

of things."

On that same trip I also learned something on my own. I had to spend a night in Las Tunas, both coming and going. In the hotel where I stopped, was an American, Otis Miller, his wife, his mother-in-law, and two small boys. One of the boys was very sick. They had come to bring him to the doctor. None of them spoke any Spanish and I was able to be of some service to them. They were from Omaja, and told me there were several Americans there already and there were plans for a very large colony there. I asked who was promoting it, and was told D. E. Kerr and C. E. Bowman. I had previously become quite well acquainted with both of them at Hotel Norman. I got to thinking, "If they have any kind of a colony, they must have their land surveyed. If they have as much land as Miller says, it will take two or three years to subdivide it all into ten acre lots. Someone will have to do it. If I can get the job, Birdie will come back. We can live among American people, and she will not be lonesome." So when I got back to Camaguey, I looked up D. E. Kerr and asked about the job. It was too sudden. He would have to think it over, and talk it over with Bowman. Also, I would not quit my job without notice. When I asked Windsor about taking another job, he said they had work for me but would not stand in my way if I could better myself. After Kerr saw Bowman, I saw the two of them together and made a verbal contract to do all the surveying they required for twenty-two dollars per mile.

Chapter 12

OMAJA'

After Sir William Van Horne completed the Canadian Pacific Railroad, he began looking for other worlds to conquer. That was just after the Spanish American War and he found that Cuba had no railroad connecting cities in the central part of the island from Santa Clara to Santiago, a distance of more than four hundred miles. So, he got a franchise of General Wood and proceeded to build one. For that purpose he imported a lot of mules and mule skinnners from the United States. One contingent had been recruited around Omaha, Nebraska; set up their camp in Oriente Province; and just naturally hung out their sign, Omaha. When the railroad went to put names on their stations, they found the sign, changed the "h" to "j" to conform to Spanish spelling, and that is the name it still carries.

In 1904, while I was looking for work, quite by accident I met an army engineer from the U. S. Naval Station in Guantanamo. He had a few days' vacation and was scouting around looking for a piece of land to buy but getting nowhere. Since I wasn't busy, he hired me to go with him as guide and interpreter. My friend, Lindelie, told me there was a large tract of land at Omaja that was for sale, so we took the train and went to see it. When we got off the train, the only house in sight was a palm-leaf shack with a dirt floor. We went over and asked about the place. Manuel Gomez, the man who lived there, told us he was the owner, and to prove it he took down quite a stack of deeds. He told us how many caballerias he owned; and showed us the deeds to several big farms. Among them was a deed to Las Paras. I had been there with Burke and Thompson to buy cattle and spotted it. I said, "Why, that belongs to Wincelao Infante of Holguin."

"Yes, he has possession, but I have the

deed and I will have him off of there very soon." Infante was the richest man in Holguin. Knowing the power of money in Cuba, I formed a mental picture of this man, living in a palm-leaf shack with a dirt floor; his naked children playing on the ground with the dogs, the cats and the chickens, throwing Infante off his farm, regardless of to whom it belonged. I pinned him down and he admitted that all of his land was "pesos de posesion" in "Haciendas Comuneras". I had been stung in "pesos de posesion", and told my friend I was sorry we had wasted money to come to see the place, but after all that was the only way we had of getting information. Now that we had the information, he wanted no part of that land.

About a year later, D. E. Kerr and C. E. Bowman, with Joaquin Rivas as interpreter, came along, looking for land. Gomez gave them a hot line and they swallowed it—hook, bait and sinker. They had not been stung by "pesos de posesion", but got it right then and there. The contract looked all right but, as I learned later, there was one very important element missing.

A few years later I had a contract with this same C. E. Bowman. A very prominent Cuban was involved in the same contract so I took it to him for his approval. I asked him to kindly look the contract over, and tell me if, in his opinion, it was a good contract. He wouldn't even look at it, but said, "Any contract is good if the man who made it is honest. No contract is any good if the maker is no good." The missing element here was that the man who made it was no good. How he ever acquired so many deeds I have no idea, but they were in "pesos de posesion", and did not yield anything like the acreage he claimed for them. In the case of Las Paras, he couldn't deliver one acre. Kerr and Bowman paid Gomez several thousand dollars down. He was to move the survey of the land and deliver surveyed land for which they

were to pay by the caballeria. (33 1/6 acres) The price was very cheap, even then.

Instead of moving the survey, according to contract, Gomez built a very large palm-leaf shack, bought several thousand dollars worth of goods to sell to the Americans that were supposed to come, and opened a store. The idea was a good one, but he had no idea about buying nor what Americans used. His farm equipment was largely the kind used in Spain and the Canary Islands. Even the food supplies were not what Americans normally ate. He bought an enormous amount and was able to sell but very little. He went down to Santiago with what money he had left and spent it gambling and in riotous living. When he was flat broke, he went to Kerr in Camaguey and tried to get more money. Kerr told him he would get more money when he got the land surveyed. Then, he got a lawyer friend to go to Kerr and intercede for him. Kerr asked the lawyer if he was a friend of Gomez; and, when he said he was, Kerr said, "Then suppose you let him have some money. He is no friend of mine." When Gomez finally faced up to the fact that he would get no more money till he got the land surveyed, and couldn't get the land surveyed without money, he went back to his hotel and committed suicide. That threw the whole thing in Kerr's lap. Bowman had already smelled disaster and pulled out. Kerr had to pay for the survey, and there was only a very small fraction of the land Gomez had told them there was. At the agreed price the down payment was more than the cost of the land they received. It took Kerr years to get it settled.

I arrived in Omaja' on April twentieth, 1906, to begin my survey. I engaged board and room with Conrad Plant, an English Mormon, newly arrived from Boise, Idaho. There were quite a few Colonists there already. Not one of them could speak a word of Spanish, so I was something of a Godsend to the whole Colony. I not only spoke the language but was an old timer. I had been in Cuba almost

three years; had been over the island quite a bit; and knew good land from bad by the vegetation that grew on it. Some of them had selected savanna land so they wouldn't have to clear it. When the rainy season came, they were in a lake and ready to go back to the States. Bowman told them that if they didn't like what they had chosen, they could choose again anywhere they liked. I showed them very good, fertile land that was high and dry, and they stayed. People are like sheep. Had a few actually gone back, it would have started a trend that would have been very hard to stop.

When Kerr and Bowman started their colony, they took a leaf out of Uncle Sam's method of settling the West. They gave ten acres of land absolutely free to everyone who would build a house on it; live on it and improve it. They would sell him as much land around it as he cared to buy at twenty dollars an acre. I promptly took a homestead, and bought ten acres more to be paid for by surveying.

Sam Vander Vorst, an American engineer from Camaguey, had already done a little surveying. Since this land was unsurveyed, it had, as of that time, no boundaries. They took the railroad station as a starting point, and the railroad, which happened to be straight for several miles at Omaja', as a base line, so what we called north was actually some twenty or twenty-five degrees east of north. They reserved one section right north of the railroad for a townsite, then laid out all the surrounding country for miles around, in sections, and divided the sections into ten-acre lots. All on paper, of course. It was my job to put it on the ground.

I had worked but little more than a month, when Kerr came down and discovered that I was getting the surveying done a great deal faster than he was getting settlers to occupy it. So he made me a proposition to

go to the States to sell land for him. Birdie was in the States, and I hadn't been there for almost three years, so it wasn't very hard to talk me into it. He had agents in several states, and suggested I go to Iowa. As I had taken my college course there, and Brother Robert was living there, that suited me just fine. I wrote Birdie to meet me at Robert's. Kerr suggested that we take a trip together to La Gloria and Palm City, two American colonies on the north coast, to get ideas for talking points and pick up some products and photographs for exhibits. I was lucky enough to get to La Gloria just at the right time to find the biggest pineapple I ever saw, ready to harvest. It weighed thirteen pounds. I bought it and took it with me. A German living in La Gloria made a business of collecting all kinds of wood in the vicinity, sawing them into little blocks $\frac{1}{4}$ x $1\frac{1}{2}$ x 3 inches, planing them, and all that would take a polish he polished on one side, and sold them to tourists. I bought a set. From the same man, I bought a fruit bowl he had turned out of mahogany, and a set of napkin rings, each ring turned from a different kind of hard wood. In Havana, I bought a coconut with the husk on, carved like a human face, a monkey jug, and several interesting photographs.

The only boat I found sailing out of Havana any time soon was the Ward Line Steamer, Monterey, for New York, and all first and second class cabins were sold out, so I bought a third class ticket. They didn't assign cabins there, just let everyone select his own.

Just as I started down to the cabins, a well-dressed young man stopped me and introduced himself. He said he had been touring in Cuba and had a hurry-up call to come home. His ticket was first class; but, as he had not intended to return so soon, he had made no reservations. When he got to the boat, all first and second class cabins were sold, so he had to go third class or wait for

another boat. He said he was a little bit choosy about whom he roomed with. He had been down; selected a cabin and placed a piece of luggage in every bunk to indicate it was taken; and had now come up to look the passengers over as they came aboard. He hoped to be able to find some congenial cabin mates. I was the first he had seen that was to his liking. Would I like to share it with him? He looked much cleaner and more respectable than the others coming aboard, so I gladly accepted his offer. These cabins were about the same size as the second class cabins on the Munson Line; but these bunks were only double deckers, whereas those were triple deckers. My friend found only one more desirable, so there were only three in the cabin. All the rest were Spaniards, Italians and Cubans of the laboring class, going to New York as emigrants. They acted much more like a bunch of hogs than they did like human beings, when they went to the table. After the first meal, my friend went to the steward and had a talk with him. He said if the three of us would just wait till the rabble got through, he would have time to give us more attention; and, furthermore, the first class table would be through eating and he could get the food they left over for us. So the three of us each gave him a sizable tip; waited for the gang to clear out; and had first class fare at less than second class rates. The sea was very quiet and we had an uneventful trip till we reached New York Harbor. We arrived early in the morning and the fog was so thick you could almost slice it. We had to anchor till about two P. M. before going in. I got through Customs and caught a train for Iowa that same night.

When I reached Oskaloosa, Robert and Birdie were at the depot to meet me. Robert and Jessie had a two-story house, rented just for the two of them, so we moved in with them. My friend, F. E. Gordon, who had been my boss when I was in the picture business, invited me to spread my exhibits in his law office

and use it as my office. I wrote some articles on Cuba for the local paper, and advertised in it, also got out handbills about Cuba and gave my address. I was beginning to get a few people interested when, like a bolt from the blue, the papers came out with big headlines telling of revolution in Cuba; and, from day to day, told of the battles fought and number of men killed. Then, President Theodore Roosevelt sent Secretary of War Taft with a contingent of U. S. troops down to hold the lid on, and President Estrada Palma resigned. That put us in the second Intervention, a condition that seemed necessary but pleased nobody. Then, Roosevelt appointed MacGoon Military Governor. The shooting stopped but tension and unrest continued, and business was pretty much paralyzed. Solid Americans with good common sense just don't buy Latin American Revolutions. I hung on for a while hoping things would get better in Cuba. If they did, the knowledge of it failed to reach the American Press. I didn't sell one acre of land, nor interest one person in migrating to Cuba in all summer.

Chataquas were very popular in those days and Oskaloosa put one on. Harry Coffin, a school mate, and I got the concession to run the lemonade stand and lunch room. I did very well financially at that while it lasted, but it was the only money I earned in all summer. Birdie and I attended Iowa Yearly Meeting of Friends, then we went to Indiana to visit our relatives and friends. There, I gave several missionary lectures in churches, and real estate lectures in school houses, and entertained a lot of people. The missionary talks raised money for missions; but the real estate talks failed to interest anyone in going to Cuba or in making any investments there. When winter began to bite, I began making arrangements to return to Cuba. Birdie didn't want to go; and, considering the unrest there, I wasn't sure that I wanted her to. So I sent her back to Nebraska, and made reservation on the Munson Line out of New York

to return to Cuba, alone.

Just before I was to leave, I got a letter from Father in North Dakota. He was living alone; teaching school; and was sick. He said he didn't think he could survive another winter up there; and, if I would postpone my sailing till next boat, he would join me. I promptly wired the company to change the reservations. He joined me and lived twenty-eight years in Cuba.

On our way to New York we stopped in Philadelphia to visit my brother, Lloyd, who was a Sophomore at Haverford College. Our ways parted there and did not cross again for thirty-nine years. While in Philadelphia, we visited Independence Hall, and other places of interest around there, with Lloyd as guide.

The day we left New York there were three or four inches of snow on the ground, and a cold raw wind that went right through you. We had smooth sailing for two or three days, then things began to happen. A tropical hurricane hit us broad side, and we couldn't take it that way. We had to head into it and lost a day in getting into Nuevitas. First-class passengers were right over the propeller, so they got the full force of the storm, and it was reported that everyone was seasick next morning. Second class cabins were in the middle of the boat, so we fared much better; but in spite of our better position, there were only four of us out to breakfast next morning. I was not sick, but spent most of my time in bed, because it was the only comfortable place to be. To be really comfortable there, I had to block myself in with life preservers. After leaving the cold and snow in New York, and passing through that storm at sea, when we felt the nice balmy breeze and saw the beautiful green trees as we sailed into Nuevitas Harbor, and later saw the luscious green pastures and fat cattle, we felt very much like we had reached the Promised Land.

The Revolution was over but the effects

of it were not. Colonists had almost ceased coming; hence Kerr needed but very little surveying done. Furthermore, tho I had surveyed only a small fraction of what Gomez sold to Kerr and Bowman, three of my lines ran into the pastures of adjoining farms, so I could go no farther in those directions. So Kerr stopped my surveying in Omaja', and gave me some to do at Cacocum.

When that was done, I took small jobs wherever I could find them; and, between jobs, I worked on my farm. Father and I cleared land; planted a garden; built us a galvanized-iron shack; moved into it and went to keeping batch. We dug a well in the good old fashioned way. That is, I dug it with pick and shovel and Father drew the dirt out—a very laborious job. At thirty-odd feet I struck just a little water. It was bitter as gall. Then we dug and cemented a cistern, and put eave troughs on our shack. If we couldn't get water out of the ground, we would get it out of the sky. By far my biggest job was surveying Haciendas Comuneras which I will take up in my next chapter. I settled down to be a good citizen of the Colony; and, judging by the offices they elected me to, I was quite a prominent one. There was a reason. I was the only man in the Colony with a College Degree; the only one who could speak both languages; and had had a very wide experience in Cuba, so knew how to deal with the people. To name just a few: I was elected Chairman of the Good Roads Committee, Chairman of the School Board, Chairman of the General Betterment Committee, and Chairman of the Medical Committee. As to the good roads, there wasn't a road in the Colony that you could get over with an American wagon in the rainy season. The big ox carts kept such roads as there were torn up and rutted so deep the wagons couldn't get over them. At my instigation, we cut a new road through the woods, and purposely made it just barely wide enough for the wagons, but too narrow

for the carts. That worked fine till they got their cart road worked up so deep they got stuck in it. All Cubans have axes and machetes. One day when none of us was looking, a cartman turned into our road. The trees and brush slowed him down a little, but he cut his way through, and left the road wide enough for the next cart. I went through and saw what had been done and set myself to see that it didn't happen again. You can always hear a loaded cart coming a long way off, either by the groaning of the axles, or the language of the driver—generally both.

Not many days hence, I heard a cart, jumped on a horse and beat him to the junction. I parked myself and horse in the middle of our road and told him he had to take the old road. He drew his machete on me; but, fortunately, there was another American within calling distance, and murder isn't a nice charge even in Cuba, particularly when there is a witness. When the other American arrived, he started his oxen down the cart road. It took him more than half a day to negotiate three quarters of a mile of bad road. I was indeed sorry both for him and for his oxen, but it had taken many days' work for us to clear the road. It took vigilance but we kept it open.

As Chairman of the School Board, I took the matter up with the proper authorities, and got the Government to pay our school teacher.

As Chairman of the Medical Committee, I contacted Dr. Butler, the only fully accredited American doctor I ever knew in Cuba. I knew three that were accredited to practice in the country, but not in the city: Dr. Law of Holguin, Dr. McLaughlan of Galbis, and Dr. Baker of La Gloria. Several of us agreed to pay Dr. Butler so much a month to keep us well and he moved in. He could take all the outside practice he could get. He was still there when I left Omaja', but was too good a doctor to waste himself on so small a place.

A sugar mill offered him more money than he could ever hope to get in Omaja'.

One of the jobs I had during this time was quite unusual and had some very wide ramifications for the other fellows. Major Maude, a retired English army officer, just over from England, had some money to invest. The manager of the gold mine at Holguin heard of him and approached him to get him to invest in the mine. Being a prudent man, he didn't invest blindly. He employed the engineering firm of Marx and Windsor to investigate the mine. They, in turn, wrote me to go over to make the investigation for them, and not to tell anybody my business.

Truth is stranger than fiction. I arrived in Holguin, went out to the mine and made what investigation I could under the conditions laid down. They were getting out gold but on a very small scale. They had only a few men working. Engineer Black had told me when I lived in Holguin that there was a very large ore body there, and I had no reason to doubt his word. It looked pretty good. I was on my way down to McCracken's, where I was stopping, when a man standing in the door of what looked like a private house, called to me and asked me to come in. I had never seen him before and know he didn't know me. Why he picked on me I have no idea unless it was because I am an American, and all Americans were supposed to have money.

I was no more than in his house when he said, "Let me sell you the Santiago Gold Mine."

"Isn't that the mine that is working?"

"Yes."

"Are they selling out?"

"No. They have no deed to the mine. They are trespassers. I have the deed here." And he produced it. It was a very old, time-colored deed to a gold mine somewhere near Holguin. I don't remember the date, but it was quite old. He said the owners were working the mine when the Ten Years War broke out in 1868. They fled to Spain, and in time died. When the heirs learned the mine was

working, they sent him the deed and asked him to sell the mine for them.

I was skeptical and said, "The mine is working."

"Yes, it is working now, but I am getting out an injunction against further work, and inside of two weeks all work will stop." He wasn't bluffing. He did just what he said he would.

I made a careful report of what I had seen, then told what I had learned accidentally about the deed, and added, "It looks very much to me like anyone who puts money into that mine will be buying himself a lawsuit." Every time I have thought of that mine in all these years, I have been thankful for that accident. Or was it an accident? Had Major Maude put his money into that mine on my recommendation, I would have been conscience-stricken the rest of my life. Instead he joined with Ray Barker, a cattleman, and they bought the whole island of Turiguano, off the north coast of Cuba, and went into the cattle business. He wasn't a young man then, and I suspect he has long since gone to his reward, but Barker was still there raising cattle when I was in Cuba in 1957.

Rev. Fletcher, Superintendent of Methodist Missions for the Eastern District of Cuba, and the Methodist Church were not so lucky. I first met Rev. Fletcher in a hotel in Holguin during my first year in Cuba, and our paths crossed many times in the next few years. While I was overseer on The Nipe Bay sugar plantation, he was looking for a place to establish a Mission there, and spent a night with us in our Guaro camp. He later established a Mission in Mayari which is still going strong after more than fifty years. While we were living at Omaja', he spent a night in our home. It was a real cold night for Cuba and our house was as well ventilated as the Cuban shacks; and, in addition, had a galvanized iron roof which is much colder than the conventional palm leaves. The plumbing consisted of a washbowl, a pitcher

of water, and a slop jar. When he came out of breakfast next morning, he was rubbing his hands and said, "Con Padre, but it's cold!" He had the best supply of Negro stories, and could tell them the best of anyone I ever knew.

On another meeting, he told me he was establishing a Methodist School in Santiago and asked if I didn't know someone who had a team of horses who could drive the school bus and work around the school and whose wife could run the kitchen for the school. I sent him to my brother, John, who lived in Omaja' at that time and they made a deal. The school was very short-lived, but its influence is still going on.

When we were expecting our first child, I took Birdie down to John's where there was a doctor. There, I met a very unusual boy, Lorenzo Verdecia. First, he was blond, which was rare among Cubans. Second, he spoke some English, which was also rare; and, third, he was working his way through school, which Cuban boys just didn't do in those days. He waited tables and helped generally with the dining room and kitchen work for his schooling. Since neither John nor Lelia spoke much Spanish, Lorenzo was a great help to them in talking to the other students, and they, in turn, helped him with his English. Some years later I met Lorenzo on the train. He was a recorded Methodist minister and was on his way to hold a meeting.

* * * * *

In 1930, while I was helping Henry Kaiser build Cuba's National Highway, my daughter, Vera, went down to Cuba to spend her college vacation teaching English to private pupils. I learned that Lorenzo was head of the English Department at the Camaguey Institute; and, as this was Vera's first attempt at teaching, I took her over for a visit and to get some pointers. He had been to Columbia University to round out his English education and had written a text book for teaching English

which was at that time in use in the Cuban schools. When I was in Cuba in 1953, I learned that he was head of the English Department in the University of Havana and had a son who was a practicing physician in Long Beach, California.

* * * * *

Getting back to Rev. Fletcher. Engineer Black's wife was a Mexican and a Methodist, so they regularly attended Fletcher's meetings in Holguin. When the reports came in so good on the gold mine, Fletcher suggested to Black that since his mine had turned out so well, he should contribute liberally to the new church. Black said he would be glad to but had not yet sold the mine, hence no money, but he would gladly contribute stock in the Company, which he did. Fletcher, very energetic and zealous for his church, promptly got out and sold them and Black sold more on the strength of the church selling them. After the injunction was put on, no more work, and no more gold coming out, these purchasers came onto Fletcher and the Methodist Mission Board and demanded their money back. I never learned whether any money was paid back or not but the Board recalled Fletcher, which was about all they could do under the circumstances. The whole affair was very unfortunate both for Fletcher and for the Methodist Church. I am satisfied that neither Fletcher nor Black had any thought of wrong-doing. The gold was there and they were not lucky enough to learn about the old deed.

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On a recent trip to Cuba I took pains to inquire about the mine. I didn't go out there, and the reports I got were hearsay and somewhat conflicting. Putting them together the best I can I gather that the mine has been opened on a small scale a few times over the years, but promptly closed again.

During World War I, I read some very interesting articles in "The Havana Post", written by a Fletcher who was with the English

army in Mesopotamia. From the fact that the articles were published in "The Havana Post", I always suspected that it was this same Fletcher. On a recent trip to Cuba I was able to confirm my suspicions. After he left Cuba, he went to England and joined the English army as a Chaplain and was sent to General Allenby's army that marched through Mesopotamia into Jerusalem. He returned to the United States, and was for many years a College Professor at Lakeland, Florida.

The article that most impressed me was that the Mesopotamians are the slickest thieves on earth. They are taught that stealing is honorable. To be caught is criminal. One night an English Tommy lost his rifle. To lose your gun in time of war is a serious offense, so the Tommy was court martialed. He testified that he was sleeping on his gun and it was stolen from under him. Next morning, after the court martial, the colonel that acted as court martial judge awoke looking at the stars. The natives had stolen his tent and everything in it except the cot he was sleeping on.

* * * * *

My brother, John, and family and my sister, Luella, decided to come down the summer of 1907. I had neither time nor money to build the concrete house I had planned, so got galvanized iron for the roof, hard wood posts from the woods, royal palm boot legs for the sides, and cheap soft wood lumber for the framing and floor, and built a temporary house where I intended eventually to build a barn.

When John came, he brought with him a team of mares, a span of mules, a wagon, household goods, and some farming equipment for himself, and a stallion and a jack for me. I met them at Antilla and helped clear Customs and ship the goods to Omaja'. They, also, had with them Fred Reich and his ten-or twelve-year-old daughter, from Wabash, Indiana. They were very good friends of my sister, Ruth Anna, and had been in poor health. Both

his doctor and his wife thought a change of climate might benefit both of them. So his wife told them to go down; and, if the climate was sufficiently beneficial, she and the other children would go later.

As soon as they were all moved in, we loaded everybody into the wagon for a trip to my cattle ranch, some nine or ten miles away by horseback trail, but fourteen or fifteen by the cart road. I wanted them to see my ranch and the intervening country, also wanted to get a couple of cows and my saddle ponies. The weather was hot and the cows were back in the woods where we couldn't find them till they came out in the cool of the evening. Leading cows is a long, slow process, and they tire easily, particularly in hot weather. Sometime in the night we came to a stream where we could water the animals, and John suggested we camp till morning. We had taken the precaution before we left home to cut some grass and put it in the wagon bed. Father and I surrendered the wagon to the "tender feet" and stretched ourselves underneath. Next morning Fred's face was a yard long, and he was the most homesick man I ever saw. I asked him what was the matter.

"It's the first time in my life, since I can remember, that I have ever slept with my shoes on."

"You didn't have to sleep with them on. You could have taken them off."

"You slept with yours on."

"It wasn't the first time for me."

When we got home, there was a letter for me to go out on a surveying job. I showed Fred some work to do, and told him to keep his own time and I would pay him when I got back. When I got back, he was gone. He had caught the same boat that brought them down, on its return trip to New York. They said that he was so afraid that John wouldn't get around in time to haul his trunk to the afternoon train, that he got up at four o'clock in the morning and hauled it the mile and three-

quarters on the wheelbarrow. The daughter had always lived in town. Here she had girls her own age to play with; a pony to ride; mangoes to hunt and eat; trees to climb; and while the creek wasn't deep enough to swim in, she did have a lot of fun wading in it. The color had returned to her cheeks, and she was well and happy. She begged to stay but Fred wouldn't let her.

Soon after the folks arrived, a neighbor, Mr. Coleman, was drilling a well for the Baptist Mission College at El Cristo, when the Superintendent, Dr. Mosley, asked him if he didn't know some American woman he could get to run the College kitchen.

He said, "About running the kitchen, I don't know. If it were a teacher you were looking for, a Miss Williams has just come down and I understand she is a College graduate and an experienced teacher."

"Did you say she is a teacher? Do give me her address." He wrote to her; she went down and hired to him; then got her newly acquired friend, Bessie Lytle, to run the kitchen. About a year later Dr. Mosley hired as his secretary, Dr. Robert Anderson, another Quaker from Kansas. We never met him there, but it turned out that he was born and grew up in the same county where four of us Williamses were born. Yes, reader, you guessed it. He and Luella were married and are still living happily together although that has been almost fifty years. (They lived together 56 years and he died 5/16/1965. She is now 97. GLW 12/4/79)

It has often been said that no house is big enough for two families. We most certainly checked that statement. Birdie had said she would not return to Cuba. After John came down, so she would not be alone, I succeeded in persuading her to give it one more trial. When she arrived, it didn't take long for the friction to start. Lelia, John's wife, felt that the house had been built for her and that Birdie was an intruder. Birdie felt that it was our house and she

should boss it. Every night John had to hear all the mean things that Birdie had done to Lelia, and I had to hear about all the mean things Lelia had done to Birdie. The tension became so unbearable that John and I both just about mortgaged our souls to get money to build him a house over on his own farm. That little half-mile made all the difference in the world. They became very good friends. When Birdie had a baby, Lelia took care of her; and, when Lelia had a baby, Birdie took care of her, and they remained the very best of friends as long as Lelia lived, which was twenty-four years.

Not having enough surveying to do, I took any kind of work I could find. I hired Cubans to clear and Spaniards to ditch land for the colonists while I supervised the work. I borrowed John's plow and hired Cubans with their oxen to pull it while I held it and broke up the savanna for colonists with savanna land.

The biggest job I tackled was gathering corn. Homer Arter had one hundred acres of citrus fruit right in front of my house. To help keep it clean and pay expenses, he planted the whole thing in corn. I suspect it was the biggest cornfield ever planted in Cuba up to that time. The land was cleared by cutting everything down and leaving it lie on the ground till dry, then setting fire to it. Brush and small stuff that didn't burn in the first fire were piled and reburned. Bigger poles and logs were left to rot right where they fell. Holes were dug and trees planted right in among the stumps and logs. Then, with a sharp stick, holes were punched in the ground and corn planted between the trees. The whole thing was cultivated with a hoe, a very primitive method.

When it was ready to harvest, he was up against a real proposition. There wasn't a road through the field anywhere. There were no Americans available for shucking the corn, and Cubans didn't know how; and he couldn't talk to them nor teach them. The corn weevil

is very bad in Cuba, and the only corn that survived it was a variety with a heavy, close-fitting husk that extended far beyond the ear, which made it very hard to shuck. Cubans only plant small patches and gather and store it with the husk on till they need it. Arter found sale for his corn, but it had to be shucked; hauled out of the field; shelled; sacked and hauled to the railroad car for shipment. The only vehicles the Cubans had for hauling were pack saddles and ox carts. The pack saddles were obviously impractical, and he was afraid the oxen would ruin his trees. So he came to me.

When John moved to Santiago, as previously mentioned, he left one team and his wagon with me. I rounded up a bunch of Cubans, made a lot of wooden shucking pegs, such as we used on the farm when I was a boy, taught the Cubans how to use the pegs, and paid them by the basket-full to shuck the corn and pile it on the ground. I had men with axes go through and cut roads along the lines of least resistance; then followed through with the wagon and picked up the corn in baskets. Arter furnished a man-powered corn sheller. It was real work and lots of it, but we got it done. It was while I was working on this job that my oldest daughter, Elizabeth, was born in Santiago.

I did many small jobs of many kinds, but just couldn't find enough work to keep profitably busy. The Panama Canal was under construction at that time and they were using a lot of engineers, so I decided to go there. I went to Camaguey to straighten out my business affairs preparatory to leaving, and ran into my old friend, E. H. Strickland. He said, "Williams, why are you running off to Panama just when there is a lot of work about to open up right here in Cuba?"

"Where is it? I hadn't heard of it."

"I am not at liberty to tell you about all of it; but I am working on a deal right now, that if it goes through, you will have all the work you can do for a long time. I

will know definitely in two or three weeks. I can't promise you anything definite, but it won't hurt you here nor lessen your chances of work in Panama to wait that long."

So I went back home to wait. I had logs in the woods, and John had a logging outfit, so I started hauling logs, preparatory to having lumber sawed and building that long-planned house. One evening while we were at supper a Spaniard came along inquiring the road to Buenaventura. That happens to be a little Cuban settlement on the road to my cattle ranch, and it also just so happened that I was driving over there with the wagon next day. I told him it was about four leagues by the cart road, and a league or so shorter by a woods trail. He couldn't possibly follow the woods trail by night; that his best bet would be to spend the night with us and ride over next morning. He said he couldn't wait, so took off. In about half an hour he was back. Said he could see I was right. He couldn't possibly find the trail in the dark, so had no choice but to accept my offer. In the course of the conversation, I told him that I was a civil engineer; at present out of a job; and that if I didn't find work soon, I was going to Panama.

He said, "Man, do you know there is a railroad survey just starting from Marti to Palma Soriano? You might get a job there."

"Are you sure?"

"Certainly, I am sure. I was out at the camp just yesterday."

"What Company is making the survey?"

"The Cuba Company." I wrote two letters immediately; one to the Chief of Party at Marti and the other to the Chief Engineer of the Cuba Company. Two or three days later my neighbor across the street came in to tell me that the sawmill at Omaja' had just burned down, and that my logs were burning. Maybe I could save some of them if I went down immediately. The logs were a total loss, and the house was never built.

In the mail were two letters, answers to the ones I had written. The one from the Chief of Party said he had a full complement of engineers, but he could give me a job as head chainman till something else showed up. The one from Chief Engineer, S. F. Shaw, was brief and to the point. He had two vacancies. Topographer at \$125 a month, and Levelman at \$100. Come to Camaguey and we would talk it over; and he enclosed a pass. I caught the next train to Camaguey. One-hundred-twenty-five dollars a month was real money in those days, so naturally I applied for the topographer job. Never in all my life have I felt like a man was looking right through me as I did when he fixed his eyes on me and asked, "How much topography have you ever taken?"

"I have never held the position of topographer, but I have helped the topographer, and know how it is taken."

"Are you a draftsman?"

"No, sir."

He continued to look through me as he said, "I'm going to let you try that level." He told me to report to Mr. McKie in Palma Soriano next Monday. The interview was over. He called for his pass book and wrote me two passes, one to go home on, the other good for next Sunday from Omaja' to Palma Soriano.