and pry them far enough apart to get a bolt through, then a pair of fish plates are bolted on with just the one bolt and the train goes merrily on its way.

The railroad across the swamp and the absence of crocodiles was all the difference I could see in the swamp. With the railroad, the hunters had better access to the swamp and have killed the crocodiles off for their hides.

The Bahia de Cochina (Bay of Pigs) is one of the few deep water bays on the south coast. The owner of the, then new sugar mill, Australia, built the railroad intending to build docks and ship the sugar from all the nearby mills from there, instead of the long haul to the few ports on the north coast. Soon after the railroad was across,he was killed in an accident. During the settlement of the estate and other complications, the price of sugar went down and the docks remain unbuilt. The railroad was built on what engineers call cribbing. Logs laid lengthwise with shorter timbers crosswise and more logs lengthwise. Once the trains could cross,they hauled dirt and rocks in and built it up to three feet above water. It has now been in operation for almost forty years and has never been maintained in the usual sense of the word. It has sunk until it is all under water across the swamp. There is a lot of timber on the coastal ridge and it is used to haul out logs, cross ties, and charcoal and to supply the workers down there.

The locomotive and cars are light weight, but it operates.

While there I found three men who worked on the surveys but none who worked on my crew. One who worked with me had died within the year.

Next I returned to the Kinsey Clan, and we divided our time between visiting and feasting. We had another feast at Antonio Rutz's place, one with John Sundheimer, one with Mr. Schaum at the Baragua' Sugar Mill, and one with Mr. Erb, Manager of the Electric Light Plant in Ciego de Avila. We made our return flight to Miami,January 22nd, 1954.

Today, June 12, 1977, Noah K. Williams, my father, reached 98 years of age. This autobiography of his has been lying around our house for nearly 10 years, but my wife, Ethel, and I have just gotten around to reading it. From its contents, it appears that he wrote it in 1959. He includes accounts of his trip to Cuba in 1953 and one to Mexico in 1954, but nothing later. Perhaps I can add a bit.

He retired from the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation in 1951, as he stated, at the age of 72, and after 15 years of employment. Although the entire job was far below his capability and experience level, it was by far his longest single employment. In 1937, after his first year with them, he was granted the first vacation with pay that he had ever experienced. All of his previous vacations were between relatively short-time jobs that were definitely without vacation or retirement benefits. That vacation he visited us in Denver, where I, a Bureau of Reclamation Junior Engineer in my mid-twenties, was earning more than he, who had been doing responsible engineering work for 1/3 of a century.

Apparently much of the above gap between 1954 and 1959 was used in writing this book. After writing it, his granddaughter, Susie Williams, who was a high-school girl typed part of it. As that was a slow process, he went to school to learn typing—in his late 70's—and typed it himself. He worked long and hard on this book, referring to such diary notes as he had salvaged from the 1928 hurricane.

He and Mrs. Kinsey—known by many as Pop and Mamita (pronounced Mámeetá)—were married in 1941, shortly before Pearl Harbor. He was 62, and she 65 when they were married, but they lived to celebrate their silver wedding anniversary - the second one for each of them. Actually, to my knowledge, we were acquainted with the Kinseys by 1914 (before I was 4), which in their case, continued until her death in November 1967. (Mr. Kinsey was killed in a logging accident, in Cuba, during the Depression). Many Americans in Cuba, shortly after the turn-of-the-century, became well acquainted with each other.

When they retired, in 1951, they moved to Ft. Pierce, Florida, to be near my brother, Kenneth, who operated a dairy there; and fairly close to her two

sons who still lived in Cuba. (This was some time before Castro.) They also preferred a mild climate—the more like Cuba's, the better. While living in Ft. Pierce, besides taking the above trips and writing this book, he dabbled a bit in real estate. They continued to live there and care for their house and yard until they were in their late 80's. This was for several years after Kenneth moved his dairy to Melbourne, Florida. About 1966, they moved to Dania, Florida, to a co-op building in which her daughter, Ruth, had resided for a few years.

Unlike Pop, I felt able to retire at the age of 55 and, after some traveling abroad, returned from over-seas work in late 1966. In the spring of 1967, besides other travels in the U. S., Ethel and I took Pop and Mamita on a rather long automobile trip from Florida to visit relatives in California, Oregon, Illinois, and Indiana. Mamita, who was 90, was a bit reluctant to undertake such a trip, but she weathered it very well and thoroughly enjoyed it.

The following fall, November 1967, at the age of 91, Mamita suddenly died with a heart attack. She had prepared her usual 3 meals for the two of them on the previous day. With her death, Ethel and I cut short our travels in South America, returned to Florida to live, bought a house for ourselves in greater Miami, and took Pop to live with us. Except for periods of a few weeks at a time, when he has visited his other children, he has lived with us ever since.

The summer of 1969 we celebrated Pop's 90th birthday in a big way. Ethel put on two big parties for him. One was with his brother, sisters, and cousins on his birthday, June 12. The other was with his 8 children, many of his grandchildren, some of his great-grandchildren, and our mother, Birdie, who was 83. One son, Richard, drove from Alaska to Florida, with several of his children, to be present. Others came from as far as Oregon and California. Later, that year, Ethel and I took him, by car, to visit relatives in Tennessee, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Indiana, and Illinois. Since then he has made several air trips—sometimes alone—to visit relatives and attend family funerals in the U.S.—one of which was that of my mother, Birdie, who died in Los Angeles, February 2, 1972.

At 98, he is frequently quite alert. He generally takes care of himself and has all of his faculties, except that he cannot take a step without his 4-legged walker. Some advocate much exercise to stay healthy but he has never exercised deliberately. In high school, he walked six miles per day for 4 years besides doing farm chores. As a farm boy and as a land surveyor he walked great distances - as his book indicates - but his legs are the first part of his body to become incapacitated. It makes one wonder at the need for physical exercise, touted by people who will never reach 98. He came from a Quaker family of well-disciplined habits, and many of them have lived well into their 90's.

Pop's medical treatment during his 10 years with us consisted of prostate and cataract operations and treatment for a heart attack. He has often expressed gratitude that he has neither an ache nor a pain, which is wonderful, considering the rheumatic pain he suffered so much when he was a high-school and college student.

Of the incidents mentioned in his book, a few more on the construction of the sugar mill at Aguada de Pasajeros, in Cuba, come to mind. Our mother took us 4 children there to join him. I, at nearly 5, was next to the oldest. We arrived at the rail station at a little town some 5 miles from the mill site. We rode that 5 miles after dark on a little flat railroad car, normally pushed by hand; but, this time, pulled by a horse that trotted along a foot path between the rails. It was a smooth and thrilling ride.

I recall, distinctly, the incident of the macheteman getting his hand cut off. As several men were giving him such first aid as they could, on the porch of the Casa Grande, where many of us lived, I walked around the corner of the porch to see the excitement. That sight surely ruined my appetite!

That Casa Grande was equipped with gas lights, supplied by a carbide generator located in an outhouse in the backyard. One rainy night it gave some trouble, so the chief electrician, Mr. Clark, went out to correct it. He took a young Cuban along to hold the kerosene lantern for him. Like most Americans, his Spanish was poor and did not convince the Cuban that he should stand out in the rain with the

light. Thus, he came into the out-house behind Mr. Clark. The resulting explosion burned them both, but especially Mr. Clark. My mother, the daughter of a Nebraska country doctor, took over his treatment and had him back at work in a few weeks.

As time went on, the mill acquired a 1915 model gasoline-driven railroad motorcar, quite suitable for travel along the plantation rails. (1915 was even early for automobile travel.) On one occasion, Mr. Clark took our whole family to do some shopping—such as could be done in that village. The motorcar had no lights. On the return trip, as the tropical darkness was closing in, we were putt-putting along at full speed—perhaps 25 miles per hour—when Mr. Clark suddenly saw something on the rails ahead. He tried to stop, but we plunged right into a spike-toothed harrow. Those of us who were on the front seat shot forward like so many clay pigeons. We were scratched and bruised, but had no serious injuries. I think my father never learned who put the harrow there, or why, but he rather suspected a man that he had recently fired from the mill construction.

Shortly thereafter, we moved to a newly constructed house built for the mill operators. It had electric lights, running water, a cold shower, and a boardwalk to the out-house. We were living it up! Mother, with the help of a Cuban house-boy took on the job of boarding the American construction staff of a dozen men. It was no easy chore for the mother of 4 small children. I was a big help! On one occasion, I dropped a stack of 12 soup plates, and was elated because 2 of them didn't break!

One evening, she undertook to show us that a person could whirl a bucket of water up over his head without spilling it. The experiment was a complete success, but the bucket knocked off the tip of the light bulb, hanging from the ceiling, which promptly went ps-s-s-t, then darkness. It was many years before I, as a budding engineer, learned about the centrifugal force in the bucket, or why Edison put the glass tip on that Mazda lamp. Sometimes, Physics experiments overlap.

In time, the mill was completed and fired up. We all went over to see the opening operation. The part that intrigued me, was seeing the cane cars dump

into the hopper. A locomotive spotted the cars, one at a time, on the tipple. The cars, in turn, were then chained to the rails and the car and all were tipped over, spilling the cane into the hopper that fed the mill. It was an impressive sight for a 5-year-old boy.

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One of Mr. Clark's electricians was named Jack Baker. He had come to Cuba from West Palm Beach, Florida. When we moved to West Palm Beach about 3 years later, my father kept an eye open for a possible encounter with him. The 1919 Armistice celebration, a year later, was a big community affair. The whole town turned out to the City Park enmass. Suddenly, Pop said, "I think I see Jack Baker" and ran over and tagged him.

He said, "Say, aren't you Jack Baker?"

The man replied, "Why, no, I'm —— why, hello, Mr. Williams." It turned out, that for reasons best known to himself, his name was Jack Baker in Cuba, but Pherigo in West Palm Beach. Also, by coincidence, he reported that his last job before going to Cuba, some 4 or 5 years earlier, was to wire the house that we later bought — 623 Jessamine Street.

* * * * * * * * * * *

In summary, the road Pop traveled from his cradle near Parsons, Kansas, to his rocking-chair in Miami has been a very long one in both time and distance. It was a bit rough in spots, a bit drab in others, but, in retrospect, was most interesting. He has always been a good father to us, a good and unselfish provider, and of exemplary character. If he ever cheated anybody, I never learned of it. As of now, he is the proud progenitor of 8 living children, 35 grandchildren, 46 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandson.

Time marches on!

Gordon L. Williams

P.P.S.

A month later, July 11, 1977, Pop had a stroke while visiting my brother, Kenneth, at Melbourne, Florida. This led to several days in the hospital and several weeks at a nursing home in Melbourne.

In mid-September, we bought him a wheelchair

and brought him back to our home in Miami. He had no paralysis, and was able to walk several steps about the house if somebody steadied his walker. For longer distances, we used the wheelchair, in which he was very comfortable. He made several trips in the car with us, including attendance at family reunions at Melbourne, Florida; Cocoa, Florida; and at our second home, near Leesburg, Florida.

He died in the hospital at Leesburg, January 29, 1979 - 4½ months short of reaching 100. He was laid to rest with Mamita at Hollywood Memorial Gardens, Hollywood, Florida.

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This is written at the suggestion of my daughter, Sarah Williams Finnell, to record what my father told me about the untimely and tragic death of his mother, Lydia Tomlinson Williams (1846—1886).

On September 28, 1886, Lydia — a big woman of 40, expecting her seventh child — was carrying a crock of liquid down rickety, termite-eaten steps into the basement of their dilapidated rough-lumber home, when the steps gave way, dropping her to the basement floor. She called to her sons, Robert, 9, and Noah, 7, to run get their father, Nathan, in a nearby field. Nathan promptly unhitched one horse and galloped home bareback, yelling back to the boys to bring in the other horse and the plow. The following day, the infant was born dead, and she followed it in death. They were buried in a common grave in the graveyard of the Friendship Meeting House, near Parsons, Kansas.

Miami, Florida
January 29, 1979

To Elizabeth:

Remember back, Sister, to when we were small
And lived down in Cuba—the primitive part—
Our pacing mare, Roxy, perhaps you'll recall—
The one with a compass, it seemed, in her heart;
For truly could Roxy go home!

Remember the stories that Mamma would tell—
Like dark in the woods, and a path ill-defined—
How Villagers, lost, were consoled by her yell,
"Let me ride in front, and just follow behind";
Then Roxy would lead the group home!

And then there were times, at the close of the day,
She'd tuck us in bed and she'd blow out the light;
Then whispering softly to us she would say,
"Now Papa's on Roxy, away in the night;
And Roxy is bringing him home!"

At last, in the dark that preceded the day,
While list'ning and waiting—when gone was the moon—
From down by the gate, we would hear Roxy neigh;
And hear Papa whistle his tuneless own tune—
Our Roxy had carried him home!

The year of '18, and our move to this state,
Meant turning out Roxy to graze where she may.
And thence, in her Pasture Beyond the Big Gate,
For 3 scores of years she's awaited this day,
When Papa would need a ride home.

His one-hundredth year brought the call that he heard—
That quickened his actions and sharpened his sight—
So, straight in his saddle, and booted and spurred,
Once more, through the dark, he rides Roxy to-night;
And Roxy will carry him HOME!

Your Brother,

Gordon

THE NOAH WILLIAMS FAMILY, JULY 3,1969

Gordon John Mary Kenneth Richard
Elizabeth Birdie Noah Esther
Vera