

HOME TOWN HELPS

IN FIGHT FOR CIVIC BEAUTY

Commercial Interests of Kansas City have gone on record as enemies of the "uglies."

The city planning and public buildings committee of the chamber of commerce adopted a resolution, taking a definite stand against "the encroachment of either filling stations or billboards on the city's boulevards and homes."

The resolution stated that the chamber members are heartily in accord with and desire to lend their moral support to the joint resolution of the two houses of the council to the effect that filling stations and billboards should not be permitted to destroy the effect of Kansas City's boulevard system.

After a protracted discussion the committee declared in favor of a "local option" on the uglies. By that was meant that each neighborhood be permitted to decide whether billboards or filling stations should be allowed to locate in that vicinity. The residents whose homes are within view, or within close proximity of the ugly, should have a voice in denying or permitting its location, the committee members believed.

Billboards in certain localities are not objectionable if properly constructed and lighted, in the opinion of the committee. But their place is not in residence neighborhoods or on boulevards, they agreed.

WAR ON INDUSTRIAL UNREST

"Community Service" Idea Is Spreading, for Many Good and Substantial Reasons.

"Community Service, Incorporated" shortly will take its place as a definite factor in the industrial life of Illinois. This announcement comes through Maj. A. A. Sprague, chairman of the executive-financial committee for Illinois. Organization has been completed for Illinois and the plans for the establishment of the work are under way.

The aim of Community Service is to improve living and leisure conditions that through their development a peaceful, settled and contented community atmosphere will prevail and industrial unrest to a great degree be removed.

The work of the organization has passed the experimental stage. It has been found to be a very solid and substantial success in the big industrial communities of Bethlehem and Chester, Pa. The main work of Community Service is the solution of the leisure hour problem. A trained organizer will be sent to various communities to study conditions and make a survey of the social and recreational life, determining what is most needed and most desirable for the occupation of the leisure hours of the community, and then assisting them to provide and build up a service system for themselves.

House Painting.

When the home owner's thoughts turn to house painting problems Californians, particularly, begin to wonder what color will be best for the movies. A location director for motion pictures in Hollywood, Cal., says that white houses are almost impossible for use in motion pictures and he hopes the people within the area of the picture industry will use neutral or dark shades when they do their house painting.

"Darker shades are more agreeable to the eye than those of dazzling whiteness," so this movie director says, "and they photograph better, in addition to blending with the natural colors of the landscape."

All-white houses are also hard on the eyes.

Beauty Not Matter of Expense.

Beautiful grounds need not be expensive. The loveliest flowers and plants that ever grew are found in the woods and along the banks of streams, in fence corners, and in fields and shady nooks. They are yours for the digging. What is rarer or prettier than a bed of wild violets and ferns in a shady spot near the house? Plant generously of perennials, so that they will bloom and grow year after year with little time and attention and give stability to your landscape effects.

Willie Had a Reason.

Willie Hopkins is only ten years old, but, strange to tell, he brushes his own hair and washes his ears without parental coercion. It must be admitted that Willie started this most uncommon practice within the last few days. The young man's mother was dumfounded when she walked into his room and found him plastering down his hair with a brush.

"You're a very good boy," she said. "Did you ever come to think of brushing your hair and washing your face?" Willie looked sheepish and then replied: "Mary Brown told me I was good looking."—New York Sun.

Don't Keep Auto in Barn.

The barn is a bad place for the automobile. Build a garage.

OKEFINOKEE? NATIONAL PARK?



COWHOUSE RUN

OKEFINOKEE NATIONAL PARK! That sounds like a paradox. For Okefinokee is the name of a tremendous big swamp in Georgia and what does the United States national park system need of a big swamp? Anyway, there is a bill in congress for the establishment of the Okefinokee National park in this very swamp. And the request for its establishment is made in the name of the state of Georgia.

The proposition is not such a paradox as it seems at first thought. The national park enthusiasts of the country would have the national parks system comprehensive. It is already fairly so. For example, it contains the Grand Canyon, the most wonderful example in the world of stream erosion; the majestic granite peaks of the Continental divide in Rocky Mountain; the freakish volcanic activities of the Yellowstone; the relics of a prehistoric people in Mesa Verde; Crater Lake, in the crater of a prehistoric volcano; Lafayette on the coast of Maine, exemplifying the oldest rock forms in America; Mount Rainier, a vast single peak with 28 living glaciers; Sequoia with its millions of Big Trees.

This desire for a national park system that shall be comprehensive is shown in the movements to establish the Redwoods National park in California, the Mississippi Valley National park, the Mammoth Cave National park in Kentucky, the Dunes National park in Indiana and the Okefinokee National park in Georgia. In the "Statement of National Park Policy," made in 1918 by the late Franklin K. Lane as secretary of the Interior, is found this:

"In studying new park projects you should seek to find scenery of supreme and distinctive quality or some natural feature so extraordinary or unique as to be of national interest and importance. You should seek distinguished examples of typical forms of world architecture. . . . The national park system as now constituted should not be lowered in standard, dignity and prestige by the inclusion of areas which express in less than the standard terms the particular class or kind of exhibit which they represent."

Okefinokee is without doubt a natural wonder. It covers nearly seven hundred square miles in southeastern Georgia. Among the freshwater swamps only of the Mississippi it is exceeded in size only by the Everglades. Its scenery is first class of its kind. It is a refuge for some exceptionally rare forms of animal life. It is an important wintering ground for large numbers of migratory waterfowl. It has extraordinary interest as a floral area. It still contains, in spite of extensive lumbering operations, about 500 square miles of diversified territory in an absolutely primeval state. This latter fact is important, inasmuch as it is stated that the Dismal Swamp and the Everglades have already been changed by man beyond the hope or possibility of preservation in a natural state.

So, if there is to be a swamp national park, it would appear to be a case of Okefinokee or nothing.

Even should the destiny of Okefinokee not be that of a national park, it is possible and even probable that some of its area will be preserved to the nation through the Okefinokee society. This society was organized in 1918, its object being "to give authentic publicity regarding the Okefinokee swamp; to secure its reservation and preservation for public, educational, scientific and recreational uses." The society has the hearty endorsement of the National Park association, the United States biological survey, the American Museum of Natural History, the National Association of Audubon societies, the Ecological Society of America, the American Game Protective association, the State Geological Survey of Georgia, the Cornell university departments of zoology and entomology, and many scientists and nature lovers throughout the country. The president of the society is Professor James G. Needham of Cornell university, and the secretary, Dr. J. F. Wilson of Waycross, Georgia.

One of the first aims of the society is to secure certain representative portions of the swamp as the nucleus of a reservation to which additions may be made as rapidly as opportunity or funds permit. The society plans, after securing the area for a reservation, to present it to the United States government, in order that it may be administered and perpetuated as a national wild life refuge.

Okefinokee was named by the Indians. The name means "Trembling Earth." It is an inspiration, since often it is hard to say where the land ends and the water begins. Cowhouse Run, for example, is almost solid with water lilies and "never-wets" (Orontium); yet a boat can be poled through it between colonnades of cypress to islands covered with long-leaved pine (Pinus palustris). The otter hunter goes about in a flat-bottomed craft with his hound. The Big Water stretches for miles between shoreless margins flanked by cypress; here one may discard the forked push-pole and take to the paddle. Chase



OKEFINOKEE SWAMP

Prairie is typical of the so-called "prairies" of the swamp. These prairies are essentially marshes, with more or less open water, but practically filled with a luxuriant growth of aquatic plants. These include water lilies, maiden cane, pitcher plants, arrowhead, arrow arum, saw grass, fern, paint root and sphagnum. They are the favored resort of waterfowl. Here and there on the prairies stand picturesque clumps or heads of cypress and pine. Yet abundant crops of corn and sweet potatoes are raised in the swamp and much of it may be wended.

Francis Harper, assistant biologist of the United States biological survey, contributes an interesting article on "Okefinokee Swamp as a Reservation" to Natural History. Of its animal and plant life he says, in part:

There are probably between one and two hundred black bears in the swamp and its immediate environs; the Florida deer is a rather common and well-distributed species on the islands and in other parts of the swamp; the Florida otter is a fairly common denizen of this wilderness; several panthers have been recorded about the borders within the past few years; a Florida wolf was killed near the edge of the swamp about 1910; and some animal believed to be a wolf was heard in the swamp several times in 1916. This species is virtually extinct, and there are only one or two specimens in the museums of the country. That curious little animal, the Florida water rat or round-tailed muskrat (Neofiber alleni), has just recently been discovered in the swamp. It is very abundant here in its only known habitat in Georgia.

The ivorybill, our greatest and most magnificent woodpecker, now on the very verge of extinction, has maintained in the Okefinokee one of its last strongholds. The great pileated woodpecker, scarcely less splendid than the ivorybill, is astonishingly abundant, its numbers here perhaps surpassing those of any other part of the country. The American egret, once nearly exterminated for its plumes, has been found breeding in the environs of the swamp. It also has here a safe winter refuge. The Okefinokee is the only place in Georgia where one may find the sand-hill crane and the limpkin. The former is a resident and quite common species, but only one or two of the curious and fast-disappearing limpkins have been observed in the swamp, which doubtless represents the northern limit of their breeding range. The wood duck is a resident species of which there are probably hundreds of individuals in the swamp. In the entire country there is perhaps no other equally favorable habitat for this rare and beautiful little duck.

As a wintering ground for migratory waterfowl, the Okefinokee is of very considerable importance. Eleven species of interest to game conservationists were found wintering in 1916-17, in numbers loosely estimated as follows: hooded merganser, several hundred; mallard, several thousand; black duck, 1,000; green-winged teal, 25; pintail, 50; wood duck, 300; ring-necked duck, several hundred; sandhill crane, 100; woodcock, 100; Wilson's snipe, 500; killdeer, 100. Altogether about 85 species of birds have been recorded from the swamp in summer, and about 90 in winter. At the latter season it attracts great numbers of berry and fruit-eating birds.

At present a considerable amount of hunting is carried on, chiefly by residents in and about the swamp. Deer, bears, and wildcats are hunted with hounds at virtually all seasons of the year. Not only the ordinary game birds, but also such species as the wood ibis, Ward's heron, sand-hill crane, and occasionally even a cormorant or a water turkey, are killed and eaten. The wood duck, although protected by both state and fed-

eral laws, is killed in considerable numbers; some have been sold in recent years at the rate of three for a dollar. Wild turkeys are now much scarcer than formerly, but their numbers might be restored by proper protection. Bobwhites are still common.

Trapping is extensively practiced. Great numbers of raccoons and several dozens of otters are taken every winter. Smaller numbers of wildcats, opossums, and skunks are trapped.

The Mississippi alligator, now rapidly disappearing from the haunts of man, has found the Okefinokee a goodly place in which to survive. For the student of herpetology the region holds a vast and fascinating store of riches.

The swamp waters abound in fish life, including pickerel, large-mouthed black bass and other smaller bass, short-nosed gars, chub suckers, mudfish (Amla), various species of catfish, and numerous killifishes. Among the recent discoveries is a particularly dainty little fish, Lucania omata, which was previously known only from a few specimens taken in Florida; it enjoys the distinction of being one of the very tiniest of existing vertebrates.

The wonderfully rich and diverse plant life of the Okefinokee constitutes one of its greatest charms and beauties. And herein one may perceive a veritable illustration of the "curse of beauty"; for it is the magnificent timber of the swamp that furnishes its commercial value and has invited destructive exploitation. There are two major types of forest growth—the pine barrens on the islands, and the cypress "bays" occupying inundated portions of the swamp.

The so-called pine barrens are open forests of long-leaved slash pines, between whose straight and lofty trunks one may look for a distance of a quarter of a mile in almost any direction. The low undergrowth consists principally of saw palmetto, together with a profusion of huckleberries and blueberries, which form an important element in the food of many birds and mammals. One may find on some of the Okefinokee islands, where the "turpentine" and the logger have not yet penetrated, the southern pine forest in its finest glory.

In the "bays," which cover a large portion of the swamp, the dominant growth is the pond cypress. Probably nowhere else in the world does it attain a heavier growth or finer proportions. Other trees in this habitat are the black gum, red bay, white bay, sweet bay, and red maple.

There are a number of other distinct types of vegetation in the swamp, including hammocks, "sand scrub," sphagnum bogs, and cypress ponds, each with a charm of its own.

For ten years past the very existence of the Okefinokee, in any condition worth preserving, has been threatened by rapidly extending commercial operations, until matters have now reached an acute stage. One lumber company, with a great mill near Waycross, has already removed the heavy cypress timber in the northwestern quarter of the swamp north of Billy's island. The company's railroad, with many branches, now extends to the very heart of the swamp between Billy's and Floyd's islands. Another company has turpented the magnificent pines on Billy's island and the Pocket. Thus the area already devastated probably comprises more than one hundred square miles; and there is a constant menace of industrial encroachment from all sides of the swamp.

Fortunately, the entire area in which the removal of the timber either has been accomplished or is being planned, comprises only about one third of the swamp. This lies mainly in the northwestern part, extending south to Honey Island and east to Minne's lake; and also through the "bays" northeast of Billy's island to Floyd's island, Floyd's island, in the eastern part of the swamp, is the most diversified, and in some respects the most interesting of the islands. The owners have kept it as a sort of game preserve, and it is evidently in no immediate danger of exploitation.

Plans are already being considered for a definite system of drainage operations, to be started after the timber has been taken out, for the purpose of converting the swamp into land suitable for agricultural purposes.

So it appears that if Okefinokee is to be saved it must be soon.

In 1880 the state of Georgia sold Okefinokee to a lumbering syndicate for 20 1/2 cents an acre. The pity of it!

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