

A HISTORY OF KINGSLEY LAKE

by

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OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this study has been to prepare, as completely as possible, a sequential history of Kingsley Lake. This has proved to be an exciting and rewarding experience for the writer.

As one begins to study the lake, he will find that it is significant in many areas.

Historically speaking, the stories of the Indians, the Civil War, the Big Freeze, and Camp Blanding (World War II) have played mayor roles in the story of Florida and the nation. It is possible to learn from events of the past, from the mistakes as well as the wise decisions of our ancestors.

Ecologically speaking, Kingsley provides a typical example of man's impact on his environment. The effect of overcrowding on the lake creates a controversial issue: the problem of sharing the lake with others versus overcrowding resulting in pollution.

Sociologically speaking, Kingsley is significant in a more personal sense. As a member of a family long associated with the lake, it is good to know about one's origins. It gives one a sense of identity and belonging.

Not only does one find himself responsible for his actions, but also for the actions of his predecessors. Even as he enjoys the good things they provided, he must concern himself with their failures, for if he does not, they will become his failures.

Kingsley Lake has long provided a special retreat for many people. People have come here to find peace of mind, quietude, beauty, and themselves. Thus may it be forever.

A HISTORY OF KINGSLEY LAKE

Location

Kingsley Lake is located in Clay County, 20 miles west of Green Cove Springs, the county seat. The nearest community is Starke, in Bradford County, seven miles to the southwest. It is 32 miles northeast of Gainesville. To reach the lake from Gainesville, go north on State Road 24 to Waldo, and then north on U. S. Highway 301 to Starke. From Starke, go east on State Road 230 and continue east until the road curves north. The north curve will go around the lake until its junction with State Road 16. Road 16 has a branch 16A, which is fairly close to the waterfront.¹

Description

Kingsley Lake was nicknamed "Silver Dollar Lake" by World War II flyers training at Camp Blanding because its almost perfect roundness and crystal clear waters made it look like a silver dollar from the air.² It is 2-3/4 miles in diameter and has an 8 mile circumference. It has a surface area of 1,630 acres, and is 176.3 feet above sea level.³ The lake is unique in that it only has one surface outlet, the North Prong of Black Creek.⁴

The water level is fairly constant. In a survey made from June of 1945 to January of 1958, the level varied by only 3.5 feet, compared to a variance of almost 20 feet observed in other lakes in the area. This stable stage is attributed to a steady flow of ground water from the surrounding sandy formation.⁵

Swimmers often notice "cold spots" which occur at frequent intervals in the lake and are believed by some to be evidence of small springs seeping in below the surface.⁶

One of the deepest portions of the lake is some distance out from the Enlisted Men's Club (Camp Blanding) on the east

side of the lake. The depth of this cavern has never been determined, but is thought to be greater than 90 feet. It is possible that the "deep hole" might be the source of springs which maintain the lake's constant level.⁷

On one occasion, some regular army scuba divers, on routine training, encountered a swift, below-surface, current about half a mile off the north shore of the lake. This current was so strong that it had cleared out a path in the vegetation along the bottom, and so cold that the divers could not remain in it for long even in their "wet suits." The source of the current was never found, even though the divers planned to return and make further explorations.⁸

Kingsley Lake is the highest, oldest, and one of the purest lakes in the state.⁹ Its flora and fauna are typical of north central Florida. Cypress, pine, and oak are common. Patches of tall grass are found in the shallow water, and are frequently bedding sites for bream and bass. Several varieties of minnows and turtles also share the habitat. Gar fish, speckled perch, and catfish are seen less frequently.¹⁰

An early naturalist, H. E. Lagergren, (caretaker of the big Sundell orange grove) described earlier times when flying squirrels were numerous. Evidently, the squirrels enjoyed nightly raids on local cottages. When the people arose the next morning, they would find small objects "mysteriously" missing.¹¹ He also told of plentiful otters, which are no longer found at the lake. Sometimes they swam in single file resembling, at a distance, a writhing sea serpent.¹² Mr. Lagergren described the area as being very sandy, so sandy that "the early settlers had to cut holes in their shoes to let the sand out as fast as it came in."¹³

Formation

Kingsley is near the summit of Trail Ridge, a long elevation of land that starts near the Georgia line and extends to the lake region in central Florida. This high

ridge, running like a backbone down the middle of the state, was the first part of the Florida peninsula to emerge as a sand spit from the sea millions of years ago. The top of the ridge is the "great divide" for this part of Florida, with drainage from the west side of the ridge eventually reaching the Gulf of Mexico, and that from the east side going into the Atlantic Ocean.¹⁴

Kingsley Lake probably was formed as the result of a sinkhole. The bottom has the characteristic shape that is likely to form when sandy material slumps in a hole.¹⁵ The hole must have been of great depth since it was not filled in by all the earth which settled into it, leaving the long slopes all around the lake which are still visible today.¹⁶

Early History

It is difficult to trace the early history of the Kingsley Lake area, because records from these times are scarce, and many are not dated. Much of what is known has been passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. Often, different people have given conflicting accounts of the same occurrence. The following version has been taken from a variety of sources, and put in sequence as nearly correct as the writer could determine.

In spite of numerous excavations made around the lake by "treasure hunters," only one prehistoric fossil was ever recovered, and that was quite by accident. In 1898, Sam Perry, who lived near the lake, saw what he assumed to be a cypress knee at the edge of the lake. He kicked it and a piece of bone, which looked like a section of the backbone of an ancient mastadon, broke off. An account in the Bradford County Telegraph described the main part of the fossil as being "about the size of a water bucket, measuring 13 inches across." It was placed on exhibition in Starke, at the drug store of Dr. J. L. Gaskins. No one knows what became of the fossil.¹⁷

An interesting sidelight to this story concerns Dr. Gaskins, who displayed the relic in his drugstore. Dr. Gaskins was the first mayor of nearby Starke. He lost his life in Kingsley Lake, when a canvas boat he had made collapsed, and although a good swimmer, he died of heart failure in the water.¹⁸

Again, not very much is known about the Indians who settled around the lake. The earliest Indians were probably the Timucuan and their ancestors, since we have records of Timucuan settlements in the lower St. Johns River area, of which Kingsley is a part. As early as 1564, Jacques Le Moyne prepared drawings of the Indians with an accompanying descriptive commentary.¹⁹ By 1728, the Timucuan were completely destroyed by the white men, not one remained alive in Florida.²⁰

That Seminoles once lived here is fairly certain. The legend of how the lake got its name is directly connected with the Seminole Indians.²¹

As late as 1831, Davis Thomas, a government surveyor, sectionized around the lake, and noted Kingsley in his records as merely "an open lake, which seems to be round." Later maps labeled the lake "Kingalee Pond."²²

The late Reverend J. L. Strickland of Clay Hill, said that Kingsley received its name during "the Indian War." It is probable that this was the last Seminole War, which lasted from 1857 to 1858. He told of a Captain Kingsley, who, while doing scout duty, found himself completely surrounded by Indians except on the side next to the lake. The lake being the only means of escape, he swam his horse across it. The horse came out of the lake at the camp on the west side of the lake, about where the Kingsley Lake Baptist Church is now, and "stiffened and fell dead." Captain Kingsley requested that the lake be given his name because the lake and his horse had saved his life.²³ Others attribute the name to the famous slave trader, Zephaniah Kingsley, whose headquarters were not

very far away on the St. Johns River.²⁴ However, this theory is not generally accepted, most prefer the colorful Indian tale.²⁵

The late James Hornsby recalled seeing Indian artifacts as late as the 1880's when he moved with his parents to the lake. He found remnants of Indian rafts, left there when the Seminoles were forced to leave this part of the state and seek hideouts in the swamps of South Florida.²⁶

Many years ago several Indian mounds could be seen on the west side of the lake, but have long since been flattened and are no longer recognizable.²⁷ Mrs. Elma Riggs, a long time resident of the Kingsley area, remembers a clay mound on her father's farm which drew considerable attention, but never resulted in any significant finds.²⁸

Another legend concerning Indians in the area centered on a tall pine tree on the southeast side of the lake, upon which was carved the figure of a man. It is said that this marked the burial spot of a U. S. Army paymaster who was captured and killed by the local Indians. Before his capture, he was supposed to have buried his money near a creek in the area. Many eager treasure hunters made extensive excavations hoping to locate the money, but were unsuccessful.²⁹ Robert Keith, an early Starke Justice of the Peace, speculated so much over the matter that he finally dreamed the treasure was buried on the north side of Black Creek. He dug giant holes all over the area, but found nothing but sand.³⁰

The Civil War

On January 10, 1861, Florida became the third state to secede from the United States. The next day, former territorial governor Richard Keith Call was approached by a group of jubilant secessionists.

"Well Governor," they shouted, "we have have done it!" "And what have you done?" asked the old man, waving his walking cane over his head. "You have opened the gates of

hell, from which shall flow the curses of the damned to sink you to perdition."³¹

It is very likely that this act of the plantation owning legislators did not reflect the views of the majority of whites in Florida. According to one source, when the state of Florida held a special election to determine if the people of Florida desired to secede from the Union, the results of the election revealed that the people of Florida desired to remain in the Union. It further states that "a group of young hot-headed legislators caused the legislature to be called into emergency session and they disregarded the vote of the people and at that time Florida did secede from the Union."³²

Contrary to popular belief, there were not many planters in Florida with large slave holdings prior to the Civil War. There were eight social classes in antebellum Florida. At the top of the social ladder were the "Big Planters," who owned 100 or more slaves. There were only 50 big planters in the state, and the majority settled in the fertile area between the Suwanee and Appalachicola Rivers to grow fine grade "Sea Island Cotton." The planters considered it their moral duty to get involved in politics, and they dominated the state legislature.³³

Considered slightly inferior to the planters were the professionals (doctors, lawyers) who were usually "second sons" of a big planter. The firstborn son would inherit the plantation, and the younger brothers were usually educated in England. Another social class was made up of business men. They were not considered as respectable because they did not make their living from the land. Ninety per cent of Florida's people were yeoman farmers. They were small farmers, many of whom never owned slaves, but owned their own land west of the Appalachicola River and east of the Suwanee River. Most of the early settlers in the Kingsley area belonged to this class. Other social groups were the artisans, piney forest folk (didn't own their land--"white trash"--considered socially

lower than slaves), slaves, and free blacks.³⁴

Of 75,000 free people in the state (including women and children) 15,000 fought for the Confederacy, and 1,000 lost their lives. Two thousand Floridians fought for the Union.³⁵ The Confederate soldiers were the most part small farmers who were defending their homeland and their dream of someday being a big planter. Some fought out of fear that the freed slaves would make slaves of them.³⁶

J. L. Strickland described life for the yeoman farmer at Kingsley as follows: "The pioneers didn't know much about factory made cloth as they used their spinning wheels to make their own thread and then made the cloth on their hand looms. The mother and housekeeper was also the tailor and seamstress, making the men's clothing, as well as making clothing for herself and her children. She also made the soap . . . from lye, oak ashes, scrap fat meat, and waste grease. They ground their grits and meal with hand stone grits mills. . . . Most food was raised on the farms. The cooking was done on the fire place All meat and lard was home grown and home butchered. There were deer, bear, and other wild animals in abundance and no law against killing them, so one could choose the kind of meat he wished and go get it. All owned hogs and cattle . . . got milk from their own cows. There was no law against fishing, large fish were plentiful in the lake, and one could spear all the fish he wished."³⁷

The story of William and Louisa Wilson Thomas, (writer's great-great grandparents) is typical of Florida's yeoman farmers.

William's father, William H. Thomas, Sr., came to Florida from South Carolina, as did many from that area. William Sr.'s wife Mary was a native of Florida. An interesting point to note is that the census of 1840 listed the family as having three slaves, two females ages 36 and 55, and one boy about 10 years old.³⁸

William Jr. was born in 1825 in Alachua County. At the age of 15 he traveled to Jacksonville and enrolled in the Florida Mounted Militia Volunteers, and began a long career of service in the Seminole Wars. He married Louisa Wilson in 1858. Their family Bible listed them as residents of Belmore, in the County of Clay. Clay County was formed from a portion of Duval County in 1858, and named after the famed orator Henry Clay. William was listed on the 1850 census as a farmer with \$300 worth of real estate holdings (approximately 40 acres).³⁹

Although he voted the Union ticket when the State of Florida held a special election to determine whether or not the people wished to secede, William joined the Confederate Army when war was declared. He fought in the Battle of Olustee, which was the greatest battle of the war fought in Florida.⁴⁰ The Union Army was interested in cutting Florida off from the South, because it was supplying the Confederate Army with beef. The U. S. Army suffered a loss of 5,000 men, 40 per cent of their force, and the Confederates lost 20 per cent of their men. This was the highest percentage of losses for both sides during the entire war. The Union lost, and the war continued for another year because Florida was able to maintain the supply of beef for the Confederate Army.⁴¹

William received a gun shot wound in the thigh while participating in a raid on the enemy in Virginia. He was hospitalized and released and was on his way home on furlough by train when he developed lockjaw (tetanus) and died. Louisa Wilson Thomas then became the head of the house for her six children, which required her to plow the fields, tend cattle, and maintain her home. This she majestically did, as did many other southern women, without the sale of a single parcel of land or head of cattle. She received \$150 per annum for William's service as a Confederate Soldier, and \$8 per month (later increased to \$12) for his service in the Seminole War.⁴²

Churches in the Kingsley Lake Area

It might be said that "in the old days" one's church and religion were more important. One can imagine the need for a deep-seated faith in God to survive in a harsh wilderness. The many unmarked infant graves in nearby cemeteries bear mute testimony to this need, and yet, in spite of all, the people stayed on and conquered their "wilderness."⁴³ Many of the records we have of earlier times were found in the family Bibles.⁴⁴

One of the oldest churches in the Kingsley area is Beulah Missionary Baptist Church, established on November 13, 1850, according to "principles set forth at the Baptist Assembly in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1742."⁴⁵

The two acre site for the church grounds and cemetery was deeded to Beulah by Kindred B. Drew. The original building was a log house, which was replaced in 1874 by a frame church.⁴⁶ The church faced south and had "two front doors with the pulpit placed between them so that anyone wishing to leave during the service had to pass by the preacher."⁴⁷

The church records indicate that in 1858 a resolution was made to "reserve two seats in the back of the church for the colored people of the community," a common practice of the times. The records further indicate that ". . . some of the members were often admonished because of non-attendance and for other things not becoming to a Christian." The first pastor was the Reverend L. W. Kickliter, and the church membership in 1856 numbered 52.⁴⁸

Because of the impassable condition of the road which led to the church in 1933, the church filed a request before the Clay County Board of Public Instruction to hold services in the abandoned Central School house. The request was granted, and the people met there until July 1942, when they received a communication from the United States Government stating that since a state of war was existing, certain lands had been condemned for government use. Beulah Church was in this area.

They received \$800 compensation for the land.⁴⁹

The church was then moved to its present location on State Road 21, between Keystone Heights and Middleburg. The land (4 acres) was deeded to the church by Foremost Properties largely as a result of the association of one of their members, N. C. Wainwright, with the company.⁵⁰

The old Central School building was moved to the present site of the church and later replaced by a cement block sanctuary.⁵¹

Kingsley Lake Baptist Church and cemetery is located just off State Road 16, and at one time owned some frontage on the lake, which has been sold and is now in private ownership.⁵² The earliest graves in the cemetery date back to the 1880's.

Another source lists a Methodist church in the area in the 1880's, but it does not exist today.⁵³

The Big Freezes 1895-1895

The big money crop in early Florida was citrus. According to J. L. Strickland, people came from far and wide to grow oranges at Kingsley Lake; from Canada (Nova Scotia), Germany, England, and the northern United States.⁵⁴ Often times Florida was the place of the exile for Europe's "black sheep," as in the case of composer Fredrick Delins, who was sent to grow oranges along the St. Johns River by his stern father because he wanted to study music.⁵⁵

One of the biggest groves on the lake was the Sundell place on the south side (10 acres) of the lake. Mr. Sundell came from the north, and his uncle H. E. Lagergren, was the first caretaker of the grove.⁵⁶ Mr. Lagergren was a naturalist and did some writing for the Bradford County Telegraph. George Hornsby was the next caretaker. He came from Pennsylvania because he had asthma and had been advised by doctors to come here for his health.⁵⁷ A Starke merchant by the name of Andrew Floreus bought the oranges for \$1 a crate.⁵⁸

The orange business around the lake was an prosperous that in 1886 The Kingsley Lake Navigation Company was formed

for the purpose of operating a steam boat line across the lake for the transport of passengers and citrus, since roads into the area were possibly only sand trails. No one knows whether or not the line was ever put in operation.⁵⁹

There were other enterprises on the lake besides citrus growing. There was a sawmill on the southeast side of the lake, and Jim Hornsby recalled working there for \$1 a week.⁶⁰ People also grew bananas, vegetables, pineapple, and grapes for wine.⁶¹ William Carpenter had a wine cellar at the site of the present home of the Ray Miller family.⁶²

The big freezes wiped out all of the agricultural endeavors. Jim Hornsby remembers a low of 12°F. which split the bark and killed the orange trees in December of 1894.⁶³ The loss was estimated at \$2 million state-wide. Later freezes in 1895 and 1898 completed the damage.⁶⁴ After the freeze, most of the people from the north returned where they had come from. Mr. Floreus, the man who bought the oranges, committed suicide.⁶⁵

At the time prior to the freeze there were three postoffices around the lake: Lakeview (south side of the lake, one of the big land promotions which failed to "pan out"), Kingsley (north side), and Ionia (west side).⁶⁶

After the freezes, cotton was the money crop.⁶⁷

The Turn of the Century

Kingsley Lake has long been a favorite vacation spot for people in the area. As early as 1898, an editor of the old Florida Advocate, a local newspaper of the time, was promoting a bicycle path to the lake.⁶⁸ The June 6, 1902 issue of the Bradford County Telegraph tells of the formation of a Starke and Kingsley Lake Road Company to answer the need for "rapid transit" to the shores of the popular vacation spot. Stock in the "Good Roads Company" totaled \$575. The article stated that "Work has commenced, right of way secured, and nearly one mile of the road has already been cleared of stumps." The company planned to have the road ready for use by July 1.⁶⁹

The first resort at the lake was Anderson's Retreat, of which we have several photographs. It was located on the west side of the lake, about where the Canova property is today.⁷⁰

Also around the turn of the century, Col. Comer L. Peek started the development of "Peek's Subdivlsion." He was a real estate agent and planned a community with public streets to the waterfront. Most of the streets had Indian names. The investment didn't make money for Col. Peek because Land prices at that time were so low. Most of the public streets have been legally closed now.⁷¹

In 1909 a U.S. engineer was stationed at the lake to determine if Kingsley would provide summit water for a Cross-Florida Canal.⁷² This was probably never done because of Kingsley's high elevation. If it had been done, Kingsley would probably not be there today since it would have been very difficult to build locks that would prevent excessive drainage.⁷³

DuPont interests took a brief and ill-fated fling at producing camphor from extensive groves planted two miles east of the lake. About 100 men were employed. Almost as soon as the DuPonts got the plant ready, a process for producing synthetic camphor was invented.⁷⁴

Strickland's Landing

One of the most interesting and colorful families at the lake is the Strickland family. Simeon Strickland's father came to the lake from North Carolina. Simeon acquired 100 acres of land and became involved in the citrus industry. One of his sons, Alonzo, came to be a very prominent land owner, and at one time owned as much as one half of the shoreline. Alonzo inherited some of his father's land and bought the rest. Much of it was acquired by paying taxes that the owners were unable to pay.⁷⁵

About 50 years ago, Alonzo opened Strickland's Landing as a tourist attraction. It consisted of about 120 acres, but this much land was not needed since there were fewer people

and not as much business in those days. In 1937, he sold out to the New Kingeley Beach, which is still in operation today.⁷⁶

In 1946, Alonzots son, Fro W. Strickland, reopened the business with 100 front feet, 50 of which he inherited and 50 of which he purchased. He subsequently purchased land from adjoining owners and acquired the 1000 front feet which he has now. Strickland's Landing today consists of 60 acres and can accommodate 15,000 people. Mr. Strickland controls most of the commerce in the area, he owns the only gasoline station and convenience store, and also several additional camping and hunting facilities.⁷⁷

Strickland's Landing and Kingsley Beach still exist side by side. It was suggested at one time that Strickland's Landing was more suitable for church gatherings because no alcoholic beverages were allowed. On the other hand, the Kingsley Beach establishment operates a tavern nearby.⁷⁸

1939 Boat Law

An interesting and little known fact about the lake is a law concerning boating. The law was filed in the Office of the Secretary of State on May 25, 1939. It requires that all water craft propelled by combustion engines be equipped with mufflers or exhaust systems to deaden sound, and limits speed to five miles per hour within 100 yards of bathers. It also outlaws reckless handling of boats, and even deals with speed around persons engaged in fishing. Any violation of the law would be considered a misdemeanor, and a violator could be fined no more than \$100, or jailed for up to six months.⁷⁹

The law was found tacked to boards in the boathouse of Jack Trawick, and as far as we know, the law was never repealed.⁸⁰

World War II--Camp Blanding

Prior to 1939 there was a National Guard Camp on the St. Johns River, south of Jacksonville, known as Camp Foster. It

had been used as a training center for the Florida National Guard, but was needed by the War Department as a Naval Air Base for defense.⁸¹ General Sumter L. Lowry was instrumental in securing the 30,000 acre site which was selected for the new National Guard Camp. He had enjoyed hunting and fishing in the Kingsley Lake area and thought that the terrain was well suited for a military training reservation.⁸² The camp was named after Albert H. Blanding, a military hero of the Spanish American War and World War I. He lived in Florida most of his life, and graduated from the East Florida Seminary.⁸³

In 1940, the Army, faced with mobilization, leased the entire site from the Armory Board, and acquired an additional 150,000 acres.⁸⁴ The Camp was designed to accommodate 75,000 soldiers.⁸⁵ The land which was used for the construction of the camp was obtained by the government by condemning private property and then leasing or purchasing it, usually at prices far below the actual value. According to Fro Strickland, the government leased his father's land for approximately \$1.50 an acre with the proviso that it would be returned after the war, plus compensation for any damage done to the land. This never happened. The legislature in session after the war voted to let the Camp keep the surplus land, some of which has been leased to the DuPont Company for mining of heavy minerals.⁸⁶

The arrival of construction crews and soldiers triggered an enormous boom. There was an acute housing shortage resulting from families who were displaced when they lost their land, new businesses, and soldiers and their wives.⁸⁷ One example of skyrocketing rent rates involved a man who was renting a place for \$22 a month before the boom, and during the boom received \$165 a month for it.⁸⁸

People lived in almost unbelievable conditions. A house was anything that had a roof. A settlement which was known as Boomtown grew up around Kingsley Lake. People lived in cars and ate outside; however, the "town" had nice restaurants, theaters, and foodstores.⁸⁹

A man by the name of Louis Shafkin planned a big development at Kingsley to include "a modern theater, drugstore, bowling alley, cleaning plant, barber shop, filling station, military store, pool room, recreation center, tavern, night club, cafeteria, and tourist cottages."⁹⁰ Much of this was never done.

The war boom in Starke, the nearest community, was of tremendous dimensions. Starke went from a population of 1,500 as a strawberry growing community, to over 5,000, plus about 6,000 in surrounding areas.⁹¹ Starke received national publicity, much of it derogatory. The general consensus was that the war boom had turned a nice agricultural community into a gaudy conglomeration of neon lights and cheap businesses.⁹² However, Starke was proud of its publicity, and glad to be known as something other than a "cross roads town."⁹³ After the war, Starke again settled down to being a pleasant community, but never again returned to its 1,500 pre-war population.⁹⁴

With the war effort over, Camp Blanding again became a National Guard Camp, and is used for weekend drills of the Florida National Guard and for the Florida National Guard Officer Candidate School, established in 1961. The school trains Classes of about 115 students each to become second lieutenants in the National Guard. The Camp today consists of 72,397 acres used for military training, forestry, hunting, recreation and the mining of heavy minerals.⁹⁵

Mining

After the war, 12,400 acres of surplus land were leased for the mining of heavy minerals.⁹⁶ Often, people at Kingsley Lake will notice black streaks of silky sand on the beach. This is the mineral ilmenite, which is the major object of the mining operations in the area.⁹⁷

Geologists first noticed it at the lake before they had any idea of its usefulness. It is postulated that when Florida was nothing more than a sand spit, this mineral washed down

into the ocean from the Appalachian Plateau in North Georgia and the Carolinas. The sand spit (which later developed into the Trail Ridge) received minerals from the sea ,which washed upon it. The minerals became concentrated on the spit.⁹⁸

The ilmenite is mined by the spiral process, which was developed by the Humphreys Gold Corporation. The sand is dredged up and run through spirals. The centrifugal force sends the light quartz sand outside, and the minerals settle down in the middle. From wet mill (so named because the dredging machine creates its own lake), the minerals are sent to the "dry mill," where ilmenite is separated from other materials by electrical and magnetic means. Ilmenite is oxidized and turns white, and is used as a pigment in paint and a means of making the thin paper used in Bibles opaque. Other minerals are used for ceramics and aluminum.⁹⁹

Only four per cent of the recovered materials are usable. The mining has been a cause of some concern because the first land that was mined (south of State Road 230) has never been reclaimed. Nothing will grow there now, because the humus, or topsoil, was never replaced. The area had formerly been a pine forest. Now, topsoil is removed before the mining operation begins and is replaced afterwards so the land can continue to produce pine.¹⁰⁰

The mining will continue until the Kingsley Lake operation meets the Lawtey operation (about six miles away) in about 25 years.¹⁰¹

The Community Today

The Kingsley Lake community today is largely a summer home area. Not many people live there year-round. Kingsley is nct a township, and few feel that it should be, since people go there to "get away from it all."¹⁰²

Most efforts are centered on preventing pollution. The lake was recently zoned to prohibit mobile homes on the waterfront. This prevents more than one septic tank per lot.

There is no sewage system at the lake, and this is one of the biggest problems. Many septic tanks drain into the lake.¹⁰³

The children at Kingsley Lake attend school in Starke, and have done so since the 1940's. Prior to that, they had to go to school in Green Cove Springs, the nearest Clay County community (20 miles away) which had a school. An agreement was later reached with the Bradford County Board of Public Instruction to allow the children to attend school in Starke.¹⁰⁴

Electric power for Kingsley comes from the Florida Power Company. Everyone must drill his own well for water. The Continental Telephone of the South Company (headquarters in Bonifay) provides telephone service.¹⁰⁵

One of the latest developments at the lake has been the formation of a volunteer fire department on May 5, 1970.¹⁰⁶

A few weeks prior to that time there was a fire at the lake which began at an unoccupied home, and then spread to another. Both were destroyed.¹⁰⁷

The membership now consists of 18 members. The Department utilizes a fire house provided by Clay County and two fire trucks provided by the Florida Forest Service. The trucks are 680 gallon and 1500 gallon tankers. They also have two floating pumps which can pump 200 gallons per minute from the lake. The Department also set up a system of numbering roads¹⁰⁸ which lead directly down to the waterfront. The Department is financed through county funds and associate memberships. They currently have no indebtedness.¹⁰⁹

Ecology

Just about everyone who has been associated with the lake for any length of time will agree that the water is not as clear as it used to be, there are fewer fish, one finds more litter, and the boating traffic is much heavier. Many recall the "Big Grass," new disappeared from the lake, which used to provide prime deep-water fishing areas.¹¹⁰

Fro Strickland attributes much of the problem to drainage into The lake from a greater number of roads and ditches surrounding it. However, Mr. Strickland reports that he has the quality of the water analyzed frequently, and that it is considered fairly pure.¹¹¹ The pollution problem is caused by many other factors. Some attribute it to the large number of people who "weekend" at the two commercial beaches or at Camp Blanding's recreational facilities. Others attribute it to reckless and excessive boating activity, or to septic tanks which drain into the lake.¹¹²

In order to improve the situation, I would recommend a fish stocking program, (Camp Blanding stocked the lake at one time),¹¹³ a boat patrol to control illegal fishing and reckless boating, a sewage system for the residents, a boating license given on the same basis as a driver's license, enforcement of the trailer zoning law, and the formation of some type of organization to concern itself with these problems.

Whatever the problems are, they are problems to which we must find the answers if Kingsley Lake is to continue to be a part of the heritage of our children.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹John.R. Dunkle, Atlas of Florida, compiled by Erwin Raisz and Associates, (Gainesville, FL, 1964), p. 55.
- ²"Road Company Organized 68 Years Ago to Construct Rapid Transit to Kingsley," The Bradford County Telegraph, (July 9, 1970), p. 8.
- ³William E. Clark et. al., Interim Report on the Water Resources of Alachua, Bradford, Clay, and Union Counties, Florida, (Tallahassee, FL, 1962), pp. 35-37.
- ⁴"Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend," The Bradford County Telegraph, (May 3, 1957), section 5, p.1.
- ⁵Clark, ibid., p. 35.
- ⁶"Unique Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend, Folklore," The Bradford County Telegraph, (August 27, 1970), p. 8.
- ⁷Ibid.
- ⁸Ibid.
- ⁹Carol Everts, "Water of Primary Importance in Clay County," The Gainesville Sun, (September 8, 1975), section B, p. 1.
- ¹⁰Clarice Wood, interviewed by Mary Wood, (Gainesville, FL), 7:30 PM, October 31, 1975.
- ¹¹H. E. Lagergren, "Notes on Kingsley Lake," The Bradford County Telegraph Historical Files, compiled by Eugene Matthews, (Starke, FL).
- ¹²"Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend," ibid.
- ¹³Lagergren, ibid.
- ¹⁴"Unique Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend, Folklore," ibid.
- ¹⁵Clark, ibid., p. 36.
- ¹⁶"Unique Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend, Folklore," ibid.
- ¹⁷"Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend," ibid.
- ¹⁸"Starke's First Mayor," Kingsley Lake File, The Bradford County Telegraph Historical Files, compiled by Eugene Matthews, (Starke, FL).
- ¹⁹Charlton W. Tebeau, A History of Florida, (Coral Gables, FL, 1971), p. 16.
- ²⁰Elizabeth R. Spencer, They Are Here, (Orange Park, FL), p. 1.

21 "Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend," ibid.

22 "Unique Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend, Folklore," ibid.

23 J. L. Strickland "Notes on Kingsley Lake," Kingsley Lake File, The Bradford County Telegraph Historical Files, compiled by Eugene Matthews, (Starke, FL).

24 Nixon Smiley, "Mystery Still Shrouds Tiny Slave Trader," The Miami Herald, (February 24, 1969).

25 Eugene Matthews, interviewed by Mary Wood, (Starke, FL), 2:30 PM, October 23, 1979.

26 "Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend," ibid.

27 "Unique Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend, Folklore," ibid.

28 Elma T. Riggs, interviewed by Mary Wood, (Kingsley Lake, FL), 9:00 AM, October 23, 1975.

29 Matthews, ibid.

30 "Unique Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend, Folklore," ibid.

31 John E. Johns, Florida During the Civil War, (Gainesville, FL), p. 1.

32 John M. Thomas, William Thomas, (Keystone Heights, FL), February 19, 1961, pp. 3-4.

33 Joyce R. Miller, lecture attended by Mary Wood, (Gainesville, FL), 10:30 AM, October 21, 1974.

34 Miller, ibid., October 21, 1974.

35 Joyce R. Miller, lecture attended by Mary Wood, (Gainesville, FL), 10:30 AM, October 24, 1974.

36 Joyce R. Miller, lecture attended by Mary Wood, (Gainesville, FL), 10:30 AM, October 22, 1974.

37 J. L. Strickland, ibid.

38 Thomas, ibid., p. 1.

39 Ibid., p. 1-2.

40 Ibid., p. 2-3.

41 Joyce R. Miller, lecture attended by Mary Wood, (Gainesville, FL), 10:30 AM, October 28, 1974.

⁴²Thomas, ibid., p. 3.

⁴³Spencer, ibid., p. 4.

⁴⁴Thomas, ibid., p. 2.

⁴⁵Mazelle Dubose, "The History of Beulah Missionary Baptist Church," (Kingsley Lake, FL), November, 1950.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷Spencer, ibid., p. 14.

⁴⁸Dubose, ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Riggs, ibid.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³"Excerpts from Webb's Historical, Industrial, and Biographical Florida," Kingsley Lake File, The Bradford County Telegraph Historical Files, compiled by Eugene Matthews, (Starke, FL).

⁵⁴J. L. Strickland, ibid.

⁵⁵Bert Collier, "Fredrick Delius: Song of Torment, Song of Hope," The Gainesville Sun, (August 24, 1975), section C, pp. 1 & 3.

⁵⁶J. L. Strickland, ibid.

⁵⁷Lagergren, ibid.

⁵⁸J. L. Strickland, ibid.

⁵⁹"Road Company Organized 68 Years Ago to Construct Rapid Transit to Kingsley, ibid.

⁶⁰Jim Hornsby, "Notes on Kingsley Lake," Kingsley Lake File, The Bradford County Telegraph Historical Files, compiled by Eugene Matthews, (Starke, FL).

⁶¹"Excerpts from The Florida State Gazeteer," Kingsley Lake File, The Bradford County Telegraph Historical Files, compiled by Eugene Matthews, (Starke, FL).

⁶²Riggs, ibid.

⁶³Hornsby, ibid.

⁶⁴Lester Dinkins, Dunnellon, Boomtown of the 1890's, (St. Petersburg, FL, 1969), "The Great Freezes."

⁶⁵J. L. Strickland, ibid.

⁶⁶Hornsby, ibid.

⁶⁷J. L. Strickland, ibid.

⁶⁸"Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend," ibid.

⁶⁹"Road Company Organized 68 Years Ago to Construct Rapid Transit to Kingsley," ibid.

⁷⁰Matthews, ibid.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²"Unique Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend, Folklore," ibid.

⁷³Matthews, ibid.

⁷⁴"Kingsley Lake Rich in Legend," ibid.

⁷⁵Fro W. Strickland, interviewed by Mary Wood, (Kingsley Lake, FL), 4:00 PM, October 30, 1975.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸Wood, ibid.

⁷⁹"House Bill Number 995," Kingsley Lake File, The Bradford County Telegraph Historical Files, compiled by Eugene Matthews, (Starke, FL).

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹"Camp Blanding," Camp Blanding File, The Bradford County Telegraph Historical Files, compiled by Eugene Matthews, (Starke, FL).

⁸²"General Lowry Optimistic Over Future of Blanding," The Bradford County Telegraph, (September 7, 1945).

⁸³"Camp Blanding," ibid.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵"Starke in the Limelight," The Bradford County Telegraph, (February 28, 1941), p. 2.

⁸⁶Fro W. Strickland, ibid.

⁸⁷Mary S. Miller, interviewed by Mary Wood, (Kingsley Lake, FL), 9:00 AM, October 23, 1975.

⁸⁸Ward Morehouse, "Starke, (Fla.) "It Dot Rich Quick!" The New York Sun, (February 16, 1952), p. 6.

⁸⁹Mary S. Miller, ibid.

⁹⁰"Shafkin Plans Big Development," The Bradford County Telegraph, (May 2, 1951), p. 1.

⁹¹"Starke in the Limelight," ibid.

⁹²Morehouse, ibid.

⁹³"Starke in the Limelight," ibid.

⁹⁴Wood, ibid.

⁹⁵"Camp Blanding," ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid.

⁹⁷Matthews, ibid.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Fro W. Strickland, ibid.

¹⁰³Matthews, ibid.

¹⁰⁴Mary S. Hiller, ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Warren F. Ebling, Secretary Kingsley Lake Volunteer Fire Department, letter to Mary Wood, November 15, 1975.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

110Matthews, ibid.

111Fro W. Strickland, ibid.

112Mary S. Miller, ibid.

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