

Page 15 (Book page 106 and 107) details Aaron Bass grandson of **Needham Bass** and son of Charles Bass.

The text also details Cross Prairie, "Mr. Bass (**Aaron**) gives us more details about Cross Prairie. He says that this was a very boggy place and was filled with floating tussocks (Ed Note: Dense tufts or bunches of grass, twigs, or the like). During a very dry time Mr. Needham Bass made a canal through this marsh about eighteen feet wide so that he could operate the ferry more easily. The prices for crossing were as follows: Pedestrians – 25c, Man and Horse – 75c, Small team - \$1, Large team - \$2.



CHAPTER TWENTY

Mr. Aaron Bass St. Cloud

We found Mr. Aaron Bass at the home of his son, Mr. Murray Bass, near St. Cloud. It was indeed a pleasure to us to have the opportunity of helping him while away his eighty-first birthday, and we wish him many more.

He was a son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bass and a grandson of Mr. Needham Bass, who had old time experiences so many years ago, living at Shake Rag. When there was no other way to get salt, they boiled the saw palmettoes down and got plenty of salt out of them. They used the oak ashes for making soap. They also had to keep their tinderhorn dry for fire.

He says that several teams met and drove through the country to Mellonville (Sanford) after supplies, and many times he and Mr. E.L.D. Overstreet were among these travelers.

His brother Needham hauled supplies from Lake Jessup to Shake Rag for Captains Allen, Johnson, and Rose to be hauled in their steamers to trading posts down the Kissimmee River.

When Mr. Mose Barber moved into Shake Rag, he took over the cattle range so Mr. Bass's family moved further south to Canoe Creek Island, a large body of land south of St. Cloud, which during very high water was a real island.

That was a very wild country — wolves, bears, tigers, wildcats — the woods were filled with them. They penned some of the cows at night and let the calves run loose in the woods. When the wolves got after the calves, the cows stampeded and broke out of the pens, running to their assistance, and fought with their horns and hoofs. Wolves even tried to rob the camps at night, and the only way to get rid of them was to feed them strychnine in the beef. These animals were intelligent enough to know to follow the herds of cattle which were driven through the country and attack the weak or stragglers which were dropped by the wayside. Many times the men met these wolves in the woods on their return from marketing their cattle.

This was an ideal place for the hunter. Spare money was made in this way as buyers came through the country in ox teams and purchased hides from time to time.

The deer were so plentiful that Mr. Bass said that he saw a

pile of discarded venison from four deer which had been killed by a local hunter. He kept only the skins to sell, these bringing eighteen cents per pound for the dry skins, which averaged about seventy cents. It was seldom that they were large enough to bring \$1. Gator hides brought ten cents per foot. He says that his largest one was thirteen feet and four inches in length.

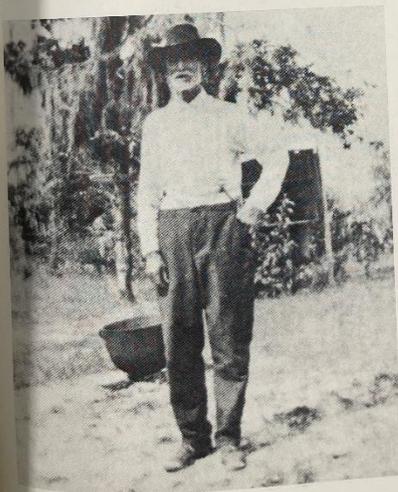
He says that as fine a herd of cattle as he ever saw belonged to Mr. Bob Savage, on the St. Johns River. They were the old time cattle that had not been bred up, and could make their way in the woods without the expense of extra feed.

During the Civil War some settlers decided to run away. They started in ox teams to go south, and reaching the lower East Coast, they turned back northward and camped in an old house. Here they were captured by the Yankees. They were taken as far as Cook's Ferry where they were put in a double-pen log house, owned by a Mrs. Nichols. One of the men became so frightened during the night that he jumped out of the window and ran away into the woods. The rest were put across the ferry with the promise of returning home and furnishing the Yankees at St. Augustine with beef. They paid them to stay at home and bought their cattle.

The man who ran away kept traveling south till he nearly starved to death. He lay down one night, thinking that he couldn't possibly go any further, but when he awoke the next morning, he heard the crowing of roosters, and following that most welcome noise, he came to the home of Mr. Henry Sullivan on Lake View. Here he was fed and taken care of and later made good in life.

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Lawrence Sullivan with Tye Bass, son of Aaron Bass, 1900. (Courtesy: Mrs. Lenora Bass McGraw)



Aaron Bass, part Cherokee Indian of Oklahoma, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bass. (Courtesy: Mrs. Lenora Bass McGraw)



Homer Bass, son of Aaron Bass and brother of Tye, with Bob Journigan. In the background is Ackias Bass' house. (Courtesy: Elvin Thomas)

We called on Mr. Bass again and found him at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Tom Mann, beyond St. Cloud. He helps us to outline some more old trails so that our map may be as correct as possible.

One General Harney's Trail led south of Ft. Gatlin, crossed the old Boggy Creek Ford in the Locke neighborhood, crossing the highway one and one-quarter miles west of Hilliard's Island near the Dr. Phillips's grove, east of Bob Partin's and in front to the west of Steve Partin's house. From there it ran to Cross Prairie, then to Canoe Creek, where a large rowboat was used for persons or small wagons. Here the oxen or horses had to swim across, sometimes pulling the wagons if they were too heavy to put on the boat. The wagons were unloaded and loaded again after the crossing was made. This trail joined the other General Harney Trail at Fort Bassenger. The heavy loaded wagons turned below Cross Prairie and followed a trail east of East Tohopekaliga Lake to Fort Gatlin.

It took several days to make the trip to Mellonville for groceries when living in Canoe Creek Island. Sometimes their supplies of flour were exhausted, but nature provided them with

coontie which has a large root and can be dried and grated into flour for bread.

Mr. Bass gives a recipe for making salt. Cut and clean palmetto, cutting off the small feed roots, then put in a pile and burn. Next morning take the crusty ashes off the top and boil in water. Skim off the salt which rises to the top and dry it. It is then ready for use.

A Mr. Wright homesteaded in south Kissimmee, living near the location of the courthouse. He must have been Kissimmee's first resident.

Aaron Bass's uncle, Mr. Rob Bass, homesteaded north Kissimmee, having a large field where he raised long staple cotton. He lived outside the present city limits, near Vine Street. As a boy Ackias Bass lived there, picking cotton for his board while attending school at the first schoolhouse on Vine Street.

Aaron Bass cut cane on the sugar plantation for \$1.25 a day, working by a bell.

Like all our early settlers he tells enthusiastically of the wonderful cattle with such large horns raised in the days when the grass was so plentiful on the open range.



Fille's The Hunt