

INTERVIEW WITH ASA PILLSBURY
AT HIS HOME JUST WEST OF SHAWS
POINT ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF
MANATEE RIVER

Interviewed by Carl D. King - April 1963

Q - Mr. Pillsbury, were you born in Manatee County?

A - No.

Q - Where did you come from?

A - Chicago

Q - How did you get here?

A - We came from Chicago to Florida and we stayed there about a year. Then we came on to Cedar Keys by train, and then stayed there about another year. And then we came to Clearwater by sailboat. And stayed there about a year. Then we came on down to Manatee and from there on down here by sailboat.

Q - Did you homestead this piece of property that we are on?

A - No. This was homesteaded by the Nichols. The other homestead is right across on the bay.

Q - I understand that you have been a seafaring man part of your life, fishing.

A - Yea, fishing and boatbuilding.

Q - Did you not keep the lights on Tampa Bay?

A - No. That was my brother.

Q - We are looking here, Mr. Pillsbury, at a piece of iron. It looks like an old pot and has a lot of rust on it, but it has a big star in the bottom of it. I would say it is about 8 inches across. Tell us something about this.

A - We found it with a metal detector just below the moss here, where the high tide would come up over it. It was down about two feet deep.

Q - Right on the shore of the river here?

A - Yes, two of them. And they have been there no telling how long. But I think it couldn't be no longer than the Civil War.

Q - How do you imagine it lodged in that particular spot? How did it get there.

A - I think during the Civil War the Confederates had a look-out here. Watching for gun-boats to come in the river. And undoubtedly they buried this here so the Union couldn't find it. They wanted it for something. I think they wanted it for their musket balls.

Q - You think that is what it was for?

A - No. That is what they had it for.

Q - What was it originally used for? What is your opinion?

A - I think it was the end off a windless.

Q - I heard someone else say that it might be a cover that fitted over the end of a gun. Of course, we don't know but we could send it in to the Smithsonian. They probably could tell us, couldn't they?

A - Yea, I think so. A boy took a picture of it, and took it down to Sarasota, and there was a fellow that could tell us what it was. And what they were for. And he took them down, I told him I wanted one and he wanted one. But I told him - don't you clean mine up, leave it just like it was and like I found it. This was nothing but a cumulation of rust on it. He cleaned it up and thought they might find a mark or some sort of identification, but they couldn't find anything. And so he suggested that it was a cover of gun, off a warship.

Q - That star on the front indicates that it was off a naval ship, because I know that the tomkins or plugs that they put in the guns of modern battleships have a star very similar to that. So we don't know what it is. You were telling me something about a Union gun-boat sinking out here off of Long-boat Key during the Civil War.

A - In the Harbor? Yea, they had a convoy. They had, I don't know how many soldiers, thirty, they were carrying from Mobile or Pensacola.

Q - Where were they carrying them to?

A - Tortugas.

Q - They were Confederate soldiers that the Union soldiers were carrying to Tortugas?

A - Yea. And they were all lost right out here.

Q - Off of Anna Maria or Longboat?

A - Off of Eggmont. That is a storm took them off of Eggmont, and they went ashore down here on Longboat.

Q - Tell us a little something about it.

A - Well, The bodies washed ashore, and somebody buried them. We don't know who, but I think it was confederate people here.

Q - And you say there was a collection of bones down there at one time?

A - Yea. Right the other side of Crane's Bayou. On Longboat.

Q - Was it on the bay side or gulf side?

A - It was on the gulf side.

Q - Can you think of any other historical events that have taken place around here? Did your father tell you of any other things that have happened around here, on the water, anything concerning the ships of historical nature?

A - No. All I got it out of was the Confederate State's Navy history. And I lost that book. It tells about them.

Q - What about the early days here. What mode of transportation did we have here in Manatee County?

A - Sailboats.

Q - Was that in your time or before your time?

A - Yea, before and a long time after. First boats I was building was sailboats.

Q - Where was that? Over at Sneads Island?

A - No. Up here right near the post office (Palma Sola). I was building sailboats long before the Sneads Island boatworks started. That was my brother that started that.

Q - Now when the steamers started to come in, come up the river, where did they come from? Tampa mostly?

A - They came from Tampa. Some boats used to come in here from Mobile. Bringing groceries and stuff like that. Forgarty used to get a lot of his stuff that way.

Q - At that time I guess there wasn't any railroads coming in here.

A - No railroads this side of Cedar Keys. The railroads didn't come in here until the 80's something. 86 I guess it was. The Plant line.

Q - What was the principal industry?

A - That is when they (Plant line) came into Tampa. They didn't come on down here until later. Everything was carried up on the steamer to Tampa.

Q - Back when you were a boy, what was the principal industry here?

A - Fishing mostly. And carpentry work. There was quite a little bit of carpentry work. You see, the Warners had a whole bunch of houses up here at Palma Sola. A big store and an hotel. And they had a big ice house there. They used to bring the ice down in sailing ships from Maine. And that was real ice and that was before they got this artificial ice.

Q - That ice was mostly for the fishermen, I presume?

A - Yes. Or for anybody that wanted to buy it. You could store a schooner load of ice at this place. That was the biggest town on the river. (The town referred to - Palma Sola, and the river, Manatee).

Q - Well, I have heard of Forgartyville. Did that precede Bradenton?

A - Yes.

Q - Was it bigger than Bradenton?

A - Yes, I guess it was. Bradentown was just a few scattered houses, you know. For quite a long time.

Q - In other words, the biggest town in Manatee County when you were a boy, was Palma Sola.

A - Yes.

Q - Then the principal industry was fishing. Was there any agriculture of any kind?

A - No.

Q - They couldn't ship their fruit or vegetables out?

A - They weren't raising vegetables here much.

Q - What about cattle? Did they raise any cattle here?

A - Yes. This was open range then and there was cattle all over.

Q - Where did they ship their cattle to?

A - They shipped them to Cuba.

Q - Where did they ship their fish to?

A - Cuba. That is, this smack fishermen here, but the other, they shipped them from around here to Cedar Keys in sailboats and then put them on the train. That didn't do very good because it was too long. Too long for sailboats to get up to Cedar Keys.

Q - A gunboat came up in the river (Manatee)? (Ellenton)

A - Yea. And tore up the sugar mill up the river. I remember seeing some of the operating plans that they would get that thing from the boat. You see, that is about a half-mile back.

Q - Was that a sailboat?

A - No, that was a steamer.

Q - That was done in the Civil War?

A - Yes. People here was notified that this here gunboat or Union boat out there. The people here was the Confederates was watching. And at the Point if the gunboats was coming in they notify the people ahead of them.

Q - How would they do that? By horse?

A - Yes. Mrs. Bishop, she was staying up there. Mr. Bishop (Asa) he went to Alabama and joined up with the Confederate Army.

Q - Which Bishop was that?

A - Asa Bishop. Cecil Bishop's father. (Note - Cecil could be in error as named blurred). She was there with the children alone, and she sighted the gunboat coming, and she took to the woods. And she stayed in this little hammock out here. Do you remember Rob Sikes old field? It was out there on that Loop Road. On the South Loop. And an old seedling grove in there.

Q - There is an old cemetery up there on the South Loop. Was it near there?

A - East of that. Mrs. Bishop went over there in that hammock, it wasn't cleaned up then. That was Colonel Foster. He had a lot of slaves up at Ellenton. Old Foster Plantation up there somewhere. (DR. GUS FOSTER)
(AT FROG CREEK)

Q - Did that have anything to do with Gamble Plantation?

A - I think it did. Because he had this place over here on Sneads Island, where that mound is.

Q - Did he live on the mound?

A - I think he did. That is the land that Freeman Horton owns. Anyhow, he had a bunch of slaves up there working, and Mr. Sikes was working for Col. Foster. And he took those slaves and come down here to clean up this hammock. He planted out the seedling orange trees.

Q - Where did he plant the trees? Down here in Palma Sola?

A - Yes. And he got some more land up (?) the gulf.

Q - At that time were there many oranges in Manatee County?

A - No. That was one of the first groves. All there was here was seedlings. They didn't have any budded.

Q - This grove over here in Palma Sola was one of the first?

A - One of the first. John Glazier might could help you out on that too.

Q - John Glazier's father preached over at the church on the South Loop Road?

A - That is right.

Q - That is a non-denominational church now, is it not?

A - Yea. It always has been that way, I think.

Q - I notice there is a pretty good size grave-yard over there.

A - Yea. Cortez and all around here.

Q - Quite a few old people buried in there?

A - Yea. People from up Bradentown too. Well, the first school house built there was used for a church too. The community built and the county didn't help a bit on it. And all the seats in there was home-made. And they would have church nearly every Sunday, in the school house.

Q - And you say that Palma Sola when you were a child, was the biggest town in Manatee County?

A - Yea. It shore was.

Q - You say there was considerable fishing here. Was that the city of Cortez?

A - There was no Cortez then.

Q - Where were the fishing docks at that time? Where did they operate from?

A - Right here in the river at Palma Sola. They had big docks there. East of Shaw's Point. They had a cattle dock here at Shaw's Point, too. They shipped some cattle out when we came here.

Q - Let me ask you this about Shaw's Point. Of course, we had a nice road going out to the park now where the old shell mound used to be. Back in your day how did you get over to that Indian mound that was on Shaw's Point.

A - Well, we came this way. Through the Nichols place in there. Come on down the beach to it. Or there was an old well, or spring, up there where the boats got water.

Q - Up near Shaw's Point?

A - Right in the bight there from that point. On the east side there. There was a spring in there and somebody had put three big barrels in there to get the water. It was good water too.

Q - You mean they cased it in with barrels?

A - Yea.

Q - How big a spring was it?

A - Really, I don't think it was no spring, it wasn't that much of a spring. We used to bail the water out faster than it could come in. The old "Gussie", the Morgan line. There was two of those that run cattle.

Q - Were they sailing ships?

A - No. Steam, side-shealers. And they had a dock over at Emerson Point there. And they shipped them from over on that side too.

Q - Now where is Emerson Point?

A - Right across here on Sneads Island. And they had another cattle dock where the ways is up there.

Q - Where the Sneads Island boat works is?

A - Yea. McKays Point. I believe that is what that is called. You see the cut-off was shallow water and you could wade across it.

Q - Snead Island cut-off?

A - Yea.

Q - That run from the Manatee River to Terra Ceia Bay?

A - It goes out there 'til after the steamers got to running it. They got stuck on it a couple of times.

Q - In other words that was not dug out until when?

A - That was not dug out until about 1900.

Q - And up until that time you could wade across from the mainland over to Sneads Island?

A - Oh yes. A little before 1900. It must have been about - well, the Spanish war was in '98, wasn't it? It was just before that.

Q - Why did they dig the cut-off there? What was the reason?

A - There was a lot of stuff from Terra Ceia shipped. And no railroad then.

Q - What were they shipping?

A - Oranges, and then they started to raising tomatoes over there. A little before 1900.

Q - Previous to that the main industry seemed to be fishing and cattle.

A - Fishing and cattle and carpentry. You see, all of this was surveyed down here, sometime after we come here. Father just had a squatter's right on it until it was surveyed. And then he could prove up.

Q - In other words who all was squatting on it when it was surveyed could make a claim for it.

A - Yea.

Q - I guess he had a priority, maybe?

A - Yea. That there line was out to Shaws Point, on that section line there. East of there was surveyed. West of there was not.

Q - The U.S. Government survey was east of Shaws Point?

A - Yes.

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Q - And west there was no survey at that time?

A - No.

Q - And the people who were living on this side of the north-south line going through Shaws Point were squatters?

A - Squatters. That is right.

Q - Well, that is not the way you acquired this property, is it?

A - No. I bought this from Nichols. Nichols homesteaded it.

Q - What Nichols is that?

A - One of his daughters is living on the place now. One of (widow) ~~the daughters~~ married a ~~Dunlop~~ ^{GOWAN LOCK}. She married old man ~~Dunlop~~ ^{GOWAN LOCK}. Mr. Nichols was in the Confederate Army and had lost a leg. After a number of years gangrene set in and that is what killed him. (DUNLOP IN ERROR - NAME) (WAS GOWAN LOCK)

Q - I imagine the way you talk, there must have been quite a few that belonged to the Confederate Army.

A - Yea there was. Most everybody in Manatee County.

Q - What year were you born?

A - 1877.

Q - You were born after the war. When you were a boy, I imagine you knew all the veterans from the war, and heard the stories they told.

A - Yea. The President had just been down looking over Gettysburg, where that big battle was. That was where my father was captured.

Q - Your father was captured at Gettysburg?

A - In that big battle, yea.

Q - He was a Union?

A - Yea.

Q - The Confederates captured him?

A - Yea. There was 23,000 men killed there.

Q - Then your father came on down after the war.

A - After the war, yea. He stayed in the Andersonville prison until after the war was over.

Q - How many years did he stay in Andersonville?

A - Well, I think that battle was in 1862. Well anyhow, I think he was in there about three years.

Q - Was it as bad as the book says?

A - Yea, he said it was just as bad or worse. He didn't have no shelter. All they had was a big pine post sticking up right close together. A corral.

Q - Was that just because they didn't have the facilities or was the South about worn out about that time?

A - I think that had a good deal to do with it. The battle was going on until 1865, you know.

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A - (Continued). Dr. Pelot, up here, he was confederate. And most all the people here, just left the younger ones and the women folk to here at home.

Q - What were the conditions here during the reconstruction days when you were a boy?

A - It wasn't too bad.

Q - Of course, the people down here were pretty self-sustaining, weren't they? They could all the fish, and eat all the swamp cabbage they could cut.

A - Yes they were. And all the sweet potatoes. You see where all the cattle was they could pen the cattle up. The cattlemen would let them pen the cattle up at night. And that would make sweet potatoes. We used to get sweet potatoes, all you want, for 50¢ a bushel.

Q - I guess you had plenty of syrup. I understand they raised sugar-cane.

A - Yea. John Andress over there made fine syrup. On Terra Ceia.

Q - What did you do for bread?

A - You could get the flour. You could buy flour. As far as I can remember we could get flour.

Q - Did you have any trouble getting salt?

A - No.

Q - That was during the war that they had the trouble.

A - Well you see, they salted a lot of fish here too. And then sent them to Cuba. That is what built Shaws Point up, mostly, that was the Spanish salted fish. Shaws Point at one time was a Spanish settlement. From the point clean back up to the shell mound was all big camps like. Made out of palmetto fans. And they a couple of big seines. They hauled the fish in seines then. And they had them on reels, wind them up. There must have been more than a hundred.

Q - More than a hundred Spaniards living there?

A - Yea. There was a settlement out there.

Q - It was pretty much an island at that time, wasn't it? Wasn't it pretty much surrounded by mangroves?

A - Yea. That didn't bother them. It wasn't deep enough to hurt. There wasn't enough water enough to hurt.

Q - The Spaniards from Cuba came up here?

A - Yea. They just squatted there. They fished these waters. No duty on them or tax or nothing. They didn't do like they do now, tax everything, to the limit. They all went back to Cuba.

Q - Were they using sailing ships?

A - Yes. They called them smacks.

Q - What kind of channel did they have to get in from Egmont into the mouth of the Manatee River.

A - The channel was good, about 8 to 10 feet of water. On a high tide, it was about 12 feet.

Q - Now on a sailing ship, if you didn't have the wind right, what did you have to do, drag in?

A - No. You had to wait.

Q - You had to wait until you got a favorable wind?

A - Yes. You couldn't take big boats up in that narrow channel.

Q - How wide was that channel?

A - Oh, it was not over 100 feet.

Q - One hundred feet. Well, you could do a little feeding.

A - You could on small boats. You take one of those schooners they couldn't do much feeding.

Q - How long would she have to stand off out there before she could come in?

A - It wouldn't be more than a couple of days, at the most. You know the wind used to be just like clock-time. The squalls come in the summer time, start in the middle of June. After the squall is over, then the air comes from the east. The wind first is west, then the squalls come and kill that west wind and then later it comes from the east. And then a little breeze blows all night and until about ten o'clock the next day. Then she will shift back west again.

Q - Well, I notice at night we generally get a breeze from the east at night, where I live and I have heard that it comes from the east at night and west in the daytime.

A - That is right. And the east wind is cool after a squall. And the west wind is warm.

Q - Getting back to the ships, it wasn't too long a wait before they could get in? For a favorable wind to come up?

A - No. You could count on it every day. It wasn't so bad. With all these modern thing now, it seems like it was pretty tough. But it wasn't.

Q - Where did you get your lumber back in those days? Did you have saw-mills then?

A - Yea. Warner had a big saw-mill, then.

Q - What Warner was that?

A - Bert Warner's father. W.S.

Q - Where was it located?

A - Right on that point. Palma Sola Point. You remember that old hotel there, don't you. It has been only 8 years since it was tore down. They had the saw-mill just inside the point and then they had the big boom where they taken the logs down. They pulled them up and sawed them on the upstairs of the porch. Of that saw-mill. Down underneath they had machinery to work novelty siding and things like that.

Q - They didn't have circular saws did they?

A - That is what they had.

Q - That hotel that you were talking about, how many rooms did it have?

A - About 25. Three story. All wooden building.

Q - Let's get off on another subject. Let us talk about these Indian mounds.

A - We haven't decided to our benefit, the age of these mounds yet.

Q - For the benefit of those people listening, we are sitting here on the side of this huge ceremonial mound on Mr. Pillsbury's property, just west of Shaws Point, and this is a ceremonial mound. And I am going to let Mr. Pillsbury to tell us something about it.

A - Well, I don't know where to start.

Q - According to the historical records, Hernando DeSoto was supposed to have landed somewhere in this vicinity on this side of the river.

A - Yes.

Q - He was supposed to have had 500 men and 250 horses. Where would he have found enough water for that many horses and men?

A - Well, Somebody dug a big well about 10 feet square right back here, and lined it up with boards.

Q - On this property?

A - No, on the back of ours on the other side of the road there. Where that lower ground is, there is better pasture, and he could have run his horses out there, I think.

Q - Do you think that well was dug by the Indians?

A - No. I think it was dug by DeSoto.

Q - When they landed here, they didn't have time to dig a well. Don't you imagine they sent scouts; well, I know they scouted this coast before they came up from Cuba. I'm thinking here over on the other side of the mound there there is a big bar-pit where they got the dirt to build the mound.

A - There was water in there all the time.

Q - How big was that originally? I understand that you have drained it now.

A - Yea. It was about 100 feet across. About an acre and a half in that whole thing.

Q - Were there any other sources of water that big in this vicinity?

A - Well, this bay-head right here. Usually there is a good spring in them. And they could get water there.

Q - Would they have had as much water in the bay-head as they had here?

A - Yea. I guess they had more.

Q - More in the bay-head?

A - Yea. Cause it has an outlet to the bay.

Q - Is that drinking water or brackish water?

A - No. That is fresh. That is good water.

Q - Where is that bay-head located?

A - Right over there on Mr. Bishop's place. Across the road. A piece of it runs up into (?)

Q - Getting back to this bar-pit, this acre and a half bar-pit that you had over here, it is about 500 or 600 feet from the shores of the river, isn't it?

A - Not that far. About 200 feet this side of the mound. And the mound is about 150 feet. It ain't far. It is between 400 to 500 feet. Good landing place for his horses as it is a stable bank.

Q - I'm not trying to get you to say DeSoto landed here.

A - I don't know why you shouldn't. Why should he have landed there and went all through that mangrove swamp.

Q - It would seem like this high ground around here would have been the logical spot.

A - It looks like it. And besides the wells there, his horses couldn't have went up right there where those mounds are. He either went up on the other side or this side. And that was just nothing but a mangrove jungle in there.

Q - How much dry ground do you imagine was around the old shell mound? Back then.

A - Yea. It wasn't that high then anywhere. Until you come back on this kind of ridge that goes out there. That mound originally was started out in the river. Cause I found some posts after a hurricane had washed the beach away and I got one of the posts up. It wasn't chopped off, it was burnt off. They burned them off and that is what they started their shell mound for where they camped. And the mound was about half washed away.

Q - I understand that most of the shell where the mound was, was hauled away during the boom to build the streets of Bradenton. Is that right?

A - Before the boom. I think this road out here was shelled with it.

Q - The one on Shaws Point was a kitchen midden mound.

A - Yes, that was. You see, the Indians never lived here, at all. It was just a burial place. They lived up there and they had a ramp went from this mound right over there. From this mound to Shaws Point. Come right in back of us. You could trace it until these people got to leveling it all down.

Q - You said something about some ramp on the side of this mound?

A - Yea. That was it. It points toward Shaws Point.

Q - There was a kind of causeway from here to Shaws Point?

A - There was a whole lot to it. They had made ridges with their shells. And in between the ridges they had water for their canoes to come into back of there. So there always been a harbor and always be handy to get in and out. The ridges come to the shell-mound. You can see them there now. That is on the mangrove side of it. From where the gate is, that was all mangroves from there on down. And from where the gate is, the ridge comes up there.

Q - They had built a harbor in there for their boats?

A - I think so. And the same way over to Sneads Island, at that mound. In front of the mound, they had a basin in there, like. For the boats to come in.

Q - Those shell mounds were nothing but garbage dumps?

A - That is right. When they ate the shell-fish.

Q - What is the connection with this ceremonial mound, which is made out of sand + the shell mound down on Shaws Point?

A - It is the same people. That is what I think.

Q - What was this mound used for?

A - Strictly burial. They had big celebrations and I think they had mass burials. Because we found in here about 147 bodies in here, and take up to Gainesville.

Q - That was about a month ago?

A - It was about a month ago.

Q - Dr. Bolen, was he the archaeologist that came down from the University of Florida?

A - Yes. He was the one. He got 147 bodies out of here.

Q - Where were they located from where we are sitting?

A - We'll walk down there and take it look at it. And they was cremated. One was still in the place where they had cremated it.

Q - In a bowl or pottery?

A - In pottery and a bunch of charcoal. And others looked like they had burnt them and put the ashes in the bottom. They didn't cremate them like we would. Their bones weren't burnt. And they looked like their bodies were setting up, in a sitting position. Some of them. And their head would be off there 4 or 5 feet. And some of them would be laying flat.

Q - Those that laying flat and those in a sitting position, were they at different levels?

A - No. There was a little difference in elevations of them. They found some of the bodies about 18 inches from the top.

Q - Which were they? The ones in the sitting position?

A - No. They were mixed up. The ones that were cremated all the doings were there. You see they way they done it, they laid down a lot of floor and laid the bones on there and put more flooring on when that had burnt enough they covered it all up with sand. Well, you can see

A - (continued). some of the wood where they had burnt it, it didn't all go to charcoal. Still they covered it all up before it had all burnt up.

Q - How did they determine there was 147 bodies?

A - They found that many skulls. He didn't get near all of them. I found two skulls over there a little while ago. Down about three feet.

Q - Was that what you were doing when I came in?

A - Yea.

Q - I guess there is still a lot of history to be discovered in this mound.

A - Oh yes. He was much pleased with the evidence he found. I got my opinion. I don't believe like he does on all the things. Now, when he first came, I asked him what about all that black dirt that was on the conch shells and around the skulls and everything. He says that is the black dirt that was kicked down by the rains and washed in on them. I don't see it that way. Because you find the whiter sand down lower. You don't find the rich dirt has gone down through the sand. Oh yes, that is the way it is. Well, he went on digging and he found a corpse full of that black dirt. And around the bodies. And then you could see where he cut the sides down, you could see streaks of that different dirt. Where they had brought it in. And then they brought in some white sand, and put around the bodies. He got every head and bones that he got, he has a list of the depths in the foundation. See, they didn't bury them down, they laid them on the ground and buried them. Covered them up. They just laid them on the ground and covered them up without making any excavations.

Q - Were they buried up in the top of the mound or around the edges?

A - I think the recent Indians buried them in these mounds. Because in some of the mounds they find Spanish stuff. Not in this mound, though. We haven't found any in here. I think in Parrish, there are five burial mounds out there. Three of them is cremated and two of them is not. And they find Spanish stuff out there. That is out at Parrish.

Q - Whereabouts in Parrish?

A - It is not very far from Parrish. East of Parrish. It is an orange grove now.

Q - How many miles east of Parrish are these mounds?

A - I don't know. I have never been out there. But Mr. Atwood, that works in Sharps Drug Store, he was out here digging a little bit too. And he has been out there, but he says the people that own the place won't let him go in there to look at them.

Q - It is better for an archaeologist to look into those things because they can put two and two together, and come up with an answer. If just anybody goes in and digs, they just have a souvenir and that is the end of it.

A - Yes. That is it. That have no right. Now look at Mr. Tallant. He has dug in every mound around from the Everglades clean up to Carabell. He don't have a thing on record to keep.

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Q - Generally the family inherits it, and the first thing you know, it all goes out in the garbage can. That is the reason the Historical Society is getting interested in these things, and want to do something about it before it is too late.

A - They are putting it off too late now. What I have been trying to get them to do is, this island we are sitting on, is to buy this place and make a park. I told them I would take \$50,000 for it, but I would give them \$10,000 off.

Q - This is a historical site here. It was a look-out during the Civil War and it possibly has some connection with the DeSoto expedition, and the mounds here. Someone should preserve this.

A - It ought to be preserved. I tried to get the government to take it over with that down there. (Shaws Point). We fooled with it for about a year, and they called and said they had to go before Congress to get money. I couldn't afford to give it to them. I have to get a little something out of it. And it had to go before Congress and get an appropriation and they had to agree to everything. I just quit fooling with it. So now we want to try the State.

Q - Maybe, we can be of some help. I don't know. We can try.

A - I think these mounds are in Sarasota too. And I think they are trying to put it (?) down at Whitfield Estates.

Q - We are going to keep ours in Manatee County. (?)

A - You know, speaking about the Whitakers down there, that Whitaker Bayou, all along up there, is one big Indian camp. There is a shell ridge all along. On the north of Whitaker Bayou. And all there where the oaks are. All where they have been camping. They have a fine place there, if they could buy it, but it all high priced now.

Q - There was a big Indian camp there on Whitaker's Bayou?

A - Yea.

Q - Are there any Indian mounds down there?

A - I think there is.

Q - What is the official height of this mound, do you know? (Pillsbury's).

A - Mr. Bolen says it is about twenty feet. That is above the level of the water, out there.

Q - And to walk around it, what is the perimeter of it?

A - I say it is 300 feet across and this is half way. It is 163 feet in diameter, from here to the other side. But you know, it must have been a good deal higher than that. Somebody has dug out in the top there, when we bought the place. And there was a lot of trees where they had dug them out. Dr. Chilson, he used to come down there and examine their teeth. They all had such wonderful teeth. But they are recent Indians I know. The bones were all in good shape and there wasn't no cremation on them.

Q - You were talking a little while ago about Spanish artifacts being found in the mounds up in Parrish. I understand there was and maybe still is, an Indian mound where Pinehurst is. Your nephew told

Q - (Continued). was telling me that when he was a boy he used to go over there and dig -(tape was erased by mistake. Carl King explains on the tape.)

Carl King - Before I forget we talked about this small Indian mound over in Pinehurst Subdivision. That is the subdivision that 75th street runs along the east side and the north loop road runs along the north side of it. And there is a small Indian mound back in there somewhere. I have never seen it, but I have heard of it.

A -(Asa Pillsbury). Yea. We went out there the other day. It has all been dug up. Anybody can just go out there and dig up the beads. You can see what little mound there is left. Fairly good.

Q - How high is it?

A - It is pretty nearly leveled down. I don't think it is more than 2 feet high. It wasn't very high to start with.

Q - What kind of mound was it? What connection does it have with mound complex?

A - Nothing at all. That is a recent one out there.

Q - What do you call recent?

A - Spanish stuff. Since the Spaniards came. Now this (Pillsbury) is all old stuff.

Q - Was that a burial mound over there?

A - Yea. Wasn't a lot of people buried in it. And they weren't small like these (Pillsbury mound). They were ordinary sized people.

Q - These were small Indians buried in here? (Pillsbury)

A - Yes. When the doctor was digging over there, we found one burial great big fellow. He must have been about seven feet. But all the rest of them were small.

Q - How high were they?

A - I don't think they over five feet. Mr. Atwood, one of skulls that he got, he took and measured it. It was smaller than his little boy. It was an adult skull.

Q - I understood that the Indians that lived in this section were real tall. That is, the first Indians that were here. In Carl Bickel's book, "The Mangrove Coast", he speaks of a burial on Longboat Key. There were two skeletons in there that were about seven feet tall. I just wonder if these were a different race of Indians?

A - Yea. I think these little fellows were the first ones. Ones that built the mound. Dr. Bolen says that this the only second place where he has found where they were cremated. Did you go out to Parrish to see about those mounds?

Q - I enquired about those mounds. I saw a young fellow out there and asked him and he seemed to think they were up toward Duette. Which is about 19 miles east of Parrish. He said there were some up there.

A - Now I don't know just where they are, but I think there are

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A - (Continued). five burial places. It is in an orange grove now and they won't let people go in there. They found some Spanish stuff out there. There was three of burials out there in those mounds that were cremated. Out beyond Parrish. And two of them were just plain buried. Do you know Charlie Boyett that lived out there at Rye? Well, he lived out there all his life, and he probably knows all those mounds and everything. You could get in contact with him sometime.

Q - I have heard that at one time there was a large general store up at Rye Bridge at one time. I believe that the name of it was Giddens. Did you ever hear of that?

A - No. But I wouldn't be surprised if there was because there was an old seedling orange grove out there. Captain Hawkins was raised out there. Hawkins was down here before the Civil War surveying, I think, and that is how come him after the Civil War to come down here and settle. And he has been here ever since. And then Dowling and Dudley lived up there after their father died.

Q - Yesterday, after the tape had run out, you told me about some cannon they had found off of Shaws Point, in the river. Tell us about it, what the age was, and how it got there.

A - Well, I think it was dumped overboard off of the pirate ship that the gunboat was chasing in the river.

Q - I have never heard of that. Tell me the story of the pirate ship.

A - The gunboat was coming after them, and they kept on going. They lightened up their ship, so they could keep ahead of the gunboat. They thought the gunboat would get aground, right off the channel.

Q - Were these sailing ships?

A - Yea. They were both sailing ships.

Q - And a Federal gunboat was trying to capture the pirate ship?

A - Yea. They went on up there to Rocky Bluff, north of Ellenton on the north side of the river. They used to call it Old Ford right in there. The water wasn't very deep there. I suppose on low tide it wasn't more than two feet deep. All the way across the river. They lightened up the pirate ship, threw the cannons over, and went on up to Rocky Bluff. The river makes a little turn in there and deep water comes right up close to the bank. And she was laying right in there when we came here, where the gunboat had blown her up.

Q - She was laying up off of Rocky Bluff, which is on the north side of the river, just beyond Ellenton.

A - Yes. You could see the frames sticking out of water at low tide. And they never did touch them (pirates). They took to the woods, the pirates did. I don't know for sure whether that was Gaspar or Lafitte. They both worked down this coast here. And what they done after they lost their ship, they just scattered out and I don't think they heard any more out of them.

Q - What happened to the cannon? Did you see the cannon? Or did you just hear about it?

A - The fellow that was diving told me about it. It was about two years ago.

Q - How large was the cannon?

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A - She didn't seem to know. But the barrel was sticking up pretty straight. You know, if it was thrown overboard off of the pirate ship, they wouldn't have those wheels on it like they would have had on a land cannon.

Q - They just had the barrel?

A - They would just have the skids, the foundation on what the barrel sat on. They shifted them around. If it is on that, it is probably there yet. Because it is probably buried right up in the sand. And the whole thing maybe buried up because when the boys dug that dirt out there, to fill in there where the monument is, the sand kept coming in. Anyhow, nobody has bothered it.

Q - Did they take the gun out of the river or is it still there?

A - No. It is still there.

Q - Where is it in relation to the monument?

A - Right off the monument (Shaws Point) in line with Emerson's Point. Toward Emerson's Point, over there. There is a big cabbage tree two of them, I think, over there. And it is right in range with the monument (End of the first side of tape) to the cabbage tree.

Q - How far out in the river?

A - About 200 feet, I guess.

Q - Some of that shore has washed away in that last storm. They have lost a little toward the monument, but I think they have put some more sand back out.

A - Yes. I think they have. It would be a most interesting job to go look for that thing and find it if you could. It may be a good brass cannon. Because if the pirates had it, it could have been one taken off of a ship they captured.

Q - Do you think maybe DeSoto may have dropped it there?

A - No. He wouldn't have done that. He wanted all of his cannons. And I don't think DeSoto landed up there anyhow. Because the water wasn't right, and the bank wasn't right, and the woods back there wasn't right. He come down this way.

Q - Somewhere where you have the good high bank? And plenty of high land?

A - Yea. Now after you come down this way a little bit from the monument, the ground is pretty hard. He wouldn't have had to carry his feed upon that high bluff. So he either come on a little further down this way, there is a kind of a valley right down in there where he could have landed.

Q - You told me some time ago, that we were talking about this causeway that ran from your mound to the kitchen midden on Shaws Point.

A - Yea. It was like a causeway for a road or something like that. But they wouldn't wanted to have done that I don't think.

Q - Don't you think the Indians used that to come over here to make their burials? Have their ceremonies?

A - Well, We can't tell.

Q - You said something a little time ago, that when they were clearing digging over there, they found a lot of ashes over there. Tell us about that.

A - Yea. That was between the two mounds - the shell mounds, where they camped. Not this mound. The two mounds over to Shaws Point. The big one and the other a small one. And that ash pit was close up to the big mound. It was about 20 feet across. Ashes themselves was about five feet deep in there. And all along that place was bones. All kinds - fish, birds, and gators. It was a kitchen. They would cook their stuff and eat it right there. They kept that fire going all the time. They just let the ashes stay. I don't know how they ever started a fire, but they had someway of starting it. The mound over on Sneads Island was just like this one was.

Q - Do you remember when that old mound was there before they took it away? (Shaws Point)

A - Sure.

Q - How tall was it?

A - About 20 feet. About the same height as this. But you see, they had cut down on that middles, it had washed away. About half of it was gone. From the looks of everything then.

Q - In other words it extended right to the water's edge?

A - Yea. But first it went way out, from the shore. Out into the river. They started it on the shoal out there, and worked it in. The reason I know, because I dug up an old post that washed out there after a storm. And the post was put down in the ground about four feet. And was burnt off, wasn't chopped with an axe. They had burned it off and I guess burnt off the top end, but you see the top end was all ate off by the bugs. After the shell was washed away from it.

Q - How extensive was that mound on the point? Was it, the perimeter as large as this mound?

A - Yea. It shore was. It was about this size. Well, I guess it was a little bigger than this. Cause it had quite a little top on it.

Q - I have read somewhere that that mound was quite a prominent object to the ships out in the bay. It was more or less a marker.

A - Yes, it was. You could see that clean across the bay.

Q - Was there any vegetation on it?

A - Oh Yea. Some gumbo limbo trees, cedars.

Q - I notice that you generally see these gumbo limbo trees on a Indian mound. Around Indian mounds. And you generally don't see them anywhere else. Why is that?

A - I don't know. Unless the shell makes the ground more open for them.

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Q - Could those trees been brought in here from the Indies?

A - Yea. They could have been. They won't grow much further north from here. Too cold.

Q - I notice out on Shaws Point there are some gumbo limbo trees growing on the little mound where the monument is. That is the base of the old mound, I presume. There are about four gumbo limbo trees there. You go over to the Bickel mound, over on Terra Ceia Island, and there is one or two gumbo limbo trees there. Those are a foot in diameter or more.

A - There used to be a couple of bigs ones over here at the shell mound.

Q - They are still there. Let us get into something else. Let's get into some of the names of places around here. For instance: Shaws Point. Do you ever have any idea of how it acquired the name of Shaws Point?

A - Yea. I think the Shaws homesteaded it.

Q - Who were the Shaws?

A - They were some people from Key West. And they had a store. There on the point. Traded with the Indians. In boats, like that. There was a little concrete building.

Q - Did you know the Shaws?

A - No they were gone. But we wrote to them in Key West. And got their history from them. And they sold it to Vanderipe, Whitaker, and Warner s.

Q - It was out on the point?

A - Yea. It was built up on a foundation, concrete made out of lime and shell. A little place of about 50 feet or more. The building there was small. And they had a cellar in it. And that cellar, the people had used it for camping in later years. And they had filled up that cellar and made a floor. The treasure hunters came in there in late years and just tore that thing all up. They were looking for gold.

Q - Now let's go to Sneads Island. How did that get its name?

A - That got it the same way. I don't know the particulars about that. You know there was three Spaniards, one of them was Perico. I don't know about that mound over here, but that Bickel mound, that was settled by a Spaniard. I think his name was Terra Ceia.

Q - Terra Ceia is a Spanish word for land of heaven or land of the sky. But now this Magill Bay. I understand that the real name of that is Miquel Bay. A Spaniard by the name of Miquel.

A - They call it Magill for short, I guess. You know Rob Fogarty's father, was one of those Spaniards. One of those three Spaniards. And they lived right up here. And he died and the two boys went wild. They caught Rob. And Lees on Terra Ceia took him, and Captain Fogarty took Rob. There father died. And they were just wild. They had to catch them with a cast-net. And Captain Fogarty adopted Rob.

Q - And who adopted the other one?

A - Lee. Ed Lee.

Q - Ed Lee adopted the other one?

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A - No. That was the Spanish boy. He adopted his name, of the folks. I don't think his right name was Ed.

Q - In other words, Captain Fogarty adopted one boy, and who adopted the other?

A - Lee. He used to live over there on Terra Ceia Island.

Q - They were abandoned over on Terra Ceia? Did the father die over there?

A - No. Up here at the bight at Shaws Point. You know where Dr. Hall's house is? Well, right up there.

Q - You said there was a Spanish settlement there. A fishing settlement. In that area out on the point. Can you think of any other names around here?

A - Henry Fogarty, you know him. In the moving business. You probably could get some good information from him. Rob Fogarty was his father.

Q - Of course, Palma Sola means lone palm in Spanish. Cortez.

A - Now that is recent, Cortez is. Hunter's Point is the old town down there. That is up as you turn to go into Palma Sola Bay. Where you turn right to go into Sarasota Bay. And that is Hunter's Point. There used to be a shell mound there. And they have leveled that all down. That was another fishing camp there. Spanish camp. Cortez.

Q - At Hunter's Point. But you go up to up where the old bridge used,

A - Yea. You pass that. You turn right and go up to Palma Sola Bay. That was another Spanish fishing settlement. Now this old shell mound here on Shaws Point, There was a pit right in the top of the mound. That was about six or eight feet wide and ten feet long, made out of concrete. And when they tore the mound down, they found the relics of where a person died, in there.

Q - What was this pit?

A - I think it must have been where they kept stuff hidden from their enemies.

Q - It was a concrete pit - lined in concrete?

A - Yea. It had boards on the floor. A square pit. And hand-made nails. And concrete walls.

Q - How deep was the pit?

A - About eight feet. And there was one just like it on the mound down here at Shaws Point.

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Q - Do you reckon it was a hurricane shelter?

A - No. I don't think so. Those things we don't know. There was some history about the Spanish fishing ranches, but I don't think there was anything about this at all.

Q - When did these Spaniards leave? When did they stop coming into this area?

A - They were here when we came. That was in 1881. We came right here. So it was right after that when they left.

Q - Did they leave before the Spanish-American War or after?

A - Before. The war was in 1898. They left in 80 something. About 1885, I guess. They were here when we came here, when I was a boy. Palma Sola was started big when we came here.

Q - Who was behind Palma Sola? Who was the leader in starting it?

A - W.S. Warner started it.

Q - Is he the one we refer to as Captain Warner?

A - Well, he was one of them. George Warner, they called him captain. He used to run on the steamer to Tampa.

Q - I can give you another name you can straighten me out on. McNeil Bayou. Who was that named after?

A - I guess old Charlie McNeil. ~~Captain-McNeil~~. You know his father was a navigator, and he used to run on boats from New York down here. He was Irish. They were fine people too. Captain McNeil was Charlie McNeil's father. There were one or two more of them. He was tax collector for awhile. It was hard times then. And some of his friends didn't have money to pay their taxes, so he paid it for them. In the end, they couldn't pay him up, so he got into a kind of financial straits with the county. And that took him out of politics. But he was honest and a good fellow.

Q - Did you know Captain Jones that used to live out on School Key?

A - Yea. But he didn't live on School Key. He lived on where that little bayou goes through there. He lived on the island (Anna Maria). He is Irish too.

Q - How did he get here?

A - He was a practicing lawyer in Tampa. And a son lives right by the side of him. There is one or two more of them. They came down from Tampa and settled up. He was a sea-faring man - an old sail-boat man.

Q - I understand there was one settler that his ship just wrecked and he settled.

A - I don't think it was him. Because he went on to Atlantic and crossed to England. He used to tell some big old stories too. About those times. Most interesting old fellow. He had really a good education.

Q - I remember him when I was a child. He was still living.

A - You know, liquor was his doings.

Q - Key Royale, there is a subdivision up there now. At School Key. Just a little bit north of where he homesteaded. Did you ever have any moonshiners around these parts?

A - No. Later days they had a still down here at Shaws Point. I think it was John Gover's. I didn't have no use for the stuff, so I wasn't interested. They had it under some big oak trees there so the airplanes couldn't see it. That was during Prohibition. You could get all the liquor you wanted off of those Spanish smacks. They would come in here during bad weather, boats would go out, and you could get all the liquor you wanted from them.

Q - I remember when I was a young man here during Prohibition, that I remember ever now and then the sheriff's men or the Federal men would come in with a truck-load of Scotch whiskey with these straw mats around it.

A - Like would come from Cuba.

Q - What did they do? Did the fishing boats go out and bring that in at night?

A - Yea. Some of them went on to Cuba and got it right there. Smuggled it in in small boats.

Q - How did they go about catching them? Did they generally try to come in on a dark night?

A - Yea. The revenours would watch for them. Try to catch them. If they didn't pay them enough to let them alone. Eddie Mead used to do it. We built him a boat over at Snead's Island Ways. Just expressly for that business. To bring liquor from Cuba. He made a lot of money, but it didn't do him any good.

Q - Did much of that whiskey stay in Manatee County, did it?

A - You would be surprised at the number of people that bought from them.

Q - You have done quite a bit of fishing in your day. I imagine there quite a bit more fish back in these waters in your time.

A - Yea. There shore was.

Q - Where did you get your biggest hauls?

A - On the outside Gulf. When the mullet school-up, the schools form out there. And they gather up in the gulf and on the north end of Anna Maria Key. They school up there. A school of them would go out here and the sharks would get after them, and they would just roar. You could hear them way back here on the land.

Q - I remember even when I was a young man, you could see the porpoise chasing the mullet. They would try to get them up in the shallow waters it would seem like, in a game of hide-and-seek.

A - Yea. It seemed like the porpoise would do it more for fun than anything else. I don't know. They didn't have no trouble getting all they wanted to eat.

Q - What is the biggest haul you ever made fishing?

A - I don't remember. Sometimes we would get four or five thousand fish. It was only in later years that they were sold by the pound. They were sold so much apiece. You would get the same price for a big fish as you would a small one. If they were too small, they would make you thrown in one free. And if they were too small, they wouldn't take them.

Q - You don't see many oyster bars around any more. I can remember in my lifetime, out in Terra Ceia Bay, and we used to go out to Magill Bay and have oyster roast. Many of the bars have disappeared.

A - Yea, they have. They shore have disappeared. There was a good bar right over here at Emerson Point. And another right in there from Shaw's Point. And the middle-ground out there was just alive with them. Now they ain't there.

Q - What caused them to disappear?

A - I don't know. Now there is still a few up at Ellenton. There is some conditions in the rain or something that wasn't good for them. Now, the clams is another thing that has disappeared. Now I used to think that they were gathered up, the reason they were gone. But I have found out different. I notice that after storms - you see the clams are in the valleys where the ridges are, grass bottom, and after a storm you see where places have washed out, and there is all dead clam shells. The sand came over them and smothered them.

Q - Did the clams live in the grass?

A - In the grass. Well, they were buried. You know how they are. They were buried in the grass. Not too many on the bare sand. I think that is what destroyed them. And it maybe some condition like that that cleaned the oysters out. Because on this shell mound, there was some nice big oysters that the aborigines got there. They were larger then than now. I see in the paper right lately that they have the finest oysters in Tampa Bay, there is anywhere, and and they are selling the bottom land where they raise oysters.

Q - Did you ever market oysters from Manatee County in later years?

A - Never did. Just ate them. They used to run them from Sarasota Bay up to Tampa. There used to be pretty good oysters there. But something got the matter with them down there.

Q - Have we just about covered everything? The tape is getting low.

A - I guess we have.

Q - Can you suggest some other old settlers around here that I could interview for the historical society?

A - They are all gone.

Q - You spoke of the lady that lived next door.

A - Yea. She is one of the older ones.

Q - Now what is her name? Lived on the east side of you.

A - Her name was Nichols. And she was married to Hollingsworth, something like that.

Q - Is she still there?

A - Yea.

Q - We will see her. And Mrs. Patton, who lives up at Gamble Mansion. And Miss Gates, over at Manatee. She never been married, has she? Doctor Gates sister, wasn't she?

A - Well, I guess. And Joe Gates, do you remember him? Doc's brother.

Q - Mr. Pillsbury, I certainly want to thank you for this fine interview. Maybe 200 years from now, somebody will be listening to you and me out here under this old mango tree, next to the Indian mound. Trying to revive some of the old history of Manatee County.

A - You don't remember Gus Cole that used to be up here? He is living now down at Placida. He used to work at Palmetto. I think he was raised over to Palmetto. And then he went to fishing, and he went down there where fishing was better. And he went to shipping fish, and he made money. He had an ice plant down there and a fish house.

END OF INTERVIEW