car and invited us all to go to Everglade as his guests for the night. The Elcar and the Overland are still behind and the caterpillar tractor has gone for them. Early this morning we saw fresh deer tracks. It must have gone through last night near our camp. A storm is threatening and it will rain soon, but Billy Cornapatchie in his Indian sign language says it will be a small storm and soon go by.

Billy is a sub-chief, intelligent and interesting. His son, also Billy Cornapatchie, is the medicine man for the tribe. He is a Seminole of the North Wind family which originated in Georgia. Abraham Lincoln is of the same mound but of the Tiger family. The tradition in Billy's family is that they originated in a mound in Georgia placed there by God was to come back 12 moons to release them which he did.

They came out in eight different families, and his forefathers came out in the North Wind family. The door was closed and a tree planted there. The eight families were, North Wind, Tiger, Bear, Deer, Snake, Panther, Eagle and Otter.

"PLENTY BEAR SIGN."

Billy says "plenty bear sign" in the palm hammocks now as the palm trees are in blossom and the bears eat the berries in the blossom. The clouds have passed by after a little sprinkle as Billy said, and the weather is delightful.

At 3:00 P.M. a car is coming in the distance and we found it to be the Overland which had been pulled out by the tractor and was coming along the prairie under her own power but there are no signs of the big Elcar.

On arrival of the Overland we learned the men had been without food the day before so we got them a quick meal and five or six of them started back again in the Overland to get out the Elcar and the tractor, both of which were reported stuck in the soft ground of the prairie a few miles back. At this time a train arrived consisting of an auto "locomotive", and an observation car and took us from Seminole city into Everglade four and one half miles away - a most wonderful ride for scenic beauty of tropic vegetation, prairie, palms and water.

REACH EVERGLADES.

Reaching the end of the railroad we were taken in motor boats to the Everglade Rod and Gun club as guests of Mr. Scott, who arranged to fix up the balance of the party later on in the evening. We had a most delightful dinner and at about 10:00 P.M. the balance of the party had arrived, with the exception of Mr. Giles and Mr. Van Duyle, who remained at Lemon Camp. It was reported that the Elcar was still bogged and looked as though we would have to go on without it. The Ford cars have behaved beautifully.

Everglade is at the southern end of the Deep Lake railroad which runs south from Deep Lake to Everglade, 13 miles, and was built for the transportation of fruit from groves at Deep Lake to Tidewater. A boat runs every other day from Everglade to Fort Myers, but there is no wire communication with the outside world. The village is located on Barron river, which was renamed from Allen creek and small powerboats there are as thick as "flivvers" in an ordinary village. It is noticeable that the buildings are painted yellow, trimmed with white, green roofed and present a fine appearance. Barron Collier is said to own the town, also a million acres of land in Lee county.

ELCAR TURNS BACK.

Monday, April 9 - We left Everglade about 7:00 A.M. for Lemon Camp and on arrival Mr. Chapin called a meeting and Mr. Giles was then told that it was believed impracticable for his car to continue, that Mr. Scott would have a tractor place it back on the grade and furnish men to help build up the bridges so he can return to Ft. Myers. The party then was divided into three mess squads and preparations begun for going forward.

It was decided to take the tractor with the expedition and the Overland was sent back over the prairies to pick it up from where it had been left the night before, after the failure to bring the Elcar to Lemon Camp. On returning to camp we had dinner and all cars except the Elcar started east over the prairies and ran by easy stages until 1:30 P.M. when we reached Abraham Lincoln's home, where he lives with his Indian mother, two sisters and a cousin probably 10 years old, a sister of probably 22, pretty good looking as Indians go and dressed encostume with great masses of beads around their necks and barefooted. Their home consists of four open thatched houses ingeniously built and, as compared with the ones at Lemon Camp, are very good.

THE REAL SEMINOLE HOME.

The pigs, chickens and dogs ran freely under the "beds" and in and out of the houses as they were all open on the four sides. In windy weather they cannot shut the windows as there are none. Their native tools and cooking utensils were scattered about and I should imagine that at Indian standards the family would be considered to be well-to-do.

We have been following an ox-trail, but it was so faint that although we had followed it for some distance I did not know it was a trail until told. At 2:30 P.M. we got under way again and shortly ran into a cypress strand where we proceeded slowly considerable distance over a blazed trail, with the Indians and a party ahead with the axes clearing the way.

From time to time it was necessary to have the tractor come up and pull a car out and at 5:30 P.M. the Overland crushed a front wheel against a cypress stump while being towed by the tractor and it is now being put on skids or "travoy" poles as the Indians call it.

The prairie flowers are beautiful. The "street" we are now on is getting bad like the tough little girl on the tough little street the farther we go the tougher it gets and apparently we live in the last house.

At 6:30 P.M. we have all reached a clearing and are making camp in a little pine grove on high ground. It is getting dark and the camp fires are twinkling. The Indians were told "dig um water" and we have two water holes near the cypress. They are dug in a scientific manner, about five feet deep, or as rock is reached, with a step down and a bowl for the water to seep into. Some one left an axe on the trail and eight men passed by it but Billy Cornpatchie with his sharp eyes, picked it up and said "who axe." Abraham Lincoln, on being asked if this is a good place for rattle snakes said, "no." He has two words that he uses considerably, "yes" and "no."

No one has noticed a mosquito so we will sleep without our nets tonight. George Dunham remarked that there are not enough mosquitoes here to keep a bat alive and if a bat was making this trip he would have to take 10 days rations along or starve to death. We are beginning to see signs of deer and turkey. We came eight miles today.

BEDROOM "ALL OUTDOORS."

Tuesday, April 10th - A gently zephyr came in my bedroom window at sun rise and blew my window curtain across my face, awakening me, and jumping to my feet I found the curtain was a palmetto leaf and my bedroom was "all outdoors." The morning is glorious and at 7:15 A.M. we started out to follow the trail after having had a hearty breakfast of ham and eggs and bread and coffee. The soil all along looks wonderfully fertile and I believe it would almost grow a wart on a rock. We are passing over a rough road through pines, palmetto and cypress and shortly reached an Indian camp where "Stanlee Hamsee" as the Indians call him, pointed out their methods of laying up a fire, a "hall tree" for hanging pots and kettles and other appointments of the camp.

At 8:00 A.M. we have reached another Indian camp which Billy Cornpatchie says is his and consists of one good thatched hut, a "bed" and a "table." We have made 1.8 miles today. In the "house" are four part cans of coffee and a small bag of rice. The Indians say "hungry man come, save um life." Somewhere in the thatch is kept a rag with some salt in it for use when game is killed and is a part of the regular Indian camp equipment. The flowers in the woods are beautiful. Turkey tracks are getting thick again and occasionally the print of a barefoot Indian is seen. There are almost no insects now we have reached the interior and consequently few birds.

IN BEAUTIFUL PINE FOREST.

At 9:30 A.M. we reached another Indian camp in a beautiful pine forest. We have reached an almost impenetrable forest and are building a road to the head of Turner's River which is said to be some little distance ahead. In the jungle a big owl sat on an oak on the bank of a little pool where we filled our water bottles with clear water and Russell Kay of the Florida Grower strung up his road and cast for fish, but did not get any.

As I write this I can hear a 'gator "honking" a short distance away. A bottle of "pinethal" made at Estero which I brought with me has proved valuable for sawgrass cuts and minor injuries and I treated several of the men. At 11 A.M. Mr. Corrigan's car with the grub reached the clearing in the pines, having been pulled through the jungle by the tractor which also pulled out all the other cars in turn and at 12:30 noon when we were all together again. Dinner was prepared, the "inner-man" satisfied and we started on again, with Abraham Lincoln continuing in the first car with Charley Hunt as heretofore. Abraham Lincoln says we have now about 20 miles of prairie ahead of us but it is in the middle of the day and the grass has dried out making for much more rapid movement. George P. Smith, of Everglade, Fla., who is driving the tractor, is deserving of special mention of his splendid work.

THREE FOREST FIRES.

At 3:20 P.M. we have been waiting 30 minutes for him to catch up. He is here now and reported three forest fires back of us. We are now burning an area so we may safely leave a can of gasoline for Smith to pick up on his way back with the tractor when he makes the return trip. We marked the place with an empty baking powder box, placed on a sapling.

On starting forward again we are passing through another cypress strand with rocks on the surface of the ground. At one place our car stuck fast in a hole between two rocks and we were obliged to break up the rocks with a sledge to extricate our car. Over our route today the Elcar would have mired a hundred times. These little Ford cars are wonderful machines. After passing over prairies, through more cypress and pine islands we came to a beautiful little pine island with plenty of palmetto leaves for beds and made camp. The unfailing courtesy and thoughtfulness of the men for each other is noticeable. In our mess we have seven white men and two Indians. Everyone does the necessary thing at hand to the very best of his ability, there is no grumbling or fault finding and to give proper credit it would be necessary to mention each man individually.

We made 12.6 miles today. Billy Cornapatchie was away all day.

DEER STARTED UP.

A deer started up last night 200 yards from our camp. The Indians say we should turn south and will have two miles of cypress to cut through at what is called Chatham Bend. There are now seven cars in the party, all Fords.

Christensen and I are in the fifth car, trailing the Florida Grower and cutting our way through cypress over what Hanson with his practiced eye says is a blazed trail, but I, unused to forests, can see no sign of a trail. At 7:45 A.M. we have now come to the end of the blazed trail and are making our own trail over a route pointed out by the Indians and are turning almost due south. The sun is getting hot and during the middle of the day one should avoid touching the fenders of the car, for they get blistering hot from the sun's rays.

CUT WAY THROUGH CYPRESS.

Yesterday we worked over the Lee county line into Monroe county for a short distance, then back into Lee county where we now are now ensconced. We hear crows for the first time. Yesterday I walked about eight miles over the worst places to keep my weight off the car. Billy Cornapatchie had left us - pointing to the sun, he said: "Sun him high, Me come bake bum by." Abraham Lincoln and Clark Taylor have gone ahead to prospect for a route and we are waiting for their return, and at 11:00 A.M. we picked them up with our glasses and they signaled us to come ahead, which we all did with the exception of one car, which the tractor had to haul out.

The guides had built a fire to attract our attention so we could see them in the distance. We are now cutting our way through the cypress. Abraham Lincoln remarking, "no trail - cut um first time," meaning that we were passing over virgin territory. In a cypress swamp there is no shade and it is steaming hot. We are wet through with perspiration. One of the men was stung by a wasp from a nest in a tree which we felled. Some of the men are annoyed by stings of green worms which fall from the trees, and Russell Kay is suffering slightly from poison oak.

STRUCK BY FALLING TREE.

George Dunham was accidentally struck by a falling tree and his head slightly cut. We worked until dark, then made camp in the cypress, having made 5.3 miles during the day. The men are tired - have rolled up in their blankets and are sleeping on the wet ground. About 10:30 P.M. Charley Hunt said he saw a rocket in the southeast and we also thought we heard the motor of an airplane, but we were not sure.

We have worked through the cypress and are waiting on the prairie for the tractor and grub wagon to catch up, taking advantage of the breathing spell to look over our tires. The car Mr. Hill is driving is somewhat the worse for wear. Front spring broken, radius rod bent and tied up with wire and car runs sidewise, muffler torn off, all four fenders dented, but otherwise he is in good condition.

99.6 MILES FROM FORT MYERS.

Stanley Hanson tore the valve off a tube and is running on an airless tire. There was a small water snake in one of our water holes this morning. We heard a turkey a short distance away.

At 9:30 A.M. we have reached a hunting camp of Abraham Lincoln and there are some Indian mounds here about three feet high. The mileage is 99.6 from Ft. Myers. Abraham Lincoln after a conference with Hanson has started forward with his gun prospecting and said "white man him rest. Abe him go look. Shoot gun Wave." He had borrowed Hanson's handkerchief to wave from the end of his gun for us to come forward after he found the way.

11:30 A.M. - Abraham Lincoln signalled again and we started out in a southeasterly direction across the prairie to another cypress strand. We thought we heard a motor in the distance but Abe said it was a boat on a bay to the south which is said to project inland from the west coast. Fred Hough, cut his leg with an axe and Hanson gave him first aid from his emergency kit.

ALL DETERMINED.

3:30 P.M. - The men being tired from chopping down trees and building road, knocked off for luncheon and it was decided to send out two scouting parties of two men each, one due south the other east and if they got into trouble they were to give the hunter's signal of distress.

Thunder was heard in the distance and shortly we were having a fine shower which soaked nearly everything but the spirits of the men who were determined to reach Miami over the new Tamiami trail.

In the evening an electric storm came up and a heavy rain drenched everything not under cover. The lightning was beautiful. During the evening the scouts returned and reported having found a survey post showing us to be in the northeast corner of Monroe county. We spent a more or less comfortable night sleeping on the wet ground around the camp fire or stowed away in cars.

"FARTHER AND FARTHER."

Wednesday, April 11. - Morning came in due time and we had a breakfast of flapjacks and coffee, the men started out to clear the way and do as much road building as possible before the sun got hot. We have seen quite a number of deer tracks and some signs of panther and wildcats. The tree-toads are croaking for more rain. Four men started to walk to Miami. Mr. Hill remarked, "every day and in every way we are getting farther and farther from home."

AIRPLANE IS SEEN.

11:25 A.M. an aeroplane passed going north and we built a fire to make a smoke for the pilot to see, but the wood was wet and he had passed on before our fire got well started.

This morning a panther backtrailed a scouting party and apparently was curious. No doubt it was a new experience to him as it is unlikely that he had ever scented white ~~XXXX~~ men before. A number of moccasins were killed this morning and a deer started from near the trail. It is very hot and the men are getting tired. Dunham slightly injured his hand while chopping. We had lunch during the middle of the day and rested up. It was very hot and there was no breeze. We continued chopping cypress and making roads all day, then bringing the cars to the head of our trail.

We had a good supper. I have learned to flip flapjacks like an old timer. We have reached higher ground, although still in slash cypress, and made camp. We built a big camp fire and had the pleasantest evening of the trip so far. Russell Kay, Frank Whitman and others entertaining us with songs and recitations. We were obliged to put up our screens as there were a few mosquitoes.

OUT OF PROVISIONS.

Thursday, April 12. - We were up at 5:30 A.M. having had a good night's rest under the stars. Some of the men are suffering from red bugs. At 12:30 P.M. Porter Richards caught up with us on the back trail and reported the Elcar with Mr. Giles and another man about two and half miles behind with two tractors. They were said to be out of provisions and had practically nothing to eat for two days. We fed him and sent him back with some food.

Today I saw a bear track so large I couldn't cover it with my hand. At 2:30 P.M. a forest fire threatened the whole party, but the wind changed and we were safe. It is beastly hot and most of the men chopping trees have shed their shirts. At 3:00 P.M. Irvin Cook, Luby Hobby and Captain Tony and Indian caught up with us and told us we were 20 miles from an automobile road. Cook is superintendent of the Chevelier corporation, which owns all the land in this section. There is a smoke in the distance and Mr. Cook says he started a fire this morning in an attempt to get a signal out of us.

3:30 P.M. - We got caught in a storm out on the prairie and stopped to put the cars in shape before entering another cypress.

STRIKE PIONEER ROAD.

Mr. Cook started ahead, leading us through cypress strands and prairies and shortly reached his automobile which had a supply of gas aboard for us. He was soon out of sight, but we shortly found his car with a broken rear axle, his companions having one on ahead on foot. After more prairie and more cypress we struck a road built by Mr. Jaudon owner of land in this section. It was very rough, soft and full of stumps and we were soon stalled or mired, but helped each other along until it got dark. Some of the men started on foot for the camp, but as Christensen was not feeling very well we decided to stay where ~~XXXX~~ we were for the night, build a fire and prepared an excuse for supper from a little food we happened to have in our car.

Mr. Garmon and Mr. Dunham came out from one of the rear cars, ate supper with us and stayed over night in Mr. Hill's car, which was broken down just back of us. It had rained a good part of the afternoon, but the night was clear and we slept sitting up in our car wrapped in blankets.

FRIDAY, THE THIRTEENTH.

Friday, The Thirteenth - The sun rose, morning came and I built a camp fire on a wildcat track, prepared coffee with the last of our water supply and proceeded to extricate our car, but find we cannot move ahead or back up and will have to lift it over a stump. We have not yet heard from Charley Hunt, who started on foot for Miami with Mr. Chapin and Mr. Cosden a couple of days ago.

By 9:00 A.M. Christensen and I had pried up our car and moved it forward two feet. We heard motors back of us and along came Stanley Hanson with his car and George Smith with the tractor, also Abraham Lincoln, Maurice Ayer and Milton Thompson.

An aeroplane just passed south and we believe she is circling to make a landing at Mr. Cooks camp two or three miles ahead. Abraham Lincoln has dug another water hole and everyone had a drink. We moved two cars on east from time to time and at 11:30 A.M. met Ernest Jacobs, who had supplies of food and newspapers for us which had been brought from Miami this morning by aeroplane.

About 3:00 P.M. six cars and the tractor had reached Billy Robert's camp on Pine Island, which is four miles west of Dade county line, two miles south of Lee county line and 50 miles west of Miami.

NEAR EXHAUSTION.

We aired and dried our blankets and screens for the first time since the trip began and ate a good supper. Mr. Giles came along to camp and reported his two men a couple of miles back who, were approaching the camp on foot, and Mr. Corrigan and George Prime went out to get them as they were about all in from hunger, exhaustion and thirst. They were brought back and fed.

We spent a pleasant evening and sang songs which included one composed by Frank Whitman, "It's a Long Long Way to Old Miami", and a parody composed by myself.

Saturday, April 14. - We were up at 6:00 A.M. and had breakfast of oatmeal, sweet potatoes, bacon, bread and coffee, put our cars up in shape and waited for the aeroplane until 9:00 A.M. when we started out a car at a time. Each car would go as far as it could and bog down, then the men would push it out and little further advance would be made.

At 10:00 A. M. the aeroplane landed back at the camp and we unloaded our car and drove back for a supply of gas which they had brought to us.

MADE FOUR MILES.

We worked allday long pulling the cars over a slough and made about four miles of the seven miles to the dredge, the tractor and cars bogging time after time. We built a corduroy road some of the way. The aeroplane came, brought us rope, etc., and divided their supply of gasoline with us. Our provisions are getting low. We dug water holes as we progressed. At night we made camp, had supper of bread, canned tomatoes, bacon and coffee. Sang songs, told stories and went to bed on the damp ground. At 1:30 A.M. rain began falling and continued nearly all night. At times falling in torrents. We were all driven into our cars.

Sunday, April 15. - The dawn found us a wet, bedraggled party of 14 men, the others of the party having hiked it on into civilization. Water stands in the ruts made by the cars. We built a campfire, made coffee and had breakfast, our provisions having been exhausted except for small piece of bread, a can of tomatoes and a can of roast beef. There is now left in the party W. Stanley Hanson, J. W. Hill, Alfred Christensen, Frank Whitman, Frank Lewis, C. P. Corrigan, L. A. Whitney, Milton Thompson, George Prime, George Smith, Morris Ayer, Joe Clark, Clark Taylor, Grover Hackney. We made more corduroy road and started to pull out George Prime's car, but the tractor mired and it was given

up for a time. The tractor then started for the dredge for gasoline and supplies, but mired and the men came back to camp. After a conference several of the men started for the dredge and we hope they will bring help. The men who went are Messrs. Hill, Corrigan, Prime, Smith, Ayres, Clark, Hackney and Taylor.

TAKES MOVING PICTURES.

Two men from Miami, C. D. Pryor and Charles W. Herbert, representing Fox News, came out with a moving picture machine and took some pictures with their camera. With them came Shawcross, Van Duyl and ~~sax~~ four big colored men and others packing some grub to us. There are now three races of us, white, red and black. We find we are off the route and will have to go back a quarter of a mile. We tied a rope to the "Grower" car, hauled her a short distance, every man pulling, but gave it up for the time on account of soft ground. The ground in camp is nearly ankle deep in mud. Stanley and the boy went to an Indian camp and came back with Abe packing some sweet potatoes. We all slept in cars the ground being too wet and it rained hard again during the night.

Monday, April 16. - It is wetter than ever. I scouted around, found some rocks some distance from camp and built a fire there and got breakfast with the help of Alfred, and we felt better. The sun is out hot again and if the rain will stop for a few days we may get out of here. Mr. Whitney is with us and is doing everything to help. It was a question of whether I should stay here or hike to the dredge, but Stanley, Alfred and Mr. Whitney want me to stay, which I prefer to do.

LEARNED INDIAN WORDS.

Indian words as told me: "Humhicksee" something to eat; "athadesee," go; "eleesee," come; "okabatchee," sunshine; "echee," deer; "efee," dog; "statkee," white man; "tacophobee," fire; "neecalee," night; "neelagee," day.

With Alfred's help I cooked dinner today for nine men, and they ate it all and said it was good. They say my coffee is the best they have had on this trip. Had my first bath on this trip under tent canvas set up against two cypress trees - used a tomato can for a bath tub - got supper for nine men. Alfred washed the dishes. Went to bed at dusk in Clark Taylor's car. It rained a little during the day. The frogs in a near by bog sound like hogs grunting.

Tuesday, April 17. - Bright and fair. We are in Monroe county about four miles south of the Lee county line, southeast quarter of the southwest quarter, section 22, township 54, range 34-2, 1.2 miles west of Dade county line (W.H. Roberts, of Roberts camp). He is surveying. It was last surveyed in 1886. He visited us this morning. I washed my shirt and began to feel clean. We have frequent showers and are nearly ankle deep in mud. We reached this point Saturday and have not moved forward a foot yet. We are about 47 or 48 miles from Miami. Alfred and I feel it our duty to get this car back home and are sitting tight a few days. We had a new moon last night and the rain is betting less and less.

PLAN TO GET OUT.

Wednesday, April 18. - It has been clear today. The sun and wind had dried up the ground considerable and plans are under way for our getting out of here. I got dinner today for 14 men who are working on the cars, hiking to the dredge and back with supplies, lumber to run the cars on over the swamps, gasoline, parts for the cars and tractor, getting the tractor un-mired etc., and jacking up the cars out of the mud and mire. Some of the men are in town living at the Roberts hotel.

It is four miles to the dredge that is building the Tamiami trail out from the city and 44 miles from the dredge to Miami. We are very anxious to get home and this necessary inactivity is very unpleasant. A number of Indians visited the camp today. Our "Cletrac" is mired out about a half mile east of here. There is nothing to do for the minute but to wait and it is getting very tedious. Our car is in good condition except for one fender gone. Maurice Ayres, civil engineer, gave up the job today and went to Ft. Myers where he was called on important business and turned the job over to George Prime of Satasota who is to boss the work. He has gone in for help and we hope to get moving tomorrow or next day. We are so far from base of supplies that the work proceeds slowly and time drags. We are 46 to 47 miles from a postoffice.

GREETINGS FROM MIAMI.

Thursday, April 19. - Bright and fair, it was very cold in the night, a north wind is blowing strong. At 9 o'clock A.M. Mr. Freeman reached camp with a gang of about eight negroes and extra tires. He has started putting two extra tires on each wheel and says he will get us all out.

Received the following letter dated Hotel Roberts, Miami, April 18, 1923- "My dear fellows: All Miami sends greetings to you. All Miami has been made to understand your trials. Miami will pay the bills incident to your troubles after reaching the Dade county line. In order to lessen the costs of living expenses six of our men were sent home, thus reducing our expenses \$30.00 per day. Keep a stiff upper lip. My heels were badly bruised but they are nearly well now. I am staying right on the job caring for this end of ~~affairs~~ affairs. We got over 500 columns of publicity and made our names immortal in Florida history. Write me a note how you are and what the prospects are. Also please get my blankets which are rolled in a rubber blanket and bound with a strap and send them in as soon as you can, Affectionately, Chaplin." 2 o'clock P.M. three cars have moved and four are left.

PARTY NOW THIRTY.

Friday, April 20th, 1923. - Those left here of the original party are Stanley, Hanson, Alfred Christensen, F. S. Lewis, Milton Thompson, George Prime, Clark Taylor, Grover Hackney, George Smith, Mr. Corrigan and Abraham Lincoln ~~and~~ the Indian. George Prime went to Miami and brought back E. S. Lyne and four colored men which were combined with Mr. H. Freeman's gang and four Indians, Frank Tiger, Jimmy Tommy, Willie Billie and White Cypress, making 30 men in all, representing three races, white, black and red. Indian names for white men, Statekee, black men, eskeluskee and red men, yatkitasee.

Mr. H. Freeman is superintendent for the J. B. McCrary company and is building the Tamiami Trail to the Dade county line, only 3,400 feet remaining to be built and it is approximately 44 miles to Miami over a road built of solid rock and as straight as a line drawn on a map with a fuler.

The method followed is to cut through hammocks which are thick jungles and over the prairies, then drill holes and blast it out with dynamite. Then the dredge comes up and throws the shot rock up on top of solid rock into a grade. A gang of colored men follow leveling the rocks, rolling the big ones out of the way, and leveling off the surfaces as much as possible.

COUNTY TAKES HAND.

A geoline roller is put at work which mashes the rock and levels the road. The road is then ready for the county which puts on their road machinery and completes the work, the Miami end being as smooth and level as a billiard table. When the road is completed across the state it will open up millions of acres of land to settlers. Much of the land is very valuable and with proper drainage probably at least four crops a year can be grown. With this wonderful climate all this section can be made a garden spot. People of Dade county should feel proud of that part of the Tamiami Trail which is already constructed and will shortly be

at the Lee County line.

It was a wonderful sight to see Mr. Freeman with his gang, assisted by the remnant left of the Tamiami Trail blazers, move the seven Ford cars across the five miles of prairie, hammock and marsh a mile from his camp. When darkness overtook us and we had to foot it to get in, leaving the cars in charge of Stanley Hanson and Mr. Corrigan for the night. When night came it was dark, dark in every sense of the word, no electric street lights on this end of the trail and it would have been about as much as a man's life would be worth to stumble along over the rocks and pot holes, logs and brush to camp over the mile or more of incompleated road, although some of our men have done it.

DOUBLE SETS OF TIRES.

The cars were moved up in steps of about a quarter of a mile, a car at a time, using the best means possible to fit the conditions. All but two of the cars were first equipped with extra rims and tires, there were not enough rims and tires to go round so Stanley Hanson's car and our car (F.S. Lewis and Alfred Christensen) were not so equipped.

We removed the little truck box from the back of our car to lighten it as much as possible, as cargo is thrown overboard from a ship in distress, and we broke it up into firewood to cook our meals, for wood was very scarce, that is wood that would burn. Green cypress is saturated with water and just simmers and smokes.

The "Cletrac" into play and pull us out at the end of a 50-foot rope. In many places the ground was too soft for the "Cletrac" to work and the rope would be hitched to a car and 25 men, white, black and red, pulling on the rope, the balance pushing behind the car, would by concerted action move her along slowly until drier, harder ground was reached. I have counted 10 men pushing our little Ford.

TRACTOR PULLED OUT.

Today is where the movie men, who were with us a few days could have made some good pictures had they been here. Several times the "Cletrac" would bog down and we would have to pull her out as we did the cars by using the long rope and every ounce of man power we had. Part of the way our cars would run under their own power until a soft spot would be reached when they would bog down and have to be pulled out. In marshy places I saw mud fly from our wheels 30 feet into the air in a regular mud shower and pushing our car I have been plastered with mud, mud all over my clothes, mud down the back of my neck, mud in the pocket of my shirt and when I reached camp at 8 o'clock at night, I dug a great gob of mud from my hair.

During a breathing spell, while sitting on the fender of our car some of the men found a moccasin in the grass four feet from me and on our way to camp in the twilight when near the dredge a moccasin struck Mr. E. S. Lyne, but missed him. A colored man following closely saw it and his face turned almost as white as his teeth, for down here the bite of a moccasin is said to be deadly. There are said to be some large rattlesnakes around here, but it has been my good fortune not to see any. Abraham Lincoln told me the reason is that it is so wet, "he no like um." He as well as some of the other Indians go barefoot considerable. I don't see how they stand it or dare do it on account of snakes. Indians do not believe in killing snakes.

NEEDED MUCH WATER.

From time to time as we would advance, water holes were dug, for 30 men exerting themselves to their utmost need to drink a considerable quantity of water. At one time we found a good supply of drinking water in holes in the rocks but we could not reach it without cups and lying flat on our faces sucked it up through straws cut from saw grass.

Speaking of saw grass, which some of the way was head high for miles, I counted on one of my thumbs twelve scars of saw grass cuts. The cuts soon heal, however, although we disinfect the deeper cuts. I got most of my cuts while chopping cypress trees. How I do hate to drop down a cypress knee, although many times it was necessary. There was no satisfaction for they are very hard some times a foot or two in diameter and we cannot yell "timber" as we do when felling a tree and see the men scamper to get out of the way as the tree falls.

On reaching camp we ate supper with Mr. Freeman, roast beef; ham, sweet potatoes, grits, biscuit, coffee with cream and sugar and, wonder of wonders, pumpkin pie, a whole quarter of a pie to a man. The memory of that meal will stay with me for a long time. I had almost forgotten there was such a thing as pie. Mr. Freeman kindly found me a place to sleep in his tent on a cot and I had the best night's sleep since we left home. This sleeping on the wet ground or doubled up like a jack knife in a Ford car is all right to read about but to experience is a different matter and it requires Walter Camp's daily dozen to get the kinks out of one's joints the next morning. The other men rolled up in their blankets and slept on cots in the open, Mr. Freeman looking personally after the comfort of each member of our party.

To Mr. H. Freeman and his gang and George Smith with his "Cletrac" is due the credit of getting us out of the Everglades. But for them we would have had to abandon our cars five miles from the grade and hoofed it on into Miami.

FREEMAN'S CAMP

Mr. Freeman's usual crew of 25 to 30 men camp consists of about 15 tents where the men sleep and eat and a small collapsible house for supplies. It has rocks laid in the roof to keep the top from blowing down in a high wind and letting the sides collapse like a house of cards. Our mess table is out in the open, will seat 12 men and is under a slanting thatch sun and wind shield.

Along the Tamiami trail there is a canal blasted in the rock. It is about 12 feet wide and five feet deep. Along the banks near the dredge a quarter of a mile from camp are a number of Indian canoes. They are 20 to 30 feet long and hewn from solid cypress trees about two feet through. They have a high prow and are about 16 inches deep. The Indians do not use oars but propel the canoes by means of poles.

When it was found a few days ago that the Tamiami Trail blazers were stuck good and proper, all the men but the drivers were called off and sent on into Miami to avoid "toting" supplies so far to such a large party. The only exception was myself and on unanimous request I remained to look after the supplies and food for the few men left.

I have learned to build a camp fire in the rain when everything is soaked and to flip a flapjack like old experienced frontiersmen.

HAD CLEAR WEATHER.

We have had clear weather now for two or three days and if it continues today all the cars should be on the grade and ready to make the last lap of the trip and on into Miami. Rome Spivey, the colored camp cook, can certainly make good biscuit and pies and our supper was the best meal I have had since leaving home. There are a few chickens in camp and hearing a noise in a tent found, on investigation, five chickens in the middle of my cot sitting around much as a group of men would about to start a little game of "nickel ante."

STRUCK BY FALLING TREE.

Saturday, April 21. - Daylight came all too soon and we had an early breakfast and started west up the grade about two miles to where the cars were left when darkness overtook us last night. Gasoline is being "toted" to supply each car as the tanks on all cars are empty. The camp is built on a great flat rock extending out into the flat country as far as the eye can see. There are many pot holes for unwary men to stumble into and cypress trees grow up through some of them. The trees make good poles for tents, etc., having been firmly driven into the rocks by nature and placed apparently at convenient intervals. This morning while walking up the grade I heard a rustle in some brush near by and looking quickly saw a big diamond back rattler at least six feet long. I stopped suddenly and he then moved off into the wilderness. You can take my word for his length for I did not follow him up to get an exact measurement, but hustled away from the vicinity, thinking his playmate might be hanging around close by.

GREET "OLD FLAG."

By pushing and pulling each car in its turn, the entire motorcade, or what is left of it, was on the grade at noon and lined up at the camp. As we reached the Dade county line, the flag was put up on the leading car and as "Old Glory" fluttered in the breeze she was greeted by loud cheers from the men who had saved the day. It was necessary to corduroy over the marshy places and large quantities of brush and poles were cut from the cypress and the cars went over the improvised roads wallowing like a ship in a gale, mud flying men pushing behind or pulling ahead on the long rope, but finally we won out.

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