

IN THE 'GLADES

Prof. C. B. Cory Tells About What He Saw In The Everglades

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Among the late-lingering tourists in this city is Prof. C.B. Cory, of Boston, Mass., who has been here in Florida since the early days of winter, most of the time at Lake Worth and in the game lands of the lower East Coast country, the New River region, the Biscayne Bay section and in the Everglades themselves. In these days it is quite unusual to find a man who combines with a genuine love of nature and a passion for sports afield learning, culture, wealth and leisure. But Professor Cory presents this combination in a way at once practical and attractive. He is well-born, well-bred, educated, possessed of ample means, and is a thorough naturalist. The greater portion of his 38 years has been devoted to the study of birds, animals and fishes, and he is the author of a dozen or more works on natural history. His knowledge of this subject is the result of life out of doors and personal contact for many months at a time with the denizens of the forest in nearly every country on the face of the globe.

At present he has in preparation a book on the birds, animals and fish of Florida, and it was with a view to "rounding up" his information on these subjects that he went on a long hunting expedition in the lower peninsular region last winter and spent several months among the Seminole



Professor Charles B. Cory, photographed with a panther killed in the Everglades of today's Broward County, 1895 (photo from *Hunting and Fishing in Florida*).

Indians in the Everglades and the area lying east and north of them. He made the Hotel Royal Poinciana at Palm Beach a basis of operations and a source of supply, and from there explored most of the country in the Lake Worth, New River and Biscayne Bay regions, even into the depths of the Everglades. To a few of his friends grouped about him on the porch of the Hotel Cordova a night or two ago Mr. Cory talked most entertainingly of his experience in the forest, and among the Indians, and subsequently gave his permission for the publication of portions of the story.

I was anxious, said the naturalist, to procure an Indian guide, for I knew of no white man who had a thorough knowledge of the Everglades region; and, besides this, I wanted to obtain some photographs of living wild animals, and I knew of no one who could aid me better than an Indian. Taking with me as guide and part companion, part "handy man," my old acquaintance, John Davis (who, by the way, is by far the best guide to be had in South Florida), I went directly to New River, about forty-five miles south of Palm Beach and found there a number of Indians in camp, but it was only after being several weeks in their vicinity that they became at all friendly with me.

From his youth, Charles Barney Cory, heir to a silk and wine fortune, used his wealth and leisure time to indulge in his love for hunting, fishing, and studying wildlife, eventually earning a reputation as one of America's leading naturalists and an authority on the wild birds of the Caribbean. In 1877, Cory first visited Florida, attracted by the state's climate, recreational opportunities, and plentiful wildlife. He took up winter residence in 1885, and, nine years later, followed the F.E.C. Railway to Palm Beach, where he divided his time between the high society life of the resort hotels and hunting and fishing in the surrounding wilderness. Using specimens collected in the field, he opened the Florida Museum of Natural History opposite Henry Flagler's Palm Beach Inn (later The Breakers). The museum was in operation from 1895 to 1903, and became one of Palm Beach's most popular attractions.

Cory's incursions into the wilderness during his first winter in Palm Beach took him to the Hillsboro River, New River, and Everglades regions of present-day Broward County, and brought him into close contact with the Seminole Indians. This account of that expedition was written by the St. Augustine correspondent for the Jacksonville Metropolis and reprinted in the West Palm Beach Tropical Sun. The following year, Cory published an expanded account of his experiences and observations as a book, Hunting and Fishing in Florida. The photos accompanying this article are from the collection of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, and several are reproduced from Hunting and Fishing in Florida, a copy of which is available in the society's library.

Indians, as a rule, do not like white men. They are naturally jealous of the way in which their country is being settled up, and they are beginning to notice that game is not as abundant as it once was. Indians do not like to talk about themselves, and it was only after camping and hunting with them for several weeks that they would talk freely of their manners and customs. The usual dress of an Indian, when in the woods, consists of a cotton shirt and a bright-colored turban. Some wear leggings of deer skin. These are usually dyed a pretty brownish-red color, with an infusion of mangrove bark.

Nowadays the younger Indians put on more clothes when they visit a town.

A few wear an ordinary suit of cheap clothes, but they are the exception. The usual full dress of a young Indian dude consists of a bright colored turban, a cotton shirt of various colors and wonderful construction, a vest and a watch chain. This, with a pair of leggings and moccasins, or even shoes, completes the outfit. At times the turban is replaced with a hat.

The squaws wear calico dresses of various colors, usually frilled and ornamented with pieces of different colored calico. Their ornaments consist of strings of colored beads worn about their necks and silver coins, which are fastened to the dress about the neck and breast. They also wear rows of very thin round pieces of silver made

from 10-cents pieces hammered very thin until they are about the size of a 25-cent piece.

The squaws do much of the work in the fields. They chop wood and take care of the camp work; but the men work in clearing up new fields. They cut down trees and "clear" a hammock for planting.

As I said before, the Indians are becoming alarmed at the ever-increasing number of white men, who every year penetrate further and further into their hunting grounds. They usually discourage any overtures of friendship. As a rule they will not talk of their hunting grounds or hunt with you. The older Indians (some of whom fought in the last Seminole War)



Seminole Indian men, 1890s, wearing a mixture of traditional and white man's clothing, as described by Cory.



Seminole Indian women, 1890s. Note ornamental silver disks hammered from coins and sewn to their clothing.



Robert Osceola (photo from *Hunting and Fishing in Florida*).



Everglades guide John Davis (photo from *Hunting and Fishing in Florida*).

object to the younger ones making friends with the white people; and only a few of the younger generation care to risk the displeasure of the old-timers. At first, none of the Indians would hunt with me except one, by name Tom-a-lusky. Tom agreed to go with me at a salary of \$1 per day, and promised to join me in camp the following week, but he did not materialize, and later I learned that he had gone away hunting with some of the older men.

Gradually they became less reserved, and then "Bill" Freman, the old guide and hunter of Biscayne Bay, told Osceola that I was "all right" and "did not want to homestead land," Robert Osceola agreed readily to guide me to a place where Tom Tiger had seen fresh panther tracks in the cypress the day before. After this it was easy sailing, and I became well acquainted with Osceola (Gart-sum-tel-e-kee), during our hunt and afterwards visited his camp and met a number of Indians, all of whom (except Old Tommy) were friendly and willing to hunt with me. This, perhaps, was brought about by my success in curing the toothache for Osceola's squaw and in curing a bad finger for Old Charlie, who had cut off the end of it while making a "soffkee" spoon.

They gave me fresh eggs and sweet potatoes and pumpkins, and were as friendly as possible. On one occasion

I camped a week, traveling about and hunting with Robert Osceola and Tom Tiger; and the squaw and children of the former were in the party. As we moved camp every day I was enabled to form some idea of their manner of living.

The Indians raise sweet potatoes, corn, pumpkins and maize. The women gather the "coontie" root and make quantities of "coontie," a kind of starch which is very palatable. The "coontie" plant grows plentifully in the pine lands of South Florida. During March the men kill a number of deer, the flesh of which is smoked and then dried in the sun, and saved for summer use.

A favorite dish with them is what I called soffkee, a kind of broth made sometimes from ground corn and grits, and sometimes from coontie and grits. They sit about the pot and pass a soffkee spoon from one to another, each drinking a spoonful of the mixture in turn. The "soffkee" spoon is a large wooden spoon which the Indians manufacture.

An Indian always builds a camp fire by placing the ends of a number of logs together and arranging them like the spokes of a wheel. The fire is lighted in the center, and, as the logs burn slowly away, they are pushed up towards the center again. When it is desirable to extinguish a camp fire it is done by simply drawing the logs back a few inches, and the fire soon dies out; but it may be relighted again with little trouble.

Contrary to the general idea the Indians have no antidote for snake poison. I have asked many different



THE SOFFKEE-SPOON.



Seminole woman cooking over "star" or "wagonwheel" fire described by Cory.



Professor Cory with black bear such as those hunted near Hillsboro Inlet in 1895 (photo from *Hunting and Fishing in Florida*).

ones and have always received the same answer. Osceola remarked: "Injun die all same white man."

During the winter months many of the Indians devote their time to trapping otters and killing alligators, the skins of which they sell. Later many of them hunt and kill "plume birds" in spite of the Florida laws in force against the practice. In spring they burn the flat woods to attract the deer and turkeys, which often seek such places and eat the young and tender grass. In February and March they clear and plant the fields. An Indian kills large numbers of deer and turkeys but rarely tries to kill a panther. Old Charlie says: "Panther scratch too much no like um!"

A bear is esteemed as a great prize. Three or four are usually killed near Hillsboro Beach every spring. The Indians do not hunt them with dogs, as we do, but finding a fresh track leading to some thick hammock a dozen of them will hunt for him and perhaps "jump" him. During the turtle egg season in June bears are not uncommon on the beach in many locations.

In the "Big Cypress" and south of the Everglades wolves are still common. The Indians say they are usually black. Osceola once caught two little wolves alive, but they soon died. He said: "Wolf, me know um. One time one say wow; show teeth; me shoot um; then find tookelin (two) littily bit wolves; me take um camp; no eat; me

smash um heads on tree."

Occasionally a party of Seminoles go to New River to kill a manatee. These animals are common at times in several of the rivers, where they go to feed on "Manatee" grass; but they are wanderers and are more often found in salt water than in fresh during the winter months. Most of the Indians hunt them in canoes, sometimes half a mile from the shore when the ocean is calm. The manatee is seen rising to the surface, and is speared, and after-

wards shot by the hunter, who follows the float which is attached to the spear or harpoon, and fires at the animal as it shows its head from time to time.

Manatees are at times very timid and shy and then they are very [word missing] to approach. They grow to an immense size. A not unusually large one will weigh a thousand pounds. The flesh is much liked by the natives. It somewhat resembles coarse beef.

Nearly all of the Indians have permanent camps, sometimes two or three. These usually consist of palmetto shanties in a clear field. Robert Osceola has a camp on New River and another on Cypress Creek. Tomaluska, Old Tommy, Old Charlie, and his son, Jack Charlie, all have camps on Upper New River also, but he has deserted it now.

The great annual festival is called the Green Corn Dance, which takes place during the "little moon in June," usually the second week. Indians come from all about, from the unknown islands of the Everglades, and even a few from the Big Cypress. They get together and eat green corn, dance and drink wyome (whisky). The dancing lasts four or five days, but it is intermittent, and most of it is done on the first day. The women tie seven dry turtle shells, containing stones or beads, to each leg and stamp about, keeping time with the dancers. It is claimed that they beat a skin drum, but this is denied by some Indians. None of the men are permitted to eat green corn before this festival, which seems to be of semi-religious character, but the women and children eat it whenever they get a chance — at least some do. One Indian said to me, "One white man tell me eat green corn now. You eat um?" I said, "Yes, me like um



Indians hunting manatee from canoe (photo from *Hunting and Fishing in Florida*).

HUNTING AND FISHING

IN

FLORIDA,

INCLUDING A

KEY TO THE WATER BIRDS

KNOWN TO OCCUR IN THE STATE.

BY

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Title page of *Hunting and Fishing in Florida*, Cory's book about his experiences and observations in Florida, including his 1895 Everglades expedition.

Professor Cory showed the correspondent a list of Indian words, which he has prepared for publication in his forthcoming work on Florida. Among them were the following, which he allowed your correspondent to copy:

Uncar	yes
Hick-os-chee	no
Tuck-e-luck-ee	bread
E-cho	deer
Che-loc-kah	horse
Lucosee	bear
Pennywah	turkey
Os-Kay	rain
O-e-Wah	water
Cir-cus-jay	gone
Efar	dog
Hal-pa-lah	alligator
A-bass-wah	bread
Soff-kee	soup
Ojus	plenty
Hollowaugus	bad
Humbugis	food
Catsa	panther
Hiepus	go
Klamen	1
Tookelin	2
Toceenin	3
Shetaskin	4
Sarkepin	5
Eparkin	6
Colorparkin	7
Senarparkin	8
Ostherparkin	9
Parlin	10
In-nar-car-poor? . . .	What is the price?
Si-arts-jay	I want.
Che-mo-char	Have you any.
Ti-tas-jare	Thank you.
Fundlet	tracks
Klark-o-push-kee-mif-see-a . . .	shotgun

The title of "professor" comes to Mr. Cory from the trustees of the Field Columbian Museum in Chicago, who some months ago elected him to a full professorship in the institution, where he frequently appears as a lecturer on natural history and kindred topics. He will spend the summer in Europe in company with his wife and two children — a boy and a girl — starting from Boston early in June.

— St. Augustine Cor. in
Jacksonville Metropolis.

plenty." Whereupon he remarked, "Injun no eat um now. Bymeby green corn dance, Injun eat um."

As a rule the Seminole Indians have but one wife; two of them have two wives - Old Doctor and Old Charlie. Both of them were presented with an extra wife for some praiseworthy act. What Old Charlie did I do not know; but Old Doctor was allowed to take unto himself a second wife for killing "Nigger Jim." Nigger Jim was a half-breed, a son of Key West Billy; and Mr. Jim, under the influence of bad whis-

key and disappointment at being refused the hand of a fair Indian maid, commenced shooting with a Winchester and killed several Indians before Old Doctor dropped him in his tracks.

Many of the Indians now keep hens and pigs. The latter they take about with them when they move about from place to place, a squaw usually leading them by a rope.

I once asked Old Charlie who made the shell mounds. He said, "Long time ago other Indians come in canoes, eat, play ball."