

**TIMELINE for Needham D. Bass (1794-1870) "Our Florida Pioneer"**

**~1798** – **Needham Bass** born **Cumberland Co, NC** (Father Rice Bass (~1755 - ~1824), ~~UNK~~ but possibly ~~Allison Everett~~ (note, NOT Sarah Green who was married to Uriah Benjamin Bass) (Or born in Sansom Co per Ernest R. Bass Jr's Notes)

**1805** – **Elizabeth Peterson** (future 2<sup>nd</sup> wife born in NC)

Jun 1, 1820 – Married Flora Culbreath (b: ~1800), Cumberland Co, NC (*bassetbranches.org*)

1820 – Census of Cumberland County, NC (living with 1 female 20-30 and 1 male 16-18 and 1 male 45+???) (*bassetbranches.org*)

*Note: There are some inconsistencies in the below dates. We know that in 1830, the family, including **Needham**, were living in Flea Hill, Cumberland County, North Carolina. I believe the move to Sumter County, Georgia probably took place around 1936.*

1821 – 1825 Son Robinson Dock Bass, Born in NC (d: Apr 1899 in GA ~78) (*bassetbranches.org*)

1824 – 1848 – Lived in Americus, Sumpter Co, GA (*Per Ernest Jr's Notes*) (note: probably moved to GA after son Rob Bass was born in 1825 in NC) (*Needham* was still living in NC at least as late as 1930.)

*Note: Around 1834 Ackies and two of his brothers, **Needham** and Quincy, left Cumberland County and went to Sumter County GA. (<https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Bass-2428>)*

Jun 1, 1825 – Son James Robert (Rob) (or Robert B.) Bass born in NC (d: Dec 15, 1899 in Clearwater, FL) (*bassetbranches.org*)

*(note: there is some discrepancies below. Quinn (1827), Ackies (1832) have been listed as being born in Georgia but more likely they were born in North Carolina. I don't believe **Needham** moved to Georgia until around 1836 and after he was married to Betsy Peterson)*

Apr 27, 1827 – Son Quinn Bass born in Sumter Co, GA (d: Jul 9, 1911 in Kissimmee, FL) (*bassetbranches.org*) (Note: 1830 Census shows *Needham* still living in Flea Hill, Cumberland Co, NC)



*Photo by Adrienne Bass, Rose Hill Cemetery, Mar 2022*

**1830** – Census of Flea Hill, Cumberland Co, NC (living with 1 female 20-30, 1 male under 5, 2 males 15-20, & 1 male 60-70?) (*bassetbranches.org*) (note: *Needham's father died in 1799—so the older male may have been Flora's Father?*)

**1832** – Son Ackie Bass born in Sumpter, GA (d: 1905 in Worth Co GA) (*ancestry.com*)

**1833** – Unconfirmed death of Flora Culbreath sometime between 1832 and 1836.

**Nov 10, 1836** – Married Elizabeth “Betsy” Peterson (Parents unknown) (she possibly had previously married Henry New in Duplin Co, NC Oct 1, 1833?)

**~1836** – Moved to Sumter, Georgia per the Osceola Journal article (6b1 and 6b2)

A story from the Americus Press, describes **Needham** as follows:

**Needham**, the one that I shall devote more time to than the rest, had a large family of boys brought up here, but afterwards moved to Florida. **Needham** was somewhat different from the rest, as he was a great hunter in those days. Game was plentiful—deer, turkeys, etc., and almost daily he would bring to town venison hams and wild turkeys to sell. He was a great shot with a rifle, which he always carried with him. And, in addition to his hunting, he was a good fiddler, and would have frolics. We called them afterwards balls, and now they are Germans. Two or three times a week there would be a frolic, either at his house or some of the neighbors' house. **Needham** was always sure to be there with his fiddle. He took great delight in the dances because of the pay and fun there was in them. About every hour they would pass the hat around for collection, and the dance generally would last all night, so that they could go home in the morning. The girls and boys would have a good time of it dancing the old, old favorite and much beloved Virginia reel—most always in the yard—as the houses were too small to dance in. They would clean off the yards, which were large. Then, if the moon was not shining, they would have large lightwood fires at several places around so as to give good lights, and have benches made for the girls to sit and rest. When they danced out a reel they got ready for the next. **Needham** was always the central figure at all places, and would not only play the fiddle, but would call for them and pat his foot. His favorite piece would be called “Needham's Favorite”, which would run thus: “Up in the loft and down the cellar, **Needham Bass** is a hell of a fellow.

And thus the dancing would go on till **Betsy** would announce supper, which was always prepared for the occasion, and very soon the table would be filled with at least as many as could get around it. When they got through eating they would give away and another crowd fill the table. Thus they did till all had enough.

On one of those occasions while **Betsy** was making a chicken pie she accidentally dropped her pipe into it. She never discovered it and all went merrily on till supper was announced. When all had partake of the pie, and about the time the last table was getting through, Frank Turpin got the pipe in his plate and thought that he had struck something hard which he could not masticate very easily. On a closer examination he found it to be **Betsy's** pipe. About that time those of the first table began to get sick, then the others, until all had commenced vomiting. All that had partaken of it were sick, and soon the whole house and yard was filled with chicken pie; the dogs and cats got hold of some of it, making them sick.

**Needham** had three dogs, Ringtail, Rock and Jowler, who were about to die. He sent for Aunt Polly Peterson, who soon administered sweet milk and some tea made from herbs taken from the garden, and they soon began to get better, except Grif Gatewood, Jim Baily and Frank Turpin, who seemed worse off than the balance. Frank had a private bottle of peach and honey, which they begin to sample, and

soon they began to get better. But it broke up the frolic for the night. **Needham** said that outside of his two **Betsies**, his wife, gun and fiddle, that there was nothing on earth he loved better than his trusty dogs. I will state that Major Speer wrote about the pipe in the chicken pie some fifteen years ago. He said that it was in Tallow Town that it happened. Pat Brady answered his letter from Henry county, Alabama, and disputed it by saying that the event took place over in Goose Neck, four miles west of Americus in Holly Settlement. But as I happen to be on that gnawed some of them chicken bones, it made very serious impression on my mind, and I know what I am talking about.

Poor Old **Needham** got into a little scrape by cutting Jack Anthon's throat and had to run away to Florida, which broke up the fun in that settlement. When he was a friend to you, he was a friend indeed, and would give up everything he had except his two **Betsies** and his three dogs, Ringtail, Rock and Jowler."

About 1837/8 – Son Charles E Bass born .... (1 year older than Crawford)

### **Jan 4, 1839 – Son Crawford H Bass born in Sumter Co. GA**

1840 – Census of Sumter Co Georgia (living with 1 female 20-30, 2 males 10-15, 1 male 30-40, 1 female 5-10) (*bassetbranches.org*)

1842 – Daughter Sylvania Bass born in Sumter Co. GA

1847 – Daughter Almyra (or spelled Elmira) Bass born in GA

Jan 1, 1848 – Son George Washington T. Bass born in GA. (Died in Kissimmee FL, Aug 26 1914) Note: Death Cert says he was born in 1844. Died of Typhoid Fever

1850 – Census (taken Sep 25) shows Residence in Georgia (Irwin Co) Residing with "**Thedam**" (50), Elizabeth (35), Charles C (13), **William C** (11) Sylvanney (8) and George G (2). **Needham** list as "farming".

1850 – Census (taken Nov 20) shows Richard Bass (1792 son of Rice and brother of our **Needham**) residence in Sumter Co, Georgia with wife Effy (Culbreath) (1812) and son **Needham** (1827). Barbary Culbreath (~1780) also lives with them. Probably Effy's mother or grandmother and likely related to our **Needham's** first wife, Flora Culbreath.

1850 – Moved to Florida (Considered a Pioneer though doesn't meet the strict guidelines of arriving prior to 1845) Note the age difference listed for **Needham** and **Elizabeth** for the two 1850 censuses, however all kids ages match. This likely places the move to Florida in Oct/Nov 1850.

1850 – Census (taken Dec 3) shows Residence in Ocala, Marion County, Fla District 4, Dwelling #387. Residing with "**Needham** (52), **Elizabeth** (45), Charles (13), **Wm H. C.** (12), Sylvania (8), Almyra 3, George T (2). **Needham** is a "laborer".

Census Info: (*bassetbranches.org*)

*1850 Federal Census of Fourth District, Marion County, Florida (December 3, 1850)*

*Needham Bass - 52 - Male - North Carolina - Laborer*

*Elizabeth - 45 - Female - North Carolina*

*Charles E. - 13 - Male - Georgia*

*Wm H.C. - 12 - Male - Georgia*

*Sylvania - 8 - Female - Georgia*

*Almira - 3 - Female - Georgia*

*George W.T. - 2 - Male - Georgia*

*Living nearby:*

*1850 Federal Census of Fourth District, Marion County, Florida (December 3, 1850)*

*Quincey Bass - 18 - Male - Georgia - Laborer*

*Jane - 16 - Female - Georgia*

**1850** – Residence in Ocala, Marion County, FL *familysearch.org*

**Jan 7, 1854** – Son Needham Wesley “Tude” Bass born in Florida

**1850s** – Military Service in Marion County (per Ernest Jr’s notes but unconfirmed)

**1860** – Census (taken July 7) shows Residence in District 2, Orange County, Fla (Needham’s House) residing with **Needham** (70), **Elizabeth** (45), **William C.** (16), Sylvania (14), Elmira (13), George W T (11) and Needham W (5). **Needham** is a “Farmer” and **William C.** is a “Farm Laborer”

**1860** – 5<sup>th</sup> District, Orange County, FL (Post Office was in Orlando).

**1867** – Voter Registration states **Needham** has been in FL for 14 years (probably actually been 17 years)

**Needham** is known to have operated the Ferry at Cross Prairie (map shown on 6m2), at least during the years surrounding the Civil War. The Basses operated this ferry probably into the 1880s. Prices for the ferry are noted in (6m6) as: *Prices for crossing were: Pedestrians, 25c; Horseback, 75c, Small Team, \$1; Large Team \$2.*

**1870** – Census shows residence in Orange Co, FL (**Needham** 85 Farmer, **Elizabeth** 65, Needham W 15)  
Note: Same year Needham died.

Before **Needham** died, he had told his friend, Mr. Eleazer Overstreet, that “when he passed away he wanted some coffee and fiddle-strings buried in the coffin with him.”

**1870** – **Needham** died in Georgia (Sumter Co). He was visiting his “son” Akies at the time and was buried there. His funeral services were held in Kissimmee. Quote from “*Old Tales and Trails*”: “Mrs. Hatch says that the first funeral she remembered attending was that of **Needham Bass** back in the 1870’s. He was visiting his son Ackias in Georgia. He died and was buried there. Parson Tindall preached his funeral services in this locality. Mr. Bob Bass carried his 109-year-old grandmother into the house in a chair.”

*Note: **Needham** had a son “Akies” born ~1832 (d: 1905) in Sumter Co, GA. Probably the last child with his first wife, Flora Culbreath. If Needham moved to Florida around 1850, then Akies would be about 18 at that time and does not appear to have gone with the family but instead remained in Georgia.*

Page 139-140 of the “*Old Tales and Trails of Florida*” book gives a significant amount of detail on **Needham Bass** including his final moments. Lula Bass Overstreet was the granddaughter of **Needham Bass** and daughter of George W. and Susanna Bass.

The text specific to Needham states:

“Her grandfather, **Needham Bass**, was a native of Smithville, Georgia (*note: Needham was actually born in North Carolina but lived in Sumter County, Georgia from about 1836-1850*). We find him in Orlando in the late 1850’s which was probably when he migrated to this section. His children born during his first marriage were: Quinn, Rob, Doc and probably daughter, Elvira. During his marriage to his

second wife, Betsy, George, Crawford, Charles, Needham Jr. (Tude), and Sylvania were born. Sylvania married Dr. Billie Smith of Davenport, the only physician for many miles around. Their nieces and nephews call them "Uncle Billy" and "Aunt Silly."

**Needham Bass** had a remarkable set of teeth, although they wore down to the gums before his death. Members of the family tell about the wonderful strength he had in them. They saw him swing his homemade hickory chairs back and forth between his long legs, holding them only by the back with his teeth.

He was very fond of music and was a great "fiddler." When on his death bed he asked one of the family to give him his fiddle. After playing some of his favorite tunes on his beloved instrument, he lay back on his pillows and passed into the Great Beyond. The fiddle was placed in the casket to rest with him.

When Mrs. Lula Overstreet was eleven or twelve years old, she accompanied her Uncle Jim Bass on his return to Georgia. They got off the train at Smithville, and on their drive to Americus, they visited the grave of her grandfather, **Needham Bass**, who had passed away while visiting relatives. She doesn't remember having seen him, but she does recall vividly having seen her grandmother sitting just inside the door. She was a very pretty woman although real old at that time. Her sitting there combing her beautiful white hair made a lasting impression on the young girl's mind."

**1880** – Elizabeth Peterson Bass is living with daughter Sylvania in Sumter Co, FL (1880 census)

Page 75 of "*Old Tales and Trails of Florida*" gives more details on Needham's fiddle playing at the Overstreet's first hotel they built.

The text states, "Mr. **Needham Bass** and a friend, who were great "fiddlers," were in this hall, and a large crowd had gathered to listen to the music. Some of the men had too much to drink and drove an ox and cart up into the hall, and of course, the crowd scattered in every direction. Quiet was restored when Mr. Overstreet ordered them to take the ox and cart outside of the house. This friend of Mr. Bass, whose name I have forgotten, would fiddle away on an old familiar tune while the crowd was dancing to the music. Once in awhile and unexpectedly, he would sing out the following: "Up to the loft, down to the cellar, Ole Needham Bass is the hell of a feller." Then he would fiddle right on again.

Needham and Flora Culbreath's (1<sup>st</sup> Wife) Marriage Certificate:

State of North Carolina, }  
Cumberland County. }

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS, That we, *John Maxwell* are held  
and firmly bound unto *John Branch Esq* Governor  
of the said State, for the time being, and his successors in office, in the sum of  
One Hundred and Twenty-five Pounds, lawful money of the said State, to the  
which payment well and truly to be made, we bind ourselves and each of us,  
each of our Executors and Administrators, firmly by these Presents.

Sealed with our Seals and dated this *5* day of *Decr* 18 *20*

The Condition of the above Obligation is such, That whereas, on application  
to *John Maxwell* Clerk of the Court of Pleas and  
Quarter Sessions, of the County of *Cumberland* he the said  
Clerk has issued a license authorising any regular Minister of the Gospel, or any  
Justice of the Peace for said County, to solemnize the rites of matrimony between

*Abraham Bass & Flora Culbreath*

Now the Condition of the above Obligation is such, That if there is not any  
lawful cause to obstruct the marriage of the said *Abraham &*  
*Flora* then the above obligation to  
be void and of none effect, otherwise to remain in full force and virtue.

*John Maxwell* 

Quinn Bass (Needham's 3<sup>rd</sup> son with Flora) (From THE ORLANDO SENTINEL, Dec 3, 2000)

## BASS FAMILY IS NOVEL'S FODDER (Fictional Book set in historical Kissimmee)

Some people live in the real world, and some lives are pure fiction.

Kissimmee's Quinn Bass crosses from reality to fiction in Peter Matthiessen's 1999 frontier Florida novel, *Bone by Bone*.

The real Quinn Bass drove cattle from the Kissimmee River valley to Jacksonville and St. Augustine during the Civil War. His father was **Needham Bass**, who in the 1860s followed the Gen. Harney Trail to Cross Prairie. The senior Bass built a ferry and carried people, horses, wagons and livestock across the marshland that separated what became the cattle town of Kissimmee from the sugar-cane plantation town of St. Cloud.

Quinn and brother Rob worked with their dad, and at one time Quinn ran a store on the south side of Boggy Creek Ford and west of the Harney Trail. Rob Bass operated a cotton gin and gristmill on Mill Slough, powered by the dam he built.

Myrtle Hilliard Crow writes in *Old Tales and Trails of Florida* -- recently reprinted by the Osceola County Historical Society -- that lakes Tohopekaliga and East Tohopekaliga once were one body of water linked by a wide stream 4 to 10 feet deep. The bottom of the stream was several feet of muck.

"It was impossible for anyone to cross here except in boats, so the Indians found this an ideal retreat, as they could climb to their lookout in tall oak trees on the edge of the marsh and very easily discern the approach of an enemy."

This is where the Bass family later ran the ferry at Cross Prairie.

The fictional Quinn Bass appears about halfway through Matthiessen's *Bone by Bone*, the last of a trilogy about the violent life of notorious Florida sugar-cane farmer E.J. Watson.

Matthiessen reminds his readers at the beginning of the book that it is a work of fiction, written by mixing facts from historical records with "rumor, gossip, tale and legend that has evolved over eight decades into

myth." But he teases readers by adding: "On the other hand, there is nothing that could not have happened -- nothing inconsistent, that is, with the very little that is actually on record."

Watson, on the run from his past lawlessness, drifts into frontier Florida. In the cattle land of the Kissimmee River valley south to stockyards of Arcadia, he finds a land where a man "who was easy with a horse and gun and kept his mouth shut could make good money," Matthiessen writes.

"For a few years in the early nineties, the range wars around Arcadia beat anything the Wild West had to offer. The ranchers were advertising for gunslingers as far off as St. Louis, and every outfit had its own gang of hard riders."

This is the second of two columns about a real-life Osceola pioneer and his fictional counterpart. Today: Quinn Bass meets his match.

Novelist Peter Matthiessen's fictional cattleman Will Durrance had his hands full protecting his cattle from rustlers in the 1890s.

"For a few years in the early nineties, the range wars around Arcadia beat anything the Wild West had to offer. The ranchers were advertising for gunslingers as far off as St. Louis, and every outfit had its own gang of hard riders," Matthiessen writes in *Bone by Bone*, the last in a trilogy about the violent life of notorious Florida sugarcane farmer E.J. Watson.

Durrance hired Watson to scare off rustlers, but the cattle boss warned Watson of "a feller named Quinn Bass, the bad news in a big cattle clan around [Kissimmee](#)."

Matthiessen's **fictional** Quinn Bass is loosely based on the Osceola County cattleman whose family came to the area in the 1860s.

The novel's Quinn Bass liked to play with gun and knife "with any man at any time on any terms and on any provocation."

Even the lawmen avoided confronting Bass, knowing if they survived, a local jury or the Bass clan might not see things their way.



That was just about the time Bass had been found not guilty of killing a black man because the white witness had been killed before he could testify. Bass was awaiting trial for that killing.

Seeing that Watson was a man without fear, Durrance paid his bar tab and bought his supper and a room at the hotel. He added a week's pay in advance. The next day, at the ranch, Durrance gave Watson a new Winchester rifle -- worth two month's pay. Watson showed his shooting skills by firing at a can.

"I danced that can across the cowpen about as fast as I could pull the trigger."

Watson and another of the gunslingers were standing at the bar of a saloon one night when through the mirror Watson saw a man push open the swinging doors, "a squat and squint-eyed runt with bushy whiskers and a big lumpy tobacco chaw which made his mug look too big for his face," Matthiessen writes.

This was Quinn Bass.

He confronted Watson right off, spitting tobacco juice between his boots and insulting Durrance and challenging the manhood of anyone who would work for the rancher. When Watson didn't respond, Bass slapped the back of his hand across Watson's upper arm, demanding to know his name. Watson returned the insult by not responding.

Bass turned his attention to the other cowhand, quickly forcing a knife fight. But Watson stopped it by kicking Bass in the back with his boot.

Bass turned with his knife, but Watson already had his revolver aimed. Bass backed down, but left with a threat that they would soon meet again.

After the cattle boss heard about the trouble and that Watson had passed up a chance to kill Bass in self-defense, Durrance offered to pay Watson to ambush and kill the troublemaker. Watson became a hired killer.

Bass, convicted of murder, escaped from prison in late 1893, causing a scare across the cattle country. Durrance renewed his offer, and killing Quinn Bass became a "business proposition," money to help Watson stake his own homestead.

Deputized by the sheriff, Watson tracked down Bass and gunned him down just ahead of a posse that helped make it look justified.

Watson collected his blood money from Durance, kept the Winchester and claimed the \$800 reward bounty on Bass. He also stole the loot he found in the hideout used by Bass, money that turned out to be counterfeit \$10 bills that Watson had no trouble spending in the Florida frontier just as if it were real greenbacks.

Quinn Bass was not the first man killed in a bushwhack by Watson, and not the last either.

If someone on your holiday shopping list likes historical novels, check out *Bone by Bone* or the other two books in the trilogy, *Killing Mister Watson* and its sequel, *Lost Man's River*. Together, they tell the stories of Watson from a crude and impoverished childhood during Reconstruction, the loss of the plantation he expected to inherit and his violent life that leads to his murder in the early 1900s. Other books by Matthiessen include the nonfiction *The Tree Where Man Was Born* and *The Snow Leopard*.

### **Orange Co. Historical Events:**

- Was originally called Mosquito County and embraced most of what are now Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, Osceola, Lake and Seminole Counties.
- The region suffered greatly during the Seminole Wars.
- The county name was changed in 1845 and after the Civil War ended, the Population: began to increase rapidly.
- The great freeze of 1895 injured the county badly, but it began to build up again immediately.
- Rollins College was opened in 1885 and has made Orange County a noted cultural center.
- Orange County is Florida's second county in the production of oranges.

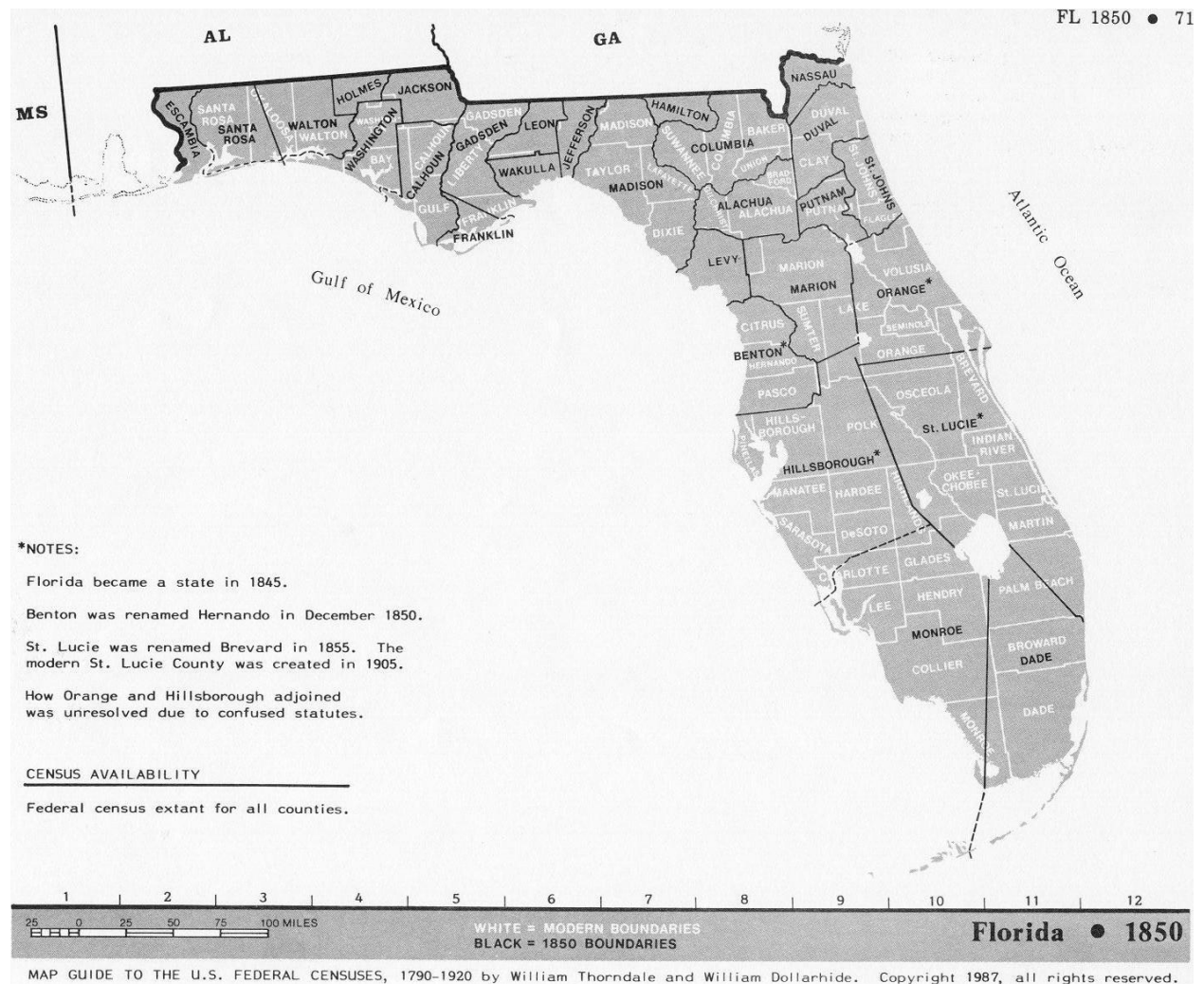
- It possesses more than 1500 fresh water lakes.

Link is not family specific but gives a good feel for the early days in the Kissimmee area.

<https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/62375793/historic-osceola-county>

1850 Florida Census Map.

[http://members.tripod.com/~Langford\\_2/cenmaps.html](http://members.tripod.com/~Langford_2/cenmaps.html)



CUMBERLAND COUNTY MARRIAGE BONDS

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<u>GROOM</u>	<u>BRIDE</u>	<u>DATE OF BOND</u>	<u>BONDSMAN &amp; WITNESSES</u>
Barnes, Neill	Lucy Johnson	3 Feb. 1863	R(ugh) Barnes John Barnes
Barnes, Thomas B. (son James & Wolsey Barnes)	Jane F. Pope (dau. Stephen & Delith a Pope)	8 Mar. 1874 n. 8 Mar. 1874 by J. W. Godwin JP	(w) A. M. Campbell Dep.
Barnes, William C.	Mary Stewart	23 Nov. 1849	Ben Woodel
Barnes, Pinkney	Helen Britt	10 Feb. 1849	Duncan B. Lindsay
Barringer, (R.) William Fanny Lawrence		28 Dec. 1869	Hiram G. Smith (w) Henry Buske
Barrington, Joseph	Nancy Simmonds	5 June 1808	James Maults(by) (w) Robinson Mumford
Barty, John D.	Mary James (widow)	15 Dec. 1891	x Mills Howell (w) Jno. Armstrong
Bartlett, R. C.	Sarah A. Parker	30 Nov. 1853 n. 30 Nov. 1853 by S. Milton Frost M.G.	(G. W. Andrews) (w) John McLaurin clk.
Basket, James	Jannett Clark	20 Sept. 1815	Daniel Campbell Robinson Mumford (w)
Bass, Ackies x	Polly McIntyre	5 Jan. 1814	Daniel McIntyre (w) Robinson Mumford
Bass, John	Merly Lane	17 Dec. 1844	Geo. x Taylor (w) J. McLaurin
Bass, Jordan x	Elizabeth Ward	10 Nov. 1840	Hardy x Deal (w) D. McLaurin
Bass, Joseph B.	Christian Cameron	2 Jan. 1839	John Stewart (w) Jno. M. C. Laurin Jr.
Bass, Lewis	Fanny Cook	8 Dec. 1813	Benajah x Buggs (w) Robinson Mumford
Bass, Needham	Flora Culbreath	1 June 1830	John Maxwell
Bass, Quincy	Mary McMullan	28 Oct. 1815	James Bass (w) Robinson Mumford
Bass, Rice x	Winney Ellis	4 July 1814	James Cuyton (w) Robinson Mumford
Bass, Richard	Affy Culbreath	6 June 1830	John Maxwell (w) John Armstrong clk.

Extra Notes:

Joseph Everett Bass (prob son of Ackies) has an R1a1a DNA Haplogroup.