

before filing his homestead application on September 7, 1883, at the land office in Gainesville, Florida. When he filed this application, two of his neighbors, Ephraim A. Hill and James P. Allen, were his witnesses and verified Joshua's statements about the improvements made on the land since 1871, and their value. Joshua stated that, to that time, he had cleared and fenced fifteen acres and had cultivated five acres. He also stated that besides this dwelling he had built several 'out houses' as he called them, and he valued these improvements at \$600.00.

There is an interesting story concerning these small houses, which he called his 'out houses'. There were four or possibly five of them. Joshua needed help in clearing and developing this new land, so he hired workers to help him in this task. He built these houses for the workers to live in while they were working for him. In later years when his farm was as large as he wanted and when his children were old enough to help him, he did not need hired workers, so these houses were used for other purposes. In 1891, when his daughter, Martha Jane, married, she and her husband, James E. Keen, lived in one of these houses for some time. Her first child, my first cousin, was born there, so he told me. In 1910, my own family lived in one of these houses. At that time there were five children in our family, so this house, which had four small rooms and a front porch, was probably the largest of the 'out houses'.

In September of 1890, seven years after Joshua filed his homestead application, his claim was finalized. This seven year period was called 'lapsed final proof', which meant that a two year grace period was added to the regular five year period required to finalize a homestead claim. The claimant could take advantage of this grace period if he had a good reason for the delay. However, the law required that the final proof be presented, witnessed, examined, and approved before the seventh year expired or the claim would be forfeited. So, early in the year of 1890, January 25, Joshua notified the land office of his intention to present his final proof and establish his claim. A complete description of the land and his intention to establish his claim was advertised for six weeks as required. Then on March 26, 1890, as his final proof, he gave information about settling the land, living there continuously, and improving the land by \$700.00. His two witnesses, Ephraim A. Hill and James P. Allen verified all the statements made. So by September 23, 1890, Joshua H. Hunter's homestead claim was examined and approved by the land office in Gainesville, Florida, which meant that his claim was established and he would receive a deed to the 39.57 acre tract of land he had lived on for nineteen years.

Joshua Hunter's final proof reveals some very interesting facts. He stated that he had eleven acres under cultivation and that he used an average of eight acres per year for his crops. His main crops were corn, potatoes, peas, and sugar cane. He also mentioned his orange trees. His farming tools were simple plows, hoes, rakes, and shovels. He had a yoke of oxen and a horse and wagon, which was used for farming and transportation. He also had some hogs and chickens. Ten of his children were living with him at that time. With a family that large, his dwelling, which he valued at \$75.00, was quite different from the first log house he