

This article was written and contributed by Mrs. Ruby Cason Iliff of N-2506 Denver, Spokane, Washington 99207. Continued from Issue 15/16.

We look in retrospect at this thriving old store and home on the Myakka, and see Grandpa Murphy out in the woods cow hunting with his train of riders. The older Murphy girls were obliged to run the store, and the country "Crackers" would come in with their green Gator hides to trade for coffee, sugar or what not. The girls would look the hides over to be sure they had no holes or were torn, and bargained with the men over the price. Then too, frequently Grandpa would be gone for a week or a month, depending on the success of his hunt. When he did arrive home, it was almost a constant practice, that he would arrive with from one to a dozen hungry men in tow. Just after the meal was over, and the kitchen all cleaned up and tidied away, they would once again be obliged to prepare another meal for the tired men. In this way they assisted their father with his work.

If one could be allowed the privilege of a magic carpet trip to where the once tranquil country life on the Myakka was a haven of rest for, not only the Murphys, but for all such hearty pioneers whose love of independence beckoned them on, and ever on to Florida. We would find it quite different today. The old cow trails would all be erased and in its place the Myakka State Park has taken shape. We could eat at the tables close to "Upper Lake" and feed bread to the deer, etc. We could imagine Grandpa Murphy still cow hunting and riding as he once did. The first Bass ever caught by Samuel G. Murphy, was at Alligator Point on Upper Lake. Most of the north side of the Myakka River is old Murphy stomping grounds. When Garrett Murphy lived there Sarasota and De Soto Counties were part of Manatee County.

The Murphy children went to school in a one room school house located in old Myakka. The building is still there, as well as a Church and cemetery where reposed in dignified calmness, rests the mortal clay of many of the illustrious pioneer ancestors of Garrett Murphy. I like the ancient Saxon phrase which calls the burial ground, "God's Acres". "It is just, and consecrates each grave within its walls, and breathes a benediction o're the sleeping dust." The above words by Longfellow might well be adopted by all who desire to find and preserve our great American Heritage. The history of Florida is so vast and rich, as Governor Bryant has said; and that it has the longest history of any of the fifty states. He has indicated that special attention should be given this priceless heritage.

"Forbs Pasture" on the Myakka was a special place for the Murphy's to vacation. On this ranch of Grandpa's, everything could be had for ones relaxation. Fishing, hunting and picnic places. It would be at special times such as school vacations, Christmas Holiday's, and just "for fun times", that the Murphy clan would gather at Forbs Pasture, men women, children and dogs. Here they would spend so many happy hours. On one of these excursions, Samuel Jackson bagged over 200 doves in a single day. Garrett Murphy never did come home empty handed. He was an excellent marksman. Perhaps this could be attributed to the two pair of glasses he always wore while hunting. He always had on hand an extra pair of binoculars, as well.

Garrett Murphy moved to the Myakka when he was quite young. All eight Murphy children were born in the same old home previously referred to. Uncle Peter Jones Carlton and Uncle Marion Postell Carlton, half brothers of Garrett Murphy came to Manatee County later on, and settled on the Myakka also. Garrett Carlton, son of Peter Jones