

quickly. He shouted, "Boys, I'm not going to let that tiger kill my dogs!"

"With great courage and strength, he waded into the palmetto patch. Then with sledge-hammer fist blows, assisted by his bleeding dogs, he finally killed the panther. Opening his pocket knife, he cut the panther's throat and dragged him out of the palmetto patch.

"Soon after this fight Cicero arrived with the muzzle-loader & they killed the panther in the tree. They cut off the heads of both panthers, for which they would collect a bounty. The badly cut and bleeding dogs were treated with raw pine gum. There was no more hog hunting that day. All returned to Mr. Albritton's home for a grand meal. Vegetables from the cow-penned garden, grated corn pone, potato pone, cassava pone, buttermilk and curd, homemade rice with red eye gravy, corn syrup and honey for a sopping dessert.

"The oak and cabbage hammock where the bare-hand panther fight was made and the panther killed is to this day known as Tiger Hammock."

Thomas H. Albritton and other settlers of the Horse Creek area would either travel to Fort Meade or Fort Ogden to buy supplies which they needed. They would travel by horse & wagon and would camp several days at Boggess Landing, near Fort Ogden, waiting for the supply ships to come in. On one of these trips, when the supply ship pulled in, a young Cuban boy ran off of and away from the ship. One of the pioneers, a veteran of the Mexican War and who could understand Spanish, grabbed the boy and told him to get back on the ship. The boy began crying and begged not to be sent back to Cuba. He said that his father had killed his brother & threatened to kill him if he did not dig a grave & bury the dead brother. Thomas H. Albritton came up & through the interpreter, told the young Cuban boy that he could live with him & his family.

On July 22, 1871, Thomas H. and Francis Albritton were listed as charter members of Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church located in Hillsborough County near the Polk County line. Mrs. Frances Waldron Albritton died on September 15, 1879 and was buried at the Lily Cemetery in present day Hardee County.

The 1880 Manatee County census shows Thomas H. Albritton residing with his three youngest children, Ann, Arcadia & Oregon.

On October 9, 1881 at Fellowship Chapel in Manatee County, Thomas married Mrs. Syndarilla (Syndrella) Byrd Hutchinson. Marriage was performed by Elder Andrew Kicklighter. Syndarilla was born Aug. 29, 1830 and was the widow of John M. Hutchinson, by which she had four children.

Thomas Albritton later moved to Polk County and settled in the Chicora community where he was living in 1892 when he applied for a pension based on his Indian War service. When the Bethlehem Primitive Baptist Church was reconstituted in Jan. 22, 1898, Thomas H. and Cindrella Albritton were charter members.

In 1906, The Punta Gorda Herald had this to say about Thomas: "A Polk County Patriarch". Mr. T. H. Albritton of Chicora, Polk Co., Fla., has 170 living descendants: 12 children, 80 grandchildren, 76 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren. He is as lively as a 17-year old boy, as active as a man of 30, full of good nature, genial and social in the highest degree, and it is said that he can give the Indian warwhoop loud enough to be heard two miles away."

Thomas H. Albritton died on February 19, 1907 at his daughter, Ann Carlton's home in Bowling Green. The body was brought by train to Gardner, and from Gardner, the body was transported by horse and wagon to Lily, where he was buried besides Frances Albritton, his second wife. Mrs. Syndrella Albritton died on August 27, 1915 and was buried at Bethlehem cemetery.