

EARLY MARRIAGE RECORDS OF MANATEE COUNTY, FLORIDA

The earliest marriages recorded in Manatee County are not found in the County Judge's Office with the later marriages. They are scattered throughout the earliest deed records. When a new county was created, the clerk usually used only one book to record all of the deeds, wills, marriages and other records until they became so plentiful that he needed a separate book for each type of record. Manatee County was created out of Hillsborough County in 1855. Some of the earliest records were copied from "the old book in Hillsborough County" as was stated on the edge of the recorded deeds. The earliest book in Manatee County was a Pamphlet Record Book of which there is no sign now. In 1889, H. F. Wyatt, Clerk of the Circuit Court copied the records which were in the Pamphlet Record Book and placed them in Copy Deed Record A. The second oldest record book is still available. Originally it was Deed Record A but is now entitled Miscellaneous Record 1859-1878. But the records from it were also copied into Copy Deed Record A in 1889. So that all of the original records which were recorded in Miscellaneous Record 1859-1878 are still in the Clerk's office plus a copied version of the same records, which are in Copy Deed Record A.

Most of the early marriage records consist of the following format:

State of Florida
Manatee County

To any civil Magistrate or Ordained Minister of the Gospel, Greeting. You are hereby authorized to join in the marriage relation Mr. Jones and Miss Smith of the county & state aforesaid and make returns to this office. In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my official seal at Manatee this 31st day of January AD 1859.

Edmund Lee, Clerk CC M Fla

This is to certify that the above named Mr. Jones and Miss Smith were this day united in wedlock, Feb. 17th, 1859.

Levi Pearce,
Ordained Minister of
the Gospel

A true copy of record made by me this 14th day of
May AD 1859.

Edmund Lee, Clerk

In several cases, the person performing the marriage ceremony would not make a return to be recorded, or he would have recorded that the couple was married by him but not put the date of marriage. In this case, the date of application and the date the marriage was recorded by the Clerk is given since the date of marriage is not known. You will notice that the dates of marriages are not in order of date since the person performing the marriage might wait a month or so before he recorded it at the courthouse.