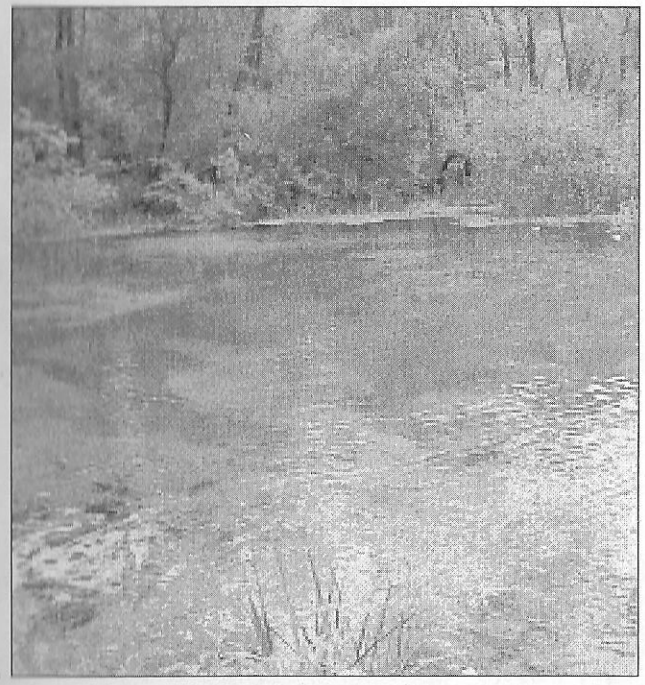
Old Timers Remember – Ichetucknee Springs



By Patricia C. Behnke

For
Florida Department of
Environmental Protection

Old Timers Remember – Ichetucknee Springs

By Patricia C. Behnke
Under the Direction of
Jim Stevenson

Illustrations by
Larry Behnke

Produced by
Florida Department of Environmental Protection

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"The Ichetucknee and its run, the most beautiful landscape in the world."

Archie Carr
A Naturalist in Florida

Photo courtesy of Ichetucknee Springs State Park

Picture at Ichetucknee Springs, circa 1929. Seated, from left, Mollie Williams Getzen, Mae Getzen. Standing, from left, Albert Crouch, Tom Getzen, Dick Crouch, Sallie Getzen, Rufus Getzen.

Chapter One
From the Prehistoric Era to the Old Timers

Memories of family picnics and church socials, plentiful fish and chilled watermelon create a painting of a time when swimming, eating, and fishing fulfilled friends and family gathered at Ichetucknee

Springs in north Florida. Brush strokes of each memory spill forth on history's canvas when a group of Old Timers gather each March at Ichetucknee Springs State Park to remember the area before the state owned it.

They belong to an exclusive group who remember the springs before 1970 when it became Ichetucknee Springs State Park. The group has met for the past seven years, and volunteers, rangers, and staff have recorded the memories that only exist in the stories shared.

Sadie Feagle wrote down some of her reminiscences for the reunion in 1997. She began visiting Ichetucknee Springs in the 1920s with her family from Lake City because schools of fish meant the family would have full tummies after a day of swimming. When she married, she moved to Old Bellamy Road, living a quarter of a mile from the springs.

"We continued to go to the springs regularly," she wrote. "All my children enjoyed the water and learned to swim there. We farmed and in the evening, we would ride or walk to the springs to swim and bathe.

"Very often, we would get together with our neighbors and go to the springs for a picnic. We would make ice cream and have a barbecue, cut watermelons, and sometimes hold a fish fry," she said.

These memories bring the Old Timers together and keep the Ichetucknee Springs family intact. Those Old Timers who still live in the area remain loyal to Ichetucknee Springs even though now it is a state park.

The Ichetucknee Springs State Park staff and volunteers welcome the Old Timers and let them know because of their past connection to the place, they also own a part of it in their hearts.

Flowing for four and one-half miles through hardwood hammocks, wild rice marshes, and sandhills, the Ichetucknee River provides a meandering clear waterway born from the seven-named springs along its path.

Map by Larry Behnke

Forming the boundary of Columbia and Suwannee Counties in north Florida, the Ichetucknee River flows from one spring to the next with translucent waters before it reaches the Santa Fe River, which flows with the tannic-stained water produced by the

fallen leaves. The combined forces of the two rivers continue their journey until they reach the Suwannee River, which widens and flows to the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1965, D.L. Means, a frequent visitor to Ichetucknee Springs, wrote about the Ichetucknee River Valley as the Garden of Eden.

"The Ichetucknee grows on you," wrote Means. "When you drive up to the Head Spring, you simply gasp from its great beauty.

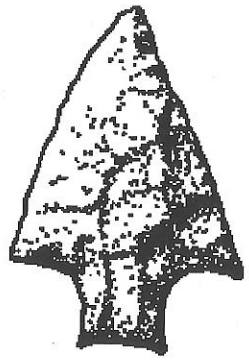
"The crystal clear water with its water plants of various colors that wave up and down in the water makes you think of a beautiful maiden with long flaxen hair blown by strong winds."

Wes Skiles has been diving in the springs of north Florida since the age of ten. He now owns Karst Productions, located in High Springs, Fla. His photography and filmmaking have brought him into intimate contact with Ichetucknee Springs.

"The springs are just leaks," said Skiles. "If you put your hand over one hole, it just comes faster out the other side."

The water of the springs bursts through the surface of limerock. The depth of the Floridan Aquifer under Ichetucknee Springs causes more pressure where the river has eroded through the limerock, pumping an average of 233 million gallons of water daily, making the seven springs a first magnitude flow.

The springs make the river. Thousands of years ago when the water level was lower, before the glaciers melted, the springs were just pools among the hardwoods and swamp and sandhills. When the water level began rising, the springs gave rise to the Ichetucknee River, forming a mode of transportation



Drawing by Larry Behnke

for the overflow of the springs.

The banks and riverbed of the Ichetucknee River provide a timeline for the history of Florida. From prehistoric mammals, Paleoindians, Indian villages, a Spanish mission, gristmill operation, phosphate mines, social gatherings, and finally preservation by the state, the past of the Ichetucknee Springs and its river remains a fascinating study of a state changing from primitive to industrialized to one of preservation and restoration of its natural resources.

Mastodon, mammoth, horse, camel, and bison once roamed near the banks of the springs even before the water level raised enough to form the Ichetucknee River. The advent of man's predation in the area led to their extinction.

Paleoindians sought sites near limestone deposits for chert, a rock resembling flint. Chert could be shaped into tools such as the Florida Archaic Stemmed point pictured above.[1]

The land surrounding the springs became a place of life and death. The Paleoindians needed the water for drinking, but they also needed the animals that traveled to the crystal waters. The animals were killed there and used by Indians as their source of food and more. This Native American settlement is

thought to be Aguacaleyquen on the banks of the Ichetucknee River.[2]

In ancient times, the Ichetucknee River began its journey at Alligator Lake in Lake City on the surface twelve miles north and east of the Head Spring. Water drained into the river from the lake, Cannon Creek, Clay Hole Creek and Rose Creek.

Modern explorers have shown that dye put in Rose Sink, six miles north of the Ichetucknee Head Spring, will eventually show up in the springs at Ichetucknee. It is logical that at one time all of those waters and sinks connected to one another above ground.

Skiles believes without a doubt that all the creeks and sinks and lakes north of the Ichetucknee River are connected underground and at one time connected above the ground. Skiles and his team put the dye in Rose Sink and watched the springs of the Ichetucknee for trace amounts of the green dye. Several days later the dye appeared in Blue Hole and Mission Springs.

"Scientists can't say 'without a doubt,'" said Skiles. "But I can because I'm an explorer.

"It's like Swiss cheese underground. Lakes disappear and change. I will take the risk and say, 'They are all connected.'"

Ken Ringle worked with Skiles on an article for *National Geographic* in 1999 that detailed the dye experiment. Ringle believes the springs of Florida will always remain a mystery because of their changeable character.

"Entire spring-fed lakes, fresh and abundant most of the year, disappear almost overnight in dry seasons," he wrote.[3]

The underground crevices and cracks provide a passage for the springs as discovered by exploring cave divers in recent years. They found "a watery interstate highway system" flowing in the limerock beneath north Florida's sandy soils.[4]

Traveling through Florida, Hernando de Soto most likely visited Aguacaleyquen in the summer of1539, according to Jerald T. Milanich in *Florida Indians and the Invasion from Europe*. Milanich traced the de Soto expedition along a "network of trails that lead from the Santa Fe River, past the Ichetucknee River, and north to the vicinity of Lake City."[5]

By the late 1590s, the Spanish began founding Franciscan missions away from the east coast of Florida. Father Martin Prieto founded the mission of San Martin de Timucua at the settlement of Aguacaleyquen located at Mission Springs on the Ichetucknee River in 1608.[6] Mission Springs consists of two springs in close proximity on the Columbia County side of the Ichetucknee River.

Martin noted that he "was establishing the mission in the major town of that mission province."[7] Archaeologist Brent Weisman excavated the site in 1989 and found the San Martin site and the structure that was built in 1608 as the church.[8]

The Spanish missions used the labor of the Native Americans until the population of the Timucuans decreased through illness and the effects of colonization.[9]

According to Robin Brown in *Florida's First People*, "In 1500 A.D. there may have been as many as 100,000 people living in what is today Florida. By

1800 A.D. all aboriginal Floridians were gone."[10]

The missions, including San Martin, were either

This drawing is a rendering of what a Timucuan Indian might have worn.

Drawing by Larry Behnke

abandoned or destroyed through rebellions.

By the late 1800s, the mining of phosphate and logging of the longleaf pine in the sandhills near the springs and river became a common practice.

Dutton Phosphate Company ran a hard rock phosphate mining operation from the 1890s until 1920 on the 2,241 acres surrounding 3.5 miles of the Ichetucknee at its upper or northern end. In 1920 Loncala Phosphate Company bought the property and owned it for the next 50 years.

John Hill came to the Loncala area in the mid-fifties from England. From that time until the state acquisition in 1970, Hill was involved in the everyday management of the property.

During interviews over the past seven years, Hill has provided a history of the industry on the property now owned by the state and called Ichetucknee Springs State Park.

Hill said, "During the Dutton era all digging work was done by hand, and the phosphate ore was hauled out of the pits and to the rail depot at Fort White or High Springs on narrow gauge rail cars pulled by mules and eventually a small steam engine."

The railroad trestle at Trestle Point, according to Hill, was built for removing the phosphates and not for a wagon road as some suspected.

"A passable road existed for a very long time around the Head Spring," noted Hill.

The state bought the property from Loncala Phosphate Company for $1,850,000 in 1970, even though a private developer had eyes on this acreage. Even as early as 1940, plans had been made for the development of the Ichetucknee River with guest cottages, a lodge, and horse trails.

However, the state wanted the property, too. The governor and cabinet voted to purchase the property and Loncala sold it to the state of Florida in 1970.

Hill stated that Loncala sold for two main reasons. Trash and vandalism had escalated throughout the 1960s after University of Florida students discovered Ichetucknee Springs, and Loncala officials tired of fighting the problem. Also, Florida environmentalists began applying political pressure, making development of the property less attractive financially.

During Loncala's tenure, the company still allowed the public to use the springs although other parts of the property were fenced to keep out trespassers and vehicles.

The residents of the area, mostly from Lake City and Fort White, came to the springs to cool off, bathe, socialize, baptize, court, eat, and swim. Although the Ichetucknee River is now almost completely associated with floating downriver on inner tubes, no one had heard of "tubing" the Ichetucknee River until the 1960s. They used the water for swimming, bathing, drinking, and irrigating.

Al Burt, a Florida writer, recently wrote about his love of Ichetucknee Springs and the other springs of north Florida in *The Gainesville Sun.*

"Springs nourish clues to our natural past, and they encourage us to recognize that what we have left is too precious to squander on hucksters who never sipped from a spring while keeping an eye on a crawfish at the bottom, or on a snake hanging off a tree limb overhead."[11]

Jim Stevenson, Senior Biologist with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), chairs the Ichetucknee Springs Water Quality Work Group. In 1995, he became interested in preserving the history of the Old Timers who remembered Ichetucknee Springs prior to 1970.

When interviewed by Ringle for *National Geographic*, Stevenson stated his reasons for preserving the Ichetucknee culture, before it disappears completely.

"People here are incredibly protective of Ichetucknee Springs,' he says. 'They learned to swim

there as kids. They were baptized there by their churches. They know what the springs mean to the area economy as a tourist attraction, but their real attachment is very personal and emotional.'"[12]

For the past seven years, a group of Ichetucknee Old Timers have met in the park to reminisce and share their memories with local and state historians, such as Stevenson. These memories have been recorded through written and oral records, which form the main part of this book.

The Old Timers remember when the abundance of fish blocked views of the crystal blue spring waters, when the businesses in Columbia County closed on Wednesday afternoons so residents could go swimming in the 72 degree water, when cars sometimes slipped over the edge of the springs, and when enterprising fishermen dynamited the fish to the surface.

Ichetucknee Springs' transitions echo the eras of Florida's past, providing a picture of simpler times when fish and mammals meant sustenance and tubing the Ichetucknee River never entered the minds of those using the waters of the springs for their very life-blood.

Now with the preservation efforts by the Florida Park Service, both environmentally and historically, the Ichetucknee River exists as a place where a part of Florida has returned to its natural state. Memories of the Old Timers preserve the rest.

ENDNOTES

1.Robin C. Brown, *Florida's First People* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1994), 5.
2.Jerald T. Milanich, *Florida Indians adn the Invasion from Europe* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1993), 173.
3.Ken Ringle, "North Florida Springs," *National Geographic,* March 1999, 45.
4. Ibid.
5.Milanich, *Florida Indians*, 91.
6.Ibid., 173.
7.Ibid.
8.Brent Weisman, *Excavations on the Franciscan Frontier* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1992), 7.
9.Brown, 7.
10.Ibid.
11.Al Burt, "Allure of Springs," *The Gainesville Sun*, 20 April, 2003, 5G.
12.As quoted in Ringle, "North Florida Springs," 54.

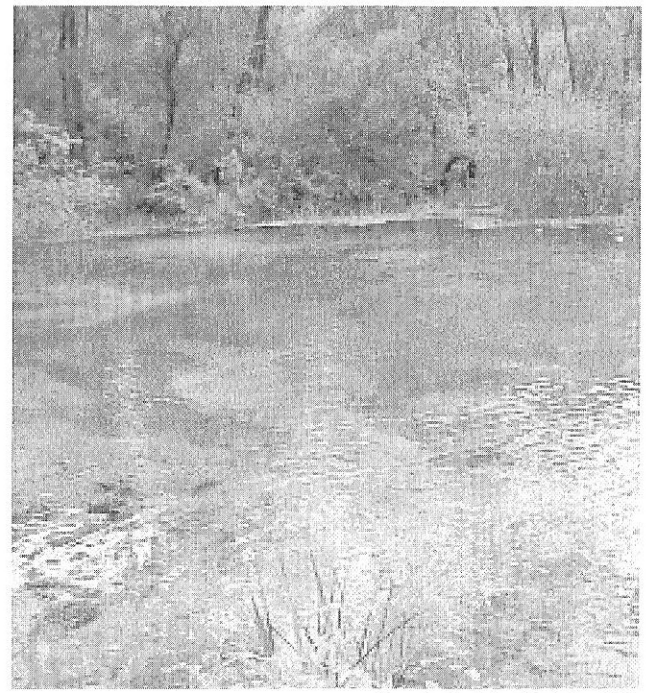


Photo by Patricia C. Behnke, 2003
Ichetucknee Head Spring in the spring of 2003.

Chapter Two
Ichetucknee Head Spring

The Ichetucknee boasts seven-named springs, but it all begins at the blue Ichetucknee Spring or Head Spring. This headwater provides a natural swimming

pool where the water temperature remains at 72 degrees year round.

The Head Spring is the most popular for snorkeling and swimming because of its accessibility to the parking area in the north end of the Ichetucknee Springs State Park. This pool is 75 feet wide by 150 feet long. Until recently the depth had been measured at 12 feet, but recent efforts to restore the Head Spring back to a more pristine state have resulted in a deeper pool. Jim Stevenson of Department of Environmental Protection reported in May of 2003 that the depth had been measured at 24 feet. Restoration efforts concentrate on the removal of manmade trash and debris such as concrete dumped in the Head Spring's vent in the 1960s before the state acquisition. These recent efforts have deepened the Head Spring to its former shape.

Old Timers call the spring, "the boil." From their recollections of gatherings at the Head Spring from the 1920s through the 1960s, they believe the spring flowed at a much higher rate.

Leonard Bundy, not only an Old Timer but also a former ranger at the state park, remembered the sound of the boil during an interview in 1997. His most vivid recollections come from the summer of 1944. He said the springs could be heard before they were seen.

Eathan Porter said, "You could hear the water boiling out of the spring from the present parking area," a distance of approximately 300 feet.

Roy Porter remembers scaffolding in the tree over the boil used for diving.

"Back then the boil was big and more active," Roy remembered. "There was a tire swing that people would drop from."

Many of the Old Timers recall that the boil could be seen bubbling at least three inches above the surface of the water. Some said it was so strong it was impossible to swim across it.

Averill Fielding, born in 1910, also remembered that a big cypress tree contained a scaffold 30 feet high for diving into the spring. An oak limb hanging over the pool held a rope for swinging and dropping into the cool spring waters.

Another Old Timer, Helen Hamilton, reminisced in a letter to park rangers in 1999 about swimming at the Head Spring.

"I was too proud or stupid to let my peers know just how terrified I was to swim underwater through the boil," she said.

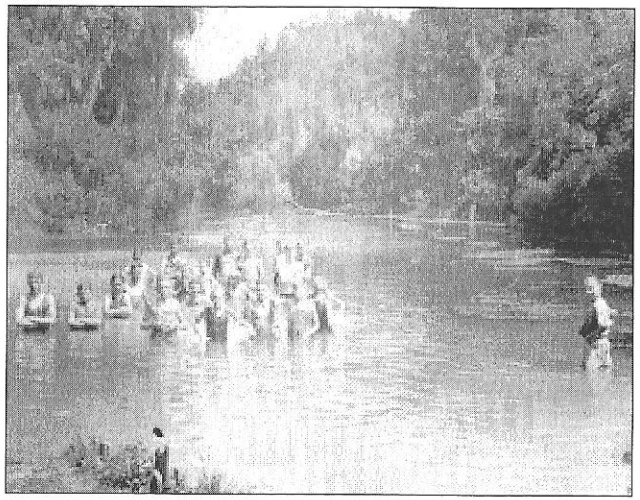


Photo courtesy Ichetucknee Springs State Park

Swimming at the Head Spring, circa 1920.

The Timucuan Indians lived near the Head Spring for sustenance, but more recent residents in the surrounding area came for social gatherings and the cooling waters. However, the fish caught did provide families and friends with food for a picnic. Most of the Old Timers remember cooking the fish right on the banks of the Ichetucknee River.

Old Timers also talked of peanut boils, all day swimming parties, baptisms, love blooming, and cars rolling over the edge of the pool and into the springs.

At the 1999 reunion, Carolyn (McDonald) Cornman recalled coming to the Head Spring for the first time in 1930.

"My mother believed in getting here before daylight, so we could be here bright and early," she said. "We wouldn't leave until 10 at night.

"Of course, we were blistered and sunburned."

Her mother would pile everyone into the car since not too many folks owned cars then. Cornman always held somebody's baby in her lap. The car they used did not have four seats because it was a coupe; she remembers riding with her two siblings and another couple with three babies.

"It was like I was grown and done left home before I knew you could go in a car without holding somebody," she said.

Sisters Irene Couklin, Dessie Harris, and Pearl Whitten came to the Ichetucknee Springs every weekend as children over 70 years ago. Their father was a farmer in Mikesville and each time they came they brought a large pot of Brunswick Stew.

Crickett Porter said that others coming to the springs would contribute to any of the stews brought.

"They'd bring squirrels from around the springs

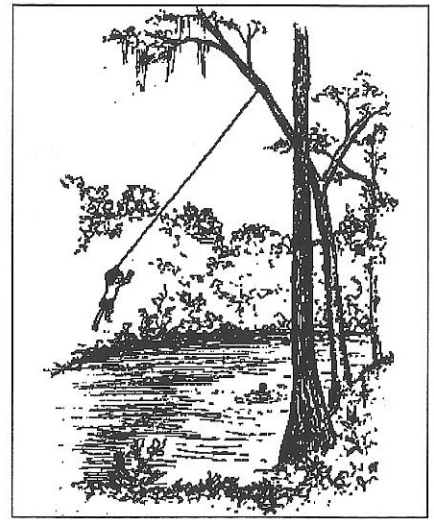
and pigs, not really 'feral' pigs because this was before the fence laws," said Porter.

Sometimes the Old Timers sit in a group and talk to one interviewer at the reunions, sharing their fondest memories. The tapes of these interviews do not reveal the individual speakers but represent the collective voice of this loose-knit family.

The Old Timers remember the food. Many times the day at the Head Spring began at sunrise with bacon and eggs and grits cooked over an open fire.

One Old Timer said, "We never ate between meals; we couldn't afford to."

And they never thought about carrying drinks into the water with them when they swam or floated like the college students of later years did.



Drawing by Larry Behnke

"If we had something to drink, it was in a jug," said an Old Timer. "Most likely it was White Lightning."

Lena Mae Martin, in a 1999 interview, remembered those picnics and cookouts where they would cook over an open fire.

She said, "I remember fun times with the families at picnics — wild atmosphere with plenty of places to hide. We had specified places where boys and girls dressed."

Edith Hunter Sistrunk visited the spring in the 1930s. She said the Ichetucknee River was the place to come for end-of-school and church picnics.

"We'd camp for days," she remembered. "We drank the water and made a lot of noise so we didn't see much wildlife."

Many of the Old Timers remember a bathhouse at the Head Spring, although nothing remains of that today. Hugh Wilson said the bathhouses were built in the early 1920s by Lake City people. Those who do not recall the bathhouse do remember that the girls' dressing area was behind one mound of dirt pulled from the phosphate pits and the boys' was behind another mound, providing some privacy from prying eyes.

Sistrunk said the boys and girls had separate "pit stops" in the woods.

"It was our social place," she said. "We had gatherings on Sunday afternoons and night peanut boilings.

"In the early '30s, we always wanted to swim on Christmas day," she continued. "And life in 1934 meant showing our backs in our new backless bathing suits."

Before Nettie Black Ozaki died, she left a written account of her memories from Ichetucknee Springs, giving a glimpse into a carefree time as the locals soaked up the atmosphere of the springs. This written record comes from a speech she made at the springs in 1995.

"Coming to mind today are special memories of times no more at our beloved treasure, Ichetucknee Springs," she said.

"I can remember when just folks around here went swimming there, and nobody ever heard about 'tubing.' Our family would go down on Sunday for a cooling swim.

"The water was so cold our lips would turn blue and people chilled their watermelons and rinds in the caves.

"Most of all I think of the Kirby picnics, which my father, Mr. A.K. Black, helped organize. Daddy was in politics so we always went. We'd leave home about 10 on Sunday morning with the car loaded down with baked dishes and foods, paper plates, napkins and cloths. By the time we got there, people in cars were everywhere.

"The young would greet friends and dive in, or ease in a little at a time — Ohhhhhhh — or drop in suddenly. That was always a big decision we had to make as to how we would go in [the head spring]. There was a big cypress tree and homemade steps, or climb-ups, and a rope tied to a limb in such a way that it was pulled back and when the boys would push off, they'd swing over the springs, let go and drop head or feet first.

"These days are over now, but I can see the middle-aged folks chatting, and the old just looking and

eyeing everybody. Finally everyone would be called up and west of the springs, which is now a parking area in 1995, under the trees would be what seemed to be a mile of tables, groaning and groaning under the weight of every kind of meat pie, and any vegetable a Southern man could think of.

"I was always invited by others and told by daddy to bring the accordion, and after everybody had gone up and down the tables eating, eating, eating, and eating, I'd play a few hymns, old-timey ones, such as the *Old Rugged Cross, Bringing in the Sheaves, Church in the Wildwood.*

"Finally we had given enough time for our tummies to calm down so we wouldn't drown, we went back to swimming and the crowd would slowly eventually fade 'way as the day came to an end.

"When time came to go home, we sometimes would sit on the hood of the car and daddy would drive really slow so we could dry off. Best of all your body would feel cool for hours after you got home, and you would have this good feeling about having spent the day at Ichetucknee."

When Loncala bought the property in 1920, they still allowed the locals to use the Head Spring. Even when they fenced in the rest of the property in the 1960s, they kept Ichetucknee Spring open, according to John Hill, the president of Loncala from the mid 1950s until his retirement in the 1990s.

Thelma Lowe was raised in Columbia County and baptized in the Ichetucknee Spring. She and her family have benefited from the tubing on the Ichetucknee since the state park opened in 1970.

"But it wasn't crowded like now," she said.

For the past thirty-three years, they have rented

inner tubes and other floatable devices to the thousands who flock to the springs each summer. However, she remembers a time when only locals knew about the springs.

"The feeder spring at the head was two to three feet wide, and we would put watermelons there to keep cool," she remembered.

"When the water was low, we couldn't even swim over the boil it was so strong," she said.

She also said the stores would close in Lake City on Wednesday afternoons and everyone would head to Ichetucknee Springs.

Crickett Porter remembers that cars parked right up to Head Spring until the state took over in 1970. She also remembers that in the 1960s most of the locals stopped coming to Ichetucknee because of the discovery of the springs by UF students.

Tommy Browning remembers that a car went into the Head Spring in the early sixties. A wrecker ended up pulling it out.

Earl Kinnard, born in 1930, remembers another method used to pull a car out of the spring.

"A 1936 Ford," he said, "went into the Head Spring driven by a teenage girl.

"Mules were used to pull it out," he said.

Another Old Timer remembered when a couple parked close to the banks of the Head Spring and began necking. Soon the passionate session ended when the car rolled into the spring.

Theda Eadie said Elim Baptist Church held baptisms at the Head Spring on Sundays during the 1930s and 1940s. The church is located several miles east of the north entrance of the park on County Road 238. At one time that road was known as the

Old Bellamy Road, the major highway in north Florida during the 1800s.

"In 1925 Norma Fielding was baptized at the Head Spring," Eadie said. "Same day a car that was parked above the springs rolled down to the spring and hit a tree and hit a boy and broke his arm."

Willie Martin said he was baptized in the Head Spring on June 22, 1944, but his wife was baptized at Mill Pond Spring.

Social gatherings of teenage friends often leads to romance, especially surrounded by natural beauty and springs so full of life it was possible to see the power of water being pushed up from the aquifer.

Sadie Feagle wrote a letter to the Old Timers in 1997 recounting some of her memories of the Ichetucknee.

"I met my husband, Bascom (Sug) Feagle on the banks of the Ichetucknee River at Dampier Landing. We were married in 1932 and lived near the springs on the Old Bellamy Road, which is now County Road 238," she wrote.

She and her family, the Holloways, lived near Lake City but began going to the springs in the 1920s.

"The Ichetucknee River was a favorite fishing place of my family," she wrote.

Ralph and Marilyn Little became engaged at the Head Spring, while Rosa Mae Collins Oliver remembers her parents came to court at the springs in a wagon.

"For their courtship they just sat on a rock. Evidently they both were shy and neither said much.

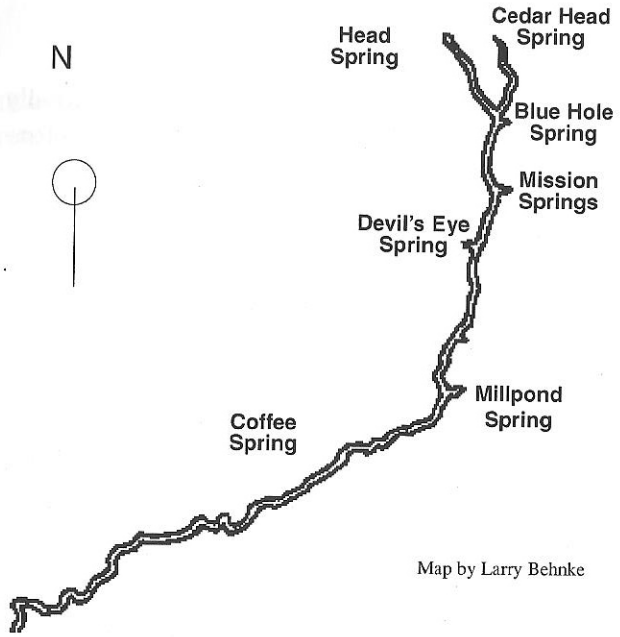
"It was a quiet courtship," she said.

Carolyn Cornman had a different dating experience at the Head Spring. She asked some of the Old Timers sitting with her at the 1999 reunion, if they ever went to Lovers' Lane at the spring.

No one would admit they had been there.

Cornman said she went once on a blind date arranged by a friend. When she arrived at the Head Spring, she discovered her date was her cousin.

"It was the best date I ever had," she said. "I used to be shy around boys, and on that date, I didn't have to worry about a thing."



Map by Larry Behnke

Chapter Three
The Other Springs

There are seven named springs on the Ichetucknee River, but there are many more of smaller intensity.

One of the named-springs, Mission Springs, actually consists of two smaller vents located in close proximity to one another.

Brooksie and John Bergen in their book *Carefree Canoeing in Florida* state the springs on the Ichetucknee River, are boiling "out of limestone sinks or trickle out from cypress roots, . . . join to form this vitreous body of water with its white sand bottom."[1]

Most all of these springs lie within the upper end of the Ichetucknee River. The named springs in downstream order are the Head or Ichetucknee Spring, Cedar Head, Blue Hole or Jug Spring, Devil's Eye Spring, Mission or Fig Springs, Mill Pond Spring, and Coffee Spring.

The Cedar Head Spring, feeds into the Ichetucknee through Blue Hole Spring by way of an approximately 350 foot-long stream. The pool is six feet wide with a maximum depth of five feet.

Cedar Head Spring sits by itself as it flows from the ground, fed by the pressure below the surface of the limestone. Its narrow stream connects it with the rest of the river and springs, but access to the pool itself is limited.

The stream from Cedar Head Spring may only be ten feet wide at its broadest point, but the flow into Blue Hole Spring is steady and sure as it meanders through the hardwood forest. One final curve and the stream, still as clear as when it flowed out of the vent, combines with the force of Blue Hole Spring.

D.L. Means wrote in 1965, "Get in your boat and take a trip downstream and drift along between cypress, cedar, sweet gum, and the many other trees

that form a canopy over your head. By the time you reach the Blue Hole, you are overcome with beauty."

Blue Hole Spring forms a pool downriver from the Head Spring. The state has built a boardwalk from the main parking area for a portion of the hike to the

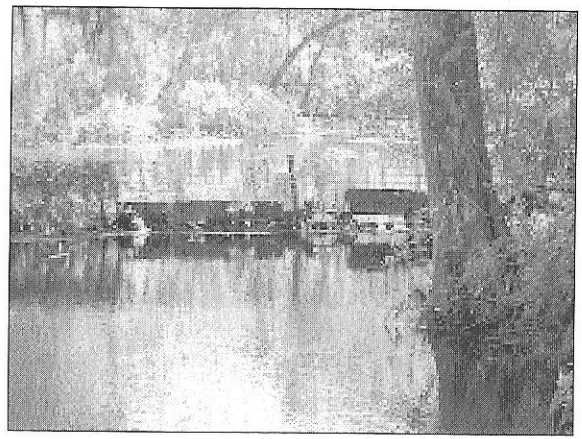


Photo by Patricia C. Behnke, 2003

Blue Hole Spring in April. Water is high from heavy rains in early 2003.

spring. Deck and stairs border the north side of the pool, and native plants remain around the perimeter of this spring. Blue Hole was sometimes called Jug Spring because of its shape.

The boil at Blue Hole, visible and active, flows to the surface at a rate of over 65 million gallons per day before flowing into the Ichetucknee River. Its flow is supplemented by Cedar Head Spring joining the Blue Hole before a short run into the river.

The pool is 100 feet wide. At the bottom of the spring vent, the water is 45 feet deep. Blue Hole is a first-magnitude spring, and the largest spring flowing

into the Ichetucknee River. Even though it is the largest of the springs, its seclusion from the rest of the river makes it an ideal place for quiet pursuits and other activities. Today it is known for its clear visibility and makes a great spot for beginning snorkelers and cave divers. But the Old Timers remember the days when Blue Hole was infamous for something else.

They remember that Blue Hole drew the skinny dippers to its banks and waters. Some remember skinny-dipping in Cedar Head Spring, also. Both springs lie off the main flow of the river, which provided some privacy for the nude bathers.

"You didn't need a bathing suit if you swam at Blue Hole," Averill Fielding remembered.

Fielding, born in 1910, began visiting the springs with his family in 1917. In those days the family loaded up the wagon and hitched it to a mule to make the trek from Fort White for a day of swimming.

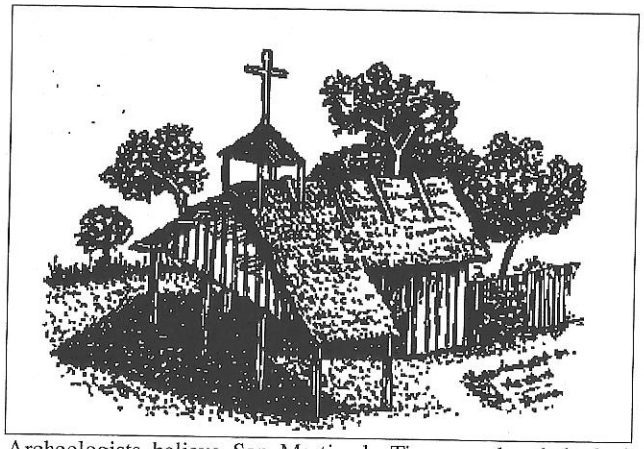
Many of the Old Timers remembered walking or riding a horse to the spring. They saw nothing unusual about traveling five or more miles by foot or horseback just for a swim in the cool water.

Whether or not they swam at Blue Hole probably had more to do with their modesty than their preference.

Helen Hamilton wrote to park rangers in 1999 that she had been terrified to swim in the Head Spring but did it anyway so her peers would not know of her fears.

"And I never desired to swim in Blue Hole," she wrote.

Earl Kinnard, born in 1930, said in 1998 that New Year's Day became the official day for skinny-dipping. He said he still goes skinny dipping in the Head Spring every New Year's morning.



Archeologists believe San Martin de Timucua church looked very similar to the drawing above.

Rosa Mae (Collins) Oliver claimed the boys liked to skinny dip in Blue Hole, and the girls knew it.

"If the girls wanted to go there they had better make plenty of noise or else," said Oliver.

Roaring and Singing Springs lie so close to one another, the Park Service has lumped them together using one name, Mission Springs. The name comes from the Franciscan mission, San de Martin Timucua that was located here during the days of the Spanish occupation of Florida.

Excavations completed at this site by Brent Weisman in 1988 and 1989 uncovered three buildings and a cemetery from those years when the Spanish ruled.

Weisman writes about the discoveries at Mission Springs in *Excavations on the Franciscan Frontier*. He said one of the buildings must have served as the

church, one as the priest's quarters, and one seems to have been a dormitory. A cemetery with the remains of Christian Indians was also found. His team found remnants from the Spanish such as glass beads, pottery shards of majolica and a brass finger ring with stone intact. These items were interspersed with Indian artifacts throughout the area.[2]

Roaring and Singing Springs emerge from the base of a high bank some 250 feet east of the Ichetucknee River and 1,500 feet downstream from Blue Hole Spring. Roaring Spring fits its name, as its flow is rapid and high-velocity. Singing Springs while emerging from the banks, is slower and "casually bubbles, sloshes, and tumbles over pebbles and stones."[3]

From notes taken from one Old Timers Reunion, several remembered swimming at Mission Springs. They also found Native American artifacts, but no one knew why they were there until the excavations were completed.

One Old Timer said, "We used to swim in the spring at Mission Springs, but we were unaware of any name given to the mission at that time."

The dependable source of water, the proximity to the river, and good soil for farming made the Mission Springs a good choice to place the mission.

Lying 850 feet downstream, a unique spring emerges from the eelgrass as if an eye has appeared in the aquatic plants. Devil's Eye Spring is located in Suwannee County and has a short run of 60 feet to the river.

The run that joins Mill Pond Spring with the river contains stones and pebbles at its bottom. The run is

shallow and flows for 150 feet. A small log dam lies across the run not far from the pool.

Means wrote, "The Mill Pond has a magic beauty all its own. This spring was damned up and the spillways were cut out of the stone banks. The vista down from the high bluffs is out of this world. You have to see it to believe that this great beauty is at our own door."

A.K. Black had a rich and long association with the Ichetucknee Springs. He was born sometime around 1899 in Columbia City, north of the Ichetucknee River.

His father, D. W. Black, was the engineer for the Lake City Short, part of the Plant System Railroad that ran from Lake City through Fort White to High Springs and back.

Black was a local attorney and judge. He served on the first committee to Save Ichetucknee Springs back in 1958.

In an interview in 1997 with Jim Stevenson, Black recalled that during the 1920s a gristmill existed at Mill Pond.

Several Old Timers remember Collins Mill at Mill Pond. Averill Fielding said Rosa May Oliver's great-grandfather ran it.

Oliver corroborated that story with interviewer Joan Shelton at the 1999 reunion. However, she told Shelton the old gristmill at Mill Pond Spring was her grandfather's not her great-grandfather's as Fielding recalled or William Cason's, as it states in the book Columbia County history.

Her grandfather, William Henry Collins, also ran the Ichetucknee Post Office, which Oliver believes was housed in his home. She remembered that her

grandfather hired a rider to take the mail to Cedar Key. Mail did come from Lake City, but she doesn't recall the mode of transportation.

Laura Ann Porter also remembered that a W.H. Collins was the postmaster of Ichetucknee Springs. The confusion between Oliver's and Fielding's memories could be explained through Porter's recollections. She believes it was Collins' father who ran the gristmill, making the mill owner Oliver's great-grandfather.

Porter brought a Postmaster Form to the 2000 reunion, dated July 9, 1880 for the quarter ended June 30, 1880. The Ichetucknee Post Office owed 92 cents to the Post Office Department. W.H.C. Collins, Postmaster, signed the report.

In the notes from the Old Timers Reunion, the group remembered when businesses would close Lake City on Wednesday afternoons, people would go to the Ichetucknee River. However, the Head Spring would often be packed with people, so many from Lake City would go down to Mill Pond in the 1940s to spend the afternoon. They remembered easy access by vehicle.

They also remembered the water at Mill Pond Spring coming over their heads while the dam was still in place.

Two of the Old Timers said at times the winding road going to the Mill Pond would be too muddy to drive. They would have to walk coming in from the Lake City Road.

One man talked about the difficulty of making a living years ago, "so everyone would do more than one thing to make money."

He said he remembered that a bartender also

served as the local dentist. The Mill site took on other business operations, probably sometime during and after the depression in the 1930s. The Mill would not have survived as a mill alone.

Roscoe McCormick moved to Columbia City in 1947. In 1965 he built a cabin on the Columbia County side of the Ichetucknee River below the US 27 Bridge. He remembers swimming, fishing, and camping at Mill Pond even before he built the cabin.

One of the Old Timers who visited Ichetucknee Springs in the 1920s remembers that the Mill site was the only spot with a business, post office, and general store. He said from his memories, the stores were already closed, but remembered that everyone talked about it.

"There were two or three cracker shacks between Junction [Road] and the mill," he recalled.

He remembered the blacksmith as having nothing more than a tin roof over a rock furnace.

The road to the Mill Pond went along the railroad bed and the side of the run was dug out so equipment could get down to the dam.

The river continues flowing for another mile before picking up the water from the last named-spring, Coffee Spring. Its name may come from the sound made as the water pushes its way up to the surface from the vent.

"Like Singing Springs, it makes a percolating sound as the water trickles over pebbly rocks," Emmet Ferguson writes in *North Florida Springs*. [4]

The vents are located near the base of a slope and discharge into a 30 feet wide pond filled with an abundance of aquatic plants. This spring is in close

proximity to the river, on the west or Suwannee County side.

As the Ichetucknee River continues its journey, the tubers exit the river before the US 27 Bridge. The last mile is outside the state park. Below the bridge, both sides of the river are developed with houses and cabins before it joins the Santa Fe River.

ENDNOTES

1. Brooksie and John Bergen, *Carefree Canoeing in Florida* (Houston: Gulf Publishing Company, 1997), 91.
2. Weisman, *Excavations*, 1.
3. Jack Rosenau, Glen Faulkner, Charles Hendry, Jr., and Robert Hall, *Spirngs of Florida* (U.S. Geological Survey, 1977), 102.
4. Emmett Ferguson, Jr., *The Major and Minor Springs of Florida* (Saratoga, N.Y.: Saratoga Publishing Group, Inc., 1995), 81.

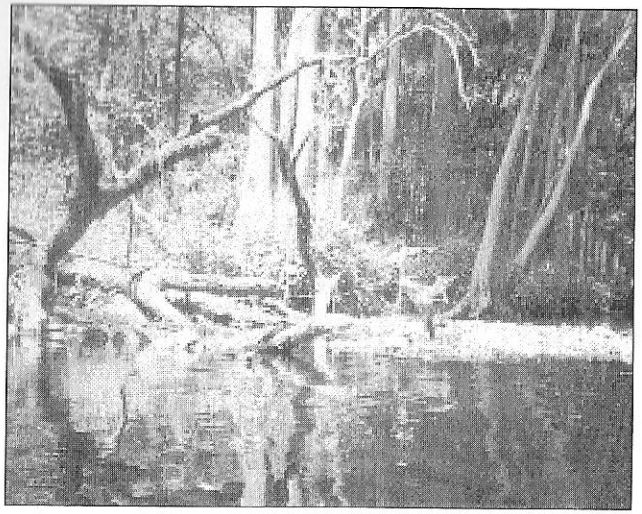


Photo by Patricia C. Behnke

The Ichetucknee River in the spring of 2003.

Chapter Four
The River

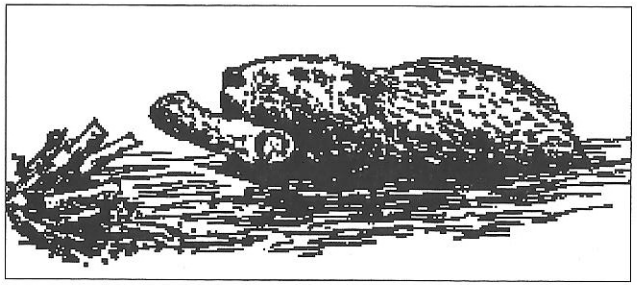
The Ichetucknee River flows for approximately four and a half miles in a southwesterly direction. Its crystal clear waters pulse from the springs on its course. Plant life grows on the bottom of the river, waving with the current and sometimes looking alive as the springs create a velocity of energy.

The fast-moving current allows the Ichetucknee River to remain unstained from the tannic color asso-

ciated with slower moving rivers like the Santa Fe. At its end, the Ichetucknee flows into the Santa Fe River and aerial photos show the clear waters mixing into the tannic-laden waters of the wider and slower flowing river.

The name, Ichetucknee, comes from a Native American word meaning "pond of the beaver." The beaver population along the river is large within the state park.

Wes Skiles observed, "I've seen manatees, schools of mullet, shell crackers, mud fish, and bream. And there is a good beaver population along with foxes and bobcats."



Drawing by Larry Behnke

Azell Nail has been the Ichetucknee Springs State Park Manager for the past fifteen years, but he remembers coming to Ichetucknee Springs as a teenager in the 1960s.

He said that manatees generally do not come up as far as the Ichetucknee because of the shallowness of the Santa Fe River. However, during times of high waters such as in the spring of 2003, manatees made their way north from the Gulf of Mexico to the temperate waters of the Ichetucknee Springs.

"We had three manatees this spring," said Nail in 2003. "We counted two cows and one calf.

The Gainesville Sun reported on February 14, 1995 that a manatee had been spotted on the river near the mid-point tube launch approximately three miles from the Santa Fe River. While it is not unusual for manatees to travel up to 125 miles away from the ocean to find warmer waters in the rivers, there had been no reported manatees on the Ichetucknee River prior to the 1990s. *The Sun* article suggests that the efforts by the park service to restore Ichetucknee Springs to a more natural state have been effective, allowing the vegetation to once again sprout from the bottom of the river and attracting the manatees.[1]

Cattle grazed in the river until the passage of a law that ended the open range laws in 1950. John Hill said Loncala did not acquire the "sandhill property on the west side north of Grassy Flats to present day County Road 238 until 1960."

"This property likely had cows on it until that time," Hill said

Nail said he has seen pictures of cattle in the river near the grassy flats and at the Head Spring. He even found some old manure on the banks years ago.

"There was probably extensive grazing in the river because of all the farming that took place on the east side of the park," Nail said.

Skiles said that probably the most damage done by the cattle would have been the erosion caused by climbing up and down the banks to reach the water. The springs and river show no sign of this damage some 50 years later after the cattle no longer had free range over the area.

Hill also remembers his employees reported unconfirmed sightings of panthers.

"One Loncala crewman definitely saw either a panther or an escaped or released western cougar on A.W. Gaylord's drive near Hildreth in 1978," Hill recounted.

The banks of the river were well used over the centuries by Native Americans. A Spanish mission thrived for almost 50 years before meeting with destruction at the hands of angry Native Americans being used and forced to do the work of the Franciscan priests.

Travelers on the Old Bellamy Road, which passed within yards of the Head Spring, refreshed themselves by bathing and drinking the clean waters of the river. And miners of phosphate and loggers damaged much of the natural growth on the sandhills, creating acres of hardwoods and altering the ecosystem of the Ichetucknee River's banks.

Local residents also used the river and took what they could from it, claiming ownership of its contents. Stories of abundant fish and snakes and greater flowing water abound among the Old Timers.

Carolyn Cornman remembers parties and picnics with her family on the riverbanks, but she said her momma would never swim herself.

"She said if she did swim, there wouldn't be any water because it would all go up her nose," Cornman said.

But one day her momma sat on the banks of the river and saw a snake on a log next to her. The next thing the family saw was their momma jumping into the river.

"We said to her, 'Momma, you might not swim, but you sure can dive!'" Cornman said.

"It was a wonderful life back then," Cornman remembered. "We never went far down river. I always hated the weeds and grasses, and I was afraid of snakes and eels."

Doug Stamm describes in his book, *The Springs of Florida*, that the spring water leaving its source and creating the stream environment also creates a place for vibrant vegetation with much variation. The bottom of the river is covered in eelgrass and other native aquatic plants.

Stamm writes, "Often, during the high of midday, clumps of [nuisance] algae are carried to the surface by the great numbers of oxygen bubbles they produce and become caught in the algae strands."[2]

D.L. Means served on the first, "Save the River Committee" in 1956 and wrote lovingly in 1965 of what he called the "Garden of Eden."

"The Ichetucknee River Valley is very narrow and

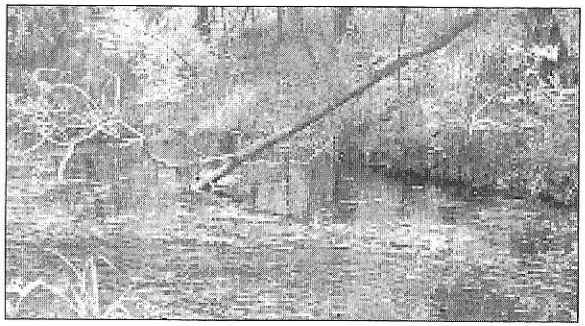


Photo by Patricia C. Behnke

Taken near Mission Springs in May 2003, this photo shows the eel grasses growing under the water.

the hills come real close to the river in most areas; and are covered with a dense swamp and various types of trees covered with moss," Means wrote.

"And a few times, I have seen fish so thick that you probably could have dipped some up in a dip net."

Other Old Timers remember the abundance of fish as well. And perhaps the variety of fish is equaled

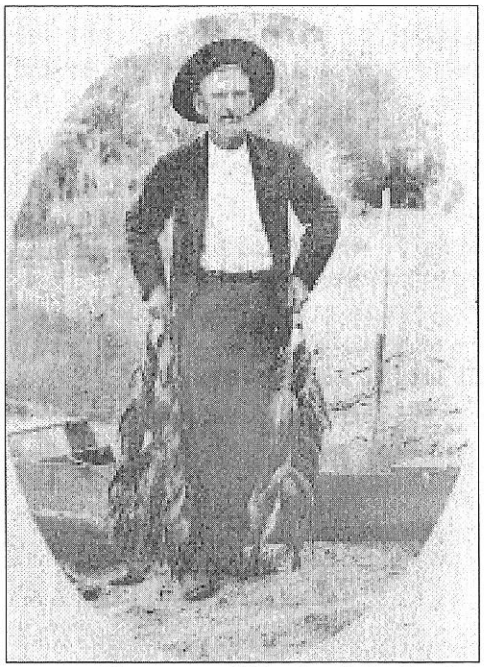


Photo courtesy of Ichetucknee Springs State Park

Thomas E. Getzen displays his yield of fish caught in the Santa Fe River from just four hours of fishing, circa 1911.

only by the variety of methods used to catch those fish.

A.K. Black's history intertwines with the history of the river from the early 1900s until it became a state park. His father, D.W., ran the Lake City Short Line from Lake City to High Springs and back daily.

One day Black and his friend, Joe Gellar, boarded his father's train. The two young men had just purchased some dynamite and carried it on board.

"My father asked me what I was carrying, and I told him it was dynamite," Black recalled. "I told him I had the caps."

Black's father told him it was illegal to have explosives on a train in Florida, so he confiscated the dynamite and caps. After scolding his son and Gellar, Conductor Black turned the dynamite over to his friend.

"He asked his friend to get him some fish each day," Black said. "He did."

"I knew a guy named Nub Martin," Black told University of Florida student Patricia Garner in 1994. "Both of his arms were blown off with dynamite."

"So that's why they called him Nub?" asked Garner.

"Yes," Black replied. "There was another man named Niblack. He was a member of the legislature and had lost one arm."

"That was something that people did pretty regular?" Garner asked. "Was there that many fish in the river?"

Black told her it was done when folks wanted a "mess of fish." Then he told her another method.

"They'd fish at night with a long pole with a light on it," he said. "They could go up and down that river."

Black told her people took buckets of fish home regularly after "fishing" on the Ichetucknee River.

"I'll tell you something about the fish," Black continued. "You could always tell when the fish had been dynamited. I have experienced this sometimes.

"The bones of the backs were always shattered."

Thelma Lowe, who owns the oldest tube rental facility near Ichetucknee Springs State Park, was baptized at the Head Spring and remembers that Cleveland Stalmaker would dynamite fish.

At the 2003 reunion, Lowe spoke to an interviewer about catching and eating perch, catfish, and flounder caught from the river.

"They would dynamite and that's the reason for the holes," she said. "Fish would come to the top of the water and they'd dive down for the ones on the bottom.

"And then we ate them at the river."

"The fish were in larger numbers and size than today," she said.

"The dynamite was probably horrible on the environment," said Skiles. "They'd drop 1/4 stick, fish would go belly-up, and they'd scoop them in a basket.

"But the tendency to blame all the problems with the environment on the dynamite is overstated," Skiles continued. "I don't think it did anything ostensibly to the river."

He explains his belief using the model of what is actually happening within the springs. The springs are continually breaking down the rocks.

"There is evidence of erosion and a natural sinking or collapsing of lime rock," Skiles said. "But it is because of the continued erosion of the rocks and not the result of dynamite."

Roscoe McCormick of Columbia City built a cabin on the Ichetucknee River in 1965. He recalls that schools of mullet were common and remembers one school of catfish near the Santa Fe River. Roy Porter remembers both schools of catfish and mullet. However, other Old Timers do not recall an abundance of catfish on the river.

Mullet, a vegetarian fish, live on the algae that are so abundant in the Ichetucknee River. Mullet have a strange habit of leaping out of the water into the air and then falling back into the river. They do not seem bothered by the tubers on the river, sometimes jumping out of the water either in front of or behind one of the floaters.[3]

Catfish are basically bottom feeders and although they are found in the springs, they are not as easily sighted because of their penchant for dark and hidden places. They reside in the cracks and crevices of the rivers' walls.[4]

McCormick also remembers a few alligators lounging in the grassy flats of the Ichetucknee River.

Nettie Black Ozaki, daughter of A.K., remembers Randall Jackson wrestling a big gator at the Head Spring. Earl Kinnard remembers seeing a four-foot alligator in 1947, but never anything larger.

While alligator sightings did occur, they do not play a huge role in the memories of the Old Timers.

Woody Hollingsworth recalled in the early 1950s, "the crayfish were so thick you couldn't see the white bottom [of the river]."

James Carter graduated from Fort White High School in 1950 in a class of 11. He remembers "gigging" bass and bream at night from a boat with his

dad. The method of gigging consists of metal prongs on a pole, like a spear. It is thrown at the fish, hopefully jabbing them.

Photo courtesy Ichetucknee Springs State Park

A group enjoys boating on the Ichetucknee River, circa 1930-31. From left, Marguerite Getzen, Harry Moyer, Ruth Williams, Lula Getzen, Dick Crouch, and Zelia Gresham.

Kinnard, the New Year's Day skinny dipper, remembers schools of mullet on the river, although he believes there are much less today. He also recalls more variety of ducks.

Helen Hamilton wrote to the Ichetucknee Springs State Park after the 1999 reunion and asked if anyone had mentioned the glass bottom boats on the Ichetucknee River.

Hugh Wilson remembers back as far as the 1920s at the river. He recalled the glass bottom boats and thinks they might have come after World War II. However, a tree was dropped into the river to block the boat and that ended those trips.

"An outfit did try to have glass bottom boat trips," Hamilton wrote. "I was fortunate to receive a free trip, probably in 1931 or 1932."

"There was a man that started a glass boat business, probably north of US 27," said Nail in an interview in 2003. "On the west bank, there's an old metal pipe where they tied the boats."

Nail also believes there was a tavern located near the launching site for the boats. There remain the remnants of an old building and cast iron pipes on the hill above the banks.

"The story goes that the man couldn't keep the debris and fallen trees out of the river," Nail said. "Too much trouble, which is probably good or we'd be like Silver Springs now."

Nail said the glass bottom boats must have traveled upstream because he doesn't believe the boat could have gone under the railroad bridge at the US 27 Bridge.

Interviewed in 1997 at the age of 88, Raymond Barager remembers when lots on the river cost $400 in the early 1950s. He was the third owner to build on the southern end of the Ichetucknee River. At that time, most of the residents were not aware of their actions' impact on the river. Barager said when he cleared his lot, most of the debris would not burn, so he bulldozed it all into the river.

Barager was not the only resident or private interest that put debris in the river. The effects of those

actions before environmental protection laws and education became effective have been identified and rectified where possible by the State Park System and others who feel intimately connected to the Ichetucknee Springs and River.

ENDNOTES

1. Bruce Ritchie, "Ichetucknee lures new tourists: manatees," *The Gainesville Sun*, February 14, 1995, 5A.
2. Doug Stam, *The Springs of Florida*(Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1994), 21.
3. Ibid., 102.
4. Ibid., 103.

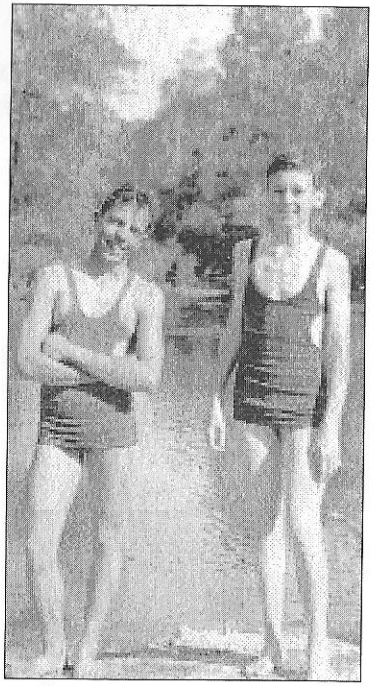


Photo courtesy of Ichetucknee Springs State Park

Rufus Getzen(left) and friend at the Ichetucknee River, circa 1936.

Chapter Five
Transportation and Income

The mode of transportation to Ichetucknee Springs varied according to the times, economics, and availability.

A.K. Black remembered vividly the railroad that connected Lake City, Fort White, and High Springs because his father, D.W. Black, was the conductor for the Lake City Short Line.

In 1994, he reminisced about those days when the whistle from the train marked the passage of time for nearby residents.

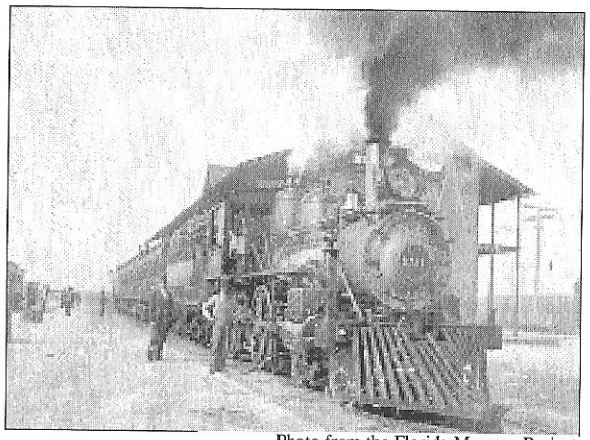


Photo from the Florida Memory Project

Seaboard Coast Rail Line at the High Springs depot in the early 1900s. This train is most likely powered by coal. The Lake City Short Line arrived in High Springs daily before heading back to Fort White and then Lake City.

"They blew that warning whistle," he said. "That meant get out of the springs and get back up for the train.

"They'd blow that whistle and that train would back out. When they rode up to Herlong Road, one boy was missing so they stopped the train. He was running and said something was after him.

"Everyone said, 'What is it?' He said, 'It's trying to catch me.' He had a feather in the back of his hat and that feather was tickling his neck and scared him," Black recounted.

Black also spoke about Columbia City and his memories of the railroad.

"Columbia City was six miles south of Lake City, and they built a railroad through there in 1880," he said.

"It [the train] had a wood burning engine," Black said. "There was a black man would go fire the engine up, south of Columbia City, and for four to five miles, he'd add wood. The train had a big pile of wood up in the back.

"My father's train used to leave Lake City every morning about 9 a.m.," Black remembered. "It would go to Fort White to High Springs, then to Lake City, then return to Fort White.

"There were no other trains," he said. "When the air brakes would go on, my daddy would lean over and look out and say, '[Engineer] John is going to kill a squirrel.'

"There were all sorts of fox squirrel there, all colors, and just beautiful," Black said.

Black also remembered that the roads between each of the towns were nearly impassable. Doctors would give prescriptions to Mr. Black, and he would get them filled in Lake City.

His father had so many friends that people always urged him to run for political office, which he never did. His son, A.K. Black used to dread the days his mother would send him down to meet the train because he knew it meant little time for play.

"I used to come in from school in the afternoon,"

Black remembered. "My mother said, 'Your daddy said to meet the train.' Well, I wanted to play baseball.

"Somebody would have given him 50-70 quail, and there'd be a backbone, and ham that people had given him.

"I saw he'd have five to six big sacks full of turkeys, too," Black said.

And that meant Black had to help cart the precious food home instead of playing with his friends in the field.

Black also remembered that Saturday was butchering day.

"There was no refrigeration," he said. "Everybody would come in and they'd sell off that beef.

"On Friday afternoons the train would bring fish from Cedar Key, and they sold mullet for 50 cents," he remembered.

Thelma Lowe grew up in Columbia County and

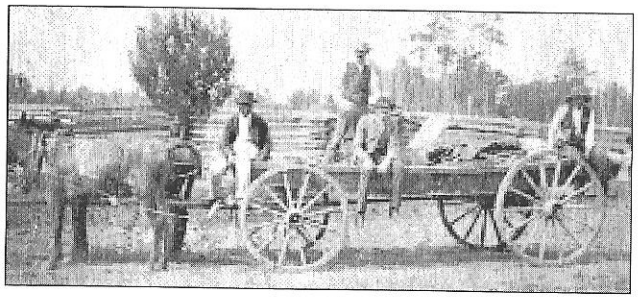


Photo courtesy Florida Memory Project

In this photo, shot in north Florida in the early 1900s, men are ready for fishing. The wagon bed also served as a boat.

attended school in Fort White. She lived behind the J.C. Cattle Ranch on County Road 47. She and her

family would come out to the Head Spring one or two times each year in horse and wagon.

"We took our wagon down a two-rut road and parked on the east side," she remembered.

Edith Sistrunk was born in 1928 said she would come from Fort White and walk if there was no other way to get to Ichetucknee Springs.

"But usually someone else was coming, and they would take us," she said. "We'd camp for days."

Duncan McCormick also remembers walking to the springs "from Fort White with a bunch of kids" just to swim in the springs and river.

John Hill from Loncala said the Lake City Short would travel along US 27 between High Springs and Fort White and then follow Junction Road from Fort White to Lake City.

Lowe remembered that the train came from Lake City around 11 a.m., blowing the lunch whistle.

Eathan Porter grew up in the area of Ichetucknee Springs. Born in 1913, he shared his memories of the Lake City Short in an interview with Jim Stevenson in 1997.

"Two passenger trains a day at first, and then later only one per day," said Porter. "There was a train depot in Columbia City, and I remember World War I recruits boarding the train in Columbia City."

"We'd work in the fields and the person we worked for would bring us down afterwards," said Fielding. "We'd jump in, clothes and all."

Laurie Kirby talked about Kirby family reunions held every year at Ichetucknee Springs.

"We used to ride a mule to Ichetucknee to swim," said Kirby.

Earl Lane, born in 1932, began coming to

Ichetucknee Springs at the age of two. He remembered riding his bike to the springs and skinny-dipping and eating boiled peanuts.

Crickett Porter said her family would picnic at the springs, arriving in a wagon.

"If it rained, we got under the wagon to stay dry," she said.

Wana Davis remembered in a 1999 interview that "Nice little cedars grew in the phosphate mine."

"We used to cut our Christmas tree every year a few weeks before Christmas," she said.

Others used the springs to bathe. Chuck Ottinger retired from the Navy in the Fort White area in 1961. He and his wife purchased a 581-acre farm and grew peanuts and watermelon.

"Our farm help would use the springs as their weekly bath or just to cool off," said Ottinger.

He also said the tobacco workers in particular loved to swim in the springs, since the harvesting of tobacco occurs during some of the hottest times of the year in north Florida, late June and early July.

"Many local farmers would use trips to the springs as incentive to work harder and faster," said Ottinger.

Nettie Black Ozaki remembered the same thing in 1997. "The field hands went to the spring to bathe after a day in the fields," she said.

However, A.K. Black said most people in the early days of his recollections came to the river to obtain the water, not to swim.

When Averill Fielding first visited Ichetucknee Springs in 1917 he arrived in a horse-pulled wagon. He also remembered that it was necessary at times to gather water from the springs.

One of the Old Timers remembers using the water

for irrigating the fields during the flood of 1948, and other times during drought.

"We had a Model A truck," he said. "We'd back it down the road, stand in the back, and get water in barrels to take home with us.

"We needed to water the fields; we didn't have irrigation back then, you know," he explained.

Annie Laura Porter said her father-in-law would back his truck right up to the Head Spring and fill up barrels with water for his tobacco plants.

Other pursuits besides the water became useful and profitable to private companies between 1880 and 1950, changing the face of the banks along the river and its springs.

The longleaf pines, also known as yellow pine, was harvested for its lumber. Hill, of Loncala, said that Loncala replanted some tracts with slash pine when they owned the property. However, slash pine is not native to the park.

Nail said cedar and cypress were both logged from the riverbanks. Just south of the US 27 Bridge, a mill took the logs harvested from the cedar and cypress and turned them into shingles. They also harvested dogwood trees to use in making spools and bearings.

Hill said, "Although Loncala acquired the property in 1920, it was the early 1950s before they actually returned to mine the Ichetucknee pits.

"At this time they opened no new pits, but did scrape old pits to reclaim colloidal phosphate residues," he continued. "The phosphoric clay was washed down at or near the mine sites, and the wastewater was channeled into slime ponds.

"One of these old ponds sits across from the North Ranger Residence and was planted in slash pine by

Loncala, as is typically done in these waste areas.

"The dried product was then carried by truck to the processing facility on the old Lake City Junction rail line, now Junction Road," Hill said.

Even though Loncala did not use the site from 1920 through 1950, they did lease out turpentine rights. Scars are still left on the pines from the process required in removing the turpentine.

According to Gene M. Burnett in *Florida's Past,* turpentine was once "Florida's second largest industry. . .For nearly a half a century, it yielded fabulous profits." [1]

However, greed led to its demise for several reasons. When it was discovered that the turpentine camps kept mostly African-American workers in a form of servitude, the state intervened and began outlawing the camps in the 1940s. The last of the camps in the area of the Ichetucknee probably ended in 1949.

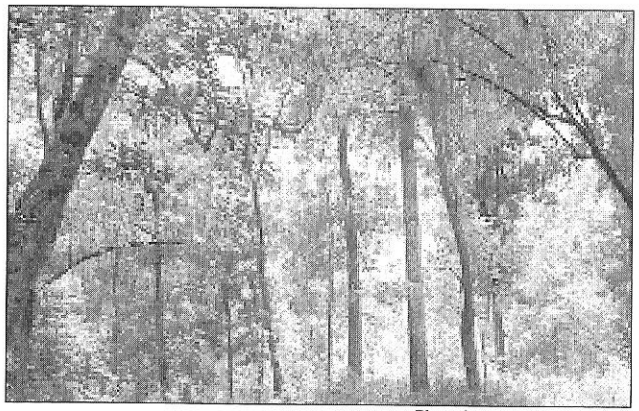


Photo by Patricia C. Behnke

The hardwood forests currently surrounding the river near Mission Springs.

Hill said that Loncala never did "extensive logging on the property — only harvesting selected longleaf pines from the uplands."

They also floated out cypress logs from the river to be reclaimed for commercial use. Loncala "cut no cypress or hardwoods," Hill said.

In the 1950s, Hill said the land around the south entrance had been cleared of its "native sandhill vegetation by pulling chains between tractors to remove brush. The area was then planted in watermelons for one to two years before Loncala planted slash pines on the tract."

Hill said Loncala did allow the University of Florida to remove many of the rare Shumard Oaks in the 1950s.

"These were planted on campus — particularly around Shands," Hill noted. "Many of these impressive trees may be seen on campus today."

Jim Stevenson said in 2003, "The Florida Park Service is striving to restore the natural plant communities of the park. The upland sandhills were the most severely impacted by farming, grazing, logging, and suppression of natural fires. Methods being used to restore the sandhills are prescribed burning and girdling of Laurel Oaks."

With these efforts in place, Ichetucknee Springs is beginning to return to its original state. Not only will the restoration bring the vegetation back, making the park pristine-like, but animal life will also return to its natural habitat.

ENDNOTES

1. Gene M. Burnett, *Florida's Past* (Sarasota: Pineapple Press, 1986), 223.

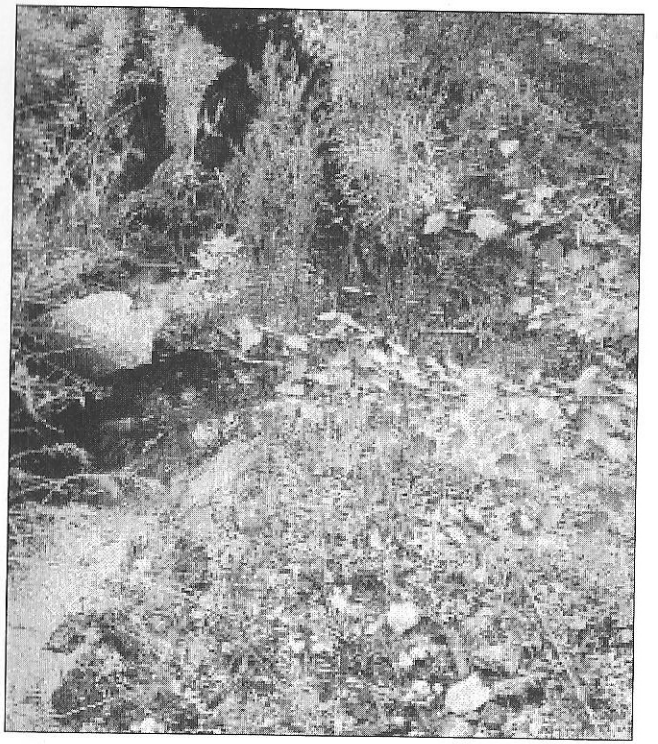


Photo by Larry Behnke

Rose Creek, April 2003

Chapter Six
The Flow

While the Ichetucknee River flows above ground for almost five miles, it actually begins twelve miles

north at Alligator Lake in Lake City. From there water flows underground and emerges in Ichetucknee Springs.

Springs of the Suwannee River Basin in Florida by David Hornsby explains the relationship between the Floridan aquifer and the springs by first discussing the characteristics of the area.

"There are two main physiographic regions in the Suwannee River Basin: the Northern Highlands and the Gulf Coastal Lowlands. As the river descends from the highlands in the northeast, it cuts through the confining sediments that overlie the Floridan aquifer system. Springs can occur in the Suwannee River Basin whenever the potentiometric surface of the aquifer extends above land surface and there is an opening for the water to escape through."[1]

Alligator Lake lies on the Northern Highlands, and a natural downward sloping occurs called the Cody Escarpment. Within the escarpment, swallet holes and sinkholes form until the land levels out in the Gulf Coastal Lowlands and the site of the springs of the Ichetucknee.

Hornsby notes that once the water makes it into the Lowlands, "the rivers have eroded down into the limestone of the Floridan aquifer system."[2]

In order for the springs to flow, gravity demands they lie lower than the aquifer and a passageway must exist for the water to gather and travel.

Ken Ringle wrote about North Florida's springs in *National Geographic Magazine* in March of 1999.

In his studies and research with Skiles who lives near High Springs, Ringle referred to the "profoundly mysterious" nature of the springs and rivers, which rise and disappear with no apparent reason.

He says the action of the water in North Florida responding to rain and drought act "as if God pulled the plug in a bathtub."[3]

His conclusions can explain the interconnectivity of the Ichetucknee with the sinks, creeks, and lakes north of the Head Spring.

"Scientists know that many of the springs are interconnected. . . But they've never known exactly how. Only in the past decade or so have they begun to appreciate the complexity of the watery network lacing the limestone and dolomite geology of north Florida — and the dangers to the springs posed by the region's growth in population, agriculture, and industry," Ringle wrote.[4]

A *Gainesville Sun* article in 1997 cites a University of Florida study that showed "water beneath Rose Sink, near [in] Columbia City, flowed to the Ichetucknee Head Spring about five [six] miles away in less than 24 hours."[5]

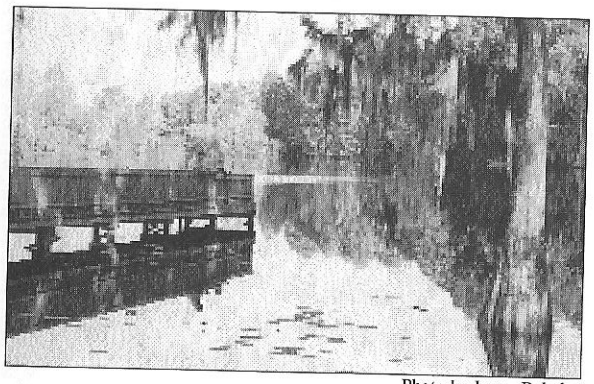


Photo by Larry Behnke

Alligator Lake, April 2003

Alligator Lake lies in Lake City in Columbia County. The shores are graced with old cypress trees hung heavily in Spanish moss, creating the look of old Florida with its dream-like frosted edges.

Skiles said Alligator Lake completely disappeared during the beginning of a period of drought in 1999.

The Old Timers have seen first hand what happens when those sinkholes and springs and creeks and rivers flood. The whole area of the Ichetucknee Trace becomes one conduit for the water to travel. Only the construction of roads along its path causes some unnatural flowing to occur.

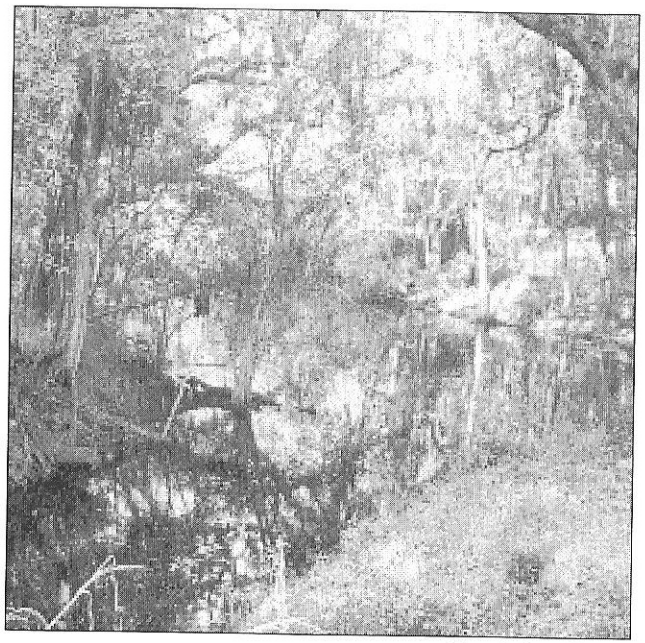


Photo by Larry Behnke

Clay Hole Creek, April 2003

Clarence Tice talked with Jim Stevenson about his memories of the waters. He lives near Clay Hole Creek, which runs southwest of Alligator Lake.

"We moved to Clay Hole Creek in 1924," he said. "The creek flowed over sinks and county roads in the flood of 1948."

He remembers that Clay Hole Creek flowed continuously then.

"The water table is lower now," Tice continued. "Big Lake [Alligator Lake] overflowed into Clay Hole Creek. Big fish came from the lake.

"Black sink took the water first, then Clay Hole Sink, then the sink at the road [Dyal Sink]. During floods there was continuous surface water from Alligator Lake to Rose Sink," Tice said.

Part of Clay Hole Sink is on Tice's property. He says he could hear the "sink sucking" from his place.

Neal Dukes served as the Columbia County Extension Agent for 27 years; he retired in 1980. He said Dyal Sink on Clay Hole Creek off of Dyal Road was dug out with a backhoe in 1998.

"Dyal Sink always has water," he said. "It's a four foot by four foot hole or vent."

A series of creeks, Clay Hole, Cannon, and Rose, meander across the landscape and disappear into sinkholes. Rose Sink is behind a gas station in Columbia City, six miles from Ichetucknee Springs.

A.K. Black, raised in Columbia City, remembered that the limerock and phosphate pits and sinks and creeks also became gathering places when getting to Ichetucknee was not possible.

"Columbia City is six miles south of Lake City," he said in 1994. "They built a railroad through there in 1880."

He remembered a cotton gin in Columbia City. He said the black community would "gather up at the top of the hill where the mill was located and on Sunday morning paraded down and they had musical instruments.

"We used to sit and listen to the service," he continued. "There was a creek [Rose] coming down about two blocks from my grandparents home and when the logs would hit that hole [Rose Creek swallet] they would go up on end and go down."

Most likely he is referring to Rose Creek and its sink off of State Road 47.

Genevieve Brown moved to Rose Sink when she was two years old. Her father, Alford Sheely, ran a gristmill and cotton gin powered by a steam engine with water from Rose Sink.

During an interview with Stevenson in 1999, Brown said they swam in the creek, but were forbidden to swim in the sinks because of the caves.

"The creek always flowed," she said. "There was no duckweed on the sink. Old blacks used to fish in the sink.

"You could hear it — the swallet — and fences posts and trees went down into them," said Brown.

Skiles said Brown would be referring to the sound of the flow as surface waters go underground; they were called 'go away holes,'" he said.

"It's like a sucking vortex."

Old Timers refer to the swallet as sucking, which is probably a more literal description of what happens to the water and anything on the surface surrounding it.

During extremely wet times the Old Timers remember the floods. Passage of time can be marked

by the flood years, mostly 1948, 1958, 1964, 1973, and 1998.

Brown remembers the flood of 1948 when water went across County Road 47, just north of the present Columbia City Elementary School. The water also covered the railroad tracks. Her father rode his horse to get around during the flood.

News accounts in 1948 reported closed roads as the Suwannee River and its tributaries reached the highest levels reported in recorded history.

Roscoe McCormick moved to Columbia City in 1947. During the flood of 1948 water came up around his house twice in a month. He had to move his house to higher ground as a result.

State Road 47 flooded twice since it was paved in 1948, according to McCormick. He said SR 47 flooded north of the school in the Ichetucknee Trace.

Hugh Wilson remembers the highest water in 1958. Annie Laura Porter believes in 1964 the water rose the second highest. During Hurricane Dora in 1964, Averill Fielding remembers that 16 inches of rain fell in 24 hours.

The year 1973 also saw the waters rise in the whole Suwannee area. Cricket Porter remembers seeing a picture of a canoe tied to the eaves of a two-story house that year.

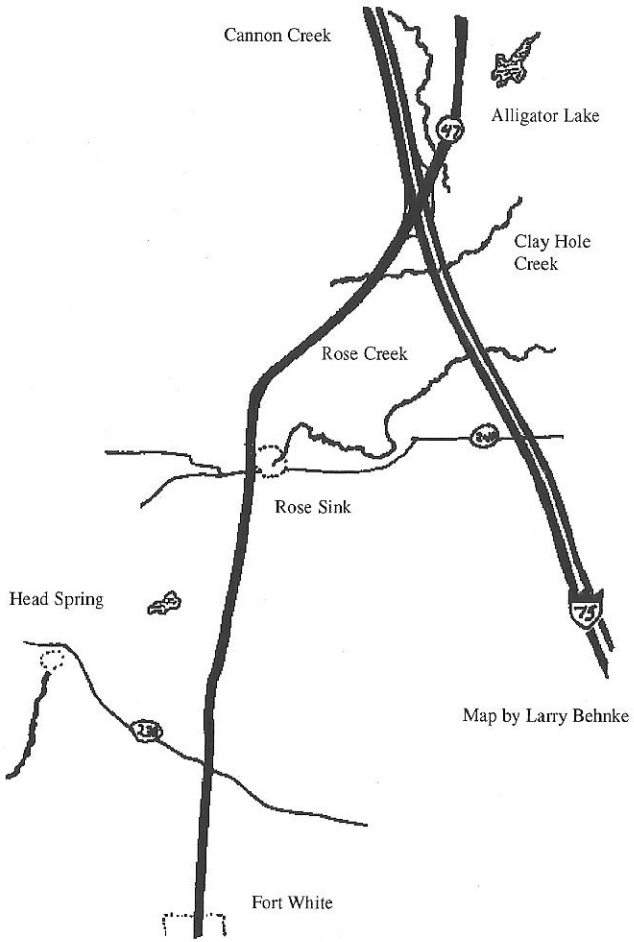
Ralph Little remembers drinking the creek water in the 1940s when the Rose Creek never went dry. He believes road ditches have changed hydrology.

Eathan Porter said in a 1997 interview with Jim Stevenson that when the river is high, "water rises to the surface in a flat area on my land east of the park boundary."

A pond on the north side of County Road 238 fills

and overflows south into a borrow pit in the park, according to Porter. He also said there is high water in the gas line right-of-way during floods.

In 1948, Porter remembered the water flowing out of a sink off of Lazy Oaks Road. Porter said that



sediments eroded from the county road and filled the Head Spring. He also believes that a private interest "pushed concrete rubble into the spring vent with a bulldozer around 1958 to stop the flow in order to stop people from swimming."

The Ichetucknee Trace is the ancient riverbed that connects the creeks and sinks north of the Ichetucknee Head Spring. Porter remembers that the trace flooded completely in 1948 from Ichetucknee Sink to Ichetucknee Springs, as the water flowed out of Ichetucknee Sink directly into the trace.

"The major sinks in the Ichetucknee Trace are connected to a cave," said Stevenson in an interview in 2003. "The sinks are located in the trace and take surface water, so there has to be a cave underneath."

Skiles said, "Tracing the water is a big challenge. Springs tend to be interchanges of underground highways meeting where multiple water sources come together."

"As technology increases, we are learning more about the springs," Stevenson said.

Nevin Nettles built a gas station at County Road 242 and State Road 47. When he had the water well drilled, it entered a cavity 25 feet to 100 feet height. In March of 1998, he reported that a new sink had opened up behind the station, 10 feet wide by 20 feet deep.

Nettles has seen water flowing in the trace from Clayhole Creek to Rose Sink.

Laurie Kirby, born in 1926, sat with Stevenson for an interview in 1997. He and his family have a close association with the river. They have a cabin on the river, their oldest son was baptized at the Head Spring, his family held old-fashioned picnics at

Ichetucknee Springs before it became a state park, and the Kirby family owned the Kirby Limerock Mine.

They started mining the pit in 1958 when construction began on I-75. The Kirby Mine is in the Ichetucknee Trace.

Kirby said, "When the pit was one and a half acres, they tried to pump it dry, but a large boil of water could not be overcome by the pump."

Kirby, born two miles north of the mine, remembers a small depression or sink with clear water where the pit was eventually dug. A sinkhole opened under a large pile of overrburden.

He also identified Wink Pit and Willow Pond on the mine property. When the pit expanded to three acres, they released 3,000 bream and 300 bass into the water, making for some great fishing at the Kirby Pit. He even recalled the time a large eel was caught in the pit.

Kirby remembered during the floods of 1948, 1958, and 1964 when State Road 47 flooded, "Clay Hole Sink could not take all the water, and the creek flowed west and south in the trace."

Kirby Pit Road leading to the mine, was "flooded at the first dip — we had to paddle a boat from the dip to the pit," said Kirby.

The flow of water from underground receives its fair share of runoff from the springshed, which requires monitoring of the water quality at the springs.

Stevenson told *National Geographic* in 1999 that Ichetucknee Springs State Park might be the textbook case for learning about the process of runoff and the Floridan Aquifer.

"Stevenson, Skiles, and others suspected that the springs were being fed by [contaminated] runoff from Lake City, a community of 10,000 15 miles to the north. How could they be certain?" asked Ken Ringle in the "North Florida Springs" in *National* Geographic [6]

Ringle seemed puzzled about the possibility of the interconnectivity because Lake City is a separate environment from the Ichetucknee area. He did know that "oil and agricultural chemicals from the roads and fields around Lake City showed up in creeks south of town. . . There they appeared to stop." [7]

Or so Ringle thought.

He was forced to believe the truth when Skiles assured him that dye put in Rose Sink showed up days later in Blue Hole Spring in Ichetucknee Springs State Park.

Skiles told him, "This is just like the drain in a bathtub. It all goes down to the aquifer. Chemicals and all. And it comes out at the Ichetucknee."[8]

ENDNOTES

1. David Hornsby, *Springs of the Suwannee River Basin in Florida* (Live Oak: Suwannee River Water Management District, 1998), 6.
2. Ibid., 7.
3. Ringle, "North Florida Springs," 45.
4. Ibid.
5. Bruce Ritchie, "Overflow could affect springs," *The Gainesville Sun*, 30 April, 1997, 5B.
6. Ringle, 51. In an interview in 2003, Jim Stevenson clarified some of the information in the *National Geographic* article. He added the word contaminated to describe the water quality. He also noted that it is 12 miles, not 15, fromAlligator Lake to Ichetucknee Spring.
7. IBID.
8. IBID.

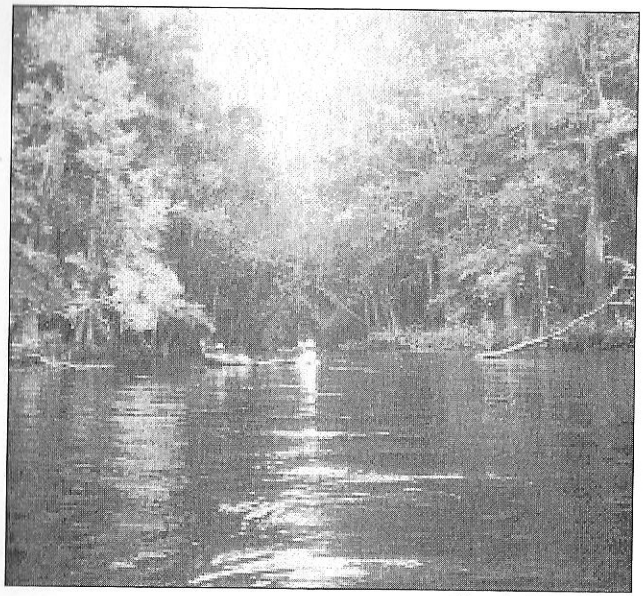


Photo by Larry Behnke

Tubing down the Ichetucknee River, May 2002.

Chapter Seven
A Life of Simple Pleasures

The purchase by the State of Florida of Ichetucknee Springs in 1970 did not end the idyllic pursuits of the Old Timers. According to most recollections those special times began ending in the late

1960s upon the discovery of the springs by college students from the University of Florida.

Removed from much of what went on in the rest of the world during much of the 1920s to 1960, the Old Timers recollect an innocent time in the stories they tell. But when the 1960s exploded with social change, Ichetucknee Springs felt the reverberations from the blast just like the rest of society.

John Hill of Loncala said in the late 1950s the Head Spring and river came to the attention of University of Florida students and other outsiders.

"But by the mid '60s, the situation was out of hand," said Hill, "with thousands of tubers and partiers around each weekend.

"The trash and vandalism problem was overwhelming," he noted.

Hill also said it was one of the reasons Loncala decided to sell the land to the state. They could no longer control the situation, making them libel for any mishaps.

Randy Robinson, a retired lieutenant with the Florida Highway Patrol, lives in Lake City. He remembered that in 1967, Florida's Governor, Claude Kirk, directed Robinson to "clean up that den of inequity at the Ichetucknee River caused by drunken college students."

Robinson said he concentrated his efforts near the US 27 Bridge on the Ichetucknee River, and the first few days of his project resulted in many unpleasant encounters with the students.

"I made 30 plus arrests for drunk and disorderly and nudity," Robinson said.

Roy Porter talked with Jim Stevenson at the 1999 reunion and recalled "before the state took over

things were out of control."

"UF students were laying around naked and doing drugs," said Porter. "About four or five truckloads of beer bottles were pulled out from under the Ichetucknee Bridge [at US 27]."

Porter also believes the students threw concrete and debris into the spring. He remembers the family reunions near the parking lot at the north end of the park when church tables would be brought in to hold all of the food. But those reunions ended when the students took over.

Earl Kinnard, who still enjoys the cool waters of the Head Spring on New Years Day each year, said in the late 1960s the families stopped coming "because of the drugs, drunks, and trash."

With the advent of Ichetucknee Springs State Park, the partying ended, restrictions were put into place, and a new era began in the park. Residents became involved and formed groups to help protect the Ichetucknee Springs.

One of the efforts was removal of debris from the Head Springs vent, which was the natural flow of the spring.

The Old Timers remember hearing the boil and seeing it rise at least three inches above the surface of the water. As the years passed and the new era began in the 1960s, many suspected that cement and other debris were put there to stop the flow would stop swimming in the springs.

In 1954, Averill Fielding and Al Corwin said they removed rocks and sand that had gotten into the boil over the years.

Fielding said the hole was not that big, but "it was just like seeping through the rocks, bubbling up through all the rocks." He believed most of the

blockage came from the erosion of the unpaved road at the Head Spring.

"Water would run off and sediments would wash down into the swimming area," said Fielding. "It got into the natural crevices and helped restrict the flow.

"There was a string of springs back from the main spring that over the years have filled in with sediments," he concluded.

When the flow became restricted, Fielding said that residents would take it upon themselves to clean out the debris to restore the flow. He said after a clean up in 1968, it rose five to seven inches.

"You could stand right here [picnic area at Head Spring] and hear it, where the water was coming up," he said. "But it only did that for a couple of days. We pulled some big rocks up. We took great big rocks out, as big as that picnic table.

"We took a hoist and hooked it to a tree out in the woods with a chain and cable," Fielding continued. "We would stretch the cable to the tree, and everybody would get together and lift it as high as we could.

"When we would lift it, it would move the rock about eight or ten inches," he said.

"When we got that one big rock out, it made a lot of difference," Fielding said. "The water came up really fast.

"It was clean. The water was just as clean as clean right up to the bank," he said.

"There would be rocks this big around floating from the pressure," Fielding remembered.

"We'd take a #3 washtub, like a galvanized trash can, and put one rock in the bottom of the tub and set it right there in the center of the boil," he continued.

"The tub would fill up itself.

"In other words, the water pressure would stir it up and rocks would just jump into the tubs — little tiny to baseball size.

"We just set the tub down there. One time we had a 50-gallon drum down there, and we had trouble getting it out," he said.

Once they pulled the tub out of the water they would haul it up on the banks and dump out all the rocks. Fielding and Corwin also remembered that when they finished a job like that, the Head Spring vent would be so enlarged that they could swim right into it.

"When we first started you couldn't see any kind

Photo by Patricia C. Behnke

Swimming at the Head Spring, April 2003.

of cave, but then you could see a slope," said Fielding. "But you couldn't get down into it because of the flow. You could put your hand over the water, and it would shake from the pressure," he said. "You couldn't actually get down in there then."

Fielding said it was impossible to fight the water pressure because the water was coming out so fast.

"Now when we first started it wasn't like that," he noted. "When we finished, the water was coming out in an area about ten feet across."

For a short time the spring remained that way, but then runoff from the road would make the locals want to clean it again.

The Ichetucknee Springs may have been owned by a private company and now by the state, but the people who have taken sustenance from the waters claim an ownership too.

Even if the stakes were high, going to Ichetucknee Springs was worth it.

Earl Rump remembered at the 2000 reunion that he and his friends ended up in trouble over a trip to the springs while he was a teenager and attending Fort White Public School.

"One April first, some of the other boys and me asked some girls to skip school," he recounted. "We decided to go to Ichetucknee Head Spring for the day.

"While we were there, someone from school looked for us," he said, "and, of course, found us at the springs."

Once back at school punishment was doled out.

"We boys said not to blame the girls as it was not their idea to start with," he said. "We had to cut firewood for the stoves for the classrooms during recess. The girls' punishment was to stand there and watch

us."

Recent efforts by the Florida Park Service include educating the residents about pollutants. David Hornsby of the Suwannee River Water Management District told *The Gainesville Sun* in 1998, "People need to realize that everything we do has an impact. Somewhere along the line it's going to affect something, somehow." [1]

U.S. Geological Survey hydrologist Brian Katz also told *The Sun* he is concerned because since the 1960s, the concentration of "nitrates in the Ichetucknee's water has increased by 10 times." [2]

He believes "there's not much we can do except let the system flush itself out, and take preventative measures in the future."[3]

Stevenson believes education is key to bringing awareness to problems affecting Ichetucknee Springs.

"It's important to understand how the [spring] system works [and] to demonstrate the need for ecosystem management," Stevenson said in 2003.

D.L. Means wrote about the river in 1965, "Every time I make this trip, I am more sure that this is the Garden of Eden. As you drift on down to the Santa Fe River you will pass several small springs which are just as beautiful as the larger ones."

Over 30 years later Al Burt described an equally beautiful river in his book *Tropic of Cracker*.

"Its [Ichetucknee] waters bubble up out of the ground and flow like melted diamonds across a sandy bottom through a natural forest," he wrote.

"The spring run, from the source to where the park ends, is one of Florida's most beautiful natural attractions."[4]

ENDNOTES

1. Cody Vaughan-Birch, "Florida scientists are testing the Ichetucknee River to find out some of the causes for the water's declining quality," *The Gainesville Sun,* 3 March, 1998, 3D.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Al Burt, *The Tropic of Cracker* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999), 61.

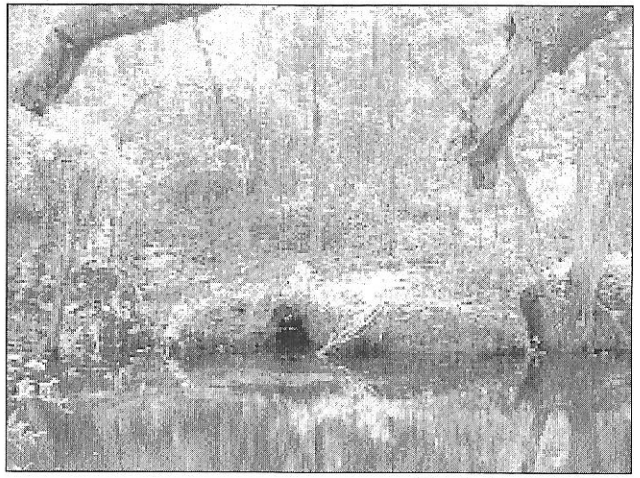


Photo by Patricia C. Behnke

The Ichetucknee River downstream from the Head Spring, April 2003.

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4. Bundy, Leonard. Interview with Mary K. Jones, 1997.
5. Carter, James. Interview in 2001.
6. Cornman, Carolyn. Interview with Joan Shelton, 1999.
7. Couklin, Irene. Interview with Penny Preston, 1999.
8. Davis, Wana. Interview with Virginia Seacrist, 1999.
9. Dukes, Neal. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1998.
10. Eadie, Theda. Interview with Rick Preston, 1999.
11.Fielding, Averill. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1997.
12. Hill, John. Interview with Florida Park Service in 1992 and Jim Stevenson in 1997.
13. Kinnard, Earl. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1998.
14. Kirby, Laurie. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1997.
15. Lane, Earl. Interview in 1999.
16. Littles, Ralph. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1998.
17. Lowe, Thelma. Interview. Crickett Porter also

present according to transcript, but no date or interviewer given.

18. Martin, Lena Mae. Interview in 1999.

19. Martin, Willie. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1997.

20. McCormick, Duncan. Interview in 1999.

21. McCormick, Roscoe. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1997.

22. Nail, Azell. Interview with Patricia C. Behnke, 2003.

23. Nettles, Nevin. Interview in 1998.

24. Oliver, Rosa Mae Collins. Interview with Joan Shelton, 1999.

25. Ottinger, Chuck and Betty. Interview with Paul Heinmuller, 1997.

26. Ozaki, Nettie Black. Interview in 1997.

27. Porter, Annie Laura. Interview with Mary Martin, 2000.

28. Porter, Eathan. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1997.

29. Porter, Roy. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1999.

30. Robinson, Randall. Interview with Paul Heinmuller, 1998.

31. Rump, Earl. Interview with Joan Shelton, 2000.

32. Sistrunk, Edith Hunter. Interview with Virginia Seacrist, 1999.

33. Skiles, Wes. Interview with Patricia C. Behnke, 2003.

34. Stevenson, Jim. Interviews with Patricia C. Behnke, 2003.

35. Tice, Clarence. Interview with Jim Stevenson, 1997.

36. Wilson, Hugh. No date or interviewer given. Transcripts state Mr. Wilson was 85 years old at the time of the interview.

37. Whitten, Pearl. 1999.

Written Accounts

1. Feagle, Sadie. Letter dated March 6, 1997.

2. Hamilton, Helen. Letter dated March 27, 1999.

3. Means, D.L. Letter sent to Herb Attaway in 1965. Attaway presented it to the Old Timers on March 15, 1997.

4. Ozaki, Nettie Black. Speech given in 1995 at Ichetucknee Springs State Park.