

# THE ADVENTURES OF OUR MRCAMPBELL

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## Arnold Campbell Makes Own Adventures

Did someone tell you the days of adventure have come and gone? Meet a chap who makes his own while the rest of us are day-dreaming through an office window.

Arnold Campbell is principal out at Bonny Oaks School. Once every three years school teachers must take a refresher course or do a bit of traveling about which they must write a paper. Arnold started planning five years ago to travel and this was the year.

Being a school teacher he hadn't a lot of money to throw away on fancy boats. He purchased an unfinished 14-foot fishing boat, finished it himself, then added a small cabin and some trimmings to his taste. Ever see a 14-foot cruiser? Arnold hadn't, either, but he made one. Pretty neat, too, as the picture shows.

With this little boat Arnold traveled solo from here to the Keys and return, taking a month for the trip. He'd planned to take his weimeraner dog with him, but she became ill the day before he left and he had to leave her behind. He trailered his boat, with a 12-horse Wizard on the back for power, to Florida, and took to the waters there.

### Kissimmee Low

Arnold first put in the Ocklawaha near Ocala and cruised that river and the lakes to Crescent City before he turned back to pick up the trailer again. He then drove to Lake Kissimmee, but found the water so low that grass was growing 100 yards out from the banks and he had to drive on below to the Kissimmee River to put in where Highway 60 crosses that stream. He cruised down to Lake Okeechobee, across to the Caloosahatchee and down that river to the coast at Fort Myers. He worked down the coast to Everglades, then took off across the open Gulf, for Bahia Honda Key, down toward Key West.

Arnold was out of sight of land from the time he left Everglades until he raised Bahia Honda. The weather was almost perfect on the trip. There came one storm, while he was working down the coast, when breakers were running so high he couldn't get in to beach his boat and had to stay outside.

He kept the light little craft headed into the wind, trying to avoid being swept sideways into the trough of the sea, and finally had to ditch 20 gallons of gas to



CAMPBELL AND HIS CRUISER

### Crosses Corner of Gulf in Converted 14-Foot Fishing Boat

lighten the load. At times he could look up and see waves above him several times higher than his head, but the little plywood job rode them out safely. "There never was a drop of water in the cockpit," he said. "My one great fear was that one of the big waves would come in over the stern and swamp the boat."

### Almost Monotonous

"It was an unbelievable experience," said Arnold. "There was some trouble, of course, but most of the trip ran off so smoothly that it almost became monotonous. Exception was the unusual sights, the scenery, and the new places visited.

"I saw only one snake that could be identified as poisonous. It was in the Ocala National Forest.

"I lost two 'wheels' (propellers), one in the Kissimmee River, the other in Lake Okeechobee. I carried one spare with me and picked up another at Okeechobee City.

"There was no town for 220 miles on the Kissimmee, and the river was so low that all the fishing camps were shut down, leaving no place to get gas. I borrowed some gas from a ranch near the river. That's all cattle country, you know. The river water was so low that I had to

pole the boat about 20 or 30 miles because it was too shallow to use the motor. I still have blisters in my hands to show for that.

### Tired of Frog Legs

"I caught everything from mangrove snappers to snook and sea trout," he said. "Also six or eight sharks that ran up to five feet. I enjoyed all kinds of seafood, including several kinds of turtle and some eels, all of which I caught myself. Coming down the Kissimmee I had so many frog legs that I got sick of the taste of them.

"In spite of all the poling, the storm while I was outside and all the rest, the trip did me a lot of good. When I left I had reached such a nervous state that I could keep nothing on my stomach. I'd no sooner hit the waters in Florida than I became hungry and began eating like a horse. I even gained 14 pounds on the trip."

Arnold took three cameras with him—a 16mm movie outfit, a 2½x3½ black and white, and a 35mm for color transparencies, and spent most of his spare time making pictures.

### Off Again

The trip lasted a month, portal to portal, at a cost of less than \$225, which was a little more than \$7 per day. Sixty dollars of the amount which covered everything on the trip was for gas for the car.

On his return home he had a week left of his vacation. Know what he did? Took a solo cruise up the Tennessee for a visit to the lakes above Chickamauga.

Mr. Campbell is the Principal  
of Bonny Oaks Grammar School.  
He is loved and admired by all on the Campus