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Letter from Mrs. Mahalie R. Hodder, Pass-a-Grille, Florida, to Anne Whitney, Boston, Massachusetts, 1914 February 26

Mahalie R. Hodder

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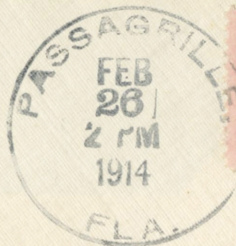
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Mrs. Hooper

*Miss Anne Whitney -
The Charlesgate.
Boston.
Mass.*



6
Pass-a-Gulle Florida -
Feb. 26th 1914.

Dearest Miss Whitney.

Last night
you visited me in dream-
land, and satisfied my
longing to see you, and to
hear your voice. You were
well and happy and even
merry, and the visit cheered
me through and through.

And where is Pass-a-Gulle
you ask? Way down off the
middle-western coast of
Florida, on the Gulf of Mexico.
One of the larger of the ma-
ny reefs or Keys that form

near the coast of Florida.

Why are we here? As a substitute for California, where our son was hopeless of reaching us in illness or death, we came here last May, to see whether we could endure a summer here, before bringing our Lares and Penates and establishing a home.

We knew that the winters were as gracious as in Cal., and that St. Petersburg is within two days and nights of New York. It was to St. Petersburg that we came.

Alas, it was a great mistake. Mr. Hodder was so ill en route that we were

four days coming from Cui.
here, stopping three times
on the way with my dear one
too ill to be conscious of
where he was. Then came
the long hot summer, which
lasts five months here, and
although St. Petersburg is
on Tampa Bay, and the
heat is tempered by wind
from the Gulf, there are
no cool days. When the
sun rises at 5 o'clock or
sooner he brings all his
rays with him, and attends
to business until he sinks
to rest - no holidays for
him here. My Alfred
was ill all summer, and

lost every ounce of flesh, and
alone I cared for him, somehow
lived through the summer,
refusing to let my sister
come to me lest she suffer
with the heat as we did.

She came in September
in time to decide with me
that we shall not make a
home in Florida, but will
warm ourselves at the
equatorial fires, and dip
in the Gulf-stream until
May, and then hie us north.

St Petersburg is a beautiful
town of 10,000 people, with
two or three times that
population in winter,
for tourists love the place

Palms, live oaks, and oleanders,
line the wide, paved streets,
and Tampa Bay is twelve
miles wide, and the sun
seems to rise on the horizon
of waters, and to change them
to pink, and crimson, & gold.
We took an apartment in
St. P. for the season - Oct. to
April - but sister found
later that her son in New
York might visit her with
his family, so she came
to this island (twelve
miles from St. P.) and
hired a cottage to receive
her family, and give her
grandsons (aged five & seven)

My dear friend,
I do not ask you to write, dear friend, I am not worth the paper & ink.

My dear husband, who has improved since Oct. & gained health

a happy time on this beautiful beach, where shells abound in myriads, and give their parents a month of rest from business and society.

Frank has been delayed and Susan invited us, and a cousin who is visiting us to come with her here, to stay until Frank arrives.

Ever since I lived with Robinson Crusoe (sixty years ago) on his tropical isle, I have cherished a picture of it, and dreamed that I might sometime return to it. This is probably as near to the realization of that dream as I shall come.

Petersburg address is 94 Fourth Ave. north. Lovingly
Anabel. P. S.

It has the palm trees, the cacti, the sand dunes, and the wide expanse of sea and sky; and at night hosts of new stars, led by Canopus join the shining ranks.

The island is six miles long and perhaps three hundred yards wide, with Boga-Coga Bay on one side, and The Gulf on the other.

Four hotels, and perhaps fifty cottages cluster at the south end of the island near the "pass". This cottage fronts on the bay, where we see the steamers come and go, and

Petersburg address is 94 Fourth Ave. north. Cloring by
Mehalei R. Hodder.

but our St.

where the fishing smacks,
motor boats, row-boats and
yachts enliven the scene.
When we take bath or swim
we cross the isle (one block)
to the pellucid waters of the
Gulf - as transparent and
green as the water of the
Grotto of Capri is brilliantly
blue.

The sunsets are a daily
wonder and glory - not alone
for cloud effects but when the
Sun sinks into the Gulf on
the western horizon sending
a shaft of light across the
miles of water to your feet
he fills the sea with opalescent
light, and glints the waves
with flame.

Sister joins me in love - and

so does my husband who has improved since Oct. & gained flesh.
I do not ask you to write, dear friend & Louise is not well & I presume

but our St. Petersburg address is 94 Fourth Ave. north. Lovingly
Mahalia P. Hodder.