

Franklin McMillan (1885–1966)

1910–1911

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{Printed letter heading with sketch of a metal bowl filled with fruit on the top left-hand side. Every page in this diary is written on this letter headed paper as shown below.}

A.D. McMILLAN

Phone 81

FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GROWER

Burlington, Ont19....

{Hand written diary starts now}

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A Few Incidents of Our Trip to New York. Florida and Cuba.

We left home on the twelve o'clock Car on Dec 12th 1910. Arrived in Hamilton about one o'clock. went to the Bank to get some Canadian Money changed for American Money – went to the station and enquired about tickets. we wanted to get a ticket to go by Boat from New York. and return by train but they would not sell us one in Hamilton but said we might get one in Buffalo. so we got single tickets to Buffalo. also found out that we would make better connections if we waited in Hamilton till the six twenty train in the evening. So we had to get our suppers before we left we went to the Manhattan. and got it. We left on time at about six twenty for Buffalo. They asked us lot of questions were we were going were we come from. and lots more – also – examined our suit cases right to the bottom. I guess they must have thought we were a tough looking crowd.

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We arrived in Buffalo about 9.30 oclock had about one hour to wait for connections tried here again to get our tickets to go by boat and back by train but was no good. so we bought tickets to New York by train and from there to Jacksonville by Boat and return same way – for \$52.

We left Buffalo about 10.30 oclock by New York Central. The time passed quickly on the train. one old man was sick. Alec doctored him up with some Wild Strawberry he got off the train at Albany. Also had quite a chat with the Brakesman telling us about New York. we asked him were there was a good hotel to go to so he told us to go to the Manhattan about two blocks from the station he said it was a cheap hotel – . so we intend to look it up when we arrive.

Tuesday Dec 13th. Arrived in New York about 9. oclock in the morning. felt a little tired after riding all night without any sleep. so first we started out from the Grand Central station to look for the Manhattan

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Hotel we found it easy enough. but thought we would not stay as they only asked us \$2 a day each without board so we thought that was to much for us. so we started to hunt up the Grand Union Hotel – we were going to it when a porter told us the Grand Union was full but he would take us to the Annex. we went with him and got a room with two beds for a \$1.50 a day each at the Markwell Hotel we only got it for one day. after we went to our room we talked it over. and we thought he just told us the other hotel was full so we would come here. we intend to inquire at the Grand Union about it. So we had a good wash and cleaned up some of our lunch that we had left over on the train. Then we started out to see the city. it is certainly worth while seeing. the high buildings some as high as thirty and forty stories on 42nd street the traffic is immense the sidewalks about twenty feet wide and where it crosses the avenues there

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are one and two police to guide the traffic we next hit 5th Avenue. the swell street of the town were all the swell Carriages and Autos drive. There are no street cars allowed on it.

We also found the Grand Union Hotel on the corner of 4th Avenue and 42nd Street. we found they had lots of rooms so we intend to move there in the morning.

Wednesday Jan Dec 14th. We left the Markland Hotel and got rooms at the Grand Union. We hunted up the Hotel that Frank Benner told us was cheap. we found it on 7th Ave. called Mills Hotel. we did not stay as it looked pretty tough. went to a Vaudeville show in the afternoon. and to the Hippodrome Theatre at night it simply was grand. The first Act was a Circus. 2nd an International Cup Yacht Race. 3rd Wireless telegraph in a big storm at sea 4th The Ballet of Niagara Falls. and the San Francisco Earth Quake –

Thursday Jan Dec 15th. We went to Central Park. It is terrible large about sixty blocks long. it must be grand in the summer time

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We took in the Art Galleries and Museum which are in the Park – we stayed all morning could have put in a week there if we had time. In the afternoon we took the elevated cars to Bronx Park where the Zoological Gardens are and we seen a herd of 59 Buffaloes there and every other kind of animal you could name. We took the Subway back to our hotel this was the first time we rode underground and they certainly go some –

Friday Jan Dec 16th. We started getting ready for the boat took the street car down Madison Ave and transferred on to the old fashioned horse car which took us to the boat. it certainly seems funny to see cars drawn by horses in a place like New York – The boat left at one oclock for Jacksonville this is the first time any of was ever on the ocean but it is good and calm.

Saturday Jan Dec 17th. We have been out of sight of land all day. Cant notice much change in the weather yet. have not been sea sick yet. but it is very calm and

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nobody has been sick don't think they will make much on us fellows the way we are eating.

Sunday ~~Jan~~ Dec 18th. Arrived in Charleston South Carolina about three oclock. had six hours here while they unloaded and loaded freight. So Alex. Louis and I and another fellow from Middleport N.Y. went up town it is quite a bit warmer here. trying to rain a little. The town looked quite and old fashioned. not much business done here they say. The Post Office was about the nicest building we saw. we walked through what used to be an old slave market and is now the fruit market.

Monday ~~Jan~~ Dec 19th. Arrived in Jacksonville about 3 oclock we certainly had a fine trip no rough weather and nobody sea sick. We put up at the Everett Hotel for a day to look around and get a boarding house. Harry Crocker is with us, he is just takeing a trip like us and he seems to be a nice fellow so we all put up together.

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Tuesday Dec 20th. Moved from the Hotel to 222 Cedar Street. The room cost us \$3 a week each. and we board next door which costs us \$3 a week – In the afternoon we went to Riverside Park – 7 miles out for five cents each way. it was a forlorn looking place. did not see much Park. looked more like a bush all the trees out there were all covered with a kind of moss that completely covered some of them –

Wednesday Dec 21st. It was kind of cool this morning walked about the town and had to wear an overcoat –

In the afternoon we took the car to the Ostrich Farm. they have 151 there all sizes they hitched one up to a buggy and drove it around a track also rode on ones back. it was well worth the price 25 cts to see it.

Thursday. Dec 22nd We certainly struck a fierce boarding house – we are getting nearly starved took a trip on the Ferry Boat across the river to South Jax. nothing over there only a circus put up there for the winter.

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Friday Dec 23rd – saw a couple of queer sights you dont see at home one was a team of small oxen hitched to an old home made cart the man was peddling sweet Potatoes. the other was a man with a monkey. and a hand organ.

Saturday Dec 24th – nothing much doing still kind of cold and damp.

Sunday Xmas Day. Took a walk about five miles out in the country to see a celery farm. It was not up to much. Saw a resin plant on the way out thousands of barrels of it stored there. had to hurry back to dinner. although it would not matter much whether we missed it or not for all we got. we hear we only get two meals at that. guess we will go to a Restaurant and have a good Turkey Dinner. Harry and Alec went to the Race track to see an Areoplane flight Louis and I stayed and wrote some letters – Went to church at night –

Monday 26th. still alive but nearly starved even Oranges are 25 and 30 cent a dozen

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Tuesday 27th. We left Jax for Sanford by the steamer City of Jax. which goes up the River St John. I was very sorry to leave our good boarding house, we made up for a weeks starvation at supper time.

Wednesday Dec 28th. There is quite a change in the weather this morning was a lot warmer. The tropical scenery is grand along this river. It is terrible crooked so crooked that it is 107 miles by train and 211 by Boat – some times when the boat turned sharp corners the hind end would brush the bushes on shore. Some places the river was covered with what they call Water Hyacinths, but there was none in Flower yet – . Saw lots of cows they waded and swam all around eating these water Hyacinths. We arrived at Sanford about 9. oclock this morning. We put up at the Bye Lo Hotel. Harry, Louis and I went for a walk. this is the best place we have seen for garden stuff. also were we saw the first oranges although there is not many here –

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In the afternoon we went for a ride on the new street car line it is a belt line that goes about 12 around the fare was 25 cts – . They have two cars and they are run by Gasoline

and they leave them standing on the main street at nights. Lettuce and Celery is the main crop here. They plant the Lettuce between the celery and cut it out first. they were cutting and shipping loads of it to New York – It is all irrigated here they have over flowing wells and they run it in to tiles and block up the ends. and when the wet weather is on they act as drains as they take out the plugs and shut the water from getting in the tiles out of the wells. This town should be called the celery town as there is acres upon acres of it – some of it is nearly ready to board up now. The land that is irrigated is worth about \$1000 an acre – but you go back in the bush – you can buy it for about \$50 to \$100 an acre – but think it would be worth quite a bit to get it in shape.

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Thursday Dec 29th. Louis and I went for a walk to see a fellow that had about two acres under Canvass. He had it nearly all full of peppers. had been shipping them and he said he was getting \$12 a crate for them in New York – He had quite a scheme to cover it. he had posts up all through it and strung wires across to which he fastened the canvass and on cold nights he pulled the canvass on. He also had little sheet iron stoves one about every twenty feet each way that he put fires in. we think he would need to get big prices to make any thing for his trouble.

Friday Dec 30. Left Sanford this morning at 815 for Orlando. arrived about half past nine. Got board and Room at Childs House about one block from station at \$1 a day – and it seems to be a good place –

Saturday Dec 31st. We were out this morning and saw a man picking strawberries They can't grow strawberries like we can they have not got the soil so they have to fertilize terribly heavy. The patch

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he was picking off just looked like ours do just when they start to run only – a few plants. he had two acres and expected to get about 20 boxes he said but they were worth 50 cts a box he told us. He said they picked from Jan 1st till about June. We told him we could grow

from 8000 to 10000 quarts an acre if we had a good crop. he looked at us as much as to say you are crazy.

Jan 1st 1911 New Years Day. Strolled around the town it is a pretty nice little town. Lots of oranges here trees in every yard and every place you look – we are enjoying them too. nice and warm here too. was wondering how cold it was at home – Went to a Baptist Church. they dipped four never seen it done before –

Monday Jan 2nd Went to a packing house to watch them put up oranges which is quite a business here there is about a dozen packers. They bring most of the oranges in out of the country in cars and unload them in the buildings they are in bushel

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boxs. They first dump the oranges into a vat full of water where they are caught on carriers with little brushes on which scrub the oranges clean then these carriers takes them around hot-air pipes which dry them. and then takes them out on a grading carrier with holes in it. and the smallest ones keep dropping through and the farther they go the larger they get. Then the boys stand on each side and wrap them all in different paper according to size.

Tuesday Jan 3rd. Harry and I walked out to see a turpentine plant that chopped old wood up and boiled the turpentine out. They were not running as they had broken there machinery. we then went through the artificial ice plant which was near. In the afternoon we saw them play a game of Polo.

Wednesday Jan 4th Harry and I went to see a Palmetto Factory were they dry and dye palmetto leaves for decorations they also make cheap fans out of them

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and ship them up north – they told us there was only one more factory in Florida

Thurs Jan 5th. Alec an Louis spent nearly all day at the Driving Track looking at horses. Harry and I roamed about the town. we leave tomorrow for Miami have been trying to get

Harry to come with us but he says he won't but is going to Tampa We expect to go there some time so we may see him again.

Friday Jan 6th. Got ready to leave here went to the station at 10 oclock did not leave for two hours train was late, blocked by a wreck a freight train jumped the track. Got to Orange City Junction about 2 oclock were of course we missed connections and have to wait till six. This is the forlornest looking place I ever saw in all my days. Consists of the station about ten feet square and one house the station agent the rest is scrub bushes. every way you look. Had no dinner only some Oranges Alec and Louis found some place down the

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track. Our train arrived about five thirty one car and an old wood burning engine. then of course we had to wait one more hour till the next train arrived from Orlando. so we might as well have stayed at Orlando till the afternoon train. But we got started at last they said it was only about twenty miles. it only took about two hours. had a good big freight when we arrived as they stopped at every farm it seemed and picked up a car of oranges or lumber. When we got into New Smyrna the first thing we done was beat it for a restaurant. only had about an hour here till we left for Miami. Slept nearly all night arrived at Miami about 7.30 oclock in the morning.

Sat Jan 7th. Walked around and took in the sights of the town it seems to be a nice place. it is right on Biscayne Bay which makes a nice harbor right from the ocean. the Bay is nearly full of Big private yachts and all Kinds

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boats and steamers there is also a swell park right along the shore which is fine. we also went through the grounds of the Big Miami Hotel. the flower gardens are certainly grand. every kind of tropical flowers and shrubs that is grown seems to be there.

Tuesday Jan. 10th. nothing particular since Saturday have been enjoying ourselves fine sitting in the Park and walking around the town. Louis and I hired wheels. (Alec. can't Ride a wheel) and went out in the country about ten miles there is a lot of vegetables grown

around here such as Beans. Peppers Tomatoes and Egg Plants. They are shipping Beans by the loads now they grow them by the 10 acre fields. They were also starting to ship Green Peppers and Tomatoes. On the way back we saw the first Pineapples growing they were right along the road so we tested them they were fine.

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Friday Jan 13th This is the finest place we have struck yet. it is nice and warm and bright sunshine every day. also have a good boarding house which helps to make you feel good. The man where we are boarding took us out for an Auto ride in the country this seems to be a great place for grape fruit they seem to grow to perfection here. some have as much as sixty acres of groves.

Monday Jan 16th We leave here tomorrow by Boat. for Key West and from there for Cuba. We are kind of sorry to leave here as it is a pretty nice place but we are out to see the sights, so we have to move.

Tuesday Jan 17th. Left by boat this morning this is the first time we were ever on a schooner guess we will have to rough it by the looks of things but it will be a novelty. the wind was very light went about fifteen miles all day. got talking to three Americans

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they are going to Havana guess we will all go together.

Wed. Jan 18th. We lay anchored nearly all night and most of the morning waiting for wind. went with a couple of lads in the life boat after sponges they got about a dozen they grow on the rock they have a long pole with hooks which hook under them and pull them up. they also got some starfish and shells which were very pretty -

Thursd Jan 19th wind still very light getting tired of sailing. have seen lots of porpoises. which look like pigs in the water. they say they are harmless.

Friday 20th Arrived in Key West this morning about 7.30 oclock. Put up at the Island City Hotel on William Street Did not like the town so left tonight for Havana. This is my birthday am spending it along way from home -

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Jan 21st Saturday. Arrived in Havana Harbor at 6 oclock. Every body had to be examined by a doctor also have your baggage examined by the Customs officers we had no baggage left ours in Key West -

We put up at the La Tulleras Hotel on Monserratt Street. we saw the wreck of the Maine in the harbor they are working at it going to raise it. we got a guide and went across the Harbor to Morro Castle. also went through Cabannas fortress. They certainly have been great forts. all full of covered passageways and dungeons.

Sunday Jan 22nd went to the baby institute where they raise homeless children they certainly have a nice building there was (1200) twelve hundred there. on the way back we went through the Spanish Club building it is the finest building we were ever in all marble stairway and finishings. they have thirty thousand members.

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went to Colon Cemetery in the afternoon. seen three funerals of the rich class they get a grave for five years and if there friends don't pay again they are dug out and some one else buried there. the poorer people are buried two or three in one grave without any box at all.

Monday Jan. 23rd. This is the warmest place we have struck yet. to hot for a hat so went and bought a Panama Hat. This is certainly a funny city. every thing different from the States. they have no Carpets on any of the floors they are all marble or tiles have no glass the windows all have iron bars and at nights they shut big thick doors three and four inches thick and some of them have iron bolts studded all through them. They have the nicest parks of any place we have seen. There is a military band that plays evenings in the parks

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Tuesday Jan 24th Took a trip by Electric Railway to Guanajay a village about forty miles out of Havana. This is a great Pineapple section was in a patch of a hundred acres or more They also can grow Banannas and Tobacco to perfection. also seen lots of Sugar Cane.

Wednes. Jan 25th. We bought our tickets for Tampa Florida this morning we leave tomorrow. we took in the outskirts of the town it is a terrible dirty place when you get off the main streets.

Thursday Jan 26th Left at 12 30 oclock today it was terrible rough every body sea sick. we got to Key West at 8.15 oclock. got our baggage and left Key West ant 10 30

Friday Jan 27th Arrived at Tampa just dark had supper went to the Post Office and got some letters had not heard from home for two weeks, was just coming out of the Post Office and

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we run across our old chum Harry Crocker who has been here a couple of weeks. felt pretty tired went to bed Early.

Saturday January 28th. It is kind of a nice town but seems pretty quiet after leaving Havana. strolled around went to a couple picture shows.

Sunday Jan 29th Spent the day in Tampa Bay Park it is a nice park along the river.

Tuesday Jan 31. Went through Tampa Bay Hotel and Grounds which are pretty nice.

Wed Feb 1st Went out by car to sulphur springs Park it has a big spring which they have surrounded with a cement wall. And have a big swimming pool.

Friday Feb 3rd. Left for Jacksonville at 2 oclock arrived about 3 oclock. The town seems to be a lot more busier than it did when we were here before.

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Saturday Feb 4th Left for New York by Steamer Mohawk -

Sunday Feb 5th not sea sick yet but feel pretty tough. it is getting rough too.

Monday. Got up this morning walked around the deck a few times. went back to my room and stayed all day.

Tuesday Feb 7th. Arrived in New York about one oclock put up at Grand Central Hotel. felt pretty good after having a good meal.

Wed. Feb 8th Left New York at 4.30 in the afternoon for home. Arrived in Buffalo. at 3.30 in the morning had two hours to wait for Hamilton train. it looks funny to see sleighs out and lots of snow after being were it was so warm.

Thursday Feb 9th Arrived in Hamilton 7.40 in the morning Hamilton certainly looks dead. Caught the 8 oclock car for home. Got home at nine oclock.

Finis

For more information on Franklin McMillan, check out the "Meet the Diarists" section under "Discover" on our website: ruraldiaries.uoguelph.ca