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VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

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ALL OVER THE WITHLACOOCHEE



At the end of an eastward flowing stream is this cavern where water is flowing into the earth. Pendleton Little is inside.



Up and over the bank from the cavern is this dry river bed, more than a mile long. Up the bank to the right about 400 yards is the River.

What man couldn't get hooked on exploring Lowndes County, particularly when he searches for something rare and finds it.

Pendleton Little told me that he had encountered the spot where the Withlacoochee River supposedly goes underground. He and Paul Myddelton found it one day about 20 years ago when they fished down the river to be picked up at highway 41 by Paul's mother Mrs. Nell Myddelton. At that time Paul and Pendleton left their boat and ran "about a mile" to the highway.

So, Larry, Pendleton and I went "broncoing" again, found several strange things and returned tired and sore, but more enlightened as to our county.

We turned east after crossing the unmarked bridge over the Withlacoochee on highway 41 north. On our first try to find the river, we rode through much brush, through woods. We came to the river, saw the dark water standing still. But near it was a smaller, clearer stream, which seemed to be flowing in the opposite direction!

We decided we had not gone into the woods deep enough, drove out and into the woods again. On this second try to find the river, we passed a large dry strange looking pond. Pendleton said it was Shadrick's Pool. We could have walked all over it. Later, Pendleton did cross it. We then traveled on through mud and on rough ground, choosing roads we thought must be the right ones. We came to the small stream again, and it was flowing backwards.

On foot, we rushed on more eastward and found another almost dry area which had once been under water, but here was our stream headed east, right into a huge wall of dirt. On closer inspection, the wall of dirt, almost stone-looking, was dripping with moisture in full sun, and in the middle-bottom of it ran our stream, right down into the earth!

The only way across the stream to see into the hole was over a log. Pendleton and Larry went to inspect. They said there were a couple of small chambers to the place, but actually you could stand up in the first one. The water was really rushing down into the cavern and out of sight. It is apparently a spring fed stream, going on its predestined course to the

hole in the earth. We will most likely return to take flash pictures inside the cavern.

Larry tells me that Bobby Guess has been scuba-diving in the cavern when the whole area was filled with water. Bobby found only catfish.

Pendleton and Larry crossed over another embankment and I had to go up and around over our mysterious hole in the ground to where they were. Going downhill again, we found ourselves in a huge expanse of a dry river floor!

Larry walked a quarter of a mile east and the area was still dry. We walked forward some on sifted pure white dry sand, big rock, limestone, small rocks and a flint-like stone which, in another hundred years, could well be a good grade of flint. There was an old castaway swivel easy chair on the river bed on which I gladly reclined -- after we kicked it, just in case of snakes or what-have-you. There were some damp spots in the sand, and a very small pool of water in a low spot. The roots of many trees showed. And there were alien motor cycle wheel tracks. In fact, we saw these wherever we went and we also encountered three young men who were riding nearby and through the woods, and scaring away the wildlife.

Pendleton went up the bank of what must have been south to try to see the real Withlacoochee River with water. But it seemed to be nowhere in sight. As much as it zig-zags on the map, we weren't surprised. We decided that in heavy rainy seasons, our dry river would fill up and really be a part of the river then. But we could think of no explanation (except a spring) for the stream flowing in a reverse manner and going down into the cavern in the earth. Actually, (so we were told) the Withlacoochee River was some 400 yards from where we stood in the dry river bed.

We rode on east, passing sink holes (dry), and found the river at other spots. The water was always dark and either still or slowly flowing.

Have you ever ridden down a huge right-of-way after they've cleared away some of the brush and trees? (for powerline) We did -- oh, boy, we did! Through ruts, over limbs, etc., hunting for a trail, we bounced. Then later through thick woods, sometimes pines and then oaks, but always lots of bushes. We'd go down trail, up trail and even blazed a few trails of our own. Larry knew the area. But we went through more woods than one would encounter in a month of South Georgia coon hunts!

It was December 1, and a glorious, sunny day.

Two Visitors

Mrs. Howard Bradford, the former Peggy Edalgo, who was helpful to Susie and me with our book, came calling the other day. Peggy's great grandfather was brought to the United States by Major H. B. Holliday on his return from the Mexican War. This story appears in our book. Peggy lives in Nashville, Georgia but her husband has an insurance office in Valdosta. We enjoyed talking about one of our favorite subjects -- the Edalgo's.

One mid-afternoon, the telephone rang at my office. A gentleman, Randolph J. Whittle, Jr., informed me he had been visiting the local library and reading our Newsletter. He wanted to know what more I could tell him about his relative -- Powhatan B. Whittle! He was so grateful that we were able to supply more information. He has searched our cemetery, as we have, for Powhatan's grave. Susie has since found an obituary which states that Powhatan died in Virginia and was buried there. We hope Mr. Whittle from Florida will return and we will discuss another favorite subject -- Powhatan B. Whittle!

A Discovery

After reading In Search of the Hollidays, Mrs. Mary Allison of Valdosta (and a friend of Peggy Edalgo Bradford's) called to say that her great great great great grandfather was General Winfield Scott. Major H. B. Holliday served under General Scott in the Mexican War, and by chance, Major Holliday, of course, brought Francisco Hidalgo (Francis Edalgo) back to Georgia with him when he returned from the war in Mexico. It continues to be a small world. We'd like very much to talk with Mrs. Allison for it sounds like a good historical story there with her family.

No Meeting

There will be no meeting in December at the Lowndes County Historical Society. We will continue meetings in January, last Thursday night in that month.

Renew Your Membership

Many of our members have not renewed their memberships. Our year began in October. We hope with this Newsletter these former members will send in dues and keep the Newsletter coming to them.

News Items from The Valdosta Daily Times

February 10, 1883:

Married

Hon. J. M. Wilkinson one of our promising young lawyers, and Mayor of Valdosta, was married last Tuesday to Miss Carrie, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. M. Howell of Lowndes County, Rev. F. R. C. Ellis officiating.

Miss Carrie was one of the most popular young ladies of this section, and her liege lord enjoys the confidence of all who know him. Both are to be congratulated. They have done well, and we predict they will be a happy and congenial pair. No one wishes them more abundant success than does the writer hereof.

January 27, 1883:

Messrs. Carroll and Martine Varnedoe went out in the sleet last Monday afternoon and bagged forty-two partridges. Sixteen were killed at one shot being all there were in the covey.

(letter to the Times)

December 19, 1914

Dear Old Santa Claus;

I am a little boy five years old. I am looking for you Dear Old Santa, and I want you to bring me a few things. First, I want a drum, then a fire wagon. I wish you would bring me an Indian suit. With a harp, nuts, fruit and candy I will be satisfied this Christmas.

Carl Simmons
305 West Street
Valdosta, Ga.

Somewhere along the way, Carl Simmons found a piano and learned very early to make beautiful music, for Carl is remembered by all Valdosta residents as a most accomplished pianist and organist. He told me he played at the Palace Theatre before talking pictures before or around 1929. He had a dance orchestra (with no name, he says), about a 12-14 piece band, about 1935-36. He played 13 years for the Lee Street Baptist Church, but played longest at the First Christian Church, 21 years. He played for the Crockett Dance Studio for two sessions. Carl is now auditor for Holiday Inn in Valdosta and he and his wife live at 734 East Ann Street in our city. If we ever get a piano for our Museum, let's have them over. Carl can make a musical instrument sing!

English Class at the High School

Our Newsletter is being used as a source of information by the English Class at Valdosta High School for their yearly publication, Cracklins'. The students have also visited our Museum. If some student calls you for help and information, please help them. They have a fine magazine.

Albert S. Pendleton, Jr., Editor