FEATURES

Getting the Bugs Out:
Fort Lauderdale before pest control
By Susan Gillis
Page 2

Transcriptions of The Homeseeker:
A monthly publication of the Model Land Company
Introduction by Patrick Scott
Page 4

Ending the Hunt for “Pig” Brown:
Solving the disappearance of John Joseph Brown
Broward County’s first elected official
by Christopher R. Eck
Page 22

Parkside:
An early neighborhood in Hollywood worthy of historic designation
By Marla Sherman Dumas
Page 28

West Side School:
86 Years of serving Broward County
By Helen Herriott Landers
Page 38

Harmon Field at West Side School:
A forgotten legacy
By William G. Crawford, Jr.
Page 42

Broward County Historical Commission Awarded Historic Preservation Challenge Grants
By David Baber
Page 45
Getting the Bugs Out:
Fort Lauderdale before pest control

By Susan Gillis

To those full time residents who wonder “how people down here survived before air-conditioning,” in the summer months, I say your misery is nothing to that suffered by our hardy settlers in the days before DDT. Insects were a constant threat to man and beast throughout the year, but never more so than when the “west wind blew in from the Everglades” as my grandmother would say, during the summer months. The Seminole Indians as well as the early white settlers, found various flying pests to be a continual threat to their crops, livestock, and themselves — malaria was potentially fatal, in the days before quinine. Horseflies were large and fierce, drawing blood from animals and humans alike. Early local pioneers often relied on canned milk and sea turtle eggs because of the difficulty of keeping livestock. When Davie pioneers Blanche and Hamilton Forman struggled to establish dairy farming in the area they faced formidable if small foes. The mosquitoes could be so numerous they were known to have killed unprotected animals left in the open.

These intrepid pioneers were resourceful however; the ancient Tequesta knew to pick up and move camp to a site nearer the ocean breezes during an infestation. The Seminole and other early settlers used smoke from the campfire to fend off flying insects. Current South Florida residents can only imagine how the average lifespan might have been shortened by that practice. They also used mosquito netting or cheesecloth for bedding, in the days before window screens. Pioneers commonly carried a “smudge,” which was often palmetto roots set afire with wet grass or wet moss added to create more smoke, and
every home had a palm frond fan at
the door that was used to disperse the
flying insects lurking there. Indians
and early white and black settlers wore
long sleeves and dark clothing—even
on the hottest day. The alternative to
“broiling” was being eaten alive.  

The real dread of the pioneer era was
a critter called a “no-see-um,” or sand
fly. The pest was particularly tiny,
particulare insidious, and particularly
prevalent near the beach, where
one might expect to find relief. Fort
Lauderdale pioneer Joe Oliver recalled
his own early method of integrated
pest management:

“Back in the early days and up to
and including World War II, up past
that time even, we had a thing here
called a sand fly. My wife and I,
when we were just a young married
couple, lived out in a place called
Victoria Park… We used to have to
take drained out crank case oil and
kerosene to paint the screen to keep
the sand flies out. The sand flies
would fly up against the screens and
stick on that oil and then when they
would get so thick we would have
to take the screens down and wash
them off and do the whole job all over
again. How those Yankees stood those
sand flies and mosquitoes, back in the
early days, I’ll never know… I will
say that was about the worst thing
Fort Lauderdale ever had.”  

Mercifully, times changed. In the
1930s, Dade and Broward County
began an active campaign against
the flying pests by digging a series
of drainage ditches to drain local
marshes where they bred. DDT, a
highly effective broad spectrum
pesticide developed during World
War II, was quickly adopted on the
home front after the war. Trucks and
airplanes were dispatched to “fog”
infested communities through South
Florida from the late 1940s until the
1960s. The treatment was immediate
and long lasting.  

But the same factors
that made DDT useful caused it to be
banned from use in the U.S. by 1972
when it was shown to accumulate in
non-target species (all the way up and
down the food chain) and have a long-
residual life.  

Other safer and more
modern pesticides have taken its place.
But the real answer to “getting the
bugs out” is much simpler—concrete.

The vast amount of pavement that has
taken over much of Broward County
ensures that fewer and fewer flying
pests today have a breeding ground.

1 Charles Hofman, Letters From Linton
(Delray Beach, 2004), 69; Victoria
Wagner, The History of Davie and
Its Dilemma (Fort Lauderdale: Nova
University, 1982), 27.  

2 Patsy West, “Reflections 181:
Mosquitoes,” TMs Seminole
Miccosukee Photo Archives.  

3 August Burghard and Philip Weidling,
Checkered Sunshine (Gainesville:
Virginia S. Young, Mangrove Roots
of Fort Lauderdale (Fort Lauderdale,
1976), 18; Wagner, History of Davie,
46.  

4 Joe Oliver, Oral History Interview
OH95, Fort Lauderdale Historical
Society  

5 Dan Ray, “Getting the Bugs Out,”
Mostly Sunny Days (Miami: Miami
Herald, 1986), 141-145.  

6 George W. Ware, Pesticides Theory
and Application (New York: W.H.
Transcriptions of The Homeseeker:
A monthly publication of the Model Land Company
Introduction by Patrick Scott

The Florida East Coast Homeseeker, or The Homeseeker, was a monthly publication of the Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad in St. Augustine from 1899 to May 1914; it continued under various other titles until at least 1929. The railroad was owned by tycoon industrialist Henry M. Flagler. For a time, around 1901-1903, the place of publication was shown as Miami. As a Florida East Coast Railroad publicity device, it was designed to promote the development of the communities along the railroad’s route and to draw purchasers of land, particularly small farm plots.

From the time of his arrival in St. Augustine in 1885, Flagler built a railroad line in exchange for 3,840 acres of alternating sections of land nearby for each mile of track built. For extending the Jacksonville, St. Augustine and Indian River Line south of Daytona—to West Palm Beach in 1894, Miami in 1896, and Key West in 1912, he received greater concessions, as much as 8,000 acres per mile, but much of it lying in the so-called Swamp and Overflowed Lands administered by the state’s Internal Improvement Fund (IIF). Progressive governors William Jennings and Napoleon Broward fought the award of so much land for railroad purposes rather than drainage activities. Litigation between the state and Flagler was eventually settled with Flagler agreeing to only a tenth of the IIF land originally offered, most of which was in the Cape Sable area of Monroe County. Even today this area is served by only two marinas and a small motel accessible by a 35-mile ride from Florida City through Everglades National Park. The rest of the lands awarded to Flagler were located in what is today Palm Beach, Broward, and Dade counties. Originally, Flagler had taken title to all lands in the name of the FEC, but after putting James E. Ingraham in charge of the railroad’s Land Department, Flagler formed the Model Land Company in 1896 as the land development company. By 1911, the FEC completed the transfer of its non-railroad lands to the Model Land Company.

The FEC Land Department and the Model Land Company advertised in northern newspapers and in various Florida
in 1900, and most had learned of the opportunity here because they had worked on the railroad construction project. No proof of long-term success in farming in this area was available, and so it would be necessary for Flagler to develop communities of farmers. Local newspapers, the *Tropical Sun* (Juno), the *Miami Metropolis*, and the short-lived *Miami News*, were filled with accounts of agricultural successes. Confronted initially with lackluster growth, Flagler turned to immigrant community promoters to establish farms in Dania and Hallandale, and later at Boca Raton, with the intention that a record of farming success could be promoted by the FEC in order to lure other home site purchasers. In 1910, a depot was added at Lake View, west of Lake Mabel (present Port Everglades), and a saw mill set up for the community that never came. The Miami Road was built generally along the route of present U.S. 1 south of Lake View. But the inlet to the ocean at Lake Mabel was often closed by shifting sands, and the settlers abandoned Lake View in favor of Fort Lauderdale and Dania.

The greatest influence in early Broward County’s development and the creation of the county — resulted from the Everglades Drainage Program. By 1906 it became certain that a long-proposed plan to drain the marshy lands west of what is now Highway 441 would proceed, and that the first primary canal to be completed would connect Lake Okeechobee to the south fork of the New River. As the canal dredges worked westward in 1910, a half dozen competitors, including R.P. Davie, appeared on the scene to compete with Flagler. By this time, Flagler had turned his attention south to the Florida Keys Extension of his railroad, and he died shortly after the first train reached Key West. The competitors, Richard Bolles’ Florida Fruitlands Company, the Everglades Land Sales Company, and others, published their own magazines. *The Homeseeker* continued to promote the Flagler lands, but after 1910 the principal beneficiaries of the promotion were the competing community of Zona—later renamed Davie—on the South New River Canal, and the massive developments by Florida Fruitlands and Everglades Land Sales, who were digging hundreds of miles of ditches and lateral canals feeding into the New River and Snake Creek canals.

No complete set of *The Homeseeker* is known to exist. The University of Florida has a long run, and the Flagler Museum at Whitehall in Palm Beach has many issues, The National Agricultural Library has the largest set, but still about [one-third] of the issues from E.V. Blackman’s time as editor have never been preserved in any collection.

Because there was no newspaper in this area until 1911, the surviving issues of *The Homeseeker* provide an invaluable glimpse into the earliest years of the settlement of Broward County, and establish many facts important to our local history: when the Dania-Davie Road (Stirling Road) was built, how Lake View, and the Dania Cut-Off Canal and Davie, came to be, what businesses, including a coontie mill, were established, what life was like in Dania, how the Las Olas Inn of J. McGregor Adams was first built, how Stranahan’s original camp was a collection of tents made of “thick red paper,” who was doing what and growing what. This is the Broward County of one hundred years ago.

Unless otherwise noted the following transcripts from *The Homeseeker* are from copies in the collections of the Flagler Museum in Palm Beach, Florida. This is an exact transcription, any errors or misspellings were in the original publication. Images featured are of the period, but not original to the articles.
Mr. Wofford has had years of experience both in the culture of vegetables and citrus fruits.

To those who are desirous of locating where they can engage in growing both fruits and vegetables we would recommend this section.

Vol. 1 July 1899 • Hallandale

There is no section of the Florida East Coast that has a larger acreage of prairie and muck lands than the section immediately surrounding Hallandale. A large portion of these prairie and muck lands east of Hallandale have been sold, and many acres will be cultivated this season for the first time. The crops of vegetables grown on these lands last year were of a superior quality, and the truckers all made money. During the summer the several land companies that own the prairie lying west of Hallandale have constructed about six miles of canals, which drain in the neighborhood of two thousand acres of land that is as rich as the Valley of the Nile. Some time ago, in company with Mr. Louis Larson, of the Land Department of the Florida East Coast Railway Company, Capt. R. E. Rose, of sugar fame, and Mr. Sheen, who had the contract for building the canals, we had the pleasure of taking a canoe ride through the recently constructed canals. These lands are thoroughly drained and are ready for cultivation. In some respects they vary from soil, such as marl and sand lands, with a large mixture of humus, and the genuine muck lands that are as fertile as decayed vegetation can possibly be. There I saw acres covered with wild millet, with heads varying from six to twelve inches in length and with stalks standing from six to twelve feet in height. The drainage is sufficient to completely drain almost every acre of these valuable lands. There is no place in the State better adapted for the growing of vegetables and sugarcane than this body of land. There have been a few tracts, in this body of land recently drained, already disposed of. One advantage the land has over many other sections is that it is near to the railway station, so that a long haul is avoided. There is a good class of pine lands for growing citrus and tropical fruits on either side of the prairie lands. Here and there are dense hammocks covered with immense liveoaks. T. J. Wofford and Sons own two of these hammocks and are clearing them and planting in citrus and tropical trees. They are also planting vegetables, between the rows of trees. They now have several acres in tomatoes that are beginning to set fruit, and in a few days will begin shipping. The prairie lands extend on both the east and west sides.
of the town. On the north lies Dania, another flourishing settlement, where there are hundreds of acres of the best quality of muck and marl prairie, also an almost unlimited quantity of first-class pine land suited to the culture of citrus trees and pineapples. One of the most flourishing young groves in this Southland is owned by Mr. F. J. West, of Dania. Mr. West also has several acres of pineapples as good as the best. Mr. Larson expressed himself as well pleased at the thorough manner in which the contractor has done his work. On the east side the company has built a wagon road from Hallandale to the ocean beach, which has drained a large body of adjacent lands. Those who are seeking for lands, either for growing vegetables or fruits, we would advise them to visit Hallandale and its surrounding country.

Vol. I August 1899 • *Fort Lauderdale*

The truckers in this favored section made large and paying crops in spite of the discouraging conditions early in the season. The settlers in this portion of the country are not men who sit down and fold their hands because of adverse conditions, but they are men who believe in the old adage, “Where there is a will there is a way.” At any rate they were determined to do their part faithfully and well, then if they failed their “skirts would be clear.” From this station there were shipped over 7,000 crates of vegetables. It is said that one grower pocketed the neat sum of $5,000 for his crop. Tomatoes was the principal crop grown, although beans, Irish potatoes, eggplant, okra, squash, cucumbers and other vegetables were grown to a limited extent. Next season there will be a larger acreage of the latter vegetables planted.

The lands around Fort Lauderdale have proven themselves to be superior lands for market gardening, as the results of this season show. Mr. L. W. Marshall is the most extensive trucker in this section. In spite of the cold he shipped about 1,800 crates of beans, tomatoes and eggplant from his home place. Messrs. Hardgrave and Valentine added 1,000 or more crates of tomatoes from their field, while Marshall and Marsh shipped about 800 crates of tomatoes and eggplant. C. M. Cara sent forward 800 crates of tomatoes. Marshall and Phillips were among the fortunate ones, shipping something over 550 crates of tomatoes. The gentlemen named are not the only successful truckers in that section. W. B. Joyce, William Marshall, E. T. King, A. J. Wallace, R. S. King, J. H. Brantly, F. R. Oliver, J. H. Fromberger, all met with good success.

There will be a large increase in acreage there next season. The town of Fort Lauderdale is rapidly developing, and sooner or later will be one of the favorite places on the East Coast. There is a prospect of a large and up-to-date hotel being built before the opening of the tourist season. Already the promoters of this scheme have spent
many dollars in clearing and grading the grounds and building a large dock. Recently several town lots have been sold and the owners will build homes upon them. For location, Fort Lauderdale cannot be excelled on the East Coast. The town proper is located on a high, rocky bluff, covered with majestic pines and monster live oaks, at the confluence of the New River and New River Sound, whose waters are famous as being the fisherman’s paradise. During the tarpon season the “Silver King” may be caught in large quantities.

Vol. I August 1899 • Fort Lauderdale

FOR SALE

FT. LAUDERDALE, on New River, a beautiful town site, located on both sides of the river, with railroad passing through centre of it. Trains daily. Has one store, hotel, post office, etc. An excellent place to locate in. Rich fruit and trucking lands all around it, and promises to settle up rapidly the coming year. Lots $50 to $250.

Vol. II April 1900 • Dania

Among the pleasant callers at our office a few days since was Mr. J. W. Clarke, one of Dania’s progressive and prominent citizens. He reports the tomato crop in fine condition there, and shipments already going forward. Mr. Clarke has just commenced picking. From one acre he gathered forty-six crates of fancy fruit, and the vines are loaded with bloom and young fruit. The present indications are that the Dania truckers will get more that an average crop of fruit and of a superior quality. The following is a list of the growers there with their acreage:

The West Meadow Company, 20 acres; Jas. Paulson, 8 acres; Stanley Bros., 4 acres; C. Chambers, 2 acres; Crane & Bostwick, 3 acres; C. B. Eskilson, 1 acre; H. Jogensen, 3 acres; John Beghr, 1 acre; Geo. B. Hinkley, 1 ½ acres; W. B. Ord, 1 acre; B. J. Sarred, 1 acre; T. Heneberg, 1 acre; Beebe & King, 1 acre. Mr. Clarke says: “I never saw a better prospect for a large crop.” Several of the farmers planted an early crop of cabbage, which brought them good prices. The muck lands in the vicinity of Dania are especially adapted growing cabbage.

PINEAPPLES

There are several small fields of pineapples there, which give promise of an abundant yield. We asked M. Clarke what percentage of plants will fruit this season; re replied “ninety-five per cent.” Mr. W. B. Ord has a most excellent pineapple field, all of the fancy varieties.

MESSRS. ESKILSON & CO.

Messrs. Eskilson & Co. are manufacturing a superior quality of comptie (coontie) starch for food purposes, for which they are finding a ready sale at good prices. They have the most approved machinery and their product is superior to any we have ever seen. Messrs. Eskilson & Co. are energetic, up-to-date business men, and fully believe in keeping up with the procession. Their product is put up in fancy one pound packages. Messrs. C. B. Rogers & Co., of Jacksonville, are their State agents, and through this popular grocery firm a great amount is being put on the market. Messrs. Eskilson also ship large quantities to Chicago, where it is put up in attractive one pound packages and is finding a ready sale. It is unquestionably one of the best food products manufactured.

Vol. II April 1900 • Fort Lauderdale

A few days since we had the pleasure of meeting Mr. L. W. Marshall, of Fort Lauderdale, who gave us a favorable report of the crop conditions in his neighborhood, with the exception of a few crops, which he claims were damaged by the use of an inferior fertilizer. Mr. Marshall is one of the most extensive truckers in Dade County, planting a large acreage himself and renting land on shares to other truckers. The majority of the farms are west of the railroad bridge and adjacent to the New River. Mr. Marshall, like all East Coast truck farmers, is dead in love with his own section, and claims the land in that section superior for truck growing to any on the lower East Coast. The acreage planted there is much greater this year than last. There are also hundreds of acres of first-class orange and grapefruit lands there, scattered from the New River Sound west to the Everglades. It is said by those who have visited Mr. Phil. Bryant’s young orange grove west from Fort Lauderdale, that it is one of the most promising young groves in Dade County. All the young groves in that vicinity give evidence
of coming to early maturity, and the quality of the fruit is equal to that grown on the Indian River.

Vol. III June 1901 • Fort Lauderdale

We have been informed by one of the prominent citizens of Fort Lauderdale that the past season has been one of the most prosperous in its history. The acreage planted in vegetables was considerably increased over previous years and, as a rule, the truckers made a great success, some of the planters making as high as 800 crates of tomatoes to the acre. While this is a phenomenal yield, many of the more progressive planters are of the opinion that they can grow 1,000 crates to the acre. There were some, however, that made little money on their crop, but this was owing to local conditions. There have been many sales of trucking land there during the past few weeks, and several new families are expected to arrive this summer.

NEW BUILDINGS

There will be several new residences built during the summer months in the village and on the farms lying adjacent to the town. Mr. Frank Stranahan, the popular merchant, will erect a large and modern store building, his present quarters being inadequate to accommodate his increasing trade. It is also reported that several prominent and well know capitalists will build winter homes on the shores of the sound during the coming summer.

MR. J. M’GREGOR ADAMS

Mr. J. McGregor Adams, of Chicago, made the initial movement in building winter homes here. Last summer he completed one of the finest winter residences on the East Coast, costing many thousand dollars. The building is located on a high plateau of land overlooking both ocean and the sound. The lower story is constructed of made stone, the second of wood with shingled sides, and broad porches. The furnishings are elegant, it having been furnished with the same care that one would bestow on a residence in a city. A Mr. Burch [Hugh Taylor Birch], a prominent Chicago attorney, is interested with Mr. Adams in the lands adjoining the estate. Last winter Mr. Adams’ palatial winter home was filled with friends from the Windy City, who came to enjoy the balmy climate during the winter months.

GOOD FISHING

New River and New River Sound have long been noted as one of the choicest fishing grounds in the State. Year by year it has increased in popularity. The gathering of the lovers of piscatorial sports there during the past winter has been greater than ever before. New River Sound is not only a rare place for catching a great variety of fish, but is a most delightful place for those who enjoy sailing and yachting.

FORT LAUDERDALE’S FUTURE

No one can be blind to the fact that this section has a bright future in store. The vegetable lands are extremely rich, while the high lands give promise of growing orange and other citrus trees to perfection. Several groves that have been planted in the last few years have made rapid and healthful growth, which is evidence that the above statement is true.

Vol. III June 1901 • Coontie Starch

One of the finest and most delicious starch foods manufactured is made from the coontie root (*Zamia integrifolia*), which grows wild in great quantities in Dade county. Messrs. C. Eskilson & Co., of Dania, Fla., have recently put in an improved plant for the manufacture of this most delicious food. During the recent Dade County Fair, Mr. Eskilson sent us a case for distribution. We gave packages to numerous Northern people, who visited the Fair, asking them to use it and then write us their opinions in regard to it as a food. Since, we have received several letters, and in each case they speak in the highest terms of it.

Mrs. Carrie N. Lewis writes: “I have tried the Florida food (coontie) and like it very much.”

Mrs. S. D. Pinkerton, of West Chester, Pa., writes thus: “When at Palm Beach I visited your exhibit of fruits and vegetables at Miami. You kindly presented me with a package of ‘coontie.’ I have used it as I would corn starch, and am sure it is all it is represented to be, and a more delicate article than corn starch.”

Another lady, who was spending the winter in Miami, said: “You can say anything you please for me in favor of coontie starch for puddings, etc. It is simply delicious. It is superior to any article I have ever used for the table.”

Another said: “I am delighted with the package of coontie starch you presented me. Corn starch and other products of like character are not ‘in it,’ when compared with coontie.”
We have no interest in the manufacture of this article, save that it is an East Coast product, and one which only has to be known to be appreciated. We feel that we are safe in saying that there is no product manufactured for the making of puddings, custards, ice cream and soups, or in any form when starch is used that equals the coontie. It has a peculiarly delightful, nutty flavor, unlike any other starch product. Florida food is destined to become very popular with up-to-date housekeepers.

VEGETABLE LANDS

Among the many thousand acres of vegetable lands that is in close proximity to the Florida East Coast Railway, Dania comes in for its full share. Lying between the pine land and the canal there is a body of superior land, all ditched and drained ready for planting. These lands are made up of marl, sand, prairie and muck. A little more than two miles to the eastward is the broad Atlantic, with its sand-beaten beach, affording a fine place for surf bathing and fishing. To the west are broad, fertile prairies and long stretches of pine woods, suited to growing oranges trees. Hon. Mr. Beed, of Hampton, Ia., owns a fine orange grove, with many of the trees just coming into bearing. A little to the north Mr. Ord has a fine pineapple plantation, and

Mr. Hinkley has a splendid orange grove and pineapple plantation. Mr. Eskelson, of Chicago, is also the owner of a pineapple plantation and proprietor of the starch factory, which manufactures the celebrated Florida food. Take it altogether, Dania is a good place to make a home, where one can engage in growing either vegetables, pineapples or oranges, or he can secure a block of land with the soils so varied that he can engage in growing everything that can be successfully grown there, thus avoiding “putting all his eggs in one basket.”

Mr. A. W. Beed, cashier of the Franklin County Bank, at Hampton, Ia., has a grove of 1,500 citrus trees, which are doing well. Recently he spent several days there looking over his possessions. He was so encouraged over the rapid growth of his trees that he gave Mr. King orders to clear and plant three acres more. An orange grove is a bewitching thing, the more a man has the more he wants. There is money in growing oranges.

Mr. C. G. Bostrom, of Ormond, Fla., has a very promising grove of four hundred orange trees, beside a quantity of other fruit trees, including persimmons, kumquats, guavas, grapes, etc.

J. W. Clark, store keeper, postmaster and real estate agent, is further demonstrating his faith in the Dania lands by purchasing twenty acres more. He is having two acres cleared and will plant orange trees.

The following is a partial list of the Dania truckers, including acreage and number of crates shipped:

Two early farmers clear land for cultivation. (Broward County Historical Commission collection)

White and African-American workers in an early Dania tomato field paused to have their photograph taken. A good worker could pick 600 pounds of tomatoes a day. (Broward County Historical Commission collection)
Richard King & Brother, five acres tomatoes, 1,150 crates; W. H. Torbert, two acres, seven hundred crates; T. D. Newman, two acres, three hundred crates; James Paulsen, two and o-half acres, eighty crates tomatoes, forty crates cabbage; G. M. Howard, six acres, five hundred crates tomatoes – four acres were a partial failure; George B. Hinkley, one-half acre, one hundred and fifty crates; W. B. Ord, one acre, two hundred and twenty crates; C. Willers, one acre, three hundred and seventy-five crates; J. W. Clark, ten acres, 2,700 crates – three acres were almost a failure.

If any of our readers would like to see a real pretty tropical home and grounds, visit the grounds of George B. Hinkley.

**Vol. XII November 1910**

**FT. LAUDERDALE’S ENORMOUS GROWTH**

**WHAT IT WAS FIFTEEN YEARS AGO AND WHAT IT IS TODAY**

Are you ambitious, energetic, intelligent? Then you should move to Dade County, Florida. Locate anywhere, either north or south of Miami and get your share of the great prosperity that this section is enjoying.

In the year 1895 the writer sailed up Biscayne Bay on a little forty-ton schooner from Key West to Lemon City, then the Metropolis of south Dade, and visited a relative who held a contract with the United States Government to carry the mail from West Palm Beach to Lemon City, a town five miles north of Miami. In the government service this is known as a “Star Route.” The mail carrier in those days generally had big stage coaches to accommodate any passenger who might be traveling this way. It was on one of these coaches that the writer was carried into Fort Lauderdale.

Fort Lauderdale at that time was a camp and the houses were made of thick red paper nailed to framing. The camp was used for the lay-over between Lemon City and West Palm Beach, and aside from Frank Stranahan, the postmaster, and the drivers of the coaches, the residents and only people around were the Seminole Indians.

What a vast difference today! In place of the old ferry, two big steel drawbridges span that stream. In the place of the little post office stands a great big two-story concrete building where upwards of fifty thousand dollars in stock is stored. In the place of the little red paper shack with its eight six by eight rooms, for sleeping purposes, and called “The Hotel,” now stands two concrete buildings, one with twenty or more rooms, the other with ten. Both as near fire-proof as possible to make and with all the conveniences to be found in large cities. The buildings in question are the New River Hotel and the Keystone.

It was my pleasure to visit Fort Lauderdale, which was the first time since April and the life and activity there struck me very much. Upon investigation I found that there are in course of construction fifty buildings, a very greater part being residences, ranging in cost from three hundred and fifty dollars to ten thousand dollars. Simply marvelous for a place with less than fifteen hundred people. But such is the case. Among the buildings costing over two thousand dollars are the public school, now nearing completion, at a cost of seven thousand dollars. This is being erected out of concrete blocks. The Methodist and Baptist churches, both of concrete
blocks and costing four thousand and thirty-five hundred dollars respectively. The Fort Lauderdale State Bank, concrete, twenty-five hundred dollars, without fixtures; the Masonic Temple, to be three stories and costing eight thousand. The first floor of this building will be devoted to stores and the second for offices. There are quite a number of other buildings to go up as soon as plans can be gotten out, among which will be a new store for Wheeler & Co., to be built of concrete blocks. This store will cost in the neighborhood of four thousand dollars when completed.

But the question is asked, What is the reason for all this activity?

Twenty thousand farms, aggregating two hundred thousand acres, have been sold west of Fort Lauderdale. One company alone sold twelve thousand and will begin in December to allot to each purchaser his ten-acre tract. The officers of this company estimate that of the twelve thousand contract holders at least six thousand will visit Fort Lauderdale this winter, and it is very probable that three thousand will remain.

Two of the three canals being built by the State on this side of Florida, empty into New River. Over two-thirds of the lands which have been sold during the past three years in the Eastern Everglades are tributary to these canals, and as soon as the lands are brought into cultivation the canals will be used as avenues of transportation for these lands. Fort Lauderdale being the logical shipping point, all of this traffic is bound to go there for distribution. The Florida Fruit Lands Company have purchased two thousand acres, three quarters of a mile north of the river, and are platting and having it surveyed into town lots. One lot will be given to each purchaser of a ten-acre farm from this company. The number of lots to be given away will be twelve thousand.

At the next legislature, the residents of Fort Lauderdale will ask that body to incorporate that town.

An electric railway is projected from Miami to West Palm Beach. This line will pass through Fort Lauderdale and as it is the intention to operate both a passenger and freight service, this will place that town in close relation to Miami.

At present Fort Lauderdale has three general stores and one department store. The department store carrying fifty thousand dollars in stock.

The bank is incorporated for $15,000, and will do a general banking business.

Fort Lauderdale has three hotels, two boat yards and several large packing houses.

One thousand people get their mail from this post office, Fort Lauderdale proper has about seven hundred and fifty people in it.

There are a number of citrus fruit groves along the river.

The north fork canal has been dug nineteen and one-half miles into the ‘Glades and the south canal twenty-three miles.

Fort Lauderdale is twenty-five miles north of Miami, and can be reached by automobile on the county road, by boat through the East Coast canal, or by rail. These are some of the things that is causing this great activity.

And yet the development of this section has only begun.
Vol. VXIII Number 8 August 1911

Transcription from original copy from the collections of the Boca Raton Historical Society

DANIA, THE BANNER TOMATO DISTRICT

FACTS ABOUT ONE OF THE MOST PROSPEROUS SECTIONS OF THE LOWER EAST COAST

Dania, the largest shipping point for tomatoes on the East Coast, is located 345 miles south of Jacksonville, on the Florida East Coast Railway; 22 miles north of Miami and one and a half miles from the Atlantic Ocean. The elevation is eighteen feet above sea level.

The town was founded about six years ago and now has a population of one thousand; has three churches, one graded school, one drug store, four general stores, post-office, ice cream parlor, two meat markets, two hotels, several boarding houses, one bicycle shop, two blacksmith shops and novelty works, one attorney-at-law, one physician, and one land agent. The town was incorporated about four years ago, has a city council, marshal, town hall and jail, and city waterworks. The purity of the water derived from artesian wells is certified to by Mr. R. E. Ross, State chemist. Dania has fine rock roads and streets and a telephone line has been constructed through the town.

When I arrived here from Wisconsin a few years ago, I only found one married couple and three bachelors. Dania is bordering on the Everglades, now being drained by the State and private parties, and being opened up for settlement. The draining of the Everglades is practically assured as some of the richest land is located in the ‘Glades.

With the climatic condition in South Florida so favorable to raising truck the year round, I see no reason why Dade county in the near future should not be one of the richest counties in the State, if not in the United States. I expect to see the day when the ‘Glades will be covered with sugar cane and rice for hundreds of miles and dotted with sugar mills.

A canal is being dug from the main canal to the coast, one and a half miles, so that small boats can run up to town.

In order to provide more room for the large influx of settlers from the North a year ago I had a new town platted out two and a half miles north from Dania and named it Lake View. Lake Mable is located a half-mile to the east from the town and has an outlet to the Atlantic Ocean. It had a street constructed to the lake from the depot. A sawmill has been placed on the side track and is sawing lumber and one or two packing houses will be erected there this fall. A store and hotel will also be built.

The town of Lake View now connects with the town of Lauderdale, recently laid out by A. J. Bendle, a member of the Lauderdale Realty Company. Mr. Bendle deserves a great deal of credit to the interest he and his company has taken in developing the Everglades and the country in and around Lake View and Dania.

A rock road will be constructed between Lake View and Lauderdale to intersect the south fork of the State canal. The county has also constructed a rock road four miles west from Dania into the ‘Glades, and Mr. Bendle and his company will continue the road at their expense to intersect the south fork of the State canal. These two roads are the only means by which one can reach the Everglades by wagon.

The Florida East Coast Railroad Company recently sold to Mr. Bendle, through me, seventeen hundred and eighty acres of land located between Dania and the Everglades. It is very good land for vegetables, oranges and grapefruit. The Robt. J. Reed & Son Land Company also owns a fine tract of land abutting on Dania and the Everglades, suitable for vegetable, oranges and grapefruit.
This country is the home of the grapefruit and nowhere in Florida can they do so well as in Dade County, and I defy a contradiction. J. M. Bryan, Jr., has a twelve-acre grove in bearing, and sold the fruit on the trees this season for seven thousand dollars cash. Judge Glassor, from New York, came here three years ago and bought eighty acres near Dania and set out thirty acres in grapefruit and they look fine. He also built a seven-thousand-dollar residence and other buildings on the place. A son of the Robt. J. Reed & Son Land Company, before spoken of, bought two lots in Lake View from me and built a two-thousand-dollar residence on them. 

Lake View is the highest point in Dade County. It has an elevation of about twenty-five feet above sea level. J. E. Shoal, of Alpina, South Dakota, vice-president of the bank there, and R. E. Dye, editor, Mr. W. H. McMillin who owns a large cattle ranch, of Alpina, S. D., came to Florida last fall, looking for a location. They had been all over Florida and did not find anything suitable. But when they struck Dania they purchased one hundred acres of some of the best vegetable, orange and grapefruit lands in and around here. They went back home and the banker sent his father and one brother down here to farm and experiment. They farmed seven acres of tomatoes and cleared above all expenses about one thousand dollars and went back home well satisfied.

Dania had thirteen packing houses in operation and twelve hundred acres in tomatoes. Three hundred thousand crates were packed and mostly sold f. o. b., and netted the growers one dollar per crate. About three hundred thousand dollars were paid the growers and about seven hundred carloads were shipped. What we need the most now in Dania is a bank and a first-class hotel. Last winter the town was overcrowded with people that could find no place to sleep, and some had to sleep in tents or any old shack they could find.

My son, George, and his partner farmed fifteen acres in tomatoes and netted twenty-seven hundred dollars; my two sons, Martin and Sherman, farmed seven acres of tomatoes and netted above all expenses eighteen hundred dollars; myself and son, Auton, had eight acres of tomatoes and sold them in the field for fifteen hundred dollars; and there were others who made good money, and some did not make so much. It all depends on how you manage your crop.

S. M. Alsobrook, who owns about 2,000 acres of land near Dania, has 50 acres in bearing pineapples, a fine residence on the place and fine artesian water. Five years ago he came here with $1,500. His property now is considered to be worth about $60,000. A good many others who came here with small amounts are now pretty well fixed.

Tomatoes should be planted at different times; then you are sure to hit a good market with some of them. Crops should be diversified. Irish potatoes yield well here and bring a good price and can be planted at any time during the season, as we are practically below the frost line. Eggplants, peppers, bean and peas pay well if planted the right time.

Tobacco was tried here last winter by Theo. Demro in the east marsh without fertilizer, except one handful of stable dirt to the plant. It was planted the 15th day of February and cut the 26th day of May.

**Vol. XIV March 1912**

**FIRST NEW TOWN IN THE EVERGLADES**

A few years ago, if one had prophesied that there would come a time when the great Everglades would be inhabited, that towns and villages would spring up, all would have joined in saying “that man was a lunatic,” but strange and progressive movements are in the air in this century, the Everglades are being drained and the first village has been surveyed and platted, streets are to be laid out and surfaced with rock, cement sidewalks are to be laid, homes and business blocks are to be and are being erected.
The name of the new child is Zona, and has been christened as such. The United States has established a post office, several residences have been erected, an up-to-date packing house and dock have been completed.

The new town is located west from Fort Lauderdale and a portion of the town site contains the famous Everglade Experimental Farm. Just across the canal and to the north is the great Irish potato field of H. G. Ralston and John Bryan.

The experimental farm of the Everglade Land Sales Company is a wonder to all who have seen it. On this tract of drained Everglade soil almost everything grown in the tropical climate and in the latitudes further north are seen growing most luxuriantly, demonstrating the adaptability of the drained muck lands for growing an endless variety of crops.

Within a few years, standing on the same dock, a wonderful change will have taken place. Instead of the broad expanse of waving grasses and hammock isles will be homes, with beautiful surroundings, great fields cultivated in sugar cane, cereals and vegetables. Hard surface roads will penetrate far into the now wilderness and the marks of progress and prosperity will be seen everywhere.

The present age is a wonderful age, an age in which no undertaking is too far-reaching or involving too great an outlay of money to be undertaken and carried to a successful finish.

Zona, the first baby born in the vast Everglades, will go down in history as one of the first and great results of the drainage of the Everglades, the opening up of the millions of acres of what for centuries was supposed to be a worthless tract of land.

E. V. Blackman Writes About a Visit to the Davie Farm and Royal Glades Tract

The question of reclaiming the Everglades is gradually being solved. It will probably be years before the entire area is drained, but the work must finally be accomplished as the muck soil that has already been tilled is proving very fertile. In this article it is not the purpose of the writer to go into the history of the drainage scheme, but to give an idea of what a party saw on the Davie Farm and adjacent drained lands while on a recent visit to that section. To make comparison it is necessary to refer back.

Workers pose in an early Packing House. (Broward County Historical Commission collection)

Plants thrived in an early pineapple field. (Broward County Historical Commission, Christopher R. Eck collection)
About a year ago we visited the Davie Farm, where the Everglades Land Sales Company maintains an experimental farm for the benefit of settlers. What we saw then was a convincing argument that the ‘Glades can be drained, that they will be drained, and that the drained muck lands will become the most valuable farming lands in the United States. It was the first year that these lands had been cultivated and a great many of the attempts were superficial, the farmers having had no experience in working lands of this character. It was expected by nearly all that these lands, which had been lying under water for centuries a greater part of the time, must be cultivated and sweetened before they would be of practical use. In this these ideas were partially true, but what we saw growing there last year convinced us that with more complete drainage the muck lands would produce immense crops of almost every kind of vegetable that is grown. During the summer months the Everglade Land Sales Company has had its dredges at work cutting canals and lateral ditches which have furthered the drainage of these lands. Although those portions of the drained muck that were cultivated last year have been under water a portion of the past summer, yet the physical condition of the land is greatly improved over its condition last season and each year it is cultivated it will continue to improve.

It is evident now that those who have done practical work in Everglade drainage have demonstrated beyond a question that the scheme is more than feasible, that the lands drained are extremely rich, and when the entire Everglades are drained and opened up for settlement, and it will be the most valuable and most productive body of land in the United States.

By invitation of Mr. Dale Miller, of the Everglade Land Sales Company, a party consisting of Messrs. John and Tom Townley, old-time Everglade boomers, Mr. E. G. Keene, of the Miami Metropolis, and E. V. Blackman, made the trip recently, going to Fort Lauderdale in Mr. Miller’s large touring car, thence via launch to the Davie farm and other places on the Everglades. If ever a party was richly repaid for a long day’s jaunt, it was this party. At Fort Lauderdale we noticed residences being built on every side, two large business blocks are nearly completed, with another to be erected soon. It was all life and bustle, and the town was filled with strangers who are looking over the country for investments. The party boarded the launch with Capt. B. Ball at the wheel.

The experimental farm was a subject of great interest. The garden is under the direction of Mr. Werner, an expert in agriculture and horticulture. The whole demonstration garden is laid out in a most attractive manner, the beds on which the seeds were planted and slightly raised above the surface. The contrast between the coal black soil and the dark green foliage of the growing plants made the garden very attractive. This tract, or a portion
1915: {A. Hoen & Co., for USDA, Bureau of Soils} Soil Map, Fort Lauderdale, Florida sheet. This map shows roads and buildings. (Map image courtesy Patrick Scott)
of it, was cultivated last year. The difference in the physical condition of the soil now and last year is very marked. The difference also between the general appearance of the plants as we saw them last year and on this trip is also very pronounced, showing that continued cultivation is improving the soil and making plant life more abundant. On the demonstration farm we saw almost every kind of vegetable grown in any portion of the United States, without a sickly plant, but on the other hand all were growing most luxuriantly. There were several varieties of beans, tomatoes in almost every stage, from the seed bed to the ripened fruit; Chinese cabbage, eggplant, onion, peppers, lettuce, radish, okra, peanuts, turnips, carrots, bananas, oranges; in fact, there was a complete representation of all kinds of vegetables. In flowers there were a great variety and when in bloom will represent every shade and color known to nature.

The Everglade Land Sales Company is experimenting, and most successfully, with forage plants of different kinds. One of the great drawbacks of the southern portion of the State has been the lack of forage plants that would thrive here. The Everglade Land Sales Company in its garden has solved the problem. Among the forage plants being grown is the para grass, the Rhodes grass, Kentucky blue grass, English blue grass, alfalfa, sorghum, Kaffir corn, oats and many others. All of these grasses promise an abundant yield and some of them a tonnage to the acre that will be surprising. The great object of the Everglade Land Sales Company in establishing their experimental farm is to assist their clients who purchase lands. Their settlers’ clients come from all portions of the world. They are in a strange land, among a strange people, and all the conditions are almost the opposite to those that exist at their former homes. It is to demonstrate to these people just what can be grown, when to plant seed, how to plant, how to fertilize and how to tend their growing crops and further to assist them in packing and marketing their products. This is very commendable and a prominent feature of the manner of conducting the business of this company that gives their patrons confidence.

After leaving the experimental farm the party visited several farmers, whom we found busy and very hopeful. In all our calls we did not find a single disgruntled fellow. They all talked “drained Everglade lands” with great energy, pointing to their growing corps with pride and telling of their delight in owning some of this famous land. Their growing crops told the story of successful endeavor. Never have we seen more luxurious crops of all kinds growing that we saw on the drained muck lands.

One of the most enthusiastic drained land boomers that we met was Mrs. C. L. Steel, and when she placed her farm with its crops on exhibition before us we simply did not blame her for her enthusiasm. About eight weeks previous Mrs. Steel commenced making ready for planting her varied crops. She manages her farm and has demonstrated that she has wonderful ability. Her place is laid out with the preciseness of a park. Not a weed was to be seen. Mrs. Steel is very proud of her undertaking. In speaking of her work she said: “I have never enjoyed anything in all my life as I am enjoying my work here. Our place is somewhat isolated; but I never have time to get lonesome, or even to wish that I was somewhere else. The wonderful growth of my plants is a simple inspiration to me and each day urges me on to more constant endeavor. Possibly you may think that I am a land agent, but this is not the case. I have no land for sale and only wish I had money enough to purchase many acres of this land.”

As an experiment her first planting was five hills of cucumbers. From these five hills she has sold 9 1/3 dozen cucumbers at $1.80 per dozen. Mrs. Steel has proven her ability along this line and now has a large planting and has contracted the cucumbers at one dollar per dozen. Her bean crop is simply a wonder. The first planting is now in full bearing and she is now...
Boats like this example would be used to take people to their farms in the Everglades. (Broward County Historical Commission, Julia Snow Jones collection)

Men and a dredge digging a canal. (Broward County Historical Commission, Broward family collection)

An early collection of Florida-grown fruit including bananas, pineapples, sugar apples, coconuts, alligator pear, mangos, lemons and limes. (Broward County Historical Commission, Christopher R. Eck collection)

shipping. Finer beans or more thrifty plants were never grown. As soon as the beans are mature the ground will be planted in onions, making two crops off the same land and both are money crops. Mrs. Steel has two thousand cauliflowers. Never have we seen more promising plants than these. Mrs. Steel has sold this crop under contract at thirty-five cents per head and from the present appearance every plant will head.

One gentleman in the crowd looked with wonder at the magnificent sight and exclaimed, “And a woman did it?”

The canal’s which the State has contracted to dig have proven to be inadequate to handle the water on this immense tract at certain seasons of the year. The Everglade Land Sales Company and the Everglade Sugar and Land Company are arranging to spend half a million dollars in completing the drainage so that their lands will be tillable at all seasons of the year without regard to the heavy rainfalls. A dyke will be dug entirely around the “Royal Glade” and lateral ditches throughout the entire tract. Roads will be constructed and the Davie farm will be treated in the same manner. The Everglade Land Sales Co. and the Everglade Sugar and Land Co. propose to furnish their patrons with land that is absolutely drained and made fit for cultivation the year round. The work contemplated will cost a vast amount of money, but the companies are willing spenders and when the work is completed the Davie Farms and the Royal Glade will be the finest and most valuable tracts of farming land in the world.

Vol. XV Number 1 January 1913

Transcription from original copy from the collections of the Boca Raton Historical Society

THE HOMEMAKERS’ DEPARTMENT

NO ISOLATED FARMS

It has been said “There is no more frontier.” This is notably true of Florida. The waste places are disappearing. Primitive conditions have been outgrown, and the railroad, telephone, telegraph and daily mail link the farms and farming sections of the State as closely together as are the residents of cities. In other sections of the country the great farms, miles in extent, the extensive plantations of thousands of acres, produce neighborliness among owners. But here small farms are the rule – a few acres, subjected to intensive cultivation the entire year, with no fallow land during the twelve months – bring the owners close together; the telephone, the launch, the automobile, and the railroads line the neighborhoods, and there is no isolation or loneliness.
A few late pineapples may be had this month. Peel and slice, put in pint jars, fill to overflowing with clear, cold water, seal tight, and enjoy them six months hence with sugar, before the regular summer crop comes in.

Readers of THE HOMSEEKER who file the magazine have in back numbers a variety of excellent recipes for making many goodies from citrus fruits, published in the department early this year, while the citrus crop was ripepen. These are true and tried, and will be of value to anyone able to obtain the fruit for preserving. The orange and grapefruit crop this season will be very heavy, hence the prudent housewife will have an excellent opportunity to test her skill in the manufacture of many dainties for the household.

SOME INSECT PESTS AND REMEDIES

Florida has the reputation of being about the most insect-ridden spot on earth, and perhaps a few uncared-for dwellings within her boarders do sustain that reputation – which is undeserved by the State at large. Parasites will thrive anywhere and everywhere if care be not taken to eradicate and prevent them. This is true of Florida, but no less true of other sections.

Probably the mosquito is the most widely discussed of all the pests that infest the State. Filth is in nowise responsible for his existence, but standing water in even the smallest quantity is. We have found that no receptacles for stagnant water should be left about the premises if we may expect immunity from mosquitoes. We have found that ridding the place of every vessel or pool in which water may stagnate, and keeping the premises drained is the only best defense against them. Towns and villages are finding this out as well, and municipal authorities provide for “dry” towns be enacting ordinances forbidding the accumulation of tin cans that catch and hold rainwater; standing tubs or barrels uncovered, as well as providing means for draining marshes and nearby swamps. Where water must stand for some special purpose it should be in covered vessels. When this is not practicable a little kerosene oil poured into the water container will kill the larvae, and will in nowise spoil the water. This precaution, with the additional one of screening the windows, will keep premises almost entirely mosquito-proof.

Of course, if one’s neighbors do not observe the same precautions a few objectionable visitors may disturb one’s serenity but a good example being set it is often happily followed.

ANTS

The next most ubiquitous pest is the ant. They come in all sorts, sizes and colors, and the biblical sluggard can find his good example among any and all. The Florida variety is just as industrious and just as prolific, just as neighborly and just as inquisitive as any other kind, but they all readily vacate in the presence of the following remedy, tired and tested by this writer:

Mix thoroughly one part each of cornmeal, sugar and powdered borax, moistening with enough water to make a batter, about like muffins. Put this about the house in the ant “runs” in small plates or baking-powder can tops.

Something that can be refilled with water when the dough gets dry. Remoistened thus this supply will last for three months, and as long as kept in the house the ants will remain away. They will not go away at once – perhaps for three or four days – but after that they most assuredly will, not to return so long as the remedy is kept moist.

CHINCHES OR BEDBUGS

Not even scrupulous cleanliness will always keep these disgusting things out of a house once they get into it, unless their eggs are absolutely destroyed.

The cleanest as well as the most efficacious remedy is gasoline. Pour in liberally over the bedstead, the springs and into every crevice where the bugs can go, and on the creases and folds of the bedding. It will instantly kill the bugs, their larvae, deodorize the room, and will not hurt anything it touches, and dries up almost immediately. Be careful to have no fire anywhere near where it is used, nor until it has thoroughly dried.

LICE AND FLEAS

Former articles in this department have discussed the value of dry sulphur as an eradicator of chicken lice, fleas and
mites, not only on the fowls and the biddies, but in their houses and nests, especially sitting hens, and all about the premises. Any one working with fowls and getting covered with mites can get rid of them in a little while by using sulphur on the person, the hands, the clothing. It has the further advantage of being clean and otherwise wholesome.

It has the same effect on rats. The rodent dearly loves good wheat flour and will always help himself. If mixed with the plaster for his repast he will not return for a second lunch.

Chloride of lime is the best deodorizer and disinfectant, and permanganate of potash is a perfect water test. When the purple powder is dropped into pure water, the water will remain a clear purple for at least twenty-four hours. Should the water lose the color, and a sediment consequently settles in the vessel, the water is not fit to drink.

These are simple but sure remedies and tests, and should be in every home – for the sake of comfort, cleanliness and health.

1  F. W. DeCroix, *Historical, Industrial and Commercial Data of Miami and Fort Lauderdale, Dade County, Florida* (St. Augustine, 1912), p. 113.


5  F. W. DeCroix, *Historical, Industrial and Commercial Data of Miami and Fort Lauderdale, Dade County, Florida* (St. Augustine, 1912), p. 113.


8  Frances Smith McCallister (1908-20__) recalled that her family first settled along the Miami Road in 1910, but moved back “into town” in 1911 because their home was so remote. Interview by Patrick Scott. Remnants of the rail spur running to the rockpit that is now called “Harbor Lake” may still be visible on the easement along the north side of Evergreen Cemetery.

In the 1870s, John Joseph Brown and his family were virtually the only white settlers in the area that would eventually become part of Broward County forty years later. To the small and scattered community of Dade County – of which the area of Fort Lauderdale Beach where the Browns lived was part – he was known as “Pig” Brown, because he and his wife, Lavinia, and their several children raised hogs on their modest and isolated farm on the barrier island along New River Sound.

Beyond the fact that Pig Brown and his family were recorded as living here in the US Census of 1870, part of why people in Broward are still interested in him and his family is the century old “mystery” of their disappearance from their beach farmstead. Another part of our interest stems from the fact that he was the area’s first resident to be elected to state office when he was seated in the state legislature in 1877; however, after he and his family left for Tallahassee in 1877, they never returned.

The mystery of Pig Brown’s disappearance is a mystery that has now been solved.

Background

We know from the US Census records that enumerated the population of Dade County in 1870 that John (born in Virginia in 1822) and Lavinia Brown (born in Georgia in 1821) were then living on Fort Lauderdale beach, just five years after the end of the Civil War. They are recorded as having six children living with them: William F., 23; Josephine, 21; Benjamin, 19; Laura J., 17; Clarence M., 15;
and Arnold, 13. John and his two oldest sons, William and Benjamin, are each noted by occupation as “farmer.”

The 1870 Census also records John as being born in Virginia and Lavinia as being born in Georgia. However, it is now known that he had been living further up the coast in Volusia County in 1860 at the time of the prior US Census. In that document John is described – different from later census enumerations – as being born in New York. His occupation was also stated to be “journeyman carpenter.”

Because recording errors are fairly common in the early census records, this difference may normally be discounted as a simple error of the census enumerator. Errors in spellings, inaccurate ages, occupations and other incorrect personal information are to be expected in many early census records, inasmuch as the information that was written down was often innocently (though mistakenly) provided by neighbors, children, relatives or the persons themselves, if they were uneducated or uninformed or the enumerator was careless in recording the information.

However, recent research has also identified the correct records that show that he and Lavinia were earlier living in Sumter County, Georgia (likely where Lavinia, as a Georgia native, was raised). In those records, he is again noted as being born in New York. His occupation at this time is stated to be “blacksmith.”

Is it possible that John, as a Northerner married to a Southerner and living in the South just after the Civil War, preferred to be considered “Southern” for the purpose of personal and familial sympathies? It should be noted that as a man of fighting age – at least for militia or Home Guard purposes – there would likely have been a great deal of pressure on him and his oldest son, William (who became 18 years of age in 1864 at the height of the fighting), to choose sides and enlist into either Confederate or Union military service.

In fact, there is both a John J. and William Brown recorded as serving in the federal First East Florida Cavalry Regiment that operated in northern Florida. Because both names are very common, it is unknown at this time whether either of these two men are the same as the father and son that we are concerned with here. However, as a trained blacksmith, John would have been extraordinarily important in keeping the regiment’s horses well shod and, if this too is the same person, William, being recorded as a “gunsmith,” would have added another indispensable aspect to the military preparedness of the regiment.

It may also be that John himself was torn about the conflict. It appears now, from later census records that have been found listing him and his children, that he may himself have come from a family whereby his father was born in Virginia and his mother in New York; hence, the confusion in the records about his place of birth even among members of his family. This will be discussed in greater detail later.

**Life for the Browns in the 1870s**

Moving to the remote southeast quarter of the peninsula shortly after the Civil War may have helped the family escape the ill-feelings about sides taken during the war which continued to plague Reconstruction Era Florida, as it did in so much of the federal troop-occupied South. With the exception of Seminole settlements further into the interior, as one of only two non-Indian pioneer families in this area, the Browns were not only largely isolated but free to make of their lives what they willed. Undoubtedly, the Browns would also have come into occasional contact with Seminole families who frequented the New River and the sound and shore for hunting, fishing, trading and other purposes.

Despite their isolation, the Browns did more than simply scratch out a meager living on their farm. Arthur Williams, the son of state surveyor Marcellus Williams and who accompanied his father in his survey work in 1870 that came through the area, noted years later in his own memoirs that he recalled that the Browns also made their “living by wreck and beachcombing.” As the owners of a small schooner, the Browns’ practice of salvaging and beachcombing could add significant additional income at a time when money and goods were hard to acquire.

Because John had virtually no other neighbors to compete for what came ashore, the sale of items found on and off Fort Lauderdale beach likely helped immensely to provide money for his family. Most of what he salvaged he would have sold in Key West, as it was the largest and closest established market for such things.

In fact, about this time, it was later recalled by Commodore Ralph Munroe of Miami that John – whom he called “old man Brown” in his memoirs – once found two large metal ingots on Fort Lauderdale beach following a hurricane. Taking the heavy metal bars on his boat to Key West he sold them for their value as lead, as he believed them to be. Later, he learned from others in the town that the two bars had actually been discolored silver ingots – the remnants most likely of a long-forgotten and unrecorded Spanish wreck – but when he returned later to the same place on the beach nothing more was to be found, as another storm had come and changed the beachfront.
It was not long, however, before Brown was thrown into the thick of a human storm involving volatile Reconstruction politics. In 1872, Dade County had only 30 registered voters and, together with the 69 voters in Brevard County to the north, the 99 voters in these two areas comprised the total electorate for the Twenty-First Senate District in any run for statewide office in Tallahassee. In 1872 John was put up to run against the powerful and corrupt William H. Gleason, an audacious Carpetbagger that manipulated local government, business and community life in Dade County for a decade beginning with his move to the area in 1866. Even given the myriad of past and present political scandals in Florida, Gleason’s audacious and unlawful exploits are still legendary today.

It is not known whether Brown was chosen to run for office or whether he decided for himself to go up against the powerful and corrupt William H. Gleason, an audacious Carpetbagger that manipulated local government, business and community life in Dade County for a decade beginning with his move to the area in 1866. Even given the myriad of past and present political scandals in Florida, Gleason’s audacious and unlawful exploits are still legendary today.

In the 1872 race, John received 16 votes to Gleason’s 14. Gleason, who was already serving as clerk of the circuit court, county clerk, tax assessor, tax collector, school board member and state representative simultaneously, arranged to have three votes known to have been cast for John by foreign-born but naturalized citizens thrown out, eventually leaving him with the winning lead of 14 votes to 13.

The underhandedness of all of this must not have sat well with Brown because he is known to have filed a formal protest with the Speaker of the House following the election. With the convening of the legislature in January 1873, the protest was read into the legislative record but, following the preparation of Majority and Minority reports, Gleason was allowed to retain his seat. Ironically, in an amendment to a bill that was proposed and approved to allow several contestants for assembly seats to be provided $150 (John was among those listed), Gleason was among those voting to approve the payment. Gleason may have believed that the approval of this “hush” money by the state assembly to an embittered office seeker such as John may have assuaged his wounds. It did not.

In 1876, John again ran against Gleason for the state legislative seat for Dade County. As before, Gleason once more tried to rig the election in which John received more votes. This time around, however, it was John who was found by a majority of the legislators to be the rightful electee and he was sworn into office on February 1, 1877.

Out of Town and Out of Sight

When John moved his family to Tallahassee in 1877 to take his seat as representative he must have already become tired of the nefarious politics of Gleason and his gang in south Florida. “Pig” Brown’s election as a Democrat for his district coincided with the end of Carpetbag rule in Florida which culminated in the election of Democrat George F. Drew as governor. With his defeat and that of his cohorts, Gleason moved out of Dade County to the town of Eau Gallie farther north up the coast, in what is today the Melbourne area.

However, after serving in Tallahassee, John and his family also never moved back to their farmstead along New River Sound. The end result of the election of 1876 was that both contestants moved from Dade County never to return or again run for office locally. But the answer to what happened to the Browns after John left the state legislature has haunted local historians for over a century.

One might assume that a search in the 1880 federal census would easily have helped discover his new home, but it did not.

Ending the Mystery of “Pig” Brown’s Disappearance

Since the 1880s, the whereabouts of Pig and his family after they moved away remained a mystery. This was in part compounded by the fact that a simple search by historians of records, such as the census, has been hampered by the utter ubiquity of a name such as “John Brown.”

This type of problem has been alleviated in recent years by modern research tools, such as internet genealogical research service sites (e.g., pay-for-service websites such as Ancestry.com) and free publicly-accessible databases, both of which have allowed research to be conducted using name and keyword searches on consolidated groups of original or transcribed records in ways that would not have been possible a generation ago.
Still, even with the use of a sophisticated tool such as an internet-based genealogical research site, the task can be daunting. For example, a search for “John Brown” in the 1880 US Census on Ancestry.com lists 15,148 persons by this name enumerated across the country for that year. Narrowing this by various criteria—such as adding the middle initial and place of birth (New York or Virginia)—eliminates all of these men as possibilities. Although the use of this type of research device is often greatly successful, a researcher must still face the fact that in any given census year, a person may not have been enumerated using the correct spelling of his or her name or at all.

However, by searching from another angle—using the names of his children, particularly Clarence M. Brown (the most uncommon name among them)—a door was opened. He is found in the 1900 census living on Chokoloskee Island and has a child named after his father, John J. Brown. By backtracking using combinations of first and middle names and initials of known family members, Clarence is then found in the mid-decade 1885 Florida State Census under the initials of “C. M. Brown” in the Monroe County tally for all residents residing outside of Key West. This was the break in the “brick wall” that had been needed; John (now a widower) was found to be living with his son, Clarence, in the Southwest coast of Florida around Chokoloskee.

Once the family was found, the ages, places of birth and family names (many of these shared given names passed along by John’s children to his grandchildren) helped to confirm that the correct “John Brown” family had been identified. This led to finding local histories of that area which contributed to his being drawn to places that were away from the tumult of the greater society.

If so, he chose the right place, because even today the area around Chokoloskee is fairly remote. Reading “Totch” Brown’s book about his family’s life and adventures in this area—and their attachment to this land on the edge of Florida, the Everglades and the sea—indicates that this last place that John Joseph Brown chose to settle and stay was perfect for himself and his many descendants in many, many ways.

**Conclusion**

The peregrinations of the Browns—from Virginia first for John and then from Georgia and throughout Florida for him with his wife and their children—lasted for several decades until they finally settled around Chokoloskee Island about 1880 where their descendants remain to this day. In the end, the real mystery concerning “Pig” Brown and his family was why he did not return to southeastern Florida after his brief and contentious service in the Florida legislature in the late 1870s. It may be that after his short stint as a legislator during the nasty Carpetbag politics of Reconstruction-era Florida he decided that he wanted a place set even further apart from all of that.

South Florida pioneer and “barefoot mailman” Charles W. Pierce once described Brown in his memoirs (published posthumously after his death in 1939) as “a lonely hermit who lived on New River and raised pigs.” After being elected and seated for his position, according to Pierce, he apparently “disposed of his hogs… and never returned.” Perhaps politics were not the only reason he sought a more “hermitic” life in the wilds of southern Florida for himself and his family, his personal disposition or possibly traumatic experiences during the Civil War may also have contributed to his being drawn to places that were away from the tumult of the greater society.

1. When the 1870 state survey party, led by Marcellus A. Williams, went north to survey the lands between Miami and Lake Worth, the Browns and one other family on the south side of New River, the Halls, were the only families encountered by the surveyors the whole distance between Biscayne Bay and Jupiter Inlet, a distance of about 80 miles. See Joe Knetsch, “A Well-Connected Man: The Career of Marcellus A. Williams,” in *Broward Legacy*, Vol. 16 (Summer-Fall 1993) Nos. 3-4, pp.2-10, 5.


3. During the time of the preparation of this article, a new publication was released regarding the pioneer families of this area. Local historian Tim Robinson of West Palm Beach wrote *A Tropical Frontier: Pioneers and Settlers of Southeast Florida, 1800-1890*, Port Salerno, FL, Port Sun Publishing (2006) and reached the same conclusion—that the Brown Family moved to Florida’s Southwest Coast. I wish to thank Broward County Historical Commission Curator Denyse Cunningham for bringing this valuable reference to my attention.

The latter son, Arnold, is incorrectly noted as being female though it is clear from the other records that this was a scrivener’s error.


“American Civil War Soldiers Record” in Ancestry.com (10 August 2006) notes a “John J. Brown, farmer” enlisting as a private in this unit, which was also known as “Brady’s Company of Florida Cavalry,” on 19 November 1864 and that a “William Brown, gunsmith,” enlisting on 12 January 1865.

Knetsch, p. 5; see also, Ralph Middleton Munroe and Vincent Gilpin, The Commodore’s Story. First published in 1930, 2nd reprinting, Historical Association of Southern Florida, 1974, p. 301, where Munroe notes Brown as a “beachcomber.”

Munroe and Gilpin, The Commodore’s Story, p. 301 and David O. True, “Pirate Lore and Treasure Trove,” in Tequesta No. 6 (1946), pp. 3-13, 6.


Ibid, p. 16 et seq.

Ibid, p.26. Gleason was once apparently whipped with a cowhide strap on the streets of Key West – to the delight of many an onlooker – by Dr. Jeptha V. Harris of Key West who had bought the old English family plantation, which had become Fort Dallas at the mouth of the Miami River. Dr. Harris had bought the property from the English heirs but he had been in a long-running battle with Gleason who had been trying to steal the property. See Peters, Biscayne Country, p. 25 and Jerrell H. Shofner, Nor Is It Over Yet: Florida in the Era of Reconstruction 1863-1877, Gainesville, The University Presses of Florida (1974), p. 267.


A Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of the State of Florida at the Sixth Session Begun and Held in the Capitol in the City of Tallahassee on Tuesday, January 7th, 1873, Tallahassee, S.B. McLin, State Printer (1873), pp. 19-20, 202-207, 307.

Ibid, p. 244.

A Journal of the Proceedings of the Assembly of the State of Florida at its Ninth Session, Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, On Tuesday, January 2, 1877, Tallahassee, C.E. Dyke, Sr., State Printer (1877), pp. 11, 228-9, 241-2.

Ibid, p. 229. The official return of the Board of County Canvassers had officially certified a result favoring Gleason once again, with Gleason receiving seven votes to Brown’s four, with several votes for the contested legislative seat thrown out by Gleason’s appointees to the Canvassing Board. See United States Senate, Report of Committees of the Senate of the United States for the Second Session of the Forty-Fourth Congress, 1876-’77, Vol. 2, Washington, Government Printing Office (1877), pp. 481-482.

Peters, Biscayne Country, p. 32.


Florida State Census, 1885, p. 10, enumeration District 7. The page is entitled, “Inhabitants exclusive of the Island of Key West, in the County of Monroe, State of Florida,” recorded on 18 June 1885.

After research for this article began, I contacted Fort Lauderdale historian and attorney Patrick S. Scott who has written a number of articles on local history. Mr. Scott informed me that he himself had come across the references to the Brown family in Chokoloskee and had assumed that they might well be the same family as the people which had also lived in Fort Lauderdale but he had never pursued the research. I wish to also acknowledge Mr. Scott’s helpful assistance in pointing out several of the obscure references to Brown that are included in this research. Personal communications of the author with Patrick S. Scott, August 10 and November 14, 2006.


The Brown family has survived now for several generations here in this rugged and relatively secluded stretch of the state. References to them are frequently found in memoirs of the hard life here that has been won here by a resourcefulness that seems to stretch back to Pig Brown’s own ways of subsistence farming, and raising livestock, wrecking and beachcombing. An example of this is the mention of the Browns participating in rum-running during Prohibition. See, for example, Rob Storter, Crackers in the Glade: Life and Times in the Old Everglades, Athens, GA, University of Georgia Press (2000), p. 75.
This book is a tribute to the city of Hollywood, Florida and its founder Joseph W. Young Jr. Young created Hollywood in 1920. Hollywood was planned using the City Beautiful Idea, an architectural and urban planning movement that flourished in the early 1900s. This book chronicles the history of Hollywood through hundreds of pictures, all with descriptions and attributions. From its collection of over 15,000 photographs the Hollywood Historical Society presents images of Hollywood since its inception and provides comparisons to the city as it now stands. Most of the structures in this book still exist, though many have changed names and functions. The “then and now” format documents those changes. It allows for this book to be used both as a window to the past, or a guidebook for historic walking or driving tours of Hollywood.

Part of the Hollywood Historical Society’s stated mission is education about the city’s history. They have certainly accomplished their goal in this slim and informative volume. This book is highly recommended for anyone with an interest in Hollywood history or architecture.
Credit for initiating development of the city of Hollywood belongs to Joseph W. Young, a real estate developer from the west coast (born in Gig Harbor, Washington in 1882 and relocated to Long Beach, California in 1903). He left California for Arizona following floods in 1915. By 1917 he was residing in Indianapolis with his family. He first visited the area that became Hollywood-by-the-Sea, Florida, in 1920. He was known as J.W. to those who worked with him and those who came to reside permanently or seasonally in this newly developing community.

Two major north-south transportation corridors existed that made access to this portion of southeast Florida possible. The Florida East Coast Rail Road developed by Henry Flagler reached Miami by 1896 and to Key West in 1912. Dixie Highway developed by Carl Fisher of Indianapolis and considered to be the founder of Miami Beach, which connected Fort Lauderdale and Miami was finished and available for travel in 1915. J.W. used these routes to access the area south of what is now called Dania Beach and north of what is now considered Hallandale Beach.

For those of you who may not be familiar with this area of southeast Florida, which as of 1915 was in Broward County, the two travel corridors are parallel to each other immediately west of 21st Avenue in Hollywood. Setting the context in terms of location is important to this article as the neighborhood now known as Parkside is situated immediately to the east of these north-south routes.

Following his 1920 visit and purchase of undeveloped land in the area, Young returned to Indianapolis and established the Hollywood Land and Water Company. He developed the conceptual plan for the city that became Hollywood with assistance from an engineering draftsman, George Schmidt, and later with the architectural firm of Rubush and Hunter, also of Indianapolis. Young along with Rubush and Hunter encouraged certain architectural styles that included: Craftsmen Bungalow, Mission and Adobe.
Persons familiar with Hollywood, but not necessarily knowledgeable about how the City developed, may not realize that Parkside is a part of the original neighborhood where development was initiated when J.W. Young began his real estate venture in 1922. Some locals are aware of this community. Though residents and visitors to Hollywood may drive along U.S. 1 (Federal Highway/18th Avenue) or 21st Avenue or use the less traveled 19th Avenue or 20th Avenue when heading north or south, few have taken the time to ride down the numerous streets named for presidents, admirals, and in one case each a general and a captain that are arguably the heart of this area.

Between 1922 and 1926, Hollywood began to grow and reached a population of about 20,000 consisting of both seasonal and full-time residents. The city of Hollywood was incorporated in November 1925. Unfortunately, less than one year later, on September 17, 1926, a devastating hurricane hit Hollywood and the surrounding areas. The winds were in excess of 100 miles per hour; there were tornadoes, storm surge and flooding. At that time, people did not know much about these types of storms, and were completely unprepared as precise early warning systems were not in place. Many buildings were destroyed, scores of people were injured and others perished.

J.W. Young was not in Hollywood when the hurricane hit, but returned and promised to rebuild. However, the depression was just around the corner and hard times hit the real estate industry. Following the storm the population of Hollywood fell to about 2,500 people. The South Florida real estate market did not recover for quite some time and Young eventually began to work in developing properties in the Adirondack Mountains of New York, as Hollywood-in-the-Hills, a summer resort to complement his South Florida community. He did, however, return to Hollywood and his home at 1055 Hollywood Boulevard where he died in February 1934 following a bout with influenza.

Significant development in the area now known as Parkside was curtailed following the 1926 hurricane and further negatively influenced by Florida’s economic downturn and the depression that characterized the 1930s. Though we can identify some new buildings that were completed during this period, the demand due to a dwindling population of seasonal and year round residents dramatically impacted the pace of new development.

World War II brought a lot of military personnel into the Hollywood area. In August 1942 the U.S. Navy took over the Riverside Military Academy (formerly the Hollywood Hills Inn) for its Naval Air Gunnery Training School and in December 1942 the Hollywood Beach Hotel became the Officer Indoctrination and Training School. The U.S. Navy took possession of Fogg Field (currently Hollywood-Fort Lauderdale International Airport). These military activities brought many young men into the area from all over the United States.

The second real estate boom in Hollywood happened following World War II, when returning serviceman who had been stationed for some of their military time in South Florida or had heard about the Sunshine State from military buddies decided to make this area their home. Parkside benefited greatly by the renewed interest in home building and many of the finest examples of mid-century modern architecture in Hollywood are located in this community.

The area known as Parkside is generally bounded by downtown Hollywood on the north, US 1 on the east, Pembroke Road on the south, and 21st Avenue on the west. This neighborhood is only three blocks wide from east to west and sixteen blocks long from north to south. The name Parkside recognizes that this neighborhood is bordered on the west by Poinciana Park on 21st Avenue extending from Plunkett Street almost to Pembroke Road, and on the north by the recently completed Arts Park, formerly known as Young Circle.

According to the 2005 book by Joan Mickelson, A Guide to Historic Hollywood, A Tour Through Place and Time, “The first area to be laid out with sidewalks and rock-covered streets was between Dixie Highway and about Eighteenth Avenue, and Washington Street to Johnson Street…. The northernmost portion of Parkside falls generally within the southern portion of this area. Of important note, the surveyor referenced in this book, A. C. Tony Mickelson, a key employee recruited by J. W. Young, is the author’s father.
Also of significance, is that Virginia Elliot TenEick’s childhood home is located at 1855-57 Monroe Street in the heart of Parkside. Her parents were Clyde and Amy Elliot, early pioneers of Hollywood. Much to the dismay of many members of the community, this property is currently for sale and may be slated for demolition, in order to accommodate redevelopment of this site.

Mrs. TenEick authored a book in 1966 entitled *A History of Hollywood Florida*. It was the first book written that attempted to document the beginning of development by J.W. Young that resulted in the creation of the city of Hollywood and continues the story through the post World War II period. This book was reprinted in 1989, thanks to Pat Smith, a member of a Hollywood pioneer family and founding member of Hollywood Historical Society.

The Whitehall, one of J.W. Young’s early hotel buildings, on which construction started in August 1924, was originally conceived as a dormitory to house employees of the Hollywood Beach Hotel. However, when opened in 1925, it was occupied by paying guests. This two-story building with over fifty rooms still exists at 2036 Van Buren Street.

The Hollywood Historical Society was very pleased to feature Parkside in the 2007 Home Tour held on Sunday, December 2, 2007. This tour featured six buildings and two very lovely gardens. One of the structures was an eighteen-unit, three-story apartment building, Casa El Jeanne, that was constructed in 1924; and there were three houses also built in the 1920s and two homes built following World War II, the second boom period for the City of Hollywood. The 1920s homes on the tour consisted of the following architectural styles: Mediterranean Revival, Mission Style, and Vernacular Bungalow. Both post World War II homes on the tour were excellent examples of mid-century modern architecture, a style that is currently becoming recognized as a significant design category.

Included in the center of the 2007 Parkside brochure was a walking tour of the major streets in the area, prepared by Joan Mickelson, which identified places of interest in the neighborhood, significant persons who resided in the area and events in history that took place there. Following the Home Tour, she and Patricia M. Smith prepared an even more detailed walking tour for the area which further differentiated between buildings that are extant and those that have been demolished over time. With their permission, this information is provided as an appendix to this article.

As a result of the Home Tour, excitement about this neighborhood in Hollywood was generated and has intensified. The Parkside Civic Association has taken an active role in looking into the possibility of local designation of at least a portion of the neighborhood as an historic district. Designation as a local district usually requires that a majority of structures are fifty years or older, that people of significance to history resided or engaged in activities in the area, and that there are a collection of buildings that demonstrate architectural styles and building construction representative of the era.

Currently, the following historic districts exist in Hollywood: The Downtown National Register District along Hollywood Boulevard (from the Arts Park to 21st Avenue); Harrison Street and Tyler Street Local Historic Districts (from 10th Avenue to 17th Avenue); the Lakes Area Multiple Resource Historic District (from Johnson Street on the north, to Washington Street on the south, and from the Intracoastal Waterway on the east to 17th Avenue on the west); and the Hollywood Beach Local Historic District (from the Broadwalk on the east to Surf Road on the west, and from Jefferson Street on the south to Sherman Street on the north). Additionally, there are at least twenty-one (21) individually designated historic sites throughout the city of Hollywood.

In the nearly two years since the Home Tour, there have been some very significant restorations completed of historic buildings in the area. Just recently, restoration activities at the Casa El Jeanne at 2000 Jefferson Street were implemented. Additionally, the city of Hollywood, through its Community Redevelopment Agency, finished the installation of a street lighting project along Monroe Street from 21st Avenue to Federal Highway in June 2009. Historic style lampposts and acorn shaped fixtures such as those that were used in the early part of the 20th century were selected to be used for this endeavor. It is hoped that a continuation of this street lighting program will be possible to further enhance the character of this neighborhood.

As this neighborhood is located adjacent to the Downtown Historic District and in close proximity to
the historic districts in the Lakes neighborhood, and as the area where J.W. Young started his real estate venture in southeast Florida and also contains many fine examples of mid-century modern architecture, clearly this area is worthy of historic designation within the city of Hollywood.

A study in Florida was jointly conducted by the Center for Governmental Responsibility, University of Florida Levin College of Law and the Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University. The study, completed in September 2002, entitled Economic Impacts of Historic Preservation in Florida, demonstrates that historic preservation efforts have positive economic development benefits to the communities that actively support these efforts. With this information in mind, expansion of the historic districts to include Parkside will benefit all of Hollywood.

APPENDIX

HISTORY IN PARKSIDE 1920 – 1940

Hollywood’s original Central Section

By Joan Mickelson, Ph.D. and Patricia M. Smith, Hollywood Historical Society. Mickelson is writing a biography of J.W. Young.

In the square mile of land that was his first purchase for his dream city in 1920, Joseph W. Young called it the Central section and named the east-west running streets for the U. S. Presidents, beginning at the south border of that first purchase, which is Washington Street today. As a result, Hollywood children could name off the presidents in order up through Calvin Coolidge. In keeping with his vision of a City Beautiful, Young zoned the area for particular architectural styles of his choosing and had his architects, Rubush & Hunter, design a variety of homes in the California Mission, Adobe, Moorish and Craftsman bungalow styles. The first 15 homes (not all identified) were built by contractor Harry Bastian in accordance with these plans, in 1921-1922.

The building of homes in this area and settling in of new residents was front page news in the Hollywood Reporter from 1922 to 1925. Properties mentioned in 1922 included the George E. Rodens from Toronto on Madison and 19th Avenue, the Dickeys’ bungalow on Jackson, the Frank Conrads from Pennsylvania on Madison, a “pretty adobe bungalow” on Jackson owned by “Miss Marr,” C. W. Sammons from Ohio in a Spanish bungalow on Monroe, a home on Jackson for Mr. and Mrs. Paul R. John and son Paul from Indianapolis, Mr. and Mrs. O. E. Behymer’s “unique Spanish type home on Jackson,” Miss Lillian Allen and her mother–also from Indianapolis–a home on Madison, and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Habig from Indianapolis completing a home on Monroe.

Mentioned in 1923 were Frank Thompson from Connecticut (Madison Street, two Spanish bungalows, nine more planned), R. M Ducharme from New York, 17 lots, George Young from Indiana (no relation to Hollywood’s founder), Spanish bungalows on Van Buren Street, Louis Mood from New York state, bungalows on Adams and Jefferson, O. M. McCombs from Indiana, 6-room bungalow on Madison near 20th Avenue, J. E. Bell from Ohio, six-room bungalow on Washington and 18th, and George E. Floyd from Miami, a novel Spanish bungalow on Jackson between 18th and 19th Avenues. Other sources of information about Hollywood’s first settlers include early city directories, and oral history transcripts from pioneers. Not all of these sites can be identified today as homes were not numbered for the first few years in Hollywood.

The following are historic sites in today’s Parkside that have been identified. [Addresses in brackets and italics indicate that the original house is no longer extant.]

Dixie Highway. This road was the brainchild of Carl Fisher of Indianapolis. Fisher had begun developing Miami Beach and as an auto enthusiast–he and partners built the Indianapolis Speedway in 1909 – Fisher saw the auto
as the future. In 1915 he built the Dixie Highway, paralleling Henry Flagler’s Florida East Coast Rail Way tracks in Hollywood, to bring visitors by car from Chicago and Indianapolis south to the Miami area. The first car passed through the wilderness that would become Hollywood in July 1915, and Fisher himself drove through in October 1916. Joseph W. Young arrived on the Dixie Highway in 1920 to buy the land that would become Hollywood, and Hollywood’s earliest settlers came along the Dixie Highway by car and bus as it was the main and only north-south road in the early 1920s. Sidewalks and ornamental light posts with underground wiring were installed by 1923 between Johnson and Washington Streets. For a time this road was also known as the “West Dixie.”

21st Avenue, called 1st Avenue from 1921 to 1925 because it was the first avenue to be graded and rock-surfaced when the city began. The avenues were renumbered when Hollywood became a city in 1925.

U.S. 1. 18th Avenue was called 4th Avenue until 1926. It did not become U. S. 1 until 1930-31. After that it was known as “the Federal” to locals.

Van Buren Street was named for President Martin Van Buren.

1804 Van Buren. First Methodist Church. Built on land donated to the church by J. W. Young, designed by architects Rubush & Hunter, and built at a cost of $30,000 in 1924, it was the first church built in Hollywood. William Jennings Bryan spoke at the cornerstone laying ceremony. Severely damaged in the 1926 hurricane it was partially torn down and rebuilt.

[1847 Van Buren. Home of Leo W. and Mara Stetson in 1929. Stetson, who arrived in 1927, was owner-publisher of the Hollywood News which he bought from J. W. Young in 1929. In the 1930s he published the Hollywood Herald and the Dania Herald and served on the city’s first Planning and Zoning Board in December 1941. He was Kiwanis president in 1944 when that group sponsored the teen center, the Rec. Mara Stetson served on the very effective Bond Drive committee in World War II.]

[2035 Van Buren. Whitehall Hotel. Built by J. W. Young from designs by Rubush & Hunter, August 1924, 50 rooms, at a cost of $75,000, intended as a dormitory for Beach Hotel help, but immediately began serving paying visitors. Of the six hotels built by founder J. W. Young before 1926, only the Beach Hotel, the Great Southern Hotel, the former Casa Blanca, and this one remain.

Jackson Street. Named for President Andrew Jackson. This was one of the first streets to be surfaced, in 1922 then developed with homes, many built by contractor Harry K. Bastian from Rubush & Hunter designs commissioned by J. W. Young.


1818 Jackson. Wellinger Apartments, 1924-25. Possibly from a design by Rubush & Hunter. In the late 1920s Virginia Elliott and her first husband, Harold Lathrop, lived here. {She later became Hollywood historian Virginia TenEick.}

1833 Jackson. Home of Ruth L. Burgoon, second grade teacher at Hollywood Central in the 1930s and 1940s. The double Mission-style house itself dates before 1926.
1836 Jackson. Home of Clarence H. and Alice Williams. He served on the city commission in 1939, and was elected mayor of Hollywood in 1941. Later also the home of Florence Lubinski Gassler, R.N., who in 1926 was assigned by the Red Cross to work in the Great Southern Hotel following the hurricane in September, and worked round the clock for three days straight aiding survivors. The house appears on the 1926 Sanborn map.


[1856-1860 Jackson. Home of the Frank Burtons in 1922. After they moved, it was rented to J. W. Young’s oldest son, John and wife, Micki, who were living here when daughter Rene Ann was born January 31, 1930.]

1857 Jackson. Maryland Apartments. Built about 1924-25, the hotel served as a temporary hospital following the 1926 hurricane.

Exact locations not identified: a novel Spanish bungalow on Jackson between 18th and 19th avenues built for George E. Floyd from Miami in 1923, and the home of Joseph and Margaret Clark on Jackson “near” 19th in 1924.

[1905 Jackson. LaBaw family home. Also the residence of several Catholic priests when the first Church of the Little Flower property abutted theirs.]

[1908 Jackson. Site of the glamorous Hotel Villa Hermosa built in 1925 by the Whitsons, with dining room, tropical patio and 40 rooms. After the 1926 hurricane they housed 200 refugees and fed 300 daily including the Red Cross and National Guard. Ed and Edythe Whitson worked with J. W. Young in Indianapolis and were his close confidantes as he created Hollywood.]

1941 Jackson. Bungalow home of Frank and Orpha Dickey from 1922. They were among the first six families to settle in the new Hollywood. Chief Engineer of Young’s Hollywood Land & Water Company, Dickey was the man responsible for transforming Young’s designs on paper into an actual city, including the draining of the Lakes Section and beginning of Port Everglades, where he was also Chief Engineer. Virginia TenEick says, “Throughout the city can be seen the practical ideas Dickey put into effect, first as company engineer, then city engineer, and finally City Manager (1935 to 1940s).” Orpha Dickey, also a civic leader, was first President of the Woman’s Club in 1922.


[1946 Jackson. Home of Dr. Harrison Walker and his wife, Josephine, from 1925. Dr. Walker began as resident physician in the Hollywood Beach Hotel, then established Hollywood’s first hospital, Gulfstream Hospital in the coral rock building at 324 Indiana Street. The former hospital, now plastered over, is now the oldest original structure on the beach.]

1957-59 Jackson. Poinsettia Hotel, built in 1924, was known as the Royal Palm Hotel by the 1930s. At that time managed by D. Steger, who advertised individual garages on premises, rates were $1.50 to 3.50 daily and $8.50 to 12.50 weekly (fairly standard in Hollywood in the 1930s).

2030 Jackson. Cottage-style home of J. G. and Christine Wellons by 1929. Wellons owned two shops on Hollywood Boulevard in the 1930s, Wellons Sandwich Shop at #2051 and Wellons Shoe Shop at #2039 and at the repeal of Prohibition, he opened one of the first cocktail lounges, at #1907.

Monroe Street, named for President James Monroe.

1841 Monroe. Home of Blanche and Frank C. Burton, from Indiana to Hollywood in 1923. House 1924-25 shown on the 1926 Sanborn map. Mrs. Burton was a teacher at Hollywood Central in the 1930s and 1940s.

1845 Monroe. 1924-25, appears on the 1926 Sanborn map. May be the home of Thomas McCarrell, 1925, a builder in Young’s era. McCarrell built the Hollywood Theatre (later Ritz Theatre) on Hollywood Boulevard. Their son, Tommy, an engineer for Young, was killed in the 1926 hurricane.

1855 Monroe. First Hollywood home of Clyde and Aimee Elliott and daughter, Virginia, later TenEick, who would write the first history of Hollywood. The 1922 house is considered the first to be built in the heart of historic Hollywood. It was one of the first 15 homes constructed by Harry Bastian to designs made by architects Rubush & Hunter for J.W. Young. When the Elliots bought it they enlarged it and in 1923 moved in. Clyde Elliott served on the first Hollywood city charter committee and was later vice mayor. Virginia was a long-time reporter for the Miami Herald. Her History of Hollywood 1920 to 1950 is available at the Hollywood Historical Society.

1905 Monroe. 1924-25 cottage, appears on the 1926 Sanborn map.

1945 Monroe. Built for Philip and Minnie Adler in the bungalow style, in 1923 by contractor E. A. Van Atten from Rubush & Hunter designs approved by J.W. Young. The Adlers, from Indiana in 1924, were among the first Jewish settlers in Hollywood. With Phil’s sisters they owned Adler’s ladies wear which opened on Hollywood Boulevard in 1924. The sisters, Hattie and Victoria, were founding members of the First Church of Christ Scientist, in Hollywood.

1925-27 Adams, 1980 (Broward County Historical Commission collection)

[1954 Monroe. Berner Hotel, 1924-25.]
[1955-57 Monroe. Trianon Hotel, built in 1924 for Helen Whatley and her sisters from Chicago. Owner/manager Helen Whatley’s daughter, Marion, called Babe, a nurse, married J.W. Young’s youngest son Billy; they lived at 1500 Adams Street.]


Listed in the 1924-25 County directory, before houses were numbered, were also: C. Warren and Wealthy Sammons. In 1922 their home was described as a Spanish bungalow. He was one of the Hollywood Land & Water Company’s top salesmen.

Samuel and Essie Black, with a home on Monroe near 19th. They owned the Hollywood Drug Co., the city’s first drugstore.

William and Ida Robbins home on the corner of Monroe and 20th.

Miss Cora Belle Riley home on east Monroe near 20th.

Madison Street. Named for President James Madison.

1813 Madison. Home of Marcella and T. D. Ellis from Georgia, from 1927. Dave Ellis, an attorney, was author of Hollywood’s city charter in 1925, and later served as city attorney for Hollywood and for Dania.

[1812 or 1818 Madison. Home of June and William Pyne, 1923. He was assistant director of publicity for Young’s companies in the 1920s. June was Hollywood’s first policewoman. They also operated a small restaurant on 20th Avenue, called June Pyne’s, in the 1930s and 1940s.]

[1832 Madison. Home of C. C. and Sarah Freeman, built 1923. He was on the city charter committee in 1925 and also served as City Manager in the 1920s.]

[1901 Madison. Considered the first home to be settled in Hollywood. The house was built, like several around it, in 1922 by the Harry K. Bastian Company from a California Mission style design by Rubush & Hunter, approved by J. W. Young, Charles E. Roden, a retired jeweler from Toronto and his wife, Emma, bought the house in March 1922 and moved in. They called the house “Hollywood Villa.” Following the September 1926 hurricane the Rodens’ home became a resource for all Canadians needing relief, through the Toronto Star. This important Hollywood landmark was torn down in 1964.]

[1933 Madison. Frank and Martha Conrad. Considered the second home to be settled, after the Rodens, in 1922, and like theirs this was built from a design by Rubush & Hunter (approved by J.W. Young) by the Harry K. Bastian Company.]

Listed in the 1924-25 County directory, before houses were
numbered, were also homes owned by:
David and Emma Fessler, corner of Madison and 19th. He was a Manager.
Miss Helen Fessler, stenographer, corner of Madison and 19th.

**Jefferson Street.** Named for President Thomas Jefferson.

[1809 Jefferson. Home of Jane and Floyd Wray in 1929. The Wrays came from Indiana in 1925, first to Miami then Hollywood in 1926 and in 1927. The Wrays were the founders of Flamingo Groves, extensive citrus groves in Davie, now Flamingo Gardens. He was President of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce 1929-30 and 1937-38, and a director of the Hollywood State Bank as well. They later moved to 1615 Monroe Street.]

[1818 Jefferson. Home of James and Mary Mack in 1928. The Mission style home was built c.1924-25 and appears on the 1926 Sanborn map. In 1930 Mack bought the former Southern Mill & Bungalow builders supply company on 21st Avenue (originally begun by Young), and changed its name to Mack Lumber Company. He was president of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce 1934-35, and a director of the Hollywood State Bank in the 1930s.


**Adams Street.** Named for both Presidents Adams, John and son John Quincy.

1821 **Adams.** California Mission style house, 1924-25, on the 1926 Sanborn map.

1825 **Adams.** three identical buildings on this lot appear on the 1926 Sanborn map.


1925-27 **Adams.** Mission style house with porte cochere, 1924-25, on the 1926 Sanborn map.

1929 **Adams.** Home of M. T. and Petra Henjum in 1929.

1939 **Adams.** 1924-25, on the 1926 Sanborn map. Home of Royal Scott, an insurance agent, in 1933. City Commissioner in 1927.

1945 **Adams.** Home of John and Eugenia Whelan. Originally from Minnesota and a Great War veteran, he was an attorney with an office in the Morse Arcade on the Boulevard. She was Hollywood’s Chief Librarian from 1943 to 1964. The bungalow appears on the 1926 Sanborn map.

[1947 Adams. Home of Louis and Sarah Sokolow Brown. The house appears on the 1926 Sanborn map, but today only the rear building remains. Louis Brown was born in Brest, Poland, and came to the U.S. in 1907, escaping pogroms, moving to Dania in 1913 where he opened a store. He married Sarah Sokolow in 1915, and in about 1924 they opened Brown’s, a department store at 2024 Hollywood Boulevard. With the Phil Adlers, they were probably the first Jewish families to settle in Hollywood. An ad in 1934 (during the Depression) quoted prices for “wash frocks 95 cents,” men’s dress shirts 95 cents and work shirts 69 cents, while towels 40”x20” were 22 cents.

1956 **Adams.** Villa-Arms Apartments. Originally the Clara Apartments, built 1924-25. J. W. Young’s widow Jessie and granddaughter Rene Ann were living here around 1949 when Rene Ann married Craig McNair.
2019-21 Adams. A house is shown here on the 1926 Sanborn map.

2033 Adams. Mission style 1924-25 house, on 1926 Sanborn map.

Washington Street, named for President George Washington. Streets named for U.S. presidents run north chronologically from here, and aid Hollywood children to learn the names of the U.S. presidents in order through Coolidge.


[1849 Washington. Duling Apartments, 1924-25. E. P. and Nellie Duling were in the awning business in the 1920s. In the 1930s they opened Mrs. Duling’s Dining Room across from the south side of Harding (Young) Circle.]


1915 Washington. In 1936 a “Modern Furnished Bungalow” at this address was auctioned, and sold to Pat Blake for $3,400.

1936 Washington. Home of John and Doris Rozelle in 1929. She was a teacher at Hollywood Central in the 1930s and 1940s.


2028 Washington. Bevan Apartments, 1924-25. May be the same as the Havemeyer Apartments.


The Hollywood streets between Washington and Pembroke Road were part of a land purchase Young made in 1924, after the streets to the north beginning with Washington had been laid out and named so a new set of names was needed. Head surveyor Tony Mickelson, a former Navy man, suggested names of several prominent Navy men and a general.

Dewey Street. Named for Admiral George Dewey, commander of the US Fleet at the Battle of Manila Bay in the Philippines, scoring a famous victory for the USA.

1853 Dewey. Phyllis Apartments, home of owners Guy and Forest Wachtstetter from the 1930s. He owned a dairy west of Hollywood.

[1940 Dewey. Home of Earl “Pop” Dowdy and wife, Clara, by 1928. Dowdy was in the grocery business, managing the Piggly-Wiggly which took over the Hollywood Land & Water Company’s Administration Building on the Boulevard. During the worst of the Depression he suggested that the City raise morale by opening a softball field and sponsoring a team. Dowdy Field (on the Dixie Highway at Johnson Street) was named for him and opened in the spring of 1934. Coached by Dowdy and Homer David, Hollywood’s team won a state championship.]

2034 Dewey. Jessie Young, widow of Hollywood’s founder, J. W. Young, was living here in May 1953 when she was honored by the Apartment & Hotel Association as a “Pioneer Mother.”

Funston Street. Named for General Frederick Funston, who was Army Chief of Staff at the beginning of World War I.
1823 Funston. Home of architect Fred Eskridge and wife, Elizabeth, by 1929. He designed the Hollywood Woman’s Club in 1927.

1924 Funston. In the 1920s this Mission-style cottage was the home of Mrs. Leonora Natkins.

1926 Funston. Apparently a pair with 1924. In 1940 this 1920s house was rented to tourists.

2014 Funston. In 1940 this was the home of Dr. Howard Koonce.

Rodman Street. Named by Tony Mickelson for Admiral Hugh Rodman, commander of the first US Pacific fleet, formed in 1919.

[1820 Rodman. Home of Dr. Arthur and Charlotte Kellner, from 1925. Dr. Kellner, a dentist with an office in Central Arcade, served as Hollywood’s Mayor during the Depression, 1935-38. Following the 1926 hurricane he was instrumental in obtaining relief funds for the beleaguered city through the American Red Cross. In 1935 he helped establish Orange Brook Golf Course, and was active in many other areas of public service, winning the Chamber of Commerce Community Service Award. Charlotte Kellner was a talented artist. They also lived at 1921 Rodman Street.]


Plunkett Street. Named for Admiral Charles Plunkett, commander-in-chief of the US Destroyer force in the Atlantic in World War I.

Wiley Street. Named by Tony Mickelson for Captain A. Wiley, who commanded the battleship Wyoming in World War I and was Mickelson’s immediate superior. The ship—and the men—took part in the surrender of the German fleet at Scapa Flow, Scotland, in 1918.

The following is listed with a Wiley Street address in the 1924-25 County directory before houses were numbered:

Wiley near 18th, E. A. Van Atten, one of Hollywood’s first contractors (he built the Adler family houses on Monroe Street).


Fletcher Street. Named for Admiral Frank F. Fletcher, commander of the US Atlantic fleet in World War I.

Moffett Street. Named for Admiral William A. Moffett, commander of Battleship Squadron I in Europe in World War I.

Moffett to Washington and Dixie Highway to about U.S. 1. Hollywood Airport or Hollywood Airpark, 1941-1952. A private airfield begun July 7, 1941, on undeveloped land purchased by J. W. Young in 1924 and named MacArthur Field after the attack on Pearl Harbor. Throughout World War II it was one of a small number of private airfields to remain open.

In 1945 the new owners renamed it Hollywood Airpark. With the postwar population growth crowding the airport, the owners closed it in July 1952, had the streets put in and developed the property for homes.

1945 Moffett (Pembroke Road). Julius LaRosa’s restaurant in the 1950s. LaRosa was a popular singer and accordion player who performed on the Arthur Godfrey radio show.

The information in this appendix was taken from original source documents from the 1920s and 1930s, from oral history transcripts of Hollywood Pioneers, from city directories of the 1920s to 1940s, and Virginia Elliott TenEick’s History of Hollywood. For example, Young’s magazine, the Hollywood Reporter, documents his interest in the City Beautiful movement, and in California Spanish Mission architecture. (Nowadays this style is generically termed Mediterranean, but J. W. Young lived in southern California in the 1910s when the California Spanish Mission Revival was at its height, and never had an occasion to be influenced by the Mediterranean.)

If you would like more information, or if you have any information to share, please contact the Hollywood Historical Society, 954-923-5590 or hollywoodFLhistory@juno.com.
THE BEGINNING OF BROWARD COUNTY’S PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM

On October 1, 1915, Broward County was officially incorporated by Florida State statute. The county was formed from the southern portion of Palm Beach County and a northern section of Dade County. At the time of its incorporation, the population of Broward County was 4,763.¹

On that date, nine schools that were in operation from Hallandale to Deerfield were handed off to the newly elected three-member Broward County Board of Public Instruction. The board divided the county into three special tax districts and appointed three trustees for each district. In 1915 there were 835 white students and 247 “colored” students.²

Throughout the United States in the late 1800s and the early 1900s compulsory public education was in its infancy. The concept of free public education and free textbooks was an integral plank in Napoleon Bonaparte Broward’s 1904 campaign for governor of Florida. Nationwide there was a commitment to the basic goals of public education. Two documents that had a wide circulation were “The Seven Cardinal Principles of Education” and the “Ten Socio-Economic Goals of Education.” Throughout Florida school attendance was compulsory but it was not enforced in Broward County until 1926 when the board employed Russell O. Bair as Attendance Officer for the county’s schools. He arrived in Fort Lauderdale a few days before the 1926 hurricane.³

In 1920 the population of Broward County had grown to 5,135 residents.⁴ The Trustees of each school district would ask the Broward County Board of Public Instruction to sell bonds for the purpose of building schools. In the Fort Lauderdale School District the Trustees provided for school growth through a ward system. Central High School and Central Elementary were built in 1915. The District Trustees carried out plans for Ward Schools: South Side in 1922, West Side in 1923, North Side in 1927, and East Side in 1936.
WEST SIDE SCHOOL
1923-1961

Educating Children for Thirty-Eight Years

District Three Trustees were looking for a suitable location for a new school north of the New River and west of the Florida East Coast Railroad. They found a location within Subdivision 9 of Section 9, Township 50 South, Range 42 East. Early surveys of the area now known as Sailboat Bend were completed by George McKay in 1845 and later by Marcellus A. Williams in 1870. Captain William C. Valentine, a Confederate veteran, settled on the New River in the late 1800s. Valentine made noteworthy contributions as a pioneer settler, surveyor, and public servant. Mary Brickell of Miami, who concentrated on amassing tracts of land on New River and the North Fork, employed Valentine in surveying land in the North Fork area. By July 1898 he was surveying a plat of land bordering the river’s forks. The land had come to be used for agricultural purposes, primarily for tomato farming. Valentine turned his attention to producing tomatoes on the land he held on the North Fork of the New River. Valentine drowned in the New River on March 28, 1903. In 1911 the land that Valentine surveyed, the W. C. Valentine section 9 Township 50 south Range 42 east, was platted.⁵

In 1923 R. G. Snow, R. E. Dye, and R. D. Bailey, Broward County District Three Trustees, petitioned the Broward County School Board members, J. P. Smoak, S. C. Mahannah, and Chairman F. L. Neville to purchase land in the W. C. Valentine section 9 Township 50 south Range 42 East for the second ward school. The school would be located in the Waverly Place subdivision, on a two-acre plot sold by John C. Alley to the board for $500.⁶ Alley was later elected to the Fort Lauderdale City Commission. He died in office in 1931. On December 23, 1923, Ethal Gaines sold property adding to the site of the West Side School and in January 1924, James S. Rickards sold additional land for the school. Mr. Rickards was Superintendent of Broward County Schools from 1921 to 1929. Rickards was known for bringing the Junior High School concept to Broward County. In 1929, Rickards left Broward County moving to Tallahassee to become an assistant superintendent of Florida’s Public Schools. Rickards died in 1949. The Broward County School District named a middle school in his honor.

Architect Morris Peterman, was hired by the Broward County Board of Public Instruction to design three public schools in the 1920s: South Side, West Side, and Dillard School. In Sailboat Bend, he also designed the C. P. Weidling residence at 716 S.W. 4th Place. Additionally, Peterman was...
the architect for the second county courthouse built in 1927 for $1.5 million. Cayot and Hart, contractors, built the four-class room West Side School, a stucco Mediterranean revival building, for $27,577.90. Construction began on July 20, 1923. West Side was rushed to completion.

On Friday, August 24, 1923, the *Fort Lauderdale Sun-Sentinel* announced that West Side School would open on September 21, 1923, with an able corps of teachers. The paper reported Mrs. Will Parham had been selected as Principal and teacher of first and second grades with Miss Gertrude Boyd as her assistant and teacher of third and fourth grades. Actually Mrs. L. L. (Mae) Blackburn, wife of the Fort Lauderdale High School Principal, served as Principal.

**September 21, 1923: FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

On that Monday morning when the bell rang, all the children lined up to march to their classroom. The teacher assigned each child to a desk. The class stood to pledge allegiance to the flag, sing “Our County ‘tis of Thee,” listen to the reading of scripture, and recite the Lord’s Prayer.

In the mid-1920s, there was a population explosion in Broward County as a result of the booming real estate market. The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* reported in early 1924 that West Side School enrollment had increased so rapidly that an addition was needed. To address the resultant over-crowding, the Broward County Board of Public Instruction voted to build four additional classrooms and a large open air type assembly room to accommodate the increased enrollment at the West Side School. This addition was ready for new classes in the fall of 1925. On August 4, the Broward County Board of Public Instruction appointed faculty for 1925-26 as follows:³³

Mrs. L. L. (Mae) Blackburn, Principal
Vinita Miller
Louise Frist
Elizabeth Owen
Edith Perula
Helen Mar Frieday
Ruth Teal (Dichtenmueller)

Mrs. Dichtenmueller was honored as a Broward County Pioneer in 1979. She recalled, “The Florida boom of the 1920s brought with it a phenomenal period of growth and prosperity, but with it came a multitude of obstacles. This ‘Boom’ period was caused by a rapid expansion in population as people moved to Florida in great numbers to take advantage of the real estate market. Educators suffered as there were not enough classrooms to handle the sudden influx of children.”³³ Dichtenmueller described her first day of school:

“I found awaiting me forty-six sixth graders, an outdoor classroom sheltered by the Florida pines, furnished in the very latest modern ‘Boom-time school desks,’ consisting of four long, wide planks forming a square, placed flat on the ground, a portable blackboard, a bulletin board, 4 ft. by 8 ft., attached to a sturdy pine, a chair, and plenty of sand, fresh air, sunshine with the usual Florida showers interspersed and assurances from the Principal of her wholehearted cooperation in making this teaching situation a success.”³³

Helen Mar Frieday, daughter of early pioneers, left teaching at the end of the school year and studied for her degree in Missouri during the summer. Lewis Moore travelled to Missouri where they were married. Thus ended Helen Mar Moore’s teaching career. Mr. Moore became the mayor of Fort Lauderdale in 1935.

On July 16, 1924, the West Side School Mother’s Club petitioned the School District to improve and beautify the school grounds. They respectively petitioned the board to develop a plan of “orderly planning and systematically improving said grounds and do respectfully petition your Honorable Body to employ a landscape gardener for the purpose of landscaping the said school grounds.” The Broward County Board of Public Instruction and the District Trustees instructed Superintendent Rickards to communicate with Wyldwood Nursery owner Commodore A. H. Brook and arrange for the landscaping of the school.

The 1926-1927 teachers were:¹¹

Gertrude Boyd
Ruth Tea Dichtenmueller
Elizabeth Atkinson
Mary Louise Parker
Phyllis Farrington Kelly
Freida McNeff (sub)

When Gertrude Boyd began her first year of teaching at West Side she had completed her freshman year at Florida State College for Women. At the end of the school year she returned to college for her sophomore year. Each year Gertrude saved the money for the next year of education. She was the first Broward County woman to receive her doctorate in education.

Elizabeth Atkinson became a specialist in music for the Broward County Schools, and Phyllis Farrington Kelly later taught 6th grade at Central Elementary.
CLOSING OF THE WEST SIDE SCHOOL

By 1961 residential areas of central Broward County were changing. New schools were being built to satisfy the needs associated with the rapid growth in Broward County and to keep pace with updated technology equipment and television access in the classroom. The Broward County Board of Public Instruction members, Virginia Young, Chair, Verlon Burrell, Dr. Charles Forman, Wesley Parrish and John O. Calvin voted to close West Side at the end of the school year. The students “will move to Hortt, Croissant Park and Edgewood Schools. Principal Mrs. Van Hyning and the teachers will go to Lloyd Estates Elementary School. The school will be closed, but the memories will remain and echo among the hallways.”

From June 1961 until March 5, 2002, the school was office space for various School Board Departments. Other buildings were brought to the site, including surplus from the Naval Air Station, and used by School Board administrative offices.

There were efforts by the City of Fort Lauderdale in 1996 and Broward County’s Cultural Affairs Division in 1999 to restore the school as a community and artistic center.

On March 5, 2002 Lennar Homes purchased the entire Broward County School Board site of 13.4 acres for $5,000,000. This included the boarded up West Side School. Lennar Homes created the Villages of Sailboat Bend, a multi-use project that included the development of a luxury condominium community, construction of affordable live/work artist lofts, and the restoration of the West Side School to be used as the headquarters of the Broward County Historical Commission and Museum. Several key entities worked together in supporting the school’s restoration. They were Lennar Homes, Broward County Cultural Affairs Division, ArtSpace Projects, the City of Fort Lauderdale, Broward County Historical Commission, and the Broward County Commission. County Commissioner John Rodstrom spoke of the importance of the Sailboat Bend Historic District, emphasizing the restoration of the West Side School is like a gem on the finger of West Las Olas Boulevard.

WEST SIDE SCHOOL: BROWARD COUNTY’S HISTORY CENTER

In the fall of 2009, 86 years after it first opened, the West Side School re-opened as the headquarters of the Broward County Historical Commission and Museum. The school has been completely renovated and restored. Within the walls of this early 20th Century historic school the history of Broward County will be available to all of Broward’s residents.

A BROADER VIEW OF HISTORY

Even before the area was surveyed, Native-Americans walked across this land, and lived along the New River and its upper North and South Forks. When the Spanish explorers arrived in the early 1500s they found the Tequesta Indians living along the southeast coast of Florida. During those years, the Tequesta canoed and walked along the upper reaches of the New River and the North Fork. In 1763 at the end of the French and Indian War, England returned Cuba to Spain in return for Florida. The Spanish Navy honored the request of the eighty-nine surviving Tequesta to be resettled in Cuba. Archaeologists have identified at least three Tequesta Indian sites in the Sailboat Bend area. Their presence is verified around the West Side School neighborhood as a result of archaeological investigations. North of today’s Broward Boulevard and south of the New River’s North Fork, currently the site of North Fork Elementary was Annie Thomas’s Seminole Camp. The camp was a hub of Indian activity. But by October 1925, Mrs. Frank Stranahan (Ivy), Vice President of the Indian Committee of the Florida Federation of Women’s Club, reported that Annie’s camp, which was located on private property was “for sale and one day they will be ordered to move.”

It was through Ivy Stranahan’s gentle persuasion that Annie Thomas and her family moved to the reservation.

1 “Broward by the Numbers,” Broward County Planning Services Division #29, October 1, 2005.
4 “Broward by the Numbers,” Broward County Planning Services Division #29, October 1, 2005.
6 Minutes of the Broward County Board of Public Instruction, July 9, 1923.
8 Broward County Historical Commission, Pioneer Day Program, 1979, p. 20-21.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Broward County Board of Public Instruction ledger, in the archives Broward County Historical Commission, Fort Lauderdale, Florida.
14 Fort Lauderdale Daily News, June 17, 1975.
At the entrance to the newly refurbished West Side School, where West Las Olas Boulevard ends at Southwest 13th Avenue, stands Fort Lauderdale’s first monument, remembering a place called Harmon Field. Embedded in what was once a concrete drinking fountain, a well-worn brass plaque recalls a faint memory of a decades old legacy: “Harmon Field/This Playfield Was Made Ours Through The Assistance Of The Harmon Foundation/1924/ Dedicated Forever To The Plays Of Children, The Development Of Youth And The Recreation Of All/‘The Gift Of Land Is The Gift Eternal’.”

On June 24, 1925, William and Kathleen Harmon of New York City donated a two-acre parcel of land called Harmon Field to the City of Fort Lauderdale for a children’s playground behind West Side School. Born in 1862 in Lebanon, Ohio, William Elmer Harmon amassed a large fortune in the real estate business before retiring to a life devoted to charitable works. In 1921, he formed the Harmon Foundation and began helping small communities throughout America build children’s playgrounds. In 1924, Harmon’s foundation announced that it would grant 50 towns each $2,000 to secure a playground. Seven hundred and twenty-five cities from every state in the Union except Nevada submitted grant applications. The Foundation awarded 54 grants. The City of Fort Lauderdale was one of the lucky few, and the only award recipient in the State of Florida.¹

As early as spring 1924, Russell G. Snow, mayor of Fort Lauderdale, began lobbying the foundation for one of the coveted playground grants. In November, the foundation reported to Snow that it had whittled down the proposals to 86 “Grade A” applicants. On December 29, 1924, Snow wrote Ivy Stranahan to help organize a committee

¹ Mr. Crawford is a Broward County Native and Fort Lauderdale attorney, who serves on the Broward County Historical Commission. His book, *Florida’s Big Dig: The Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway from Jacksonville to Miami, 1881 to 1935*, won the 2008 Florida Historical Society’s Rembert Patrick Award for best book on Florida History. His research and writings focus on Broward’s legal, judicial and local land history.
to welcome a representative of the Harmon Foundation who was expected to arrive "in the near future." Along with Stranahan, Snow invited Annie Beck, Mrs. R. D. Bailey, R. E. Dye, and James S. Rickard, Broward County schools’ superintendent. On February 5, 1925, the Harmon Foundation telegraphed Snow to advise that Fort Lauderdale had indeed won the fierce competition for a Harmon grant. On April 20, 1925, the Broward School District sold a two-acre plot for the playground to William Harmon. 2

On June 4, 1925, the City of Fort Lauderdale deposited $300 in the locally-held Harmon Foundation Park Fund. On June 24, William Harmon sold the same two acres to the City of Fort Lauderdale to be used only for park purposes. In July, the foundation wrote Snow again: “We have made a note to send you on the first of August the bronze plate for use in marking Harmon Field.” Later moved to a new location on the West Side School site, today the bronze memorial is prominently displayed in front of West Side School, the new home of the Broward County Historical Commission. County records document the project as the first city-county operation of a playground in Broward County and Fort Lauderdale’s first monument. 3

A few years after the park’s completion, the Foundation awarded the city a prize of $150 for improving and maintaining the grounds, the only city in Florida to receive the honor. The City Commission even named Southwest 13th Avenue “Harmon Avenue” in honor of his generous gift to the community. 4

In 1926, the Harmon Foundation began a decade-long practice of annually recognizing outstanding African Americans in the fields of literature, music, fine arts, business, science, and education by awarding cash prizes and medals. The Foundation’s work helped encourage the flowering of black culture throughout America during the 1920s and ‘30s, a period known today as the Harlem Renaissance. Among the first of the prize recipients were thirty-three-year-old Palmer C. Hayden, a house cleaner, winner of the gold medal for painting; noted lawyer, author, poet and composer James Weldon Johnson for his interpretative work on the Negro spiritual; writer and poet Countee Cullen, for his collection of poems, “Colors”; and Charles Clinton Spaulding, who steered North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, the nation’s first black-owned life insurance company, into national prominence. In 1933, for his painting, “Woman Holding a Jug,” exhibited in the Harmon Foundation Exhibition of Negro Artists, James Amos Porter, age 28, was awarded the Arthur Schomburg Portrait Prize. Today, Porter’s daughter, Coni Porter Uzelac, president of the Dorothy Porter Wesley Research Center, lives in Broward County. 5

When William Harmon died on Sunday, July 15, 1928, it was revealed that Harmon had been the longtime anonymous New York City benefactor “Jedidiah Tingle.” “Tingle” made hundreds of gifts to writers, poets, and needy children as well as to the Children’s Aid Society, one of the oldest charities for children in the New York area. Three days after his death, it was learned that “Tingle” had made a gift of $500 to be distributed as prizes in the form of savings accounts to children “of good character” attending one of the camps held each summer by the Society. By 1933, the Harmon Foundation had helped cities and towns throughout America acquire 118 playgrounds, made 5,000 loans to college students, and given national recognition to scores of African American artists, writers, and educators. 6

In 1944, the Harmon Foundation organized an exhibition of portraits of prominent black Americans like Marion Anderson, George Washington Carver, and Jane Bolin, the nation’s first appointed black female judge. Comprised of portraits painted by both black and white painters, the exhibit premiered at the Smithsonian Institution and later toured the country. In 1967, the Foundation donated forty-one of the fifty portraits to the National Portrait Gallery, which displayed them in an exhibition thirty years later. By the mid-1960s, the Harmon Foundation had become
prominent in the exhibition and sale of native African art throughout the United States. In 1966, the Foundation published the work of dozens of these native African artists in various media and later donated over 2,500 slides and photographs documenting the works of these artists to the National Archives.\(^7\)

Over the years, the venerable West Side School morphed into a Broward County Schools administration building, later abandoned. Today, the School is the new home of the Broward County Historical Commission and a community center. It’s also a neighbor of the Village at Sailboat Bend townhouse community, which stretches south to the banks of the New River, adjacent to Waverly Place, one of the county’s oldest neighborhoods. The school’s ‘next-door’ neighbor, however, is a fitting tribute to the Harmon legacy. It’s the home of the Sailboat Bend Artists Lofts, a partnership between Broward County and ArtsSpace, a Minneapolis nonprofit organized to help provide low cost housing to artists—just the sort of thing William and Kathleen Harmon might have supported more than 80 years ago when the Harmon Foundation partnered with the City of Fort Lauderdale and Broward County Schools to provide a playground for children.


2  There is an undated signed agreement between Harmon and the City of Fort Lauderdale in the Julia Snow Jones collection of papers at the Broward County Historical Commission (hereinafter, “Snow collection”). Edith Fremdling (Harmon Foundation) to Russell Snow dated May 9, 1924, Snow collection. Mary Beattie Bradley (Harmon Foundation) to Snow, November 28, 1924, Snow collection; Snow to Mrs. Frank Stranahan, December 29, 1924, Stranahan papers, Fort Lauderdale Historical Society (hereinafter referred to as the “Stranahan papers”). Harmon Foundation (telegram) to Snow, February 5, 1925, Snow collection. Warranty deed executed by Special Tax School District Number Three in favor of William E. Harmon dated April 20, 1925 and recorded in Deed Book 80 at Page 488 of the Public Records of Broward County, Florida.


4  “One Florida Playground Is Given Harmon [sic] Award,” *Florida Times-Union* [undated, but believed by the author to be June 6?, 1928]


In 2006, the Broward County Board of County Commissioners and the Broward County Historical Commission created a grant program to assist the preservation of historic resources within the county owned by government or nonprofit organizations. $450,000 was allocated for grants between 2006 and 2008. As a result of this program, 11 historic sites throughout the county have been assisted. Project work for these grants fell into three categories – repairing damage caused by the hurricanes of 2005, repairing general deterioration or reversing inappropriate alterations. What follows is a description of each project.

The ANNIE BECK HOUSE, 1329 North Dixie Highway, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, owned by the Broward Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc., received a grant of $42,240.00. This craftsman bungalow house was built in 1916 of Dade County pine by Fort Lauderdale pioneers Dr. Alfred J. Beck and his wife, Annie. Dr. Beck, a pharmacist, came to Fort Lauderdale in 1915 and opened one of the first drug stores in town. In 1916, Dr. Beck married Annie Margaret Atkinson and together they built this house which was to remain as Annie’s home until she died in 1985. Annie Beck was heavily involved with organizations in the community. She was active in the Fort Lauderdale Woman’s Club and was a founder of several groups, including the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, the 1919 study group, Fort Lauderdale’s first garden club and later the Federated Garden Club Circles. Annie Beck may be best known for her leadership in the project to landscape Fort Lauderdale after the devastating hurricane in 1926.

The Annie Beck house was given to the Broward Trust for Historic Preservation by Diana Heileman who purchased it in 1959. It was later moved to its current location.
the house and property near the New River to build a house for her family but couldn’t bring herself to tear it down. Word of her dilemma reached the son of a previous owner who contacted the Broward Trust who then agreed to move it as an alternative to its demolition. The Broward Trust is an advocacy group dedicated to identifying, preserving, restoring, and maintaining the architectural heritage of Broward County. More on the history of this structure can be read in the *Broward Legacy* Volume 28, Number 1 or viewed on the Web site of the Broward Trust for Historic Preservation, Inc. at www.browardtrust.org.

The grant was intended to be used to construct a new foundation for the relocated house. As a result of receipt of additional funding from the State of Florida, the scope for these grants has expanded to include all costs associated with the move and the development of restoration plans and specifications. The house was moved on July 27, 2008. The building has been placed on a new foundation and all work associated with the grant is complete.

**The FORT LAUDERDALE WOMAN’S CLUB**, 15 S.E. First Street, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, owned by the Fort Lauderdale Woman’s Club, received a grant of $20,542.50.

The Fort Lauderdale Woman’s Club was originally formed in 1911. Early members include Ivy Stranahan, Annie Beck and Mrs. William Marshall, wife of the city’s first Mayor. The mission of the Woman’s Club was and continues to be the promotion of civic improvements. Early activities included public sanitation projects, street improvements, and the first city library.

In 1916 Frank and Ivy Stranahan donated land to the Fort Lauderdale Woman’s Club so that they could build a clubhouse. The Woman’s Club engaged the services of architect, August Geiger and the clubhouse was constructed the same year. The masonry clubhouse was built in the Mediterranean revival style with details typical of this style, such as a stucco wall finish, arched loggia, an articulated cornice and a clay barrel tile roof. In 1949 an addition was built and the original building was “modernized” in a way that was detrimental to the original architecture. Beginning in 2004 the Woman’s Club embarked on a long range plan to stabilize and restore the clubhouse.

This grant partially funded preparation of a preservation plan with all architectural and engineering documents necessary to carry out restoration of the Woman’s Club building. Plans for completing restoration of the building have been approved by the City of Fort Lauderdale Historic Preservation Board. The overall preservation plan for the building has been completed. In addition to the grant project, the Woman’s Club used other funds for restoration of the roof, replicating the fireplace, and installation of one double set of wood impact resistant double hung windows that replicates the originals and are a sample for the rest of the windows that will be installed at a later date, and installation of a new air conditioning system.
The HALLANDALE SCHOOLHOUSE, 630 N.W. Second Street, Hallandale Beach, Florida, owned by the City of Hallandale Beach, received a grant of $78,375.00.

Hallandale’s first school was built in 1904 on the northwest corner of Hallandale Beach Boulevard and Second Avenue. After that building was destroyed by a hurricane in 1910 residents petitioned the Dade County School Board for a new building. When the board pleaded lack of funds to construct one, the residents assumed the responsibility of building the school. The new one-story school was built in 1910 and used until 1916 when a new two-story building was built. Now on N.W. Second Street, the building was originally at West Beach Boulevard and Second Avenue.

In 1921 Bethlehem Lutheran Church purchased the building and used it as a parish house until 1966 when they donated the building to the Hallandale Police Department. The school building became the PBA (Police Benevolent Association) Hall and recreation center. The schoolhouse is located today at the city’s Public Works Department. The site of this fragile structure was not suitable due to the nature of the activities that take place in the Public Works compound (i.e. construction, heavy traffic of sanitation trucks, landscape and construction material storage, etc.). The building is next to a one million gallon water storage ground tank. The overflow valve is located in line with the schoolhouse making the surrounding ground continuously moist which has contributed to structural decay.

The City of Hallandale Beach is embarking on a plan to preserve the historic schoolhouse. The first phase of the plan includes relocating the schoolhouse elsewhere on the existing site that will isolate the building from the Public Works activities and will allow easy public access. Once restored, the Hallandale Schoolhouse will be used as a history museum with one classroom set up as it would have been historically while the other classroom will have general history exhibits.

This grant provides funds to relocate and to stabilize the schoolhouse on a new foundation. Work was completed in September 2009. Future restoration will continue as funding becomes available.

The KING-CROMARTIE HOUSE, 229 S.W. Second Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is owned by the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society and received a grant of $25,785.38.

A one-and-a-half-story local pine wood framed vernacular home, built in 1907 by Edwin Thomas King, a local contractor. The home originally located on the south bank of the New River, is typical of turn of the century Florida architecture; few of which endured the devastating 1926 hurricane. It is significant as a pioneer structure built and occupied by one of the earliest settlers in Fort Lauderdale. Edwin King’s name was associated with many of the first buildings erected in the city, among them, the New River Inn, Bonnet House, the Las Olas Inn, the first and second schools, and several private residences.

The King-Cromartie House on its original site. (Image courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society)
The building currently has a wood shake roof supported by conventional wood framing.

In the early to mid 1970s, the King-Cromartie House was relocated to its present site. It is currently an historic house museum which is toured by school children and other visitors.

The grant funded a specific structural deficiency in the floor and rebuilding of the front porch. All work proposed in the grant has been completed. The final cost for the project was less than expected, leaving adequate funds to paint the exterior of the house. Prior to painting some deteriorated exterior siding was replaced. All work has been completed.

**The OLD DAVIE SCHOOL**, 7025 S.W. 39 Street, Davie, Florida, owned by the Town of Davie, and operated by the Davie School Foundation, received a grant of $70,125.00.

The first permanent school in the Everglades, the Old Davie School opened its doors in 1918 and welcomed 90 students. This school was the western-most outpost of the county school system for nearly a half a century.

The school was designed by August Geiger, one of South Florida’s most prominent early architects. Geiger, architect for the Dade and Broward County School Boards, designed the Mediterranean revival style with notable Spanish, Mission, and Moorish details. The large windows were carefully placed to take advantage of natural light and facilitate cross-ventilation. As the first building in the area with indoor plumbing, it was a source of community pride. Its solid masonry construction proved valuable during the 1926 hurricane and other storms when residents sought shelter there. It was in continuous use as a school through 1980.

The Old Davie School was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988. More information on the history of the school can be found on its Web site at [www.olddavieschool.org](http://www.olddavieschool.org) or in the *Broward Legacy* Volume 24, Number 1. It now serves as an historic, cultural, social and artistic resource dedicated to providing information and learning opportunities for students and the community at large.
The grant funded the replacement of windows in the school. The existing windows were not original but are replicas. The new windows were installed in September 2009.

The SAMPLE-MCDougald HOUSE, 450 N.E. 10 Street, Pompano Beach, Florida, owned by the Sample-McDougald House Preservation Society, Inc., received a grant of $16,500.00.

In 1910, John M. Sample came to South Florida and became the first settler in the Pompano Beach area. One year later his older brother, Albert Neal Sample, arrived. In 1916 Albert built what is now known as the Sample-McDougald House, a 17-room Colonial Revival style structure on rural farmland along Dixie Highway, the primary north/south route leading to Miami. The home, built of cypress throughout, features a wide columnar porch that extends in a U-shape around the north side of the house to the rear.

Upon Albert Sample’s death in 1941, the house was sold to Mr. and Mrs. William McDougald Sr. It remained in the McDougald family until 1999 when it was conveyed to the Sample-McDougald House Preservation Society. It was moved from Dixie Highway to its present location in 2001. The Sample-McDougald House is anticipated to be open to the public and will primarily be used as a house museum.

More information on the house can be read in the Broward Legacy Volume 24, Number 1 or can be viewed on its Web site at www.samplemcdougaldhouse.com. It was listed on the National Register of Historical Places in 1984.

This grant provided funding to strengthen, restore, and/or replicate the distinctive and unique wooden awnings, many of which were damaged or destroyed in hurricane Wilma. All awnings are repaired and installed.

The SOUTH SIDE SCHOOL, 701 South Andrews Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, owned by the City of Fort Lauderdale, received a grant of $78,375.00.

One of the schools built during this period was South Side School, constructed by the firm of Hart and Cayot in 1922. South Side School was the first commissioned work of locally significant architect John Morris Peterman who did many other schools. The school is designed as a blend of Mediterranean Revival, Mission Revival, and Colonial Revival styles.

Eventually, the Broward County School Board decommissioned the building. After sitting vacant for several years, the City of Fort Lauderdale acquired the South Side School site for use as a park. Once it is rehabilitated, the building will be used as a cultural and community center.

This project involves the total rehabilitation of a severely deteriorated school building. The total project cost is approximately $9,600,000. This grant represents just less than 1% of the...
The STRANAHAN HOUSE, 335 S.E. Sixth Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, is owned by Stranahan House, Inc. and received a grant of $24,333.38.

Stranahan House, built in 1901 in the classic Florida frontier vernacular design, is the oldest surviving structure in Broward County. Originally the home of Frank and Ivy Stranahan, the house has also served over the years as a post office, town hall, and restaurant. The house was occupied by Ivy Stranahan until her death in 1971 when ownership transferred to the Seventh Day Adventist Church, in accordance with her will. Shortly after, it was purchased jointly by the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society and the Fort Lauderdale Board of Realtors in order to assure its preservation.

Restored, it is now owned by Stranahan House, Inc. and is used as a museum open for public tours and special events.

More information on the house can be read in the Broward Legacy, Volume 24, Number 1 or can be viewed on its Web site at www.stranahanhouse.org. The house was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1973.

This grant provided funding to repair the roof and copper gutters, restore the north second story porch, replace storm damaged security lighting and associated wiring, and restore exterior stairs to the north porch. Additionally, brick pavers in the driveway/parking area were removed and re-set to eliminate a significant safety hazard and a new decorative perimeter fence was installed to replace one damaged in recent hurricanes.

The WALSH-OSTERHOUDT HOUSE, 6650 Griffin Road, Davie Florida, is owned by the Davie School Foundation and received a grant of $41,250.00.

The house was built for “Colonel” Charles A. Walsh and his wife, Katherine, in 1912. It is a wood frame vernacular house typical of the settlement period. Charles was President of Wacico Groves Corporation, the developer of the

South Side School presently. (Photo by Dave Baber)

Total cost and will support the exterior rehabilitation of the building. Delays in permitting changes in the project have impacted the construction schedule though the project is now progressing. An extension of three months was executed. Work associated with this funding has been completed and final payment has been made. Once the final report and the financial audit have been submitted and reviewed, the grant will be closed.

The WALSCH-OSTERHOUDT HOUSE, c. 1920. (Image courtesy Old Davie School Archives)
Everglades orange. Charles and Katherine were both involved in civic and religious work in Davie. The Walshes occupied the home until their death in 1932. In 1955 it was bought by the Osterhoudt family. Mrs. Osterhoudt taught first grade at the Old Davie School for 25 years and remained active in the community after her retirement.

The Walsh-Osterhoudt House is among the oldest structures remaining in Davie. The main part of the house appears much the same today as it did when it was built. Later additions such as the sunroom and two-story kitchen wing were constructed throughout the years.

The Walsh-Osterhoudt House is part of the village of historic buildings at the original Old Davie School site and serves to enhance programming that depicts life of the first settlers of the Everglades at the beginning of the 20th century.


This grant provided funding for interior and exterior carpentry, electrical repairs and replacement, new air conditioning, plumbing, plaster repair, rebuilding of windows, interior and exterior painting, structural repairs and the fabrication and installation of a fire escape. All work associated with this grant has been completed.

The WEST SIDE FIRE STATION No. 3, 1022 West Las Olas Boulevard, Fort Lauderdale, Florida, operated by Fort Lauderdale Fire and Safety Museum, Inc. received a grant of $13,818.75.

The West Side Fire Station was constructed in 1927 in a sub-style of Mediterranean Revival called Spanish Eclectic. It is located in the heart of the historic Sailboat Bend neighborhood. The station was designed by architect Francis L. Abreu and contains his trademark features, including a rotunda, turned stone columns, arched doors, and eyebrows over the windows, a fountain, a fireplace, leaded glass, tile floors, and a wood-beam ceiling. The 1,300-square-foot, eight-room station housed up to eight firefighters and was in service until they moved to a new station in 2004.
The station is now used as a museum dedicated to the history of local firefighting. More information on the West Side Fire Station and the Fort Lauderdale Fire Museum’s activities can be viewed on its Web site at www.fortlauderdalefiremuseum.com.

All work in this grant project has been completed, including structural repairs, roof repairs, plaster restoration, interior and exterior painting, electrical and plumbing improvements. A final report has been submitted and the grant has been closed.

The HAMMERSTEIN HOUSE, 1520 Polk Street, Hollywood, Florida, is owned by the City of Hollywood, operated by the Hollywood Historical Society, and received a grant of $50,000.00 in 2008.

The house was designed by prominent Hollywood architect, Bayard Lukens, in 1935 for Vera and Clarence Hammerstein. This is a fine example of the style Lukens called “Tropical Modern,” with a variegated tile roof and a smooth curving wall at the front entrance. White stucco walls were set off by horizontal trim in another color. His interiors are beautifully detailed, with moldings, trim over and around doors, fireplaces with heatolators (vents with decorative metal screens along the sides of the fireplace to capture the heat generated by a fire), and use of decorative Cuban and Spanish tiles.

The Hammerstein House is operated as a house museum by the Hollywood Historical Society. Many of the Hammerstein’s furnishings are still in place. More information on the house can be found on its Web site at www.hollywoodhistoricalsociety.org/1.html.

The grant was approved by the Broward County Board of County Commissioners on January 27, 2009. The funding agreement has been fully executed and project planning has been initiated. The project will be completed by September 30, 2010.