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Legacy

"A Journal of South Florida History"

SUMMER-FALL 1991 VOL. 14 — NOS. 3-4

Annual Florida Historical Society Awards

The Florida Historical Society annually awards three literary prizes for original work done in Florida history. The awards for 1990 were announced at the annual meeting held in Orlando, May 9-11, 1991.

The **Arthur W. Thompson Memorial Prize in Florida History** was awarded to Susan R. Parker, University of Florida, for her article, "Men Without God or King: Rural Settlers of East Florida, 1784-1790," which appeared in the October 1990 issue of the *Florida Historical Quarterly*.

The **Rembert W. Patrick Memorial Book Award** went to Dr. Joseph Frazier Wall, Grinnell College, for his book, *Alfred I. duPont: The Man and His Family,* which was published by Oxford University Press.

The **Charlton W. Tebeau Book Award** was presented to Mary E. Lyons, Charlottesville, Virginia, for her book, *Sorrow's Kitchen: The Life and Folklore of Zora Neale Hurston.* Mrs. Lyons's book was published by Macmillan Publishing Company.

The Florida Historical Society recognizes outstanding essays in Florida history submitted by graduate and undergraduate students. The **LeRoy Collins Prize** went to James A. Schnur, a graduate student at the University of South Florida, for his paper, *Academic Freedom and Intellectual Inquiry in Florida's Public Universities, 1956-1964.* The winner of the **Caroline Mays Brevard Prize** was Laurie Lomascolo, an undergraduate student at the University of South Florida, for her paper, *Ormond-on-the-Halifax.* The Society also recognizes outstanding essays in Florida history by a middle-high school student. The **Frederick Cubberly Prize** went to Jessica Van Leer-Viscomi of Tavares Middle School in Lake County, and to her teacher, Steven A. Farrell.

The Society awarded seven **Golden Quill Awards**, which are given for outstanding media participation relating to Florida history. The recipients are: Florida Public Radio Center; Pensacola *News-Journal*; Stuart McIver, *Sunshine Magazine*; Leland Hawes, *Tampa Tribune*; James C. Clark, *Orlando Sentinel*; and WUFT-TV5, University of Florida.

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COVER PHOTO

Students and teachers pose in front of the "Old" Davie School, 1928-29. An article on the history of the school, which is currently being restored, begins on page two of this issue of *Broward Legacy*. Photo courtesy of the Davie School Foundation, Inc.

THE OLD

DAVIE SCHOOL

BIRTH AND REBIRTH OF A BROWARD LANDMARK

by BILLIE K. COLE

The realization by a community that its older buildings are historic and a meaningful part of its existence is a reflection of a community's change in how it perceives itself. With the recognition that older buildings may be worthy of preservation, a community is tacitly admitting that it has a history significant to its future.

Wilderness to Metropolis[1]

By its decision to actively pursue the preservation and restoration of the Old Davie School, the Town of Davie may be evidencing its maturity as a community. The Davie School has an abundance of claims to historical significance. It was the first permanent school in the Everglades and is the oldest existing school building in continuous use in Broward County.[2] In addition, the building was designed by August Geiger, one of Miami's most prominent architects of the day. Many of Geiger's buildings still stand in Miami and throughout Dade County. Included are the Miami Women's Club, Miami City Hospital (the "Alamo"), Miami Beach High School, the Miami Beach Community Center, The Carl Fisher residence, and the Homestead Public School. Geiger also served as associate architect on the 1925 Dade County Courthouse. Among these buildings, the Miami Women's Club, Miami City Hospital, and the Homestead Public School are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.[3] In Broward County Geiger also designed the Dania School (1913), the Hallandale School (1915), and the Fort Lauderdale High School (1915).[4] Only the Davie School (1917-18) still stands in Broward. Mr. Geiger designed numerous school buildings throughout Dade County as architect for the Dade County School Board and was a recognized authority on school design. In his "Model School Plan for Tropic Florida," he stressed the importance of large areas of windows for sunlight and cross-ventilation, and concrete construction for more equable temperatures and for fireproofing.[5] All of these features were incorporated into the Davie School plan.

The Davie School is a two story, masonry vernacular structure built in 1917-18 which, with its blended Spanish and Moorish architectural styles, clearly reflects the inclination of architects of the day to borrow details and flourishes from exotic locales. Though its original appearance was

As the first Florida town built on reclaimed Everglades muckland and as Broward County's only substantial settlement west of the coastal ridge for nearly four decades, Davie has a particularly rich and unique history. Unfortunately, relatively few structures testify to that illustrious past. Because of the settlement's remoteness and the population's preoccupation with wresting a living from the soil, many of Davie's early buildings were undistinguished and impermanent. A notable exception is the Davie School. Completed in 1918, this well-designed and solidly built structure not only served the educational needs of Davie and the surrounding farmlands, but provided a venue for local entertainment and social and political gatherings. As a result, the school became both the practical and symbolic center of the community.

Author Billie K. Cole, a native of Davie and former student at the Davie School, presents the history of the structure from its inception to current restoration efforts, and sketches the background of Everglades drainage, agriculture, and changing demographic patterns which have shaped the school's seven decades of existence. Mrs. Cole holds a B.A. in history from Florida Atlantic University, and currently teaches that subject in the Broward County school system. Long interested in local history, she is a member of the Davie School Foundation.

ıanged slightly by the 1926 hurricane ıd by more modern additions in the 950s, the building remains "one of the ast altered elementary school buildgs in South Florida."[6] But beyond ese obvious honors, the Davie School ıs a broader claim on history. It is rare early landmark of Broward ounty's westward development, a onument to the last vestiges of oneering in the United States, and symbol of early twentieth century rogressivism in Florida.

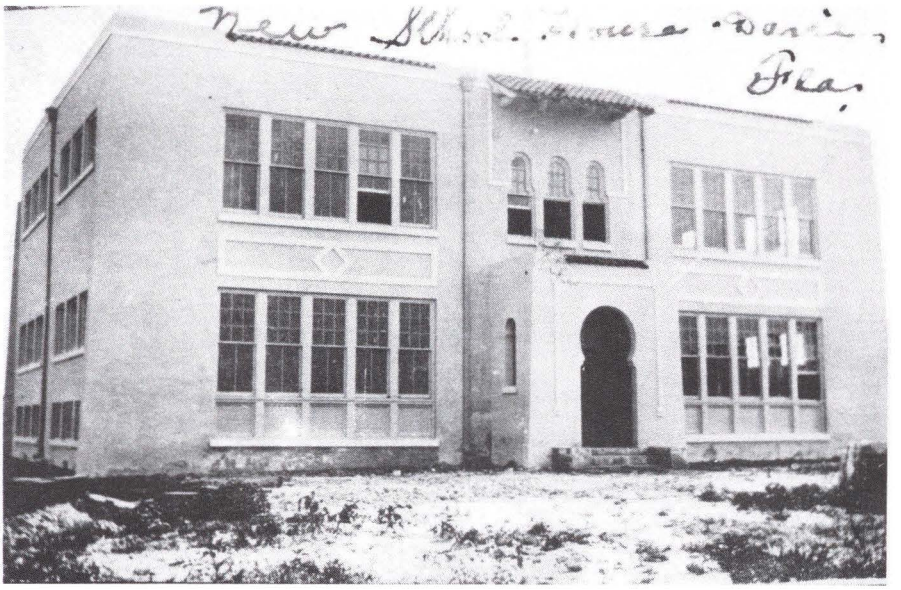
The Town of Davie has its roots in apoleon Bonaparte Broward's masve plan to drain the Everglades and pen the area to farming. Progressive olitics, an outgrowth of the populist ovements of the late 1800s and a action against the ultraconservative ourbon Democrats who had conolled Florida and other southern ate governments since the end of econstruction, had been slowly gaing ground for years when Broward, leading progressive Democrat, was ected Governor of Florida in 1904. rogressives, who received the bulk of eir support from farmers, small usinessmen, and professional groups, ought to liberalize state government v involving it more closely in the gulation of large corporate interests pecifically the railroads), and in the xpanded provision of public services private citizens. In most respects the rogressive reform agenda in Florida as similar to that in other states. Tied the Florida issues, however, was the controversy surrounding the ownership and development rights to the state's vast wetlands, including the Everglades.[7]

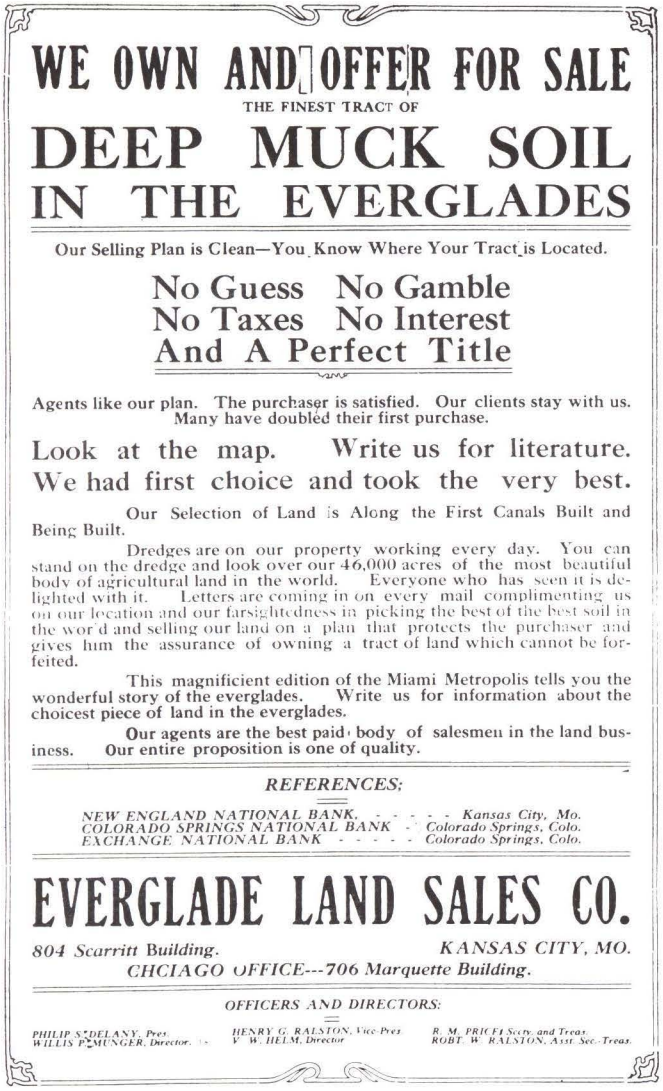
The idea of Everglades drainage and development was nothing new. Interest in such a project had been recorded as early as 1848. Legislation passed in 1851 and 1855 established the Internal Improvement Fund (IIF).[8] Governed by a board of trustees consisting of the governor, controller, treasurer, attorney general, and registrar of state lands, its job was to administer the state program of wetlands reclamation and development, via private sector financing, by deeding large grants of the wetlands to railroad and canal companies. In turn, these companies would be responsible for drainage, improvement, and ultimately settlement.[9]

By the end of Governor William D. Bloxham's second term of office in 1901, it had become obvious that something had gone awry with this plan. It was discovered that the state had granted to the railroad and canal interests some 3,000,000 acres more than the approximately 20,000,000 it possessed.[10] Amid threats and court battles that continued throughout his term of office, William S. Jennings, the new progressive-backed governor elected in 1900, decided to return to the provisions of the original 1855 charter, to reclaim the wetlands for the state, and begin efforts to drain and develop them for public use and at public expense.[11] Thus it was with Jennings, not Broward, that serious efforts in this direction actually began. It is likely, in fact, that Broward, who seemed only vaguely interested in the wetlands reclamation issue at the beginning of his campaign, became its most vocal spokesman mainly in order to draw a clearer contrast in the vaguely defined issue differences between himself and Robert W. Davis, his chief opponent in the Democratic primary of 1904.[12] Whatever his reason, it is apparent that Broward, in his campaign to convince Floridians of the value of Everglades reclamation, also convinced himself. He became almost obsessively involved in its promotion and remained so until his death in 1910.

Broward's progressive agenda extended well beyond the issue of reclamation, however. He championed such issues as improved education, higher teacher pay, compulsory school attendance and uniform school rules, restrictions on child labor, development of tourism, and support for organized labor.[13] The Broward Era in Florida history was clearly characterized by legislation that transformed the role and nature of state government. Florida's government became stronger, committed itself to the provision of much-needed public services, especially education, and made significant strides toward more effective state regulation of large business and corporate activities.

elow is the Davie School as it appeared shortly after its 1918 ompletion. Note barrel-tile roof, awning projection, and wood louvers eneath first floor windows, all omitted in remodeling which followed he 1926 hurricane (photo courtesy of Davie School Foundation, Inc.). t right is architect August Geiger (photo courtesy of Fort Lauderdale istorical Society).





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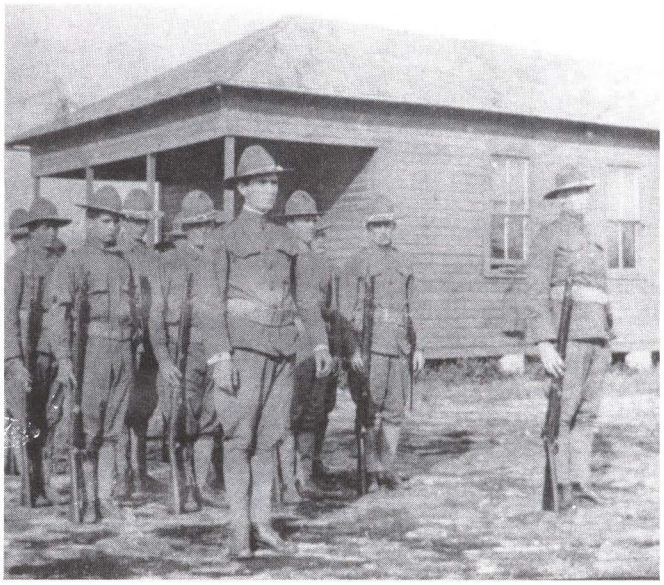


At left is an Everglades Land Sales Company advertisement for reclaimed muckland in the Davie area. Above, Davie's first school building can be seen in the background of this photo of the community's World War I Home Guard (photo courtesy of Davie Historical Society).

It is as a direct result of Napoleon B. Broward's governorship and Broward Era progressive thought and politics that what is now Broward County was given the opportunity to expand and urbanize through the reclamation of the overflowed lands which easily comprised most of its area. And it is as a result of that expansion and reclamation that what is now the Town of Davie came into existence.

Early in June 1906, Governor Broward came to Fort Lauderdale to launch the first of many planned dredges. The dipper dredge *Everglades* was to move westward out of the New River, cutting a swath through the sawgrass and creating dry land as it moved toward Lake Okeechobee to complete the first lake-to-ocean drainage canal through the Everglades, the North New River Canal. In April 1907, a second dredge, the *Okeechobee,* was launched and began work on the South New River Canal.[14] Progress on the canals was slower and more expensive than expected, but by the summer of 1908 the land southwest of Fort Lauderdale had dried to the point that R. P. Davie, a speculator and developer from Colorado Springs, agreed to a contract with the Internal Improvement Fund to purchase some 27,500 acres of the dredged and drained land. Under the terms of the contract, Mr. Davie was to establish an experimental demonstration farm on the property and dig, at his own expense, a north/south drainage ditch and dyke to connect with the South New River Canal.[15] It was this experimental tract of land, intended to show the limitless possibilities of Everglades muck soil, that came to be known as the "Davie Farm." Mr. Davie, along with J. R. McKinnie and several other partners, then organized the Everglades Sugar and Land Company and in February 1909 the Everglades Land Company, which, with its various subsidiaries, held, developed, and sold most of the land in and around Davie for the next several years.[16]

An advertisement of the Everglades Land Sales Company, appearing in a September 1909 special edition of *The Miami Metropolis*, offered for sale "The finest deep muck soil" and "the best of the best soil in the world. . ." This and similar ads drew responses from people all over the United States and many parts of the world, including Russia, Canada, and the Panama Canal Zone, who then bought ten acre tracts of land from the company. It was the early settlers from the canal zone who gave the little settlement its first name of Zona.[18]

In 1912 William Hammer of Alberta, Canada, learned of the new farm land being offered for sale in Florida. He made three trips to Zona to investigate. His daughter, Norma Hammer Albury, recalls that:

> *He came back each time with more glowing accounts and descriptions of the place. He brought back coffee cans full of muck, grapefruit (which we children thought was horrible), seashells, a stuffed alligator, maps, pictures, and talk, talk, talk.*[19]

Then as now the lure of tropical Florida was strong, and William Hammer finally decided to make the move. He arrived in Zona with his wife and eleven children in January 1913.[20] Already there were the Griffins, Hills, Formans, Aunapus, Lowes, Earles, and a few other families who comprised the small settlement of about 200.[21]

In spite of the glowing reports of the

ondrous productivity of the Ever-
lades muck soil, life in Zona was
xtremely difficult for the settlers, who
ad to deal with floods, crop failures,
nd fluctuating markets, in addition
o insects, snakes, and generally
rimitive living conditions. Still, the
ttle community was not down-
odden and showed surprising con-
ern for the finer points of life, such
s culture and education. The A. B.
owe family, for instance, was typical.
hey may have lived in a tent; but they
wned a piano.[22] More importantly, the
ettlers had already managed to estab-
sh a school. The previous February
912), Dale Miller, an officer of the
verglades Land Sales Company, had
scorted members of the Dade County
chool Board to Zona to show them
he large number of school age children
here and to convince them of the need
or a school.[23] Zona residents were so
sistent that the Dade officials agreed
o provide the land, a teacher, and
uilding materials if the residents
ould agree to build the school them-
elves.[24] The result was a two-room
ooden schoolhouse which opened on
pril 1, 1912, under schoolmaster
ilton Geere.[25] This building served
he community for about six years.

On October 1, 1915, Broward County
as officially created from parts of
orthern Dade and southern Palm
each counties. The Broward County
oard of Public Instruction was
ormed to handle all school business,
ith J. M. Holding as the county's first
uperintendent of instruction.[26]

In 1916, in spite of the sporadic (at
est) nature of the state drainage
rogram, Davie was a thriving com-
unity of some 100 families. The town
oasted a Davie Telephone Company (with thirty-two subscribers), a Davie Board of Trade, an Everglades Growers Association, and even an Everglades County Club.[27] The town name had been officially changed to Davie in 1914.[28] The small, two-room school building had been outgrown, and a new one was requested from the Broward County Board of Public Instruction.

On January 2, 1917, the Board of Public Instruction accepted plans and specifications from architect Clarence Wait for the new Davie school building. The plans were approved and ordered advertised for bids with work to be commenced not earlier than March 15, 1917, and completed not later than August 15, 1917.[29] As of February 6, however, board minutes indicate that only one bid had been received (from Fleming Pitzer), and that it had been withdrawn.[30] Meanwhile, on January 10, 1917, the Board had purchased four acres of land from the Everglades Land Sales Company to enlarge and square up the old one-acre site.[31] Finally, on April 3, 1917, the Board instructed Superintendent Holding to confer with August Geiger and request plans and specifications for a school building.[32] These Mr. Geiger presented on June 1, 1917. The plans were approved and ordered advertised for bids.[33] This time two bids were received. The first was submitted by J. F. Woolworth for $19,728 and the second by W. E. Martin for $12,424. Mr. Martin's bid was accepted, and a building contract was ordered drawn on June 12, 1917.[34] A June 15, 1917 *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* article reported the awarding of the contract and described the plans for the new building.

The lower floor will contain four classrooms each 20 feet by 30 feet, a corridor 8 feet wide through the center of the building and toilet, hallway and stairs to the rear.

The second floor contains an auditorium 41 by 70 feet, which will be capable of seating 500 people; a principal's office, a teacher's restroom and library and hall.[35]

The article continues on to praise Mr. Geiger's plans for incorporating all of the beauty of the old with the most modern advances in ventilating and lighting. Finally, on May 10, 1918, the school was dedicated with a full dose of the patriotic pomp and fanfare so representative of the era. There was a recitation of James Whitcomb Riley's "Old Glory," "Keep the Home Fires Burning" was sung, and the students performed a flag drill. Future Superintendent of Public Instruction James S. Rickards gave a patriotic address in which he compared the fine points of architecture in the new building to the desired points of character to be developed in the schools. In his best patriotic style, Mr. Rickards informed the crowd that:

The results of proper education is the developing of a character charged with idealism, and the American youth, filled with his ideals and inspired by his sense of fairness, is feared by tyrants like the German Kaiser more than he fears the belching cannon.[36]

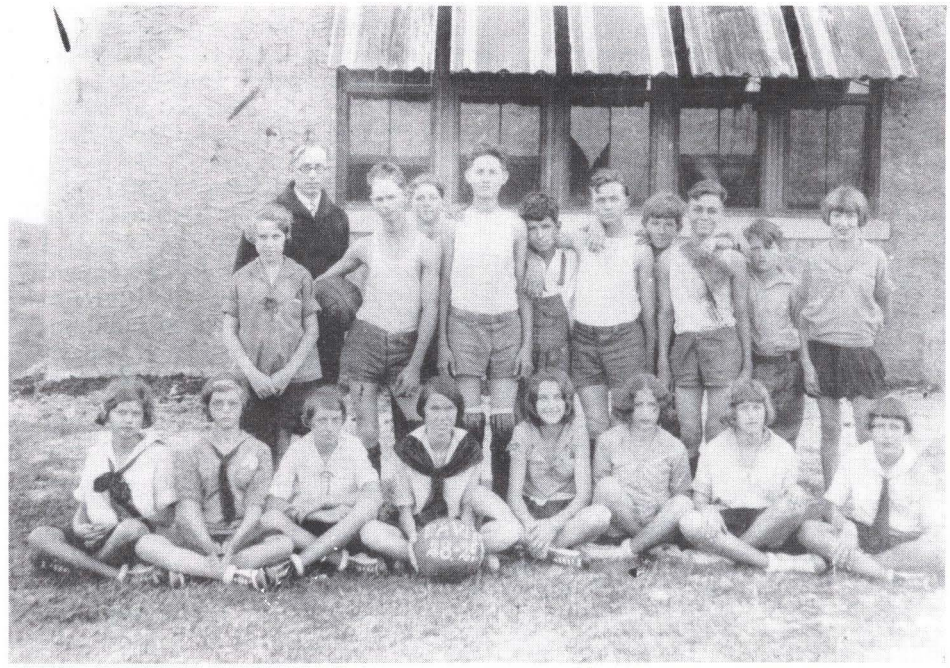
fter completing elementary grades at the Davie School, students raveled to Fort Lauderdale in this bus driven by one of their classmates, laitland Hill.

Davie School teachers and students, 1919-1920.

On August 19, 1918, the Davie School opened a little less flamboyantly for its first full year of instruction.[37] Althea Jenne was the first principal of the school, appointed by the Board of Public Instruction at a salary of $75.00 per month.[38] Mrs. Jenne continued on at Davie School in the capacity of principal or teacher for some thirty years. Helen Parker and Alma Grant received monthly salaries of $65.00 and $60.00 respectively to teach the seventy students enrolled.[39]

The new school building soon became the virtual center of community life in Davie. It was quite an impressive structure for a tiny farming village perched on the edge of the wilderness, and the people of Davie were justifiably proud of it. Every kind of social and civic activity took place in the large upstairs auditorium. There were dances and "box suppers" almost every week. School holiday programs and community plays of every description were also common. The social functions at the school were regularly attended not only by Davie people but by visitors from Fort Lauderdale and Dania as well. Davie gained a reputation for knowing how to have a good time. The *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* saw fit to publish the entire program of the 1922 Christmas Day celebration given by the Davie Sunday School in the school auditorium.[40] In 1921 the school was put to perhaps its most unusual use when the new principal, A. J. Albertson, received permission from the school trustees and the Board of Public Instruction to live in one of the classrooms, as he was unable to find adequate housing in the area.[41] Just how long Mr. Albertson remained a resident in the school is unclear, but it appears to have been a period of several months at least. Political rallies and elections were held in the school building as well. In 1925 forty-eight residents met in the auditorium to initiate incorporation of the town and elect the first mayor.[42] During the 1947 flood the second floor of the school was one of the few dry spots in town, and many took shelter there. The school building was routinely used as a hurricane shelter. Alice Woodward, principal of Davie School from 1939-56, expressed that "the school was simply the center of everything the people undertook."[43]

The Davie School maintained its central role in the community for several decades. As Davie grew and changed, accompanying changes occurred at the school. In 1923 the Broward County Board of Public Instruction approved the installation of electric lights at a cost of $750.00.[44] In 1926 the hurricane of September 17-18 was the source of the first physical alterations to the school. As a result of damage by the storm, the building was remodeled without its mission-tiled roof and wood louvers beneath the first story windows.[45] On July 5, 1927, the board approved, at the anxious insistence of school trustee Mrs. Charles Stoddard, the installation of wooden window awnings as protection against further storm damage.[46] Considering Davie's location on the edge of the Everglades, its tendency to flood, and the frequent use of the school as a shelter, storm protection was a vital consideration.



Davie girls' and boys' basketball teams in front of the school, 1929 (photo courtesy of Davie School Foundation, Inc.).

In the late 1940s, in order to accommodate growing enrollment, the upstairs auditorium was converted into four additional classrooms, and a separate cafeteria was built east of the old building. In 1954 two new classrooms were built in front of the original building and connected to it by a covered breezeway. It was at this time that the original, Moorish-style arched doorway was replaced with a broader, rectangular opening, probably the only truly destructive change the building has endured since the 1926 hurricane. Finally, in 1959, an administrative wing, new cafetorium, and six additional classrooms were constructed between the old school and Griffin Road, greatly obscuring the original structure from view.[47]

After the mid-'50s the school's function as a community center began to decrease as Davie's population grew and became more diverse. Nevertheless, school and holiday programs were still numerous and widely attended and continued to be so throughout the building's use as a school. In 1977 a new Davie Elementary School was built to accommodate the rapidly growing Davie population.[48] The old site was renamed Griffin Elementary School and continued in use as a school until 1980. Since that time it has been occupied by the South Area Offices of the Broward County School Board. This use was never meant to be permanent. When the School Board has completed its planned central offices, the old buildings will be vacated.

Until 1983 the fate of the old school was uncertain at best. In 1977 there was talk of using the facility as a terminal and maintenance center for school buses. The Town of Davie also considered acquiring the building and converting it into a town hall.[49] Neither of these plans came to fruition.

Finally, in 1983, Soroptomist International of Davie identified the acquisition, preservation, and restoration of Old Davie School as a community project. In 1984 the Davie School Foundation, Inc., was created to work with the Town of Davie to achieve this end. The process has been a long and difficult one, but is beginning to produce exciting results. On March 29, 1988, the historical significance of the Old Davie School was officially recognized with its placement on the National Register of Historic Places. In June of that year the Broward County School Board declared the Old Davie School "surplus property" and in July transferred ownership to the Town of Davie.[50] The project was slated to receive $422,162 in preservation funds in 1990 which will accomplish major restoration work. Total need for restoration is estimated at approximately $1,000,000. The building will be

Davie School Foundation brochure promoting restoration, 1990-1991.

returned to its appearance in the late 1920s (after the 1926 hurricane).

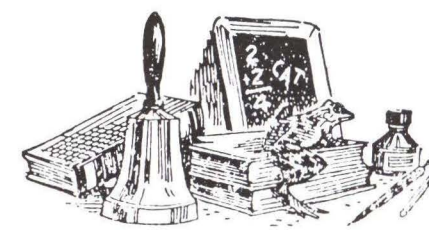
Plans for the school's use include restoring the upstairs auditorium as a home for historic exhibits, civic activities, public forums, and artisan workshops. The four original downstairs classrooms will provide a museum of local history, civic meeting rooms, archives, educational programs, and a restored classroom of the period to be used as a "hands-on" learning center for Broward County school children.[51]

In an area plagued by the wholesale destruction of its historical and cultural legacy, the story of Davie School provides a glimmer of hope. Though development is usually seen as the culprit in the loss of historic buildings, it is also often the very thing that finally sparks the attention of people too busy to otherwise notice or care much about the destruction of one more old building. Yet that is exactly how they are lost — one by one. For sixty years the Davie School sat in a sleepy little "cow town", unnoticed by anyone but the people of Davie, many of whom not only attended school there but watched their children and grandchildren do the same. They loved the old building; it was a part of the very fabric of their lives. Still, no one thought much about restoration until the boom-type development in the Davie area, coupled with the building's soon-to-be "surplus" status threatened its existence. It was this threat that sparked Davie people to begin the process of trying to save their school, and it was this process that brought into focus the wonderful significance of the old building, both in its origins and its sentimental value to Davie. It is once again becoming a common ground for the citizens of Davie to claim and an important focal point for Davie in its thirty year struggle, amid rapid and often traumatic growth, to find an expression of its true identity as a community.

In light of what the Old Davie School is once again coming to mean to the town of Davie, the words of Colonel C. A. Walsh, when he officially accepted the new Davie School building on behalf of the citizens of Davie in May 1918, take on real meaning:

> *We accept and thank you for this splendid building, a building no matter how large and important this community may grow, will ever be the center of its social action and the main cause of any progress we may make. The citizens of Davie will take pride in it, will maintain it and cherish it.*[52]

It looks as though Davie intends to keep its promise.



FOOTNOTES

1. Margot Ammidown and Ivan A. Rodriguez, eds., *From Wilderness to Metropolis, The History and Architecture of Dade County (1825-1940)* (Miami: Metropolitan Dade County, 1982), introduction.
2. "Davie School Building Dedicated Last Friday," *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, May 17, 1918, 8; An earlier structure (approximately 1910) exists in Hallandale. The small frame building was only used as a school for a short time, however, and has been moved from its original site.
3. Ammidown and Rodriguez, eds., *From Wilderness to Metropolis*, 172.
4. "Site of New School Building at Dania Chosen," *The Weekly Miami Metropolis*, April 12, 1912, 6; Minutes of the Board of Instruction for the County of Broward, State of Florida, Book I, 1; Cooper Kirk, "The Broward County Public School System — The First Quarter Century," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 11, nos. 3 & 4 (Summer/Fall 1988), 30.
5. August Geiger, "The Model School Plan for Tropic Florida," *The Tropic Magazine*, June 1914, 12-13.
6. Sarah Eaton, National Register of Historic Places, Inventory/Nomination Form, The Davie School Foundation, Inc.
7. James Thomas Brooks, Jr., "Napoleon Broward and the Great Land Debate," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 11, nos. 1 & 2 (Winter/Spring 1988), 41.
8. Charlton W. Tebeau, *A History of Florida* (Coral Gables: University of Miami Press, 1971), 346-47.
9. Brooks, "Great Land Debate," 41.
10. Samuel Proctor, *Napoleon Bonaparte Broward — Florida's Fighting Democrat* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1950), 218.
11. Ibid., 190-91.
12. Brooks, "Great Land Debate," 42.
13. Tebeau, *History of Florida*, 331-32.
14. Proctor, *Napoleon Bonaparte Broward*, 244; Nelson M. Blake, *Land Into Water, Water Into Land, a History of Water Management in Florida* (Tallahassee: University Presses of Florida, 1980), 98.
15. Blake, *Land Into Water, Water Into Land*, 104.
16. "A Gigantic Concern Organized to Grow Sugar Cane, Cotton and Various Crops on the Everglades Land in Dade County," *The Miami Metropolis*, June 12, 1908, 7; "Everglades Land Co., A New Organization Now Incorporating," *The Miami Metropolis*, February 6, 1909, 1.
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18. "First School in the Everglades Opens April 1, at Town of Zona, the New Colony From Panama," *The Weekly Miami Metropolis*, March 22, 1912, 3.
19. Norma Hammer Albury, "Please Remember, Mama," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 10, nos. 1 & 2 (Winter/Spring 1987), 15.
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22. Bernarr Lowe, Interview by Connie Dickey, videotaped at Davie, Florida, February 1990.
23. "Zona To Get First School in the Everglades," *The Weekly Miami Metropolis*, February 16, 1912, 6.
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26. Kirk, "Broward Public School System," 29.
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28. "Davie Now a Reality and Zona No More," *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, May 1, 1914, 1.

29. School Board Minutes, Book I, 65.

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31. Warrantee Deed Between the Everglades Land Sales Company and the Board of Public Instruction for the County of Broward, State of Florida, January 10, 1917.

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33. *Ibid.*, 82.

34. *Ibid.*, 87.

35. "Contract Let For Davie School," *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, June 15, 1917, 1.

36. "Davie School Building Dedicated Last Friday," *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, May 17, 1918, 8.

37. School Board Minutes, Book I, 152.

38. *Ibid.*, 88.

39. *Ibid.*, 88, 118.

40. "Christmas Day Celebration at Davie," *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, January 5, 1923, 4.

41. School Board Minutes, Book II, 357.

42. Marlyn Kemper, "The Taming of Broward's Wild, Wild West: An Analysis of 'The Code of the Town of Davie,'" *Broward Legacy*, vol. I, no. 1 (October 1976), 3. This incorporation was short-lived. In 1926 the citizens of Davie petitioned the state legislature to dissolve the charter, and Davie remained unincorporated until 1961.

43. Alice Woodward, Letter to State Historic Preservation Office in support of placing Davie School on the National Register of Historic Places.

44. School Board Minutes, Book II, 565.

45. *Ibid.*, Book IV, 1183-1184.

46. *Ibid.*, Book V, 1211.

47. State of Florida, Florida School Survey — School Plant Information, October 8, 1959, 1.

48. Davie's population has exploded in the past thirty years. In 1960 there were approximately 2,000 residents in Davie. Today there are an estimated 47,000.

49. Untitled article, *Western News*, October 13, 1977.

50. School Board of Broward County, Resolution #88-82, Agenda Item A-1: Declare Surplus — Portion of "Old" Davie Elementary School Site #009.0 as not needed for educational purposes, June 16, 1988. Agenda Item K-3: Transfer a portion of Site #009.0 ("Old" Davie Elementary) to Town of Davie, July 7, 1988.

51. "Davie School, A Special Place in a Unique Town," Brochure of the Davie School Foundation, Inc.

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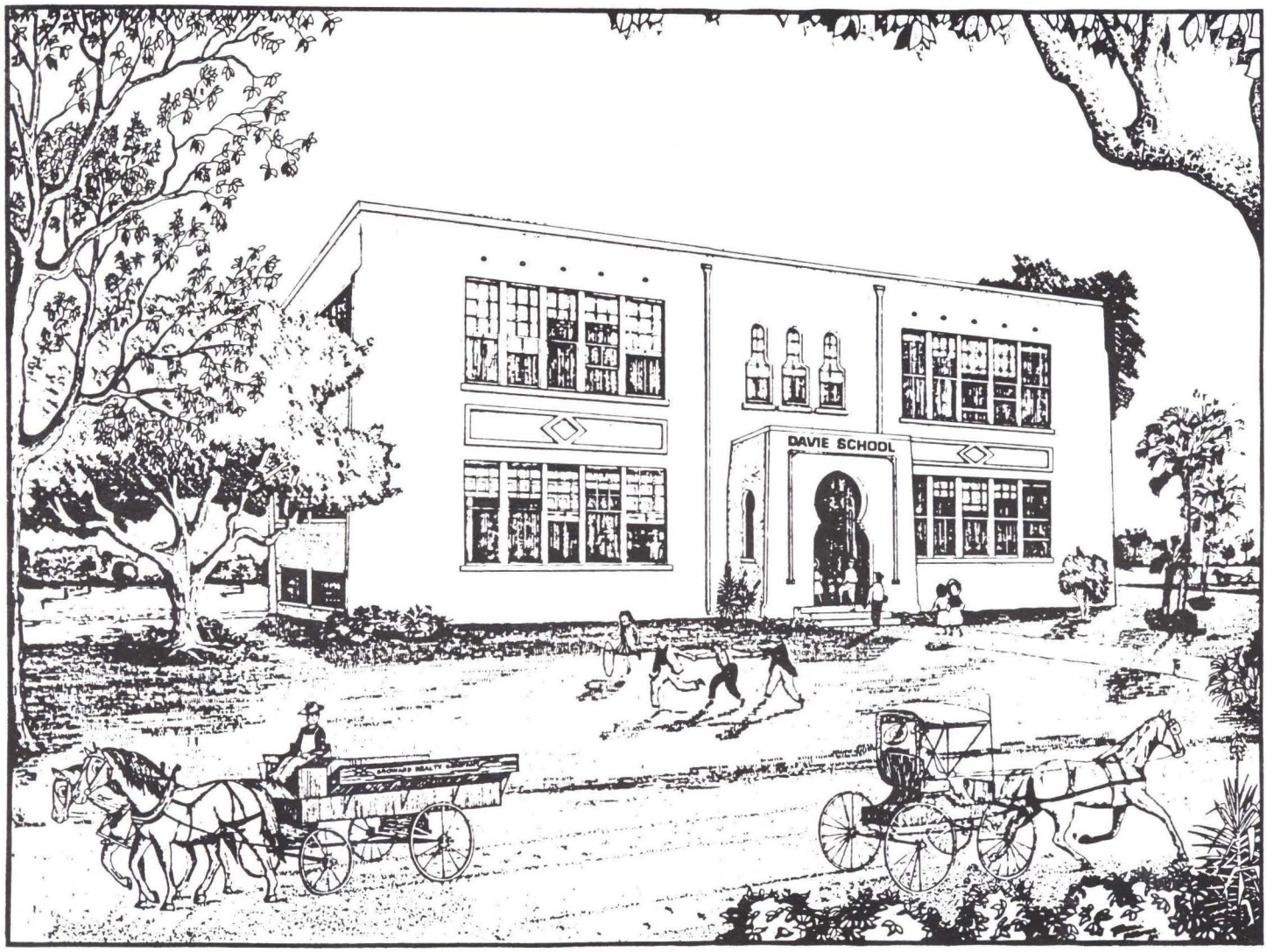


Courtesy of Davie School Foundation, Inc.

DOWNTOWN FORT LAUDERDALE:

ITS DEMISE AND RENAISSANCE IN THE POST-WAR ERA

by PAUL S. GEORGE

With the end of World War II in 1945, Fort Lauderdale residents turned to the future with high expectations, for their city had grown and prospered as few others during the conflict. Fort Lauderdale had weathered the Great Depression better than many communities because farming, still a viable industry, provided sustenance for residents, while an expanding tourist trade brought visitors and revenue. By the late 1930s, new construction and retail outlets dotted the downtown sector which centered on Andrews Avenue from the New River to immediately north of Broward Boulevard and stretched from the Florida East Coast Railway Station east to Federal Highway 1. During World War II, Fort Lauderdale had hosted thousands of members of the armed forces. Between 1940 and 1945, the city's population climbed from 17,996 to an estimated 26,000, and soared five years later to 36,328, as many wartime visitors and soldiers returned as permanent residents. The removal of wartime restrictions on the production and distribution of construction materials and consumer goods, and the presence of a populace eager to spend after years of privation, unleashed a building and spending frenzy that affected every element of the city.[1]

Growth and change manifested themselves in a myriad of ways in the postwar years. In downtown Fort Lauderdale, long the economic heart of the city, this new boom was at first

Downtown Fort Lauderdale, historically the city's "heart," shared in the wave of prosperity which swept Broward County and much of Florida following the end of World War II. Ironically, this same explosion of population, construction, and traffic would, within a decade, send the region into a prolonged period of decline. The growth of suburbs and subsequent decline of downtown as a retail area was a widespread phenomenon in postwar America, but one which was intensified in Broward County by the magnitude of the region's population growth and by an almost total dependence on the automobile for local transportation. The story of downtown Fort Lauderdale's deterioration and subsequent efforts for revitalization forms one of the most intriguing and significant chapters in the city's recent history, one which has occupied the attention of businessmen, public officials, the press, and the general public from the 1950s to the present day.

Dr. Paul S. George, Director of the Historic Broward County Preservation Board and professor of history at Florida Atlantic University and the University of Miami, is also known as "the walking historian of southeast Florida" for his popular walking tours of a number of Broward and Dade Counties' historic sections, including downtown Fort Lauderdale. This article is an adaptation of portions of Dr. George's manuscript, "Broward's Flagship City: Fort Lauderdale, 1945-1990," the final volume in a three-part comprehensive survey prepared for the Preservation Board.

reflected by increased prosperity and vitality. In succeeding years, however, increased automobile traffic and resulting parking needs and the expansion of both population and commercial development into outlying areas of the city and surrounding suburban communities threatened and eventually destroyed the district's commercial preeminence.

As Fort Lauderdale catapulted into the ranks of Florida's most important communities and the center of one of the state's most dynamic counties, its downtown, ironically, endured four decades of decline, punctuated by redevelopment efforts of varying degrees of success and failure. Only in recent years has the resurgence of downtown Fort Lauderdale been assured.

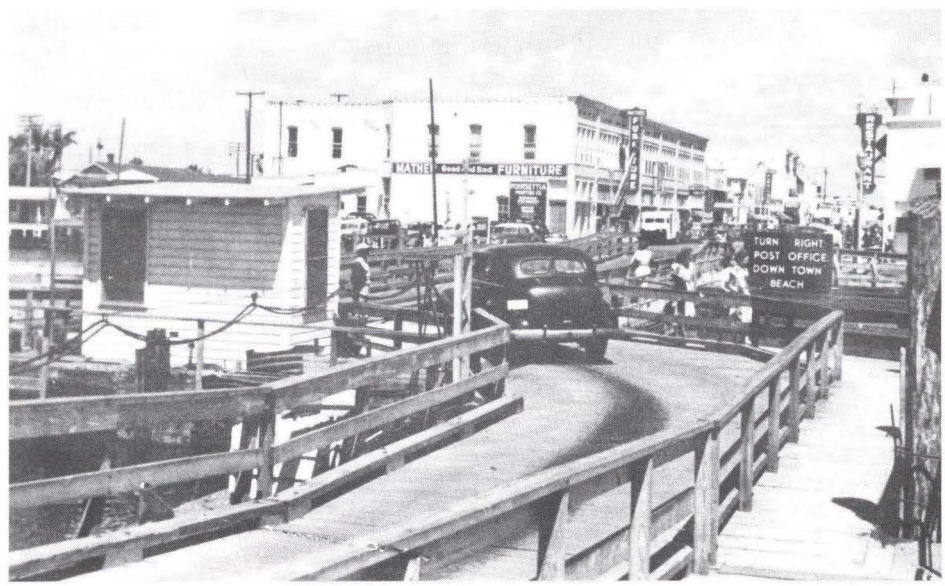
Fort Lauderdale embraced eighteen and one half square miles of territory in 1945. In the early postwar years, settlement pushed out in three directions — west from the Atlantic Ocean to within reach of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad tracks, south to State Road 84, and to the north, where some residents lived beyond Tenth Street (Sunrise Boulevard), but considerably below the looping south fork of Middle River.[2] This growth imposed new demands upon a city unprepared for them. Citizens demanded more housing, schools, additional police protection, new roads and bridges, a better water supply, and an improved sanitation system. Traffic problems in particular plagued the downtown district in the years immediately following the end of the war.[3]

Fort Lauderdale's first postwar mayor, Harold Holden, described the city's growing automobile congestion, especially in the tourist season, its dearth of downtown parking, and traffic bottlenecks at the approach to bridges. He warned that downtown congestion required immediate action since the sector was in danger of strangling on its traffic. In 1947, Holden spoke of a problem that would bedevil the nation's urban centers: "Modern automobile transport has super-imposed traffic on our streets designed for the horse and buggy."[4] Holden argued for off-street parking in downtown Fort Lauderdale, but the city, instead, chose to place parking meters along its main thoroughfares, thereby adding to the growing congestion. Nowhere was traffic more congested than on those portions of Andrews Avenue and the Federal Highway that spanned the New River. The Andrews Avenue bridge was thirty years of age and in danger of condemnation in the late 1940s, before the city commenced construction of a new bridge. The fourth span at this crossing, the new structure was molded from steel and concrete. Broader and stronger than its predecessors, it contained four lanes for traffic.[5]

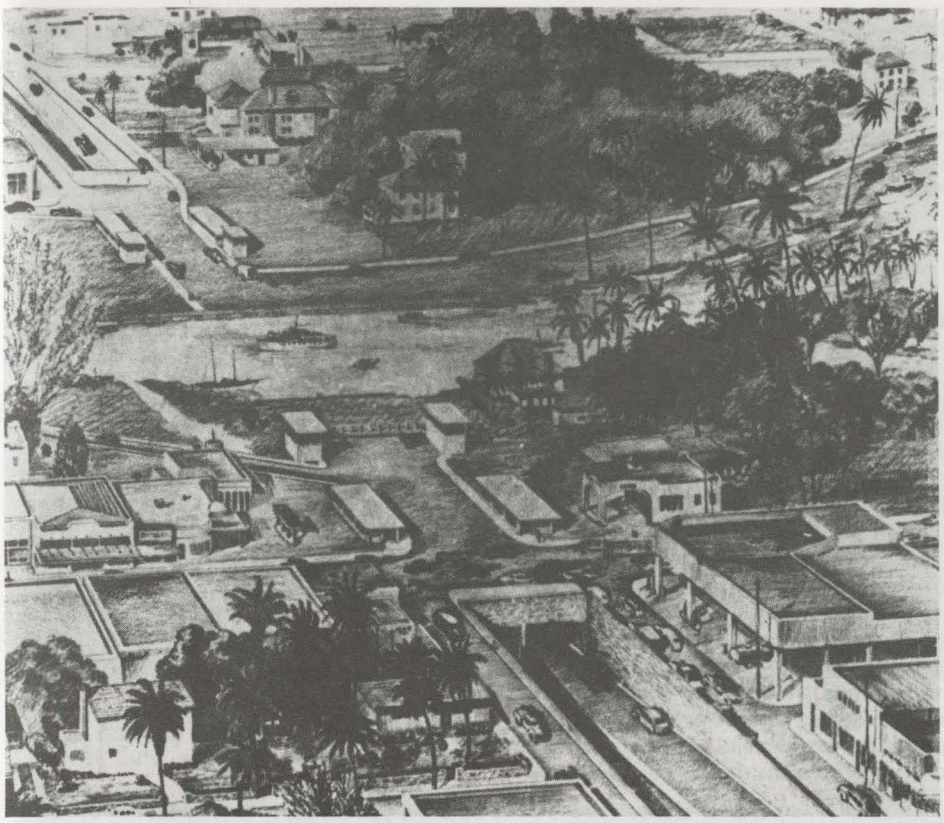
While construction was underway on the bridge, Powell Brothers, the contractors for the project, built a temporary pontoon bridge at Southwest First Avenue. It was employed briefly, because the Andrews Avenue bridge was completed in nine months, at a cost of $482,000. The bridge opened in October 1949, relieving congestion; it remained in operation until 1979. The county named the new span the H. C. Davis Memorial Bridge for the veteran engineer who had designed it.[6]

The bridge crossing the New River at the Federal Highway presented even more serious problems than the span at Andrews Avenue. Built in the mid-1920s, this low, narrow, wooden structure stood in the upright position for hours daily, sometimes causing mile-long backups on the Federal Highway. In the postwar period, this portion of the Federal Highway acquired a reputation as the "worst bottleneck of U. S. 1 from Maine to Florida."[7] Business leader Emmett McTigue remembers that just a few years earlier the absence of traffic had permitted him to ride his bicycle along the center of the Federal Highway — without his having to grip the handlebars.[8]

Because of the frequency of bridge openings, the city commission in 1945



Above is the H. C. Davis Bridge under construction at New River and Andrews Avenue, 1949. Below is the temporary pontoon bridge at Brickell (Southwest First) Avenue, which served as a substitute crossing during construction.



Preliminary drawing of the U.S. Highway 1 tunnel under the New River. This view, prepared in 1948, faces south with Las Olas Boulevard in center foreground.

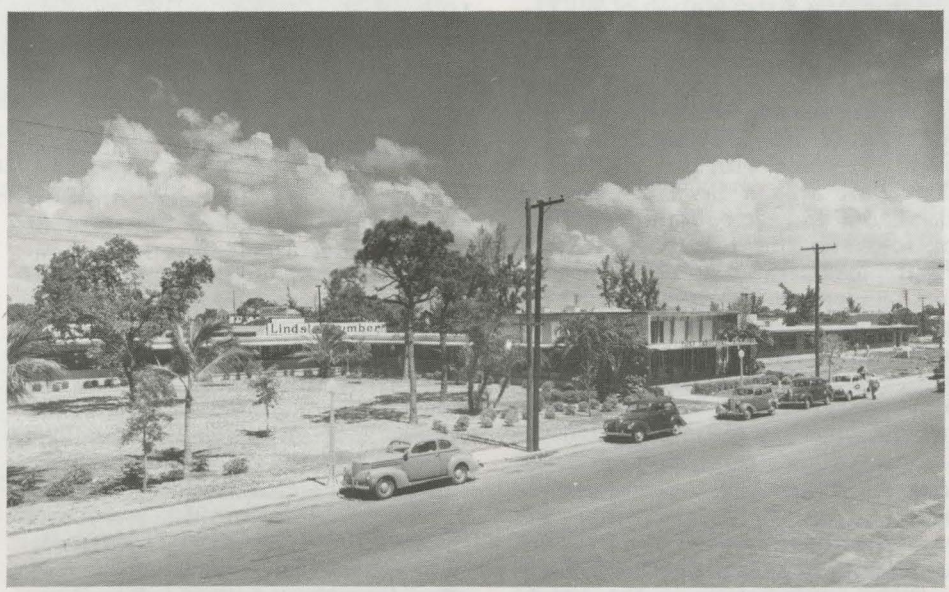
directed the city manager to take whatever steps necessary to limit them to one every half-hour. In the following year, several persons organized the New River Boatmen's Association to solve such problems as "unnecessary bridge openings."[9]

For many, however, more radical measures were necessary. As early as 1940, discussion had begun over the prospects of constructing a tunnel beneath the river at the Federal Highway crossing. In the postwar period, tunnel advocates grew louder in their demands. The city employed a consulting firm in 1948 to make preliminary plans for tunnels under the New River at Federal Highway, as well as under the Intracoastal Waterway at East Las Olas Boulevard and Southeast Seventeenth Street. The Florida State Road Department also became interested in tunnel crossings, and engaged its own consulting firm which recommended a tunnel at the Federal Highway and New River, but ruled against the proposed Intracoastal tunnels. Finally, in 1960, a tunnel under the New River at Federal Highway opened to vehicular traffic.[10]

Human as well as automotive congestion was evident in downtown Fort Lauderdale in the immediate aftermath of the war. In 1945, the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce proposed a new city hall to replace the cramped structure that had served the community since its infancy. After city leaders adopted the idea, the electorate was asked to choose a new city hall from three proposed locations; it selected a tract at North Andrews Avenue and Third Street. Upon vacating the old city hall in 1946, the city moved its operations temporarily into the second floor of the Dowdy Building at Broward Boulevard and Southwest First Avenue. Employees found this new facility cramped and sometimes redolent with the aroma of food arising from the grocery and restaurant that occupied the first floor.[11]

While the city was preparing its new home, Burdine's department store, south Florida's premier emporium, decided to open an outlet in Fort Lauderdale. For years, city leaders had coveted a Burdine's store for Fort Lauderdale; for even longer residents had journeyed to Miami to shop in Burdine's. In 1946, Burdine's purchased the vacant city hall site from the City of Fort Lauderdale for $250,000, after a traffic survey indicated that it stood at the busiest intersection in the city. In May 1946, demolition crews razed the old city hall, and construction commenced on the new Burdine's store. The store opened in the following year, and would serve a generation of customers. Many Fort Lauderdale residents shared the sentiments of Cecil Farrington, a prominent Fort Lauderdale attorney, who maintained that, "When Burdine's came to Fort Lauderdale, that's when we became a city."[12] The downtown store closed in 1980 when Burdine's opened a new store at the Galleria Mall on East Sunrise Boulevard.[13]

In the meantime, construction commenced on the new city hall in 1947. In the following year, the city completed the handsome one-story structure at a cost of $338,850, and occupied it in April. In addition to other city offices, the police and fire departments occupied the building considered large enough to serve the city for many years. Within three years of its opening, however, the city hall was



The Fort Lauderdale City Hall on North Andrews Avenue, shortly after its 1948 completion.

crowded; in the mid-1950s, it received its first addition.[14]

Although the new city hall was a pleasant venue for municipal employees, it was plagued briefly by a contretemps: the restroom windows contained one-way glass, which was reversed when it was installed, thereby preventing employees from seeing out, as it was designed to do, while allowing persons on the sidewalk outside to see in. Upon discovering the problem, the city quickly rectified it.[15]

Downtown business boomed throughout the late 1940s. In 1949, downtown retailers experienced an increase of eighteen percent in business over the figures for the previous year. Along with the opening of Burdine's and the construction of a new city hall came the appearance of other new businesses and the growth of more established institutions, such as Sears, McCrory's, and Woolworth's. Montgomery Ward opened a small outlet near the United States Post Office on Southeast Second Avenue. Appliance and furniture stores, along with grocery outlets, appeared throughout the sector.[16]

The growth of Robert H. Gore's *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, the city's lone daily, enabled it to abandon its label as "another country daily."[17] Gore transformed the newspaper plant on Southeast First Avenue and North New River Drive into a modern facility with the addition of more floor space and state of the art equipment. Gore also took control of WFTL Radio, the county's first radio station, and converted the structure at Southeast First Avenue and Las Olas Boulevard that had housed the Pioneer Department Store and the wartime Service Men's Center into the Radio Center Building for his radio operations. In 1948, Gore's WGOR-FM, a sister station of WFTL, commenced operations.[18]

Downtown's hotels and apartment houses remained fully occupied during the winter season, while the sector's Sunset and Florida theaters were usually crowded with patrons. Stranahan Park was a favorite area for socializing and recreational activities for tourists and residents alike.[19] Nightclubs operated in many parts of Fort Lauderdale. Downtown, the Federal Highway, Andrews Avenue, and North New River Drive were popular venues for this fare. Most clubs offered dinner and dancing to live music. Some included more exotic entertainment.[20]

Financial institutions and businesses born in the previous decade also exhibited striking growth after the war. Organized during the Great Depression, Fort Lauderdale's First National Bank (renamed the Landmark First National Bank in 1970) quickly outgrew its original quarters after the war, prompting a move to a new building on East Las Olas Boulevard and Third Avenue in 1948. By then, the institution had embarked on a course of aggressive lending to help develop the area. Recognizing the growing importance of accomodating the automobile, the bank offered "Drive-in Teller Service."[21]

Even a catastrophe considered Broward County's greatest natural disaster made no permanent inroads on the great expansion of the late 1940s. In the fall of 1947, two hurricanes with high winds caused heavy downpours and severe flooding in Fort Lauderdale and other parts of the county. The second storm deposited eleven inches of rain on Fort Lauderdale in less than three hours, causing the New River to spill over its banks and submerge the downtown in two feet of water. Andrews Avenue was especially hard hit, with high waters entering many stores along the thoroughfare. The rains washed away large segments of other streets as well. Fort Lauderdale required several weeks to dry itself out, and damage estimates were placed at $1.3 million.[22]

Although brief when measured in years, the second half of the 1940s marked a watershed in the history of Fort Lauderdale. Despite a bewildering variety of new demands placed upon the city by explosive, sustained growth, city officials and downtown businessmen looked forward to continued economic and physical expansion and prosperity.

Helped by the huge population migration to the area, sustained prosperity, and a white-hot economy centered on real estate and tourism, Fort Lauderdale began to assume the contours of a metropolitan center in the 1950s. Its population rose to 83,648 by 1960, placing it among the nation's fastest growing cities. By the end of the 1950s, 750 families were moving into the city each month. Broward County shared a similar story. The county's population soared from 83,933 in 1950 to 329,431 by decade's end. During this era, ten new Broward municipalities gained charters of incorporation. Ironically, this expansive decade also witnessed the beginning of the decline of downtown Fort Lauderdale.[23]

Perhaps the most dramatic change brought by the new decade was the enormous proliferation of new subdivisions and shopping centers. The largest and most successful of several significant Fort Lauderdale real estate developments in the 1950s was Coral Ridge, which arose in the city's northeast sector. Other areas of the city offered a wide variety of subdivisions and home prices as well. By the mid-1950s, homes in areas of northwest and southwest Fort Lauderdale were selling for $8,000, while those in Rio Vista and Coral Ridge fetched $15,000 to $20,000. Elaborate apartment buildings in the Birch Estates, northeast Fort Lauderdale, and Nurmi Isles were commanding prices of $100,000.[24] Fort Lauderdale Beach also represented a key center of development. Characterized by one observer as a family destination at the outset of the decade, it became a great commercial resort by the end of the decade.[25]

Retail businesses expanded across the city too, especially with the opening of the Gateway, Sunrise, Westgate, and Plaza Center shopping centers in newly developed areas of Fort Lauderdale. Sunrise, the most ambitious and successful of the early shopping centers, attracted several nationally prominent stores, including Jordan Marsh and Saks Fifth Avenue. A portion of East Las Olas Boulevard directly east of downtown underwent a beautification campaign during the 1950s, with the planting of palm trees along its center. By the end of the decade, beautiful black olive trees graced the parking lots located just off the street, and many buildings had been redesigned in the Spanish Eclectic or Mediterranean Revival architectural style, giving East Las Olas Boulevard a place among Florida's most beautiful retail districts.[26]

Downtown, Burdine's, which remained the city's premier department store, embarked on a multimillion dollar expansion, taking over the building north of it on South Andrews Avenue while constructing an addition on the site of its parking lot on Southwest First Avenue.[27] Not every downtown business continued to prosper, however. Representatives of the city's charter fishing fleet, a popular tourist draw since the 1920s, complained of a sharp decline in business. Moreover, downtown retailers felt keenly the competition from the new shopping centers with their unlimited free parking and close proximity to growing suburban population centers.[28]

Indeed, through most of the 1950s, downtown Fort Lauderdale groped for ways to meet the challenge of competition from the new shopping centers on the perimeter of the city. Downtown merchants requested additional parking areas, and the city responded by converting such sites as the old Florida East Coast Railway station just west of the tracks into a parking lot (the railway had built a new station in Croissant Park south of the New River). New parking lots and garages appeared elsewhere in the sector. In addition to Burdine's, other businesses instituted improvements to their surroundings. The long-slumbering Brow-

Mid-1960s view of the Fort Lauderdale municipal parking lot, located on the site of the old F.E.C. Railway depot.

In the 1950s and '60s, new shopping centers such as Coral Ridge, seen in this 1962 photo, drew much retail business away from downtown (photo courtesy of Smith Aerial Photography, Inc.).

ard Hotel, now empty most of the year, underwent extensive remodeling.[29]

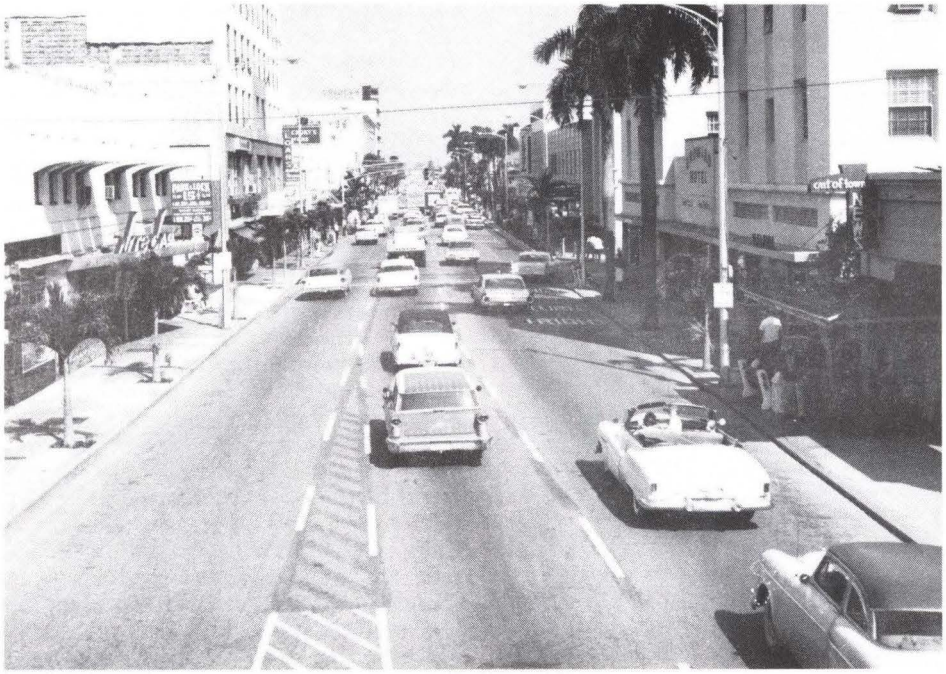
Fort Lauderdale's explosive population growth and development continued during the 1960s, overshadowing everything else as they remained the dominant themes in the city's history. Between 1960 and 1970, Fort Lauderdale's population increased by more than seventy-five percent, reaching 129,590 by decade's end. The decade marked the last great population surge for the city as settlement was pushing out against its borders. City planners estimated in 1967 that eighty-five percent of Fort Lauderdale was developed. The great population explosion in Broward County was already shifting to a growing area of communities around Fort Lauderdale.[30]

Reeling under the flight of shoppers to suburban shopping centers, downtown's decline had become acutely apparent by the mid-1950s. The intractable problems of traffic congestion and limited parking, the seasonal nature of the city's retail business, the loss of a large base of shoppers following the decline of the residential area west of the Florida East Coast Railway tracks, and the relocation of the fishing fleet and luxury yachts, which had traditionally attracted large numbers of people, away from the vicinity of the Andrews Avenue bridge, all contributed to this decline. By 1963, more than 125 downtown stores sat vacant, and Fort Lauderdale High School, a mainstay of the sector since its opening in 1915, had abandoned its old facility for new quarters elsewhere.[31]

At first, Fort Lauderdale reacted slowly to the decay at its core. In 1960, Mayor Edwin Johns was unable to decide "whether we want to (undertake urban renewal) or not. It needs a lot of study."[32] In the following year, however, three separate groups were working to revitalize downtown. The Fort Lauderdale Downtown Business Council, with 130 members, lobbied for redevelopment, offering its "Park and Shop" plan as a step in this direction. Under the terms of this plan, shoppers would receive free parking for up to one hour in cooperating parking lots. The Council also called for the return of the fishing fleets, luxury yachts, and tour boats to that segment of the New River that meanders to the south of the downtown. The Downtown Council of the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce focused on traffic improvements and beautification projects. The Chamber's Planning and Community Development Council, a third group working for the improvement of the city's core, advocated long term planning to catalyze a major transformation of downtown. By then, the city had defined the area targeted for redevelopment. It extended from Broward Boulevard on the north to the New River on the south, Ninth Avenue on the west to the Federal Highway on the east.[33]

In the early 1960s, the city commissioned a Memphis consulting firm to create a plan for the revitalization of downtown. The city unveiled the plan in 1964. Ambitious and visionary, it called for the construction of high-rise apartments, pedestrian mall and overpass, riverfront park, and nightclubs. The cost was set at $30 million, with the federal government paying two-thirds of the sum, and the city the remaining one-third.[34]

Soon after the appearance of the revitalization plan, 250 residents signed a petition opposing federal funding for the project. Opponents averred that the scheme and its proposed funding arrangement smacked of "creeping socialism."[35] The commission ultimately decided against the plan. In the wake of its decision, Mayor Edmund Burry declared that "The people in Germany followed Hitler. People can be misled. If federal aided renewal wins all over the country, you



Downtown Fort Lauderdale in the early 1960s. Note one-way traffic on Andrews Avenue in this view looking north.

won't have a country in fifteen years."[36]

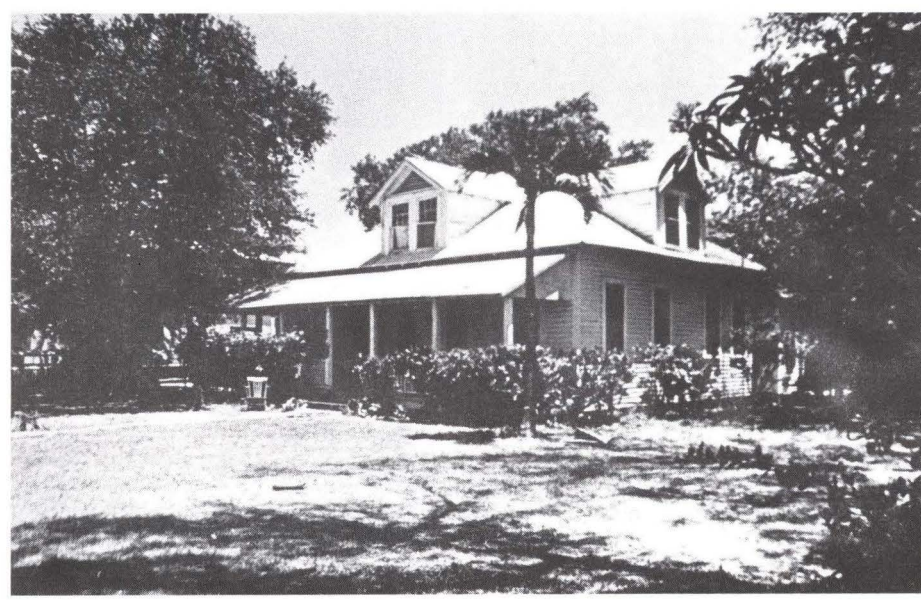
In 1965, the city proposed another scheme for downtown revitalization. It called for a $25 million complex that would include a thirty-five story apartment house building, and a twenty-one floor motor hotel on the site of the old Fort Lauderdale High School. This plan was also jettisoned, prompting the Downtown Business Council, desperate to stem the continuing decline of downtown, to search for new, more radical solutions. Fort Lauderdale's city attorney suggested the creation of a special improvement taxing district and a Downtown Development Authority (DDA) to govern the region. The DDA would possess the power of eminent domain. It also could issue general obligation and revenue bonds, acquire and dispense property, own and operate transit facilities, and assess taxes.[37]

Created in 1965 by a special act of the state legislature, the Downtown Development Authority received jurisdiction over 200 acres of land north of the New River. Soon after its creation, the DDA ordered a Central Area Study by architect Victor Green. Completed in 1967, the study became the DDA's General Plan for Downtown Fort Lauderdale and its blueprint for reversing the area's decline. As the 1960s unfolded, additional state legislation reshaped the Downtown Development Authority. A special act of the Florida Legislature on June 18, 1969, catalyzed creation of the DDA's present constitution, imbuing it with specific power to provide for rehabilitation, clearance, redevelopment, and revitalization of slums and blighted areas in the targeted downtown sector in accordance with the authority's plans.

The act also extended the boundaries of the Special Taxing District to include the area north of Northeast/Northwest Second Street. The full flowering of the DDA's efforts came with the ambitious construction program that swept downtown in the late 1970s and 1980s. In the meantime, downtown languished, becoming, to paraphrase President Lyndon B. Johnson's irritating comment on the nation's prospects in the Vietnamese War, worse before it got better.[38]

While revitalization as a whole seemed stagnant, certain individual projects provided sparks of hope for downtown through the otherwise gloomy years of the late 1960s. In 1967, the city commenced construction of an eight story, $2.1 million city hall on Northeast First Street and Andrews Avenue. Dedicated in 1969, this "modernistic" structure brought together under one roof many city departments. The building's "nerve center" was located on the first and second floors, where the city commission chambers and the offices of the city manager and city attorney stood.[39] During this same period, the First National Bank of Fort Lauderdale purchased the site of the old Fort Lauderdale High School, resolving a long-standing problem over the disposal of that valuable property.

Closely tied to emerging redevelopment efforts, although inspired by different motives, was the rise of historic preservation activity. A growing fear by many concerned residents that the "new" Fort Lauderdale was obliterating the old had led to several efforts to preserve the city's past, including the creation of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society in 1962. The first formal preservation activity came in 1969 with the formation of the Fort Lauderdale Historic Preservation Council, Inc. The Council's primary objective was the acquisition of historic buildings. The organization targeted the New River Inn as its first project. From these beginnings emerged the historic preservation



The 1907 King-Cromartie House, moved to the north side of the New River in 1971, became a centerpiece of the city's historic district adjacent to downtown.

Towering above the city's skyline, the Landmark Bank building, completed in 1971, became a symbol of the "new" downtown Fort Lauderdale.

movement of the 1970s and 1980s, involving a small group of concerned citizens fighting a rear guard action against the formidable forces of development. Understaffed and underfunded, historic preservationists remained, nonetheless, resolute in their determination to preserve elements of old Fort Lauderdale. Their victories came slowly, but each accomplishment added to the precious but fragile heritage of their city.[40]

In the 1970s and 1980s, numerous new trends and developments brought significant change to Fort Lauderdale. For the first time since its incorporation in 1911, the city's population growth stagnated, tourism changed in character, and Fort Lauderdale's famed beach declined markedly. This era also witnessed the striking revitalization of downtown and the city's corresponding emergence as a strong financial center.

Coming after decades of convulsive growth, the population slowdown was surprising. Whereas the population figure stood at 139,590 in 1970, an increase of nearly eighty percent over the total for 1960, the number ten years later was just 152,279. Even more surprising was the fact that the projected population figure for the final year of the 1980s was 150,681. This development stemmed from the fact that the city's settlement patterns had pushed out even farther against its borders since the 1960s. Accordingly, by the 1980s, Broward County's frenetic growth was confined almost exclusively to the suburbs surrounding Fort Lauderdale where land was plentiful and housing more affordable. Growth figures in Broward County underline this trend. The county contained 333,946 residents in 1960; this figure jumped to 620,100 ten years later, and to 1,018,200 in 1980. The Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood metropolitan area (SMSA) was the fastest growing of the nation's fifty largest metropolitan areas in the 1970s. Broward County's population reached 1.3 million in 1990. These figures indicate the obvious: Broward County and other regions of southeast Florida were, by the century's final decades, among the fastest growing areas of the United States.[41]

In this era, Fort Lauderdale retrieved some of its past, as well as plunging optimistically into the future. Most remarkable of all was the impressive revitalization of downtown. The DDA, the chief engine of revitalization, was still searching for its first major "victory" as the 1970s dawned. That milestone came at the outset of the new decade with the announcement by the First National Bank of Fort Lauderdale that it would build a twenty-eight story financial center on 12.7 acres of land that had earlier hosted Fort Lauderdale High School. The bank envisioned the structure as the locus of finance and commerce in Broward County. The building would also include a plaza designed to serve as a center for social and community activities. By the time the bank broke ground for the structure in 1970, it had already leased seventy-five percent of its office space to an impressive list of clients.[42]

On the south side of the New River, across from downtown, the Maxwell Arcade, a boom-era structure which had been reduced to skid row status, underwent a reincarnation in the early 1970s. A private developer transformed the complex into a Mediterranean-style village with provisions for shopping and artists' quarters. Several tenants quickly signed leases for spaces in the complex.[43]

In the meantime, the DDA had sold $9.5 million in bonds for the purchase of six blocks (twelve acres of land) in the middle of downtown between Andrews and Southeast Second Avenue and Southeast First Street and Las Olas Boulevard. The Authority proposed to raze all of the structures, primarily older homes and stores, to prepare the land for redevelopment. By 1974, the DDA had cleared the twelve acres in a modern day version of a "scorched earth" policy. While awaiting redevelopment, the cleared land served temporarily as a park with tennis courts and surface parking. The core of a vibrant city had been expunged. In assessing the redevelopment area at this juncture, one is reminded of Gertrude Stein's scorching indictment of Oakland: "There is no there there."[44]

With the area ready for redevelopment, DDA unveiled its plans for construction of the massive New River Center by the Rouse Company, a prominent developer of urban malls. The DDA envisioned a complex featuring a shopping mall with 130 stores, civic center, marina, and other attractions. Parking would be available on both sides of the New River, with a monorail carrying people across the stream.[45]

The DDA launched an ambitious public relations campaign to persuade voters to approve $16 million in general obligation bonds for construction of the civic center portion of the

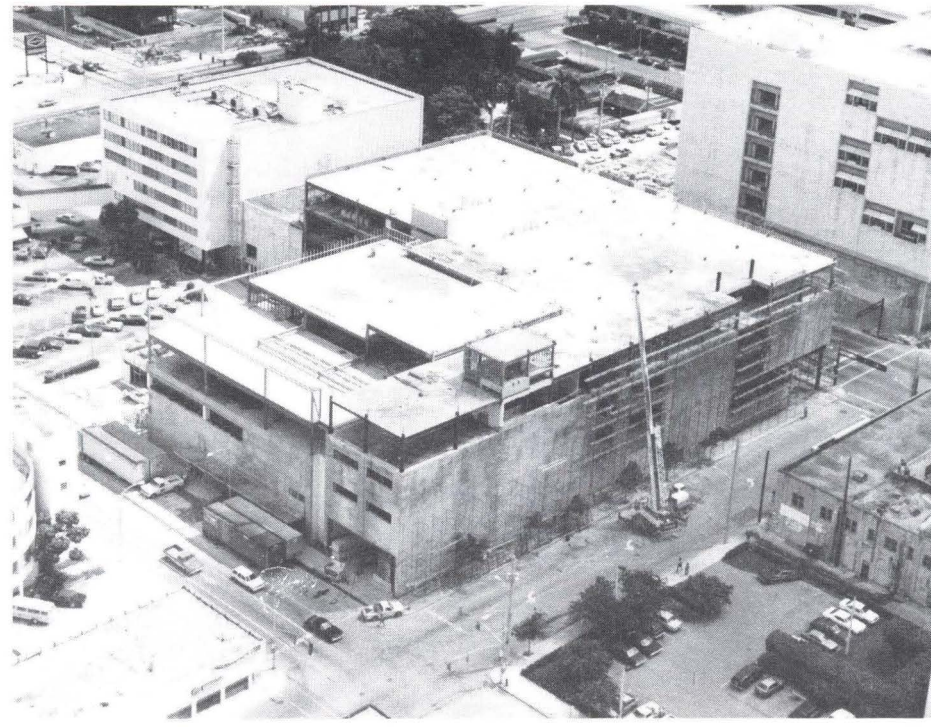
project, which would consist of two main buildings connected for educational and cultural events. The electorate, however, defeated the ambitious bond issue. Shrugging off this defeat, representatives of the DDA announced that they would proceed with the project anyway because, "We intend to have a civic center in or near downtown."[46]

The recession of the mid-1970s delayed the redevelopment of downtown. By then, a Rouse-developed shopping mall was no longer considered feasible. The DDA, however, continued to acquire and clear land downtown. The Authority received a significant boost from the Gore newspaper interests, which announced, in 1975, a $13.8 million construction and improvement project for its plant near the New River. A three year building program followed, highlighted by construction of a new plant in the same locale.[47]

The Gore-owned Governor's Club, downtown's premier hotel and meeting place for nearly forty years, experienced the opposite fate. With few permanent residents, the aging hostelry announced its closing in the mid-1970s. By then, Robert H. Gore, Sr., was dead and the city and county power brokers had deserted the Governor's Club for the twenty-seventh floor of the new Landmark First National Bank building. In 1976, the county leased the Governor's Club for office space, and it eventually became the home of several government departments.[48]

Throughout the first half of the 1970s, the DDA remained steadfast in its plans to revive downtown as a major retail center, although Burdine's represented the quarter's lone "status" store. In 1977, however, the Authority announced a broader vision of downtown through its creation of a new masterplan for redevelopment. In addition to new retail facilities, the plan envisioned office buildings for financial and governmental institutions, housing, and park space along the river.[49]

Soon after the appearance of the masterplan, however, the DDA recognized that downtown was unlikely to return as a major retailing center because of the popularity of shopping malls, an increasingly smaller residential base from which to draw, and the perennial problem of parking in that quarter. Accordingly, it redirected its efforts toward transforming downtown into the new financial, governmental, and cultural heart of Broward County. Within a few years of embarking on this path, DDA's new strategy appeared to be succeeding, for downtown showed strong signs of emerging as the county's governmental and financial hub. By then, several significant structures had been completed or were advancing toward that milestone.[50]



Workmen transform the downtown Burdines store into the Broward County Governmental Center in August 1983. Across Andrews Avenue, in the top right corner of this photo, is the county's main library building, also under construction (photo courtesy of Smith Aerial Photography, Inc.).

The construction of the Federal Courthouse on East Broward Boulevard and Second Avenue was, in the words of William Farkas, DDA's executive director, the project that launched the Authority on the road toward "the role we set out to perform" as the governmental and financial capital of Broward County.[51] Farkas believed that downtown must first become the governmental headquarters of the county before it could develop as the county's civic and cultural "guts."[52] Clearly, the downtown area was growing; a survey in 1979 indicated that 14,000 persons worked downtown, an increase of 4,000 in just one year.[53]

The 1980s signalled the full maturation of downtown as a financial and civic center. It also marked the end of major retailing in the quarter, when Burdines departed in 1980 for new quarters in the Galleria Mall on East Sunrise Boulevard and Federal Highway. After Burdines' departure, the county acquired the downtown property, and spent several million dollars converting the former store into the Broward County Governmental Center, which contains the offices and chambers of the county commission as well as most of the departments of government.[54]

The 1980s brought a long string of successes for downtown redevelopment. In the early part of the decade, officials of the Broward County public school system announced their intention of building new administrative headquarters downtown. In the meantime, groundbreaking took place for a new art museum, library, parking garage, and office building in an area framed by Andrews Avenue and Southeast Second Avenue, and Southeast First Street and Las Olas Boulevard, the same area purchased, cleared, and transformed into a temporary park by the DDA the previous decade. Pleased with its string of successes after critics had accused it of moving too slowly, the DDA explained its downtown strategy as "leveraging," or building a government facility in order to encourage private development in the sector.[55]

Downtown emerged as a financial and governmental center because of its central location, its close proximity to major thoroughfares and highways, the relatively reasonable price of property in the quarter, and the DDA's successful promotional campaign. As the 1980s progressed, downtown's steady redevelopment convinced many private developers to build there. Increasingly, it was seen as an alternative site to Dade and Palm Beach counties for businesses seeking south Florida headquarters. By the mid-1980s, William Farkas felt confident

enough in the long term prospects for downtown redevelopment to announce that "We've come a long way in seven years (since the adoption of the Masterplan of 1977). We're now in the very visible payoff years."[56] Civic leaders believed that the emerging downtown would give Fort Lauderdale an image as something more than a haven for retirees and beach kids.[57]

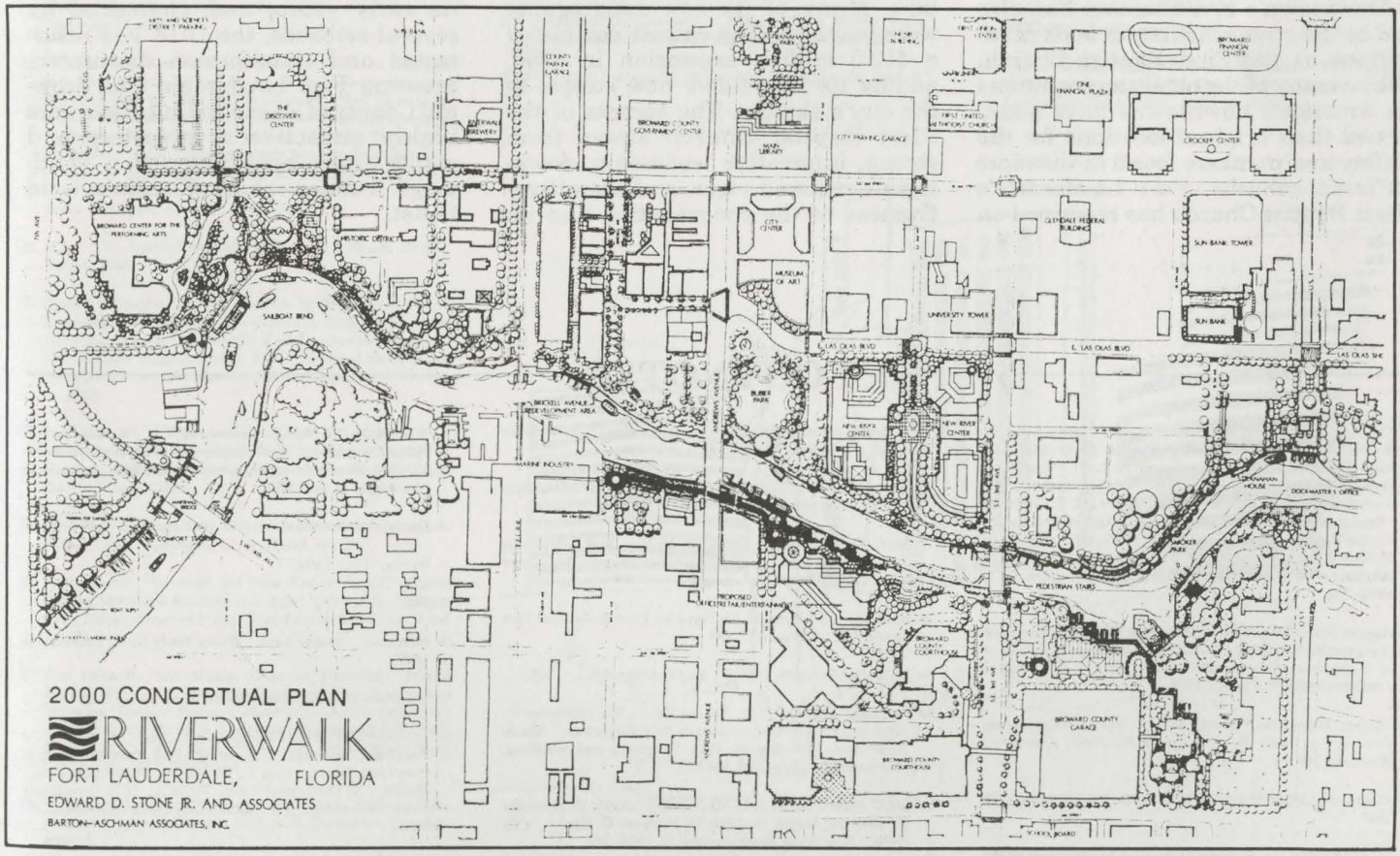
In 1985, the city unveiled its ambitious, multi-million dollar Riverwalk Plan, which called for revamping a mile-long tract of land along both banks of New River from the tunnel at the Federal Highway crossing to the bridge at Southwest Seventh Avenue. Major components of Riverwalk would include a cultural center as its western anchor, arts and science sector, historic district west of the Florida East Coast Railway tracks, and an entertainment plaza on Southwest First Avenue (also known as Old Brickell Avenue). Each of these elements would be located on the north bank of the river. Several plazas, renovated parks and ramps, street improvements, and landscaping at the river's edge, including a long, linear park, represented other parts of the project. The riverwalk itself would be designed to tie together the major components of the project.[58]

Riverwalk was envisioned as a means to create a pedestrian-friendly area featuring retail elements, such as push carts and shops, intermixed with cultural and marine-related facilities. Planners set 1992 as the date for completion of Riverwalk. Financing was dependent upon voter approval of several bond issues. Clay Shaw, a member of the United States House of Representatives from Fort Lauderdale, believed that "of all the projects, it's (Riverwalk) probably going to have the most profound effect on the city. It's just going to be a fun place to be, and you can't say that about many downtown cities."[59]

The "crown jewel" of downtown's cultural facilities would be a $33.5 million county performing arts center. A new Discovery Center, a "hands-on" children's museum, in the arts and science district just east of the performing arts center represented another noteworthy facility. With many of its early twentieth century buildings virtually intact, Old Brickell Avenue, farther east, was seen as a splendid venue for the entertainment district.[60]

While planners continued preparation for the Riverwalk project, downtown redevelopment continued at a frenzied pace. By 1986, with the first wave of office buildings completed, 18,000 persons were working downtown; the sector's tax base had risen in approximately ten years from $120 million to $400 million. A new wave of buildings followed closely behind the first surge of construction. New construction projects during the second half of the decade included the giant Barnett Bank complex, First Fort Lauderdale Plaza, NCNB Plaza, Broward Financial Center, and University Tower, which hosted branch campuses of Broward Community College, Florida Atlantic University, and Florida International University. By the end of the 1980s, these projects were completed. The occupancy rates of several of the new structures stood near eighty-five percent, a figure superior to that for new office buildings in nearby Dade and Palm Beach counties.[61]

A third wave of downtown highrise construction began in the waning months of the 1980s. Major building projects included the New River Center, Capital Bank Center, First Union Center, and the SunBank Center. Many of the city's new skyscrapers bear distinctive architectural styles. Wrapped in shimmering glass, these structures, with their multi-dimensional facades and pleasing contours, have brought a signature



Plans for the Riverwalk project, scheduled for completion in the early 1990s (photo courtesy of City of Fort Lauderdale Planning Department).

style to downtown's burgeoning skyline. As new buildings opened, the number of downtown workers continued to increase. By the end of the 1980s, 20,000 persons worked in the quarter, and its tax base continued to rise in spectacular fashion. Development on the south side of New River across from downtown also proceeded impressively with several sparkling buildings rising in the vicinity of the county courthouse. Broward County's spiraling growth prompted plans for another expansion of the courthouse in the early 1990s.[62]

Downtown's building explosion was not immediately accompanied by a boom in residential housing in the sector, although many persons advocated such development. Arguing for the construction of downtown housing in 1986, City Commissioner Jim Naugle insisted that, among other benefits, downtown residents would supplant the criminal and homeless elements that descend on the quarter after 5:00 p.m. Naugle believed that by razing large portions of downtown in the 1970s, the DDA had inadvertently caused its post 5:00 p.m. demise. Despite the dearth of permanent residents, downtown's dynamic growth made it the focal point for a bevy of festivals and events that continue to bring thousands of persons to the sector on weekends.[63]

Downtown's revitalization has also led to the strengthening of such institutions as the First Baptist Church. While many of the older congregations in America's downtowns have abandoned their original locations for the safety and numbers found in the more affluent suburbs, Fort Lauderdale's First Baptist Church has remained on East Broward Boulevard at Northeast Third Avenue. The decision to remain has redounded to the congregation's benefit, since its membership has increased seven-fold in the 1980s. By 1990, the church claimed 9,500 members. Many of its new congregants were youthful. The church completed a $12.5 million expansion in 1990, adding its impressive new steeple to the city's skyline. The success of the First Baptist Church stems from strong, innovative leadership, downtown's renewed vigor, and the attractiveness of the congregation and its location to young congregants.[64]

Downtown Fort Lauderdale's skyline, 1990, showing numerous construction projects underway.

Downtown Fort Lauderdale's future as the financial and governmental hub of a dynamic county is assured. Its thriving building program assures this primacy. Though roundly criticized in its early years, and victimized by several setbacks, the DDA has resurrected and transformed downtown, assuring Fort Lauderdale and Broward County of an expanding urban core highly attractive to investors and corporations searching for a "midway" location along Florida's Gold Coast.

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The VANISHED COMMUNITIES OF BROWARD COUNTY

From a Talk Delivered by

Dr. Cooper Kirk

At a Historical Program Sponsored by the Broward County Historical Commission, October 11, 1988

In over ninety years of settlement, the region which today comprises Broward County has contained many communities, each with its individual flavor, identity, and history. These communities have included incorporated municipalities, platted towns, real estate developments, and informal settlements which have grown around geographical or economic focal points and acquired their own names and identities. While many of these communities have grown and thrived, others have vanished from the scene. Some dwindled away when their economic bases disappeared; others saw their population siphoned away or their cohesion destroyed by shifting patterns of settlement. Still others were absorbed by larger neighboring communities, or broke apart because manmade barriers inhibited commun-

"The Vanished Communities of Broward County" was first presented by Dr. Cooper Kirk at a Historical Commission program held at the Oakland Park Library on October 11, 1988. This article was transcribed from a tape recording of that oral presentation, and provides an excellent example of Dr. Kirk's tireless research efforts, and his abiding interest in locating previously unknown facts about Broward County's fascinating, but frequently obscure, past. Although the county is frequently perceived as an area lacking in substantial history because of the recent arrival of most of its current population, this article, like much of Dr. Kirk's work, demonstrates that many facets of its long past remain to be explored.

As most **Broward Legacy** *readers know, Dr. Kirk served as Broward County's first official historian from 1972 until his death in 1989, and was the foremost authority on the county's history. In addition to his prodigious accomplishments in the fields of research, writing, preservation, and education, he was the founder, editor, and a frequent contributor to* **Broward Legacy**.

PEMBROKE AND HALLANDALE.

Pembroke is 8½ miles west of Hallandale and has the best orange lands, with yellow sub-soil in Dade county. About 200 acres of tomatoes and other truck will be planted here this year.

Mr. Luttrell of Orange River, west coast, will plant 11 acres in tomatoes. He has built a house at Pembrooke.

Mr. J. S. Blackman, who came here from Snow Hill, Md., has built and will plant 5 acres.

Mr. Barlow, who was the Hallandale broker last year, will plant 10 acres, and will also have a large packing house and buy tomatoes.

Messrs. Sjostrom and Netherland will plant 10 acres and will also have a large packing house.

Holding Bros., from Tampa, extensive celery growers, will plant 5 acres in tomatoes and 2 acres in beans.

Noble Padgett who had the brag crop at Fulford last year, will plant 15 acres. He has tomatoes and egg plants nearly ready to ship now.

H. D Allison from Lakeland, will have about 20 acres in tomatoes. He has built at Pembroke and is planting 2 acres of pine land in tomatoes and is planting alligator pears.

E. H. Padgett, the first settler on this place, will plant 20 acres, and will also build a house.

H. W. Padgett has a fine crop of egg plants and peppers on his hammock and will also plant 5 acres of prairie.

Mr. Tate Wofford is busy preparing to plant a large crop.

Edgar Robertson, of Haines City, Polk county, has decided to cast his lot with us and will be found with H. D, Allison & Co.

R. K. Thompson has a fine crop of egg plants and peppers on the hammock and will plant 10 acres of prairie. He comes from Clay county.

S. W. Douglas, of Miami, is expected this week to break ground for 20 acres of tomatoes. He will have two teams and will haul vegetables for those who want him.

This section is bound to come to the front as fine orange land and splendid trucking lands are not found ¼ mile apart in all localities.

The Law mill at Hallandale is kept busy now getting out lumber for new comers, packing houses, etc.

This column from the October 31, 1902, issue of *The Weekly Miami Metropolis* contains the first known reference to Pembroke and the names of several of the community's original settlers.

ication, transportation, and a feeling or spirit of community. The following are some of the more notable of the vanished communities of Broward County.

Pembroke

The first one, proceeding in roughly chronological order, was Pembroke. Today there are cities named Pembroke Pines and Pembroke Park, both located in southern Broward County, but there is no community of Pembroke. The settlement of the southernmost portion of what is today Broward began in 1896, when Hallandale was settled by a group of Swedes from New York who came to south Florida after being recruited by Reverend Luther Halland of Brooklyn. Halland, a Lutheran minister, was paid by the Florida East Coast Railway to recruit Swedes to colonize a settlement in south Florida, and the settlement which resulted from his efforts was named Hallandale after him.

About three and one-half miles directly west of Hallandale's railway depot, a new community was settled in October 1902. News from this settlement appears suddenly in the Miami newspapers of that day in a column titled "Pembroke." Nine different families had moved into that area with no road to connect them to the railroad. In fact, there was not one surfaced road in the Broward County area, or for that matter in all of southeast Florida, at that time. In that same year of 1902, the Dade County Board of Commissioners voted to build a shell rock road from Biscayne Bay to West Palm Beach. The road took nearly four years to build, not being completed until January 1906. Dade County, until 1909, included everything from the upper Keys to the St. Lucie Inlet. It stretched for 175 miles along Florida's east coast and extended westward halfway across the state. Today, Martin County, Palm Beach County, Broward County, and Dade County occupy the territory that was originally all Dade County.

So there was no road in the region in the fall of 1902, just the railroad, but nevertheless a group of people moved up from the northern part of Biscayne Bay to this place three and one-half miles west of Hallandale, and there they established this place called Pembroke. The chief citizen of that community was Elijah H. Padgett, who had come to Miami in 1896 from Palatka. He had a large family, and several of his children moved to Pembroke with him. Other people came too, including James M. Holding, who later became well-known in Broward County until his death in 1947.

Mr. Holding, a graduate of Wake Forest College in North Carolina, had moved from Tampa to Pembroke and was known as a celery grower. At Pembroke he cleared four acres of palmettoes. At that time much of the dry land in south Florida was covered with runner palmettoes, which spread by running along the ground and sending up shoots of fronds and fans. Holding, a bachelor, cleared that four acres by himself and planted it, a pretty good-sized plot for one man's labor. In 1909 he became a member of the Dade County School Board and served for six years. In 1915 he became the first Superintendent of Public Instruction for Broward County.

Pembroke pioneer James M. Holding, as he appeared in 1916.

The Pembroke settlers raised a variety of crops, including cabbage and peppers, but their main crop was tomatoes. They had to use wagons and mules to pull their produce to the Hallandale depot. The Pembroke community also acquired a sawmill, a necessity if people wanted to construct houses and other buildings. A man named S. W. Douglas came up from Miami to operate the mill, and he moved into the community. Douglas Road in today's southwestern Broward County is named for Mr. Douglas, since it passes through the area where he had his farm.

By 1912 there were enough people in the community to form a school. In those days, the school board furnished the lumber and had it hauled to the site. The expense generally amounted to about $150. Then the people of the community built the school building and an outdoor privy, and later the school board would have the structure painted. After the schoolhouse was completed, the Dade County School Board assigned Ruth Dowling to be the first teacher at Pembroke.

Where did Pembroke get its name?

That has been a matter of a good deal of research and investigation through the years. To this day, no one is certain, but it is believed that it took its name from a British nobleman, Sir Edward Reed, whose title was the Earl of Pembroke. Reed's involvement in the history of Broward County is, in itself, an interesting story. Between 1880 and 1914, at least fifteen British companies were chartered to operate in the State of Florida. In 1881, Florida was on the verge of bankruptcy, and, in order to raise enough money to stay afloat, state officials sold 4,000,000 acres of "swamp and overflowed land" to Hamilton Disston of the Disston Tool Company for twenty-five cents an acre. This $1,000,000 transaction, known as the Disston Purchase, was the largest sale of land to a private individual in American history. Sir Edward Reed, who served in Parliament from 1874 to 1895, led a group of British investors who assumed one-half of Disston's obligation, putting up half the money and taking over 2,000,000 acres of the land. In 1883, Reed's group formed the Florida Land and Mortgage Company. Abstracts of much of the property in Broward County, including the land in Fort Lauderdale where the county courthouse now stands, show the Florida Land and Mortgage Company as owners during the 1880s. Overall, the company owned land in twenty-nine counties in the State of Florida. Since they owned property in the Pembroke area, supposition is that the region was named for the company's leading investor, the Earl of Pembroke, Sir Edward Reed.

By 1915, the year that Broward County was created, the Pembroke school had fifteen pupils, which was about average for a one-room school with one teacher teaching all eight grades, an average of two students per grade. The longtime mayor of Pahokee, Duncan Padgett, was born in Pembroke in 1905, and in his reminiscences he recalls that in 1912 he accompanied his grandfather, community leader Elijah Padgett, in a wagon pulled by a six-mule team, conveying a huge load of lumber to Davie by way of a sand road. Mayor Padgett also remembered his grandfather letting him drive that wagon part of the way through the woods.

Mrs. Dorothy Crippen Stanley came to Dania in 1917, and she described traveling out to Pembroke in 1918 or 1919 to pick huckleberries. By that time, Mrs. Stanley recalled, all that was left were a few dilapidated buildings almost covered over by the palmettoes. No one lived there, but a big pile of sawdust remained. The sawmill had moved away, and thus Pembroke passed out of existence about 1916 or 1917. Today, two cities in Broward County take their names from the original Pembroke — Pembroke Park and Pembroke Pines. Pembroke Pines is a large city, with a population of over 35,000 on the 1980 census.[1]

The Dania District

Another early community which has since disappeared was the Dania District, which was roughly bounded by what is today Stirling Road on the south, State Road 84 on the north, the Florida East Coast Railway on the east, and present-day U.S. Highway 441 on the west. Actually, the Dania District was not a single community, but the location of several farming settlements and even platted towns which have all passed from existence.

In 1899 the Marshall family came to Fort Lauderdale from Lowndes County, Georgia. They were a large family, and several members became very prominent in Broward County. One brother, William H. Marshall, became the first mayor of Fort Lauderdale when that town was incorporated in 1911. Another, Elias Marshall, was a barber, and his wife, Myra, taught for many years at the Fort Lauderdale High School. Yet another brother, A. D. Marshall, was for many years the Broward County jailor. In addition to their other accomplishments, these brothers were great farmers. In 1903, a newspaperman visited the farmers in the Fort Lauderdale area and wrote an article about their activities, which was published in the Miami paper. One of the farmers he visited was Matthew A. "Mack" Marshall, another of the Marshall brothers and the one who figures in the history of the Dania District. The reporter wrote that when he met M. A. Marshall on his farm, Marshall was working with a mule and plow. He commented that Mr. Marshall was such an imposing man and of such physical stature that if the mule could not have pulled the plow, he was sure that Mr. Marshall could have taken his place. The Marshalls were all big people. Altogether there were eight brothers and two sisters, and in 1916, the local newspaper ran a story about them having a Christmas party and said that all ten of them together weighed 2,650 pounds.

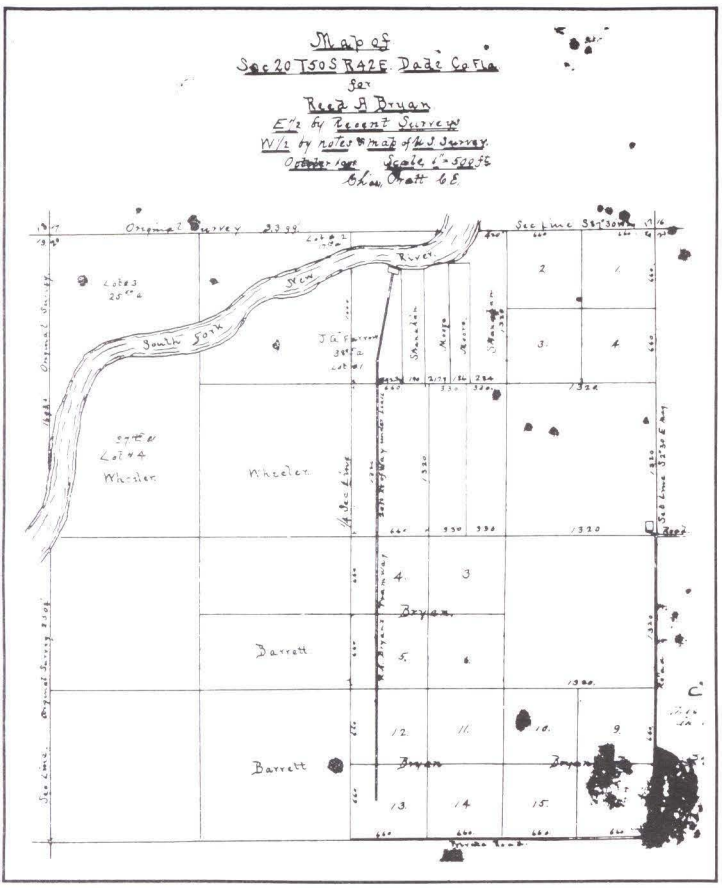
Matthew A. "Mack" Marshall (center) in a 1911 photograph (photo courtesy of Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

M. A. Marshall farmed in the general area of Tram Road, south of present-day State Road 84 and west of today's I-95, part of the Dania District. In fact, Tram Road, which still exists today, takes its name from the fact that Mack Marshall secured a charter from the Dade County Board of Commissioners in 1904 to run a tram from the New River to Dania. These trams were built by cutting lumber and crossties and nailing them together like a railroad track, but using lumber instead of rails. An animal could then pull a wagon loaded with produce, with the wheels turning along this track. Trams of this sort were common in Davie and in the mucklands, where normal wagons would bog down in the muddy soil.

Today, twelve blocks south of State Road 84, Tram Road intersects with Thirty-sixth Street, also known as Collins Road. Heading west, Collins Road runs into the Alandco Property, a 319-acre tract owned by the Florida Power and Light Company. The Alandco Property is virtually a wilderness, although Florida Power and Light has plans to develop it over a ten year period. It is a beautiful place with tremendous oak trees, and on that property is an old concrete bridge, just wide enough for one car to get across, a remnant of one of the early settlements in the area. The Alandco Property is in the heart of the Dania District as it was described in the newspapers of 1910, 1912, and 1914.

Mack Marshall, one of the first settlers of the district, had over 2,000 acres of land there. A square mile — 5,280 feet each way — contains 640 acres, so Marshall's 2,000 acres amounted to more than three square miles of land. Anyone who has ever tried to clear just one acre of palmettoes knows that that is a tremendous job in itself.

In addition to Mack Marshall, a number of people who became famous



At left is a plat of a section of the Dania District, showing the tram road and the names of early district settlers. Above, Mr. and Mrs. Reed A. Bryan and an unidentified friend visit the Bryan grove in the district, c. 1912.

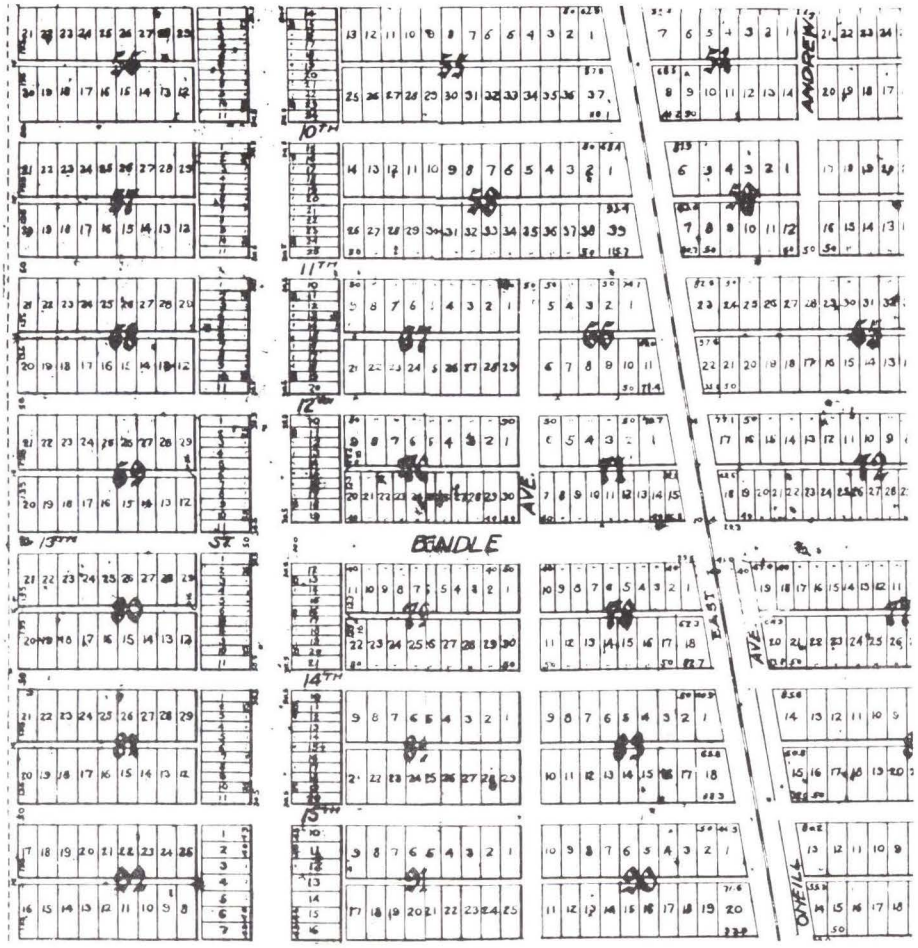
in the history of Broward County farmed in the Dania District. Reed A. Bryan and his brother, Tom M., were there, as were H. G. Wheeler, the great merchant of Fort Lauderdale in the early period, and Fernando A. Barrett, who later became a banker. At the time they farmed in the Dania District, these were just ordinary people trying to grub out a living; later they became the pillars of the community, men of wealth and position. As these people and others began producing crops, Mack Marshall built a packing house on the north bank of New River where Davie Boulevard now crosses. Completed in 1904, the packinghouse was the largest on the south fork of the river. Marshall called his packing venture the Osceola Fruit and Vegetable Company, and his idea was to transport the produce from his packing house on his Tram Road to Dania and load it aboard the trains there to be shipped north to market.

In 1910, a man named A. J. Bendle, who owned the Miami Printing Company and the *Miami Metropolis*, an outstanding newspaper in south Florida, and who had been associated with R. P. Davie in the development of Everglades land, bought one square mile, which was 640 acres or one section, near the eastern edge of the present Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. There he started a city called Lauderdale. It is interesting to note that Fort Lauderdale was not incorporated until March 1911, and by that time Bendle had already started a neighboring town called Lauderdale. By the end of January 1911, he had streets in and had 200 homes built, as well as a "tent city."

Shortly afterward, the Everglades Land Sales Company, which had also been associated with R. P. Davie in the development of Davie, established an unnamed community directly east and south of Bendle's Lauderdale. By the end of 1911, the company's town contained homes, rock roads, and 7,000 ornamental plants and trees. The Everglades Land Sales Company owned 26,000 acres at Davie, which it was selling to farmers, but most of this land was not yet drained well enough to be built upon. The company therefore gave land purchasers a lot in this community so that they would have a place to live while the Davie land continued to drain. Purchasers of property from the Everglades Land Sales Company were also advised that they could live on their town lot and travel each day to the South New River Canal, where they could take a boat out to their Davie land to farm. Within two years, however, no mention of this community can be found. Fort Lauderdale was incorporated in March 1911, but A. J. Bendle's community of Lauderdale faded away, and by 1913 the Everglades Land Sales Company's community was also out of existence.

The next big effort to develop the Dania District came with the establishment of the Reed Tract. In 1911, Mack Marshall sold most of his 2,000 acres to Colonel Robert J. Reed and his son, Will J. "Cap" Reed. They were from Chicago, and "Cap" Reed was born in 1871, nine days after the Chicago Fire. "Cap" served as mayor of Fort Lauderdale from 1916 to 1923, and then on the city commission in the late 1920s and 1930s, and he was famous, locally, as a baseball coach and umpire. He was one of the most colorful characters in Broward County's history. He had spent eighteen years in the army, where he acquired the nickname "Cap," and was a veteran of the Spanish-American War. He and his father came to the Fort Lauderdale area in 1910 and invested heavily in real estate.

When the Reeds bought Marshall's property in the Dania District, they started a community called the Reed Tract. The main road of that tract remains today — Ravenswood Road. It took its name from the home the Reeds established there, which they named Ravenswood Grove. They divided much of the property up into ten acre and twenty acre tracts, and "Cap" Reed frequently made trips to the North to sell those lots. In 1914, for example, he spoke to groups in Indiana, Illinois, and Ohio, and sold twenty-six tracts. He wrote back to the



Portion of the 1910 plat of the Town of Lauderdale. Note "Bendle Blvd.," named for town founder A. J. Bendle.

newspaper in Fort Lauderdale that many, many people would be coming down to live on the Reed Tract. He was right — subsequent issues of the newspaper tell of many different people living there. That beautiful wooded place where the Florida Power and Light property is now located just south of State Road 84 is part of the Reed Tract.

Mack Marshall did not sell all of his land to the Reeds. He kept 500 acres which he called a plantation; he named it Fair Acres. One of the first moving pictures made in today's Broward County was *The Idol Dancer*, directed by the famous filmmaker D. W. Griffith, and part of that movie was filmed at the Fair Acres plantation in 1919.

As "Cap" Reed and his father developed their land, they drilled their own wells and put in their own electrical and telephone systems. They also put in about eight miles of rock road in that area, and they probably built the concrete bridge mentioned earlier. In addition to selling real estate and constructing public amenities, they raised hogs, and "Cap" Reed started a ranch which he called the "Circle R." The newspapers of the 1910s are filled with references to people who had groves in that area.

Eventually, by 1915, the Reeds had acquired 3,200 acres, or approximately five square miles. The portion of the Dania District south of the Reed Tract

City Property
Suburban Property
Farm Property

Life Insurance
Fire Insurance
Bond Insurance

Rob't J. Reed & Son Co.

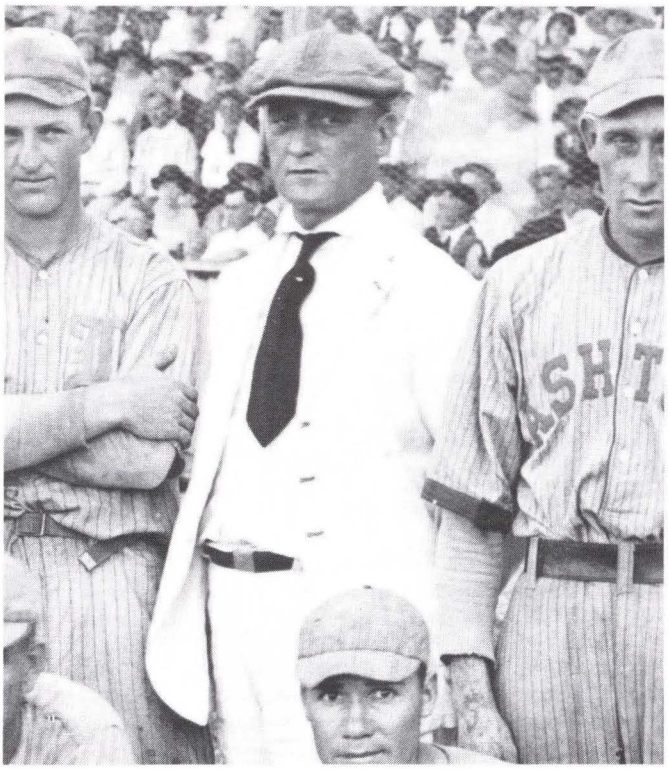
THIRTY-FIVE YEARS EXPERIENCE

The Best is the Cheapest — We Handle the Best

We have listed with us and own nothing but some of the

Choicest Property, Improved and Unimproved in Broward County

Newspaper advertisement for the Reed real estate firm, 1916.



"Cap" Reed (center, with suit and tie) with members of Fort Lauderdale's town baseball team, 1921 (photo courtesy of Florida Photographic Archives).

was developing too. The Bryan groves were located there along Bryan Road in what is today part of the City of Dania, and a number of other big farms covered the district. Then, in 1917, something happened which hurt the entire area.

At roughly the northern edge of the Dania District, the New River forks, and from each fork a drainage canal extends into the Everglades. The North New River Canal reaches all the way to Lake Okeechobee, while the South New River Canal runs through Davie and then continues westward until it joins the Miami Canal, which also runs into Lake Okeechobee. These canals are all part of the Everglades drainage system designed under the leadership of Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward. Eastward, in 1917 and 1918, the people of Dania had started to drain the East Marsh, a vast wetland just east of the town and west of the beach ridge. They dug twenty-five miles of ditches from northern Hallandale to Lake Mabel, site of today's Port Everglades. Between these two drainage systems — the state's Everglades system and Dania's East Marsh system — much land, including portions of the Dania District, suffered from lack of drainage. So in 1917, the state began work on a new canal designed to connect the South New River Canal with the coastal area.

The problem with this new canal, the Dania Cut-off Canal, was that it split the Dania District in two, destroying the homogeneity and transportation routes necessary to maintaining the Reed Tract as a self-contained community. Before the canal was completed in 1918, the tract contained approximately forty to fifty homes and was serviced by ice and grocery deliveries. In 1915, rural free mail delivery had begun, with the mailman Fred Jacques covering the area from the Reed Tract to the western limits of Dania on his motorcycle and side car. The construction of the canal changed all of this, and soon the people living south of the canal began to think of themselves as belonging to Dania and to conduct all of their business there, while the people north of the canal gravitated toward Fort Lauderdale. As an individual community, the Dania District was doomed.[2].

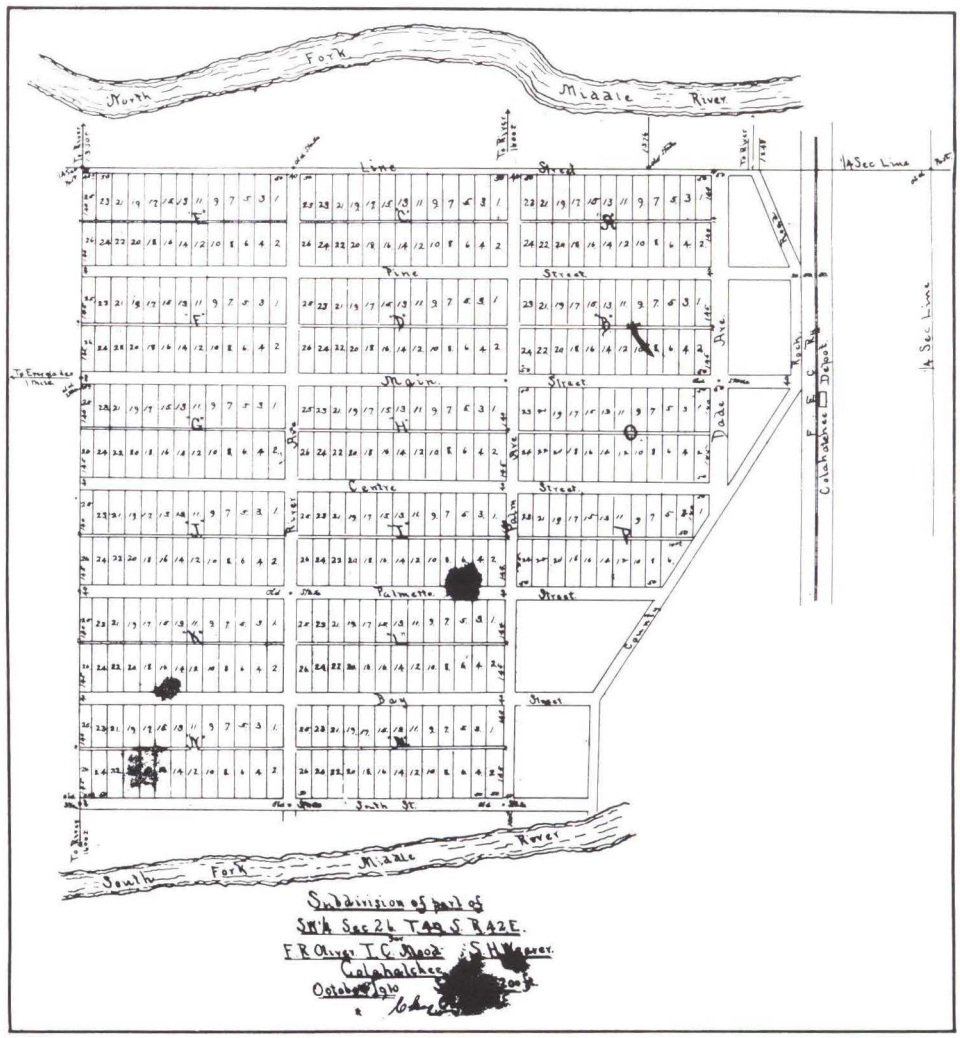
Colohatchee

Although its name lives on in a park and is still associated with the Wilton Manors area, another community which has disappeared from the map of Broward County is Colohatchee. Colohatchee was first laid out in 1910 by three men — Frank R. Oliver, T.C. Moody, and S.H. Weaver, but its history goes back much further. In 1893, a man named William C. Collier moved to the site on the north fork of the Middle River where the Kiwanis Building now stands. The Indians often came there, and their name for river was "hatchee," and they shortened Collier to "Colo," giving the area the name Colohatchee — "Collier's River." Collier was born in Alabama in 1847. After the Civil War he lived in Texas and New Mexico, where he worked in the cattle business until he was wiped out financially by the Great Blizzard of 1888. By 1890 he was in Florida, and he taught school for two years in Lemon City, just north of Miami. He purchased the Middle River property in 1892 and moved there permanently the following year to establish a grove. That grove was still producing at the time of his death in December 1922.

For approximately a decade, Collier was the only resident in the area, but as transportation and farming opportunities increased in southeast Florida in the early twentieth century, the area slowly began to develop. Among the first residents of Colohatchee were the Umstead brothers, who came from the Orlando area, and the Lewis family, who came from Georgia in 1904. In 1911, the Bras family moved from Oklahoma, and about that same time the Brock family, also from Oklahoma, moved into the area. These people were all farmers.

Colohatchee was a geographical expression, encompassing a far greater area than the town of Colohatchee, which was platted in 1910. It really extended from the present site of Fort Lauderdale High School, which is where the Brock family lived, northward to today's Commercial Boulevard, and it stretched from the Florida East Coast Railway westward to the general area of Powerline Road. So, in addition to today's Wilton Manors, it included the northernmost portion of Fort Lauderdale and a good deal of what is today Oakland Park.

The Colohatchee children attended school in Fort Lauderdale, and in 1912 E. A. Bras got a contract with the Dade County school board to drive the children of that area down to the Fort Lauderdale school, located where the Florida Power and Light building now



Plat of the Town of Colohatchee, as laid out by Frank R. Oliver, T. C. Moody, and S. H. Weaver in October 1910.

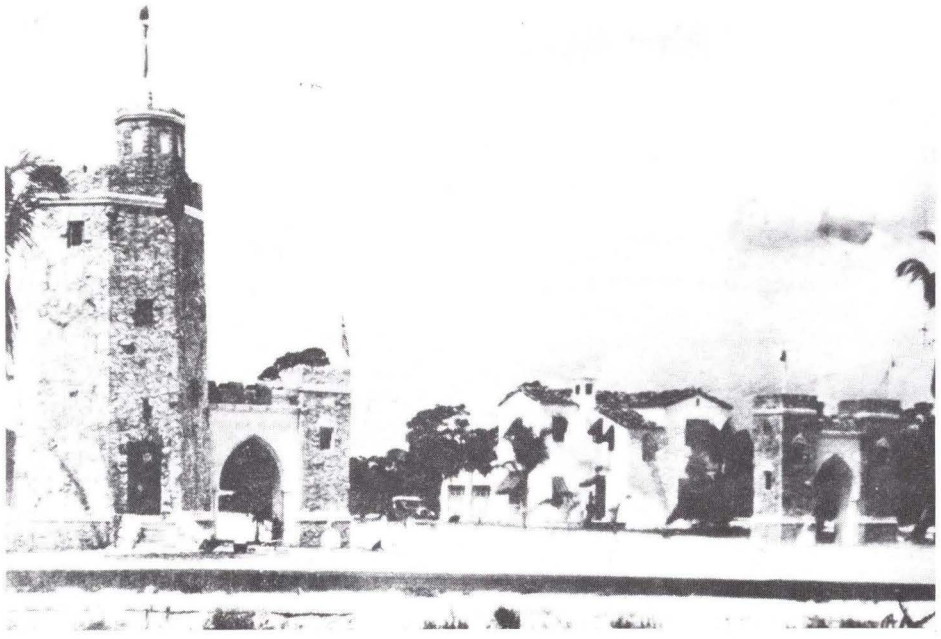
stands on South Andrews Avenue. He had a canvas-covered wagon and ponies which he used to take the children to school every morning and pick them up every afternoon. One of the children who used to ride on that wagon was Mark Mahannah, and he remembers going to school as a lark. The children would jump off the wagon and run into the woods to chase a rabbit or find a nice tree to climb, and then jump back on the wagon. In 1914, children living in the northern portion of Colohatchee began attending a new school known as the Prospect School, which was located first on the Raulerson farm and then in a converted barn belonging to M. T. Whidby.

In 1914, Iris Kinsey's family moved into Colohatchee, settling near where the Parker Electronics building is now on the Old Dixie. Around 1921, the Kinseys moved up the Dixie to what is today Oakland Park. Iris's daughter, Darleen Chadwick Mitchell, who is now city clerk for the City of Oakland Park, was born there. The Windham family also moved to Colohatchee in 1914, and the newspaper tells of Mr. Windham's marriage that year.

A center for that community in the early years was the Colohatchee Woman's Club. A man named "Old Uncle Billy" Johnson had come there in 1912 and lived on the corner of Old Dixie and Twenty-fourth Street or Mahannah Road. He gave the women the land for their club at the present site of Parker Electronics. They dedicated their building on Thanksgiving Day 1916, and the speaker was Colonel George G. Mathews, owner of the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* newspaper and a real spellbinder. The building stood at that location until approximately thirty years ago. Mrs. Lewis, who had come to Colohatchee in 1904, died in 1918 at the age of seventy-five, and she was the first person to be buried from that Woman's Club building.

Colohatchee remained lightly populated and entirely based on farming until 1924. That year a man named E. J. Willingham, who had developed Lauderdale-by-the-Sea and by 1924 had sold his property there, came to Colohatchee and bought 345 acres of land between the forks of Middle River. There he began a new subdivision which he called Wilton Manors. Wilton was his wife's maiden name.

Willingham was really the one who destroyed Colohatchee by establishing Wilton Manors. He constructed two castle-like towers at the entrance on Wilton Drive, which replaced the Dixie Highway as the main thoroughfare through that section. Wilton Drive was planned to have no businesses on it, only large, beautiful homes. It crossed the south fork of Middle River on a bridge which still stands, just north of Fort Lauderdale High School. That bridge was twenty-six feet wide, and the local newspaper noted that it was believed to be the widest bridge in Florida at the time it was constructed. It was also said that by constructing Wilton Drive, Willingham cut off seven turns on the old Dixie Highway.



Wilton Manors gates shortly after their construction in 1925. Developer E. J. Willingham used the large tower at left to give prospective land buyers a panoramic view of the area.

Floranada

As noted previously, today's Oakland Park was originally part of Colohatchee, but in 1922 two events took place which marked a change for the area. First, a twenty-two-year-old man named Dewey Hawkins moved there from Live Oak, Florida. He quickly became a leader in the community and eventually became the mayor of Oakland Park, serving twenty-eight years in that position. Secondly, the Southeast Packing Company constructed a large slaughterhouse and packing plant alongside the railroad tracks. They brought animals, particularly hogs, down from the Lake Okeechobee area by boat, slaughtered them, and shipped the meat north on the F.E.C. Railway. In 1923, when the packing company formally opened that slaughterhouse, 5,000 people came all the way from Fort Pierce to Miami to attend the barbecue. The Dixie Highway was lined with cars for miles. The packing company generators furnished electricity for the people who lived in the vicinity, and their pumps furnished water as well.

Then, in 1923, a different kind of activity took place in the area. Barkdull Investment Company of Miami bought 810 acres extending from the north fork of the Middle River all the way to the Intracoastal Waterway. They laid out a development, put in streets, and announced that a movie company from Miami was coming and planned to build a Bohemian village for the movie actors and actresses. The Barkdull Company named this subdivision Oakland Park, and that is where the present-day City of Oakland Park got its name.

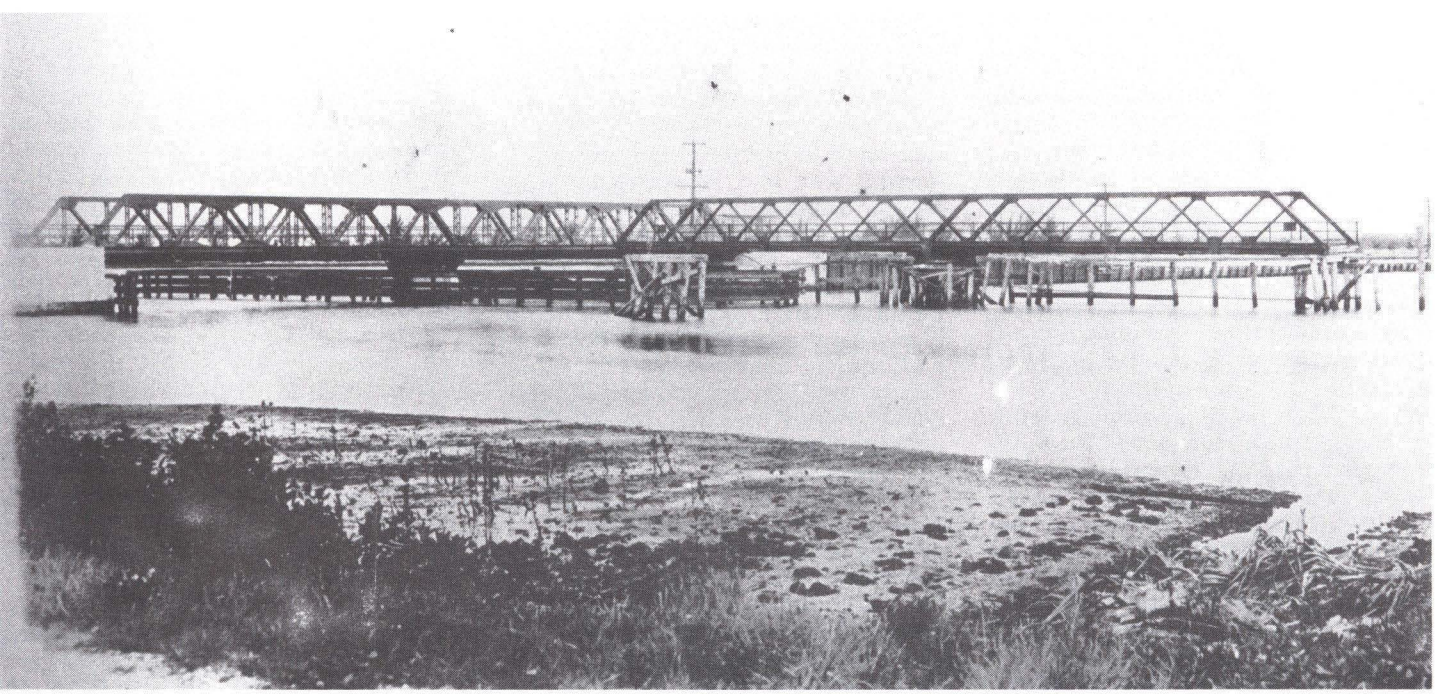
Out on the beach and extending westward near Oakland Park, a man named Arthur T. Galt owned 3,600 acres — three quarters of a mile on the beach south of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea and three and one half miles on the west side of the Intracoastal Waterway from present Commercial Boulevard down to the south fork of Middle River. That property extended over to the railroad track in places, and then, right about where Oakland Park Boulevard is today, Galt's property went about three or four blocks west of the railroad track. Hugh Taylor Birch was a friend of Arthur Galt; he it was who had interested Galt in leaving Chicago and coming south to buy oceanfront property in Broward County.

The people who lived in the vicinity of the Oakland Park subdivision wanted access to the beach, and in January 1925 a group from the Oakland Park Improvement Association went to the Broward County Commission, and the Commission told them that if they could raise $7,500 they would build a road to the beach. So the county built Oakland Park Boulevard, which was originally called Ocean

Southeastern Packing Company barbecue at Oakland Park, February 14, 1923. (Photo courtesy of Oakland Park Historical Society.)

Boulevard, and they moved the old one-lane turnstile bridge from Las Olas Boulevard, which was being replaced by a new bridge, and they had it installed at Oakland Park or Ocean Boulevard. Flynn Construction Company moved the bridge from Las Olas and reinstalled it at a cost of $7,500. It remained at Oakland Park Boulevard until 1955, when the magnificent Dave Turner bridge they have today replaced it.

In the meantime, the city of Fort Lauderdale was expanding rapidly as a result of the Florida land boom, and wanted to take in all of the land northward to Pompano. In 1925 they did annex Wilton Manors and spread westward to beyond the West Dixie Highway, today's U.S. 441. The city limits covered over sixty square miles. Pompano was also expanding and wanted to come south and block Fort Lauderdale's path by annexing what was left of Colohatchee. But this action had to be approved by the Florida Legislature, and this gave the people



Removal of the old turnstile bridge (right) over the Intracoastal at Las Olas Boulevard, and installation of the new bridge (left), 1925. The old bridge was moved to Oakland Park Boulevard (photo courtesy of Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

Floranada Club

Just north of

Fort Lauderdale, Florida

American-British
Improvement
Corp.

A community development—small, smart, exquisite, with definite restrictions, definite privileges.

Advertisement for the Floranada Club, 1925-26 (courtesy of Oakland Park Historical Society).

of Oakland Park and nearby areas of old Colohatchee time to organize. On October 29, 1925, the people of Oakland Park voted to incorporate and decided to hold an incorporation meeting on November 30 at the Colohatchee Women's Club.

Then, like a clap of thunder and lightning, came the word that on November 26, 1925, a new city called Floranada had been incorporated, taking in Oakland Park and the surrounding country north of the north fork of the Middle River. Its boundaries were what is now Commercial Boulevard, the beach, and on the west what is today Northwest Twenty-first Avenue, and it occupied twelve square miles. The name Floranada presumably came from a combination of Florida and Canada. The community was founded by the American-British Improvement Corporation. The head man was James Cromwell, the stepson of E. T. Stotesbury of Drexel Investment Company and a son-in-law of Mrs. Horace Dodge, who, three years before, had sold the Dodge Motor Company for $146,000,000 in cash. What Cromwell's group had done was to buy Galt's 3,600 acres, paying him $8,000,000 for it. Galt had not wanted his property annexed into Fort Lauderdale, so he was happy to sell to the American-British Improvement Corporation, which was incorporating its own city. The corporation called Galt's 3,600 acres or six square miles the Floranada Club. It was to be a city within a city, and very exclusive. They had the King of Greece buy property there, and the Countess of Lauderdale, and Pillsbury of Pillsbury Mills, all members of an elite group of people, most of whom had winter homes in Palm Beach and wanted to move further south.

The corporation made plans for a beautiful clubhouse located at Floranada Road. The road was to be sixty feet wide with a canal in the center. They also planned to build a plaza hotel for $6,000,000, designed by Cass Gilbert, one of the foremost architects in the United States.

So the City of Floranada catered to people of great means, and they cared very little for the wishes of the "redneck farmers" of Oakland Park. Before they had incorporated, the American-British Improvement Corporation had already selected the names of the Floranada commissioners. They did put Dewey Hawkins on that city council, and he was supposed to represent the interests of the farmers in Oakland Park. For the next few months, Floranada's city government was in a turmoil. They took in Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, and M. I. Anglin, who had founded that community along with E. J. Willingham, was mad and wanted to get out of Floranada. Floranada had also annexed a small community called Pelham, which stretched for three blocks between the Old Dixie Highway and the railroad tracks. The Johns family were among the leading residents of that area, and the Pelham people objected to being part of Floranada.

Amidst all of this bickering, the American-British Improvement Corporation continued planning their Floranada Club. They intended to have lagoons, two golf courses, and even a railroad extension. They did get their administration building completed, and they also finished a Floranada Inn. But then, suddenly, in the first week in June 1926, the newspapers announced that the American-British Improvement Corporation had declared bankruptcy.

Despite the collapse of the company, the City of Floranada lasted until 1929. By July 1926, all of the company officers were off the city commission, and the people of Floranada elected J. D. Johns and some of the other area farmers to the city commission. Dewey Hawkins became the mayor. The city bought the Southeast Packing Company's machinery, so they now had their own water works and their own electric works. But the fighting and charges of skullduggery persisted. During the three years following the demise of the American-British Improvement Corporation, Arthur T. Galt paid $11,400 in taxes on the 3,600 acres that reverted to him when the company folded, but during those same three years the City of Floranada only took in a total of $21,000. Finally, in 1929, the people voted Floranada out of existence and voted to reincorporate as Oakland Park, but they reduced the size from Floranada's twelve square miles to Oakland Park's three-quarters of one square mile. So Floranada joined the ranks of Broward County's vanished communities.

Progresso

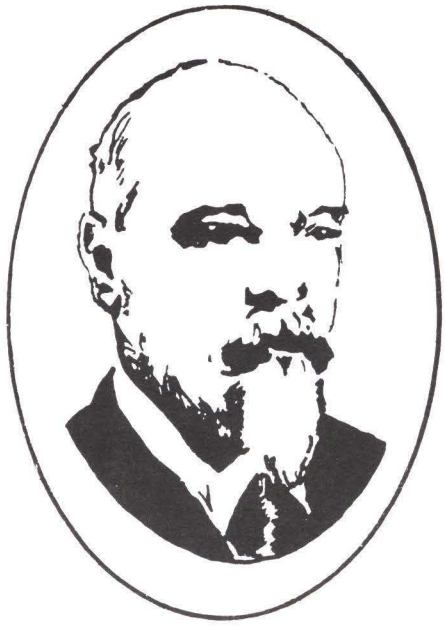
Yet another Broward County community which has disappeared is Progresso. In 1890 and '91, the Florida Fiber Company bought 1,310 acres of land reaching from the south fork of the Middle River down to what is today Fort Lauderdale's Northwest Sixth Street. There they started a fiber plantation, growing sisal or century plants. In those days, most stores around the country had a large ball of twine which ran through eyelets near the counter. The storekeeper would wrap food in paper and then wind this string around it, cut it off, and tie it. The Florida Fiber Company wanted to grow century plants to produce sisal hemp, from which this string was manufactured. They brought machinery down to their property and planted five to ten acres of sisal, but for various reasons this enterprise never got off the ground. When Henry Flagler extended his Florida East Coast Railway through the area in 1896, the fiber company platted part of that property, called it Progresso, and tried to sell lots, but had no more success with their real estate venture than they had with their agricultural plans.

Then, in 1908, after the state's Everglades drainage program began, R. J. Bolles of Colorado purchased over 500,000 acres of land, which the state had promised to drain, for $2.00 an acre. Encouraged by the attention that Everglades drainage was giving south

Florida, the fiber company began advertising Progresso again in 1909, but still did not have much success. Even though Bolles' land was not yet drained, he began selling lots all over the United States. He had agents in almost every state in the country, and they sold his Everglades land in ten acre tracts. Many of these sales were to people who had never been to Florida, and even if a prospective buyer came, there was no way to get out to the land. The newspapers commented that Bolles was selling acreage "by the gallon."

Bolles had another problem. He could sell tracts, but he could not provide deeds to the property he sold until the land was surveyed, and the state would not survey it until it was drained. Until deeds were awarded and recorded, sales were not legally recognized. But Bolles was a sharp businessman, and he had a scheme to remedy this "catch-22". He planned a lottery to award specific Everglades tracts to the purchasers by chance, and he threw in a town lot as part of the bargain. The town lots were to be located in Progresso, which Bolles had purchased from the Florida Fiber Company and then enlarged by buying substantial pieces of the surrounding country. Altogether, his enlarged Progresso stretched from today's Northwest Sixth Street up to the south fork of Middle River and from the Intracoastal Waterway westward to present Northwest Fourteenth Avenue. Bolles divided that land into over 9,000 twenty-five by 135 foot lots and over 3,000 fifty by 135 foot lots.

The big lottery took place in March 1911, and over 3,000 people came from all over the United States, some as land purchasers and others acting as surrogates for those who were unable to come. The names of all contract holders, as the land buyers were called, were put into a big hopper. The actual drawing consisted of a man reaching into the hopper and pulling out a name. Then he would reach into another hopper and pull out a description of a ten-acre piece of land in the Everglades. Then, from a third hopper, he would draw a slip containing a lot and block number in Progresso. Contract holders who bought ten acre tracts in the Everglades received twenty-five foot lots in Progresso, and those who bought twenty acre plots or more received fifty foot lots in Progresso. In that way the lottery determined without surveys how to apportion that land to all the purchasers. It took six days to complete the drawing, and 11,972 contract holders received land. The Everglades land was located along the Miami Canal, stretching from a point northwest of Miami northward to a point opposite Lantana.

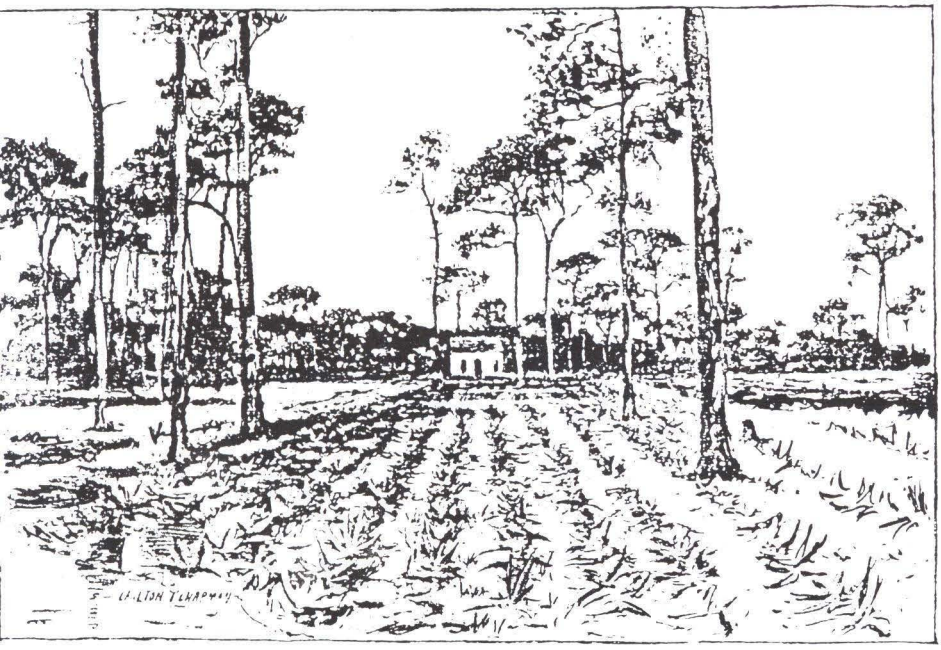


Richard J. Bolles, Everglades land investor and originator of the Progresso land drawing.

In 1911, Miami had a population of only 6,000 people, and Progresso already had 11,972 property holders. But Bolles' plan never worked out. The state never drained the Everglades land, and most of the contract holders left the area. A few stayed on and made their homes in Progresso, hoping that their land in the Everglades would eventually be drained. Bolles' Florida Fruit Lands Company had given them a park and they had dock space on Middle River, so that if they had a boat they could go up the canals to try to find their land along the Miami Canal.[3]

For several years there were big articles in the Fort Lauderdale paper on June 7, "Today Is Progresso Day," inviting people to come to that area. These accounts appeared in 1911, 1912, 1913, and 1914, and then they disappeared from the paper. The few people who stayed on in Progresso organized the Progresso Improvement Association, and several members of that association became well-known in the Fort Lauderdale area. One was J. K. Gordon. His son, Watt Gordon, was the great athlete of Fort Lauderdale High School from 1915 to 1917. Some think he was the greatest athlete to ever come out of Fort Lauderdale High School. George Hinkel, who ran Hinkel's Restaurant on First Avenue, was a member and an officer in the improvement association. E. C. Parker was the early mainstay of the association, however around 1912 or 1913 he deserted Progresso and moved into Fort Lauderdale. In 1914 he was elected to the Fort Lauderdale Town Council, and that same year he wrote a letter to the newspaper telling the people of Progresso that, although he sympathized with them, he felt they should be annexed into Fort Lauderdale. Finally, the Progresso Improvement Association dwindled away, and Progresso ceased as an organized community, although it maintained a degree of geographic identity.

By the 1920s and '30s, the Progresso people were still struggling, and Progresso was considered "the other side of the tracks," both literally and figuratively. By that time, Progresso



The Florida Fiber Company's sisal plantation on Middle River as sketched by Carlton T. Chapman for an article on "Subtropical Florida," which appeared in *Cosmopolitan Magazine* in 1898.

was, and still is, considered to begin on the north side of the F.E.C. Railway tracks, although it actually begins at Sixth Street, several blocks to the south.

There were other Broward County communities which appeared and then, for one reason or another, disappeared, but these were the ones which had the greatest impact on the history of the county. Although they no longer exist as individual communities, the names they left on maps, the settlers they attracted, and the economic activity they fostered each contributed to the course of the region's development. Broward County owes much to its "vanished communities."

FOOTNOTES

1. Census figures for 1990 show a population of 65,492 for Pembroke Pines.

2. For a complete, scholarly, and fully-documented history of the Dania District, see Cooper Kirk, "The Historic 'Dania District': A Vanished Settlement," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 11, nos. 1 & 2 (Winter/Spring 1988), 14-21.

3. More detailed and documented information on Everglades drainage and land sales in general, and the Progresso land lottery in particular, can be found in Cooper Kirk, "The Abortive Attempt to Create Broward County in 1913," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 12, nos. 1 & 2 (Winter/Spring 1989), 2-27.

Aerial view of Progresso, looking southwest, c. 1940. Andrews Avenue crosses the F.E.C. Railway tracks in the center of this photo.

THE OCTOBER 1947 "HURRICANE"

DISASTER ON TOP OF DISASTER

by MARJORIE DICKEY PARSONS

A few days earlier I returned to Fort Lauderdale after an absence of several months, just in time to experience the climax of the 1947 hurricane season — the ninth of the year. There was a lot of water and wading, not along or in the Atlantic Ocean, but on the main streets of 1947 Fort Lauderdale. Intervening years have brought so many changes that it seems wise to recall that era in the city's history.

The post-World War II recovery was beginning to impact Fort Lauderdale, and a "return to normalcy" brought welcomed changes. Wartime blackouts were over. The checkpoints, manned by armed sentries on bridges leading to Fort Lauderdale and Broward beaches, were gone; people moved to and from the beaches freely. Purchases of meat, shoes, gasoline, and tires could be made *without* ration coupons. Automobiles were rolling from assembly lines again, and new cars were in evidence. An air of optimism pervaded the area. Partially developed subdivisions, abandoned after the collapse of the 1920s land boom followed by the 1926 hurricane, were being reactivated with new capital. A steamroller of new development was just beginning to gain momentum.

When the voter registration books in Fort Lauderdale closed on October 10, 1947, there were 8,293 voters in the city qualified to vote in the city election scheduled later in the month.

The television revolution had not engulfed the country. One did *not* "see" the news and weather. Such reports came via radio. Special newspaper editions informed people of unusual and late-breaking events. The terms "aquifers" and "environmental concerns" were rarely seen in news reporting. Flood control was, however, a topic of intense interest in south Florida. The state conservation officer for the region was Fred Cabot. In the September 18, 1947, edition of the *Fort Lauderdale News and Evening Sentinel*, there was a picture of Officer Cabot showing young turtles, apparently hatched on Broward beaches, which were washed ashore by the September 17, 1947, hurricane with its winds exceeding 100 miles per hour.

The use of "hurricane-hunter" planes had begun in the early 1940s, but the war had clamped necessary radio silence over the Atlantic, and few weather reports were received from ships at sea during wartime. Ten hurricanes were reported in 1943 and a like number in 1944 and 1945 as well. Florida was in the path of two of the six hurricanes of 1946. Nineteen forty-seven was another year of many storms.[1]

As many articles in past issues of **Broward Legacy** *have demonstrated, Broward County is an area shaped by its waters and man's efforts to utilize and control them. Perhaps the greatest display of destructive power unleashed on the county by water was provided by the storms and resulting floods in the fall of 1947. This natural disaster, unwittingly aided by man's attempts to master nature, forced county and state officials to seek more effective means of flood control, ultimately resulting in the creation of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District (now the South Florida Water Management District).*

Marjorie Dickey Parsons, former executive director of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, presents the story of the 1947 storms and their aftermath from two perspectives. First, she outlines the background of post-World War II Fort Lauderdale and recounts the history of the 1947 hurricane season and flooding problems as detailed in contemporary newspaper accounts. Second, she recalls her personal experiences during the October 11-12 storm and in the days which followed. Mrs. Parsons, a longtime Fort Lauderdale resident and graduate of Fort Lauderdale High School, currently resides in Kingsland, Georgia.

There were no satellites to assist the U.S. Weather Service in predicting weather conditions and hurricane movements. Most people had barometers in their homes which were watched closely. Weather forecasters relied heavily on barometric pressure readings. When pressures began to drop, storm and hurricane warnings were issued and last-minute preparations began. Tropical storms were not given names. In fact, by today's standards, the storm on October 11-12, 1947, was not even a hurricane.

Most south Floridians were hurricane-conscious in 1947, and they demonstrated that awareness. People kept extra canned foods, sterno stoves, batteries for flashlights and radios, etc., on hand during the "storm season." Many homes were designed with decorative window shutters which could convert to storm shutters easily. The Burdines store, advertising for new employees in September 1947, had been completed at the corner of Andrews Avenue and Southwest Second Street. It had an innovative feature: the permanent marquee around the store had metal underliners which could be released, dropped over the plate glass windows, and then hooked in place to protect the glass and merchandise. (Near the Burdines ad was that of a grocery advertising a one pound can of coffee for thirty-nine cents.)

Nineteen forty-seven was a wet year. On August 8, 1947, an article datelined in Titusville reported forty to forty-five inches of rain for the year, versus an average of twenty-eight inches.[2]

An item titled "Floods Cause 250 Families to Flee Camp," with an October 4, 1947, Miami dateline, reported frequent deluges since the mid-September hurricane. Miami reported ten inches of rain the prior week, and a total of 13.6 for September versus a normal fall of eight inches. The article stated that children were wading to school in Davie, and a trailer park had to be evacuated. Heavy losses of citrus crops were reported.[3] Sheriff Walter Clark of Broward County was quoted as saying, "Fifty miles of water from the Everglades to the north is moving this way." Further, street damage was reported to be heavy at that time. Hundreds of people in Fort Lauderdale had been inoculated against typhoid. In Fort Lauderdale the Naval Air Station was set up as a refuge station.

Some meteorological research was in progress on hurricanes, and experiments were being developed which would, hopefully, diminish the devastation from the unusually heavy rainfall which normally accompanied such storms.

On September 7, 1947, this headline was found:
"Scientific Attempts to Break Hurricanes Await Next Storm."[4]
The United Press story was datelined at Miami on September 6, and states:

"Hurricane Hunters" are awaiting the opportunity to . . . use "hurricane busters."

The next great tropical storm to whirl through the Atlantic, the Caribbean or the Gulf of Mexico will be dusted with carbon dioxide (dry ice), silver iodide or some other crystal which — perhaps — will condense the water vapors, cause a record-smashing rainfall at sea, and dissipate the great swirling mass.

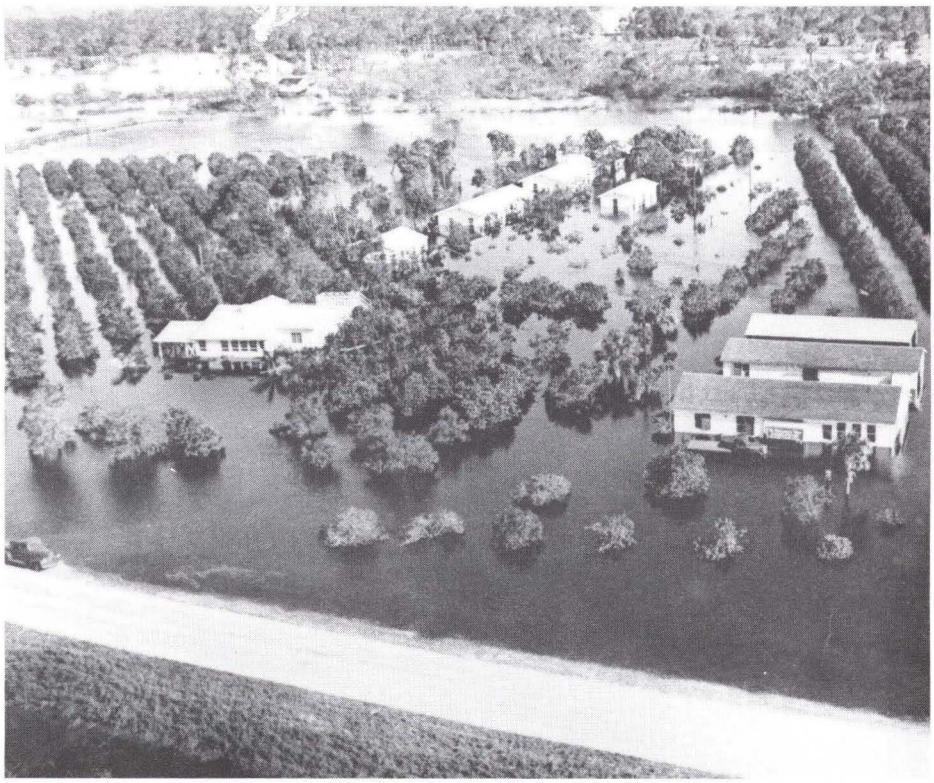
It will be a cautious experiment at first, because nobody quite knows what will happen when the tremendous energies stored completely in a great hurricane is tackled. A special B-17 weather-science plane is on the ground at Schenectady, N.Y. awaiting the word that a hurricane has formed. The plane is especially equipped for "seeding" chemicals into a cloud, like a farmer planting wheat.

When the time comes, it will fly into one of the great storms, accompanied by one or more "hurricane hunter" planes from the Miami Naval Air Station. The Miami plane will fly above the storm to photograph the effects of "seeding" by the weather-science plane.

Only a little of the chemicals will be fed into the storm the first day, then photographs and observations will be analyzed before a heavier attack is made. The "busting" efforts will be progressively heavier until scientists and Navy men know what the effect will be . . .

What will happen if all or part of this energy were released at once by a hurricane buster? It would dump 20 inches or so of rain on the surface beneath the storm, but . . . the effect isn't yet known. That is why Navy men and scientists are proceeding cautiously.

(It is not known whether the above described experiment was tried during the September 17, 1947, hurricane which came into Broward County.)



Flooded citrus groves in the Davie area, 1947.

During the ninth hurricane of 1947, a dry ice experiment was attempted in an effort to dissipate the hurricane. This fact was well publicized. After the deluge which took place October 11-12, there was much local discussion as to why the results of the experiment were not released. Perhaps it was not widely known that the Weather Service had stated it only hoped that the heavy rainfall would occur over open waters. Such experiments were discontinued in the 1960s.

The excessive rain and water in the

Talk Of The Town

It may or may not be because of the gloomy aspect of the weather, but court house employes today revealed a decided upswing in divorces and a downward trend in the issuance of marriage licenses during the past week. Eight divorce suits entered today, but only two marriage licenses were granted.

Everybody In Broward County Reads THE

FORT LAUDERDALE DAILY NEWS

MEMBER THE ASSOCIATED PRESS — AND EVENING SENTINEL — FULL NEA SERVICE AND TELEPHOTO

Smile In The News

DETROIT. (AP)—Jerry Ashley of Detroit thinks "we've got to start at the bottom in building international friendship." So his diaper company offered to provide free service for seven survivors of Chinese octuplets as well as the Russian quints whose births were announced recently.

37th YEAR. No. 27. | Phone 29 | FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1947 | Phone 29 | PRICE: FIVE CENTS

STORM HEADS TOWARD FLORIDA

Dike Repair Fund Granted

DAVIE AREA EVACUATION PREDICTED

Flood Waters Continue To Rise Steadily

Wholesale evacuation of the Davie area, even by many of the old time residents, was predicted today by Walter Stirling, pioneer grower, as flood waters continue to rise relentlessly in the tiny community.

Stirling said that 90 percent of the entire area is now under water. He declared the water had dropped with the installation of a

$5,000 Allotted By Army

Extra $10,000 Expected To Dredge River

Some measure of almost immediate relief from flood waters in Broward county is expected to result from approval today by Col. Willis Teale, district Army engineer, Jacksonville, of a program outlined to him on the telephone by local engineers.

BLOODY WARNING

THE WORLD TODAY

NEWS BULLETINS

FLOOD WATER DIVERSION REFUSED

At 1 p. m. The Daily News was advised by C. Kay Davis, engineer for the Broward drainage district, that Lamar Johnson, engineer for the Everglades drainage district had refused to divert flood waters pouring down the north New river canal from Palm Beach county. Davis said the water could be diverted by putting boards in the locks at 26-Mile bend.

FIRST INDICATION OF STORM

First indication that the present storm had passed over Cuba and was headed for Florida's mainland arrived at noon today when a driving rainstorm drenched the downtown area and soaked the already water-logged streets. The storm at 12:30 p. m. was located about 80 miles southeast of Key West, the weather bureau advised.

ARABS STUDY MILITARY MEASURES

DISTILLERY SHUTDOWN APPROVED

Action Planned To Save Grain For Europe

WASHINGTON. (AP)—President Truman's citizens food committee said today that a clear majority of the nation's major distillers has agreed to a 60-day shutdown to save grain for Europe.

Of 39 companies represented here Wednesday when committee chairman Charles Luckman proposed the shutdown, 18 gave assent on the spot. A spokesman for Luckman reported today that five more firms wired their agreement yesterday.

One of the messages came under protest. J. A. Engelhard, president of the distilled spirits institute, an organization representing 60 percent of the industry, warned that the whisky-making

Tropical Blast Expected To Hit Near Fort Myers

Top Winds Of 60 Miles An Hour Reported In Disturbance Loaded With Heavy Rain

A small tropical storm with top winds of 60 miles an hour and loaded with rain moved slowly across the Florida straits today and is expected to enter Florida in the Fort Myers' vicinity tonight, the weather bureau announced. Chief Forecaster Grady Norton said the storm would pass between Key West and the Dry Tortugas islands this afternoon. He emphasized that "this is not a hurricane and not likely to be one while in Florida, waters."

Northeast storm warnings were extended in a 10:30 a. m. advisory from Daytona Beach on the east coast around the peninsula to Tampa and small craft warnings were hoisted for the entire penin-

'Be Prepared' ---If Hurricane Happens Along

fall of 1947 was well publicized. The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* headline on October 10, 1947, proclaimed that the West Dixie Highway was proposed as the "Last Stand." Engineer J. O. Brendla of the Old Plantation District said it might become necessary to abandon and evacuate all Broward County lands west of West Dixie Highway (now U.S. 441). He is quoted as stating, "Most of the dikes west of West Dixie Hwy. are already broken and useless . . . although Road 84 is still holding thus far." And, the worst was yet to come!

The October 11, 1947, *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* carried this bold print on its first page:

TROPICAL BLAST EXPECTED TO HIT NEAR FORT MYERS

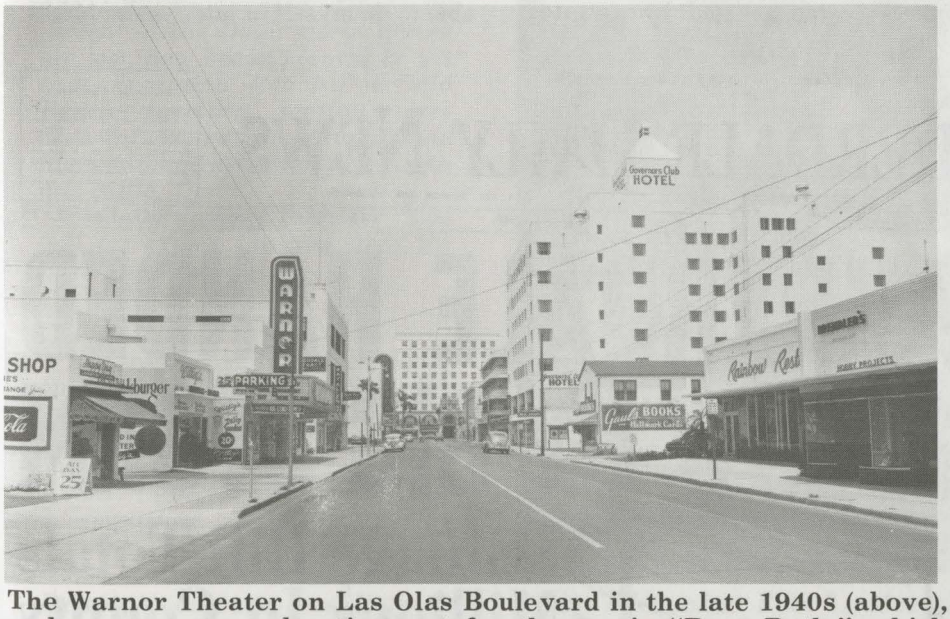
Top Winds of 60 Miles an Hour Reported in Disturbance

Loaded With Heavy Rain

A prominent article on the front page was titled "Be Prepared — If Hurricane Happens Along."

That day Fort Lauderdale residents listened for the latest forecasts. The early evening radio news contained no indication that the storm might be veering eastward across the state. News had not been sufficiently ominous for homeowners to begin the chore of boarding up their homes, drawing extra supplies of water, and making other last minute preparations.

In the absence of a warning of imminent danger, I blissfully headed toward the Warnor Theater, 122 East Las Olas Boulevard, to see Joan Caulfield and William Holden in "Dear



The Warnor Theater on Las Olas Boulevard in the late 1940s (above), and a newspaper advertisement for the movie "Dear Ruth," which played there the night of October 11, 1947.

Ruth." (The ticket was fifty cents and the movie began about seven o'clock.) Always wanting to view a movie from the beginning, I know that the warning of a change in the direction of the storm did not come until after I left home.

Our home was located at 313 Northeast First Street, only a five block walk to the theater. In those days such a walk at night in that area of Fort Lauderdale was not hazardous. Since I drove instead, it was probably raining when I left home, but mere rain was no cause for concern!

Before the picture ended, the outside downpour was audible above the sound of the movie. If there was an interruption in the electrical supply it must have been only momentary. The movie continued and concluded on schedule.

The extent of the downpour became obvious at the theater door. I was soaked by the time I reached the car which was parked near the theater entrance. An umbrella was no protection against that rain! Heading east on Las Olas Boulevard, it was apparent immediately that it would be unwise to attempt to go home via the normal and shortest route — north on Third Avenue. The intersection at Third Avenue and Broward Boulevard was always "a lake" after heavy rains, and the amount of water on the streets indicated this was no ordinary heavy rain. A drainage problem plagued that intersection for years. (The Himmarshee Canal had extended under the Federal Highway, curved upward to Broward Boulevard and extended to about the east side of Stranahan Park. When the canal west of Federal was filled in for paving, the intersection at Third Avenue did not receive enough fill to elevate it properly.) Storm sewers at that point and in many other areas of the city were virtually non-existent in 1947.

Downtown Fort Lauderdale flooding, looking south from the corner of Andrews Avenue and Broward Boulevard, October 1947.

The decision to go home via Las Olas Boulevard and Federal Highway was the right choice! Although there was standing water in the streets, there were no low spots along Las Olas or Federal Highway to collect excessive rainfall. The water was not deep enough to drown the motor or come into the car, as it would surely have done at the Broward-Third Avenue intersection. Crossing Southeast Fourth Avenue, I glanced toward the river and could see only a solid sheet of water. I thought it looked like New River was out of its banks at least as far as Las Olas — the understatement of the year.

When I arrived home, safe but soaked, I was greeted by agitated parents who thought anyone with an ounce of brains should have left the movie under such conditions and returned more promptly. I then learned that the storm had changed course, and was heading eastward across the state.

During my absence, my father had donned a heavy hip-length raincoat, with large and deep pockets on the outside, and had shuttered the house. Our home was like many others. The decorative window shutters were mounted on hinges and hooked to the house. One had only to unhook, close the shutters and slide a bar, already in place, through the slot on the opposite shutter. It was a quick and easy method of protecting windows from flying debris, a job which I was able to do myself in later years. Metal

Talk Of The Town

All sessions of municipal court have been called off until Wednesday morning, because of rain. Not only the defendants, but also the judge would have trouble reaching the courtroom today and Tuesday. Police also are busy. The principal weekend arrests were in for intoxication and two from drunk driving as wet thirsts kept pace with wet feet.

Everybody In Broward County Reads THE

FORT LAUDERDALE DAILY NEWS

MEMBER THE ASSOCIATED PRESS — AND EVENING SENTINEL — FULL NEA SERVICE AND TELEPHOTO

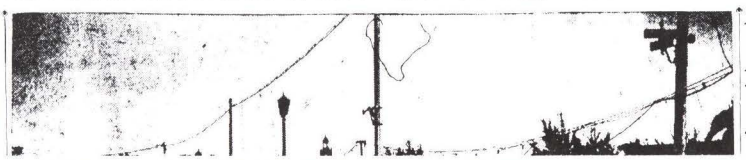
Smile In The News

ATLANTA (AP)—Maybe patience is a virtue, after all. Fifteen years ago someone stole Jim Brown's pocket watch from his home at Hampton, Ga. Today it was recovered by police in an Atlanta pawn shop. Brown, now an Atlanta resident, reclaimed his watch.

37th YEAR. No. 28. | Phone 29 | FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, 1947 | Phone 29 | PRICE: FIVE CENTS

DAVIE, FT. LAUDERDALE HANDED STAGGERING BLOW BY BIG STORM

Utility Tax Levy Vote Set



Damage Bill Totals Millions In County

alousie shutters protected the front porch screens. The torrential rains made the job more difficult. Before he finished, he was soaked to the skin and *the pockets of his coat were filled with water.* The front porch had a very wet floor from his soaked garments.

Winds did not achieve high and devastating velocities, but there was widespread damage to shrubbery. The rains ceased by the following day. Fort Lauderdale had been called the "Venice of America" — in the glamorous sense of that term. But, there was little glamor in seeing streets under water the next day.

The *Fort Lauderdale News and Evening Sentinel,* for Monday, October 13, 1947, had this headline in one and one-quarter inch letters.

DAVIE, FORT LAUDERDALE HANDED STAGGERING BLOW BY BIG STORM

Damage Bill Totals Millions in County

12 to 15 Inches of Rain Hits Area During Weekend Flooding City, Adding to Davie Woes . . .

The heavy rainfall, whipped by violent gusts of wind, came as all sections of the battered county were cleaning up debris from the Sept. 17 hurricane and were attempting to stem the flow of high water pouring in from the Everglades. New River overflowed its banks at each high tide.

No accurate estimate of damage was compiled. The $10,000,000 estimate of citrus, vegetable crop, dairy and cattle herds compiled 10 days ago may be doubled. Up to 90 percent of the Davie citrus groves are lost, new beans planted in the rich Pompano Beach-Deerfield Beach farming section were drowned out, water rose higher and higher around weakened dairy cows and cattle.

Property damage from the flood will far exceed the loss from the Sept. 17 hurricane.

. . .

The tropical storm which developed into a hurricane late Saturday afternoon and swept across south Florida came after little warning. Very few places were boarded up. Even then little good was accomplished.

. . .

Principal damage was from the water not the wind. I do not recall how long the city was without electricity or telephone service. Our family made no attempt to drive anywhere for several days. Florida storms, then as now, receive wide publicity, and distant loved ones are anxious. So, it was decided to wire relatives that we were safe. The Western Union office was on Southwest First Avenue about a half a block north of New River.

An old pair of shoes with heavy wedged soles was selected for wading to the Western Union. There were some very deep places, and the murky waters prevented seeing what one might step on which would penetrate a thinner sole. There were no injuries, however, as I made the trip slowly and cautiously. That trip was the "last mile" for those shoes.

On October 19, 1947, a cousin of my father and his family, from Harlingen, Texas, came to Fort Lauderdale as previously planned. The accompanying picture was taken by them, and only came into the writer's possession recently.

On October 18, 1947, another article appeared, datelined October 17, from Fort Lauderdale reporting that the county engineer said that four days of bright sunshine was the longest sunny spell since the September 1st hurricane.[5] It was reported that the city commission met with civic leaders and agreed to employ a qualified engineer versed in flood control work to protect the health and property of the city. William J. Kelley was serving as flood control coordinator then.

The deluge which fell October 11-12 was *not* one isolated downpour during a hurricane to which the resulting devastation can be attributed. In fact, the fifteen or so inches of rain on October 11-12 compounded the already existing flood conditions described by Sheriff Walter Clark a week earlier as "Fifty miles of water from the Everglades to the north moving this way." I recall talk of boring wells in the Davie area of the county to what was said to be "ocean current" to help drain the area, but with no positive results. Orange groves stood in water until their roots rotted.

The Fort Lauderdale City Commission ordered the reopening of the old New River Inlet (in today's Bahia Mar area) on October 14. The inlet channel had silted closed after the opening of the Port Everglades channel. The inlet had been filled completely, and a bonded road was built to provide the only access at that time to the new Harbor Beach subdivision where houses were under construction. There were those who believed the reopening of the inlet would be ineffective because of the direction of the ocean currents, and such proved to be true.

Water stood in Fort Lauderdale streets for so long that the roadbeds were soaked, and traffic seemed to beat the streets to a pulp — more potholes than smooth surfaces. City funds with which to finance the rebuilding of the streets were non-existent. Hence, a utilities tax was imposed which has been continued to this good day.

A news release from Washington, D.C., on October 29, reported actions which were being taken to try to relieve the flood situation in south Florida.[6] It reported that Senator Claude Pepper had asked President Truman to recommend that a forthcoming special

Photo of flooded Fort Lauderdale streets, taken by a relative of the Dickey family in late October, 1947 (photo courtesy of Marjorie Dickey Parsons and the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

session of Congress appropriate $3,000,000 for flood control and relief. Pepper had written:

This is on behalf of myself and the Florida delegation;

. . . it is requested that you undertake steps to formulate plans for a comprehensive flood control program so that we may seek assistance from the Congress. . .

The time has come when we have got to deal with the flood situation in the Florida peninsula as a whole.

The long, wet summer and fall of 1947, capped off with the October 11-12 deluge and its resultant problems, accelerated action on long-talked-about flood control. The Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District was authorized in 1949.

Forty plus years "down the road" the creation of a flood control project in south Florida can be viewed as one reason for the enormous growth in the Broward County area, particularly west of U.S. 441. Without the flood control measures which were taken, few people would now be living in the fringes of the Everglades. The effects of attempting to harness the Everglades may be good or bad — depending on the individual's point of view. A final judgement can only be rendered by future generations.

History does repeat itself! Should there be another wet year such as 1947, climaxed with a devastatingly wet hurricane, agriculture-related losses in the Broward County area will be minimal. People have replaced agriculture. There is a large population west of U. S. 441 today which is totally ignorant of hurricanes, floods, and even the past history and soil structure of the area in which they chose to locate. It appears almost certain that losses of residential and commercial developments which have "flooded into" the area west of U. S. 441 to serve the current population residing there will far exceed the dollar value of the agricultural losses suffered in 1947.

Fort Lauderdale and Broward County has not suffered the devastating winds and waters of a major hurricane since the 1960s. A very real danger in the next "big blow" is the failure of newcomers to be aware of the fact that "it can happen here" again. It probably will. The question is: when?

South Florida's current water shortage is well known. A wet year such as 1947 would relieve the water shortage, but at what cost?

Seal of the Central and Southern Florida Flood Control District.

FOOTNOTES

1. Marjory Stoneman Douglas, *Hurricane* (New York: Rinehart & Co., Inc., 1958), 290.
2. *The Florida Times-Union*, Jacksonville, August 8, 1947.
3. *Ibid.*, October 5, 1947.
4. *Ibid.*, September 7, 1947.
5. *Ibid.*, October 18, 1947.
6. *Ibid.*, October 31, 1947.

Aerial view of a portion of Broward County along the Florida Turnpike, April 1974, showing dense population and construction.

THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE MOVEMENT

In Broward County and Florida

by ANNETTE VAN HOWE

It was not until May 1969, that the Nineteenth Amendment was formally ratified by Florida's Governor Claude Kirk. It was a long overdue symbolic step of granting Florida's women the right to vote. Appropriately, this action came on the thirtieth anniversary of the League of Women Voters.[1] That organization was formed after the National Association of Women Suffrage Associations (NAWSA) disbanded. The National Association of Women Suffrage Associations was organized by Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in 1869. These women were the leaders, organizers, and brains of the nineteenth century suffrage movement.[2]

In the years leading up to the successful passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, on August 26, 1920, women were organizing in Fort Lauderdale and throughout Florida to pass legislation giving women suffrage on three levels: national, state, and local. Fort Lauderdale's Ivy Stranahan became one of Florida's most prominent suffragists, while a number of other Fort Lauderdale pioneers, such as Annie Beck and Frances TenBrook were active in the suffrage movement on a local level.

The Fort Lauderdale suffrage movement reflected many of the concerns expressed by suffragists throughout the South in the half century following the Civil War. The position of Henry Blackwell, a noted former abolitionist from Massachusetts, illustrates these concerns. Prior to the Civil War, Blackwell asked women to cool their ardor for suffrage so that it would not detract from efforts to free the slaves. By 1867, Blackwell advocated votes for white women to counterbalance the votes of blacks.[3]

Others also advocated the vote to maintain the political supremacy of the white race, but many regarded the prospect with horror. In the period following the Civil War, the southern white woman was perceived as the South's rationale for fighting the war,

While much of Broward County's history is the product of its unique location, climate, and topography, the county has also taken part in many sweeping national events. The struggle for women's suffrage in the first decades of the twentieth century is an outstanding example, not only because it directly affected approximately half of the region's population, but because several of Broward's most prominent women became active participants in the cause. Ivy Stranahan, in particular, assumed a position of leadership on a statewide level. This article traces the course of the women's suffrage movement in Broward County and Florida, pointing out its interconnections with other concerns of the period, including race relations, temperance, and World War I, and emphasizing the internal workings of the various cooperating — and sometimes conflicting — women's organizations in achieving their goal.

Annette Van Howe holds a master's degree in history from the State University of New York at Binghamton and is currently enrolled as a graduate student in the Florida Atlantic University Women's Studies Department. In addition to her work as a realtor, she is a member and past chair of the Broward County Commission on the Status of Women, president of the Florida Women's Consortium, and founder and chair of the Broward County Women's History Coalition.

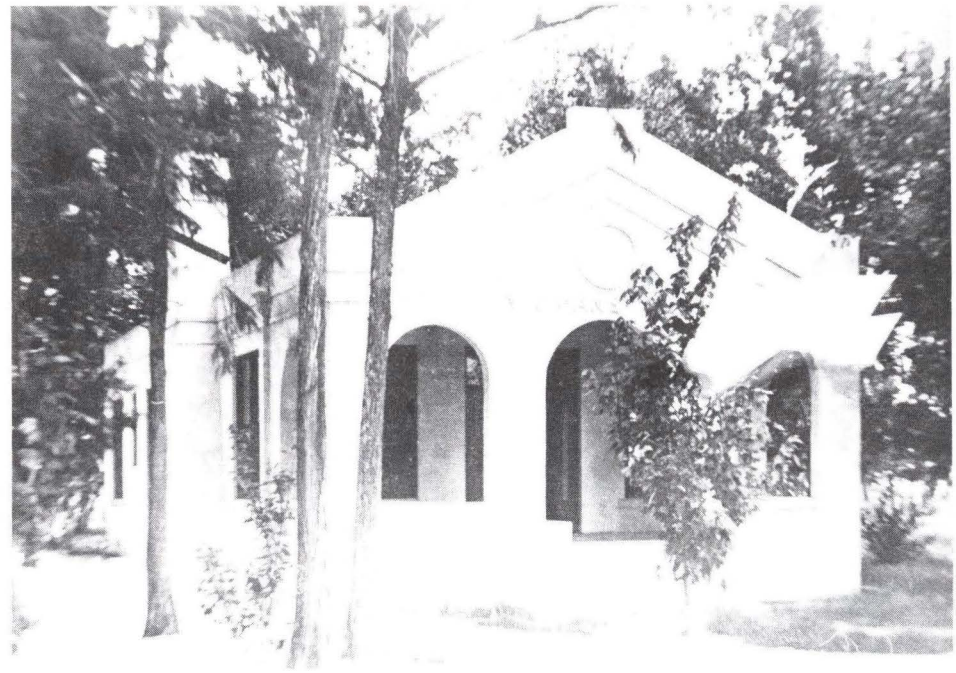
and became a key element in romanticizing their "lost cause." To vote, and thus become involved in the rough and tumble of politics, was considered by many beneath the dignity of genteel ladies.

During Reconstruction the notion that white women's votes would counterbalance those of blacks presented a powerful argument, but other ways were found to negate the black vote: poll taxes, grandfather clauses, and simple intimidation. It was not until the Women's Christian Temperance Union, in the 1880s, took a strong stand in support of women's suffrage that there was a greater resurgence of Blackwell's assertion that giving the vote to white women would further white supremacy.[4]

Speakers during that decade also argued that there were more educated southern women than all illiterate voters — white, black, and foreign-born combined. Belle Kearney, a WCTU activist, said in a speech that the South was slow to grasp the great fact that the enfranchisement of women would settle the race question in politics. Anna Howard Shaw, the NAWSA president in the 1880s, harshly reproved white southern men, saying, "Never before have men made former slaves the political masters of their former mistresses."[5]

With that logic, upper class southern white women could join the suffrage movement because it did not betray their ideals of class or their means of maintaining the southern tradition of white supremacy. While promoting the race argument in the South, the WCTU's main concern with suffrage was the corollary they saw between whiskey and the vote. Since alcoholism was a vice more common to men and had a detrimental effect on the home, temperance advocates felt that women's votes would result in the passage of anti-liquor laws.

Such was the mood of the country and of the National Association of Women Suffrage Associations at the dawn of the 1890s. Against that backdrop, some of the first suffrage groups in Florida were organized. For example, a group was organized in Tampa in 1892. This group, calling itself the Florida Women's Suffrage Association, grew to about 100 members and disbanded when its organizer, Ella C. Chamberlain, moved out of the state in 1897.[6] Despite this early activity, the women's suffrage movement in Florida made no substantial impact on legislation or the national movement throughout the first decade of the twentieth century. The movement gained momentum across the country in 1912 when the National Progressive Party made women's suffrage a part of its platform.



The Fort Lauderdale Woman's Club building in Stranahan Park, c. 1920s. The club was a center of local women's suffrage activity.

Reaction in Florida followed immediately. In Jacksonville in 1912, the Equal Franchise League was formed, becoming affiliated with NAWSA. Its members participated in the famous suffrage march in Washington, D. C., which coincided with the inauguration of Woodrow Wilson as president. The League's leader, Roselle C. Cooley, tried to get a women's suffrage amendment added to the Florida Constitution. Jeannette Rankin of Montana, the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, was sent by NAWSA to Florida to lobby for the state amendment. It was defeated by a vote of thirty-eight to twenty-six in the Florida House of Representatives, a respectable showing for a first time effort.[7]

Throughout the state other groups were forming. In 1913 the Reverend Mary A. Safford, a Unitarian minister, formed a suffrage group in Orlando. Reverend Safford also worked closely with Mrs. Cooley to form a statewide organization, a project which was accomplished at the November 1913 convention of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs. The heart of the suffrage movement in Florida was through the women's clubs. In fact, the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs (FFWC) had already adopted suffrage as part of their own program, and formally endorsed the program of Reverend Safford and Mrs. Cooley's newly-founded Florida Equal Suffrage Association.

The Florida Equal Suffrage Association held six state conventions from 1914 to 1919. Nevertheless, the general feeling remained during these years that the women's clubs were the most effective agency for bringing about suffrage. The leadership of the clubs and the suffrage association were generally the same, so there was a tendency to de-emphasize the weak and poorly organized suffrage association and work through the larger, well-organized FFWC.[8] On August 10, 1917, Ivy Stranahan, then president of the Florida Equal Suffrage Association, wrote: "I really feel that the majority of suffrage work will necessarily be done through the women's clubs anyway . . . You know when we get equal rights, it seems to me there will be no further use for a separate organization, our aims will have been accomplished."[9]

Ivy Stranahan of Fort Lauderdale was elected to the presidency of the Florida Equal Suffrage Association at its 1917 convention. The Reverend Mary Safford was named honorary chairman, and Mary Elizabeth Bryan, the wife of the presidential candidate and orator William Jennings Bryan, became legislative committee chairman. Mary Elizabeth Bryan was a strong leader, with a vision to promote legislation as the organization's main emphasis. The Association ignored the adoption of an organizational or education program. In the years to come, Ivy Stranahan and Mary Elizabeth Bryan spent much of their time lobbying in Tallahassee for various suffrage bills.[10]

Mary Elizabeth Bryan was supported in her suffrage efforts by her illustrious husband, a fact which

undoubtedly gave the movement widespread appeal and a greater reception. Colonel William Jennings Bryan spoke before a large audience in the Fort Lauderdale High School auditorium in 1918. He argued that a mother is primarily responsible for the training of a young man, pointing out that if he is fitted by her to vote, the mother should certainly be competent to do the same. In August 1918, another lecturer in Fort Lauderdale, Mrs. Guilford Dudley, president of the Equal Suffrage League of Tennessee, said, "There are two stumbling blocks in the South, the Negro and states' rights." She alluded to the different approaches between state amendments and a national amendment, then being pushed by the newly formed National Women's Party. The state leadership, under Ivy Stranahan, promoted states' rights and later a primary bill based on the fact that the South was solidly Democratic and that winning the Democratic primary usually meant election.[11] These regional issues were, for the most part, ignored by the national NAWSA organization.

Arguments for and against suffrage found their way into a number of state and local publications and were echoed in various public addresses. One pro-suffrage argument was that women's participation in government was an extension of their housekeeping chores. That sentiment was expressed in a paid advertisement in the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* in May, 1916, which said in part: "Being deprived by the state of Florida of my rights as a citizen and having no voice in the community in which I pay taxes, I appeal to you for help. I ask you to consider the best interests of the children before casting your vote."[12]

This theory gained popularity as a result of its advocacy by such national figures as Jane Addams, the noted Chicago social worker, who felt that women simply wanted an opportunity to take care of those affairs which naturally and historically belonged to women.[13] Conversely, anti-suffragists felt the vote would ruin the home. Frank Clark, a Florida congressman, was a staunch opponent of suffrage for women. In 1918, he spoke on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives saying, ". . . the conferring of the franchise on women will tend to disrupt the family . . . and when you disrupt the family you destroy the home which in America is the foundation stone of the Republic."[14] A popular ditty against women's suffrage went like this:

It's all over with the men, as soon as women get the vote . . .
They'll start to wear the trousers, men will wear the petticoats . . .
We'll have to nurse the baby, do all the housework too . . .
And they'll roll home in the morning just like father used to do.[15]

In a reversal of Henry Blackwell's argument presented in the nineteenth century, many objected to suffrage because it would give black women the vote. One man reportedly said, "We can club the nigger man away from the polls but we couldn't do that with a black woman."[16] The Florida State Superintendent of Education, W. N. Sheats, reportedly leapt to his feet at a 1914 national educators' meeting and demanded to know what "political equality" meant. He voiced the opinion that two-thirds of the women of the South did not really want suffrage. Upon his return to Florida, Sheats was asked for an explanation. He explained that "free political equality for women of the South would mean ruin since it

Ivy Stranahan, Fort Lauderdale's most prominent suffragist, as she appeared in the 1920s (photo courtesy of Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

Logical Argument for Equal Suffrage

Mrs Guilford Dudley Makes Plea to Ft Lauderdale Audience in Behalf of the Federal Equal Suffrage Amendment

Last Monday night Ft. Lauderdale had the pleasure of hearing an address on Equal Suffrage by the talanted Mrs. Guilford Dudley, of Tennessee. But Mrs. Dudley was not the only attraction. There were strange faces on the platform and two strange voices speaking for equal rights for men and women

The Rex Tehatre was comfortably filled when the hour arrived for the lecture. On the platform were the speaker, Mrs. Dudley, Mrs. Louise Parker, president of the Broward County Equal Suffrage Association and Mrs. Frank Stranahan, State President of Equal Suffrage Association. This trio of ladies was flanked on either side by a trio of mere men, who at least served as a frame in the rough for the beautiful piceture that decorated the center of the stage.

Mrs Louise Parker was chairman of the evening, and as an opening number, introduced Mme Vilona Hall, Ft. Lauderdale's gifted violinist, who favored the audience with two musical selections. Mrs. Hall was accompanied by Mrs. Baird. After the music, in a few well chosen remarks, the chairman introduced Mrs. Guilford Dudley.

Before beginning her lecture, Mrs. Dudley told the audience that she had been mis-quoted by the afternoon Miami paper regarding her speech in that city. She denied that she had said that "Prusia was ready to lay down her arms, if she felt that America would protect the weak." She also corrected the statement, made by the same Miami paper, regarding Senator Fletcher being too old to change, and in each case was radically different from what was quoted. After disposing of this matter, Mrs. Dudley took up the discussion of suffrage from three stand points. First, Southern; 2d, National and 3d, Universal.

(Continued on Page 8)

Article from the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* detailing Mrs. Guilford Dudley's suffrage address.

would open the gate to millions of ignorant and superstitious Negro women." These views were presented over and over again.[17]

Various organizations sponsored speakers in Broward County. A number of speakers came to Fort Lauderdale, often sponsored by the Woman's Club. Mrs. Frank Walsh, of Davie, spoke at a meeting of the WCTU. The *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* reprinted her entire address. She said there were two great issues facing the voters. One was democracy versus autocracy, and the other was curbing the evil of drink. To correct both, she said, it was imperative to give equal franchise to women. If mothers objected to sending their sons to war, she reasoned, they also objected to exposing their sons to a business which corrupts their souls and bodies. For these reasons, she explained, men were beginning to see that women's role in politics would resolve these problems.[18]

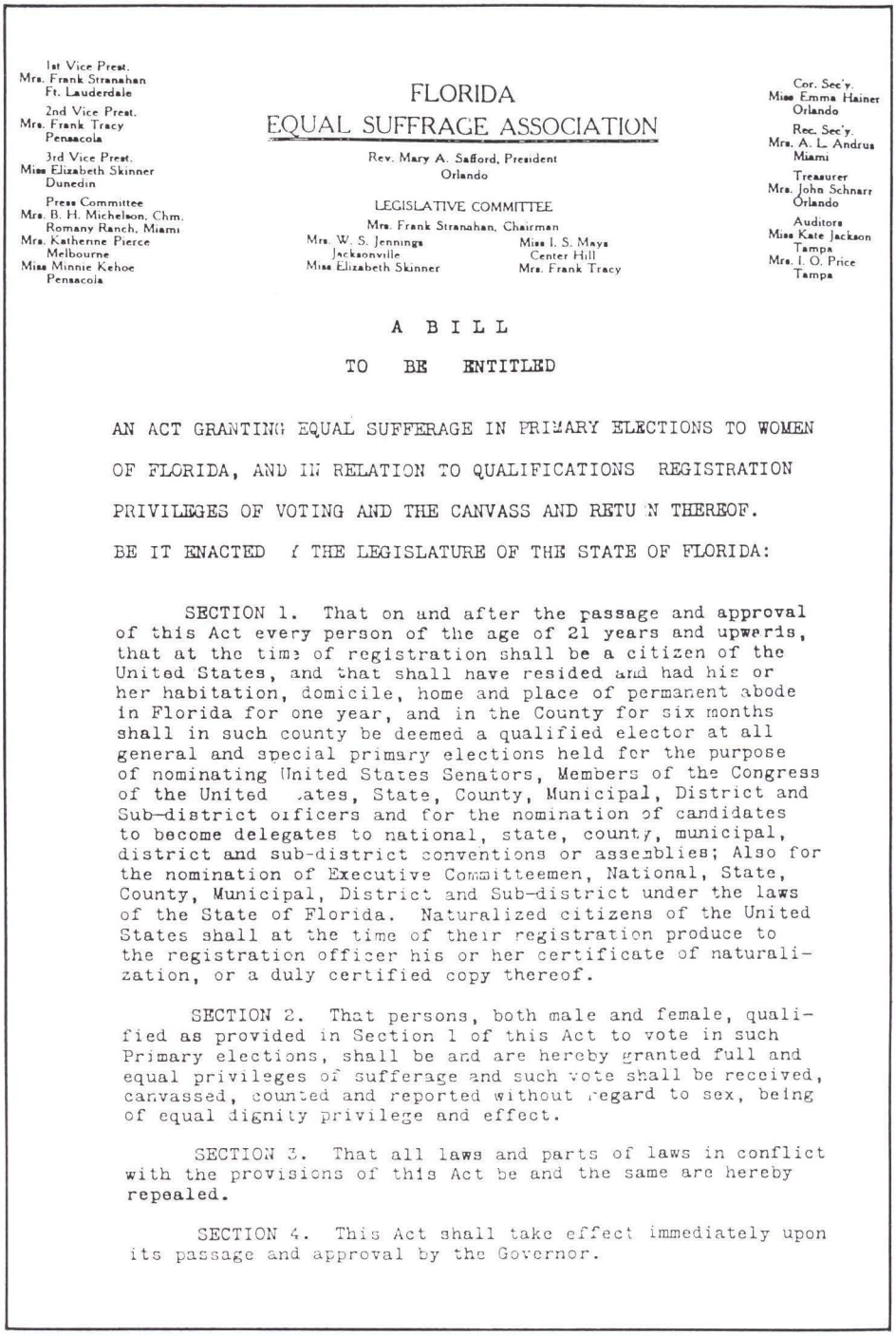
In her August 1918 address at the Rex Theatre in Fort Lauderdale, Mrs. Dudley acclaimed women's rise in education, business, and politics. According to the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, she cited that women from Plato's time to the present believed in justice and equal rights for both men and women. Following Mrs. Dudley's talk, Ivy Stranahan introduced a resolution calling upon Florida's two U.S. senators to vote for the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment guaranteeing nationwide women's suffrage.[19]

Ivy Stranahan, who had been Fort Lauderdale's first school teacher in 1899 and whose views were highly respected in the community, was a strong proponent of women's suffrage. She had been active in the formation of the Fort Lauderdale Woman's Club in 1911 and later served as president for three years. When the Fort Lauderdale Suffrage League was founded in 1915, she took a leading role in its affairs, which led to the presidency of the state association. Shortly after she took on the presidency, the United States entered World War I. She threw herself into the war effort, and her suffrage activities took second place. At the 1917 fourth annual convention in Tampa, Mrs. Stranahan reported, "Organization work has been very much retarded owing to the great war which is demanding the time, energy, and finances of the women who do this work.[20]

Other difficulties, in addition to preoccupation with the war, marred Ivy Stranahan's term as the leader of the Florida Equal Suffrage Association. Like many other southern suffrage leaders, Mrs. Stranahan was a staunch advocate of primary suffrage until the final phases of the suffrage movement. In 1917 a small group went to Tallahassee to lobby for passage of a primary suffrage bill introduced by William H. Marshall, former mayor of Fort Lauderdale. Ivy Stranahan, president of the Florida Equal Suffrage Association; Mary Elizabeth Bryan; and Mrs. William S. Jennings, president of the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, led the delegation. Marjory Stoneman Douglas covered the issue for the *Miami Times*. Public hearings were held on primary and state suffrage, but Marshall's bill did not receive the required majority vote.

That same year, Fort Lauderdale suffrage supporters suffered defeat on a local level when male voters rejected a proposed new city charter including equal municipal suffrage. The women had canvassed the town getting signatures and obtained 154 favorable signers to 117 opposed. Among the women in the forefront of this drive was Frances TenBrook, who was also president of the local WCTU. Even though the canvass revealed a majority for the charter change, the 171 votes cast defeated equal municipal suffrage by a margin of ninety-three to seventy-eight.[21]

The 1917 convention reflected a



1st Vice Pres.
Mrs. Frank Stranahan
Ft. Lauderdale

2nd Vice Pres.
Mrs. Frank Tracy
Pensacola

3rd Vice Pres.
Miss Elizabeth Skinner
Dunedin

Press Committee
Mrs. B. H. Michelson, Chm.
Romany Ranch, Miami
Mrs. Katherine Pierce
Melbourne
Miss Minnie Kehoe
Pensacola

FLORIDA
EQUAL SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

Rev. Mary A. Safford, President
Orlando

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
Mrs. Frank Stranahan, Chairman
Mrs. W. S. Jennings
Jacksonville
Miss Elizabeth Skinner
Miss I. S. Mays
Center Hill
Mrs. Frank Tracy

Cor. Sec'y.
Miss Emma Hainer
Orlando

Rec. Sec'y.
Mrs. A. L. Andrus
Miami

Treasurer
Mrs. John Schnarr
Orlando

Auditors
Miss Kate Jackson
Tampa
Mrs. I. O. Price
Tampa

A B I L L

TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT GRANTING EQUAL SUFFERAGE IN PRIMARY ELECTIONS TO WOMEN OF FLORIDA, AND IN RELATION TO QUALIFICATIONS REGISTRATION PRIVILEGES OF VOTING AND THE CANVASS AND RETU N THEREOF.

BE IT ENACTED THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF FLORIDA:

SECTION 1. That on and after the passage and approval of this Act every person of the age of 21 years and upwards, that at the time of registration shall be a citizen of the United States, and that shall have resided and had his or her habitation, domicile, home and place of permanent abode in Florida for one year, and in the County for six months shall in such county be deemed a qualified elector at all general and special primary elections held for the purpose of nominating United States Senators, Members of the Congress of the United States, State, County, Municipal, District and Sub-district officers and for the nomination of candidates to become delegates to national, state, county, municipal, district and sub-district conventions or assemblies; Also for the nomination of Executive Committeemen, National, State, County, Municipal, District and Sub-district under the laws of the State of Florida. Naturalized citizens of the United States shall at the time of their registration produce to the registration officer his or her certificate of naturalization, or a duly certified copy thereof.

SECTION 2. That persons, both male and female, qualified as provided in Section 1 of this Act to vote in such Primary elections, shall be and are hereby granted full and equal privileges of sufferage and such vote shall be received, canvassed, counted and reported without regard to sex, being of equal dignity privilege and effect.

SECTION 3. That all laws and parts of laws in conflict with the provisions of this Act be and the same are hereby repealed.

SECTION 4. This Act shall take effect immediately upon its passage and approval by the Governor.

Bill for primary suffrage proposed by the Florida Equal Suffrage Association, 1918 (courtesy of Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

Above is May Mann Jennings, Florida's first lady from 1901-1905 and one of the state's leading suffragists (photo courtesy of *The Florida Historical Quarterly*). At right is the program of the Florida Equal Suffrage Association's 1918 meeting (courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

Mrs. Carrier Chapman Catts
Address,
Federation of Womens Club
Friday Evening, Nov. 22,'18

Meeting. Parlors Morgan Hotel
Conference, Daytona, Florida

"BALLOTS FOR BOTH"

FLORIDA EQUAL SUFFRAGE ASSOCIATION

FIFTH ANNUAL MEETING
November 18-19, 1918

PROGRAM

MONDAY:
Nov. 18, 3:00 p. m.—Meeting of Executive Board; Appointments Committee, Credential, Nominating and Resolutions. (All delegates please be present)

MONDAY:
Nov. 18, 7:45 p. m.—Music; America; Invocation; Address, the National American Woman Suffrage Association and the State, Mrs. Frank Stranahan, President, Florida E. S. A., Fort Lauderdale
Music; Address: "Woman Suffrage Means Patriotism," Dr. Mary A. Safford, Orlando
Announcements.

TUESDAY:
Nov. 19, 9:30 a. m.—Business; Reports; Committees, Credentials, Nominations, Officers, Secretary, President. Report: Delegate National Convention, Washington, D. C., Dr. Mary A. Safford.
Address, "What it Would Mean to the Cause if Each Suffragist did their Part." Mrs. W. S. Jennings. "Power and Right of Petition," Miss Elizabeth Skinner.
Election of Officers.
Announcements, Adjournment.

TUESDAY:
Nov. 19, 2:00 p. m.—Business: Reports of Leagues.
Address: "Woman's Growing Loyalty to Her Sex," Mrs. T. C. Havens, Miami. "The Press a Power for Suffrage," Disscussion led by Mrs. Irene G. Adams, Lake Helen, "Woman Suffrage in War-time," Mrs. V. A. Pierce, Melbourne, "Minor Conference "Vaue of Organization," Mrs. L. A. Andrus Miami.
Adjournment.
Meeting of Executive Board.

growing push for a federal suffrage amendment. One speaker said, "We are fighting to make the world safe for democracy . . . a democracy in which women have no part. The thing we ask is fundamental to democracy . . . we live in a democracy . . . but there can be no democracy in which women are not included . . ."[22] The Reverend Safford urged that women should be taken off their pedestals, which she viewed as obstacles in the path of human progress. The war showed that women were capable, she stated, and had been enthroned on "pseudo pedestals."[23]

In Florida, the National Women's Party saw the growing division between those who favored state and local measures and those who advocated a constitutional amendment as an opportunity to provide strong national leadership for the suffrage movement. The National Association of Women Suffrage Associations had no organizers in Florida, and the state association had no time, energy, or money to strengthen their cause, leaving the Florida Federation of Women's Clubs, with 1000 clubs and 700 members, as the backbone of the suffrage movement in Florida. Despite the urgings of Mrs. William S. Jennings to Ivy Stranahan to organize new suffrage leagues, no new leagues were formed.[24]

This difference of opinion expressed at the Tampa convention reflected the divisions on the national level between NAWSA and the National Women's Party and its leader, Alice Paul, who had received her indoctrination in a confrontational style from the English suffragists. British suffrage supporters marched, petitioned, and made a nuisance of themselves to gain attention. Alice Paul's National Women's Party used those same tactics in Washington, D. C. They camped in front of the White House, were jailed, force fed, and gained widespread publicity for their cause, a federal suffrage amendment.[25] Today, proponents for each group say their tactics won the suffrage. However, historians increasing are paying more attention to Alice Paul as the dominant national force for suffrage.

Probably the sharpest division to occur among Florida suffragists was the heated debate over a presidential suffrage bill. During the 1917 legislative session, Ivy Stranahan and Mrs. Jennings had a copy of the bill but did not work for its introduction on the advice of friendly legislators who said

that it would meet with sure defeat.[26] The failure to introduce the bill caused unhappiness among some women, primarily those from Miami and other parts of south Florida who had no direct contact with the legislature. The *Miami Metropolis* was especially vocal in calling for the introduction of the bill in the legislature. Some of the paper's writers claimed that the bill would have been introduced except for the opposition of Mrs. Stranahan and Mrs. Jennings. As a result of the controversy, some of the suffrage leagues threatened to withdraw from the state organization. Ivy Stranahan answered their complaints by commenting that "they were out of their heads" and suggesting that they should use their energies more effectively by working for municipal suffrage.[27]

At the fifth annual convention of the Florida Equal Suffrage Association in Daytona in November, 1918, Ivy Stranahan became first vice president and legislative chairman. This time, the convention delegates decided to tackle the issue with a two pronged attack: nationally by petitioning senators to vote for a suffrage amendment, and locally by continuing to push for primary suffrage in the state legislature.[28] Neither plan was successful. A resolution in April 1919 to pass a primary suffrage amendment to the state constitution lost by five votes. The old arguments that "Morality and purity could not be legislated" and "Politics is a dirty game, and not for women," helped defeat the amendment.[29]

When the Nineteenth Amendment was introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives on May 21, 1919, Florida's four congressmen split two and two. But the amendment passed the House with a three-fifths majority. Despite strong petitions from Florida's suffragists, the state's senators both opposed the amendment. Senator Duncan U. Fletcher argued that each state should settle the question of women's suffrage for itself. Senator Park Trammell was also adamant in his position that state governments should control and regulate elections.[30] Although both men voted against the amendment, when it came to the floor for a vote, it received the necessary three-fourths votes.

As soon as Congress passed the Susan B. Anthony Amendment, the name soon applied to the Nineteenth Amendment, a reliable group of Florida suffragists sprang into action. Four of them again travelled to Tallahassee to lobby for ratification. Ivy Stranahan was among them, representing the Florida Equal Suffrage Association. The legislature was adjourned the day after they arrived, and the governor could not be convinced to call a special session.

Before adjourning, however, the legislature had passed into law a bill of significance to Fort Lauderdale's citizens. This bill, introduced by William H. Marshall, a consistent supporter of women's suffrage, allowed women to vote in local municipal elections in Fort Lauderdale, as was already mandated in sixteen other Florida towns. The bill passed both houses of the legislature and was confirmed in a special election held in Fort Lauderdale on August 6. The election attracted a light turnout, but the Municipal Suffrage Law passed by a margin of sixty-five to seventeen.

Women across the country obtained the vote on August 26, 1920, when thirty-six states gave the three-fourths majority necessary for ratification. Nearly forty-nine years later, the Florida Legislature belatedly ratified the Nineteenth Amendment.

In the final analysis, the women of Florida gained the right to vote because of changes in the national climate brought about by women's contribution to victory in World War I, strong suffrage efforts on the state and local levels, and the well-organized push for a national suffrage amendment. Florida never had over 1,000 women as members of its suffrage leagues, but it did have a small core of dedicated workers who struggled against apathy and prejudice to achieve their goal. Women worked to achieve the vote for a variety of reasons. Some wanted to correct the disadvantaged position of women in society. Others saw suffrage as a means of promoting Prohibition. Such secondary arguments aside, all felt that they were entitled to participate in the decisions of the government under which they lived.

With suffrage achieved, the movement's leaders turned to new endeavors. The League of Women Voters, successor to NAWSA, felt that women, with their educated votes, could cure the ills of society, and concerned itself with social welfare, peace, and consumer legislation. The legal status of women was only one part of its broad platform. The National Women's Party, at the other extreme, concentrated on only one thing — an Equal Rights Amendment. Alice Paul, the story goes, was not elated when the Nineteenth Amendment passed, because she felt women had won only half the battle. For that reason, she wrote and campaigned for the Equal Rights Amendment.

Broward County's suffrage leaders also remained active in a number of political and social reforms. Ivy Stranahan, the area's most ardent suffragist, turned her energies to the educational needs of Seminole Indian children. Annie Beck devoted her time to the Fort Lauderdale Woman's Club and the beautification of her city. In general, the Fort Lauderdale Woman's Club has remained an important advocate for women's rights and civic improvement.

In the seventy years since suffrage was granted, women have improved their status in a number of ways. They have become active in political parties, and they have served in numerous state, local, and national offices. Today, women are still engaged in an effort to change the world so that it belongs to both sexes. A long road stretches ahead, but a long road has been travelled already by such women as those who led the suffrage movement in Broward County and Florida.

— FOOTNOTES —

1. Alice Hopkins, "Women's Suffrage in Florida, A Survey," Directed Independent Study, Fort Lauderdale, 1.
2. Eleanor Flener, *A Century of Struggle* (Boston: Belknap Press, Harvard University Press, 1975), 154-155.
3. Hopkins, "Women's Suffrage in Florida," 2.
4. *Ibid.*, 3.
5. *Ibid.*, 4.
6. *Ibid.*, 5.
7. *Ibid.*, 6.
8. Kenneth R. Johnson, "The Woman Suffrage Movement in Florida," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Florida State University, Tallahassee, 1966), 79.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, 109.
11. Hopkins, "Women's Suffrage in Florida," 10.
12. "A Mother's Choice," *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, May 19, 1916.
13. Hopkins, "Women's Suffrage in Florida," 10.
14. *Ibid.*, 11.
15. Miscellaneous clippings in archives of Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, Fort Lauderdale.
16. Hopkins, "Women's Suffrage in Florida," 12.
17. Johnson, "Woman Suffrage Movement," 111.
18. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, June 21, 1918.
19. *Ibid.*, August 18, 1918.
20. Johnson, "Woman Suffrage Movement," 113.
21. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, July 15, 1917.
22. Johnson, "Woman Suffrage Movement," 116.
23. *Ibid.*
24. *Ibid.*, 114.
25. Inez Haynew Irwin, "The Story of Alice Paul" (New York: Deleuger Publishers, 1977).
26. Johnson, "Woman Suffrage Movement," 217.
27. *Ibid.*, 219.
28. *Ibid.*
29. Hopkins, "Women's Suffrage in Florida," 8.
30. Johnson, "Woman Suffrage Movement," 273.

The Las Olas Casino Pool

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Page A-6

CASINO POOL IS POPULAR PLACE FOR SWIMMERS

MUNICIPALLY OWNED BATHING PLACE IS FAVORITE SPOT ON LAS OLAS BEACH

Picturesquely set against the alluring tropical background of one of Fort Lauderdale's largest and most beautiful natural parks, Las Olas casino is an enchanting spot to while away hours and relax amid restful surroundings unsurpassed in their attraction and comfort.

Provided as it is with the most modern facilities for either pool or ocean bathing abetted by the unusual demand for the place as a recreational center, the popularity of Las Olas Beach has increased a hundred fold since the building was opened to the public over two years ago. Previous to that time the beach was unable to offer suitable accommodations to many present-day patrons who did not care to patronize a beach that was not furnished with locker rooms, showers and other conveniences for bathers.

SPANISH STYLE

Representing an investment of $118,000, the stucco structure, which is municipally owned, is of the Spanish type of architecture. The building is decorated in a soft tan and with its gay red tile roofing it harmonizes perfectly with the bright greens of the woods and tropical foliage which surround it. Along the north side of the pool there is a long patio provided with tables and chairs, where patrons of the tea-room operated in conjunction with the place may dine and watch the water sports or merely dream in the shady comfort of a restful atmosphere and listen to the peculiar soothing roar of the surf as it pounds its way over the smooth golden beach. Facing the patio on the opposite side of the pool there is adequate accommodations for the people who flock to the casino during

The Las Olas Beach Casino and Pool, which opened in 1928, was only two years old when this article appeared in the **Fort Lauderdale Daily News.** *The structure replaced the city's original beach "casino," a two-story wooden structure which contained dressing rooms and a dance floor, but no pool. Promoted by a group of Fort Lauderdale businessmen led by local promoter Commodore A. H. Brook, the new casino and pool was widely regarded as a means of lifting the city out of the depression which had followed the collapse of the land boom. It was designed by architect Francis Abreu and constructed by building contractor John Olsson at a cost of $118,000, according to this 1930 account. The 1928 newspaper article which announced the building's opening, however, placed the cost at $125,000. Thirty-five thousand people attended the opening ceremonies and the accompanying swim meet, which were presided over by City Commissioner Will J. "Cap" Reed.*

In the ensuing decades, the casino lived up to its promise as the center of beachfront activities in Fort Lauderdale. Beginning in 1935, it hosted the annual Collegiate Aquatic Forum, a Christmastime college swim meet which introduced vacationing college students from around the country to the attractions of Fort Lauderdale beach. The casino remained a popular location for competitive swim meets, for visiting tourists, and for local citizens until it closed in 1965. It was subsequently demolished to make way for the International Swimming Hall of Fame complex.

the winter months for the water pageants, swimming events and other entertainments which Al Gordon, manager of the place, provides for his guests.

REGULATION POOL

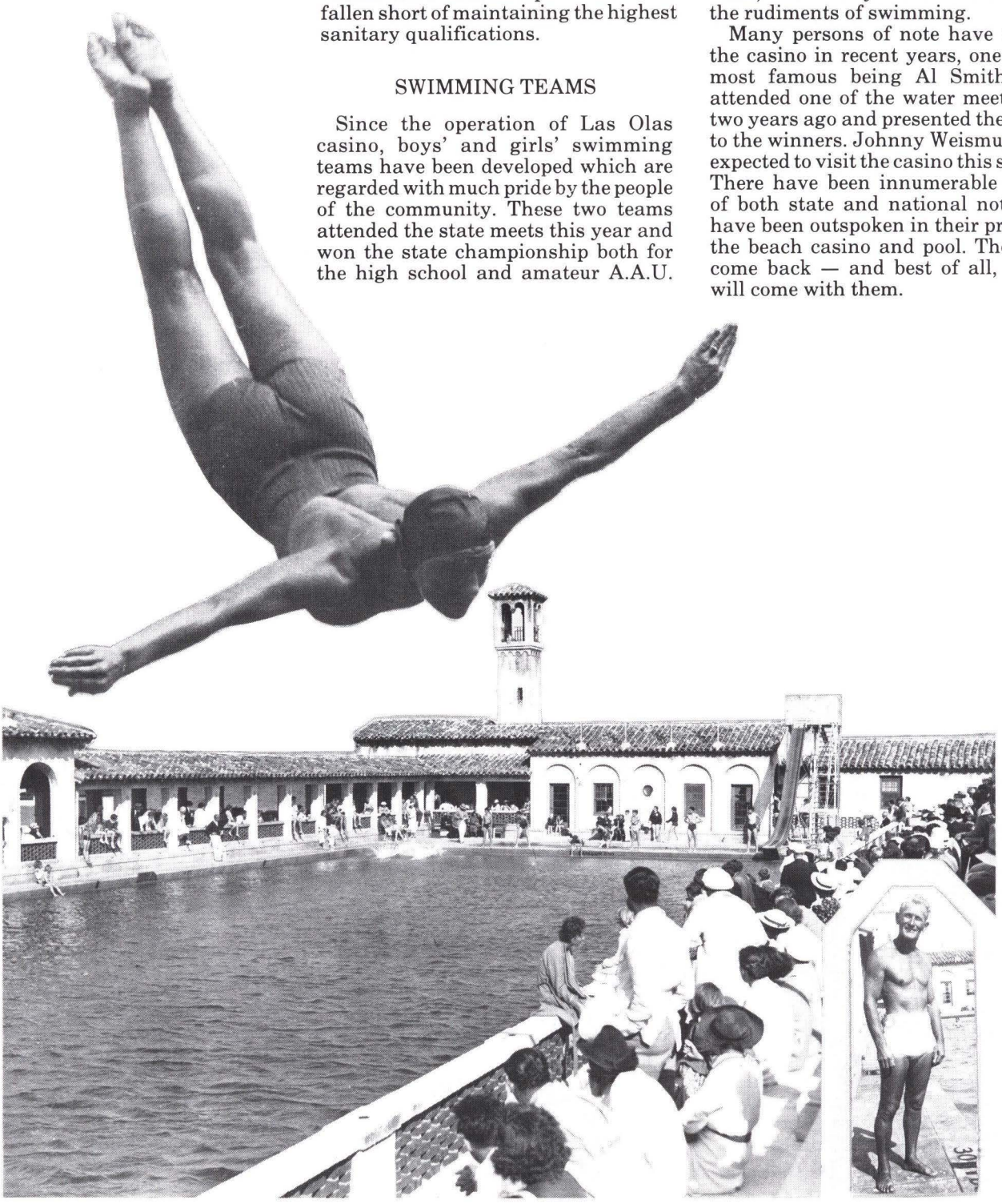
The pool itself, which is reputed to be one of the finest in the state, is constructed to conform to every regulation for the conducting of both state and national meets. Fifty-five yards long, twenty yards wide and with a varying depth of from 3 to 12 feet, the pool has a capacity of 422,000 gallons. There are twelve swimming lanes and in all other requirements the pool has met with the warm approval of swimmers of both state and national note, who have at different times visited the casino. There is a complete change of water once a week, and considerable new water is added daily. Weekly tests made by the board of health show that the pool has never fallen short of maintaining the highest sanitary qualifications.

SWIMMING TEAMS

Since the operation of Las Olas casino, boys' and girls' swimming teams have been developed which are regarded with much pride by the people of the community. These two teams attended the state meets this year and won the state championship both for the high school and amateur A.A.U. events. The casino is prepared to offer the best in swimming instruction, and many strong swimmers have been the result of this feature of casino life.

Las Olas casino also maintains a Red Cross Life Saving Corps, members of which are on regular duty at both the pool and beach. The organization here is rated at Red Cross headquarters as one of the best in the state. This summer the casino accommodated the playground children one morning each week, when many of them were taught the rudiments of swimming.

Many persons of note have visited the casino in recent years, one of the most famous being Al Smith, who attended one of the water meets here two years ago and presented the prizes to the winners. Johnny Weismueller is expected to visit the casino this season. There have been innumerable others of both state and national note who have been outspoken in their praise of the beach casino and pool. They will come back — and best of all, others will come with them.



Collage of photos from the casino pool, 1936. At bottom right is Al Gordon, longtime swimming coach and pool manager.

POOL WATER FILTERED

Before water flows into the pool it is filtered through sand, thus eliminating every danger of bathers coming in contact with stingers or other injurious small inhabitants of the sea which occasionally come in close to shore.

Of the most important events which will take place at the casino this season, there will be the Girls' Junior and Senior State Championship meet, which will be held here in January. The best women swimmers and divers in the state will participate, and the casino is preparing to accommodate a capacity attendance made up of people from many Florida cities.

There are various other water contests scheduled for the winter months, and Manager Gordon is planning to offer special entertainment in the way of aquatic sports every Monday during the season.

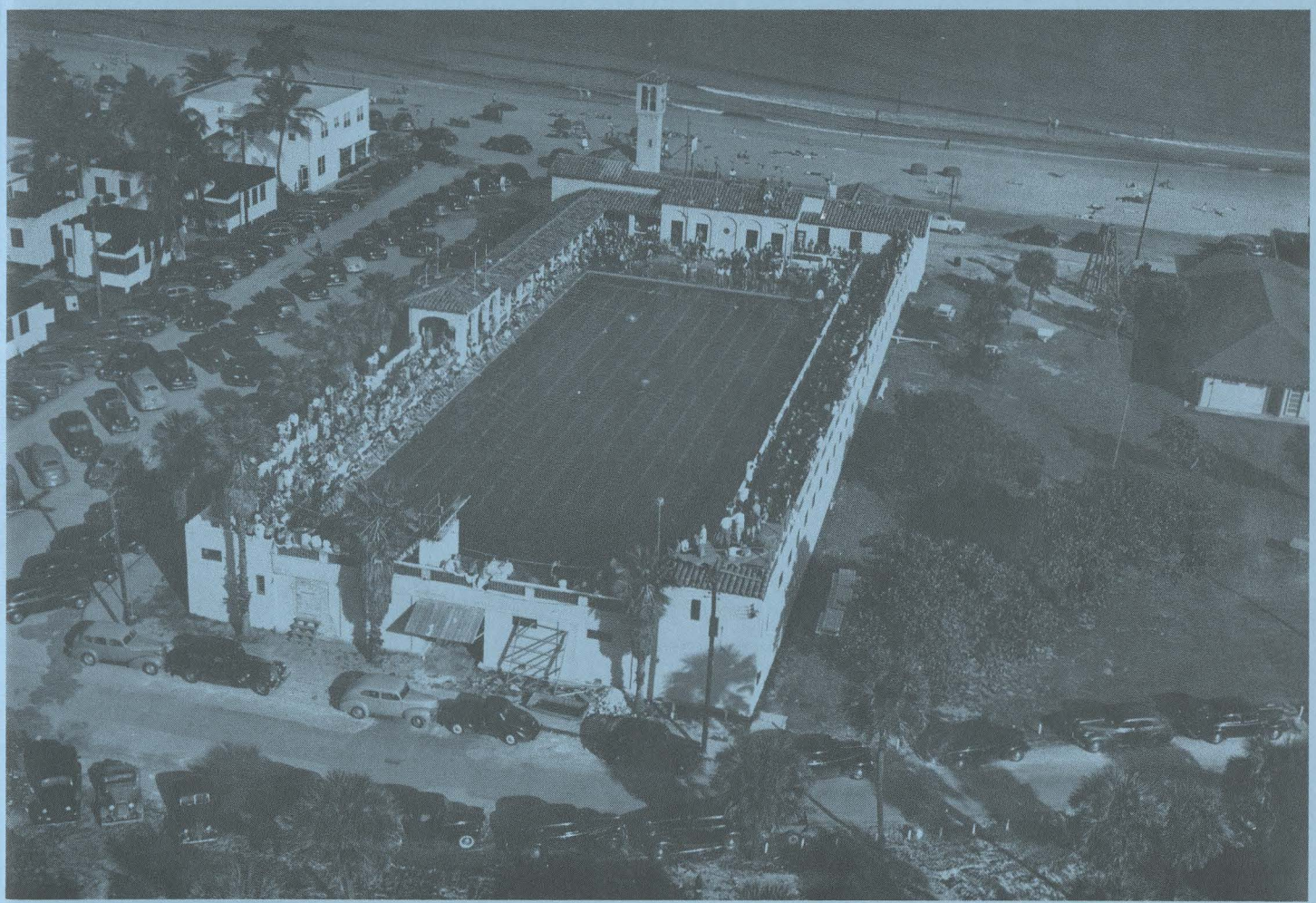
WIDE USE

As a recreational center, possibilities of the Las Olas casino are unlimited in their range. Dancing in the patio or out in the moonlight on the wide cement walk in front of the building, picnic parties which may be given in the pavilion splendidly equipped for this purpose just south of the casino, bridge parties, children's entertainment where the kiddies may play in perfect safety under the constant surveillance of a competent lifeguard, luncheon parties and every variety of water sports imaginable — these are but a few of the diversity of recreational pursuits that one may follow at the beach casino. For those who care for gymnastics, volley ball, hand ball and other sports, there are adequate facilities on the beach within a few yards of the building.

COMPLETELY EQUIPPED

The pool will accommodate three or four hundred people and is fully equipped with slides, diving towers, spring boards and other contrivances that tend to make people feel that the casino here offers the same attractions that may be found in larger cities. Recently the casino has been extensively redecorated. All iron-work has been painted a silver gray and diving boards and other pool equipment have been decorated in bright tropical shades.

The locker rooms are modern in construction and have all facilities in the way of showers and other conveniences that are so essential to pleasant ocean bathing.



Las Olas Casino and Pool in the late 1940s.

BACK COVER:

Aerial view of downtown Fort Lauderdale, 1950.


BURDINES
RHODES FURNITURE
WELLENS FURNITURE
FURNITURE
"Tony" Kozla