

The Mystery of ....

# Spook Hill

Lake Wales, Florida

After the Seminole Indians left the Cherokee nation, they settled in Central Florida, away from the white man's lodges to the North. One legendary Indian chief settled on the lake which is now known as Lake Wailes. Here, he had all the advantages of a high campsite on a lake which offered fresh water and good fishing. It was also close to Iron Mountain, which as the highest point in Florida, was sacred to the Indians' Sun God.

The chief, Cufcowellax, and his people were happy for several years, but then one day a huge bull alligator moved into the lake and began to harass the tribe. Soon, it began nightly raids on the village, and the tribe lived in constant terror of this evil spirit that inhabited their lake. The legend says Cufcowellax was a chief of great physical prowess and courage. He had great stature among his people both as a warrior and as a ruler. When he saw his people in constant fear, the chief, fearing for their safety, set out to conquer the evil spirit. His tribal shaman and elders placed him under the protection of the Great Spirit and he began his search.

Though many suns came and went, he could not catch the gator. Finally one morning, he came upon the gator on the northwest shore as it dragged yet another night's victim into the lake. The legend says the chief battled the gator on land and water for a moon, and then suddenly the great thrashing stopped, and the water of the lake turned red.

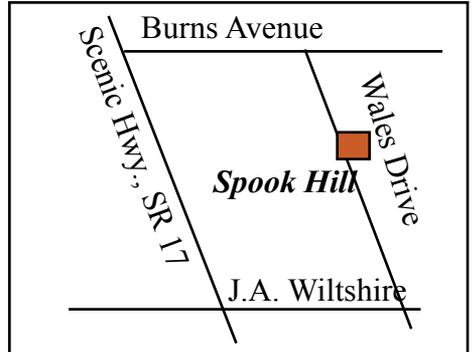
The tribe watched the surface of the lake in fearful anticipation. With great joy they saw their chief rise from the water, and in the midst of their celebration they

saw something else. The great battle had made a smaller lake near the big one. When the chief died, he was buried on the shore of the little lake, Ticowa, and the place became sacred to the Indians.

## Discovery of Spook Hill

The Indians lost their camping grounds to the encroaching white settlers. Circuit riders carrying mail between the coasts used the old trail around Lake Ticowa until they discovered that their horses were laboring downhill. It was they who first called this place Spook Hill. Some forty years later, as the area developed, the citrus industry grew. Soon the hills around Lake Ticowa were covered with citrus groves. Workers driving their wagons around the lake were startled to find their mules struggling downhill with their load.

Years later, the road was paved and residents found their cars would roll uphill by themselves. Others came to test this phenomenon and soon it became a major attraction for visitors.



## Instructions

Park your car on the white line, put it into neutral, and watch the mystery of Spook Hill work for you! (There is no charge for this famous attraction)

While you are in Lake Wales, also take time to visit:

- Bok Tower Gardens
  - The Lake Wales Arts Center
  - Historic Downtown
  - The Depot Museum
  - Lake Wales Area Chamber of Commerce
- (863) 676-3445