I moved my trunk to Mr. McCracken's so I would be closer to mail and transportation, and started looking for work.

Chapter 9

HUNTING A JOB

As soon as I got moved to McCracken's, I set out to look for work, and promptly learned that a College degree was no asset at all. Wherever I applied for work, naturally, the first question was, "What can you do?" Always my answer was, "I can do any kind of farm work, have a College degree and can run an engineer's transit." Always the same answer, "Can't use you." Had I been a carpenter, a bricklayer or a blacksmith, I might have stood some chance.

Then I heard that over at Velasco, some ten or a dozen leagues to the northwest, was an American-reared Cuban, Frank Gomez, who was looking for a man who could operate American farm machinery, and farm the American way. It sounded like that was right down my alley, so I rode over to see him and spent the night. He wanted a farmer all right, but his ideas were running far ahead of his potentialities. He had a very large farm, many head of cattle and a small cheese factory; but he didn't have one single piece of American farm machinery. Furthermore, the land he wanted to farm, American style, was still solid jungle and it would take at least three years to get it cleared and all the stumps out so we could use American machinery. I couldn't wait.

I learned that the Cuba Company was building its northern rail terminus at Corojal, (later renamed Antilla), on Nipe Bay. I also learned that there was no pasture for a horse over there, and few, if any, places for a man to eat along the road. I bought a java (a sort of palm-leaf market basket with a shoulder cord), a box of guava jam, a hunk of Cuban cheese, and some hardtack. I hung them over my shoulder; made a pack of my hammock, blanket, raincoat, and a change of clothes, and strapped it on my

back; and, was off on a two-day hike. I ate the food I had with me; drank from the streams I crossed; and hung my hammock in an abandoned shack for the night. On the second day, I reached Inglaterra, the temporary terminus of the railroad on Nipe Bay, just in time to catch the last sailboat of the day going to Corojal. At Corojal I learned that Inglaterra, on the west shore of the Bay, was the closest point on the Bay the railroad could build to, but it was shallow water for more than two miles seaward. Corojal was on a point of land about three miles east of Inglaterra, that projected into the Bay from the north and reached very near deep water. To get to Corojal, the railroad had to build around the north side of much of the Bay and build a long trestle across an arm of it. They were now building the trestle, and the foreman was Jack Stackhouse, an American-hating Canadian. I asked him for a job and he told me, flatly, "No". I had no choice but to spend the night. Next morning I caught the sailboat going over to Inglaterra to meet the train from Camaguey. A. C. Reed, Chief Engineer of the railroad, got off the train. I asked him for a job and he said, "Yes, come back with me to Corojal." He took me right back to Stackhouse, and didn't ask him but told him to put me to work. If ever a man carried out his orders to the letter, he did—with emphasis on the work.

Men from the Province of Galecia, Spain, called Gallegos, are known the world over for their combined strength and endurance as common laborers, the traditional man with the strong back and weak mind. The stringers, for the trestle they were building, were six by eighteen inches, and varied from thirty to thirty-three feet long. He put me with seven Gallegos and carrying-hooks to carry those timbers from where they were to where he wanted them so he could hook onto them with the crane and hoist them onto the trestle. I am not a Gallego, and have neither the

strength nor endurance of one, but I managed to hang on for two days. On the third day, two of the Gallegos failed to show up. The timbers were just too heavy for six men to carry. I went to Stackhouse and told him so, and added that the cable on the crane was long enough so that we could hook onto the timbers right where they lay; and, as the crane lifted, two men could guide the timbers, leaving four men for other work. He roared like a mad bull, "Who in hell pays you to think on this job? Get hold of them hooks." I struggled along till noon, but just couldn't take it so asked for my time.

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Five years later, I was resident engineer building a new railroad for the same company, and they sent Stackhouse to me to build one of my bridges. I was now being paid to think.

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There was no boat across the bay at that time of day, so I went back to the trestle with the labor gang and followed the railroad to Inglaterra and the Camino Real, and headed back for Holguin. I walked till I could see to walk no longer, then hung my hammock under a mango tree. The dew was so heavy that before morning it was dripping off the tree almost like rain and I was getting wet, so as soon as I could see, I took to the road. Sometime during the morning a man riding a fine single-footing horse overtook me. He was quite sociable so rode beside me for a while and chatted. He said he was going to Holguin. I told him I was, too. He gave me the consoling thought that I couldn't possibly make it that day, and he rode on. I don't know how many times that day we passed each other. I would pass him at a canteen, and he would pass me between canteens. The last time I saw him was about four o'clock. I stopped at a canteen to get a drink of water. He was there drinking something stronger, and getting pretty well loaded. It was a clear case of

the tortoise and the hare. I reached Holguin about five o'clock. He had not yet arrived.

A few days later I again met McCormack, Chief Engineer of The Nipe Bay Company. I asked him for a job. He asked for my experience. I told him I was a college graduate, had studied land surveying, and could run a transit. "How much engineering experience have you had since you finished college?"

"None."

"I can't use you. I want experienced engineers."

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When I got off the train on my first trip to Holguin, Haworth introduced me to an American Negro named Nelson. He had recently been mustered out of the Tenth U. S. Cavalry. That has gone down in History as a famous regiment of Negro Indian fighters, and should have another tribute that I have never seen recorded in History. Had it not been for them, Theodore Roosevelt would most likely never have lived to become President of the United States and the History of the United States would have been far different.

The word "Snafu" comes from the army itself, and means "Situation normal, all fouled up". So far as I can learn, both by reading History and talking to the men who were in it, never in all History did the army get into so gigantic a "snafu" as in the Spanish American War.

When Theodore Roosevelt and his Rough Riders shipped out of Tampa in 1898, his men were loaded on one boat and shipped to Siboney, near Santiago, on the south coast of Cuba. The horses were put on another boat and dispatched somewhere else. When the men arrived—no horses. It was probably just as well, for you can't ride a horse through the jungle. But the men weren't happy and Teddy was a man of action. After a few days waiting, they went ashore on foot and promptly ran into an ambush. They were cowboys, not soldiers, too brave to run and they couldn't see anything to shoot at. They just stood

looking while they were being mowed down. When the Commander of the Tenth Cavalry saw what was happening, he ordered his Indian fighters up and they started firing into the jungle and saved the Rough Riders and Teddy. The Tenth Cavalry was later stationed in Holguin.

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Nelson, in scouting around the country northwest of town, found an old gold mine. It had been worked by the Spaniards before the War of 1868 and was now all grown over with brush, vines, and trees. Some of the trees were six inches in diameter. Nelson had enough faith in what he found to file a claim on it, and send to Mexico for an American Mining Engineer. When I met Nelson he was at the train to meet his engineer. The engineer's name was Black. I later became quite well acquainted with him. After he had time to investigate this mine, he became quite enthusiastic about it. Enthusiasm is contagious, so some of it shed off on me.

Having nothing else to do, I decided to try my luck prospecting. McCracken, John Goodman, a man from Illinois who was boarding at McCracken's while waiting to get some real estate papers through the Court, and I, borrowed Martin's (head of Quaker Mission) tent; assembled what equipment we needed; and, went gold hunting. Eventually I found good coloring of gold in my pan in a stream west of Aguas Claras. Naturally, we were all three very much excited, and promptly dispatched McCracken to find out the necessary proceeding to file on our claim. He came back with the sad information that we were late. That stream was already staked for miles, so we moved camp farther west, where he had checked and found there were no claims. After several discouraging days, I found a trace in another stream but it was so little we didn't think it was worth filing on. After several more discouraging days, we gave up and returned to Holguin.

On hearing of our return, an old prospector named Arrowood came to see us. We told him where we had been and what we had found. A few days later he was back. He said he had prospected that same stream; had also found gold; and asked if we were going to stake a claim. We told him we were not. For, frankly, we didn't think there was enough gold there to justify it. He said in that case he was going back and prospect some more, and see if he could find the vein. He found the vein and sold his claim for several thousand dollars. That is the difference between being an amateur and an expert.

I just couldn't find a job in that part of the island. I had heard so much about La Gloria on the boat, coming down from New York, that I decided to go see if I could find anything there. I started out in the right direction, but couldn't find a soul that had ever heard of the place. I carried a pocket compass and had to depend on that for direction. The trouble was that Cuban roads are so crooked that frequently when I took the fork of a road going my way, it soon crooked around till it wasn't going my way at all. I would have to return to the fork and take the other prong. Furthermore, it rained. By the end of the second day, I reached the little sugar mill town of San Manuel. There, I found someone who really did know something about the country. He told me that between there and La Gloria there were miles and miles of jungle and swamp without any roads at all. That my only way to get there would be to go by Camaguey. It was more than a hundred miles away and I would still have thirty odd miles to go, and my pony, Dolly, was already pretty well jaded—too much road and no oats or corn. I couldn't buy oats there and she wouldn't eat corn. Most Cuban horses won't. (She wouldn't eat it till I raised some of my own and started feeding her the green stalks with the corn on it. I continued feeding her from the same crop until she ate the dry corn. It made all the

difference in the world to her. She fattened up as she had never fattened before, and toughened up till she could take about as much road as any other pony I ever owned.) It was too evident that my pony just couldn't take that long a trip. I got up early next morning; put the saddle bags on her; got behind her with a switch, and headed back to Holguin. Lightened of my weight, she could make better time. I walked fast enough to keep her in a steady jog trot, and we wound up at McCracken's about nine o'clock that night.

After a couple of days' rest, and another look around, locally, I shouldered my pack; walked the twelve miles to Cacocum; and took the train to Camaguey. At Hotel Norman I met a man, I think he was either English or Canadian, who was just establishing a plant to evaporate green platinos and grind them into pancake flour, and make a breakfast cereal of the ripe ones. I asked him for a job and he put me to work. His only other employees were Cuban women. He showed me how to fire and tend the evaporators, and I could spend the rest of my time helping the women peel platinos. In spite of all I could do, those women, who had been peeling platinos all their lives, peeled them so much faster than I that it made me ashamed of myself. After a few days I asked him how much he was paying me. I don't remember how much it was, but do remember that it was ridiculously little. I told him that I couldn't possibly work for that as it wouldn't even pay my board at the hotel where I was boarding. He replied, "That's just the trouble with you Americans. You want work and when I give you a job, you want enough pay so you can live like kings. Of course you can't live at the hotel." He didn't say how or where he expected me to live. I asked for my time and never heard of him or his business again—I can guess about his business. I tried both his pancakes and his cereal and they were both very good, but Cubans eat neither. In fact, the country

Cubans eat no breakfast at all, and he couldn't possibly produce them at a price that would let him pay freight and duty into the States and compete with the cereals produced there.

Next morning, I shouldered my pack and set out for La Gloria—afoot and alone. A few miles north of Camaguey is a savanna, miles in extent in every direction, that I have heard described as being of no earthly use for anything but to hold the island together. A few miles into the savanna I came to a fork in the road, and just naturally I took the right hand fork when I should have taken the left, and had no possible way of learning of my error till I walked a few miles farther and came to a house. Had the road been in the woods, as most of Cuba was at that time, I would have had to return to the fork in the road, but it was in open savanna and I carried a compass. I traveled in a northwesterly direction till I found my road. I had traveled some farther than if I had been on the right road, but the extra distance had not delayed me as much as the extra rough going.

The road led me through a pass in the Cubitas Mountains—just a cart road between high, timber-covered mountains of coral limestone. All was new scenery to me and wonderful to look at, but I hadn't started this trip as a sightseeing expedition. Sometime in the afternoon, in deep jungle, and miles since I had passed a house, my road ran into water. It looked like deep water. It also looked like flood water. The forest was all green, and trees just don't grow in water. A little way back from the water was a newly cut trail with signs of recent travel on it. It wasn't going my way, but at least it was dry, and it seemed to be the only road in that vicinity going anywhere, so I followed it. It circled around the lake, and after a mile or so came back into the old road. I traveled on and the first house I came to

was that of Mr. Nay, who came down with me on the boat. And this was his newly formed colony of Garden City.

He was very much surprised to see me and asked me to spend the night. I gladly accepted for it was almost sundown. I was tired, and it was still six miles to La Gloria.

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He told me that that water in the road was a very peculiar happening. They had had a very intense rainy season, and that lake just appeared there overnight. Two Americans, coming from Camaguey in the night ran into it and naturally thought it was just a puddle, so waded in. They were very soon in water up to their waists and it was getting deeper. There in the woods it was dark as pitch, so all they could do was to feel around and find a tree and climb it and spend the night.

Seven years later I was locating a railroad through that part of the country. The direction of drainage is a very important factor in railroad location. I remembered that lake and made inquiry about it. In the meantime, the people around there had had time to investigate it. That was limestone country, and out there in the woods was a big sink hole. There was quite an area around there where the drainage ran into this sink hole instead of into the sea. The underground passage had somehow got stopped up, so the lake formed. It stayed six or eight months and disappeared, and had reappeared and disappeared again during the intervening years. That was valuable information to me and saved me a few headaches, because in all normal places water runs away from, not toward, a mountain and that was still solid jungle so we couldn't see, as it was commonly expressed, beyond the ends of our noses.

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Next day I went on to La Gloria and visited several flower and vegetable gardens.

Those Colonists had really gone to work to raise vegetables to eat, and flowers to beautify the place; but when I inquired about work I learned that there were already far too many unemployed Americans there. I spent the night with two other cabin-mates, the Hill brothers, and their mother, who had come down in the meantime. It was very evident that there was nothing in La Gloria for me; so next day, after looking at some more beautiful gardens, I headed back for Camaguey and stopped for the night at Nay's.

Living with him was a Mr. Upton, a man probably in his sixties. He was intending to go to Camaguey very soon on business. He had no transportation, so would have to get up very early in the morning, walk six miles to La Gloria in time to catch the mail hack, take it to Port Viaro, then take a sailboat to Nuevitas, spend the night there and catch the train to Camaguey next day. In as much as I was walking to Camaguey and he would have company, he decided that walking with me would be the lesser of two evils. His company also helped me, because he knew a survey line that ran direct from Nay's place to the mountain pass, thus cutting out the lake and many kinks in the road. We reached Peg Leg's canteen, a well-known landmark on the edge of the savanna, for an early lunch, then set out across the savanna. I didn't realize I was walking overly fast till sometime in the afternoon Mr. Upton said, "Do you think it is really necessary to walk this fast to get there today?" We slowed down, and reached Hotel Norman about five o'clock and he went straight to bed—didn't even wait for supper.

Next day, I took the train back to Cacocum, and walked to Holguin. Soon, I learned that The Nipe Bay Company, a multi-million dollar concern, was starting work on a new sugar plantation with head-quarters at Mayari*, thirty leagues to the east.

Thirty leagues is a long road but my

pony had had time to rest, so I set out to investigate. About mid-morning of the second day, I stopped at the canteen Tacajo' to replenish my larder and inquire about the road. They told me it was twelve leagues and there were no houses at all; but all I need to do was follow the straight road. There was no place I could possibly get lost. That straight road with no place I could possibly get lost, seemed to be standard instructions for travelers. I heard it the first time I tried to travel an unknown road, and almost everytime I made a road inquiry all the years I was there.

Later that morning I came to an orange tree, just loaded with beautiful oranges. It was right beside the road in heavy jungle. By standing up on my saddle, I picked enough to pack my saddlebags full and fill the front of my shirt, and regretted that I could take no more. As I rode on I sampled one. What a disappointment! They were the wild sour oranges. Right there I learned about oranges. If you saw a tree with oranges on that could be picked either from the ground, or from a horse's back, let them alone. They were sour. The sweet ones had all been picked.

Later I came to a fork in the road. One fork was about as straight as the other. Which one should I take? Naturally I should take the better-traveled one. Soon I came out beside a great expanse of Guinea grass, higher than a horse's back, and beside the road was a portable railroad track with trees six or eight inches thick, grown up between the rails, and not a house in sight. I learned later that this was the ruins of the Santa Ysabel sugar estate that had been owned and operated by a French Company prior to the Ten Years War which broke out in 1868. It had been in ruins ever since. Here was a lot of good grass, so I ate my lunch and let the pony eat. Then I went on and soon entered solid jungle on both sides of the road, and the farther I went the more travel there had

been on the road. That was a real puzzler. It takes houses to build up traffic, and there was no sign of habitation anywhere. Eventually my road ended suddenly in a wide, open space that was very much trampled down and had a river on one side. The bank was quite steep and no road down. The water was apparently quite deep, and there was positively no sign of any road going out on the other side. I couldn't figure it out, but one thing I could figure out very clearly. I had no business trying to cross that river! I had to return and take the other fork of the road. I learned later that this was what they call a "tumbadera". They cut cedar and mahogany logs in the woods, haul them out here and pile them up till a ship comes for them. When the ship arrives, they tumble the logs into the river, and float them out to where the ship's crane can reach them and hoist them aboard. The road had gotten better as I approached the river because every log that was taken out of the woods was hauled over it from the point where it came out of the jungle to the river bank.

Just at dusk I found a man building a palm-leaf shack right beside the road. I asked him how far it was to Mayari.

"Five leagues."

"Is there anywhere that I can spend the night?"

"Mr. Williams is building an engineers' camp over in the woods just a little piece. He might be able to put you up."

Williams, better known as "Taffy", treated me like a long-lost brother. He showed me grass for my pony; gave me a good supper along with the engineers who came in; and showed me a place to hang my hammock. He was a Welshman, which is probably why they called him "Taffy"--from the Mother Goose jingle, "Taffy was a Welshman",

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As a young man, he went out to Demerara in British Guiana, South America, to learn to be a sugar planter. He was an apt pupil,

and not only learned to plant sugar cane, but, also, learned a lot about construction, and how to carry his liquor. I have known several Demerara sugar planters, and they all bragged a great deal more about how they could carry their liquor, and drink the other fellows under the table, than they did about how well they could do their work.

Later, when Taffy and I worked together, he would have a whisky for an eye opener in the morning, another with his breakfast, and when he started to the field he would put a bottle of rum and half a dozen bottles of beer in his saddlebags. By noon the rum was half gone and the beer was gone. He had some more whisky with his dinner, and added another half dozen bottles of beer to his saddlebags. By quitting time the saddlebags were empty. He had another whisky with his supper, and then began to drink. By eight o'clock he was pretty well tanked up and went to bed. I never saw him quarrelsome nor saw him stagger. He told me once that his secret for being able to drink so much was that when drinking on the job he kept going at a lively rate and sweat it out.

When malaria broke out in our camp, he was the first to come down, and others came down almost in the order of the amount of liquor they drank. The last to come down was old man Bailey, the other teetotaler. I didn't get it. I have attributed my not getting it to three things: Having it so badly in Kansas as a boy, I probably built up a pretty good immunity; I didn't weaken my system with liquor; and when the others had malaria I took quinine as a preventative.

My road and Taffy's parted when I left Nipe Bay. A few years later I met him on the train. He was so thin I didn't recognize him till he spoke to me. He got fired at Nipe for too much drinking, and went to Panama. He didn't say why he left Panama, but did say that he had been very sick, and he surely looked it. He had a job at a sugar mill in Havana Province and was going to it.

A few years later I learned that when the U. S. Government went to raise the Battleship Maine in Havana Harbor about 1911, he got a job. He was a very competent construction man. I never learned whether he was still drinking, or if his previous drinking simply caught up with him. He got hardening of the arteries and died before the job was finished. He was still in his thirties when he died. You just can't fool around with liquor and get away with it indefinitely.

As I have said before, this is a small world. In 1956, in the recreation building in Fort Pierce, Florida, I met a retired Army Engineer, who told me he built a section of the Panama Canal, and was in charge of raising the Battleship Maine in Havana Harbor. I asked him if he knew Taffy Williams on the latter job. He said he did, hesitated a moment and added, "He's dead."

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Getting back to my story. Next morning after a good breakfast, I told Taffy I was going on over to Mayari' to see Mr. Garnett about a job. "That won't be necessary. If Mohammed will just sit tight, the mountain will come to Mohammed. Mr. Garnett is coming out here this morning." On his arrival, I asked him for a job; and, while we were talking, a Cuban came up and wanted something. Without saying a word to the Cuban, he turned to me and said, "Find out what this man wants." I interpreted and thought I was doing Mr. Garnett a favor. I learned later that he spoke much better Spanish than I did at that time. He was checking up on me. After the Cuban was gone, and we had talked a while longer, he said, "I don't know how soon I will get the order to go ahead, but when I do I will need a lot of men, and I will give you a job." And he wrote down my name and address.

There was a big sawmill, by Cuban standards, of course, at San German, over on the Cuba Railroad main line. I headed there to see what I could find. Sr. Fajet, the manager, asked me if I was a sawyer. He said he

was getting more logs than he could saw, so had bought an electric lighting plant and was going to start another shift, just as soon as he could get the plant installed. I told him I had never sawed but had worked in a sawmill, and was certain that if he would let me work a couple of days with his sawyer I could handle it. He agreed to pay me $2.50 a day and named me a day to come back when all would be ready. I returned to Holguin and on the appointed day walked to Cacocum and took the train to San German.

The lights had not yet been installed. He had a gang of laborers unloading logs from flat cars and rolling them across the log yard with cant hooks to where he could reach them with the snatch cable. He told me I could help them till he got his lights in. He worked his men eleven hours a day, and that was the only place in Cuba that I ever worked so long a shift. I worked two or three days, then asked the men what wages they were getting, and they said ninety cents a day. I saw no sign of any work being done on the light plant, and it just didn't make sense to think he would pay me $2.50 a day for the same work the peons did for ninety cents, so I hunted up Sr. Fajet and asked him how long he expected to keep me on the log yard. Just till he could get his lights installed. How long would that be? He didn't know. He hadn't found an electrician to install them yet. I asked him what wages he was paying me, and he said ninety cents a day. To make matters worse, the peons ate at the second table and paid thirty cents a day for meals. I was eating at the first table which charged forty, leaving me fifty cents for eleven hours work. I told him that was not my agreement. I came here to work for $2.50 a day, and it was no fault of mine that he didn't have his lights in. After some argument, we compromised on $1.25 a day for the time I had worked, and I went back to Holguin.

When missionaries go to the foreign

field, the Board has to pay their way to the field; pay their salaries while they learn the language; and, in many cases, hire a teacher for them. All the teachers the Friends Board had in Cuba were women. I was already on the job; had a working knowledge of Spanish; and couldn't see why they couldn't use me, so sent in an application for a position teaching. Again the old familiar reply: No money. I was really getting discouraged and would very likely have headed back for the U.S.A. but for a few discouraging factors. Almost every spring in the States, I had a siege of inflammatory rheumatism, and that hurts. I had gone through one spring in Cuba without a twinge, and another spring was coming up and I much preferred to stay in Cuba rather than face another attack of rheumatism in the north. In fact, I told someone I was going to stay in Cuba even if I had to live on sweet potatoes. Furthermore, it was now pretty well into winter, and you just don't find teaching positions in the winter. So I stayed on.

They say it is a long road that has no turn. One day I went uptown in Holguin, probably because I had no place else to go, and ran into Erwin Marx again. I recognized him and he remembered me. After some conversation, I asked him if he couldn't give me a job. He hesitated a few moments, then said, "I have got a land survey coming up next week. I am going to run the transit myself. If you want to pull the head chain, I will give you a dollar and a half a day and board."

Without taking time to think, I said, "You have hired yourself a head chainman." After I thought it over, I said, "By the way, how long is that job going to last? It costs money to go to Camaguey."

"Well, I'll take care of your carfare, too." He told me when to report, and on the day before I was to report, I walked to Cacocum and took the train to Camaguey, stopping again at Hotel Norman. Next morning when I reached Marx's home in La Caridad, a

suburb of Camaguey, he had his equipment, two horses, and a rear chainman (Victor) assembled. His transit box was equipped with shoulder straps. He mounted one horse and slipped his arms through the straps. Victor and I both mounted the other horse, and picked up the tripod and range rods. It was a half day's ride to the place. It had been a sugar plantation before the War of 1868 and several of the brick houses were still standing and usable. It had been converted into a cattle ranch and an American company was buying it. They were to pay for it by the Caballeria (33 1/6 acres), and our survey was to find out how many cabs. there were in it.

The whole thing was fenced. All we had to do was follow the fence, but even that wasn't easy. There were numerous cross fences taking off on the inside, and neighbors' fences taking off on the outside, and some of the way it ran through solid jungle; and, whether in the jungle or in the open, the fence changed direction frequently without either rhyme or reason. One good look at it and Marx decided that the best way to do it was for him to take a bunch of men and go ahead cutting out obstructions; setting corners and flagging them; then Victor and I could chain the distances, and we would measure the angles later. Before we got around, a messenger came out from Camaguey with a telegram for Marx. After reading the telegram, he told me he would have to go now, but would not be gone many days. For me to take charge and finish clearing out the line, setting corners and chaining. Then he asked if I thought I could take the transit and run compass surveys on the cross fences and water courses. I thought I could.

I finished clearing around the fence, setting corners and chaining, and worked two or three days on the compass survey before his return. We measured angles just half a day when another messenger came with another telegram. He told me to go ahead with the compass surveys and he would be back.

When I finished the compass surveys, he wasn't back and I didn't know what to do next. He had implied that he wouldn't trust me to measure the angles. After due deliberation, I decided that since I had my crew, and he had to pay Victor and me anyhow, and there was only one more man to pay, I would go right ahead and measure the angles. If I did a good job, he would be pleased; and, if I fell down on the job, the worst he could do would be to make me pay the extra man at one dollar a day, and I would be getting experience. I didn't tell anybody but what I was obeying orders, and went right on with the work.

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When I studied land surveying in college, for our final examination, the professor took us out in the country and staked out quite a good sized piece of land with seven or eight sides to it and it had a hill on one side and a house on another. Our job was to measure all the sides and angles and figure the area by latitudes, departures and double meridian distances—quite a long, laborious and complicated process. We howled and complained that that was unnecessary and unreasonable, for land is surveyed in right angles. He said, "It is in Iowa, but there are places where it is not and you never know what you may run into."

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This ranch had 92 sides, and, of course, 92 angles. I didn't want to make any mistakes so took plenty of time; read every angle twice (no one had taught me to double my angles); computed my bearing and checked it with the needle before I moved on. When I went to read the closing angle, I was so nervous I could hardly read my vernier or make my computation. On account of fractional minutes and what we call accumulation of error, it is very rare for a figure to close exactly. An error of four or five minutes was really to be expected on a figure with so many angles, and ten or twelve would

hardly have been too many. When I computed my last bearing, and found that I had closed to the minute, the relaxation was so intense I just dropped to the ground and lay there till both men rushed up to see what had happened to me.

The job completed, there was nothing to do but to go into Camaguey. There was only one horse, but two men and a whole surveying outfit. We stored the outfit and both mounted the horse and headed for town. It was night when we arrived, so I went directly to the hotel. Next morning, I went to the office and learned that Marx was still not in, but was expected on the afternoon train. I met the train and he was very much displeased to see me. I suspect he was thinking of the difference in cost of keeping me out at the Guagiro's house and at the hotel, but maybe he just didn't know how fast I was and thought I should be at work. Anyhow the first thing he said was, "What are you doing here?"

"I finished the survey, and could see no point in staying longer."

"Do you mean you finished the streams and fences?"

"Yes, and the traverse, too."

"The traverse? How did it close?"

"The angles closed. I haven't figured the latitudes and departures yet."

"What do you mean by closed?"

"I mean they closed to the minute."

"Where is your notebook?"

"Down at the hotel."

"I am going to be busy for awhile. You go and get your notebook and meet me at the office in an hour."

When I handed him the notebook he started thumbing through it, and would study it a little while, then look at me like he was going to look right through me. Finally, he said, "If a Cuban engineer would give me a book like this I would burn the book and kick him out of the office. But you look so damned honest I don't know what to do. What

did you do with the transit?"

"I left it out there. I couldn't carry it in."

"Well, we will ride out there Monday morning and measure a few of those angles at random, and then we will decide what to do."

We went out Monday morning and measured a few angles. They checked, so we cut across to another part of the farm and measured some more. Suddenly he said, "I've got a minute on you here. Well, it isn't a whole minute but it should have been thrown the other way." We measured a few more and he said, "Here is another one. That makes two." He read his vernier again, then looked at the book and said, "Why, that's the other way, so it balances." He read another angle or two; took the transit off the tripod; put it in the box; and said, "Old man, I'll make an engineer out of you inside of a year if the work will just hold out."

We went back to his house and started figuring. That was before the days of electric calculating machines, and we had to do everything the hard way, which in this case was by means of logarithms. We figured all week, and when he came in Saturday afternoon he said, "I see where you are leaving for Santa Clara tomorrow afternoon. My friend, Frank Arbuckle, has a short-time option on a cattle ranch up there and wants it surveyed to know whether to close the deal or not. I can't go now so you are going up with him. Get a bunch of men; clear, hub and chain the boundary; and, I will go up and measure the angles."

His Santa Clara was not the City, as I supposed, but the Province. Arbuckle and I arrived at a flag-stop named Guayos about ten o'clock Sunday night. (Nine years later I built my first sugar mill there.) When we got off the train, there wasn't a house nor a soul in sight. Arbuckle had been there before, so knew the direction we had to go to get to the ranch. We had gone but a little way when we came to where someone was building

a palm-leaf shack right beside the trail, and had the roof on. We both had our hammocks, so moved in without even the formality of "by your leave".

Marx had shipped three horses the day before for our use, and sent a man along to care for them. Shortly after daylight, they showed up. There was no place to get any breakfast, so we headed for the ranch. It was a big half-day's ride, and we arrived after the folks living on the ranch had had their noon meal.

I told the man what we were there for and asked him if we could board with them. No, indeed! They didn't know anything about cooking for Americans, and had no extra beds. Was there any place around the neighborhood where we could board? He doubted it. I told him that as for the beds, we had our hammocks, and as for the cooking, since they lived on it all the time, we should be able to live on it a few days. I had no idea what I was letting us in for, but after all, we simply had no choice. The man's wife hastily boiled some rice and soft-fried some eggs. The Cuban's have a saying that the best seasoning for any food is hunger. Having had no breakfast, and it being now past noon, I had a liberal supply of the above-mentioned seasoning; and, despite the fact I had never eaten that combination before, I pronounced it a very fine meal. For supper we had "ajiaco" with loads of garlic. I simply couldn't eat it, and decided I could manage till breakfast. For breakfast they served a demitasse of black coffee—just about strong enough to float an iron wedge—and nothing more. I had no idea where we would be by noon, so Arbuckle told the boy where to take our lunch to us. Arbuckle's Spanish was even poorer than mine, so I don't know whether it was on account of his poor Spanish, or the boy's thick headedness, but lunch didn't reach us till three P.M. By that time, I was getting faint—ajiaco again and it cold.

With my very liberal supply of "Cuban seasoning", I managed to down a little of it— what I thought would hold me till supper time. Supper was the same thing. We were there about two weeks the first hitch and the only variation in the menu was that about the third morning I saw the old man milking a cow, and asked if we mightn't have milk with our morning coffee, which was granted from then on.

We had to sleep right out in the front room. Most Cubans retire very early, but not that family. The first night when I got tired of waiting for them to retire, I hung my hammock and climbed into it with my clothes on. The fleas played tit-tat-tow up and down my spine all night long, and to vary the monotony the dog laid right under my hammock and alternated between scratching fleas, and jumping up and barking. The next night I decided there should be some changes made. After I hung my hammock, I set a chair within reach of it and leaned the broom against the chair. I stood up on the chair; stripped off my shirt; put on my raincoat and changed into clean trousers under the raincoat; took off the raincoat; put on a clean shirt and crawled in. The first time the dog got up to bark, I dealt him such a blow with the broom that he never again came back to lay under my hammock.

When we were about three-fourths of the way around the place, Marx showed up and started reading angles. He had read just half a day and left his transit in the boiling sun while he ate lunch. When he went back to it, the cross hair was gone. It must have been a very poor cross hair, or poor glue, for I have done the same thing many times and never lost a cross hair. Be that as it may, we were out of a transit when we needed one very badly. We went to the house and Marx tore the transit apart and took out the ring that holds the cross hairs. Then we hunted the place over for a nice clean spider web. All the glue he had to put it in with

was the white of an egg, so he used that. It took quite some time, but he put it in and adjusted it, and we were back in business.

We hadn't worked long till he discovered that the transit was not holding its adjustment, but this farm was not being sold by the caballeria, but for a fixed price, take it or leave it. He said that while we could not make an accurate survey with the transit in that condition, with care we could get close enough to know if there was enough land to justify the purchase. On one side was a high, wooded hill, and the Zaza River was one side. We skirted both on cleared, level ground, then the three of us sat down around the kitchen table and fought fleas, dogs, cats, and chickens for two days while we figured latitudes, departures and double meridian distances. We found out that there was enough land there to justify its purchase. Marx was not a man to leave a job half done, but said he couldn't finish it now, so it was up to me to do it for him. First, I should go with him back to Camaguey and get another transit while Arbuckle went to close his land deal.

The first thing I did in Camaguey was to get weighed. I had lost several pounds in only two weeks. On arrival at the office, I found a letter from Mr. Garnett of the Nipe Bay Company. He said work was now starting there and he could offer me seventy dollars a month as an overseer. I showed the letter to Marx and asked him what he thought of it.

He said, "I think it is a darn good opportunity, but I do want you to go back and finish that survey. If Garnett is a reasonable man, he will understand and be willing to wait. I was in hopes work would hold out here, but there is no more in sight. But you have turned out so well I had already made up my mind to pay you sixty dollars a month straight time instead of the dollar and a half a day that I promised.

I'll tell you what I will do. I will write Mr. Garnett a letter on the typewriter and all you will need to do is to sign it."

He wrote a very nice letter, explaining that I couldn't leave my present employer with a job half done, and that I would be over just as soon as I could finish, which should be in about two weeks. I signed the letter, then went to the grocery store and laid in a liberal supply of canned crackers, canned cookies, cheese, and canned fruit, together with sardines, and Vienna sausages. I didn't lose any weight on the second hitch. I went back and finished the job, then turned my notebooks and instruments into the office and was ready for my new adventure.

Whenever I was in Camaguey on Sunday I always went to the Methodist Mission. I don't know why I picked on the Methodists, for they held their services in a rented residence several blocks from the hotel, while the Baptists had a brand-new church just half a block away. One Sunday, the Methodists asked all present that knew any English-speaking people to tell them that an Evangelist from Atlanta, Georgia, would preach there that night in English. Naturally, I went. The fact that I attended the mission, set me apart from other Americans. They just didn't go. After services that night, Rev. Gilbert, head of the mission, invited me in to meet the Evangelist and other workers in the mission—some six or seven of us, all told. Soon after we got seated, someone passed around the cigars. Gilbert said thanks, he didn't care for one tonight, but left the definite impression that he did take them on occasion. All the rest took one and lit up. When they got going good, I said, "Gentlemen, I am surprised. I am the only layman here and apparently the only one who doesn't smoke."

The Evangelist said, "Why? Do you think it is a sin to smoke?"

"I wouldn't go that far. But the Bible says your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost. You would certainly have a whole lot nicer, cleaner temple if you didn't smoke."

The Evangelist answered, "Ah won't argue that question with you. Ah'll smoke my cigah."

A few days later when I went in for dinner at the hotel, for some reason every table was occupied, and the only vacant place was at a table with two young ladies, whom I later learned were Miss Mariam, a teacher at the Baptist Mission, and Miss Epstein, stenographer for D. E. Kerr, the biggest real estate man in Camaguey. I asked if I might sit there, and introduced myself. The funniest expression spread over those girls' faces and one of them said, "O-h-h-h, We've heard of you. You're the one that called the preachers down the other night!"

"Where did you hear that?"

"One of them told me. I told him he ought to be ashamed of himself."