

Waiting at Live Oak

(The following poem is about waiting for a train at the Live Oak, Florida junction. It was written in the 1800s.)

Of all the minor woes,
Amortal undergoes,
'Tis waiting in shawl or cloak
Seven hours at Live Oak!

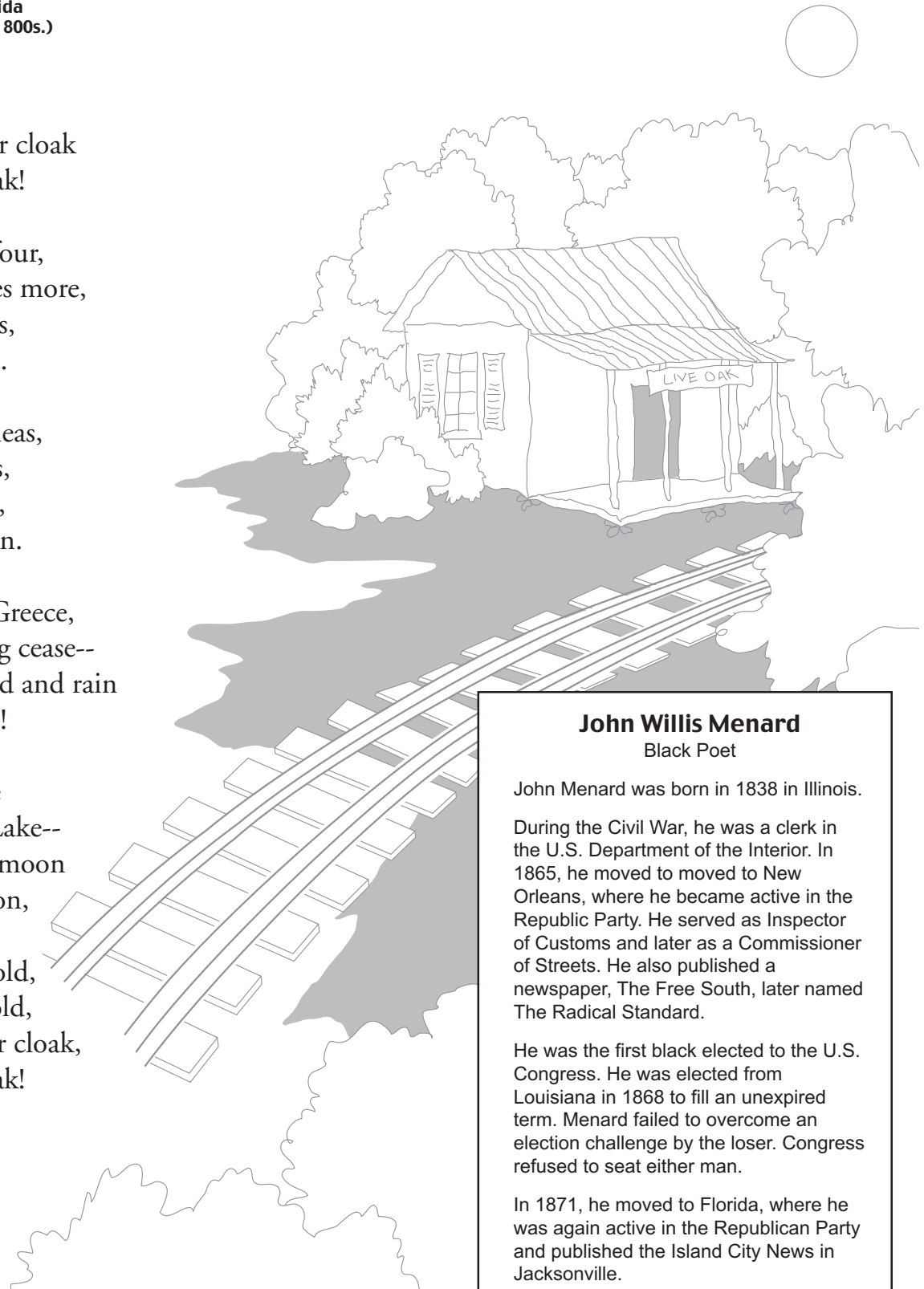
Waiting from nine to four,
Seven hours, sometimes more,
Amid box-cars and logs,
And music of the frogs.

Musquitos, bugs and fleas,
Vile dust or raging seas,
Inflict, by far, less pain,
Than waiting for a train.

Ye gods of Rome and Greece,
When shall this waiting cease--
This waiting in the cold and rain
For the Savannah train!

I'd much prefer to take
A ride o'er Great Salt Lake--
The mountains of the moon
Or to the grand Ty-coon,

Than wait in rain or cold,
With minor woes untold,
Wrapp'd up in shawl or cloak,
Seven hours at Live Oak!



John Willis Menard

Black Poet

John Menard was born in 1838 in Illinois.

During the Civil War, he was a clerk in the U.S. Department of the Interior. In 1865, he moved to moved to New Orleans, where he became active in the Republican Party. He served as Inspector of Customs and later as a Commissioner of Streets. He also published a newspaper, *The Free South*, later named *The Radical Standard*.

He was the first black elected to the U.S. Congress. He was elected from Louisiana in 1868 to fill an unexpired term. Menard failed to overcome an election challenge by the loser. Congress refused to seat either man.

In 1871, he moved to Florida, where he was again active in the Republican Party and published the *Island City News* in Jacksonville.