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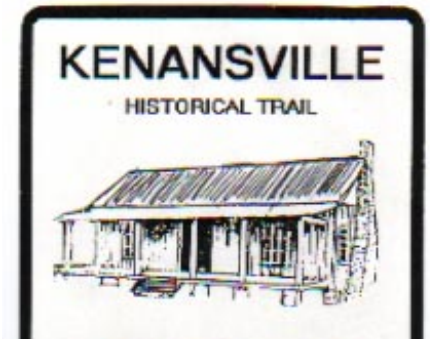
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Instructions:

1....Print this file.

2....At its end, click on "rules" to see a copy of the trail rules, print it, and then click where indicated at the end of the 3-page rules and patch order form to get back to the list of Florida trails

3....If you want a hand-drawn map showing the locations of all of the sites, send a self-addressed stamped envelope to Steve Rajtar, 1614 Bimini Dr., Orlando, FL 32806.



4....Hike the trail and order whatever patches you like (optional).

WARNING - This trail may pass through one or more neighborhoods which, although full of history, may now be unsafe for individuals on foot, or which may make you feel unsafe there. Hikers have been approached by individuals who have asked for handouts or who have inquired (not always in a friendly manner) why the hikers are in their neighborhood. Drugs and other inappropriate items have been found by hikers in some neighborhoods. It is suggested that you drive the hike routes first to see if you will feel comfortable walking them and, if you don't think it's a good place for you walk, you might want to consider (1) traveling with a large group, (2) doing the route on bicycles, or (3) choosing another hike route. The degree of comfort will vary with the individual and with the time and season of the hike, so you need to make the determination using your best judgment. If you hike the trail, you accept all risks involved.

AS OF MAY 2009, SPONSORSHIP OF THIS TRAIL HAS CHANGED. PLEASE DIRECT ANY QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS ABOUT IT TO JOHN HARDIN, 1340 BEECHWOOD DRIVE, ST. CLOUD, FL 34772, (407) 908-3913, johnhardin6624@yahoo.com.

Kenansville Historical Trail

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(From Interstate 4, drive east on US 192 into St. Cloud. Turn south on Vermont Ave. (which turns into Canoe Creek Rd.) and drive 34 miles south and east to the two-story schoolhouse on the south side of the road. Walk west on Canoe Creek Rd. to the near end of the Turnpike overpass and look to the northeast.)(1.7 miles so far)

East end of Turnpike overpass

1...Mose Barber Property

There are at least two stories regarding the Mizell-Barber feud, and the deaths of members of both families, who both migrated from North Carolina to south Georgia in the 18th century, and later both moved to Florida.

David W. Mizell, Jr., sheriff of Orange County, supported the Reconstruction laws imposed on the South. Mose Barber resented a heavy tax on cattlemen. One version says that Sheriff Mizell came to enforce the law by driving off some of the Barber cattle from lands near Kenansville.

The other version began with Robert Bullock, an Orange County cattleman, who held a bill of sale on a number of cattle, but had not been successful in getting payment from the Barbers. Sheriff Mizell headed into the Barber ranges to collect the debt or return the cattle.

Sheriff Mizell was killed on February 21, 1870, while crossing Bull Creek, near where it meets Little Bull Creek, south of Deer Park and north of Lake Marian. The next sheriff appointed to fill Mizell's position went after Mose Barber, caught him a month after the death of Mizell, and rowed him out in Lake Conway. After tying his hands behind his back and binding his feet together, he was put into a croaker sack and weighted with plowshares. He was thrown overboard and was expected to drown. As he surfaced and showed some possibility of swimming to shore, the sheriff shot him dead. Isaac Barber was captured, tied to a tree, and 20 shotguns were emptied into his body. The assassination of the sheriff sparked a total of at least eight more killings.

(Continue west on Canoe Creek Rd. to 1st Ave. Walk north on 1st Ave. until it ends at 3rd St. Walk west on 3rd St. until it ends at 5th Ave., and look to the north.)(3.1)

Intersection of 3rd St. and 5th Ave.

2....Site of Whittier

Hamp Jernigan was the first settler in Lake View, then part of Brevard County, arriving here in 1878. The name was later changed to Whittier. By the end of the year, the community consisted of three families. At Court House Slough (later known as Court House Pond) located near the stand of trees to the north, a courthouse was built of pine logs.

In 1876, the presidential election was hotly contested between Rutherford B. Hayes and Samuel J. Tilden. The election was decided on the votes from Florida, and the count from Court House Pond was reported late. There were accusations of ballot box stuffing.

As of November 7, 1876, Tilden had a clear popular majority, but the totals in the electoral college were in doubt. On March 2, 1877, the electoral commission ruled that Florida had gone for Hayes, a Republican, by 45 popular votes, with those from Whittier giving him the victory. As a result, Hayes won the electoral vote, 185 to 184. The Democrats reluctantly agreed, in part in exchange for the withdrawal of Federal troops which had continued to occupy Key West, Jacksonville, and other locations since the Civil War.

Residents in Whittier received their supplies from Sanford by ox team to Kissimmee, where they were transferred to a river steamer which took them to Turkey Hammock. From there, they came overland the last 12 miles. The cattle drives to Tampa in the early 1900s, so that beef could be shipped to Cuba, took five days.

(Walk south on 5th Ave. and east on 2nd St., to the intersection with 2nd Ave.)(3.4)

Intersection of 2nd St. and 2nd Ave.

3....Site of Parker Place

Not very far from here was the home of Readding Parker and his wife, Ellen Willingham. After Mr. Parker died in 1891, his widow moved to Basinger and rumors were circulated about gold that was supposedly buried on the property.

Gold hunters who came to dig reported seeing spooks, apparitions, wraiths, and other types of unexplained phenomena. Grown men were wary of being caught in the area after dark.

Some said Parker rode the range as a headless horseman to frighten off gold seekers. Some cattlemen reported the rattling of chains and weird moans and groans, when they tried to spend the night in the old house. It later burned down.

(Walk east on 2nd St., south on 1st Ave., and west on Canoe Creek Rd. to the intersection with Arnold Rd. Look south on Arnold Rd. toward Lake Marian.)(3.8)

Intersection of S. Canoe Creek and Arnold Rds., looking south toward Lake Marian

4....Lawrence Silas

Lawrence Silas was born in 1887 or 1891 (depending on the source you consult) on the shore of Lake Marian to the south and west. His father, Tom, was a slave who moved from Georgia and settled near the lake with 12 other families. Through hard work he built up a herd of 2,000 cattle, and owned several thousand acres of land. He hired a tutor for his children and encouraged them to be independent. They were the only black family in the area.

Lawrence was a cattleman for 70 years and was well known in Osceola County, and his homestead was located north of here near Ten Mile Rd. Novelist/Anthropologist Zora Neale Hurston wrote a two-page article about him entitled "Lawrence of the Valley", which appeared in the September 5, 1942, issue of the *Saturday Evening Post*.

After his death, Lawrence's herds were dispersed since he had no son to carry on the business.

The name of this road dates back to the early days, when the marina at the end of it was known as Bert Arnold's Landing. In the 1960s, the marina was doing a flourishing business, then owned by Frank Lester Platt.

(Walk east on Canoe Creek Rd. to the intersection with Grant Bass Rd.)(4.3)

Intersection of Canoe Creek and Grant Bass Rds.

5....Bass Family

The Bass family was a prominent one in Whittier. Arch Bass had sons Oliver, Gus, Grant, Quinn, Oscar, Lee and Nat, and daughters Rosie Tindall, Alice Montsdeoca and Iva Ashton. Grant Bass' daughter, Marie Dollar, taught at the school in the 1950s.

(Continue east on Canoe Creek Rd. to the intersection with Lake Marian Rd.)(5.6)

Southwest corner of Canoe Creek and Lake Marian Rds.

6....Kenansville Cemetery

This cemetery, once known as Evergreen Cemetery, contains the remains of many of the individuals and family members mentioned in the descriptions of the sites along this route.

(Cross Lake Marian Rd. to the southeast corner.)(5.7)

Southeast corner of Canoe Creek and Lake Marian Rds. (760 S. Canoe Creek Rd.)

7....First Missionary Baptist Church of Kenansville

The current block structure replaced an old wooden church which stood at the edge of the cemetery shortly after the coming of the railroad.

(Continue east on Canoe Creek Rd. to the intersection with Harvey Rd.)(6.4)

Intersection of Canoe Creek and Harvey Rds.

8...."Toebraker" Avenue

In the 1920s, Harvey Rd. had a different nickname than the name on today's street sign. On this road was the local shipping point of the Geiger Brothers Wholesale Fish Dealers.

J.E. Ingraham, president of the Model Land Company, announced that the railroad's purposes were to develop farmlands, haul timber and turpentine, aid the cattle industry, and most importantly of all, provide rapid transportation for the catfish industry of Lake Marian.

The road is named after the Harvey family, which included Mrs. Jack Harvey, the mother of ten sons and five daughters. She used Grandma Tumblin, a midwife, rather than a doctor or a hospital, for each of the births.

(Continue east on Canoe Creek Rd. to the old gray house on the north side, before the intersection with Bow St.)(7.1)

North side of Canoe Creek Rd., west of Bow St.

9....Site of Eagerton General Store

Mr. and Mrs. Eagerton moved here from Georgia, while he served as agent for the new railroad. They operated a general store in a concrete block building that was built in 1914. Between the store and the bank was Mrs. Pruitt's place.

(Continue east on Canoe Creek Rd. to the intersection with Bow St.)(7.1)

Northwest corner of Canoe Creek Rd. and Bow St. (1355 Canoe Creek Rd.)

10....First State Bank

This bank was built in 1914, and for a time stood as a symbol of prosperity. It went out of business during the Depression.

During the 1950s, the bank building became a grocery store operated by Minor S. Jones, Jr. and his wife, Emily. Jones filled it with 100 stuffed and mounted animal heads, mostly deer. A rumor still persists that Jones made his living more off of poaching than the sale of groceries. After he died, the rest of the family moved away and it is not known what became of the collection.

In the early 1900s, his father, Minor S. Jones, Sr., was a circuit-riding judge who traveled twice a year by horseback from Titusville to the courthouse in Whittier.

(Cross the intersection to the southeast corner.)(7.1)

Southeast corner of Canoe Creek Rd. and Bow St.

11....Site of Railroad Depot

Henry Flagler made a fortune in John D. Rockefeller's Standard Oil empire, then came to Florida in the late 1870s. Doctors felt that the warmer climate would be good for his invalid wife, Mary Harkness Flagler. He was not impressed with Jacksonville and the swamps and moved back to Ohio.

After Mary's death, for which Flagler blamed himself, he left Standard Oil and invested vast sums in a chain of winter resorts and a railroad system along Florida's east coast. He was determined to build railroads to open Florida's interior to citrus growers, cattle ranchers and farmers.

Flagler married Ida Alice Shourds, who was later committed for insanity. For a decade, he had an affair with Mary Lily Kenan of Kenansville, North Carolina. At the time, insanity was not a legal ground for divorce in Florida, but with bribes and political deals Flagler was able to persuade legislators to change the law. Flagler divorced Ida and married Mary Kenan, after whom this community is named.

Flagler's Florida East Coast Railway began construction of a 90-mile route between New Smyrna and Okeechobee in 1911. The railroad depot was located here, and regular train service began on January 5, 1915.

The Southern Colonization Company entered into a contract to build a railroad from Kenansville to a point southwest of here called Prairie Ridge by June 30, 1916. The South Florida and Gulf Railroad was to continue to Basinger and possibly to Lake Okeechobee.

The company came close to losing \$100,000 by not meeting its contractual obligations in time. With the help of Maxwell A. Kilvert, an experienced developer of tropical lands in Mexico and Central America, it reached the ridge on June 29. The arrival of the first train there was celebrated with a barbecue for 500 people. Soon thereafter, settlers concluded that the wire grass, palmettos, ponds and swamps were better suited for cattle than for farms, reducing the need for a railroad. Rail service was discontinued and the rails were sold at a financial loss.

(Continue east on Canoe Creek Rd. until it ends. Walk north on Kenansville Rd. (US 441) to the next permanent building on the west side of the road.)(7.4)

West side of Kenansville Rd., between Canoe Creek and Post Office Rds.

12....Red Gator Lounge

This establishment was named after a large red stuffed alligator on display inside.

(Continue north on Kenansville Rd. to the post office on the west side.)(7.4)

West side of Kenansville Rd., between Canoe Creek and Post Office Rds.

13....Post Office

This modern building replaced a small wooden structure which was moved to the headquarters of the Adams Ranch on SR 88 in Fort Pierce.

In 1911, the post office was located in the home of the Baisden family. The mail was brought twice weekly by horseback from Kissimmee.

(Continue north on Kenansville Rd. to the abandoned buildings on the east side of the road.)(7.6)

East side of Kenansville Rd., between Canoe Creek and Post Office Rds.

14....Webb's General Store (Combs General Store)

Jennings William Webb of Kentucky, the brother of the owner of the Heartbreak Hotel, took over this store in the 1950s.

(Walk north on Kenansville Rd. and south on Post Office Rd. to the intersection with Canoe Creek Rd. and look south.)(8.0)

Intersection of N. Post Office and Canoe Creek Rds.

15....Plat of Kenansville

The grand plan in 1911 was the establishment of a series of streets with homesites adjacent to the railroad, which crossed Canoe Creek Rd. Just east of Bow St. First through Eighth ran north-south, and east-west streets (proceeding south) were First, Owen, Penlope, Rutledge, Flagler, Rand, Kimball, Hargrave, Graham, Hale, William and Parrott. Diagonal streets were Torrence and Bow, the only remaining street named as on the original plat.

When the railroad pulled out in 1947, the community's population dropped from 550 to 60.

(Walk west on Canoe Creek Rd. and south on Bow St. until it turns from a gravel and shell surface to grass.)(8.3)

West side of Bow St., south of Canoe Creek Rd.

16....W.H. Phillips House

This was the home of W.H. Phillips while he was the resident agent of the Model Land Company.

(Walk north on Bow St. to the intersection with Canoe Creek Rd.)(8.4)

Southwest corner of Canoe Creek Rd. and Bow St.

17....Heartbreak Hotel

This building was built in 1915 by Robert Phillips of North Carolina, who was on the railroad construction crew, and his brother, Wallace, who arrived in 1915. Robert believed he had found the paradise for hunting and fishing, and decided to stay. Both of the Phillips brothers died in 1935.

The hotel was then known as the Piney Woods Inn, with a general store, dining room and kitchen on the first floor and 12 hotel rooms upstairs. For a time, it was called the Tropical Hotel. Next door to the west was located Gettis McClelland's Meat Market.

James Wallace Webb, whose brother ran Webb's General Store on Kenansville Rd., let rooms at \$3 for a double for the first night, \$2 for each additional night. Webb, from Sourwood Mountain in Teges, Kentucky, was born on September 8, 1919. He left there for Florida on November 8, 1939, and arrived in Kenansville on January 11, 1940. After three years, he moved to Arkansas, then moved back here three years after that.

In the 1960s, he became the pastor of New Hope Missionary Baptist Church in Orlando. More about the interesting Mr. Webb can be found in his autobiography, *Hang On, Mr. Webb*.

When Elvis Presley had a hit with "Heartbreak Hotel", Webb changed its name to that. Many photographers and reporters visited the building, believing it to have been the inspiration for the song, instead of the other way around.

The building was acquired by a new owner in the mid-1990s, with plans for renovation and conversion into a bed and breakfast establishment.

(Walk west on Canoe Creek Rd. to the white house on the south side of the road.)(8.4)

South side of Canoe Creek Rd., west of Bow St. (approx. 1334 S. Canoe Creek Rd.)

18....Site of Fertic General Store

Sion (Sab) and Hattie Fertic had a general store beginning shortly after the railroad arrived. The Fertics had come to Kenansville from Polk County with a large herd of cattle in 1895.

(Continue west on Canoe Creek Rd. to the point of beginning.)(8.8)

South side of Canoe Creek Rd., between Bow St. and Harvey Rd. (1178 S. Canoe Creek Rd.)

19....Kenansville School

In 1911, the community's teacher was Jeanette Hodges, who taught children from six families. She lived in the home of one of them, the Baisdens, who also had the post office in their home.

Henry Flagler donated five acres of land and \$6,000 to build this brick schoolhouse with an auditorium upstairs to replace a prior wooden school. The money came from the estate of Lillie Flagler Bingham. The school was built in 1916 and classes began in 1917. For several decades, it was one of the state's outstanding rural schools. In the 1950s, one county school official stated that Kenansville pupils were "better grounded in the fundamentals of learning than most any other in the county".

At one time, the school had five teachers and went all the way through high school. Three grades were taught in each of the four rooms. The school closed in 1962 and sat empty for thirty years until it reopened to save the younger children the long bus ride to St. Cloud. The school then served students from pre-K to second grade with older students are bused to Ross E. Jeffries Elementary and other schools in St. Cloud. In May of 2003, the school closed its doors permanently.

At the time, it was the oldest remaining functioning school building in Osceola County.

(Return to the parking lot where you began.)(8.8)

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