

the faithful pioneer Methodist preacher, with his pony, and his saddle-bags, his Bible, hymn-book, and discipline, making footprints on the sands of Peace River, and making history for future generations.

So far as we can learn the first man to preach the gospel in this county was Rev. W. P. McEwen, a consecrated local preacher, and from the accounts that came down to us this faithful man of God did a great work in planting Methodism in this section, & in blazing the way for greater things than he ever dreamed of.

Came to Manatee County in 1867 and settled near where the town of Wauchula now is, there was no organized church south of Ft. Meade. He preached at Fort Green, Ft. Ogden, and at Oak Hill - now Parish, in Manatee County and Pine Level, and organized churches.

During these days we had no bridges, and the mode of travel was horse back by both men and women, and by ox cart when taking the family.

As the ministry was not self-supporting, Rev. McEwen also engaged in farming and stock raising. In Manatee County on Nov. 25, 1871, he registered his mark and brand: split poplar leaf in one ear, two under bits in the other. The 1873 Manatee County Tax Book listed him with 1 horse and 30 cattle.

The 1880 Manatee County Census showed the neighbors of William P. and Ruth McEwen to be families which included: Milton McEwen, Joseph L. Bostick, Dennis M. Cason, Eli English, Lewis Carlton, Alex. McEwen, William L. Bostick, and Albert Carlton.

While at Nocatee for a revival, the Rev. William Penn McEwen died on July 27, 1883 and was buried in Joshua Creek Cemetery. Ruth McEwen died July 11, 1898 and was buried in the Wauchula Cemetery.

The Bartow, Florida August 11, 1883 issue of the Bartow Informant printed the following:

M. G. Carlton, of Manatee, writes us that Rev. W. P. McEwen died at the residence of R. C. Hendry, in that county, on the 27th ult, after years of affliction. He was a faithful minister and a devoted Christian.

On December 22, 1974, Gladys Carlton Clavel, a great-granddaughter of Rev. McEwen, visited his grave. She reminisced:

Martha Winfield McEwen's father, Rev. McEwen, was the first Methodist preacher in this part of the country. He came down here to preach a revival and died.

He used to ride his horse and swim the river. They had no bridges to cross Peace River. He'd