

1914

OUR FLORIDA HOLIDAYING.

Nov. 2 Monday *Daytona, Fla.*

At last the trip we have planned two years is fairly started. I left New York on Saturday, Oct. 31st, and arrived here at Daytona last night at dark, Anne having met me at Petersburg, Va. After supper we took a walk across the Halifax to Sea Breeze and up the beach, which was glorious in the moonlight, with a wide stretch of sand so packed by the breakers that one scarcely left a foot print, while just a few yards out the great rollers roared and broke in great masses of foam and spray. We were very tired when we got back to the hotel but woke up early this morning. Had a most wonderful drive through the streets, where great oaks on each side of the street meet in a leafy arch, and the green-grey Spanish moss drapes the openings like curtains of smoke. We went down through the hammock on a road that was remarkably smooth, being made from oyster shells excavated from natural banks that the people here think were left by the Indians. Owing, however, to the great number of fossil bones of animals now extinct, it is my opinion that they are deposits washed up by the sea. These shell beds are many feet thick and run for miles, and the roads are lined with the pits from which they were dug. We got as far as New Smyrna, one of the oldest towns in Florida and the site of possibly the first Church in the New World, a shrine erected by the Spaniards to commemorate their safe arrival at this point. Part of the way back we motored along the beach, and motoring on this smooth, hard course is perhaps the next thing to actual flying that is possible. This afternoon we went surf bathing at Sea Breeze, and it was great sport riding the breakers, which are from ten to twenty feet high. They looked too big for Anne and in fact there is some danger from the undertow when the tide is running out.

Nov. 3 Tuesday

To-day we went fishing from the Sea Breeze pier and had one bass strike but through ignorance tried to snub him up too quickly and lost him. Caught a little whiting, and watched the more skilful ones land several beauties, from eighteen to twenty-five pounds in weight. After dinner we drove over to DeLand in a large car, reaching here at about half after three. Are stopping at the Lexington, a very pleasant, comfortable and homelike place, the Mecca of travelling men, who are attracted by the "eats" which are very good. Took a long walk before dinner and I tried to get myself located, but the town has changed so much I can scarcely find myself. Went up to our old home, now owned and occupied by some of our old friends, and visited them, then walked back through the town, had dinner and to the movies afterwards, and then another walk. Think I walked Anne to death but she was very nice about it.

Nov. 4 Wednesday.

Drove to DeLeon Springs to-day, the fabled Fountain of Youth of the old Spanish explorer, and had a most delightful swim. We saw the old brick sugar boilers and chimney built by the Spaniards probably three hundred years ago, and the old iron wheels through which the roots of great trees have grown. To-night we went to the opening of the Blue Lake Country Club, attended by the larger part of the town, and met many of my old friends. Had a pleasant time and were home early.

Nov. 5

Thursday

Went up to chapel at the University to-day and over some of the buildings and met some of the professors, who in my young days were so imposing and of whom I lived in awe. They haven't changed much, a little greyer, perhaps, caused probably by the oversight of hundreds of others like myself. Then I spent the balance of the morning looking up old school chums and talking over old days. Many of them are scattered but others with whom I grew up are here and it was very pleasant to meet them. This evening we left DeLand and came to Sanford, arriving here about half after six, and tomorrow we start on our trip up the River, provided we can get away. So far the trip has been most enjoyable and we are in hopes it will continue so.

Nov. 6 Friday

To-day we were up early and got the canoe from the dock and with the assistance of the men there we got her unpacked and into the water with very little trouble. Then I went up to get provisions, leaving Anne to pack the trunk and our packing bag. Very stupidly took both keys to the trunk with me and when I got back, after ordering all our stuff to be at the little dock at eleven, found that Anne, of course, had not been able to do anything, and as it was then after ten and we had a great deal to do, we had to rush, and I had to order things sent down at 11:30. Finally, after hurrying to beat the band, and with the assistance of the clerk, several porters, some bystanders, and did get down to the dock and loaded up. Our tiny craft was almost buried under the bundles and boxes we had aboard, and we did not know whether she would sink or swim. After she was all loaded, however, we got aboard, very carefully, and she carried us; but there were not so many inches to spare between her rail and the water. At eleven thirty promptly we set out, both paddling, on the first stretch of our journey. As we had to cross Lake Monroe, which is sometimes very rough, we skirted the shore for the first two miles, passing just in front of the Clyde river boat, City of Jacksonville, just as she was starting out on her trip down the river. We had to hurry to get by her and were anxious for just a moment. That difficulty by, we had to go up the Lake and then cross, which we negotiated successfully, as it was calm. We got to the mouth of the river, and paddled up stream, and after half an hour passed a point marked by two trees, where my older brother Frank and I had once passed part of a day, some fifteen years before. A curious co-incidence of this was that on the day he and I were there, a school of fish were feeding and jumping exactly across the stream, and on this day just as we passed thereagain was a school at the same spot. We paddled on for an hour and then, finding a good place to camp, between two tall palmettoes, with no other place in sight for a long ways, we stopped, making our first camp. Here we found our first snake, a king, in an old palmetto which I cut open for fire wood. A bunch of cattle had evidently been using our camp site for their bedding down place, and we had to drive them away repeatedly. Had great difficulty finding wood enough for a fire, as there was nothing but a few palmetto fronds and large reeds, but we did get enough to cook our dinner. The mosquitoes troubled us somewhat here, but we put up our nets and that kept them away. After dinner we went to bed, good and tired, with several new muscles, or at least, with muscles that had not heretofore made themselves noticeable.

Nov. 7 ~~Saturday~~

Last night's sleep was not all that could be desired. It was our first night out of doors, and all the cattle in the neighborhood seemed to be disturbed at our intrusion. Two bulls had a great fight for upwards of an hour last evening and they grunted about it all night. However, we got enough sleep to rest us. This morning was dark and gloomy and we hesitated a long time as to whether we should halt or go on, but as we were not in a good place for camping, we finally decided to try it, so broke camp and got moving about ten. Paddled several hours, against strong head winds, and with several stops to try for fish, though without success. Finally reached Geneva bridge, at the mouth of Lake Jessup, and found an ideal camping spot, with flowing well, lots of wood and good trees to camp amongst. Had lunch and rested until late in the afternoon, when we fished, but as we had no live bait and no net, I having forgotten to get the cloth in Sanford, we had no luck. Bought a log of pitch pine from the bridge tender here, which we will use and take with us for kindling.

Nov. 8 Sunday

Rested and fished most of to-day and caught one of about a pound or so, which we had for dinner. Very quiet day, but beautiful weather, warm, yet not too much so. The pigs ate our soap to-day. They need it more outside than in, but possibly they are not familiar with the proper method of applying it.

Nov. 9 Monday.

started to rain to-day while we were fishing before breakfast

However, we caught one fish, and had him for breakfast, which we had to cook in the rain, and a hard job it was. In spite of the discomfort, for our tent leaked, we did not find it so bad, having made up our minds that there would be some disagreeable things to contend with. After breakfast we went up to the house of some fishermen, right near us, and they very kindly asked us in. We stayed there several hours, playing pinechle, at which we were beaten three games. The rain stopped then and I walked a couple of miles up to a small settlement and got a couple of cans of soup, some bread and a chicken. Came back and found that a pole and line fisherman had given Anne some bait and the fishermen were helping her fish, and had caught one small bass for us. We loafed around the rest of that day, going fishing in the evening, but unfortunately striking a bunch of gar fish, so had to give it up.

The bridge here has had the draw opened four times in fourteen months, and the bridge tender has quite a cinch. He is quite a character and we have had several interesting conversations with him.

Nov. 10 Tuesday

Paddled up the river to Lemon Bluff to-day, started late and had considerable trouble finding the river, as there are so many sloughs. Got lost twice but finally found the way, reaching here about half after two. Nice place to camp, under a large spreading oak, with a small orange grove near by, and quite near the home of the Chaffers. Had a very good dinner and afterwards called on the Chaffers. Went to bed early as we had had a hard day's work. Lemon Bluff is really a bluff, some fifteen feet high, and apparently formed of a mixture of sand and a very hard clay. There is a beautiful view of the river from here and we took a photo looking up stream.

Nov. 11 Wednesday

Up early this morning and I went fishing and got two nice ones, bass, about one and a half and two pounds respectively, and had the little one for breakfast. Broke camp very early, as we wanted to make Lake Harney to-day if possible. Got started about nine and had paddled about four miles when a man came along in a motor boat and asked us if we did not want a tow, and of course we did. He took us all the way to Harney and dropped us at the mouth of the lake. The place was unsuitable for a camping ground and we decided to cross the lake to Geneva Decks. A very strong wind was blowing and the lake was very rough. Anne was rather anxious, and was quite justified, as it was rather nerve racking to sit in that little boat and watch the waves come creeping along just an inch or so from the top of the rail. However, we made the trip safely, and with the help of an emergency sail crossed the five and one-half miles in an hour and fifteen minutes. Found a very good camping ground, where some people had had a palmetto shack, and pitched our tent. Good running water and lots of oak wood. Had our other bass and a lot of other things for dinner and turned in early, as we were dead tired.

Nov 12, Thursday.

Went fishing before breakfast but caught only a few little perch. Lake was so rough we could not travel so decided to stay to-day and to-morrow and leave Saturday. I walked to Geneva and back, three miles each way, and sent a telegram to Roanoke and got answer that all were well. The people here, by name of Chambliss, are very nice and divided their fish with us this morning. I caught a large eel which I gave to them.

Nov. 13 Friday

Walked two miles through soft sand up to the fish boat this morning before breakfast to get bread and minnow net material which they had brought from Sanford. Anne went fishing and caught several and the Chambliss' again divided with us. After breakfast we went to dig bait and got some oranges and tangerines. We are having more fruit than we can eat. For dinner we had fish, potatoes, tomatoes, white and corn bread, coffee and oranges. Rained part of day.

Nov. 14 Saturday

Up early and looked cloudy. Fished before breakfast and caught a few brim and one nice cat, which we gave to Chambliss. I am suspected

of being a game warden, which is rather amusing, as we have our guns very carefully hid in our pack, as we are not in our County, and I am not looking for a warden myself. Very threatening looking, but we decided to move and left about ten for a point at the orange wharf across the lake. Just got across and partly settled when heavy rain and wind came up and we had to hurry. Made small shelter tent out of tarpaulin for cooking and it was fortunate that we did. Our log of wood that we bought from the bridge tender at Geneva was all that enabled us to cook dinner to-night, as everything else was wet. Best five cent investment I ever made. Could do nothing all afternoon but sit around and wait for night. Had very hard time cooking supper and went to bed very early.

Nov. 15 Sunday.

Pleasant day but occasional showers. Got fruit, oranges, tangerines and grape fruit, fixed up camp, chopped wood and late in the afternoon went fishing but again no luck. This camp site is too windy and we may move up on the Keonlechatchie Creek. Will go up and explore tomorrow.

Nov. 16 Monday.

Paddled about ten miles to-day, to a point about three miles up the Keon and found an ideal place to stay. An old abandoned house, which anyone uses who wishes, good water, a small, rather decrepit stove, and apparently good fishing and small game. Will move tomorrow. Got one fish and speared a turtle, which we had for dinner. Weather clear and cold.

Nov. 17 Tuesday

Moved to-day; some job. Fixed up the minnow net this morning and caught a lot of minnows to take with us up the Keon. Also loaded up with fruit of all kinds. Watched the stern wheel steamer "Heck" load up with fruit and got away about two o'clock. Had very hard paddling and were very tired when we got to camp at four. Unloaded and fixed things up a little, had dinner and went to bed.

Nov. 18 Wednesday.

Fishing no good; game scarce, or at least we havent seen any. Very much disappointed but will live in hope. Fortunately we are living well as we brought lots of grub for just such a contingency, and as this is about the first time we have not had some fish we have plenty of it left.

Nov. 19 Thursday

Seen to be entirely out of the game section. Few squirrel, but after missing one nine times this morning I quit in disgust. So did the squirrel. Paddled down to Lake Harney to-day for mail and when we got back found an enormous turtle on the trot line, but when I tried to spear him he got away, which caused me to use some language more strong than was absolutely necessary, or so Anne thought. Fished a while but no luck. Will try farther up stream tomorrow. Game law is off tomorrow but there is nothing up here to shoot. Had big dinner to-day. Cooked some cabbage palmetto and found it delicious, much like mushrooms. Cold and cloudy.

Paddled three miles up stream to-day but saw little game and did not get any of what we saw. Some duck and a covey of quail. No fish. Extremely cold. We almost froze though we both slept on one cot with all covers over and under us.

Nov. 21 Saturday

Good day to-day. Went hunting before breakfast and got a squirrel dove and snipe. Stayed around camp all day, working and resting. About dark a big run of bass came along but we were almost too late. Tried a few casts and got one, a beauty, at least ten pounds. Must have been hundreds in the run and it is too bad we did not get in earlier. Got another snipe this evening.

Nov. 22 Sunday

Nov. 22 Sunday

Went about four miles up the creek to-day. No fish running but lots of squirrels and we could have killed them by the dozen, but quit when we got three. They were all around us and so tame it seemed a pity to kill them. Did not get any fish, but killed a water turkey, which we threw away. Saw what we thought was a flock of wild turkey, but they got into the brush before we got near them. Had a delightful trip through the most beautiful scenery imaginable. Saw hundreds of air plants, or wild orchids and got several. The other day up here we got one with a flower spike over three feet long on which there were probably a hundred buds, also got one plant about three feet across, which we are going to take to Enterprise. Used the last of our five cent log of pine to-day.

Nov. 23 Monday

Caught a ten pound cat on our trot line this morning and had a small slice off of him, and threw the rest away, as we did not need it. Got a squirrel before breakfast and on our way down the creek got eight reed birds. After breakfast we cleaned up the canoe and broke camp. Surely hated to leave, for it has been most pleasant here and feel much at home. Hope we can stop here some other time. Got down to the orange wharf at three thirty and after getting a load of fruit had dinner on the squirrels, which we had brought with us. Will sleep on the floor of the dock to-night as we have to get up early and go over to catch the fishing boat, which we want to have tow us to Sanford.

Nov. 24 Tuesday Lake Harney

Up early and paddled over to the fish boat and arranged to have them tow us down. Landed and cooked breakfast, our last camping out meal. Thousands of duck and coot on the lake but they have learned the range of a shot gun and quite impossible to get any. Had quite a lot of food left over and gave it to some of the fishermen who had been very nice to us, and who had brought tobacco out to me, just in time as I was on my last pipe.

Sanford

We got back at 5:40, getting sixteen coot on the way down and having four of them for dinner on the boat. After we got here we had to get our stuff up to the hotel and I took the canoe over to the Clyde Dock where we will pack her up again tomorrow. After that we went to the Hotel and headed for the bath tub, and I for a barber shop, to get rid of nineteen days growth of beard. Civilized clothes feel very comfortable now that we are back out of the woods, though roughing clothes are all right away from town. This ends our trip and to me it has been the most enjoyable vacation I have ever had, and Anne has had a much better time than she anticipated. We are both planning to take another as soon as we can, and we hope it will be soon.

Back in New York

After we got back from our camping trip we went over to Enterprise and stayed there nearly two days, looking over the town and trying the various springs there. Went to see Green Springs but I lost the way and we did not get there. Then we came back to Sanford and on Friday the 29th left via St. Johns River boat on our way back home. Stopped Saturday in Jacksonville and saw the ostrich farm and went to Charleston that night, where we spent Sunday. Although it rained both Saturday and Sunday we had a very pleasant time. Monday morning we were wrecked near Fayetteville, N. C. but no one was hurt, and as Anne missed her connection at Petersburg she dropped off at Jarratt and took the Virginian home, and got to Roanoke about eight Monday night, while I reached New York about half after nine that same evening.

A. E. Snyder