The Amazing Story of the
Lost Town of Ethel

A Chronicle of the Forgotten Settlement in the Florida Wilderness
and Its Foremost Pioneers

William Delk and Anthony Frazier

Don Philpott and Shirley Meade
# Contents

Forward ......................................................................................................................... 5

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 6

William Shelton Delk ..................................................................................................... 10

James Madison ............................................................................................................. 36

Aunt Betty .................................................................................................................... 43

Delk Island .................................................................................................................... 45

Ethel ............................................................................................................................... 48

Population Growth ....................................................................................................... 50

Homesteading ............................................................................................................... 51

Life in Ethel ................................................................................................................... 72

Social life ......................................................................................................................... 90

Turpentine ..................................................................................................................... 99

Ethel Church and School ............................................................................................. 105

Sanford Herald – Ethel news ....................................................................................... 114

Ethel and Wekiva residents and Rock Springs neighbors and how they acquired their land ......................................................................................................................... 123

Ethel Cemetery ............................................................................................................ 174

Anthony Frazier – The Slave who became a County Commissioner of Roads .......... 185

Frazier’s Headstone ...................................................................................................... 224

The Ethel Project .......................................................................................................... 243

Following are several Indentures, Deeds and Patents involving some of Frazier’s land purchases .......................................................................................................................... 245
Artist Gary Schermerhorn’s illustration of some of the structures at Ethel compressed into a single sketch. It is an artistic interpretation as we have no way of knowing what Ethel really looked like, but it is based on images that we do have.

In memory of Tony Moore who started us on this fascinating voyage of discovery.
Forward

After more than 10 years of research and collaboration with local historians, we now know that Rock Springs was the site of the first large plantation in Central Florida before the Civil War and after the war, was home to a bustling township called Ethel.

It was also the home of Anthony Frazier, a former plantation slave at Rock Springs who fought in the Union Army during the Civil War, returned to the area afterward, bought and sold land and became a respected member of the community.

In 1880, he was appointed an Orange County Commissioner for Roads, a remarkable achievement at that time for a former slave. His wife Mary was the local midwife and over three decades delivered many of the babies born in Ethel, Wekiva and nearby Sorrento.

This history of Ethel brings to life the amazing but largely forgotten history of Rock Springs, the Delk Plantation, Ethel, and Anthony Frazier.

It is a remarkable story that can finally be told.

Senator Dennis Baxley
Florida State Senate
Introduction

Ethel is now a ghost town within the boundaries of the 14,000-acre Rock Springs Run State Reserve, part of the Wekiva River Basin State Parks (which also includes Lower Wekiva and Wekiwa Springs).

Much of what we know today is thanks to the work of Tony Moore, a retired land surveyor and a volunteer with the Wekiva Wilderness Trust, the nonprofit group that supports the work of the Wekiva River Basin State Parks.

While hiking in Rock Springs one day in 2008, Tony came across a grave marker close to an old fence line and almost hidden among the chest tall grass. Incredibly, when he explored further, he discovered that the marker bore the same last name as his. Intrigued he searched among the grass and nearby he found a second gravestone that amazingly also had the same last name as his.

Tony Moore

Tony was born in Thomaston, Georgia, but was a longtime resident of Orlando. He set out to discover why the gravestones were there and whether there was a connection between them and his own family.
While he never established a family connection, he did unearth a treasure trove of information about the once thriving but long forgotten township of Ethel. Tony passed away on May 23, 2012, at the age of 74, but his invaluable research on Ethel lives on.

Shirley Meade of the East Lake Historical Society collaborated with Tony and then followed up on his work. This book would not have been possible without her own research and her encyclopedic knowledge of this area.

Our special thanks also to Bob Grenier, friend, author and Executive Director of the Tavares History Research Center for his boundless enthusiasm, assistance and encouragement, and for designing the book cover, and Robert Brooks, Manager of the Wekiva River Basin State Parks, for his support and amazing mapping skills.

Most of the information in this book comes from resources that are in the public domain – from property records in Orange and Lake Counties to the Florida State Archives, the National Archives in Washington D. C., and many more. Other information comes from families who have traced their relatives back to Ethel and who kindly gave us permission to use their photographs and documents. Special thanks to Frankie “Maxwell” Goebel, Porter Click and Janice Jernigan.

Other photographs used came from local libraries and museums and the Florida Memory archive, and we are grateful for their permission to publish.

We are also indebted to artist Gary Schermerhorn for his visualizing sketches on how William Delk and Anthony Frazier might have looked as adults as no such photographs have been found and for his sketch on how Ethel might have looked in the 1890s.

Early documents were often handwritten in a very florid style, and it has sometimes been difficult to decipher exactly what has been written. This is especially the case with names.
Where there is doubt about the exact name of the person, a question mark in brackets has been added after the name.

We have also included copies of many old documents which corroborate our research even though they might be difficult to read. The originals are all in the public domain.

The aim of this book is to tell as accurately as possible the story of Ethel and Rock Springs and the many people associated with it. It is a history that might otherwise have gone untold forever.

If you have any connections with the families mentioned in this book, we would love to hear from you, especially if you have documents or photographs that would provide additional information.

Please contact us at info@wwt-cso.com. A copy of this edition is available as a free downloadable e-book from our website, and we will keep this online version updated as we gather more information until such time that a third edition becomes necessary.

The history of Ethel is inextricably interwoven with two equally fascinating stories. They concern William S. Delk, a pre-Civil War plantation owner at Rock Springs, and Anthony Frazier, a freed Delk slave who fought as a Union soldier and became an Orange County Special Commissioner of Roads.

William S. Delk was one of the first and largest settlers in the area. He arrived in Florida in the late 1840s and established a 3,000-acre plantation at Rock Springs in the 1850s. A Union sympathizer during the Civil War, he was arrested by Confederate troops but escaped, freed his slaves, and made his way to St. Augustine to join up with federal forces there.

He returned to his plantation after the Civil War and several of his relatives later settled in and around Ethel and one of them was the last to leave the dying township.
One of Delk’s slaves, Anthony Frazier, also returned to the area after the Civil War where he served as a Union soldier. As a free man he became a landowner and eventually a Commissioner for Roads in Orange County. Almost nothing was known about Anthony Frazier until the discovery of a headstone on a remote piece of state park land about two miles northwest of the old Delk plantation and about 3.5 miles west northwest of Ethel.

These are their stories.
William Shelton Delk

The first settler at Rock Springs was William S. Delk, descended from Roger Delk who was born in Surrey, England in 1610. He married his first wife Sarah, and their daughter Elizabeth was born in Middlesex, in April 1622.

In 1624 he sailed for the Virginia Colony aboard the Southampton, one of the ships used by Sir Walter Raleigh on his last expedition to South America. He landed at Jamestown in 1624 and it is assumed that his wife died in England before she could follow him.

Not long after his arrival, he married Alice Davenport (born 1614), who had also been a passenger aboard the Southampton. Roger Delk was indentured to John Chew and worked on his plantation on Hog Island. He worked out his indentures in 1626 and by September that year had relocated to Jamestown.

Delk appeared in court in Jamestown on May 7, 1627, charged with being absent from his plantation “without the knowledge or leave of his commander contrary to an order of court for the space of 8 days complete”.

While the reason for his absence is not known, he admitted the charge and was ordered to pay 25 pounds of tobacco for every day he was absent – a total sum of 200 pounds of tobacco.

He must have had friends in high places because in 1628, Francis West, who was both the Governor and Captain General, granted him 1,000 acres on Lawne’s Creek, which flowed into the James River just south of Hog Island.

From February 1632 to February 1633, he served a one-year term in the House of Burgesses, the first legislative assembly in the New World, representing Stanley’s Hundred in Warwick.
Apparently, he lived above his means and in 1634 he was outlawed for debts and a warrant was issued for his arrest. He died in 1635 and his wife had his land transferred to her. He had two children, a daughter Alice, born in 1630, and a son Roger Jr., born in December 1634.

Roger married Rebecca Alice Reynolds about 1674 in Surrey, Virginia, and they had at least two sons and a daughter. Roger died on July 4, 1693, in Lawne’s Creek Parish, aged 58, and was buried at Bacon’s Castle, Surry, Virginia.

His children were John (1662-1699), Rebecca (1675-1738), and Joseph (1675-1761). Joseph married Hannah Thorpe who had three sons Jacob (1705-1788), John (died 1728), and Matthew (died 1732).

Jacob married Judith Mills Robertson and they had three sons Samuel (1735-1787), Jacob Jr. (1737-1788), and Kindred (1770-1818).

Samuel Delk married Anne Clyatt (1736-1777) and had at least six children although four were killed together with their mother in an Indian raid in 1777 (see below). There are records of two sons Samuel (born 1760) and David (born 1761), and a daughter whose name may have been Zelpha. There is one record of Zelpha, daughter of Samuel and Anne, born in 1763, although most records list only the two sons after the massacre. Son Samuel’s date of death is recorded as 1808 which suggests he was also not at home when his family was attacked. At that time, he would have been 17 years old and so may have been away fighting in the militia with his father.

William S. Delk’s father was David Delk who was born in 1761 in Johnston County, North Carolina, and died in 1843, aged 81 or 82. He is buried in Taylor’s Creek Cemetery, Fort Stewart, Liberty County, Georgia, and his log home on the plantation built in 1835-37, was moved in 1979 to the Oatland Island Education Center, near Savannah (now the Oatland Island Wildlife Center).
The 1835 Delk cabin (above and below) at Oatland Island
On the night of July 31, 1777, aged about 16, David was sent by his mother to fetch water from the spring. David’s father Samuel, the great-great-grandson of Roger, was in Georgia fighting as a Revolutionary soldier.

While David was away from the isolated homestead in Christ Church Parish, his mother and four of her children were massacred by a Creek Indian raiding party that had crossed the Ogeechee River, near Morgan’s Creek. When they left, they took with them Delk’s fourteen-year-old red-haired sister.

According to the book Sweet Land of Liberty: A History of Liberty County, Georgia, by Robert Long Groover, published by W. H. Wolfe Associates, 1987, “A detachment of regulars pursued the Indians for about forty miles and near the Oconee River found some hair that appeared to have been cut off the girl’s head. Fortunately, the little red-headed lass eluded her captors and up near Augusta was taken in by a friendly family. Later when she grew up, the family’s son fell in love and married her. They objected and the couple left and down near Louisville, then the State’s capitol, they settled.

“Some years later, the representative from Bryan County, probably Capt. Luke Mann, heard the story while attending a session of the Senate, and may have related it to her brother, David, in November 1798 when he witnessed the deed to 100 acres on Taylor’s Creek in Liberty County that David bought for a home. This intelligence enabled the brother and sister to be reunited.”

After his family’s massacre, David fought with the Revolutionary Army in Savannah until the city fell in 1778. He was taken prisoner and probably against his will, was enrolled in the King’s Rangers until General Alured Clarke gave up the city in June 1782.

David raised cattle and in 1783 married Anne Clyatt (parents James and Sarah Clyatt), in Effingham County, and they had a son David who died about 1807 and a daughter Anna born in 1789 and who died in 1851.
The Delk and Clyatt families were very close and there were frequent marriages between them.

After his wife’s death, David moved from North Carolina to Georgia and in 1798, bought one hundred acres on the waters of Taylor’s Creek in Liberty County where he lived until his death.

About 1811, he married Elizabeth Terrell. Their children were daughters Elizabeth (born January 3, 1818), and Susan N. Delk (born 1820), and sons John, born 1812, David born 1814, William Shelton, born about 1815, and Fleming, born 1822.

Both William S. and Fleming were privates in Capt. David R. Bryant’s company of Col. Robert Brown’s Mounted Georgia Volunteers in the Seminole Indian Wars of 1838. For his service he was entitled to a bounty of 40 acres of land, but the deed was not recorded until June 11, 1885, after his death.

William S. Delk moved to Florida in the 1840s and in 1851 he was living in Marion County, aged 35, and looking for land to settle on. His slave Joseph was born in Marian County around 1846.

In 1854, he bought 3,000 acres of pine and palmetto woodland around Rock Springs, in Orange County, of which four hundred acres was cleared for farming.

In 1856 he is listed as a member of the Orange County Militia. The militia was organized in March of that year under the command of Captain Aaron Jernigan. His command lasted less than six months when he and his two sons were indicted for the murder of militiaman William H. Wright. Rather than answer the charges, he and his family left Florida and in September, Captain Isaac N. Rutland took command of the Regiment at Fort Gatlin.

His address in 1857, according to county records, was listed as Rock Springs. While there were a few other settlers in Orange County, he was by far the largest single landowner and because of his acreage and the
number of slaves, he was considered the first plantation owner in the huge county.

Delk was a Representative for Orange County and on November 3, 1857, he and fourteen other Orange County citizens were sworn in for Orlando’s first Grand Jury. Orange County was established in 1856 and Orlando was chosen as the county seat in 1857 although Representative Delk had opposed this.

In 1859, according to Orange County records, he purchased Linda, a six-year-old slave from N. F. Chapman for $265 plus 8% interest due on January 1 the following year.

*Rock Springs c. 1900 Source: Florida Memory*
The 1860 United States Federal Census records that William S. Delk, age 45, was residing in District 3 of Orange County. His nearest Post Office was Melonville, and other members of his household listed in the 1860 U. S. Census for Orange County, District 3, were:

- William P. Delk, aged 20, son
- L. H. Green, aged 24
- Michael Ohara, aged 27
- Jackson See, aged 48
- Susan See, aged 29
- Nancy Ann See, aged 9
- Sarah Ann See, aged 7
- Joseph A. See, aged 5, and
- James K. See, aged 2.
There is no record of a wife and apart from his son and two indentured whites, all the others listed are believed to have been slaves. He did have 19 or 20 slaves, including Anthony Frazier and Joseph Robards, and their mother Mary, although they are not recorded by name in the Census.

On August 31, 1860, he sold five cows and their calves to Mary Ann Newton for $50 cash. The cattle bore the OK brand.

Rock Springs is unusual in that the water flows out from a rock cave. From there it runs into a lagoon and then into Rock Springs Run, which
meanders for about nine miles until it joins the Wekiva River. Delk must have thought it an ideal spot to locate his plantation.

He hauled his supplies by ox cart from Hawkinsville on the St. Johns River, eighteen miles away. He cleared four hundred acres to become the area’s largest plantation and grew cotton, rice, sugar cane, and corn.

![Image of William S. Delk as a young man c. 1835.](image)

The only known image of William S. Delk as a young man c. 1835.

Delk worked the land with his son William, two indentured white laborers, and 19 slaves, valued, according to the 1860 U.S. Census, at $12,700. These included a young slave called Joseph G. Robards, who later claimed he was Delk’s son, and his half-brother Anthony Frazier.

In an interview in 1929, with the Apopka Chief, Robards said that as a very small boy he was called “Joseph Delke” (sic), after his father and
master “but I took the name of Joseph G. Roberts wishing to get away from the name of my unnatural father.”

Over the years, Joseph G. Robards is also referred to as Joseph G. Roberts, but in affidavits and other legal documents, he signed himself as Robards. It is likely that the mention of Roberts in the interview above was a hearing mistake made by the reporter.

Another of Delk’s slaves was Anthony Frazier, Robards’s half-brother – they shared the same mother, Judy Henry.

The slave quarters at the Delk Plantation c. 1905 (Source. Florida Memory).

The first house was a log cabin just north of the springs with a narrow crawlway below. The cabin burned down when Delk lit a fire beneath it to try to smoke out an infestation of fleas.

The next house was built on the hill on the south side of the springs. There was also a ramshackle multi-roomed wooden structure in which all
the slaves lived (see picture above). This building survived until the early 20th century.

At that time according to Robards, Orlando was a cotton patch with a small trading post, the only one between Jacksonville and Tampa.

Around 1861, Delk built a dam across the stream about 50 yards from the spring and a flume (a deep narrow channel) to funnel the water to a water wheel with a large bucket. The dam was on the right-hand side as you looked down the stream. The spillway was on the left and next to the waterwheel was a grist mill that ground corn from his fields.

The grist mill and cotton gin were on the second floor and the sawmill was on the ground floor. The lumber yard was on the right bank of the stream.

Other farmers paid him a part of their crop to grind their corn. He also milled timber from trees felled on his property. The cotton gin was one of the largest in the area.

In 1862, the year after Florida seceded from the Union, Delk’s son William P. Delk rode off to war. Even though his father was a Union supporter, his son supported the Confederacy. He enlisted as a private on May 17, 1862, and joined a unit led by Captain Jonathan Stewart, that would later become Company G, Eighth Florida Infantry.

Just weeks later, however, without seeing action, Delk died from pneumonia on July 15, 1862, in Tallahassee, aged 22, where he is buried although he has a memorial in the Apopka Church Cemetery.

The memorial reads “In Memory of Pvt William P. Delk, Co G, 8 Fla Inf, CSA, July 15, 1862” and the stone was placed by the United Daughters of the Confederacy as his body was buried in Tallahassee. His father would later be buried beside his son’s memorial stone in the Apopka Church Cemetery.
Also on January 8, 1862, Delk bought 280 acres of land from the State of Florida for 27 cents an acre through the Internal Improvement Fund.

In 1855, the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund was created as an agency of the Florida government. In 1841, the U.S. government had granted each state in the union 500,000 acres. Combined with the land received through the Swamp and Overflowed Lands Act of 1850, the Trustees had more than 21 million acres under its control.

Land was offered at a nominal price to those willing to build infrastructure such as roads and railways and to drain, clear and reclaim land for agriculture.
Know All Men by these Presents, That the Trustees of the Internal Improvements Fund, pursuant to Title 36 of the General Assembly of the State of Ohio, having enacted an Act to provide for and encourage a liberal system of Internal Improvements in the State, approved on January 6, 1833 for an endowment of the sum of Twentyfive thousand dollars for the benefit of the people of the State, have granted, conveyed and sold and do by these presents Grant, Bargain, Sell and Convey unto the said William Shubert and his heirs and assigns for the following described lands: Townships

The South East quarter of the South East quarter of Section Twelve, and the South West quarter of Section Eleven, and the South East quarter of the North East quarter of the South East quarter of Section Five, in the Township of Sandusky, Range Twenty, Eight East, containing two hundred and eighty acres andlying and being in the County of Orange in the State of Ohio, to be sold and held unto the said William Shubert and his heirs and assigns forever.

In Testimony Whereof, the Trustees have hereunto affixed their names and sealed their seals and have caused an impression of the Seal of the County of Sandusky and thereupon do make known at the City of Columbus on this the eighth day of January A.D. Eighteen Hundred and ThirtyThree

John Fields, Governor Seal
Malachi Joseph, Auditor Seale
William Mason, Treasurer Seale
I, Eleazer W. Allen, Attorney General Seal
Hugh Workley, Register Seale
Delk senior was an old-line Whig and supported the Union while most of his neighbors supported the Confederacy. Despite the Confederacy’s demand, he refused to buy bonds to support their war effort and in 1864, a Confederate cavalry unit from Lake City was sent to seize him and his land.

Note. Robards in an interview published in the Apopka Chief in 1926 gave the date as 1863 but it was more likely 1864.

Delk invited the troops into his home and provided them with supper, but they still arrested him that evening and they all headed out as night fell. At Sorrento they made camp and Delk made his escape, took to the swamps, to avoid the troops and then returned to his home.

According to Robards, “Delk told us slaves – there were 19 of us - that we were free and to take care of ourselves”. Delk then set out for St. Augustine where there were Federal forces.

“The rest of us killed a beef and taking what provisions we could carry, set out for Wekiwa by ox team. We left four or five bales of cotton and everything else,” said Robards.

“At Wekiwa we found an old boat and started down the river. Reaching the St. Johns without mishap, we were picked up by a federal gunboat and started north. Near St. Augustine we were turned over to the Fifth Ohio Cavalry and taken into camp. Here Delk joined the party,” he said.

Note: The Wekiwa mentioned above was a small community one mile east of Rock Springs on the Wekiva River where Wekiva Falls now stands. It was not Wekiva Springs, the state park in Apopka, which was then called Clay Springs. Wekiva Falls used to be called Ford Springs and at some point, the area was hit by a hurricane which blew earth from the nearby railroad bed into the springs plugging the boil.
In St. Augustine on August 26, 1864, Delk gave his consent for Joseph, a minor aged 18, to volunteer as a soldier in the Army of the United States for two years. Joseph was then sent to Hilton Head, South Carolina, where he enlisted in the Union Army on September 14, 1864.

“I enlisted in the Union army and was sent to South Carolina, where the whole muss started, and there I did service to the close of the war.

“The year 1868 found me back at Rock Springs again, and that year I homesteaded a piece of land near Sorrento and lived there many years.

“Later I was able to acquire ten acres of land near Mount Dora and I am living my last days there with my niece,” he said.

Interestingly in these recollections, Robards does not mention Anthony Frazier although they were both slaves at Delk’s plantation, half-brothers and both signed up at Hilton Head, South Carolina, and served in the Union Army. Both were honorably discharged on the same day – April 25, 1866, and they stayed in touch after the war.
Many of Delk’s other freed slaves settled around Island Pond, a lake just north of SR 44 and north of Sorrento. At least one of Frazier’s descendants is buried in nearby Eustis.

However, in a deposition he gave dated December 20, 1910, we get a more detailed look at who Anthony Frazier was and their relationship.

“I well knew Anthony Frazier. That is the only name he ever had except before the war some people called him Delk. Anthony Frazier was my half-brother, seven years, or nine years older than I. He was 73 or 75 years old last March just before he died.

“He and I had the same owner – Mr. Delk. My mother and Anthony Frazier’s mother was the same, her name was Judy Henry, but my father was a white man and Anthony’s father was a black man named Anthony Frazier.

“Anthony was born somewhere in Georgia in Liberty County I believe. I was born in Marion County, Florida. I was raised in Marian County until I was four or five years old, and I then went to Mississippi for a little while and then back to Florida. Anthony and I worked at the Delk Place near Rock Springs until he and I went away to the army together.

Note. Robards mentions going to Mississippi for a while. There were reports that Delk got into trouble over the purchase of some cattle and had to disappear for a while until things quietened down. He is said to have stayed in Mississippi for about a year before returning to Rock Springs.

Robards continued: “Before the war Anthony Frazier sawmilled and carpentered and farmed and after the war he farmed and did general hard labor.

“He came back here in January or February after he was discharged. He lived close to here till he died. I saw him dead. He died on April 4. The first and only wife he ever had was this claimant, Mary Frazier.
“She was from Charleston, South Carolina, and my brother Anthony got acquainted with her while we were camped there as soldiers.

“She was a very young woman then and I knew her then as Mary Chambers. I don’t know that I ever heard her called Mary Ward. My brother was to marry her at once on discharge and they was to have been married that night but we got word that the transport that was to bring us to Savannah on our way home, was to leave at once, so Mary and Anthony had to leave.”

An artist’s visualization of what Delk would have looked like c.1860. Courtesy of artist Gary Schermerhorn.

While Delk planned to join the federal forces there is no record of this. There are, however, records of a William S. Delk, civilian, who was supplying cattle to the Union troops in Jacksonville and St. Augustine.
On at least two occasions after Anthony’s death, Robards petitioned on Mary Frazier’s behalf for Anthony’s $15 a month war pension to be transferred to her.

On September 10, 1864, Delk appeared at the Office of the Provost Marshall in St. Augustine to register a horse that he had bought one month earlier for $100 from a Mr. William Simmons. In that registration document Delk said that he was “in the government’s employ” and that he needed the horse for his work.

It appears that there was a dispute over the horse’s ownership and Delk was arrested and placed in detention.

On December 7, Headquarters District of Florida 8 in Jacksonville directed that he be released from arrest. He was ordered to report to the Provost Marshall’s office each morning until further notice, but otherwise was told to go about and do his work.

This work included providing federal forces with provisions especially cattle which Delk would round up and drive to St. Augustine and then submit paperwork for payment.

Florida was an important source of cattle and salt during the war. Salt was needed to preserve the meat and for tanning the hides. At its height, the Florida salt industry employed over 5,000 men.

Florida became a major supplier of cattle for the Confederate Army, but many ranchers sold their herds to the Union Army who offered payment in money or gold.

The Union also recruited civilians to ride out and round up cattle and drive them back to Jacksonville and these civilians were often not too picky where they got the animals as long as they got paid. As a result, skirmishes were common between cattle ranchers and drovers working for both sides.
This led in 1864 to the organization of the Confederate’s Cow Cavalry – units made up of veterans, ranchers and cowmen who mostly stayed in their communities where they could provide for their families and protect the livestock.

They were combined into a battalion commanded by Colonel Charles I. Munnerlyn. One unit was assigned to Melonville (Sanford) with instructions to clear the counties of Orange and Volusia of "torries" who were driving "rebel-beef" to the Federals at St. Augustine.

In Florida, cowboys were known as cowmen. They argued that the work was too tough for boys and was a man’s job, thus the name which stuck.
Headquarters Dept of Bla.
2d Separate Brigade D.S.
Jacksonville Fla Dec 7 1863

Lt J.H. Holle
Comd at St. Augustine

Col. Holle

The Brig Genl. orders direct that Mr. S. Delk (civilian) be released from confinement and ordered to report at the Clerk Marshal's Office each morning until further orders. He is thus ordered, with the object of retaining him as a witness.

I am Colonel
Respectfully your obedient servt.
Thomas J. Askinson
Lt & A. A. A.

Headquarters U.S. Forces
St Augustine Fla Dec 9 1863

Official

W.H. Chaffin
31st S Carolina Volts Adjt
The cow cavalry was disbanded on April 9, 1865, following the surrender of the Confederate armies.

Delk must have been ranging far and wide to round up cattle. Sometimes he would be on the trail for 28 days driving cattle back to Jacksonville or St. Augustine. And it seems he was not too particular where he got the
In December 1864, he was in trouble with the authorities again over ownership of the cattle that he was supplying.

A letter written on December 30, 1864, to Brigadier General Eliakim Parker Scammon, the general commanding the District of Florida, recommends that Delk’s “application for payment” be rejected because of doubts about the ownership of the cattle he had delivered.

The letter was written by an officer (R. L. Holloway – rank unknown), in the Union’s Provost Marshall’s office in Jacksonville. He said Delk had been paid $300 for delivering a herd after a cattle drive of 28 days but that another delivery was in dispute.

Holloway said that at least four other men were claiming ownership of the cattle. He said that cattle being received, all bore the brands of “rebels” and that Delk and others knew they would not be paid for “driving loyal men’s stock”.

“Since it is impossible to ascertain what part of the lot in question he should receive pay for, I would most respectfully submit that his application be disapproved,” concluded Holloway.
Jacksonville, Fla
December 30th 1864

Brie, Genl. E. P. Scammon,
1st Comdy Dist of Florida
General

In relation to the application of Mr. D. Delk, for payment for collecting and driving a lot of cattle at St. Augustine, Fla. I have the honor to state that I have seen four papers made by as many different parties, each purporting to give the number and marks & brands of said cattle. No two of these agreed either as to the number or marks.

J. B. Morehouse certifies that one of them is correct, see accompanying paper marked 5 & also one marked 13 which are two of those above referred to.

It is Mr. Delk’s interest to have as many of these cattle rendered bearing the marks & Brands of Rebeles, knowing that
Other than the above, little is known about Delk’s activities for the remainder of the war.

After the war, Delk returned to Rock Springs and reclaimed his property. Delk continued to farm, while Robards and Frazier, who were now free men, bought their own land nearby under the Homestead Act and using the bounty money.
On June 9, 1868. Delk bought 120 acres for $1.25 an acre through the Internal Improvement Fund but this sale was not recorded until after his death.

Delk, still clashing with his neighbors, was involved in bitter litigation to recover debts owed to him from James S. Hackney. Because of his Unionist sympathies, he did not think he could get a fair trial locally, so his case was moved to Putnam County where a jury awarded him $884.60 damages.

Orange County Sheriff John Ivey was ordered to seize and sell 176 acres of Hackney’s land to pay the judgment.

Delk likely married his wife Samantha in 1868/9. She was 31 years younger than him. They had two daughters, Nora born in 1869 and Martha in 1870.

Extract from the 1870 Federal Census of Orange County listing William S. Delk, 56, wife Samantha, 25, and unnamed baby, 10 months old.
On March 8, 1877, Delk bought just under 40 acres of land for $140 from Leroy S. Strickland and the State of Florida, and in December 1880, he bought another parcel of land for $14,000 from Josiah C. and Francis Phillips. The acreage was not listed on the Indenture.

In later years Delk became an active and prominent member of the community, and in July 1880, he and D. C. Hill were appointed Orange County Special Commissioners for Roads and tasked with building a road between Orlando and Rock Springs “by the best and nearest practicable route”.

The image contains a handwritten document that appears to be an Indenture, detailing the transfer of land. The text on the document reads:

“This Indenture, made the 8th day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven, between Leroy S. Strickland of the county of Orange, and the State of Florida, of the first part, and William E. Delk, of the county of Orange, of the second part, and of Orange County and State of Florida, witness that the said part 4 of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of Ten Thousand Four Hundred Dollars, lawful money of the United States of America, to be paid in hand paid by the said part 4 of the second part, at or before the conveyance and delivery of the hereby acknowledged and hereinafter described, released, conveyed and confirmed, and by these presents, for the sum of Ten Thousand Four Hundred Dollars, to have and hold, the said part 4, together with its appurtenances, unto the said part 4, forever.

The said part 4, together with its appurtenances, forever, and the other part of the same, together with its appurtenances, forever.

In witness whereof, the above and foregoing has been hereunto subscribed, sealed, signed, and acknowledged by the parties thereto, this 8th day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and seventy-seven, at Orange, Florida.

[Signature]

William E. Delk

[Signature]

Leroy S. Strickland

[Signature]

Orange County and State of Florida

[Signature]
In October 1880, Delk and two other men – his freed slave Anthony Frazier and James Madison - were also appointed Orange County Road Commissioners to supervise the building of a public road from Rock Springs to the Hawkinsville Road intersection.

James Madison

James Madison was born in Mississippi in 1845, the son of Isaac Ware (born in 1830 in South Carolina), and presumably born a slave. Little is known of his early life but by the early 1850s, James was living in Florida. His half-sisters Nancy, born 1854, and Neily (or Nealy), born about 1854 were both born in Florida. Their mother was Hettie Bacon, black, who was born in Georgia about 1828. According to the 1870 U. S. Census, Isaac Ware, a farmer, was living in Enterprise and Jincy Ware, aged 30, is listed as his “supposed” wife. She was too young to have been James’ mother. At that time, Hetty was living near Clay Springs as was James, and they both list their address as the Post Office, Clay Springs. James is listed as a farm laborer although subsequent Censuses list him as self-employed trading in wood.

Hetty married Isaac Ware on Christmas Day, 1876. His date of death is not known while Hetty died in Sorrento, Lake County in 1915.

On May 16, 1880, James married Annie born in North Carolina in 1856, and the 1880 U.S. Census lists him as ‘mulatto’. Their address, according to the 1890 U.S. Census is given as St. Claire Avenue, Sorrento, Lake County.


In 1880 James, along with William Delk and Anthony Frazier, was appointed a Special Commissioner for Roads in Orange County.
From 1882 James and Annie bought and sold many parcels of land. There are 31 deeds of sale recorded in the Orange County archives, most of them in the 1880s. Two are of special interest because on November 9, 1885, he bought 120 acres of land from Anthony Frazier, and on March 13, 1887, he sold a plot to Samantha Delk, widow of William (the acreage and price is not listed). One of his last transactions was on September 14, 1918, when he sold land to the Wilson Cypress Company.

James died in Eustis, Lake County, in 1931.

From the handwritten minutes of the Orange County Commissioners Meeting, October 4, 1880

Roads in the 1880s were a far cry from those of today but it was the duty of the appointed Road Commissioners to “locate and prepare the roads”, and then to keep these public highways in good repair.

If there were complaints about the state of the road, the Commissioners responsible could be reported to the State Attorney and prosecuted for not maintaining them.

In rural areas, road building usually involved cutting down trees and filling holes with sand to create a route that horses and ox carts could pass through.
Until 1896, the specifications for work on public roads read: “Keep clear palmetto and other roots, trees, bushes, etc., for a width of eight feet. Low ways to be causewayed, poles 16 ft long, well covered with dirt. Sand kept off bridges.”

Delk died at home in 1885 aged 70, leaving his estate to his second wife Samantha. She settled the estate on June 11, 1885, recording the Marion County warrant property for the first time and the sale of Rock Springs to Josiah C. Phillips for $14,000 cash.

The deed of sale to Josiah Phillips was the first known official record of the Rock Springs property and it describes in detail the location of his estate. Although Delk bought and sold land, he rarely recorded it and there was no record of his Rock Springs purchase until after his death.

His widow had to sort out his affairs and record his property transactions for probate purposes.
The indenture recording the sale of Rock Springs to Josiah Phillips for $14,000.

From records, it seems that Delk sold his Rock Springs property to Phillips in 1881 but retained ten acres on which he lived for the remaining years of his life.
This Indenture made the Third day of August in the year of our Lord One Thousand Eight Hundred and Eighteen and between William S. Elder and Samuel Thomas S. Elder, his wife, of the County of Orange and State of Ohio, the 1st part and James Phillips, Sr., of the Second part, for and in consideration of the sum of nine hundred and eighty dollars and the sum of twenty dollars paid by the said party of the Second part to the said party of the 1st part and delivered to the said party of the 1st part and acknowledged by the said party of the 1st part, do hereby assign, confirm unto and confirm to the said party of the Second part thisIndenture and assigns the same hereof all that certain parcel of land located at the NW corner of Orange and State of Ohio, known as S. Elder's land and described as follows:

The SE 1/4 of SE 1/4 Sec. 16 of the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Sec. 26, T-70-S-40.

The SW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of Sec. 26, T-70-S-40.

The SE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Sec. 26, T-70-S-40.

This Indenture and assigns the same hereof all that certain parcel of land located at the NW corner of Orange and State of Ohio, known as S. Elder's land and described as follows:

The SE 1/4 of SE 1/4 Sec. 16 of the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Sec. 26, T-70-S-40.

The SW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of Sec. 26, T-70-S-40.

The SE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Sec. 26, T-70-S-40.

This Indenture and assigns the same hereof all that certain parcel of land located at the NW corner of Orange and State of Ohio, known as S. Elder's land and described as follows:

The SE 1/4 of SE 1/4 Sec. 16 of the NW 1/4 of the SW 1/4 of Sec. 26, T-70-S-40.

The SW 1/4 of SW 1/4 of the NW 1/4 of the NE 1/4 of Sec. 26, T-70-S-40.

The SE 1/4 of SW 1/4 of Sec. 26, T-70-S-40.
for from all becoming to the said party of the first part
the said right to all and every the sum of the said party of
the said party of the first part his executors and administra
tors above directed

and hereby for and against all and every person present
their lawful claim or to claim the same shall and
will require and by their power so enjoin
this 3rd day of August AD 1881 personally
Came before me an acting Notary Public to wit
Samantha Delks
Deed_binder William Delks and upon

Delk was buried in Apopka, next to the memorial for his son. Years later, Robards recounted that “it was a miserable death and a pathetic funeral. I was living in Sorrento where I had homesteaded a piece of land.”

He said when he heard of Delk’s death “I came here and put the old man in a rough box, the best we could do, and the body was taken to Apopka and buried in a small cemetery there.”

It is not known why Delk’s funeral was such a pathetic and miserable affair. He had sold his land shortly before and should have been in receipt of significant funds. The payment, however, might have been delayed until after the deeds were filed and that was after Delk’s death.

*Delk’s headstone which mistakenly lists his age as 72*
At least two of Delk’s freed slaves also became landowners. Frazier bought 160 acres of land in what is now Neighborhood Lakes and over the next forty years bought and sold many parcels of land in the area (see Anthony Frazier below).

Robards settled in Sorrento and then farmed 10 acres near Mount Dora. He visited Rock Springs in 1926 with Mr. Wm. Edwards and Mr. A. M. Hall, editor of the Apopka Chief, to whom he related his life story. It was published in the Apopka Chief of May 13, 1926.

Mr. Hall relates that Robards “stood by the spring with bared head and chanted this greeting and farewell: Best greetings, Mr. Rock, Howdedo Mr. Spring! From whence you come, I do not know, from whence you came in the beginning. And whence do you flow, we do not know. Blessing for years you have continued to bring. Wherefore you are known as Old Rock Spring. For, lo, many years did I here remain. This you may know, it is old friend Joe, who worked here so long, midst sorrow and woe. Good night, old spring, forever."

**Aunt Betty**

On November 2, 1909, the Jacksonville Times-Union newspaper reported on the death of “Aunt Betty” Reese, at the age of 109. In the Sorrento news section and under the headline “Old Slavery Woman Dead”, the paper reported: “Aunt Betty Reese is dead at the ripe old age of 109”.

“The colored people with their little ones will gather today at the funeral from many miles around, for the descendants of Aunt Betty, to the fourth and fifth generations were very thickly scattered over the four counties of Orange, Lake, Marion, and Sumter.
“A famous mother in the colored Israel was Aunt Betty. Despite her advanced years, she was wonderfully active till within a week of her death. Her hearing and eyesight never seemed to be out of repair in the least. Aunt Betty was born on a plantation in Southern Georgia about the time Thomas Jefferson entered into his first time as president.

“When a young married slave with five children she and her whole family were sold to the notorious planter, Delk, whose large Florida estate rambled for many leagues around Rock Springs, five miles from one of the two sources for the Wekiva River.

“When slavery days were over, Betty and her brood moved to a secluded spot about three miles northwest of Sorrento and named it Island Pond, where they formed a settlement and where the old woman lived out the balance of her days. Two of her grandsons are nearly 70. As to her great and great-great grandchildren they quit trying to count them long ago.”
Delk Island

The higher ground that Delk Island and Pine Island afforded at the north end of the spring run, were popular spots with hunters.

(Source. Orlando Sentinel)
Hunter’s map of Delk Island showing best positions for blinds. (Source. WSSP Archives)

Delk Island is across from King’s Landing, named after landowner Elmer Stanton King, who was a member of the Apopka Sportsmen’s Club. His grandfather, Murray S. King, designed the 1927 Orange County
Courthouse which is now home to the Orange County Regional History Center.

In the 1960s, realtor Gabrielle “Gaby” Gardener, bought the Landing site for a canoe rental business. When she became too ill to run the business (she died in 2007), she sold it to Bob and Steven Loomis in the early 2000s and they pledged to preserve King’s Landing for future generations.

The Landings was closed following the 2004 hurricane season when four major storms hit central Florida and destroyed the canoe launch area with much of the Run impassable because of fallen trees.

However, the landing area was restored and the debris in the river was finally removed and King’s Landing and Rock Springs Run today is one of the premier paddles in Florida.

Few people paddling down this quiet and beautiful scenic river today, however, have any idea that this was once a historic and prosperous plantation site.
Ethel

Ethel cemetery is all that remains of the once thriving farming township of Ethel in what is now Rock Springs Run State Reserve. The railroad arrived in 1886 with a ‘flag’ stop, so called because people would stand on the tracks and flag the train down if they wanted to board.

The railroad later built a platform on the southern side of the tracks to make it easier for people to get on and off. Local produce, especially citrus, was taken by cart to local markets or by train to further afield.

From combing through property deeds and records, we know that there were several sawmills in the area with a rail spur line from Ethel to at least one of the mills on what is now Cypress Mill Road which runs parallel and just north of SR 46.

Located east of County Road 433 (which is the road running through Rock Springs), Ethel cemetery is currently the oldest known cemetery in Lake County. Three grave markers, bearing four names, remain intact.

Just over a mile to the east was the small township of Wekiva, close to the river of the same name and not to be confused with Wekiwa Springs which at that time was called Clay Springs (until 1906), close to Apopka and Longwood, and the source of the Wekiva River.

Wekiva did not have either a school or cemetery and some of the people who lived there were buried at Ethel. Wekiva did have a ferry which was essential for travel in the area even after the arrival of the railway.
1890 ferry rates (before automobiles) were:

Three or four horses or oxen and team $1.00
Two horses or oxen and team .75¢
One horse or ox and team .40 ¢
Saddle horse and rider .25 ¢
Foot passenger .25 ¢
Cow, calf, sheep, goat, or hog .10 ¢

Ethel was established in the 1860s mostly by people who obtained their land through the Homestead Act.
These land deeds were known as patents or grants. This area was then in Orange County but became part of the new Lake County which was created in 1887.

A June 1, 1887, article in the Jacksonville Times-Union newspaper, which was then the state newspaper, reported on a meeting in Sorrento on May 28. “The people in this vicinity are much agitated over the proposed division of Orange County.

“As it stands now, Sorrento will be in the new county of Lake. We are not at all pleased at the prospect of separating from old Orange but suppose we must submit to the inevitable.

“It will undoubtedly be a pull where to locate the county seat, Leesburg, Eustis, and Tavares all being the points to select from.”

**Population Growth**

In 1840, Mosquito County, which included the present-day counties of Orange, Lake, Polk, Palm Beach, Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie, Martin, Seminole and Osceola, had a population of 78. In 1844 it changed its name to Orange County and by 1850, the population had grown to 466. By 1860, it was 987, by 1870, 2195 and by 1880 it had reached 6,618. It almost doubled by 1890 to 12,584 but declined by 1900 to 11,374 following disastrous freezes which wiped out the citrus industry forcing many families to leave.

In 1890 the population of Lake County which included Ethel was 8,034 but again this had declined by 1900 to 7,467. At that time, the population of Sorrento, the nearest township was 383 and may have included those living in Ethel and Wekiva.
People who bought property under the Homestead Act were required to farm the land for five years (unless they were a Civil War veteran) and build their own home on it.

Most of these homes were primitive affairs, often one room cabins built from felled trees and some as small as ten feet by 12 feet. A condition of the Homestead Act was that the cabin must be at least 12 feet by 14 feet.

When the settlers arrived on their land with their few belongings, they would set up camp. They would make a small A-frame shelter from cypress saplings covered with palm fronds or erect a tent among the pines. Snakes, lizards, and roaches would also make their homes in the thatch of the shelter. At night they would have to contend with wolves, panthers, bears, bobcats and other wild animals.

Then, they would choose the best location for their cabin and start to clear the land. Large oak trees would be spared to provide shade for the cabin. Pine trees had to be felled and hauled to the site and then shaped by hand. Cabins were usually built facing east to take advantage of early morning sunlight and warmth, and easterly breezes. This orientation also helped keep the logs dry and prevent the wood rotting so fast.

Sand from the river was used to make large bricks on which the log walls would rest to prevent them from rotting by keeping them off the ground.

Sand and clay from the river would be mixed with water, tightly pressed into molds and left in the sun for two or three days to dry. The brick would shrink in the mold, so more mixture was added, tightly packed.
down and then left in the sun to dry for up to a week. The bricks would then be soaked in water to absorb as much moisture as possible and then left in the sun to dry from within. This ensured a brick that would last a long time.

The trees were hand-hewn into logs which were used for walls and floors, although early cabins floors were bare earth. The walls were often 15 logs high, alternating large logs with smaller ones. Notches were carved near the end of each log so that logs from adjoining walls interlocked into one another in each of the corners. Gaps between logs were filled with mud and leaves. This made for a very rigid structure which would have withstood very high winds.

The roof was covered with large cedar tiles loosely laid on cedar trusses to allow ventilation. Sometimes flat wooden boards were nailed to the interior walls, but this was an additional cost because the wood would have to be bought from a local mill.

Once the walls were built, openings for a door and window had to be sawed out. If there was a window, it would face south for morning warmth and light from the sun.

It would be covered with greased paper or burlap to provide some sort of weather proofing and to keep insects out. Glass was too expensive and broke too easily, Quilts were often used to cover doorways in early cabins. Later, doors made with boards would be used, hung with leather hinges.
Finley Belshazar Click outside his first cabin, Ethel c. late 1880s.
Cabin construction using notched log. Source: Florida Memory

Click’s second cabin built around c. 1910 with the old cabin behind

Margaret and Finley Click outside their second cabin c. 1912
The cabin construction, using notched logs that locked them all in position, meant extremely solid structures. There were numerous hurricanes throughout the 19th century, but homestead cabins were built to withstand them.

The worst two hurricanes of the century both passed across central Florida. The first was on September 7, 1844, when there was almost no settlement in central Florida. The second was on August 29, 1880, when a Category 2 hurricane made landfall just south of Cocoa Beach. It crossed over central Florida and exited land near Cedar Key. It was responsible for at least 68 deaths and many shipwrecks.

While the cabin construction was not complicated it took time. Apart from building a home, settlers had to clear an area for a garden, and plant crops because they needed food.

Cedar trees were plentiful, but it took time to fashion shingles and a cabin’s roof may need 500 or more. While the shingles were being made, the roof might have been thatched with palmetto fronds. It could take up to a year before the family was able to move into their new home, and after that, it was then a constant round of repairs and improvements.
Finley B. Click and his wife Maggie, outside his second cabin, Ethel, 1912. Source for all Click photographs. Frankie “Maxwell” Goebel, his great granddaughter, and Porter Click, her cousin, whose great, great father was Finley’s brother.

A different view of Click’s second cabin with the old cabin in the foreground to the left. He has a rifle over his shoulder and is obviously
doing some repairs. There are several hides hanging over the fence of the closure to dry.

The breezeway or airway through the cabin funneled any wind through the middle of the house, and separated the parent’s bedroom from the main room where the children would have slept or separated the main living area from the kitchen. Behind the cabin above is a fenced area for the animals and to the right of the cabin an outside shed or animal coop.
Finley Click working his land at Ethel.
A typical homesteaders cabin c.1890. This photo (courtesy of Florida Memory) shows a cabin built in south Florida.

A typical rural settlement in the late 19th century. Source: Florida Memory
A typical homestead cabin and outbuildings with animal enclosure. Source: Florida Memory

Typical fence for animal enclosure. Source: Florida Memory
Settlers would often fashion their own furniture from wood – beds, tables, and chairs. Once built, the settlers would continue to make improvements to their cabins and as their families grew, the cabins would be extended or replaced by a bigger structure. The original cabin would then be used as a storehouse or given to a son on their marriage.

If rope was not available, they would use natural materials to make cordage. Strips of palm fronds braided together make a strong rope.

Early settlers would cook outside because of the danger of fire inside the wooden structures. Later cabins would have brick chimneys to vent smoke from either an open fire or a wood burning stove. Cast iron wood burning stoves were available but too expensive for most early homesteaders.

Close to the cabin would be an enclosure for livestock with hollowed-out logs used for feed and water troughs. The animals would be allowed to graze freely during the day but would be rounded up at night and corralled for protection against predators.

Trees around the cabin would be felled. This cleared the ground for farming, allowed more sun to penetrate the cabin which helped warm it and made it less damp, and it also reduced the risk to the cabin from wildfires caused by lightning strikes, a constant hazard.

The log cabins were scattered among clearings in the trees. Each cabin stood on its own land which had been cleared for crops and a vegetable garden. Sweet potatoes and pumpkins were popular as they only had to be planted once.

A plot was cleared, seeds were sown, and the two vegetables would continue to produce year after year if they got enough water and manure.

Later, the more adventurous homesteaders would plant orange groves with peach trees planted between the orange trees for added income. When the railroad arrived, more fruit was planted – lemons, grapefruit,
pears, plums and guavas - because it was able to get to markets further afield before rotting. Pineapples, strawberries, grapes and even olives were also grown as cash crops.

The first post-Civil War settlers at Ethel were the Moore family - William and Charlotte and their three sons, who arrived from eastern Georgia in the late 1860s. They had acquired 360 acres which they planned to farm.

The life did not suit the two eldest sons who soon returned to Georgia and raised families there, but Newton, the youngest son, stayed with his parents, and they all spent the rest of their lives at Ethel.

The family continued to acquire nearby land. William expanded his holdings with land grants in 1875 and 1878, and Newton acquired a large adjacent tract with an 1882 land grant.

William donated a site in the northwest corner of his 1878 land grant for the cemetery in 1880. No official record of any transfer of property has been found although the donated site is mentioned in later deeds.

The exact size of the cemetery is not known but it is thought to have been one acre with the western side following the section line.

In the 1920’s there were said to be so many graves, according to reports from residents at the time, that it was difficult to dig a new grave without coming across an old one.

The Moore’s quickly acquired neighbors, and most became farmers, raising row crops, citrus, grapes, melons, peaches, and farm animals such as cattle, goats, sheep, chickens, and hogs.

Others were farm laborers according to early census’s working for large landowners, especially in the citrus groves. The local timber mills and cattle farms also provided employment. The township also had its craftsmen – carpenters, machinists, and wood cutters.
The population grew again after the railroad was built with people working for the railroad company and in the logging, timber, and turpentine industries and in the booming citrus market. The railroad allowed fruit to be shipped quickly to much bigger and more distant markets.

William and Charlotte were buried in the same plot in Ethel cemetery and their headstone remains. William was buried in 1882 and his wife Charlotte was buried alongside him in 1883 when his headstone was replaced with a new double headstone. Newton was buried in 1889 at Ethel but his grave site is unknown although it is assumed that it would have been close to his parents.

As Ethel was a relatively isolated community it was common for the young adults of one family to marry the young adults of a neighboring family and there are many instances of this.

Newton Moore married Laura Emma Kirkland and they had two daughters, both of whom died before 1900 and both of whom were buried at Ethel. So far twenty-nine confirmed burials have been documented at Ethel.

On June 13, 1884, a legal transcription was recorded between Newton G. Moore and Laura E. Moore, his wife, and Mrs. M. A. Bull, a widow, concerning property where Ethel Cemetery is located.

The indenture recorded the sale of 159 acres of land for $8,000 and specifically excepted one acre, which is the site of the cemetery.

The area was described as “the SW quarter of the NW quarter of Section 32, the East one half of the NE quarter and the SW quarter of the NE quarter of Section 31 in Township 19 South of Range 29 East, with the exception of one acre lying in the Northwest corner of the NE quarter of the NE quarter of said Section 31.”

The agreement was recorded in Book 15, pages 147 and 148 of Orange County, Florida, records.
This suggested that the cemetery covered one acre.

The source of the name Ethel is not known but the township is believed to have been given that name when the Sanford-Lake Eustis Railway arrived in 1886. The first map to show the name of Ethel was published in 1888 by the Land Department of the South Florida R.R. Co. and the Plant Investment Co. Locals would often refer to the township as Ethel Station.

Two years earlier, on January 29, 1884, a post office opened in the settlement with the official name of Moody Post Office, according to the Post Office Department in Washington D.C.

The application to open the post office was approved on January 16, 1884.

The application was submitted by A. Thompson. (A Mrs. Nathaniel Thompson, born 1849 and died January 22, 1894, was buried in Ethel Cemetery).
The post office application was probably submitted knowing that the railroad was coming. The post office’s proposed location was described as NW Section 30, Township 19 south and Range 29 in the county of Orange on the route between Sanford and Eustis which carried mail three times a week.

The nearest post offices, according to the filing, were Sorrento, six miles to the west, and Sylvan Lakes, six miles to the east. Bent was listed as the nearest flag station, 10 miles away. The new post office would provide service for “about 68 people”, Thompson wrote.

The applicant was also required to provide a name for the new post office. The instruction on the application read: “Select a short name for the proposed office which, when written, will not resemble the name of any other post office in the United States.

In response to this question Thompson first wrote in the name Chi--co, (undecipherable middle letter) but crossed this out and replaced it with Moody, and that is how Moody became the name of the post office. It operated from January 29, 1884, to August 25, 1889, when services were transferred to Sorrento.

The first map to show Ethel, printed in 1888. (Source. South Florida Railroad Co.)
The railroad arrived in 1886 and the township was given the name of Ethel. In 1887 Ethel became part of the new Lake County and the post office closed on August 25, 1889, when service transferred to Sorrento.

A second post office was established on May 17, 1890, and operated until September 7, 1900, when services were discontinued and transferred to Paola.

There were postal services at Wekiva between March 28, 1856, and March 29, 1867, from October 5, 1870, to June 6, 1876. And from August 11, 1887, to June 23, 1898, when services were transferred to Orlando. The last Wekiva Post Office operated from September 11, 1913, to February 15, 1920, when George M. Coates applied to locate the post office, to a site 600 feet from the Wekiva River and on the west side of it.

It would also be close to the Atlantic Coastline Railroad and half a mile from the track. The application noted that the railroad station was named Wekiva and that the post office at Paola had closed.

The Sanford and Lake Eustis Railway ran from Sanford west to the town of Tavares on Lake Eustis, a distance of 28 miles. It was a branch of the Jacksonville, Tampa and Key West Railway, a system that later became part of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad. Construction began in Sanford in 1885 and was constructed to 4 ft 9 in gauge.
Ethel station was called a ‘flag’ stop because passengers simply stepped on to the rails and flagged the train down. Later a short platform was built on the south side of the track. The railway was in use until the 1960s.

The early train engines were wood burning, and they would pick up cut wood at Ethel. At some point, the railroad switched from narrow gauge to standard gauge. The tracks were taken out in 1980, and the raised rail bed is all that remains along the north side of Ethel Drive.
The scattered Ethel community grew up around a commissary, or general store, that had belonged to a timber company. The post office would likely have been located inside the store. It burned down prior to 1916.

For bigger shopping expeditions before the arrival of the railroad, people would go by horse and ox cart to Sanford which would mean getting up at 4 am and not returning home until the late evening. People would stop for lunch at Catfish Springs (believed to have been on the outskirts of Sanford and close to Lake Monroe) and then go into town to do their shopping.

Later they could also go by rail, but the trains did not run often, and the service was not always reliable.

The township was laid out in plots recorded in a plat. Ethel Drive was the main street with the railway running parallel with it and to the north. Ethel Drive ran past the commissary and there was a track leading from it to the cemetery. The school was just off Ethel Road to the east of the station.
It is not known if there were other ‘streets’ other than sand tracks between the homesteads.

Families were large because there was no birth control and the larger the family, the more people there were to help with household chores, growing crops, tending livestock, foraging, fishing, and hunting.

Life expectancy, however, was not good, especially for children. There was little access to local doctors and medicine. Many women died in childbirth, babies succumbed to ailments and diseases such as yellow fever, typhoid and malaria killed many.

When a son married and if he was able to, he would buy a plot next to the family homestead or receive some land from his family. Family and neighbors would help the new landowner build his cabin once he had cut the logs for it.

If the families could afford it, the son would on his wedding receive a horse, saddle, and a cow, while the bride’s family would provide bedding and kitchen items.

As soon as they could shoot, boys would be given a rifle as game hunting was an important way of putting food on the table.

Ethel Drive was originally going to be named McDonald Road, after a New York businessman who had bought a lot of land in the area and ran a small newspaper, however, the locals successfully petitioned for it to be called Ethel Drive.
A typical sand road through the pines. Source: Florida Memory.
Life in Ethel

Life in Ethel was hard, and the people had to be very resilient. They were hardworking, versatile pioneers and they had to quickly learn to live off the land and use what it provided. Country people worked from dawn to dusk and even in towns, people with jobs worked 10-12 hours a day, six days a week.

A trip into town was a full day’s journey and money was always in short supply. Families would often club together to make shopping lists so that supplies could be bought for all when someone had to go into town.
Each family member had a specific role to play as part of everyday life.

The mother’s job was to make sure that everything ran smoothly. She oversaw household chores and cooking. When she was not cooking meals, she might be canning fruit or vegetables, or sewing clothes for the family. For work clothes they might make aprons out of cloth sacks, dresses out of cotton sacks and use the thick skins of gourds for buttons. Nothing was wasted.

She would make candles and soap from animal fat and lye, spin yarn and weave, take care of the vegetable garden and look after the chickens. She would also act as a teacher instructing the younger children who were not attending school. Moreover, the mother would likely either be pregnant or nursing a newborn.
The father’s job was to clear the land and build a home and then keep it in good repair. While the mother and children would weed the vegetable garden, it was the father’s job to plow the land and sow crops. With his eldest boys he would also hunt, trap and fish for food.

Children would all be assigned chores and be expected to perform them. The older children would attend the local one-room school and be expected to do all their chores before or after. What little free time they had would be spent swimming in the river or playing together outside. Boys and girls didn’t play together. The girls would jump rope or play with home-made rag dolls.

Most clothing was homemade. Cotton and flax would be planted and harvested and then spun or woven into threads and cloth. Clothes would be dyed blue using indigo, brown from the bark of the blackjack and yellow from the cotton bloom. Aster blooms, gathered in the fall, produced a yellow dye, bayberry berries made a blue dye, red cedar root and cherry produced red dyes, dog fennel was used for a greenish-yellow color, and sumac for gray.

This cloth would also be used to make tablecloths, sheets, pillowcases, quilts, suits and shirts, socks, gloves, and sunbonnets.

Hats were woven from palmetto fronds and grasses, and pine needles were woven into thick floor rugs.

Shoes were a luxury, and most young children would go barefoot unless they were going to school or church.

Girls would learn to sew and practice by making their own dolls to play with. They would also assist their mother by looking after younger children.

Boys would spend time with their father learning how to hunt, fish and trap to provide for the family. They would also learn how to use an axe and saw and how to care for livestock.
They would hollow logs to make beehives, they would carve and fashion wood to make spinning wheels, looms, and chairs, tables, bedsteads, and other articles of furniture were usually hand made. Household implements were fashioned out of gourds and pieces of wood were carved into spoons and dippers or hollowed into containers to store food.

While lanterns and candles were used indoors, dead cabbage palm fronds made excellent torches for moving around outside at night. They would be held by the stem and then lit and just before they burned out, another would be picked up from the ground and lit from the dying torch.

Hogs and cattle foraged in the woods. In the fall, the hogs would be fed on sweet potatoes and then slaughtered and smoked. The lard would be stored in large gourds for use during the winter months.

Most cabins would have a brine barrel in which meat could be preserved. The dead critter would be placed in the barrel and a large stone placed on it to submerge it under the brine. Brining kept the meat moister than drying and the solution prevented the growth of harmful organisms.

Some cattle would also be killed in the fall and their hides cleaned by using lye made from the ashes of oak and then tanned by being steeped in ‘tan ooze’ made from oak bark and water. The leather was then used to make homemade boots and shoes, using lasts made from black gum. Deer skins were used for shoes and belts.
Every fall, the rest of the cattle would be penned for the winter. This form of ‘cracker farming’ was known as cow-penning. The cows would be herded into a fenced pen made of split rails.

When there was enough manure on the ground, a new pen was made for the cattle and the first pen was planted with sweet potatoes. Corn and other crops like black-eyed peas and velvet beans would be planted after the sweet potatoes had been harvested. As the pens were regularly moved, the entire plot was enriched by manure.

Beans were planted beside corn to allow the bean vines to intertwine with the corn stalks. The more fragile squash plants were grown between the beans and corn. Every member of the family would help weed the crops.
A young boy with his hoe c.1900. Source: Florida Memory.
Sugar cane was grown to make sugar and syrup, some of which might have been sold. Syrup sold for fifty cents a gallon, dripping for twenty-five cents, and sugar at ten cents a pound.

People could buy sugar from the local store. There were many grades – from A (white and refined) to X (brown and not necessarily 100% sugar) – and it was usually sold by the sack but customers shopping at local stores
could buy it for around 7 to 10 cents a pound but would be reliant on the one or two grades the shopkeeper was stocking.

Sugar was important because apart from cooking and baking, it was used to preserve fresh seasonal produce. This was necessary in the days before refrigeration because fruit and fresh produce had to be preserved quickly or would quickly go bad because of Florida’s high temperatures.

They drank ‘coffee’ made from sweet potatoes, cut into cubes, dried in the sun until parched and then ground.

Tea would also have been sold in the local store and it also came in a wide variety of grades and types. In the late 19th century, most tea came from China. Blended black tea was the cheapest while green teas were too expensive for most rural families.

Pone was made by macerating coontie roots in a hollow fallen tree and then put into a sack and soaked in water. The soaked roots would then be poured into a container, the water drained off and pone made from the ‘flour’ that was left. Pone could also be made using corn or sweet potato.

Flour was also made from dried, ground acorns and the roots of many plants.

There was great reliance on hunting and fishing and deer, bear and game birds were plentiful. Turtles and tortoises were a staple part of their diet as were crawdaddies, rabbits, snakes, squirrels, and frogs’ legs. The gopher tortoise was referred to as “scrub chicken” and armadillos were called “swamp pork”. Alligators were caught but for their skins not the meat which was rarely eaten.

The surrounding woods and land provided nuts, fruit, berries, and edibles such as coontie, cabbage palm, prickly pear, and many others. Wild honey would be harvested rather than paying for expensive sugar in the store. The settlers also learned to identify the many wild plants that had medicinal uses.
Biden’s Alba was used to treat sore throats; feverfew for headaches and fever, Hercules club leaves for relieving toothache, mimosa leaves for depression and anxiety, passionflower for insomnia, plantain to relieve itching and usnia as a natural antiseptic. There were literally hundreds of plants that had medicinal properties and settlers learned how to recognize them and passed this knowledge on to their children.

There were also wild plants that could be used as herbs and flavorings like lemon grass, red bay, wild garlic and wild mint.

Deer tongue was gathered from the woods and added to tobacco to make it go further and it was common for both men and women to smoke. It would not be unusual to see an old woman sitting in her chair smoking a clay pipe.

Cornbread, made from home ground cornmeal, was the most common food served at mealtimes and if times were hard, it was the only food on the table. It would be served with a thick gravy made from frying fatback bacon. There would always be a jar of gravy in the meagre pantry. Pone and grits were other mealtime staples.

Coontie has long been used as a substitute for wheat flour, but it needs careful and time-consuming preparation because many parts of the plant are toxic. The root of the plant must be soaked in water and then strained through a cloth several times to extract the starch which is then dried in the sun. Cattail roots also produce starch.

Women would generally rise well before dawn to start the day’s cooking. They would bake biscuits, bread and any other ingredients needed for the three meals of the day. This was not only to get this chore out of the way but also because it was simply too hot to be cooking later in the day.

The food was set in the middle of the table and after everyone had eaten breakfast, the corners of the tablecloth would be raised and folded over the food. It was then a simple job to reheat what was needed for the other meals.
Breakfast was usually a hot meal of pone, fat back and coffee. Dinner, served in the middle of the day was the main meal, with a light supper before going to bed.

*Coontie*
Swamp cabbage ready to be cooked. Source: Florida Memory

The women were skilled at home canning and bottling using Mason jars, and fruit and vegetables would be preserved this way to provide a year-round supply.

Other methods of preserving food included drying, salting and pickling and little food was allowed to go to waste. It was the mother’s duty to
pass down all these culinary skills to her daughters so that they would know how to run their own households later.

The diet consisted largely of pork, beef, fish, game, grits, sweet potatoes, butter, a little milk, and syrup. The main meal of the day – dinner - was eaten in the early afternoon and a lighter meal – supper – would be eaten in the evening.

Moonshine was plentiful and there would have been many stills in the area. Settlers also made home-made wines from the local Muscadine grapes and a host of fruits, berries and even fungi. Sassafras was used to make homemade root beer.

Refreshing, fragrant teas were made by boiling the young twigs of spicebush. The leaves of goldenrod were boiled to make a tea with an anise-like fragrance, while two or three leaves of yaupon holly soaked in hot water made an invigorating drink often called cassena or ‘the black drink’. The red berries of sumac soaked in two or three changes of water made an acidic, refreshing drink that was called Indian lemonade.

Beer could also be made from blue porterweed, dandelions, nettles, yarrow and mugwort. The flowers of Elderberry made a refreshing low alcohol sparkling drink.

Many of these plant-based drinks also had medicinal properties. They were known to aid digestion, strengthen the immune system and fight off colds and other ailments.

Each day, the cow would be milked, and the fresh milk would be strained through a sieve and then left in a cool place for about an hour to allow the cream to rise to the top. This would be removed and churned into butter. In Florida’s heat, the milk would quickly turn.

In the fall, it was customary to slaughter some of the pigs. Because there was no refrigeration, the meat would often be shared with neighbors, or it was salted or dried. The old Southern saying “the only thing left was the squeal’ is true as nothing was ever wasted.
This was a time when the homesteaders enjoyed lots of fresh meat, but some was set aside for drying and producing bacon and ham. It could take up to a month to cure the hams by repeatedly soaking them in strong brines. The hams might then be smoked to extend their shelf life.

The two main items which had to be purchased were salt and flour and the use of the latter would often be extended by mixing it with ground up roots or acorn flour as mentioned above.

Flour sold for $3 a barrel or 4 cents a pound around 1890. Other store purchases might have been corn – 40 cents a bushel, molasses – 15 cents a gallon, lard – 6 cents a pound and butter – 15 cents a pound.

Agricultural prices were of great concern to Ethel homesteaders. Land was about $5 an acre, a stable and well $150 each. An average workhorse was $150, and a good saddle horse $200, and a harness $50. A yoke of two oxen cost $150, a heifer $18.75, a cow $26, a bull $90 and calves $2.50. A buggy sold for $75 and a wagon $64. A single shot muzzle loader rifle was $8, while a Sharps seven-shot repeater rifle cost $50.

To furnish the home, chairs could be purchased for $1.25 each, a bed for $15 (which came with commode), blankets $3 each, and a lantern $1 and kerosene 15 cents a gallon.

For clothing, 2 colored undershirts cost $1.25 (plain white were $1), 6 pairs of wool socks cost $1, 7 yards of blue denim $1, 3 yards of plain cassimere (cashmere) $1, 1 hoop skirt withy bustle $1, and 1 heavy plaid shawl $3.

Personal hygiene was not a major priority and body odor was a fact of life. Most people had long hair and cooties and head lice were a constant problem, especially among the children.

Water was brought in a bucket from a well or stream and members of the family would rinse their fingers from the same bowl before eating.
That same bowl would also be used to wash their faces in the morning before being replenished.

Oral hygiene was virtually non-existent and there was little access to dentists. If someone had a toothache, the remedy was to pull out the tooth.

There was a great reliance on herbal medicines, but diseases were common, and the mortality rate was high, especially for children and newborns. In the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s, half of all children died before the age of one.

Dysentery, measles, scarlet fever, typhoid, and malaria then killed half of all surviving children before the age of five. Even a bad cut could quickly get infected and cause sepsis and gangrene leading to amputation or death.

Outdoor toilets were unsanitary and attracted insects and there was no toilet paper, so people relied on corn cobs, leaves, rags, and grass.

Homesteaders did not change their clothes frequently because they had nothing else to put on. The mother would usually have a ‘good’ dress for church, weddings and funerals, and a second dress for all other times. The father would also have a “Sunday best’ shirt and pants, and one other outfit for all other times.

Washday was a major undertaking. Dirty clothes had to be boiled for long periods in hot water and lye to remove ground-in dirt and stains. The clothes would then be removed using long sticks and rinsed in clean water. Few homes had a ringer to squeeze out the water, so this would be done manually, often with two people twisting the garment until it was dry. The clothes would then be hung out to dry on a line or draped over a fence.
A man, presumably a bachelor, washing his clothes.
Source. Florida Memory
Children relied on hand-me-downs. Clothes would be handed down, altered or remade as needed and when they could no longer be worn, they would be torn into strips for rags.
Most cabins would have two beds – one for mother, father, and baby, and the other for the rest of the family. Beds would have mattresses stuffed with grass, corn husks or Spanish moss, and multiple children would share the same bed.

There would be pillows at the top and bottom of the bed with half the children sleeping with their heads at the head of the bed, and the other
half with their heads on pillows at the foot of the bed. If there wasn’t a second bed, the children would sleep on rugs on the floor.

A family cooking out c. 1900. Florida Memory.

Kitchens continued to be built some distance from the cabin to reduce the risk of fire but by the 1890s, smoke houses were becoming popular. Each day, the area around the cabin and cooking areas would be swept clean with a broom to prevent stray sparks from spreading.

Because everyone knew everyone else there was little crime, although boys would often get up to mischief. Ethel and the surrounding area did not have a police presence so justice, when necessary, was often carried out by the settlers on the perpetrator. Most arguments were settled by fist fights if an amicable resolution could not be reached first.
Social life

Life was hard but early settlers still found time for “frolics” as social gatherings were called. The local schoolroom, which also doubled as the church, would be the location for picnics, town meetings and dances. The building itself would be too small for a large gathering so people would congregate, cook and eat outside.

If a dance was organized, everyone in the area would be invited and families would turn up in ox carts, two-wheel carts and on mules and horseback from far and wide. Some of these dances or ‘breakdowns’ lasted two or three days with dancing all night. People would dance, sleep a while, and then get up and dance some more.

Social gatherings were most common in the fall when families would get together to help each other bring in the harvest or when it was time to slaughter livestock and prepare the meat. Each family would contribute to the meal, which would be cooked outside. They would bring large pots of chicken which would be boiled over open fires until nearly done and then wild rice would be added. The meal would be served with biscuits and coffee.

After dinner there would be dancing with a fiddler providing the music. Sometimes there would be a second musician using fiddle sticks or fiddle straws. The sticks could be knitting needles or pieces of wood and were used like drumsticks. As the fiddler used his bow, the second person would use the sticks on the neck strings of the violin to drum out the beat. This practice gives us the expressions fiddlesticks and second fiddle.

As there was no dance floor and limited space, sometimes one couple would dance at a time showing off their best moves.

According to one account published in the Florida Historical Quarterly (Vol 72, Issue 04), “two only danced at a time, as fast and as long as they could stand, when two more take it up. The older female dancers
were chewing tobacco, dipping snuff, and drinking water out of a tin dipper.”

When there was space, dancing might be barn-style with a caller shouting out the moves. Clog dancing and jigging were also popular.

People had to rely on each other so they would assist each other in building a new cabin or barn and afterwards they would celebrate with a gathering with food and music.

Births, weddings, and funerals were also occasions to gather and either celebrate or commiserate.

Occasionally, a longer outing might be planned like a day trip to Clay Springs for swimming and a picnic. On such occasions, the men would take their rifles as wild pigs were a constant problem.

There are also records that at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, Ethel families would get together for bear hunts and then share the meat. A successful hunt was always another reason for a celebration.
Homesteaders heading to a social event. Illustration. Source. Florida Memory

Ethel resident William Darlington Fillmon, his wife Etta Jane Goings Fillmon, with sons Robert and Wesley standing in front of their home c. 1920 (below). The girl in the white dress and bonnet is ‘Aunt’ Creasy. The extension on the back was probably for livestock. Etta Jane died in 1924.
William was a carpenter, and the cabin was built from local logs and there was no electricity or running water. The cabin reflected the new construction style that emerged at the end of the 19th century. Instead of timber logs being used horizontally, wooden boards were used vertically. The settler would still have to chop the trees down, but they would then be sent to a local saw mill to be cut into boards.
Wekiva Post Office (Wekiva township was about 1 mile east of Ethel at what is now known as Wekiva Falls.)

Gunn’s Cabin at Ethel. Source. WSSP Archive.
Ethel was a rural community. Most residents were farmers or worked in the orange groves, but census records show carpenters, machinists, wood craftsman, a photographer, ferry operators and schoolteachers also lived in the community at various times.

Southeast of the cemetery was a large orange grove known as the Egypt Grove. A major freeze in 1895 destroyed the citrus trees and caused many of the residents to abandon their homes and livestock, taking with them just their clothing and a few personal items. Those who remained took over the abandoned livestock and continued to farm as best they could.

Many of them became truck farmers, so called because they grew produce needed by the local shops, hotels and restaurants and would ‘truck’ it in to town to sell it.

One development that benefited rural communities occurred in 1902 with the launch of rural free delivery by the United States Post Office in Florida. Before that, packages had to be picked up at a general post office which could be many miles away or they had to pay a private carrier for delivery. Only letters and small packages would be delivered to rural post offices like Ethel.

People were now able to get goods delivered free of charge and this saw a boom for mail order catalog companies like Sears & Roebuck and Montgomery Ward. Products in the catalogs were much cheaper than those in the rural stores.

The Sears & Roebuck catalog of 1901 offered a 10lb tin cannister of tea for $3.75 while their cheapest tea – Best Grade Japan Dust – sold for 19c a pound.

A gentleman’s pocket watch was 84c, a pair of reading spectacles 35c, a violin and case $3.25, banjo $1.75 and a double-barreled shotgun $6.45. A Remington 6 rifle was $3.98.
You could even order a headstone for $5.10 with engraving costing an extra 6 cents per letter.

The cost of 1st Class freight via rail from Chicago to Florida was $1.70 per 100 lbs.

One of the first mail order catalogs, published in 1875.
An elaborate stove offered in the Sears 1900 mail order catalog.

Mrs. Rowena Lewis, who was born in Ethel in 1917, remembered in an interview in 1992, that she would go fishing with other children in “Rock Creek and that on the way home they would throw small fish out and
watch the panthers go and get them. You could watch the panthers they were that plentiful.”

She lived with her parents on a 40-acre plot and there were about nine families strung out to the west of them.

In 1945 or 1946 her parents bought the neighboring five acres of land which included the half-acre lot on which the former schoolhouse sat. In 1951 Charles and Rowena Lewis moved into their new home in Ethel alongside Ethel Drive. It is the only Ethel building that remains.

Electricity didn’t come to the area until the early 1950’s so everyone used kerosene lamps or candles for lighting.

A moonshine still – one of many in the Ethel-Sorrento area at that time. (Source. Tavares Library)
The turpentine industry moved into the Wekiva area in a big way in the 1880s and 1890s to provide rosin and oil (or spirit) of turpentine, otherwise known as “naval stores”. The industry started in Georgia and Alabama and steadily moved south as the pine trees in those states were tapped out. The trees were then usually felled for timber and after that, the land was sold and cleared for agriculture or for building on.

Rosin was used to caulk the ship’s timbers to make them watertight. Ships ropes were also coated with turpentine to make them last longer and protect them from sea water.

Turpentine was carried out throughout the area and there were many stills around Ethel. Homesteaders would tap pines for the rosin for their own use and sell any surplus to the turpentine farmers who ran their operations like plantations with large workforces.

These turpentine farmers would typically have about 10,000 trees. They needed workers to “crop” them, quarters for them to live in and a still to convert the gum.

During the winter, the trees were “boxed” which involved attaching a box or clay pot (known as a ‘herty’ pot), to a tree about 10 inches from its base. A V-shaped deep cut was made above the pot and strips of metal were hammered into the tree beneath the cuts to funnel the sap into the pot. In the spring the sap started to rise and would flow from the cut into the pot.

Every few days, a worker called a ‘turpentine dipper’, would return to make another cut just above the old one to keep the sap running. This continued for eight or nine months. The series of cuts was called a “catface” because it resembled cat whiskers. Every few weeks, the pot of sap would be emptied into buckets which would then be emptied into barrels and taken by cart to the still.
The huge copper stills were heated until the sap boiled. The liquid was passed through a coil and collected in a tank. As it cooled the oil of turpentine rose to the surface and was drained off into barrels. The
Rosin left in the still was filtered and then packed into barrels or seven-gallon pots where it congealed before being sent to market.

Loading the barrels of sap (top) and loading the sap in the mill prior to boiling (below). Source: Florida Memory
A turpentine dipper (above and below). Source: Florida Memory
Turpentine still. One of many in the Rock Springs area (Source: WSSP)

103
The best crop was always in the first year that trees were tapped. The yield dropped off each successive year. A good crop would be about 50 barrels of turpentine and 160 barrels of rosin. Turpentine trees could be tapped for between three and five years and then be allowed to rest for a year or two before the cycle started again on the other side of the tree. They could only be tapped a few times because once faces had been cut around the tree no more sap could be drawn.

On old pines you may still spot the cuts in the tree to extract the turpentine.
Conditions in the turpentine camps were often brutal. Local prisoners would be ‘leased out to work” for no pay and laborers earned about $1 dollar a day but it was paid in the form of a weekly scrip that could only be redeemed in the company store where prices were usually inflated. As a result, laborers quickly ran into debt and could not leave until they had paid off what they owed. Workers and their families lived in huts that were little more than shanties and they were frequently beaten and worse. They had little access to medical attention. In 1922, after a convict died at a turpentine camp, the state outlawed the practice and convict leasing was outlawed.

Ethel Church and School

There was a schoolhouse on a half-acre plot, where church services were conducted every other Sunday. One of the preachers was the Reverend Bartlett. He travelled from Enterprise by horse and buggy and then used the ferry at Wekiva to get to Ethel.

The first mention of a school is in the Orange County records for 1880 which lists a school at Rock Springs. The township didn’t receive the name Ethel until later in the decade when the railroad arrived and by then the school was in Lake County.

The church catered for all denominations, but many people were Methodists and Ethel had an Epworth League, which was a Methodist youth league.

The Epworth League

The Epworth League was a youth order of the Methodist Episcopal Church (now the United Methodist Church), founded in 1889 in Cleveland, Ohio.
For over half a century, the Methodist youth organization was especially strong. The group was authorized by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, into North and South chapters, and local churches soon began organizing their youth in Epworth Leagues.

The purpose of the leagues was to develop young church members in their religious life and to provide training in churchmanship – “the promotion of intelligent and vital piety among the young people of the church”.

It was parallel to the Sunday school and typically met on Sunday nights. The name came from the boyhood home in England of John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement. There were Senior and Junior branches.

In 1913, the League had 593,465 Senior members and 218,509 Junior members in the North. The South had 3,846 chapters with 133,797 members. The Southern branch published its own monthly, the Epworth Era.

Ethel's school, church and cemetery were shared with their neighbors in the little town of Wekiva, about one mile east on the Wekiva River at what is now Wekiva Falls.

Most rural schools at that time consisted of a single classroom with a single teacher who taught grades first to eighth. The youngest children would sit at the front with the oldest at the back. The youngest children were called Abecedarians because their job was to learn their ABCs. The teacher would sit on a raised platform at the front – which was also used by the preacher for Sunday services.

The children would walk to school – as much as three miles each way – and they would often be barefooted as shoes were expensive. Because children were often needed to do chores at home or look after animals,
attendance was poor and, on any day, a third or more of the students might be absent. There were no school attendance laws at this time.

There were few school supplies and children would use a slate and chalk and the older students would often be called on to help teach the younger ones. At the front of the classroom, the teacher would use a blackboard – literally several wooden boards nailed together and painted black so that chalk could be used on it.

Students would learn – at their own pace - reading, writing, arithmetic, history, grammar, rhetoric and grammar and lessons would have to be learned by heart. The children would be called to the front of the class the day after a lesson to recite what they had learned.

With a lot of children in a single room it was important to maintain discipline so corporal punishment was common. The most common punishment would be having palms or knuckles rapped with a ruler, but there was also spanking and being paddled. Bad students would also be made to wear the cone-shaped Dunce’s cap. And, if the teacher sent a student home with a letter about the child’s behavior, the child would likely get a beating at home as well.

The school day would start at 9am and finish at 2pm or 4pm depending on the time of year. There would be a 15-minute break in the morning, an hour for lunch, usually from noon to 1 pm and a 15-minute break in the afternoon if the lessons were going on to 4pm. Children living close to school would go home for lunch while others would bring their lunch in metal pails.

The school had no electricity or plumbing so students would have to use an outhouse behind the building. If there was not enough light, kerosene lamps would be used. One of the older students would also be tasked each day to bring a bucket of water which the children would share to drink.

As Ethel was a relatively remote township, it is likely that young single female teachers would board with one of the local families. Boarding was
quite common in rural areas. Most teachers in the late 1800s and early 1900s were young, unmarried females and they might board with one family for two or three weeks and then move on to another family.

The school year consisted of one term of three consecutive months with the teacher choosing which months to teach.

On the last day of the school year, the children would enjoy a picnic and the teacher would organize a program with parents invited, so that the students could show off what they had learned.
The earliest mention of Ethel School is November 22, 1893, in a deed of sale between Edward J. Duval and Ford B. Priester, which records the sale of 5 ½ acres “less the ½ acre heretofore sold to the School Board of Lake County.” The school was described as “being near the old mud hole”.

Edward Duval received 160.2 acres on December 21, 1891, as a U.S. land grant which included this school site but there was no mention of a school building. So, the school site must have been sold to the School Board between December 21, 1891, and November 22, 1893.

Ethel’s schoolteacher in 1905 was Miss Maggie Hunter from Sanford. At that time the schoolteacher received one dollar a month for each pupil for the three-month semester. This term could be taught at any time during the year, at the convenience of the teacher and school trustees.

On June 2, 1913, Edward White acquired the land less the ½ acre school site, by paying the unpaid taxes. The land was owned by John T. Pirie, but Edward White paid the $18.08 outstanding tax bill for 1912 to gain ownership of the property.

On November 10, 1919, Edward White bought the school half acre site from the state of Florida through the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund for $5. The deed (below) described the exact location of the half-acre site.

The Ethel Schoolteacher in 1912 was Lelia Royal, who was paid $40 - $20 from Lake Co and $20 from Orange (which implied that some children were coming from Orange County, east of the Wekiva River). The following year W. C. Halliday was appointed teacher at the same salary. On Oct 6, 1913, the School Board instructed the superintendent to order twelve desks for Ethel school. They were delivered on January 5, 1914, by the American Seating Co. at a cost of $48.75.
On June 1, 1914, T. J. Boyd, one of the Ethel school trustees asked that the teacher’s salary be raised to $45 and paid from county funds as district funds were needed for completing the school building. On September 7, 1914, T. J. Boyd allowed the expenditure of $5 to work on the well by the school.

On March 1, 1915, T. J. Boyd approved the expenditure of $6 for travel expenses so that the Ethel school children could attend the school fair in Tavares. The railroad was offering discounted fares so that they could attend.

On July 6, 1915, it was agreed to spend $14 to have the schoolhouse painted. T. J. Boyd was paid $45 for sealing the schoolhouse and building a porch and C. J. Vermillion, a new school trustee, was paid $5.79 in cash for cedar shingles for the school roof.

On September 6, 1915, C. J. Vermillion was paid $50 as half the cost of digging a new well and on October 4 he received the remaining $50.

On December 6, 1915, a new teacher’s desk was delivered. C. J. Vermillion paid the cost of freight, which was $2.75.

In January 1916, the Geoff Fernald Hardware Co. was paid $1.60 for installing a heater in the school and C. J. Vermillion received $12 for hauling the bricks to make the chimney.

On May 1, 1916, Ethel school trustees were announced as W. E. Lee, E.A. Rush, and T. J. Boyd.
On August 9, 1916, Eva Shores was named Ethel’s new teacher, but the pay had dropped back to $40 a month. She resigned on January 1, 1917, and the district superintendent appointed Miss Theresa Dawson in her place.

On April 1, 1918, Theresa Dawson was still the Ethel school teacher, but her pay had dropped to $30. She threatened to resign and on July 22, 1918, her pay was raised to $50. The following month on August 22, she married Edward O. Von Herbulis, who lived in Wekiva.
One of the major events of the year was the annual Lake County School Fair, a five-day showcase highlighting agriculture, arts and crafts and academic achievements. Ethel students and their teacher would almost certainly have attended one or more days.

The Fair was segregated, and a special day was set aside for students from black schools in the area. Below is an example of some of the categories and the prizes awarded for them.
By September 1919, Mrs. E. O. Von Herbulis had become the schoolteacher with a salary of $20 which was raised to $45 in October. Her husband was one of the school trustees. She was still the schoolteacher in 1920, earning $65.
On July 19, 1920, Mr. E. O. Von Herbulis agreed to transport the older children from Ethel to Wayland school for $150 a month. This was the first year that children had been transported to another school.

In 1924 the Ethel and Sorrento school districts were consolidated

By 1927, Ethel School had closed, and the children went to Sorrento by school bus.

**Interesting fact**

The 1880 Orange County Census records that there were many people ‘camping out’ in the area around Ethel. These people were crews building the railroad. There would usually be one white foreman and several blacks in a crew. As they neared the end of the day, they would set up a new camp and then move on again the next day to lay more track.

_Sanford Herald – Ethel news_

For several years the Sanford Herald ran a column called Ethel Items (later Wekiva and Ethel Items) which gave an insight into life in the small township – and all the many hardships. The column covered family dinners, social events, sightings and shootings of bears and rattlesnakes, school calendars as well as illnesses and burials.

These are some of the items. We are indebted to the Sanford Herald for allowing us to use them.

**December 13, 1912**

Mr. and Mrs. Hardy Boyd hosted a delightful Thanksgiving dance at their home with everyone reporting “a jolly time”.

A sad death occurred in our neighborhood on the 4th. Miss Ella May Boyd, daughter of Mr. Ben Boyd, after a brief illness of three days, passed away at the home of her uncle Mr. T. I. Boyd. Her many friends
and relatives will miss her smiling face as she was beloved by all who knew her. The remains were laid to rest Saturday morning at 11 o’clock in the Ethel Cemetery

**January 10, 1913**

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Rush lost their little son Clyde, Tuesday night. Little Clyde was taken ill and died after two days. He was 15 months old. The baby was buried at Ethel and the little grave was beautifully decorated with roses and other fragrant flowers.

**March 24, 1914**

Mr. Kerley is laying the foundation to set a sawmill near Wekiwa Station, which will be a great help in several ways to the community. It will give several men employment besides being such a help in getting the timber worked up on different homesteads. There can be so much stove wood shipped besides the lumber.

There is also talk of the railroad company putting in a side-track between Wekiva and Ethel which will be a great help and convenience to the people.

The Woods Bros are doing quite a business cutting buds up the river. You can hear the launch boat late and early up and down. They also give work to several men. They are very energetic, industrious young men and are making quite a success of the business.

Mr. James Boyd returned Saturday to his home after being away for quite a while, working in the packing house at Kissimmee.

Mr. P. J. Coates had no trouble in proving his homestead last Thursday, the 16th. He took up a homestead three years ago and has done quite a lot of hard work and improvements on it and in the near future he hopes to have a lovely home. He has a nice orange grove set out, besides other nice fruit, such as peaches, pears, figs, grapes and grapefruit.
There was a lecture last night at Ethel school house. The Ethel school will be out Friday, and Mr. Archie Woods has kindly offered to take the school up to Wekiwa Springs for a picnic in his flat boat on which he hauls buds.

Mr. Eugene Rush has a very pretty garden, notwithstanding the dry weather. He has been selling real nice onions and cabbage and is very kind to divide up with his neighbors.

On the same page in the newspaper there was an advertisement for The Longwood Hotel, announcing it was under the new management of D. A. Midgley, with room rates from $2 and up and ‘special rates by the week.’

October 5, 1915

“The community was thrown into sorrow when the news reached here from Sorrento last Monday evening that Mr. Jerry Breso had breathed his last at 3:00 o’clock. He was taken from his home on his homestead by the kind neighbors to Sorrento where he could be under the care of a doctor daily. He was only sick two weeks from typhoid malarial fever.

“Mr. Breso was a lovely Christian gentleman and was beloved and respected by all who came in contact with him. Oh, how we will miss him in our Sunday School, or Epworth League and prayer meetings. He was the Bible teacher in the Sunday school, the first vice president in the League and the leader in the prayer meeting. But his work was finished on earth.

“God said: “It is enough, come up higher.” It was sad to see him laid away by strangers entirely not one relative to follow him to the grave.”

Johnnie Boyd, 17 years old son of Mr. James Boyd, who lives at Ethel, died at Lakeland last week and was buried there. He was also a member of our Sunday school and will be missed very much. His mother is very ill with consumption and not expected to live, but she stood his death much better than her friends expected she would.
Mr. Ben Boyd, who has been under the care of Drs. Miller and Denton, is very ill at his brother Hardy’s at Ethel.

Rev. Bartlett of Enterprise came over to Ethel last Tuesday when he was called to preach at the funeral of our dear brother Breso. Bro. Bartlett is the preacher in charge of Ethel church, and we are always glad to see him. He spent the night with friends in Wekiwa and returned to his home on Wednesday.

**October 8, 1915**

School started this week at Ethel with 23 scholars enrolled. Miss Annie Shepard being the teacher. While it is quite a walk for the little children of Wekiwa, they are very much pleased with their teacher, and are taking quite an interest in their school. Miss Annie Shepard boards with Mrs. Andrew Rush.

There were several hunters came from Sanford yesterday searching the woods for game. We do not know what success they had but they seemed to be pretty well loaded when they passed making for the four o’clock train.

**October 15, 1915**

The latest news has announced the arrival of a baby boy via the Stork Limited, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Rush Friday morning. Mother and babe are both doing well.

Mr. P. J. Coates has been out this week sketching photographs of different homesteads in the neighborhood, namely Mr. Crippen’s, Mr. Eugene Brown’s, and others.

Frank Powell moved into his homestead this week.

We had our regular monthly preaching last Sunday at Ethel by Rev. Bartlett morning and night. The evening service was a memorial service for Mr. Jerry Bresow and Johnnie Boyd, both members of our Sunday school. Bro. Bartlett preached an excellent sermon. There were a great
many flowers brought by the scholars and friends expressing their love for both. After the service Mrs. Powell, president of the League, appointed a committee to take them to the cemetery and place them on their graves. Oh, how we do miss them both from our midst. But they have only gone on before to await the coming of their loved ones.

Mrs. James Boyd is still very low. No hope is entertained for her recovery.

Mr. Ben Boyd is still very sick.

Mr. Newman has taken charge of his homestead at Ethel since Mr. Frank Boyd has moved off.

October 26, 1915

There was no Sunday school or prayer meeting at Ethel last Sunday week on account of the heavy rains on Friday and Saturday the roads were completely flooded. There was a full attendance at Sunday school this last Sunday although quite a lot of water fell again Saturday night.

James Boyd Jr. while out hunting last week ran across a mother bear and two little cubs, which would have made nice little pets could they have been captured.

Mr. P. J. Coates is kept quite busy taking pictures in and around Wekiwa. He went up to Ethel and took the school last week and of course, they all wanted one.

December 24, 1915

Died – last Saturday evening at 5:30 Mr. Ben Boyd passed away at the home of his brother Mr. Hardy Boyd, after a long illness. Mr. Boyd’s death has been expected for two months and when the end came, it was certainly a blessed exchange for no tongue can tell what suffering he went through with having two cancers, one on his right eye and one on his back.
The funeral and burial were at Ethel burying ground at 4 o’clock Sunday afternoon. There were several beautiful hymns sung by friends. Mr. A. N. Rush conducted the services at the grave.

Mr. Alin Boyd returned to his home in Bartreas on Monday morning, being called here to the bedside of his brother Ben and faithfully nursed him to the end.

Mrs. Hardy Boyd leaves today to spend Christmas with her mother, after being confined to the house for the past month with sickness of her brother. She certainly needs and deserves a rest, and we wish her an enjoyable and happy Christmas.

There will be a Christmas tree for the Sunday School at Ethel school house Friday night. All are cordially invited as Santy will be there and the children will have a good program. There was to have been a box supper at Ethel Saturday night, but on account of Mr. Ben Boyd’s death it was postponed. Also, there was no Sunday School Sunday morning. A prayer meeting was held at Mr. Henry Boyd’s home Sunday night.

Frank Coates came in on the train from Sanford to spend a day or two with home folks.

**March 24, 1916**

Mr. Sluter, who has been making his home with Mr. Wallace is now with the Van Hurbulis brothers, as Mr. Wallace and wife have moved to Sanford.

Mrs. Charles Vermillion has recovered from her spell of sickness, we are glad to note.

Mrs. Eugene Brown is slowly recovering from her long spell of illness of over four months.
Mr. Seral Boyd and wife have returned to their home. Mr. Boyd had a position in the packing house in Kissimmee for the past several months.

Mr. P. J. Coates place is alive with pigs, there being twenty in one gang and all near one size. If nothing happens, he won’t lack for meat another year. They also have quite a lot of young chickens and more hatching.

May 3, 1916

There was a crowd of young boys went over to Enterprise yesterday in their motorboat, having quite a nice time. They returned in time for prayer meeting at Ethel. Those who were in the crowd were Carl Deas, Frank Powell, Earl Holaday, Mr. Archie Woods, and Henry Deas.

Little C. W. Rush, little son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Rush, who has been at the Mute School for the past eight months (wherever the State Mute School is in Florida) returned home last Thursday very much improved in health we understand. He is a bright child and learns fast.

The community was shocked last week when the news came from Sanford that little Arthur Fillmon was dead, where he was taken to be under the care of Dr. Denton. Little Arthur was in his third year and the son of Mr. and Mrs. Will Fillmon. He was a member of the Cradle Roll of Ethel Sunday school, and his name was the first on the roll and the first to be called to the arms of Jesus. He was taken sick on Friday and died on Saturday.

His funeral was preached by Rev. Bartlett last Sunday and his little body was laid to rest in Ethel Cemetery. His little grave was covered with lovely flowers by sympathizing friends and little Sunday school children.
Lake County Map, 1916

Close up of part of the above map with Ethel marked on it.
February 12, 1918.

Grandma Boyd has been quite sick at the home of her son J. K. Boyd.

Mr. and Mrs. James Boyd Jr. have very much sympathy from friends in the death of their baby Joseph. Burial last Sunday afternoon in Ethel cemetery.

P. J. Coates has been doing some work on his farm. Mrs. Coates and daughter spent one night and day seeing Wekiwa and friends.

Wekiwa was a quiet place last Friday, most all of us going to the school fair at Tavares, and it is said to have been the best fair they ever had.

The young folks have had some good times at their candy parties and on the river lately.

Some work is going on out here these days, cutting cord wood, crating vegetables, plowing, and fencing.

A. Newcome and E. O. Von Herbulis are suffering from lame backs.

July 26, 1918

Mrs. A. Newcome, who has been visiting relatives in New Jersey for some two months, returned home last week. She was accompanied by friend Mr. Newell Bateman, who was in very poor health and who hoped to be benefited by this climate, but the trip was too hard for one in his condition. He grew worse and passed away Monday night. If he had any relatives, they could not be found. He was buried in Ethel cemetery Tuesday afternoon.
Ethel and Wekiva residents and Rock Springs neighbors and how they acquired their land.

Most of what we know today about Ethel comes from the archives of Orange and Lake Counties where land transactions were recorded. Unfortunately, as we know from our research into William Delk, people were often remiss in filing the official paperwork. To do so meant taking time off from work, traveling to the nearest courthouse and then paying a fee to have deeds recorded and notarized. In Delk’s case, the Rock Springs property, as large as it was, wasn’t recorded until after his death. There must have been many other settlers and homesteaders who waited many years before getting their properties deeded. In these cases, the date the property was recorded is given but not the date when the land was acquired.

Below are the names of those that we were able to find.

**Adams**

George W. Adams, Land Grant 1937

**Allman**

Laura Allman died aged 4, on December 2, 1903, from an enlargement of the spleen. She was buried the same day at Ethel.

**Autman**

John Autman was born in 1857 and was married to Martha, born in 1870. According to the 1890 Census, their children were listed as Mary, aged 12, Claudia, aged 10, Lula, aged 8, and Laura aged 1.
In the Lake County Poll Tax book for 1888, a Jim Autman is listed as a resident of Ethel. His occupation was given as ferryman. He was 5 ft 6 inches tall.

**Ball Brothers**

The Ball brothers are reported to have lived in an abandoned house in the woods. One of them worked building bridges and according to local lore, the law was looking for them. When the law was getting close, one of the Balls is said to have given the railroad foreman $70,000 saying “that was small change” and that his brother had the “big money”.

Legend has it that the ‘big money’ was buried out in the woods but has never been found.

**Bassnet**

Arthur D. Bassnet, Government land purchase 1882

**Bateman**

Newell Bateman died at Ethel on July 22, 1918, while visiting from New Jersey. He was 67. He was buried at Ethel the following day. He was staying with Mrs. A. Newcome and had been in poor health for some time. He hoped the warm weather would aid his recuperation. He had a daughter in New Jersey, but she was unable to get his body back for burial, so his friends buried him in Ethel.

**Bernhard**

Peters Bernhard, Government land purchase 1891

**Boyd.**

Cyril C. Boyd, Government land purchase 1912

James Boyd, Grant 1913

124
Raymond R. Boyd, Grant 1920

Thomas I. Boyd, Government land purchase 1913

William H. Boyd Grant 1913

Ella May Boyd, died at the age of 16 on December 5, 1912, from inflammation of the brain. She was buried at Ethel on December 7, 1912. She was the daughter of Ben Boyd and niece of Thomas I. Boyd.

Joseph A. Boyd’s headstone is the third that survives in Ethel cemetery. He was the infant son of James and Minnie Boyd. He was born on December 22, 1917, and died on February 2, 1918, aged one month and 14 days. Cause of death was spinal meningitis. He was buried the following day.

His gravestone carried the inscription: “Gone but not forgotten.” When the headstone was discovered in 2008, it was sinking into the ground and old bricks had been used underneath to prevent it from falling over.

Ida Boyd, a resident of Wekiva, died during childbirth on April 16, 1915. She was 24. She was buried in Ethel the following day with her unnamed child. She was the wife of Ben Boyd.

Johnnie Boyd, the son of James Boyd, died at the age of 17 between September 26 and October 4, 1915. He was buried the week of his death. A memorial service was held for him and Jerry Bresow (see below) on October 10 by the Rev. Bartlett.

Ben Boyd, a resident of Wekiva, died aged 48, from cancer on December 18, 1915, and was buried the following day in Ethel. He had buried his wife and unborn child six months earlier.

Bragg

Grant 1928
Bresow

Jerry M. Bresow received his land grant in 1915. He died on September 27, 1915, and was buried the following day at Ethel. The Sanford Herald gave his cause of death as typhoid malarial fever.

Brown

David H. Brown, Grant 1883

Eugene Brown, Grant 1917

James M. Brown, Grant 1913

Ulysses S. Brown, Grant 1917

Click

The authors are hugely appreciative of the support given by members of the Click Family, particularly Frankie “Maxwell” Goebel and Porter Click, in writing this history of Ethel. They have spent years researching their family history and it gives us a detailed insight into the lives of the Clicks at Ethel backed up by some amazing photographs which they have allowed us to use.

Finley B. 1863-1932 Grant recorded in 1915.

Finley Belshazzar Click was born on November 28, 1863, in Jerusalem, Davie County, North Carolina. His father was John Nicholas Click and his mother was Amelia Elvira Eaton.

The family originally came from Saxony, Germany, and their last name of Kluck or Gluck gradually changed to Click once in the U.S.

Nickalaus Kluck, born September 11, 1748, was a member of a ranking family and an officer in the German Army.
According to family records, while in military service as a young man, he was “grievously insulted” by a superior officer and immediately challenged him to a duel on “the field of honor”. It was arranged that they would, stripped to the waist, fight with short swords. Just as the duel was about to begin, the police arrived and as dueling was punishable by death, both men fled the scene. Young Kluck dared not return home, so he made his way to the Atlantic coast and boarded a ship bound for America.

He arrived in the Americas in Pennsylvania in 1767. He was a farmer and Lutheran. He married Rebecca Harmon on July 9, 1771, in Pennsylvania, and they had a son Michael, born about 1782, in Davie, North Carolina, and his son John Nichols Click, born June 15, 1827, in Rowan, North Carolina, was Finley Belshazzar’s father.

Finley married Margaret Ann Mills (born October 5, 1852, in Iredell, N.C.) on September 29, 1887, in Statesville, North Carolina.
They had three sons: Clyde Francis, born September 15, 1888, in Iredell County, N.C., who died on April 21, 1917, in Duval, Florida; Clifford Mills, born October 2, 1892, in Iredell, N. C., who died on December 17, 1962, in Daytona Beach, Florida; and Carl Lee, born September 15, 1895, in Iredell, N. C., who died on September 6, 1949, in Orlando, Florida.

Carl Lee Click, who died September 6, 1949, aged 54, was the former police chief in Pine Castle and Ocoee. Earlier he was a constable in West Orange County and a game warden in the Everglades. At the time of his
death, he was a special deputy and a special warden for the Apopka Hunting Club.

Carl Lee Click, aged four.
A studio photograph of Finley and Margaret with Clyde Eaton and Clifford Mills.

Finley was a member of the Carpenter’s Union and the Oddfellows and according to his obituary in the Orlando Sentinel, he moved to Florida in 1894 although he did not file his land deed until 1915.

Writing on the back of a photograph of Finley and Margaret states that Finley came to Florida around 1886 and it was eight years before his family, who had remained in Davie Co. North Carolina, joined him.
During this time and thanks to the railroad, he made periodic visits back to his family as he and his wife continued to have children during this period. However, by 1894 his Ethel home was ready, and the family finally moved to Florida.

Maggie Click died on November 12, 1913, from cancer aged 61. She was buried the same day at Lake View, Sanford.

Finley and Margaret in their Sunday best.
On March 8, 1914, he married Emily J. Hull (born on January 20, 1863) at her parents’ home in south Orlando, and after the ceremony they returned to Ethel.

His land grant was recorded on May 27, 1915, but it is not known when he acquired the land although it must have been after 1886. One of the conditions of the Homestead Act was that you must live on your land, and this is maybe why Finley is not recorded in the 1890 U. S. Census of Davie County, North Carolina. In fact, in some records from this time, Margaret lists herself as a widow.
The United States of America,

To all to whom these presents shall come, Greeting:

WHEREAS, a Certificate of the Register of the Land Office at Gainesville, Florida, has been deposited in the General Land Office, whereby it appears that, pursuant to the Act of Congress of May 20, 1862, "To Secure Homesteads to Actual Settlers on the Public Domain," and the acts supplemental thereto, the claim of Finley B. Click has been established and duly consummated, in conformity to law, for the south half of the northeast quarter and the west half of the southeast quarter of Section thirty-six in Township nineteen south of Range twenty-eight east of the Tallahasse Meridian, Florida, containing one hundred sixty and twenty-six hundredths acres,

NOW, KNOW YE, That there is, therefore, granted by the United States unto the said claimant to have and to hold the said tract of land, with the appurtenances thereof, unto the said claimant forever.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I, Wootrow Wilson, President of the United States of America, have caused these letters to be made Patent, and the seal of the General Land Office to be hereunto affixed.

Given under my hand, at the City of Washington, the twenty-seventh day of May in the year of our Lord one thousand fifteen and of the Independence of the United States the three hundred and thirty-ninth.

By the President:

W. W. Vinton, Secretary.

The wedding announcement in the Orlando Sentinel, Tuesday, March 10, 1914

Finley died on August 2, 1932, and is buried in Greenwood Cemetery Orlando.

His death notice in the Orlando Sentinel on August 3, 1932, stated that he was survived by his wife, Emily, sons, Clyde Francis, Clifford Mills and Carl Lee, brother Sidney M. Click of Laredo, Tx, and his three sisters, Mrs. Susan Langston, of Knoxville, North Carolina, Mrs. Edith Grubb, of Ashville, and Mrs. Sallie Koontze, of Longwood.

Emily died on January 2, 1942, in Orange County, Florida.
U.S. Department of the Interior’s Bureau of Land management map of section location of Click’s Homestead Land Grant of 160.26 acres.

His son Clyde was a car salesman for the Hansen Automobile Company and he must have created a stir when he visited the family in Ethel.

_Clyde is in the rear with the suit and tie. Note the cabins in the background._
Hansen automobile.

The Clicks outside their cabin. Emily is in the front center with Finley behind her to the right.
Finley had several siblings. Charles 1865-1877, Sarah ‘Sallie’ Eliza 1868-1943, Albert A. 1871-1920, Susie ‘Sudie’ Mae 1874-1952, Edith Anita 1877-1948, and Sidney M. 1886-1963. In 1882 twins were born (a boy and a girl) but they did not survive and were not named.

Sidney M. Click bought 40 acres of land just east of what is now Wekiwa Springs State Park – recorded on September 18, 1928 - but by 1950 according to the U.S. Census had he moved to Texas.

Sarah ‘Sallie’ Eliza Click (born April 19, 1868, in Davie County, NC), was married to William Roland Koontze (born February 8, 1863), also of Ethel. They married on May 22, 1887. In 1926, they purchased 80 acres on Old McDonald Road in Sorrento where they built their home. Sarah died on
July 20, 1943, in Sorrento, and her husband died on September 4, 1944, in Eustis.

*Finley, Emily and three of his grandchildren.*
This picture taken near Finley’s cabin shows Sidney Marvin Click standing, Nonnie Belle White Click seated with banjo, and William Roland Koontz, kneeling. William is the husband of Sarah “Sallie” Eliza Click.
Pedigree Chart for Finley Belshazar Click

John Nicholas Click
B: 15 Jun 1827 in Rowan, North Carolina, USA
M: 03 Jan 1864 in Davie, North Carolina, USA
D: 02 Aug 1918 in Jerusalem, Davie, North Carolina, USA

Michael Click
B: Abt. 1762 in Mocksville, Davie, North Carolina, USA
M: 27 Apr 1809
D: Apr 1860 in Jerusalem, Davie, North Carolina, USA

Sarah Butler
B: Abt. 1792 in Davie, North Carolina, USA
D: Davie, North Carolina, USA

Rebecca Elizabeth Harmon
B: 14 Oct 1753 in Maryland, USA
D: 13 Oct 1834 in Jerusalem, Davie, North Carolina, USA

William Butler
B: 1750
M:
D: 1832 in Jackson, Madison, Tennessee, USA

Name:
B:
D:

Benjamin Eaton
B: 22 Jun 1785 in Rowan, North Carolina, USA
M: 01 Dec 1808 in Rowan, North Carolina, USA
D: 28 Aug 1829 in Davie, North Carolina, USA

Amelia Elvira Eaton
B: 25 Oct 1841 in Iredell, North Carolina, USA
D: 26 Aug 1930 in Jerusalem, Davie, North Carolina, USA

Joseph Eaton
B: 17 Jan 1815 in Davie, North Carolina, USA
M: 1830 in Davie, North Carolina, USA
D: 18 May 1851 in Farmington, Davie, North Carolina, USA

James Cornell
B:
M:
D:

Eliza Cornell
B: 28 Apr 1815 in Wilkes-Barre, Luzerne, Pennsylvania, USA
D: 28 May 1862 in Jerusalem, Davie, North Carolina, USA

Mary Cornell
B:
D:
**Coates**

John H. Coates, Grant 1916

A report in the Sanford Herald newspaper read, “Mr. P. J. Coates had no trouble proving up his homestead last Thursday, the 16th. He took up a homestead three years ago and has done quite a lot of hard work and improvements on it and in the near future, he hopes to have a lovely home. He has a nice orange grove set out, besides other nice fruit such as peaches, pears, figs, grapes, and grapefruit.”

**Crawford**

Carroll Crawford, Government land purchase 1927.

**Delk**

Major William S. Delk was born in 1810. While he was not a resident of Ethel several of his relatives were. In the 1860 Orange County Slave Schedule, Delk is listed as owning 17 slaves – seven women and 10 men aged between one year and 50 years old.

He married Samantha and had a daughter Nora. Mary Frazier, wife of Anthony, was the midwife who delivered Nora.

According to the Orange County Census in 1880, William was 70, Samantha was 30, Nora was 12, and a second daughter is listed – Martha aged 10. After William’s death Samantha remarried on October 16, 1890, to James. C. McDonald in Orlando.

Nora married Thomas Elbert White, and they had a son Edward White. Edward White married Lena Hubble of Virginia and they had a daughter Rowena Pearl.

Rowena married Charles Henry Lewis and they had two sons, Norman, and Charles Ray. (See Lewis below)

Nora was buried at Ethel.
The Registration Certificate pictured above was issued to William Delk in April 1942 as proof of his U. S. residency. He was required to have the card in his personal possession at all times in case he had to prove his identity. It lists his home in Grant, Brevard County.
On the back of the card, it also lists identifying features – a scar on the toe of his left foot, and a scar near his left eye.

The card was found in the Lewis House in Ethel. The relationship of this William Delk to the Lewis family is not known.

**Donaldson**

Henry Donaldson was born in 1847 and was a black woodcutter. He is believed to have died in October 1891.

**Dowless**

Andrew Dowless, Government land purchase 1892

**Durfee**

E. B. Durfee Government land purchase 1883

**Duval**

Edward F. Duval, born 1862, Grant of 160 acres December 21, 1891. The Lake County Poll Tx book for 1888 also lists an A. T. Duval, aged 41, occupation farmer.

**Evans**

C. G. Evans Grant 1878

**Ferran**

Edgar Ferran, Government land purchase 1885

**Fillmon**

William Darlington Fillmon, Grant 1917

Had 160 acres at Ethel.

William A. Fillmon, son of William D. Fillmon, died on May 13, 1916, from diphtheria. He was buried the next day at Ethel.
Fox
Charles J. Fox Grant 1883

Glass
Dick Glass lived at Wekiva and died on January 17, 1893, aged 9, after being run over by train cars.

An account of the accident said that he was being encouraged by railroad men to jump onto the moving rail car but fell underneath. He was buried at Ethel.

Goines/Goins
Earl Goins died in Ethel of bronchial pneumonia on February 11, 1936, while visiting from Jacksonville. He was aged 16. He was listed a single and white, and his occupation was given as schoolboy. He was buried at Ethel on February 14 at 3.30 pm.

His father was Earl Jackson Goines who was born in Lake County on November 7, 1899, and married Bertha White who ordered the funeral.

Gray
The Carey Hand Funeral Home has a record (Book 2 # 247) of the burial of a six-month-old child at Ethel in May 1896. The unnamed child died on May 15, 1896, and was the child of Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Gray of Wekiva.

Griffin
Mrs. H. Griffin was buried at Ethel and her residence was listed as Ethel Station in Lake County – which is how the township was referred to in many official documents. Cause of death on October 25, 1887, was given as dysentery. She was buried on October 27th. She was 60 years old.
Halliday
William C. Halliday, Grant 1918

Hardy
Elizabeth Hardy, Government land purchase 1883

Hawkins
Jane C. Hawkins, Grant 1895

Hicks
Henry Hicks, Government land purchase 1892

Hughey
John Hughey, Grant 1851

Jammes
Benjamin F. Jammes, Government land purchase 1928

Jernigan
Mrs. Frank Jernigan, a resident of Ethel, died on December 2, 1909, from “obstruction of bowels”. She was 56 and was buried the following day at Fort Christmas.

Johnson
Philip F. Johnson was born in 1837. Farmer. Grant 1898

Kelso
James C. Kelso Grant 1916

Killebrew
J. A. Killebrew, was born in 1861, and was a carpenter.

Kirkland
Robert Kirkland, born 1830, wife Martha, born 1832, daughter Laura, born 1856.

**Koons/Kuhns**

Jacob S. Koons, was born in 1844 and was a machinist. Grant 1902

The Jacksonville Times-Union newspaper reported on September 24, 1895, about “a serious affray between Messrs. Koons and Wynne at Sorrento.”

“Last Saturday morning (September 23) the place was thrown into excitement by a quarrel between R. T. Wynne of this place, and J. S. Koons, of Ethel. A lawsuit was pending between the two involving a sack of oats.

“J.S. Koons was quietly seated on the porch of the post office when his enemy approached, shaking a fist in his face. Koons rose and retreated. Wynne followed striking and kicking him. Both were soon floored when Koons drew a dirk knife and plunged it into the right side of Wynne, below the ribs. Drs Thomas and Russell sewed and stripped the gash with plaster. Up to date the patient is doing well. The case will be tried on Saturday, 28th, by Justice of the Peace Needham.”

The newspaper did not report on the outcome of the case but did report on October 10, 1895, that Justice Warren Needham had been confined to his room for 10 days suffering from a bilious attack.

**Koontz**

William Roland Koontz, born February 8, 1863, Davidson N.C. (Father was Andrew Koontz and mother was America E. Hodrick) Married on May 22, 1887, in Davidson, N. C. to Sarah Eliza Click (born. April 19, 1868, in Davie, N.C. She was the sister of Finley Click and at the time of her marriage was living in Ethel. She died July 20, 1943, in Sorrento, Florida).

Children:
Thurman Ebenezer. Born July 4, 1887, in Yadkin, N.C. died about 1950 in
California.
Ossie Pearl. Born August 24, 1893, in North Carolina. Died February 27, 1919, in Lebanon, PA.
Clarice Tabitha. Born August 8, 1895, in North Carolina. Date and place of death unknown.

Lee
Ely A. Lee, Grant 1907
Mary M. Lee (White) Grant 1907
Will. E. Lee Government land purchase 1912
Charles C. Lee, a resident of Sanford, died at the age of 34 from pneumonia on November 14, 1918, while staying with family at Ethel. He was buried the same day at Ethel.
Rob E. Lee, died on July 20, 1919, from unknown causes, at the age of three. Although a resident of Sanford, he was buried at Ethel on the same day.
Clara May Lee Jernigan was born on March 5, 1888, in Ethel so there must have been a Lee family living there then. Her father was John Noah Lee, a carpenter (1866-1954) and his father was Joshua Josiah Lee (1838-1933). Clara’s mother was Vallian Jane Thompson (1869-1908) who married John in 1887. They had at least three sons and five daughters.
Vallian’s birthplace is listed as Sanford. This was the nearest town to register births in the area, and as they were being recorded in Sanford, this was often listed erroneously as the birthplace especially as many rural communities did not have official names at that time, i.e. Ethel which was not given that name until the railway arrived almost 20 years later.

Clara May married Arthur Wilburn Jernigan on January 9, 1909. He was born on April 20, 1882, in Fort Christmas, Orange County, and was described as a trader. His father was Frank W. Jernigan and his mother Caroline Carrie Hodges, who might also have been buried at Ethel. The marriage certificate lists Clara May’s address as Ethel and Arthur’s as Paola, a predominantly Swedish settlement about three miles east of Ethel with its own rail stop. They later moved to Putnam County and she, Arthur and their six children are buried in Peniel Cemetery in Palatka. Their descendants still live in the Palatka area.

Arthur Jernigan, holding the cow whip, with his two sons, Hillary Elmer in the middle and Paul Warren on the right.
Marriage License.

State of Florida, County of Orange.

To any minister of the gospel, or any officer legally authorized to solemnize the rite of marriage:

Whereas, application having been made to the County Judge of Orange County, of the State of Florida, for a license to marry, and it appearing to the satisfaction of said County Judge that no legal impediments exist to the marriage now sought to be solemnized, therefor, To authorize you to unite in the

Holy Estate of Matrimony

Mr. Arthur A. Jernigans of Pet C. Fera
and Mrs. Clara Fee of Ethel Fera

and that you make record of the same, certifying under your hand, to the County Judge aforesaid.

W. W. Martin, County Judge, and the seal of said County
at the Court House in Orlando, this
A. D. 1939

H. Martin
County Judge

I certify that the parties named,

Arthur A. Jernigans
and Clara Fee,

were by me, the undersigned, duly united in the Holy Estate of Matrimony, by the authority of the

Within this day, 8th of January, A.D. 1939

W. W. Martin

Record for this, page 19

W. W. Martin
County Judge.

Lewis

Charles H. Lewis, known to everyone as Charley, was born on March 21, 1917, on the Isle of Pines in Cuba, where his parents were missionaries. His mother came from Liverpool, England, and his father was from New York. He was nine or ten when the family moved back to the United States and settled in Ethel. His mother died not long after and he had to go to work to help support the family.
He married Rowena White, on December 6, 1942. She was born in Ethel on June 2, 1922, and was related to the Delk family. Her father Edward White was born at Rock Springs on July 14, 1871, and was affectionately known as Grandpa White by all that knew him. He died one month short of his 108th birthday on June 27, 1979. He credited his long life to staying busy and eating no white bread.

He was the grandson of Major Delk, the plantation owner. Edward married Lena Hubble, from Virginia. White worked on the railroads, orange groves and shipyards. He cut wood for the wood burning railway engines and remembered that teachers at Ethel were paid $35 a month but never stayed for a second term. He had his tonsils taken out when he was 10 by Dr. Smith, the sawmill doctor, and it cost his parents $5. He said he was never the same after the surgery,

He also said that Captain Delk was breaking a horse which threw him, which broke his back, and it was that that killed him.

Nora Delk White was Grandpa White’s mother, born 1868 and died 1904. She was 11 when the school opened in Sorrento and walked to and from school each day.
Charles and Rowena Lewis c.1942

Charley served in World War II with Battery A, 204th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion. He was the operator of the power plant that provided the electricity for the 40mm guns. When he enlisted, he was among three busloads of recruits leaving Tavares.

He trained at Cape Cod and served in France and England and received his Honorable Discharge on December 10, 1945, at Camp Blanding, Florida.

After the war, he tried his hands at many jobs. He became a farmer, rancher, mechanic, and a railroad section hand before becoming a
landscape gardener. They had two sons, Norman, born on January 20, 1951, and Ray, born June 18, 1955, and known as Bigfoot.

Charley had 30 acres of land and he established the Lewis Range which for many years, was one of the few shooting range facilities in Central Florida. He eventually handed over the landscaping business to son Ray, but he continued to manage the range.

His son Norman married the former Janice Bronson, and both worked for the Methodist Children’s Home near Enterprise. They had a son and daughter.

Ray married Elinore Slicer and she joined the landscaping firm as bookkeeper. The Lewis House, built in 1951, was the last to be built in Ethel and is the only structure remaining.

Libby
George A. Libby, Government land purchase 1895

Lipford
Albert T. Lipford, Grant recorded in 1916. Born in December 1869 and worked as a foreman on the railroad. He wife Emma, was born in June 1868 and they had five children: Willa A. born June 1888, Alberta June, born June 1890, May, born July 1892, Sallie, born February 1897, and Taylor, born October 1899.

Martin
Alexander Martin, Grant 1878
Meadows

James Meadows, Government land purchase 1925

Metts

Andrew J. Metts, Grant 1883, Government land purchase 1887

Moody

Jacob Moody, Government land purchase of 160.58 acres recorded on April 5, 1876. He sold it to Andrew Owens on December 12, 1875.

Moore

Land holdings

Alonzo D. Moore, Government land purchase March 5, 1869. He paid $1.25 an acre for 39.65 acres but did not file in Orange County until January 23, 1885. He sold it to Anguson on June 3, 1878, who filed it in Orange County on June 5, 1878.

William Moore, December 11, 1875, purchase of land from Internal Improvement Fund for $1 an acre. The land was not filed with Orange County until May 23, 1882, after his death. Grant November 30, 1878.

The family:

The Moore’s came from South Carolina where they owned land. They had 1,000 acres on Mountain Creek, 96 District, in 1793, and 903 acres in Tilly Branch, All Saints parish in 1850.

William Moore senior married Margaret DuBose and they had two sons – William and Thomas – and three daughters – Maria, Matilda, and Margaret. Matilda married William D. Bryan in July 1825.
Son William was born in Barnwell District South Carolina, on June 8, 1800, and married Charlotte B. Newton (born January 23, 1813).

Children. Alonzo Dewees Moore (b. 1840), Angus Patterson Moore (b. August 22, 1842, d. May 7, 1902), Newton Gammon Moore (b. 1847). Living in Effingham Co, Georgia according to the 1860 census.

1870 census (Orange Co) William is listed aged 70, farmer, Charlotte 50 Keeping House, Alonzo 30, Angus 48, and Newton 24, all listed as farmers.

Angus married Mazelia A. Tullis around 1879 (she died in 1893). In 1880 Angus was farming in the 12th District of Effingham County, with their child Leo, 3 months. Also in the household was Mazelia’s brother Elihu, 31, who worked on the railroad and his bride Maggie Newton, 22, with their child Vivian, six months. By 1900, Angus, aged 57, was a policeman in Savannah, boarding with Elihu and Maggie.

Newton G. Moore received his land grant on September 20, 1882. Originally from South Carolina, he died in Ethel aged about 42 and was buried near his parents. He died between September 22, 1888, and April 9, 1889.

Newton Moore married Laura E. Kirkland (whose father was Robert L. Kirkland of Orange Co.). Their children were Lottie O. (born 1876), Willie Angus (born 1878), Irin Cecil (born 1880), Ila (born 1883), Newton Judson (born 1886 and died May 13, 1897), Charles Cleveland (born 1888)

They lost all their land at Ethel by foreclosure sale to Cora E. Willcox, of Pennsylvania. The case was heard in Orange County on June 21, 1887, but was then transferred to the newly formed Lake County jurisdiction. It was finalized by court decree on August 1, 1888, and recorded in Lake County’s Clerk’s Office on September 22, 1888.

On April 9, 1889, Cora Willcox deeded 10 acres by conveyance to Laura E. Moore being the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 30-19-29. This was part of Newton and
Laura’s land that Cora Willcox had foreclosed on and must have been the site of their homestead. By this time Laura was a widow with five children at home, so Cora in a very generous act gave her back the ten acres.

In those days, married women did not have land in their own name only unless they were widows or inherited it. By 1893, she had sold her 10 acres at Ethel and moved to St. Petersburg.

After Newton’s death she married William S. Meeks in Hillsborough on March 10, 1895, and had two more daughters – Willie L. Meeks (born 1897), and Emmaie (sic) G. Meeks (born 1900). In the 1900 Census, Laura says that she had had 8 children of whom 5 are still alive. The deceased children were Lottie O, Ila, and Newton Judson. Lottie and Ila were buried at Ethel. Her second husband died some time before 1903.

1875 William Moore bought 40 acres ($1 an acre) Section 13.19.29 (SE ¼ of SW ¼) Purchase approved by Governor Stearns 10.11.75, not filed until 5.23.82 after his death on 1.5.82.

Nov 13, 1878, bought 160 acres and five hundredths of an acre (Homestead Act purchase)
SWNW 32.19S.29E
E ½ NE 31.19S.29E (location of cemetery)
SWNE 31.19S.29E

Cora E. Willcox purchased the Moore property July 2, 1888. The property was foreclosed June 21, 1887, for unpaid taxes.

**Musselwhite**

John Musselwhite, Government land purchase 1906
Ottman

John Ottman lived in Ethel and was a ferry operator. He died on July 6, 1901, by suicide aged 40. He was buried the next day.

Palleo (Patillo).

Mary Jane Palleo was an Ethel resident and died on July 1, 1905. Cause of death was given as old age. She was aged 70. She was buried in Ethel on July 2, 1905. Her last name is given as Patillo in the Brisson Funeral Home burial records.

Parkhurst

E. G. Parkhurst, Government land purchase 1884

Peters

B. Peters, born 1843, cabinet maker.

Priester

Priester F. B. was born in 1861 and was a farmer.

Railroads

Government land purchase 1888

Rawls

Edgar C. Rawls Grant 1938

Reed

Arthur Reed, Government land purchase 1860. In 1863 he sold 200 acres to Isaac Rutland.

Reid

Robert R. Reid, Government land purchase 1855
Rents/Rentz
Lawson S. Rents Government land purchase 1951

Rhodes
Russell C. Rhodes Government land purchase 1926

Robuck
Robuck W. A. was born in 1857 and in the Lake County Poll Tax book of 1888 is listed as black and a farmer.

Rush
Andrew M. Rush, Grant 1917
Eugene A. Rush, Grant 1917

Clyde Rush, who died on January 7, 1913, aged 15 months, was buried at Ethel the following day. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Rush.

Rutland
Isaac N. Rutland (born 1825 in Tennessee). He listed his occupation as merchant and farmer. Government land purchase April 9, 1859, of 40.1 acres at $1 an acre; Government land purchases on August 1, 1860, of 36.14 acres (not filed in Orange County until June 18, 1928.) and 40.1 acres. On February 17, 1863, he bought about 200 acres from Arthur M. Reid.

On July 1, 1882, Othman Rutland sold 12 acres to Miles McK. Stewart for $800. The sale was filed in Orange County on August 25, 1882.

Isaac was married to Margaret M., born 1832, and they had four children – Louisa, born 1853, Cassins M. born 1856, Othman, born 1857, and a year-old son who in the 1860 Census was unnamed.

Thomas
Ella Thomas, Government land purchase 1926
Thompson

Nathaniel Thompson was born in April 1846 and lived in Ethel. His wife died on January 22, 1894. She was buried the next day. The cause of death is unknown, and she was 45 years old. It was noted that she was buried in a rosewood coffin. They had two children, Clifford, born July 1881, and William A. born January 1884. In 1900 Nathaniel was living in Tavares.

Ulrich

E. Ulrich, Government land purchase 1909

Vermillion

Charles J. Vermillion, Grant 1919

Von Herbulis

Albert Olszewski von Herbulis, Government land purchase 1914, Grant 1923.

Albert was born in Pittston, on January 24, 1888. His father was Adalbert Olszewski ‘Albert’ Von Herbulis, who was born in Budapest, on April 23, 1861, and came to America in 1880. He was a nationally recognized architect having designed many cathedrals, university buildings and hospitals in the U.S. and Canada, including the Cathedral of St. Helena in Helena, Montana. He married his wife Amelia Anna Wittke (1854-1945) in 1884, and they had five sons (Edward, Albert, Otto, Walter and John), and one daughter (Melania).

Albert married Mary Elizabeth McDonald on May 22, 1921, in Lake County, Florida, and they had at least four sons and two daughters. Mary Alberta was born on March 13, 1922, in Ethel.

The family moved to Sorrento in 1923 where the rest of their children were born, and then to Sanford, where he died on September 12, 1972, at the age of 84. He was buried in Sanford.
Edward Olszewski von Herbulis, homesteaded at Wekiva with a Government land purchase dated 1920. Edward, brother of Albert, was born on May 20, 1886, in Pittston, Pennsylvania. He married Theresa Catherine Dawson (1899-1974), the Ethel schoolteacher, on August 22, 1918, in Altoona, Florida (see Ethel School section above). They had one daughter Eveline Amelia who was born in Wekiva on December 15, 1921.

Edward and his wife Theresa later moved about five miles west to Mount Plymouth to open a jelly store – the Lake County Preserving Company - on the northwest corner of State Road 46 and County Road 435.

They made their own citrus marmalades and jellies in an assortment of colors and flavors and sold them to grocers throughout Central Florida, as well as customers out of state.

Their Model B Ford truck, used to make deliveries, was a familiar sight in the area. He died on June 13, 1968, in Sorrento at the age of 82 and was buried in Sorrento.
Edward O. Von Herbulis and his wife Theresa outside their jelly shop.  
*Source: East Lake Historical Society*

**Waits**

James Waits, Grant 1883

**Wallace**

Sadie Wallace, Grant 1921

**White**

Thomas Elbert White, Grant 1926. He married Nora Delk on November 6, 1889. They had a son Edward who was born in 1890.
Nora White was buried at Ethel on Jan 31, 1904, the day after her death from unlisted causes. She was aged about 36 and lived in Ethel. She was the grandmother of Rowena Lewis and wife of Elbert White.

James Oscar White, died on October 2, 1918, at the age of 23 from pneumonia, at Camp Upton, New York, a U.S. Army training camp. His body was transported back to Ethel, and he was buried there on October 12. His mother was Mary M. Koons White.

J. E. White, born 1866, carpenter.

Wildman

Emma A. Wildman, Government land purchase 1887

Wynne

R. T. Wynne, born 1850, carpenter.

At its heyday in the late 1880s and early 1890s, Ethel had a population of around 200.
Thanks to Tony’s research we now know who owned what land in and around Ethel in the 19th and 20th centuries. Below is the plat map broken down into four quadrants showing land acquired by Indentures, Grants and Property Transactions, the date for each and the names of the landowner.
Northeast quadrant
Southwest quadrant
Southeast quadrant
By the 1920 U.S. Census, there were only ten homes with families listed in Ethel and that included the residents of the little adjacent town of Wekiva, now Wekiva Falls RV Resort. The school and the post office had long before moved to Sorrento. The last residents moved out in the 1980s.

In the 1920 Lake County Census (Enumeration District 94, Precinct #24, Precinct Name: Ethel)

The ten families listed as living in Ethel or nearby Wekiva were:

   Boyd, James K.
Vanderhock, John
Snow, James
Boyd, Tom I.
Brockway, Nathan A.
Vermillion, Charles J.
Fillmon, William
White, Edward
White, Thomas E
Von Herbulis, Edward O.
Ball, Benjamin J

All that remains of the town of Ethel today is the Lewis House and remnants of Mrs. Rowena Lewis's birthplace, a few moss-covered bricks, and some colored bottles, which was on a five-acre lot, to the south of the Lewis House and alongside the Ethel school site.

The first purchases – on March 10, 1983 - were for two parcels of land - 7,593 acres and 351 acres from Delrando Inc. On March 21, 1990, an additional 1,526 acres were purchased from B.M.K. Ranches Inc, and 1,750 acres from M.K. Citrus Ltd Partnership, and in October 24, 1991, 1,826 acres were purchased from STS Associates L.P. During that time, an additional 550 acres was purchased from twelve different landowners. The total holding is now 14,164 acres.

The BMK Ranch was named after its owners – Bach, Marcher and Kupton. There were the ruins of a home on the BMK property, but these were cleared to make way for a road.
Ethel Point of Interest
Ethel Windmill c. 1951. Source: Author.
Ed White’s windmill (above). He was born in 1870, worked the railroad and lived in the home he built until he passed away in 1979. When he was nine, he pulled the chain for the 1879 survey crew.

Mr. Hagen, who owned a turpentine still at Markham, bought much of the rest of the land under the Murphy Act.
Ethel Cemetery

Ethel Cemetery today, is a one-acre fenced site, but research has identified a total of twenty-nine burials so far.

During World War 11, people started buying land under the Murphy Act for as little as 10 cents an acre and the cemetery is thought to have been included in one of those sales.

The new landowner was a man called Johnson, a conductor on the railroad who lived in Sanford. He bought the land to graze cattle. With the help of his grandsons, he is said to have removed the headstones, loaded them onto a truck and thrown them into a swamp along the Wekiva River.

Some of the land was also used for a hunting club called Buckhead.
Tony Moore’s first mapping of Ethel Cemetery – May 22, 2008
**Ethel burials**

James Oscar White, May 7, 1895-Oct 2, 1918, is one of three World One veterans believed to have been buried there.

*The entrance of Ethel Cemetery at Rock Springs Run State Reserve*

Below is the elaborate grave marker for Luke H. Moore, who died in 1914.

He was a member of the Woodsmen of the World, a fraternal and insurance society. His marker is known as a ‘treestone’ and would have been provided by the fraternal society.
Marli Wilkins Lopez, Reference Librarian with the City of Tavares Public Library, standing next to Luke Moore’s headstone. It looks so new it is amazing to think that it was installed so long ago.
Ironically, Luke Moore did not live in Ethel. He was a rail passenger and died on the train. His body was discovered by the conductor when the train stopped at Ethel.
The conductor thought the passenger was sleeping but when it became obvious that he was dead, he was lowered onto the platform so that the train could continue its journey. His burial was probably arranged by railway workers and the Ethel folk, and the elaborate headstone came later when his family discovered what had become of him. The headstone was provided by the Woodmen of the World.

The organization was founded in 1890 in Omaha, Nebraska, by Joseph Cullen Root. He had founded Modern Woodmen of America (MWA) in Lyons, Iowa, in 1883, after hearing a sermon about "pioneer woodsmen clearing away the forest to provide for their families".

He wanted to start a society that "would clear away problems of financial security for its members". After much internal dissension, Root was asked to leave the organization and he started again with a group called the Modern Woodmen of the World.

The "Modern", was later dropped and the organization became "Woodmen of the World". The first Boys of Woodcraft unit was founded in Jacksonville, Florida in 1903, by J.M. Taylor.

Lasting legacies of the organization are the large elaborate headstones in the shape of a tree stump. The sawed-off limbs represent a life cut short. The headstones were provided by the organization until the 1920s. Over 45,000 were installed nationally.

Luke Moore was not related to the Moore family that did live in Ethel, two of whose members – William and Charlotte are also buried in the cemetery.

**William and Charlotte Moore**

William was born on June 9, 1800, and died on January 5, 1882, aged 81. His wife Charlotte was born on January 23, 1813, and passed away on June 6, 1883, aged 70. Their combined headstone is made of marble, a sign that they were people of substance.
The arched monument gravestone when it was rediscovered in 2008. Source. Tony Moore.
The grave of Joseph A. Boyd, who died in 1918 aged 2 months. His parent James and Minnie Boyd lived in the southern part of Ethel on land they purchased in 1913. When Tony Moore found the grave, it had started to sink into the ground, so he stabilized it.

Confirmed burials at Ethel are:

Allman/Autman Laura, born 1899, died Dec 2, 1903.
Autman/Ottman, John, born 1859, died July 6, 1901.
Bateman, Newall, born 1851, died July 22, 1918. He was visiting from New Jersey but his daughter was unable to have the body returned home so he was buried in Ethel.
Boyd, Ella, born 1896, died December 5, 1912.
Boyd, Ida, born 1891, died aged 24 on April 16, 1916. A resident of Wekiva who died in childbirth. She was buried the next day.
Boyd, Johnnie/John, born 1898, died September 1915.
Boyd, Joseph Alexander, born December 20, 1917, died February 2, 1918. His funeral on February 3 cost $231. He died from spinal meningitis. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. James Boyd.
Bresow, Jerry, birth date unknown, died September 27, 1915.
Fillmon (or Fillmore), William Arthur “Will”, born 1913, died May 13, 1916. Cause of death was diphtheria. He was buried on the 14th.
Glass, Richard “Dick”, born 1884, died January 17, 1893. He was buried on the 18th.
Goins/Goines, Earl, born 1920, died aged 16 on February 11, 1936. Died of pneumonia and was buried on February 14th.
Gray, Baby, born December 1895, died aged six months on May 15, 1896. She was the child of Mr. and Mrs. Gray who lived in Wekiva.
Griffin, Mrs. A. H. born July 1827, died October 25, 1887. She died from dysentery and was buried on the 27th.
Lee, Charles C. born 1884, died November 4, 1918.
Lee, Robert E. “Rob”, born 1916, died aged three on July 20, 1919. He was buried the same day.

Moore, Charlotte, born January 23, 1813, died January 6, 1883.
She is buried alongside her husband and her headstone inscription reads:

Our mother’s dust lies underground
In life, the dearest friend ever found
Through the Lord’s unbounded love
We’ll meet again in realms above.

Moore, Charlotte O. “Lottie”, born 1876, died date unknown.
Moore, Ila, born 1883, date of death unknown.
Moore, Luke H. (see above), born Jan 3, 1876, died October 16, 1914. He was found dead on the train when it stopped at Ethel so was buried there. It is not known where he was traveling from or where he was going to. He was a member of Woodmen of the World, and they eventually supplied his elaborate tombstone. The only Luke H. Moore that Tony Moore was able to trace was listed in the 1910 Census of Hillsborough County, living with a wife and daughter. Someone must have ordered the tombstone, but Woodmen of the World has no record of it and it is not known when it was placed over the grave.

Moore, Newton Gammon, born 1847, died 1889.
Moore, William, born June 3, 1800, died January 5, 1882.
Palleo/Patiolo Mrs. Mary Jane, born 1835, died July 1, 1905, buried on the 2nd.
Rush, Clyde, born September 1911, died aged 15 months on January 7, 1913. He was buried the next day. He was the son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Rush
Thompson, Mrs. Nathaniel, born 1849, died January 22, 1894, and buried on the 23rd in a rosewood coffin.
White, James Oscar, born May 7, 1895, died aged 23 on October 2, 1918. He died from pneumonia while at the U.S. Army Training Camp at Camp Upton, New York. His body was returned to Ethel, and he was buried on the 12th.
White, Mrs. Nora (wife of Elbert), born 1868, died January 30, 1904.

Also, Mrs. F. Jernigan, a resident of Ethel, died aged 56 on December 2, 1909, from obstruction of the bowels, but was buried the following day in Fort Christmas.

Mrs. Maggie Click, of Ethel, died aged 61 from cancer on November 12, 1913, and was buried the same day at Lake View, Sanford.
Anthony Frazier – The Slave who became a County Commissioner of Roads

Anthony Frazier was born a slave in Liberty County, Georgia in 1836 or 1837 (although his military papers say Charleston NC), but he spent most of his life as a farmhand in and around north Orange and south Lake counties, according to a statement by his ‘half-brother’ and fellow slave Joseph Robards kept at the National Archives in Washington D.C.

It is almost certain that Joseph G. Robards and Joseph G. Roberts, a slave and son of Major William S. Delk, are the same person (see also Delk section above). In a deposition given in 1910, Robards said that he and Frazier had the same mother – Judy Henry, but that his father was Delk, while Anthony’s father was a black man also called Anthony Frazier.

Frazier “saw milled, carpentered and farmed and did general hard labor,” according to Robards who was testifying in 1910 on behalf of Frazier’s widow, Mary, who was seeking to have the $15 a-month military pension of her just-deceased husband transferred to her.

Anthony Frazier died on April 4, 1910. The official cause of death is not known but he did suffer from rheumatism, a condition he contracted while in the army, which got progressively worse as he aged. According to records, his death was recorded on April 7, 1910, in Orange County and his place of burial is listed as Calvary Cemetery.

As a slave in his late 20s, he was working as a laborer on the Delk Plantation when war broke out. In 1864, Delk, who was a Union sympathizer, was arrested for refusing to pay taxes to support the Confederacy. He managed to escape and returned to his plantation where he freed his slaves and they all fled.

Frazier and Robards went to the Wekiva River, found a boat, and made their way to the St. Johns where they were picked up by a federal gunboat. They both joined the Union Army on September 18, 1864.
They signed up in Hilton Head, S.C., and in return for a $100 bounty, agreed to serve for three years.

Hilton Head was an important strategic location for the Union Army but also a restocking and refueling station for the ships of the Department of the South Blockading Squadron. Black troops were used to load and unload ships, transport goods, building and maintaining buildings and growing and harvesting food.
During this time, Delk had been working as a civilian for the Union Army providing them with cattle.

At the beginning of the Civil War, runaway slaves surrendering to Union forces were returned to their ‘masters’, often forcibly. This was done to avoid further alienating the breakaway states.

However, the Union soon realized that returned slaves were supporting the rebel’s effort either by working on the plantations and providing food for the troops or being used as laborers to build Confederate fortifications.

After that, runaway slaves were recruited by the Union army as laborers, teamsters, cooks, and other menial jobs, but not as fighting soldiers.

It was not until the Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, freeing all slaves, and an order from Secretary of War Stanton on January 13, that regiments of Negro troops were officially sanctioned.

The United States Department of War issued General Order #143 on May 22, 1863, establishing the Bureau of Colored Troops.
It was ordered that “Every enlisted colored man shall have the same uniform, clothing, arms, equipments, camp equipage, rations, medical and hospital treatment as are furnished to the United States soldiers of the service.”

While this was the intent, Black troops still faced enormous discrimination. Black soldiers, both those born free as well as those who gained their freedom, were eager to fight and tens of thousands signed up. They were paid $10 a month. Whites, on the other hand, got $13. Blacks alone were also charged $3 a month for uniforms, reducing their take-home pay to $7.

This injustice was remedied in June 1864, when Congress granted equal pay to the U.S. Colored Troops, abolished the clothing allowance, and made the action retroactive to the date they enlisted.

Colored Troops spent a lot of time in camp training. The following is a typical day in camp.

5:00 a.m. Reveille - Roll call - Shake out blankets - clean tents, men wash in squads in river.
5:45 a.m. Breakfast
6:45 a.m. Surgeon's Call
6:50 a.m. Sergeant's Call - Morning Reports
7:00 a.m. Fatigue Call and Drill
8:00 a.m. 1st Call for Guard Mount
8:15 a.m. Guard Mount
10:00 a.m. Recall
12:00 p.m. Dinner
3:00 p.m. Fatigue and Drill
6:00 p.m. Recall
6:20 p.m. 1st Call Dress Parade
6:30 p.m. Adjutant's Call
7:00 p.m. Supper
8:30 p.m. Tattoo
9:00 p.m. Taps
Standard issue was that each man had canteen and haversack, two pairs of shoes, two suits underclothing-ammunition plenty and in good order - and “that the men are in every way prepared for the field.”

Colored troop regiments, however, were plagued with shortage of clothing, especially shoes, and the War Department usually chose to supply white regiments over black ones.

The Colored troops were often given secondhand weapons, usually Springfield, Enfield or Swivel Bore) and in many cases these were “more or less imperfect and hardly suitable for field service”.

Having several types of firearms, each of which required different ammunition, caused logistical problems especially on the battlefield.

Because Colored Troops were often used mostly for heavy fatigue duties - manual labor - they had little time for military training. This coupled with inadequate supplies meant they were ill prepared to face the enemy on the battlefield and explains why they saw few major battles. Frazier and Robards fought as privates in several minor skirmishes, including a ‘battle’ in Jacksonville.

Frazier served in Company K of the 21st U.S Colored Infantry, which was organized from the 3rd and 4th Regiments, South Carolina Colored Infantry on March 14, 1864. It was attached to 3rd Brigade, Vogdes' Division, District of Florida, Dept. of the South, until April 1864; Morris Island, S. C., Northern District, Dept. of the South, to October 1864, 1st Separate Brigade, Dept. of the South, to February 1865; Garrison of Charleston, S. C., Dept. of the South, to August 1865; and Dept. of the South, to October 1866.

It is thought he developed rheumatism while stationed at Morris Island and that was to trouble him for the rest of his life. His Company commander was a Lt. Davis.
Anthony Frazier’s Enlistment Record 1864
A Union Army recruiting poster targeting freed slaves

The Battle Flag of the 21st Regiment

The commanding officer of the 21st was Milton Smith Littlefield (July 19, 1830–March 7, 1899), who was known as the “Prince of
Carpetbaggers” during the Reconstruction Era because of his desire to make a profit which often landed him in legal trouble.

General Milton Littlefield

In 1861, he organized a company of infantry in Illinois and was elected its Captain. After serving at Shiloh and Corinth, he was made Lieutenant Colonel of the new 14th Illinois Cavalry and in 1863 he was sent south and ordered to recruit black troops.

He raised the 4th South Carolina Infantry and when the United States Colored Troops were organized, his regiment became the 21st USCT Infantry and on November 26, 1864, he was given a brevet promotion to Brigadier General of Volunteers. (A brevet promotion is a promotion to a higher rank as an honor but without the pay or full privileges of the higher rank.)

He served as brigade and district commander and was mustered out on April 25, 1866. It was claimed that while in charge of recruiting black troops for the Department of the South, he tried to get freedmen
pressed into service and then appropriated the enlistment bounty they were due. The misappropriations were then used to fund his many financial schemes.

In 1877 he was accused of defrauding the state of North Carolina of $4 million after the legislature granted $27.8 million in Railroad Bonds. Although indicted along with Railroad President George Swepson, he was never convicted.

The 21st served at Jacksonville, Fla., until April 1864 and moved to Hilton Head, S. C., thence to Folly Island, S. C., on April 18. It then saw duty on Folly Island, Morris Island and Coles Island operating against Charleston, S. C., until February 1865.

It took part in an Expedition to James Island, S. C., June 30-July 10 and saw action on James Island on July 2.

The 21st U.S. Colored Infantry were the first troops to march into Charleston after the mayor surrendered the town on February 18, 1865.
It took part in the Occupation of Charleston and was then engaged in garrison duty in Charleston and Mt. Pleasant, S. C., until August 1865, and at various points in South Carolina and Georgia until October 1866.

Little is known about the men of Company K, but we do know from records that the following served alongside Frazier at some time. Private James Adams, a farmer from Jacksonville, was 19 when he enlisted.

Corporal Frank Jenkins, a 46-year-old stockman from Duval County. Private Henry White, aged 17, a farmer from Jacksonville, and Private February Francis, 25, a coachman from Jacksonville.

We do know a little about February Francis because of correspondence between him and the Office of the Pension Bureau after the war regarding his pension.
He was born a slave at Mayport, in Duval County, the property of William Christopher who farmed on Talbot Island. As a young man he was known as February Christopher but at some point during the war, he changed his name to February Francis.

He served as a sailor and a soldier during the Civil War, enlisting first in the United States Navy, and, after being honorably discharged, enlisted in the United States Colored Infantry on September 14, 1864, at Fernandina, Florida. He was honorably discharged from the army on April 23, 1866, in Charleston, S.C.

After the war he returned to Duval County and lived in Jacksonville. Late in life, on March 4, 1914, he married M. Alena Diggs at St. Nicholas, Florida. By then, he was a deacon in a church in St. Nicholas and had changed his name again to February Shaw.

Records from the Pension Office show that he had an eventful time in the navy. It also indicates how long it took to resolve matters.

Received at the Office of the Pension Bureau on May 22, 1912:
“I am the identical February Francis who enlisted in Company “K” 21st Regiment U.S.C. Troops at Jacksonville Florida on the 14th day of September 1864 to serve 3 years and was discharged April 23, 1866, at Charleston S.C. by means of muster out of organization having served 1 year, 7 mos and 18 days. I am now 73 years of Age, having been born at Mayport February 1, 1839.

“I am 5 feet 8 in high, black, black eyes, black hair grey now. I have lived in Duval County Florida during the whole time since the war. I am now a Pensioner of the U.S. government under certificate No. 672763 I have the honor to ask the Hon. Commissioner of Pensions that I may be re-rated at $20.00 per month under law of May 1912.”

More than four years later, on November 4, 1916. F.D. Byington, Acting Commissioner, wrote to the Quartermaster General, War Department: “In the above-cited claim for pension it appears that Christopher
February, a colored man, was discharged from the U.S.S. “Wabash,” then part of the blockading fleet off Charleston, S.C., on November 29, 1863, and he states that he was thereafter placed on the transport “General Hunter”; was on said vessel on April 16, 1864, when she was torpedoed on the way to Jacksonville, Fla.; was taken off by the “Harris Reed”? (Harriet A. Weed) and brought to Jacksonville, where he enlisted in the army.”

“It is shown by a report from the War Department that he enlisted in Co. K, 21st U.S. Col. Inf., on September 7, 1864, under the name February Francis, and a report is desired showing whether said Christopher February or February Francis was serving as an employee of the Quartermaster’s Department aboard the “General Hunter,” and, if not, showing to what regiments the troops aboard said vessel were assigned.”

On July 19, 1917, the Commissioner received another letter from Francis. “I was discharged from U.S.S. ‘Wabash’ and went right aboard the ‘General Hunter’ and served on her until she was torpedoed April 16, 1864, off Mandarin...joined the ‘Wyoming’ Cap. Jones. Left the ‘Wyoming’ and enlisted in the 21 U.S.C. Inf. Sept. 7, 1864, and served with until discharged.”

The pension issue was never resolved, and Francis died in 1920. His wife decided not to apply for a widow’s pension.

The 21st Colored Infantry was mustered out (dismounted) in Charleston on October 7, 1866, but Robards and Frazier had already been honorably discharged on April 25, 1866.

Mary Ward had met Frazier when he was encamped as a soldier in Charleston, S.C. She was younger, possibly by as much as 15 years, but they were smitten with each other, according to Robards.
They were hoping to get married in Charleston as soon as he was discharged but on the day they were due to wed, he was ordered on to transport that was going to Savannah, the first leg on his journey home. It was to be several months before they were reunited.

Anthony Frazier’s Discharge Papers
They agreed to meet up again in Jacksonville, Florida, and there on February 2, 1867, they were married by the Rev. F. A. Branch V.D.M. (V.D.M. stands for Verbi dei minister which denoted a minister of the Lutheran or Reformed Church).

They settled near Lake Beauclair in the Tangerine area of Orange County. Records indicate they had at least six children.

A transcribed court copy of the wedding certificate of Anthony Frazier and Mary Ward
Despite exhaustive searches no pictures of Anthony Frazier have been found either while serving as a Union infantryman or later. Several photographs of Mary, however, have been found, and some of their adult children.

Photography was still in its infancy and cameras were an expensive luxury, so it is thought that the pictures of Mary and adult children were taken by Anthony Frazier and that he was always behind the camera and never in front of it.

An artist’s visualization of Anthony Frazier based on the photographs of his adult sons Dan and Morton who looked remarkably similar. Courtesy of artist Gary Schermerhorn.
“Aunt” Mary in town (Sorrento).

Mary Frazier husking corn
“Aunt” Mary Frazier and granddaughter Mary

Anthony was granted 160 acres through the Homestead Act of 1862 with the papers signed by President Ulysses S. Grant (1869-77).

The land was virtually free to those over 21, but there was a small filing fee to register the land and obtain the deeds for it. There was an $18 fee to file for the land - $10 to make a temporary claim, $2 commission to
the Land Agent and a $6 final payment to receive an official patent on the land.

To qualify, you had to show proof of continuous residence on the land for five years, had to build a home (minimum dimensions 12 feet by 14 feet, farm the land and make improvements. In total, 28,096 homestead patents were issued in Florida, totaling 3.3 million acres which is 10 percent of the land in the state.

Union soldiers could shave off time served in the Civil War from the five-year resdidency requirement. Frazier applied for his land patent after three years in 1869 and sold the 160-acre parcel on April 1, 1876, to Lewis Ballard for $400.

Frazier, who was credited with establishing the Rock Springs colored school towards the end of the 19th century, purchased land from the U.S. Government in 1876 and 1885, from the firm of Robards, Edwards and Williams also in 1885, and from the John Eaton (or Easton) Estate in 1904. (Source. History of Apopka, Jerrell H. Shofner).

In the 1870s and 1880s, Frazier was able to buy ‘raw’ (undeveloped) land from the U.S. Government for $1.50 an acre. When Mary Frazier died in Sorrento in 1924, the 120 acres owned was valued at $600, records indicate.

Vivian Owens, a Mount Dora author who has written about black history in Lake County, said Frazier likely came back to the area because "he knew the land and its resources, and he knew the nature of people populating the area."

Although he faced prejudice from many of the white people who had lost their source of free labor, he settled in an area where numerous former slaves had gathered.

"He could work directly for the white man, or he could create his own type of job. ... He could tend his own orange grove and sell to the white
and black communities. He could raise vegetables and peddle them from house to house. He could fish in the nearby lakes and streams and sell his catch of the day," said Owens, who wrote "The Mount Dorans: African American History Notes of a Florida Town."

Frazier apparently got along with blacks and whites, said Angela Y. Walton-Raji, a genealogist who read numerous documents in Frazier's pension file at the National Archives.

She pointed out that his widow, Mary, submitted a pension request written on her behalf by A.S. Matlock, an area merchant who described himself as one of the first white settlers in the area. Both Mary and Anthony Frazier were illiterate and signed their names with an X.

An entry on the Ancestry.com website said Anthony and Mary Frazier were known in the region as ‘Uncle Pete’ and ‘Aunt Mary’, which were terms of respect and endearment back then, Walton-Raji said.

"They were sort of considered good citizens in the town," she said.

In 1880, Anthony Frazier, William S. Delk, and James Madison were appointed Orange County Special Commissioners of Roads.

Handwritten minutes of the Orange County Commissioners meeting in Orlando, October 4, 1880.

They were tasked to build a public road from Orlando to Rock Springs and another from Rock Springs to the Hawkinsville intersection, a cypress timber settlement and steamboat stop on the west side of the St. Johns River, a half mile south of the more recent Whitehair Bridge (also called the DeLand Bridge or Crows Bluff Bridge) near DeLand. The Rock Springs
to Hawkinsville Road probably followed the route of what is now State Road 44 travelling from Rock Springs and east of Mount Plymouth and then northeast to the St. Johns River.

Note. In the 1930s and '40s, the Wilson Cypress Co. unloaded cypress logs at Hawkinsville and towed them to their mill in Palatka.

At one stage it was the largest cypress mill in the world.

Earlier, Civil War gunboats had been repaired and retimbered at Hawkinsville. The Wilson Co. closed its operation in 1944 because of a labor shortage brought on by World War II. The land that was once Hawkinsville was then owned by rancher Len Holt, who kept cattle there. Only the town's old commissary remains on the property.

In the History of Sorento, there is the following reference “Two other colored families lived on the Rock Springs Road – Uncle Pete and Aunt Mary Frazier and their children, and Joe Jenkins and his family. Their descendants still live in this section. (Sorrento, Lake Co., Fl USA (franmuse.com)
Dan Frazier with turkey. Source. The Rainey Family
Dan Frazier with horse. Source. The Rainey Family.
Dan Frazier with horse and cart. Source. The Rainey Family.
Dan Frazier with mules. Source. The Rainey Family.

Morton Frazier (left) and hunting friends. Fred Steenberg is in the middle. He was chauffeur to the Rainey family. On the right is Jimmy Hawkins.

208
After the Civil War, the Reconstruction Government required each county to record lists of all eligible voters by precinct. The lists were drawn up by three Registrars, one of whom was required to be a person of color.

In Orange County, James Chairs filled this requirement for the Voter List for 1867-8. The other two Registrars were L. C. Whitted and William H. Holden. Listed in Precinct 3 are William S. Delk and Anthony Frasier “colored”.

The Orange County Census of 1880, listed the Frazier household as:

- Pete (Anthony was affectionately known as Pete) aged 50,  
  Mary 30, and their children:
- Sancho 13 (born 1867) - this may have been William,  
- Missouri 11 (born 1869) - daughter
Frances 9 (born 1871),
Jacksonville 7 (born 1873), who was generally called Dan.
Lula 5 (born 1875), and
Robert 1 (born 1878).
Arthur was born in 1882 and Morton in 1888.
Robert married Lula Leggs who was born March 6, 1881. They had a daughter Clara M, born in 1913. Lula died October 2, 1926, at the age of 45. She is buried in Mt. Olive Cemetery, Eustis.
Morton Frazier was born on May 25, 1888, at Bay Ridge, Orange County, and he married Beulah ‘Bula’ Cooper (born 1895) on October 1, 1911. They lived in Sorrento according to the 1920 Census and had three children – Mary (born 1915), Charlie (born 1917), and Evans (born 1918).
Both Morton and Bula were literate.
Charlie’s nickname was ‘Hand’, and he married Martha Fields (born 1910) whose family came from Quincy (father was Tommy Fields and mother was Mary Jane, maiden name Spivey). She died soon after their marriage in Umatilla on March 11, 1938, at the age of 25. She was buried on March 13 in Winter Park and the cause of death was listed as homicide (a gunshot to the abdomen). Mary Jane is buried in Island Pond 1 cemetery.
The 1920 Census shows that Joseph R. Williams, aged 51 and his wife Charity, 38 (born 1882), were living in Sorrento. Also living in the household were Joseph R. Humphrey, aged 5, and born in 1915, and Mary Frazier, aged 70, “an aunt and widow”.

210
Morton Frazier with wild turkeys and hunting dog.
Source. The Rainey Family.
Anthony Frazier’s last purchase of land on January 30, 1904.

It was originally a 160-acre parcel although three acres had already been conveyed by the original owner Daniel Jenkins.

In his last years Anthony Frazier was in poor health and he, or people on his behalf, frequently wrote to the Commissioner of Pensions in Washington D. C. asking for his pension to be increased because of disability.

As a result, his pension over the years increased from $8 a month to $15 at the time of his death. When Mary was finally allowed to receive his pension as a widow, she received $9 a month.
A letter written on Anthony Frazier’s behalf, sent to the Pensions Office on April 16, 1905.

After Anthony died, several people wrote to the Bureau of Pension office on her behalf asking that Anthony’s pension be transferred to her.

Two of these people were his half-brother, Joseph Robards and James Madison, who had served with Anthony as an Orange County Commissioner of Roads.
Affidavit in support of Mary's pension transfer request signed by Joseph Robards and James Madison.
A letter in support of Mary’s pension request written in 1910 by A. S. Matlock, a Sorrento grocer.
A.S. Matlock & Co. Store, Sorrento. 1900. Source: Florida Memory

The record of Mary’s filing request dated May 12, 1910

216
Mary Frazier’s affidavit signed on September 8, 1916, which attested to where she had lived in the 1870s and 1880s. The affidavit also gives the exact locations where she and Anthony lived.
One of the problems was that Mary could not prove her age and the rules said that she had either had to be married to Anthony while he was serving as a soldier or that she had to be aged 70 to receive the pension.

In an affidavit of December 13, 1916, she said that while “she was born in slavery and that there is no known date or record of her birth in existence,” she is able to fix the year of her birth “from the fact that she remembers seeing the great Comet of 1843, and that she believes herself to be over 73 years of age.”

(Note. The Great Comet of 1843 was first observed in early February 1843. It was so bright that it could be seen in broad daylight. It passed closest to Earth on March 6 1843, and was at its greatest brilliance the following day. It was last observed on April 19, 1843. At that time, the comet had passed closer to the Sun than any other known object.)
In an earlier deposition she said, “I cannot tell my age, but I was 16 years old when I married my husband directly after his discharge.”
On February 21, 1917, A. Matlock, a notary public, wrote to the Commissioner of Pensions again, objecting to the delay in resolving Mary’s case. He wrote:

“Several weeks since I sent you some testimony asked for, in the case of Mary Frazier’s application for increase of pension from which nothing has been heard.

“Kindly look up the case and see if cannot be hurried up a little. The old woman is in a bad fix, has lost the use of one hand and is partly crippled in her right side, and having an almost helpless son to support. She is hard up and against it.”

Her physicians were Drs. H. T. Fenn and Charles M. Roberts of Mount Dora.

Mary died of influenza on December 19, 1924, and according to her death certificate was buried the next day. Her occupation was given as midwife and the certificate said that she was born in Savannah, Georgie, in 1843 (with ‘estimate’ in brackets).

Questions asking about the name of her father and mother and their place of birth all have “Don’t Know” written by them. Mary Frazier purchased property in Sorrento in 1921 for $50.

Her address was given as Lot 6 & 7 in the Paxton and Somerville subdivision. (A William Summerville owned a sawmill on Wolfe Branch Road around 1880 and H.B. Paxton was one of the first settlers in Sorrento, arriving around 1875.).
Mary’s home in Sorrento at the time of her death

At the time of Mary’s death, she owned 120 acres of ‘raw land’ worth $5 an acre.

She left it to her five sons jointly. They sold it very shortly after her death.
Deed of Morton’s sale of land 1925
Following Mary’s death Robert Frazier petitioned the county to use the accrued pension to cover her medical and burial bills amounting to $142.21. Her casket cost $60.

Rejecting the petition, Acting Commissioner Hays Haymaker wrote:

Mr. Robert R. Frazier,
Sorrento, Fla.

Sir:

I have to advise you that your claim for reimbursement in the case of Mary Frazier is rejected on the ground that the pensioner left assets consisting of real estate valued at $600.00, sufficient to meet the expenses of her last sickness and burial alleged to have been $142.21. Under such circumstances the accrued pension cannot be paid to anyone for any purpose.

Respectfully,

HAYS HAYMAKER

Acting Commissioner.
It is not known where Frazier’s children moved to although a black cemetery just outside Eustis holds the remains of a Lula Frazier, who was born in 1881 and died in 1926. Lula may have been Frazier's second-youngest daughter, or the wife of his youngest son, Robert, who was born in 1879.

There are four other Frazier’s buried at the cemetery but whether they were related to Anthony Frazier is unknown.

Shirley Meade of the East Lake Historical Society said she has heard through the years that there was at least one black cemetery in the middle of the old Delk orange plantation.

**Frazier’s Headstone**

Frazier’s headstone was found on land once owned by him but sold in 1885. It is under a stand of trees where it is protected from the elements. The state now owns the tract, which is known as the Neighborhood Lakes property, part of the Wekiva Basin State Parks. The grave marker was rediscovered during the construction of the Wekiva Parkway. Location is Plot NW1/4-NE1.4. Section 4, Township 20, Range 28, Orange County, close to county line with Lake County).

The gravestone may be in the vicinity of the actual grave. Although he sold the land in 1885 it is thought that he could have been buried there. There are also reports of a small black cemetery in this area “just over the hill” on land later owned by the BMK Ranch.

The headstone bears the inscription:

Anthony Frazier  
Co. K  
21 U.S. C. I.
Official Civil War headstones


This act provided:

... That the Secretary of War is hereby authorized to erect headstones over the graves of soldiers who served in the Regular or Volunteer Army of the United States during the war for the Union, and who have been buried in private village or city cemeteries, in the same manner as provided by the law of March third, eighteen hundred and seventy-three, for those interred in national military cemeteries....

The Secretary of War shall cause to be preserved in the records of his Department the names and places of burial of all soldiers for whom such headstones shall have been erected by authority of this or any former acts.

As of June 1873, the stone markers were either white marble or gray granite. Frazier’s headstone is white marble which is also interesting because marble markers were normally reserved for officers while other ranks received granite markers.

Following World War I, the Cemetery Branch became the Cemetery Division when it was consolidated with the Graves Registration Service, which had supervised the burying, placing of headstones, and record-keeping of American war dead abroad during World War I.

The official headstones stones bore a recessed shield with raised lettering. The stones of Black Union Soldiers consisted of the following abbreviations:
U.S. Cld. Inf – United State Colored Infantry
U.S. Cld. HA – United States Colored Heavy Artillery
U.S. Cld. LA – United States Colored Light Infantry
U.S. Cld. Cav – United States Colored Cavalry
U.S. Cld. Troops – United States Colored Troops

Interestingly, tombstones for Union soldiers had rounded tops while those for Confederates had pointed tops.

A Confederate ‘pointed’ headstone

There is a saying in the south that claims that Confederate headstones are deliberately pointed “so that no damn Yankees could sit on them.”
A Mr. Levi Risinger was living in Sorrento in 1910 and he is said to have petitioned to get a headstone for Anthony Frazier. As Sorrento was then a small town, it is almost certain that he and his wife Lizzie, would have been acquainted with the Frazier’s especially Mary, as she was widely known in the area as a midwife.

Levi Risinger was in Preble, Ohio, in 1834 and married Lizzie A. on Oct 5, 1854. According to the 1880 Census they were still living in Ohio with their son Abel, 24, a law student.

The 1900 Census records them as living in Sorrento where they presumably knew the Frazier family.
But by 1920, Levi, now aged 86 and widowed, was back living in Preble with his son Abel, 64, and his wife Alice, 63.

The Frazier headstone was found in the Neighborhood Lakes area which in the 1960s and 1970s was mostly orange groves.

Several people who worked in the area at the time, signed affidavits about remembering seeing the headstone. Many people also remembered a cemetery for blacks in the area, but its exact location is unknown.

Some remembered it as being on the property owned by BMK Ranches, which was “right over the hill” but still adjoining the Neighborhood Lakes land.

This cemetery might have been the one referred to as ‘Calvary’ which is where plantation slaves were buried. It was supposed to be in the middle of an orange grove with about 20 headstones.

Scott Amey, said in an affidavit signed June 30, 2014, that he had visited the site with Tony Moore on June 19, 2010, and said, “Tony Moore whom (sic) also was a surveyor, a week prior to the trip showed me personally old aerial photographs of the cemetery from the 1920s depicting a cemetery with a circular drive around it in the middle of an orange grove approximately one acre in size.”

When they visited the site, “the only tree we could see that was not on the horizon was a tree that had three trunks. At the base of the tree laid flat on the ground, was the tombstone of Anthony Frazier.

About 20 yards northeast of the tree, Tony and I discussed the area we saw, and it looked like a large circular area sunken in the ground that went a length out in front of us that looked like it could have been the area we saw in the aerial photograph.

Inside this circular area the grass growing had tiny shrubbery that stood only about six inches tall that blended with the tall grass that had thorns
on it. Also, the grass in this area was patchy with what seemed different kinds of grass patched together.”

Aerial photograph taken in the 1920s.

On the center of the circled area is what Tony believed to be Calvary cemetery with a track coming in from the east. It is surrounded by orange groves, as described by people who worked on the land at the time.
A close up of the possible location

Below is the map that Tony Moore drew based on his observations and measurements of the 1920s aerial photographs showing the location of what he believed was the cemetery.
In 2014, James Wheeler McDonald signed an affidavit (see below) recalling his recollections about the headstone. He said that he was in the area in 1955, or 56 or maybe 57 but did not remember a cemetery.

“I did come upon a grave with a tombstone, and I think, an old fence around it.... The best I can recall, the tombstone that I saw had a domed top, but I cannot remember if it was standing or laying. The fence could have been 30 or more years old then.
“I have an impression that the fenced area was only large enough for a single grave. The tombstone was centered in the fence as if there only one grave”.

In another 2014 affidavit (see below), Emory Boyd said he was working for the Lake Region Packing Association in 1970. The property was owned by the Mackle Brothers out of Deltona, and “I was hired to live on the property and take care of the groves there.

“One of the workers was clearing trees from the property when he pushed up a skeleton. Work was stopped and the property fenced because they thought this might be a cemetery. Then one day while I was riding in my truck checking on the orange trees, I saw a headstone lying on the ground. I did not bother it but left it where it was.”

After members of the East Lake Historical Society visited the site with Tony Moore on June 19, 2010, member Nancy C. Williams phoned Edward Spann whose father, Henry Spann used to work in the orange grove where the headstone was located.

“Edward Spann said there used to be more headstones in that area when his Dad worked in the groves”, she said in an affidavit dated June 2, 2014.

When the Frazier gravestone was found by the landowner it was lying on the ground out in the open. He said he moved it a “short distance” so that it was under the three-trunk oak tree.

During Hurricane Irma in 2017, the tree toppled over, and the root ball rose out the ground eerily raising the gravestone to an almost vertical position as seen in the photographs below.

Dennis Bronson in an affidavit (see below) taken on November 26, 2014, said “I remember seeing the confederate soldier headstone many times between 1977 and 1983. The headstone was also upright position at that time. The headstone is located east of Mt. Plymouth and south of highway 46 and east of Rock Springs Road.”
GENERAL AFFIDAVIT

State of FLORIDA
County of Lake

Before me this day personally appeared Shirley Meade who, being duly sworn deposes and says:

1. Shirley Meade, witnessed Emory Boyd signing the attached General Affidavit

In 1970, I Emory Boyd, 31408 C.R. 437 S., Sorrento, Florida, was working for Lake Region Packing Association, who was taking care of the groves at Neighborhood Lakes. The property was owned by Mackle Brothers out of Deltona and I was hired to live on the property and take care of the groves there. One of the workers was clearing trees from the property when he pushed up a skeleton. Work was stopped and the property fenced, because they thought this might be a cemetery. Then one day while I was riding in my truck checking on the orange trees, I saw a headstone lying on the ground. I did not bother it, but left it where it was.

As a resident of this area, I feel that every effort should be made to locate the boundaries of the cemetery, fence it and re-locate Anthony’s headstone back to it’s proper place. Doing this would bring back honor and dignity to those who are buried there.

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me this 14th day of June, 2014, by Shirley Meade who I personally know to me or U produced a as identification.

Catherine C. Hanson
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF FLORIDA
COUNTY OF SORRENTO
Expires 7/12/2016
GENERAL AFFIDAVIT

State of FLORIDA
County of LAKE

Before me this day personally appeared Dennis Bronson who, being duly
sworn deposes and says:

I remember seeing the Confederate Soldier headstone many times
between 1977 and 1983. The headstone was also upright position
at that time. The headstone is located East of Mt. Plymouth
71 South of Hwy 46 and East of Rocker Spring Road.

Near neighboring lakes in Township 19 South, Range 28
East in Section 22, 33 or 34.

Dennis Bronson
11150 Bronson Rd.,
Chiefland, FL 32626
352-267-5325

Dennis Bronson

Sworn to (or affirmed) and subscribed before me this 30th day of November, 2014, by
Dennis Bronson who ☑ is personally known to me or ☐ produced a
as identification.

Charlotte Reeves
My Commission # EE 083739
Expires: April 12, 2015
Bonded This State Notary Services

Notary Public, State of Florida
Notary public, printed name
Not far from the tree is a clump of allamanda plants with their distinctive yellow flowers. These plants are not native to Florida (they are from Central and South America) but they were often planted in cemeteries perhaps because of their common name – golden trumpets.

Originally there may have been a single plant but over the years they have spread and there is now a small group of them, and spectacular when in bloom.
Location of headstone on June 19, 2010. The headstone is 37 inches in overall length. It would have been set 12 inches into the ground with 27 inches above ground.
Allamanda bush

Allamanda - Golden Trumpet - flowers

240
The Ethel Project

In order to preserve the memory and the history of Ethel a Friends of Ethel group has been established as part of the Wekiva Wilderness Trust, the nonprofit Citizen Support Organization that supports the work of the Wekiva River Basin State Parks.

The Wekiva River Basin State parks extend to 42,000 acres and include Wekiwa Springs State Park, Lower Wekiva River Preserve State Park, and Rock Springs Run State Reserve which includes the land where Ethel once stood.

A two-mile Historic Ethel Trail has been created which follows a circular route through the area once occupied by homesteader’s cabins, the school, cemetery, and railroad. Interpretive signs have been positioned along the trail telling the story of the Delk Plantation, the Ethel township and Anthony Frazier.

Historic markers have been placed on sites of special interest such as the school, the cemetery, and the railway station.

Guided walks are available and there is also a self-guiding brochure for those who want to explore by themselves. And, of course, there is the Ethel History book, copies of which have been made available to every school and library in Lake, Orange, and Seminole Counties.

We have constructed a pavilion close to the start of the walk to provide shade or shelter for those visiting Ethel and we hope to host many visits from local schoolchildren so they can learn about the area’s fascinating history.

There are also plans to construct two cabins, replicas of what an 1880s homestead cabin would have looked like.
Fortunately, we have photos of Finlay Click’s 1880s cabin at Ethel, so we have a historical record to work with. One of the cabins will house a small museum and the other will be furnished – sparsely – as it would have been back then.

Maybe in the future, we can build more cabins to showcase the arts and crafts of the time and cultivate small cottage gardens growing the sort of crops that would have been planted then.

Whatever does happen, however, we have already been able to bring back to life the remarkable story of the Delk Plantation, the long-forgotten Ethel township, and the amazing story of Anthony Frazier.
Following are several Indentures, Deeds and Patents involving some of Frazier’s land purchases.
This Indenture, made the 20th day of October in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty...

AND ALSO, all the estate, right, title, interest, income, and right of income, separate estate, property, possession, claim, and demand whatsoever, as well as in law as to equity, of the said part...4. of the first part, of its and in the same, and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the same granted, bargain, and sold, and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the same granted, bargain, and sold...
Phila Indenture, made the 21st day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and eighty four, between Allen Stapler and Milly Stapler his wife, of the County of Orange, State of Florida, of the first part, and Anthony Crugg, of the second part, WITNESSETH, that the said parties of the first part, for and to consideration of the sum of $500.00, lawful money of the United States of America, to Allen in hand paid by the said party of the second part, or before the canceling and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, and the said Allen, his heirs, etc., to the use and disposition of the said party of the second part, by these presents, do grant, bargain, sell, alien, and vend unto the said party of the second part, all the premises set out and described as follows:

The South East corner of section twenty-nine out of township eight north of Range twelve south, county of Orange, State of Florida

And that the same be and is hereby sold to the said party of the second part for the sum of $500.00, in the manner and form aforesaid. And that the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, shall and may at all times hereafter, peaceably and quietly have, hold, use, occupy, possess and enjoy the above grants and premises, and every part and parcel thereof, with all appurtenances, without any let, limit, term, trouble, condition, covenant, or disturbed or disturbance of the said part, and the said party of the first part, his heirs and assigns, or of any other person or persons lawfully claiming or to claim the same. And that the same are now free, clear, unencumbered and unincumbered of and from all former and other grants, titles, charges, estates, fieldments, taxes, assessments and incumbrances of what nature and kind soever.
And the said parcel of the first part, for the sum of $10.00, the above described and hereby granted and reserved premises, and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, by deed and conveyance, against the said party of the first part and his heirs, and against all and every person or persons whosoever, jointly or severally, or to claim the same.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the said party of the first part, the undersigned, and the said party of the second part, herein set their hand and seal.

Milly Stapleton
[Seal]

STATE OF
COUNTY OF

Know all Men by these Presents, That I, Milly Stapleton, wife of the above named Allen Stapleton, do by these Presents, make and execute this instrument and will thereof, and that I, Milly Stapleton, do by these Presents, convey and transfer the premises herein described, and that I, Milly Stapleton, do hereby acknowledge and declare that I did make and execute the foregoing instrument for the purpose of conveying the premises above described, and for the purpose of releasing the said Allen Stapleton from all liability for the same.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal.

Milly Stapleton
[Seal]

STATE OF
COUNTY OF

On this day personally appeared before me, Allen Stapleton, alias Allen Stapleton, to me well known as the wife of the above named Allen Stapleton, and as one of the persons described in, and who executed the foregoing instrument, and acknowledged that they executed the same for the purpose therein expressed, whereinin it is prayed that the same may be recorded.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal.

Milly Stapleton
[Seal]

STATE OF
COUNTY OF

On the day hereinafore written, in the Circuit Court, in and for said County, these present instruments were recorded and are of record in the public records of said County.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal.

Milly Stapleton
[Seal]

Clerk Circuit Court
This Indenture made this fifth day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty five Between Hettie Mau, Francis Mau, Susan Mau, James Mau, Sarah Mau, Susan Mau, Alexander Mau, Susan Mau, Abraham Johnson, Robt Mau, Johnson, Winthia Williams, Milton Williams, Alvison Mau, Francis Rau, Francis Rau, Joseph Robards, Delia Robards, Stephen Rau, Charlotte Rau and of Orange County Block of the first part and smartphones, Rosamond of Orange County Block of the second part, Wiltse, Swift, the said parties of the first part for and in consideration of the sum of Two Hundred lawful money of the United States of America to the said hand paid to the said parties of the second part at or before the seal ing and delivery of this present Indenture, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have, received, accepted and quit claimed and by these presents do, as under seal, witness and forever quit claim unto the said parties of the second part and to his heirs and assigns forever all that certain tract or parcel of land lying and being in the County of Orange and State of Florida described as follows to wit The North East quarter of the North West quarter of Section four of Orange Township County of Orange, Range Forty eight (48) be containing Forty (40) acres more or less.

Together with all and singular the tenements, hereditaments and appurtenances, herits, belonging to or in any wise appertaining or appurtenant to the same and every part thereof and every part and parcel thereof and appurtenant thereto and the appurtenances thereto and every part thereof and the appurtenances his hands and to hold all and singular the heritages mentioned and described together with the appurtenances vested in the said parties of the second part.
his heirs and assigns forever. For usurers;
whereof the said parties of the said husbands
respective, shall hereby and sealed the day
and year first above written

Signed, sealed, acknowledged, and delivered, by
Hettie, Marie C.
Charlotte Rawles.  
W.E. Whitridge.

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

[Signature]
[Signature]

State of Florida
Orange County
Now all manner of these presents, that we, Hettie Rawles, Sarah Rawles, Alexander
Rawles, John Williams, Adam Rawles, Sarah Rawles, Anna Rawles, and Adam Rawles, the
husbands and heirs of our said husbands, James Rawles, the presence of H.P. Paxton,
notary public of the State of Florida, acknowledge and declare that we did make our
respective marks and executed the foregoing instrument for the purpose of
relinquishing our said dower right in the lands
thereof, described and granted and that we
do, the same freely and voluntarily, and with
out any compulsion, constraint, or other coercion,
forever, or from our said husbands.
In witness whereof, we hereunto subscribe our
names.

250
The boundaries of the premises described, are as follows: northeast quarter of the Southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 23, Township twenty-third North, Range twenty-east, containing two acres, and a strip of land one half acre in width, being entirely around the above described land. The premises being bounded on a highway established on all of the line thereof, said lines being extended for one half of said highway, situated in the County of Albemarle, in the State of Virginia, to be sold, cleared and opened as required under the laws of the State of Virginia.
This Indenture, made this 30th day of January, in the year of our Lord One Thousand Nine Hundred and four, between Harry Eaton, sole heirs at law of John G. Eaton, deceased, and Ella L. Eaton, his wife, of Manchester, of the County of Hillsborough, and State of New Hampshire, parties of the first part, and Anthony Premier, of the County of Orange and State of Florida, party of the second part, WITNESSETH: That the said part has of the first part, for and in consideration of the sum of One hundred and twenty-five dollars, lawful money of the United States of America, to be paid in hand paid by the said part y of the second part, or before the execution and delivery of these presents, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, have granted, bargained, sold, assigned, released, conveyed, and confirmed, and by these presents do grant, bargain, sell, alien, remise, release, convey, and confirm unto the said party of the second part, and his heirs and assigns forever, all that certain lot, tract or piece of land lying and being in the County of Orange and State of Florida, described as follows:

The Northeast quarter of Section nine (9) in Township twenty (20), Range twenty-eight (28), except three (3) acres in the southwest corner of said tract, heretofore conveyed by the original owner, Daniel Jenkins, Said tract hereby conveyed containing one hundred and fifty-seven (157) acres more or less.

Together with all and singular the tenements, hereditaments, and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining, and the revenues and reversions, remainder and reversion, rents, issues, and profits thereof, and also all the estate, right, title, interest, power, and right of dower, separate estate, property, possession, claim, and demand whatsoever, as well in law as in equity, of the said part, of the first part of the same, to the same, and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above granted, bargained, and described premises, with the appurtenances unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, to him his own proper use, benefit, and behalf, forever.

And the said part y of the first part, viz. Harry Eaton and Ella L. Eaton, his wife for their heirs, executors, and administrators, do covenant, promise, and agree to and with the part y of the second part, his heirs and assigns, that the said part y of the first part, at the time of the sealing and delivery of these presents, are lawfully entered in fee simple of a good, absolute, and indefeasible estate of inheritance of and in all and singular the above granted, bargained, and described premises, with the appurtenances thereunto belonging, and have good right, full power, and lawful authority to grant, bargain, sell, and convey the same in the manner and form aforesaid. And that the said part y of the second part, his heirs and assigns, shall and may at all times hereafter peaceably and quietly have, hold, use, occupy, possess, and enjoy the above granted premises, and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances, without any let, hindrance, molestation, eviction, or disturbance of the said part y of the first part, their heirs or assigns, or of any other persons or parties lawfully claiming or to claim the same. And that the same are now free, clear, discharged, and unencumbered of and from all former and other grants, titles, charges, encumbrances, judgments, taxes, assessments, and incumbrances of what nature and kind ever.
And the said part of the first part, for themselves and their heirs, the above described and hereby granted and released, premises, and every part and parcel thereof, with the appurtenances, unto the said party of the second part, his heirs and assigns, against the said part of the first part and their heirs, and against all and every person or persons whatsoever lawfully claiming or to claim the same... or any part thereof, shall and will warrant, and by these presents forever defend.

In Witness Whereof, the said party of the first part, have hereunto set their hands and sealed and affixed on the day and year above written.

Signed, sealed, and delivered in the presence of:

David B. Bartlett

Frank C. Livingston

Ella L. Eaton

(Seal)

(Signed)

(Signed)

STATE OF New Hampshire, COUNTY OF Hillsborough — ss.

Know all Men by these Presents, That I, Ella L. Eaton, wife of the above named

Harry Eaton, do by these presents, make and acknowledge me separate and apart from my said husband, and in the presence of Frank C. Livingston, a Notary Public of the State of New Hampshire, acknowledge and declare that I did make myself a party to and executed the foregoing Deed of Conveyance for the purpose of conveying

relinquishing all my dower, right of dower and separate estate, or any other interest I may have in and to the lands in said Conveyance therein described and granted, and that I did the same freely and voluntarily, and without any compulsion, constraint, apprehension, or fear of or from my said husband.

In Witness Whereof, I hereunto subscribe my name and affix my seal, this 30th day of January, A.D. 1904.

Frank C. Livingston

Ella L. Eaton

(Seal)

(Signed)

STATE OF New Hampshire, COUNTY OF Hillsborough — ss.

To all whom it may concern: Be it known that on this 30th day of January, A.D. 1904, personally appeared before

Notary Public of the State of New Hampshire, the above named

Ella L. Eaton, to me well known as the wife of

Harry Eaton

and as one of the persons described in and who executed the foregoing Deed of Conveyance, who being at the time separate and apart from her husband, the said

Harry Eaton, did then and there make and execute the foregoing acknowledgment, her name being with her own hand subscribed, and her seal affixed in my presence.

Witness my hand and seal at Manchester, N.H., the day and year above written.

Notarial seal

Frank C. Livingston

(Seal)

Notary Public.

My Commission expires March 7, 1904.

STATE OF Florida, COUNTY OF Orange — ss.

Be it Remembered, That on this 9th day of March, A.D. 1904, I, J. W. Bradshaw, Clerk of the Circuit Court in and for said County, have duly recorded the foregoing Deed in the public records of said County.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and the seal of said Court, this day and year above written.

J. W. Bradshaw

(Seal)

By

D. G.
About the authors.

Don Philpott has over 50 years' experience as an award-winning writer, journalist, consultant, public relations practitioner and passionate campaigner for conservation and the environment. For 20 years he worked for the Press Association-Reuters, the international wire service traveling the world, as a senior correspondent, covering major events and news stories. In 1988 he founded Mediawise Communications, an international media and PR company, based in London and in 1994 he relocated to the U.S. as President of Mediawise Communication U.S., managing an international client list.

He has written more 250 books on a wide range of subjects. When not writing Don is a volunteer at the Wekiwa River Basin State Parks, which includes Ethel. He is a Florida Master Naturalist, Florida Master Gardener, and a Certified Interpretive Guide. He is President of the Wekiva Wilderness Trust, an Emeritus Board Member of the Florida State Parks Foundation and vice chair of the National Association of State Park Foundations.

Shirley Meade. Growing up in Lake County Florida, Shirley has always had a strong interest in its rich history. In her early years, Shirley, along with her parents Ruby and Alto Smith and her younger brother William lived on a cattle ranch on Highway 437 in Sorrento, Florida. Later in the 1950’s she met and married her true love Frank L. Meade, a Korean War veteran and entrepreneur.
After raising their two children and a successful career as an educator with the Lake County School Board, Shirley along with other residents in the community established the East Lake Historical Society and her historian journey began. Not only was she a Founding Member of the society, but she also held officers’ positions and served on the Board of Directors. She presently holds the title of Historian of the Society.

Many of her historical journeys include a fascinating location and story about the Mt. Plymouth Hotel which Al Capone frequented. Nowadays Shirley continues her historical research but mostly enjoys sharing her findings with all who will listen. If you have a historical question about the area, it’s almost guaranteed she’ll have some information for you.