

support it. It was a very common event for young men to be captured & forced into service. It is very possible that while George was on duty driving cattle in southwest Florida, he was captured and forced to join the Union forces. It is possible that he later escaped (for George did return home after the war) and instead of being faced with embarrassment for allowing a Confederate to escape, George's commanding Union officer could have shown on his report that George had died.

Thomas H. Albritton owned several slaves prior to the Civil War and when the War was over, he gave them their freedom. Two of the young Negro boys stayed on with Thomas and helped him farm and handle his cattle & horses. One of them, Ike, later worked as a cook for Mr. Welles in Arcadia. Ike was member of the Mount Moriah Church at Joshua Creek as his tombstone in the Joshua Creek Cemetary states.

On September 7, 1867, Thomas H. Albritton registered five sets of marks and brands with the Manatee County Clerk of the Circuit Court: (1) Crop and half crop in each ear, brand "H", (2) Upper square in one ear and swallowfork and underbit in the other, brand "12", (3) Crop and underbit in one ear and two swallowforks in the other, brand "H", (4) Swallowfork and underslope in each ear, brand "H", and (5) Swallowfork and underslope in one ear and swallowfork and underbit in the other, brand "A".

The following article appeared in the July 26, 1959 issue of The Tampa Tribune: "It was on a Sunday in July of the 1870's. Thomas H. Albritton and family, along with their pioneer neighbors, had attended church services at the brush arbor in the Horse Creek settlement, later to be known as Castalia (now Lily).

"Having heard a fine and very long sermon by Parson R. M. Evans (Methodist circuit rider) and adjourning the services for dinner, the womenfolk began making preparations for spreading the meal. The men gathered to one side and were discussing events of the day.

"Thomas Albritton, talking to Morgan Mizell and Cicero Platt, said: "Boys, my bear grease and hog lard is gettin' mighty low. Supposin' we all go on a little hog hunt tomorrow on the prairie. The hogs along the hammocks ought to be in pretty good shape."

"Cicero agreed and the hunt was arranged for the next day. All were to meet at Mr. Albritton's house early the next morning.

"About the break of day, Cicero Platt and his brothers, Marion and Lewis, rode up on horseback with their 'glass-eye' leopard dog and cur dogs following them. About the same time up rode 'River Dan' Coker. Mr. Albritton and his sons, Asbury and James, had already saddled their horses and had their dogs tied.

"Since this hunt was to be strictly a hog hunt, they decided not to carry a gun as it would be in the way.

"Riding west on the prairie towards the hammocks, which were four or five miles away, the dogs jumped a panther, called in those days, tigers or 'painters'. This was near the present county line between Manatee & DeSoto. The chase was very short, the panther climbing a large live oak in a hammock.

"They all rode up, looked the panther over, and then decided that one of them should return to Morgan Mizell's and get a muzzleloader. The panther had to be killed, as pigs were his prey. Cicero left in a long gallop while others were standing guard until his return.

"In the meantime, the dogs jumped another panther in the hammock. This one refused to climb a tree. This panther backed up against a blown over stump in a tall palmetto patch and began fighting the dogs.

"Leaving Marion to guard the first panther, Thomas and his sons went to the dog-panther fight. From the yells of the dogs, it seemed to Thomas that the panther was getting the best end of the fight and would probably kill one or two of their dogs if something wasn't done