

Dec. 6  
1878

TO

Mar. 14  
1940.

It is with genuine regret that I will not be able to attend the Silver Anniversary of the Waverly Cooperative organization, which will be celebrated this evening at Waverly.

My first work, December 1878, was on the Belair Grove some  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles southwest of Sanford, where I went immediately after my arrival at Sanford via steamer "George M. Bird".

The first cold spell I recall was experienced late in <sup>1878</sup> December, or early in January 1879. The cold followed a light rain - the sand froze and formed sort of a crust. No tree damage resulted in Belair vicinity. In the fall I was on a trip to Apopka, and passed a small grove on the Wekiva River at Palm Springs and noticed the small wood was killed back, also noticed the grove had been plowed very deep. I spent the night near by and was informed the grove was owned by a party living in Indianapolis who ordered his grove plowed deep in November, and the cold spell referred to above caused the damage.

During the latter part of February (1879) I started to walk to Tampa. There was no transportation then except mule teams and oxen. I had a companion, a Floridian named Silas B. Carter. Orlando was the only town we passed thru between Sanford and Tampa. We followed the Mellonville and Tampa Trail - a sand rut - had to ford the creeks west of where Kissimmee is now located. We were about a week making the



trip. We spent only one night in a house, and that was located in the vicinity of where Plant City now is, in an enclosure where the famous "Platt" tree ~~is~~ growing. A party named Yates with his family was occupying the log cabin. They had one large bed room, with several beds parked in it. Yates told me the "Platt" tree produced annually over 32,000 oranges. A Mr. Miller in Tampa purchased the fruit annually and sold it in Mobile. I have recently had the yield of this tree confirmed by a party living in Tampa. On reaching Tampa we camped on <sup>the St. Brooks</sup> a reservation in Tampa east of the old Collins House on the Hillsboro River. There was no bridge over the River then. We walked to Manatee, returning via Parish Grove, Fort Meade and Bartow. At Bartow we purchased supplies, then headed north crossing Saddle Creek on logs. When passing through the area where Winter Haven was later located I was so impressed with the beauty of the section I entered 400 acres of government land at \$1.25 per acre in August 1882. As soon as I learned that the railroad extension to Bartow passed close to the land I purchased I employed a surveyor named Garrett to subdivide in 10 acre lots, which was later sold to an ex-Presbyterian Missionary named Stone. His object in buying was to locate a Church School on the property. We followed an established trail which may have taken us thru the Waverly district. Until we lost our shot pouch we lived on game. At Fort Davenport we only had left 2 slices of fat bacon, which we ate without much cooking and walked to Orlando - some 40 miles via Old Trail - camped for the night in Orlando in an

oak thicket where the present Court House now stands. We were over two weeks on the trip, and did not meet a team on the entire trip. It took over a week to reach Tampa. This distance is covered now in  $2\frac{1}{2}$  hours. At that time there was no railroad south of Jacksonville.

Our damaging freezes have all approached differently, those coming when trees were dormant, as was the case this year, did less tree damage in spite of the low temperatures which prevailed for four nights, than other cold spells of less duration did when trees were sappy and growing.

I planted my first grove - 5 acres 4 miles south of Sanford - in 1881.