

THE LEGEND OF TATE'S HELL

Jebediah Tate was a superstitious farmer that lived north west of Carrabelle in Sumatra Florida. His only son was born just before the war and he named him Cebe. Jebediah was a Civil War veteran, and his wife was half Cherokee Indian. He bought 160 acres for \$5 as a homestead grant after the war.

Cebe Tate helped clear his father's land, chased cattle, and gathered pine oil. His mother died from yellow fever sometime after the war. It was hard going, and Cebe's father made a pact with a local medicine man for good fortune. As long as they stayed out of the tiny cypress forest and gave him one pig a year, they would have good fortune.

For three years, they gave up a pig when the medicine man came around, and things were good. But in 1874, they decided to keep the pig and deny the old Indian. The Medicine man warned them that they would not only see hard times, but they would go through hell. That year Cebe's father died from malaria, the pine trees gave very little oil, the sugar cane was stunted, and scrub cows started to disappear. But the pigs ate good, and multiplied so fast Cebe had to build two new pig pens in the fall.

In the spring of 1875, Cebe married a mail order bride from New York City. She was a fiery German Immigrant. But there was a problem, Cebe only had pigs left, and she was of the Jewish Faith. She ate corn, potatoes, and pancakes with molasses, but she wanted beef. Cebe took off into the woods to find a cow, any cow, to quiet his bride.

Armed with a shotgun and accompanied by his hunting dogs, he journeyed into the swamp in search of a cow. His dogs took off chasing a panther, and he lost his gun in the mud. Tate was lost in the swamp or seven days and nights. He went into the Dwarf Cypress stand to escape the relentless bugs, and fell asleep against the trees that were protected by the Indian's magic.

He awoke when bitten by a snake and ran blindly thru the swamp, delirious from the bite and from drinking the murky waters. Finally he came to a clearing near Carrabelle, living only long enough to murmur the words, "My name is Cebe Tate, and I just came through Hell!" And ever since, our legendary and forbidden swamp has been called Tate's Hell.

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