

"HIKER FROM CA, HIKING 2 MONTHS SO FAR, TRYING TO GO FROM KEYS UP TO CANADA STAYING AT THE INN FOR 2-3 DAYS BEFORE HE CONTINUES ON. WE HAD BREAKFAST TOGETHER IN THE KITCHEN AND SWAPPED HIKING ADVENTURE STORIES. IT WAS A LONG BREAKFAST FULL OF EXCITING, COLORFUL REMEMBRANCES ON BOTH SIDES OF THE TABLE . . . . .

A MAN CAME BY TO LOOK AT THE POND AND TO LOOK FOR WORK. I GAVE HIM HOT COFFEE AND BISCUITS TO TAKE HOME FOR HIS BREAKFAST, WHICH HE GRATEFULLY ACCEPTED, AS HE WALKED DOWN THE ROAD TOWARDS HIS OLD TRAILER, A HUMBLE ABODE FOR SURE, BUT HOME TO A MAN WHO HAS NOTHING, EXCEPT TWO HOT BUTTERMILK BISCUITS AND SOME HOT COFFEE ON A COLD MORNING FOR HIS MORNING TIME MEAL . . . . .

IT'S A COOL, DAMP AND OVERCAST DAY IN THE SMALL TOWN OF ST. MARKS, THE DISTANT SALTY OCEAN SMELL CARRIED ON THE FOG RISING OFF THE RIVER RUNNING ALONGSIDE THE TOWN, WHERE THE CRIES OF SEAGULLS CAN BE HEARD AS THEY HOVER ABOVE THE INCOMING FISHING BOATS LOADED DOWN WITH THEIR FRESH HARVEST FROM THE DEPTHS OF THE GULF, A WEEK LONG TEST OF THEIR ENDURANCE IN THE STORMY AND COLD WATERS, THEIR WEARY FACES AND TIRED BODIES STANDING IN STATUE FASHION ON THE DECKS OF THE BOATS, EACH ONE FACING THE SHORE AS THE CAPTAIN IDLES THE BOAT UP RIVER TOWARDS THE DOCKS PAST A LITTLE OPEN AIR CAFÉ, RECEIVING WAVES AND SHOUTS OF "WELCOME HOME" FROM THE FAITHFUL FEW PATRONS WHO ARE SIPPING "WAY-TOO-WEAK-BUT-AT-LEAST-HOT" COFFEE FROM THEIR STYROFOAM CUPS, TRYING TO TAKE THE CHILL OFF THAT HAS FOUND ITS WAY INTO THEIR BONES, A CHILL PRODUCED BY THE EARLY MORNING RIVER BREEZE THAT HAS THEM ALL HUDDLED TOGETHER INSIDE THE CAFÉ, SOME OF THEM WEARING THIN, WORN OUT CLOTHING, NOT ABLE TO AFFORD ANYTHING THAT WOULD ACTUALLY KEEP THEM WARM, THEY ALL KEEP EACH OTHER WARM . . . . .

## WHAT IS ST. MARKS ALL ABOUT?

It is about a very important part of our country's history and the cultures that created this history in this area of Florida. It is about a small town whose history needs to be heard, a history that is food for the hearts and spirits of anyone who is blessed enough to be able to walk its streets and, even more blessed if given the opportunity to meet some of St. Marks' and Wakulla County residents and learn first hand in what ways their families have contributed to and participated in the making of the history of this quaint and colorful town and area.

It is about a small fishing village in an economically depressed area and the generations of families who, having endured great hardships to settle this area, still continue on with passion and zeal, not looking behind to what has been lost, but rather, looking ahead to what can be gained in the way of dignity, respect and self-worth for the next generation. The hardships and the history is written all over their faces and there is still a ray of hope in their hearts that all their years of efforts, sufferings and sacrifices will be preserved as some of the next generation stands ready to take their place in preserving not only the history of this area, but also, the memory of all those loved ones who created this history with their own blood, sweat and tears.

It is about a small town that is a historic site in itself, being the second oldest settlement after the town of St. Augustine. This small town represents the true American spirit in its capacity to remain faithful and, in its ability to stand strong together, refusing to give up hope despite all the wars, storms, depressions, criticisms and hardships that found their way into this small town throughout the history of this country.

The people of this small town and the area at large are all doing the best they can as a new storm season is approaching over the horizon – and they will all continue on, just as they always have and just as they always will, with passion and zeal . . . . .

Welcome to St. Marks, kick your shoes off and stay a while!

Stated with much respect, Patricia, Innkeeper, March 2010

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