

WILLIAM ALDERMAN 1838-1893  
A PIONEER SETTLER OF MANATEE COUNTY

The following pioneer sketch was researched, compiled and contributed by a great-grandson of William Alderman, Kyle S. VanLandingham of P. O. Box 1779, Fort Pierce, Florida 33450.

The Aldermans were among the earliest of pioneer families in south Florida. In 1848, James Alderman and his large family moved from Thomas County, Georgia to Hillsborough County, settling in the Alafia River section. James' son, William was born in Thomas County on June 25, 1838 and came with his parents to south Florida when a young boy. Records of the Third Seminole War show that William Alderman served in Company M, Florida Mounted Volunteers, commanded by Capt. William B. Hooker. The company was mustered into the service of the state on Jan. 3, 1856; later mustered into federal service, Feb. 27, 1856. Also in the company were several of William's brothers, including Matthew, Michael and Mitchell Alderman.

On Sept. 14, 1859, William Alderman registered the following brands for his use in Hillsborough County: **WA**, **J**. In the 1860 Census for Hillsborough County, William is listed in the household of his father, James Alderman. On Sept. 25, 1860, William was married to Mary Ann Moody, daughter of Benjamin F. and Nancy (Hooker) Moody. Mary Ann died shortly after the marriage and there were no children.

After the death of his wife, William moved to Manatee Co., where he married, March 16, 1863 to Martha Jane Hollingsworth, eldest child of John Henry and Ann Elizabeth (Hooker) Hollingsworth. Martha Jane was born in Hillsborough County, Feb. 12, 1847. Her family lived in the Manatee settlement of Hillsborough County and were cut into Manatee County when it was created in 1855. There was no opportunity for formal education where Martha Jane lived so she went to Tampa to stay with her mother's relatives. In the 1860 Census, she is shown residing with her aunt and uncle, Martha (Hooker) Hagler and Benjamin Hagler. Martha Jane attended school at the Tampa home of her grandparents, Captain and Mrs. William B. Hooker.

When the Civil War began in 1861, Florida joined the Confederacy but Manatee County in southwest Florida was an area of divided sympathies. It is easy to understand why many of the Manatee County cattlemen remained loyal to the Union. Few owned slaves or had any close ties to the Southern aristocracy; and the idea of leaving one's family in the wilderness to go off and fight in the fields of Virginia and Tennessee did not appeal to a large number of these independent minded people. Also, the Union garrison was nearby at Fort Myers and the Federals paid gold coins for cattle while the Confederate agents paid only worthless paper money. William Alderman, along with a number of other men in his section, refused to answer the South's call for men and when the Conscription Act was passed in 1862, he was forced to "lay out" in the back country to avoid the Confederate agents. It is said that at one time he offered his services to the Union Army but was told that he would be more useful in