

OAKLAND PARK'S HISTORY CA. 1952

by Ruth Brenner with edits by Darleen Mitchell, Caryl Stevens, and Susan Gillis

EARLY DAYS

In the blazing sun of a September afternoon of 1899, just three years after the first train had run from Palm Beach to Miami, a very thin, pale young man arrived at the settlement of Fort Lauderdale. The traveler was Thomas Whidby, 34, come to Florida from Georgia in the hope that the climate would restore health lost while fighting in the Spanish American War. He planned to do some farming if his health permitted, but the "big freeze" of that winter discouraged him and he returned to Georgia.

But Tom Whidby couldn't forget Florida and he kept thinking of a piece of land he wanted to farm. It was way out in the pine woods between Fort Lauderdale and Pompano, but people were bound to settle along the new railway. Already a sand road meandered between the two villages; it was when riding up that way with an acquaintance to do a bit of hunting that he'd seen the very place he wanted to build his house.

So, in 1901, Thomas Whidby and his wife returned and secured their portion of pine and palmetto wilderness, situated in what is now the central section of Oakland Park. Tom set about immediately cutting poles from the woods for the framework of his new home. He sent to Palm Beach for the finishing materials and these were shipped by rail and set off the train almost at his doorstep. Fifty years later Uncle Tom Whidby was still living within a hundred feet of his first home. [The first Mrs. Whidby died in 1927 and Uncle Tom passed away on April 29, 1952, at the age of 86.]

But in 1901, the Whidbys were not thinking of the years ahead, they were trying to get the land ready for the fall planting. Imagine their excitement when they learned they had a neighbor. "Had a neighbor" seemed to be the right term for it; when Tom stumbled onto the driftwood house lost in the brush late one afternoon, he found it deserted. It was several weeks before Mr. Joe Farrell, the owner, who did not make the house his permanent home, returned and stopped by the Whidbys to get acquainted. Mr. Farrell told the Whidbys he had secured the driftwood for his house from the beach in the vicinity of New River Inlet, laboriously floating the pieces up the inlet with the tide. He then bound them together, towing them up New River with a rowboat to a place where he could reach them with a team. From there, the horses with the creaking wagon of driftwood, plodded out the sand trail to Mr. Farrell's plot. This driftwood house was occupied by the Oscar Wilkerson family when the 1926 hurricane destroyed it. It had been built just south of what is now Prospect Road and just north of the present J.J. Fletcher residence on the Dixie Highway.

At the time Whidby talked to us, he mentioned one other inhabitant of the area in 1901. According to Uncle Tom, "there was an old African American bachelor by the name of Poole. He

lived in a little shack off in the woods and helped me with the farm work when he wasn't too busy fishing."

The Seminoles were friendly and often camped for a month under the shade of Whidby's trees while they hunted and fished. There were thousands of cottontail swamp rabbits, deer, quail, turkeys, dove—as well as rattlesnakes, wild cats, bears, panthers, and alligators. Two miles north of the Whidby place is the creek to which the Seminoles came when they made cypress dugouts. "Suahkee Hatchee," meaning "Cypress Creek," was the Indian name for this stream and we have retained its name today.

As the seasons passed, Uncle Tom's liking for his Indian neighbors grew into a bond of firm friendship. "They were good people," declared Uncle Tom. "I trusted them with anything I had and they never disappointed me." He sighed, "Yes, I knew many of the Jumper tribe... and there was Aunt Annie, as she was called...most of the older people I knew so well have passed away," then his mind passed to more cheerful memories and he chuckled.

"You know," he said, "I used to ride my bicycle down to Miami once in a while in those days. Had to get up early in the morning, ride down the one lane road to the big city. When I got my buying done, I'd ride home on the night train. They'd always stop and put me and my bike off in front of my place here." "Got into an argument with a fellow I met up with in Miami one day. Got so hot under the collar, I called him a 'Yankee' and he had me arrested. Judge fined me ten dollars for it, too."

As the years passed, farmers from Jasper, Jennings, and Live Oak, Florida, drifted into the area, planted winter crops, and returned north in the summer. [By 1910, the area of what is now Wilton Manors and Oakland Park was known as Colohatchee, supposedly the name of the South Fork of Middle River.] Soon more families arrive to build permanent homes. These newcomers included the L.R. Kinseys, the J.M. Baileys, the R.J. McBrides, the G.S. Goodbreads, and the J.D. Peachey's. A bit north were the farms of R.D. Lloyd, the Lindseys, J.W. Luke, George Umstead, Frank and Worth Delegal, Joe Johns, Frank Oliver, R.G. Parnell, and Monroe Whidby.

Long before Oakland Park Elementary was built, children were taken to school in Fort Lauderdale in a horse-drawn covered wagon driven by Mr. Ed. Brass. [During 1914-1916, Mrs. Mattie Raulerson Baker established the Prospect School with fourteen students on her brother's farm in "west" Colohatchee. By the second year the school, now boasting twenty students, moved to a converted barn on Tom Whidby's farm.]

Until 1915, Dade and Palm Beach Counties joined at Prospect Road, just north of the Oakland Park limits. The picnic spot on the beach, south of Lauderdale-by-the-Sea, called "Boundary Line," marks the spot where the old county line ran. By act of legislature in 1915, Broward County was formed by taking a part of the two old counties to form the new.

HOW OAKLAND PARK GOT ITS NAME

In the early part of 1922, Miamians Mr. A.T. Barkdull and Mr. and Mrs. Pitt were driving along the old Dixie Highway, not yet hard surfaced, when they observed the building owned by the Southeastern Packing Company on the bank of the North Fork of Middle River. Cattle from the Okeechobee region were floated down here on barges. Its manager, J. Ben Fraser, who later became the president of the Tidewater Construction Company which built the first highway to Key West, was busily inspecting cattle being unloaded.

Barkdull and the Pitts were discussing the plant as they drove by. They were in the real estate business in Miami and had come to this section scouting for land to start a development. "There's a packing plant over there. We might start our development here and name the town, Payroll Town, because the employees of the plant must be paid off here," observed Mr. Barkdull. Mrs. Pitt, after a moment's thought, replied, "See those oak trees? Why not call it 'Oakland Park, the Payroll Town.' " So, it was later in 1922 that the Barkdull Investment Company of Miami subdivided this area and Oakland Park received its name.

Mr. T.C. Moore, who was connected with the Barkdull concern at the time, informs us that their offices were on Northeast First Street, Miami, and they brought prospective buyers up here in cars. He relates that the Oakland Park subdivision was officially opened on February 1923 with one of the biggest barbeques ever held in the county. He is very proud of a large photograph taken at the barbeque on that day which is hanging in his office. Mr. Moore brought a prospect up to the barbeque but, instead of selling lots, the day ended with Mr. Moore having bought five acres in the area where his office now stands and an additional fifteen acres west of the town [in what is now Harlem McBride]. "And that," says Tom Moore, "is how I came to be a resident of Oakland Park."

Families who came to the new town about this time were the R.E. Newtons, Charles Rouse, J.M. Harrison, and J.M. Strickland. The Harry Wimberlys operated the first grocery store in a building north of the present Lloyd's Garage. Later, a store was opened at the corner of Oakland Boulevard [NE 34th Court] and the Dixie by a Mr. Crackenbush while G.S. Goodbread started a grocery business on Ocean Boulevard [Oakland Park Boulevard]. The Crabtrees also operated a store later and Frank Hawkins, Ward Crandall, and Chris Graber came to make their permanent homes.

The first white child born in the little town was to a family of transients. The second child, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Roy Chadwick, was born in 1926 and named Darleen. She became Mrs. Sam Mitchell and with her husband and two children still lives in the town of her birth. [Darleen served for many years as city clerk and city historian.]

During 1924 and 1925, a big pavilion on the west side of Dixie was the scene of many highly publicized lot sales. Dinner was the main attraction, each dinner ticket was a free chance on a lot given away every Sunday after the meal was over.

In those years Sunday School and church services were held in a packinghouse located on the Dixie Highway near Colohatchee [Wilton Manors?]. Its rough pine walls and sawdust floors are remembered by many an Oakland Park youngster of that day.

FLORANADA

In 1925, the American British Improvement Association bought up the land north and east of the town from Arthur Galt, a Chicago attorney. One million dollars were paid down and a balance of six million was to be paid later. Members of the American British Improvement Association included such famous names as James H.R. Cromwell, Edward T. Stotesbury, Mrs. Horace E. Dodge, Samuel M. Vauclain, an ex-king of Greece, the Viscount Molesworth, and the Countess of Lauderdale. Together they established the new town of Floranada, a combination of Florida and Canada. Floranada was incorporated in November 1925 under the mayor commissioner form of government. Its boundaries were the Atlantic Ocean to the east and Route 7 [US 441] on the west, North Fork of Middle River on the south and Cypress Creek on the north. The M.P. Whidby home, north of the present city limits, was selected as temporary headquarters and town hall. Oakland Park merged with the new undertaking and became Floranada.

The imposing list of Floranada's first city officials reads as follows: Mayor-Commissioner James H.R. Grebel and Commissioners Walter A. Hall, Col. Ed St. John Grebel, Col. Wright, and J.D. Hawkins. Mr. Hawkins was the only local man on the commission. The mayor-commissioner form of government was retained, with many changes in personnel, until 1929.

By 1924 and 1925, Logan T. Brown and his family, Homer and Lee Stevens, Ural Tucker, the Crabtrees, and the Charles Zellers, were living in Floranada.

THE FLORIDA LAND BOOM OF THE 1920s

Building operations and real estate speculation was carried on at a fever pitch. The tremendous demand for building supplies, coupled with a freight embargo on the Florida East Coast Railway, resulted in scarcity of all types of materials. Even had the people been aware of a need for hurricane-proof structures, they could not have secured proper lumber and nails. Carelessness was not always the cause of the flimsy construction. Often, one nail did the work of three, because the other two were not available. The little town fairly rang with the sound of hammers as new residents hurriedly erected dwellings on lots purchased in the booming community. Families were living in tents, shacks, flimsy cottages, anywhere there was shelter.

As a sample of the fever pitch of building, it is related by one of the carpenters here at the time that as he went to work in the morning, he noted several men laying out the framework for what

was evidently to be a small dwelling. It was dark that evening when he returned, but imagine his astonishment next day when he passed to see the little building up, its roof on and a tiny porch on which its owner sat in a rocking chair quietly smoking his pipe.

In 1926, Leonard and H.C. Dew had been residents for three years; Ural Tucker operated a general store on the Dixie Highway. Judge Peacock was running a drug and sundry store nearby. Mr. A.N. McCarty had bought the grocery business which had been operated by Thomas Cottrell. Mr. Cottrell acted as postmaster for a brief time in Oakland Park but when Mr. McCarty bought the Cottrell business, he was appointed postmaster also. The Lee Stevens were operating a lunch room called "Mother's Place and Daughter's Pies" and the population of the town was listed at 2,000, the largest it would be for years to come.

OAKLAND PARK METHODIST CHURCH

Oakland Park Methodist Church was organized March 28, 1926, with Rev. W.E. Weare serving as first pastor. Later in the same year, he was succeeded by Rev. Bart Peck. By the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. G.E. Mitchell, the first church building was erected on their property under a three year lease for free. The edifice was constructed in four and one-half days. It is recorded that on Saturday, March 27, 1926, forty-seven volunteers under the direction of Ural Tucker, worked on the building. The ladies prepared a dinner and the men set down to eat. Within an hour the material that had been used for temporary tables was laid down as flooring. Electric lights were installed on that same day and on April 27, 1926, just one month later, the church building was paid for in full and was ready for dedication.

Sad to relate on Saturday, September 18, 1926, less than six months later, the new building was destroyed by a hurricane. The George Bartlett home [1015 NE 35th Street] now occupies the site and his front stepping stones were those used for the church walk.

It was decided to rebuild the church on a new site. A lot at the corner of Adams Street and Hibiscus Avenue [NE 37th Street and Tenth Avenue] was donated by Mr. and Mrs. L.C. Milton. The building committee included W.H. Corson, W.A. Edwards, J.D. Hawkins, G.E. Mitchell, and Lee Stevens. The cornerstone of the new edifice was laid November 21, 1926, and the Spanish style building was started. The adjoining parsonage was completed later.

The congregation consisted of twenty-two members. Rev. G.H. Guy had succeeded Rev. Peck. Mr. Ed Mitchell was first Sunday School superintendent. First Sunday School teachers were Mrs. Homer Stevens and Mrs. Neva Bates. Later, through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. George Fix, neighbors and friends of the church, three building lots opposite the present church site were presented on Jan. 6, 1941, and a pavilion was built on the newly acquired property.

At the present time a new church building with a seating capacity of 300 is being constructed on this site. On March 11, 1951, a ground breaking ceremony was held. The ceremony was attended

by District Superintendent of the South Florida Methodist Conference Dr. J.H. Daniels, the following members of the Church Building Committee: J.B. Fraser, Sr.; J.D. Hawkins; Frank Hawkins; Eustace Orr; Harry White, and members of the congregation with their friends. Following the ceremony, a dinner was served on the church lawn.

WOMAN'S CLUB

During the early years, women from Oakland Park joined the Colohatchee Woman's Club which had its clubhouse near the triangle south of Wilton Manors Drive and Dixie Highway. Each Thanksgiving Day, these women sponsored a community Thanksgiving dinner which many families from the community came, bringing bulging baskets of good things. Long tables were set out under the trees and they sagged under the weight of roast turkeys, ducks, chickens, and all the fixings. The ladies vied with one another as to who could lift the most delectable homemade pies, cakes, and cookies from her basket and set it proudly on the table. No wonder those dinners have been long remembered through the county.

Colohatchee Woman's Club was organized in 1916; county federated in 1922; state federated in 1925. In 1937, the club moved to Oakland Park, still retaining its name of "Colohatchee Woman's Club." Mrs. George Smith, a member since 1928, was the first president of the newly located club.

Sometime later, the name of the club was officially changed to Oakland Park Woman's Club, and in 1951 they sponsored the publishing of the first Oakland Park city directory. They have also cooperated with other groups in sponsoring the Girl Scouts and Brownies who have used the club building for their meetings. At this writing, Oakland Park Woman's Club has a membership of sixty-one and meets on the first and third Wednesdays of the month at 1:30 PM at the Dixie Highway clubhouse. Mrs. Harry K. Powell is president, Mrs. H.C. Dew, first vice-president, Mrs. Charles Krassy, second vice-president, Mrs. A.H. Christensen, recording secretary, Mrs. Ward Crandall, corresponding secretary, Mrs. Harrison Mann, treasurer, Mrs. Earl Smith, financial secretary, Mrs. George Fitch and Mrs. W.J. Palkey are members-at-large.

OAKLAND PARK [ELEMENTARY] SCHOOL

The East Coast Investment Company, connected with the Barkdull Investment Company, donated land on the west side of Oakland Park and a school building was started in 1925. The entire program with the auditorium was completed in 1927. One of the first teachers was Mrs. F.L. Huff, whose husband was a Fort Lauderdale dentist. Mrs. Huff aided the children in presenting several minstrel shows which were highly successful. Members of the cast included Adelaide Matthews, Jo Mildred Hawkins, Betty Fraser, Earl Tucker, and others.

The school building of Spanish architecture was large, light, and airy. No further additions were necessary until 1947 when a new cafeteria with facilities for accommodating sixty children was built east of the auditorium. In 1949, a new annex containing three rooms was constructed south

of the cafeteria and, in 1950, an office for Mrs. Lucile Waters, the principal, was built in the patio. Mrs. Ena Hawkins has managed the cafeteria for the past twelve years. When she became teacher-principal, Mrs. Waters recalls, there were thirty-five pupils and three teachers-Mrs. Loucine Fox, Miss Dudley Hudson, and herself. At present, there are 275 pupils enrolled with nine teachers plus one music and one speech teacher.

At the time Mrs. Huff was interested in the school minstrel, an adult orchestra was organized which gained a good bit of recognition in the county. Some of the musicians were Johnny Graber, Gertrude Stevens, Joe Cunningham, Fred Steibel, Dr. Huff, and Roy Chadwick.

1926 STORM

On September 18, 1926, the granddaddy of all hurricanes struck, its center passing over Miami, leaving a toll of death and destruction over this whole area. People had been warned by the papers that a storm was approaching but they had no conception of a tropical hurricane and made no preparations to meet it. The furious storm found them in matchstick houses, tents, and temporary shacks, and it simply picked these up and blew them away leaving their occupants unprotected in a nightmare of wind and rain. Many of the more imposing buildings suffered but those with the sturdy houses of native pine that went off the blocks or were crushed under fallen trees but held together proved that proper construction could make buildings almost hurricane proof.

Nearly every house in Floranada suffered some damage; many were blown completely away leaving only the floors. The long line of Australian pines which had proudly lined the Dixie Highway from Pompano to Fort Lauderdale lay across the road tangled with communications and power lines.

Those buildings left standing sheltered five and six families each. The Lee Stevens family, struggled down by car from New Smyrna the day after a wild journey over fields, around fallen trees, and through flood waters. They found their home unroofed. The two bedroom house of their daughter, Mrs. Neva Bates, was still intact, but was overflowing with five refugee families who were taking turns cooking on her two burner oil stove.

They learned that there had been no deaths in Oakland Park, probably the most seriously injured was young John Lloyd, whose leg had been badly mangled when he was pinned beneath his father's windmill as it toppled over.

Merchandise in all the stores was drenched, the labels lost or unreadable. So great was the demand for food, however, that these were sold "pig in a poke" and the customers ate whatever they found when they opened their sopping prizes.

“Peaches, ugh!” shudders one Oakland Park woman recalling those days. “It seemed as though every can we managed to buy contained peaches. I never ate so many canned peaches in my life and I’ve hated them ever since.”

THE BUST

1926 marked the end of the land boom, and in the resulting crash, many lost all they possessed. So disheartened and anxious to get away were they, that few made an attempt to salvage part of the wreckage. Those unable or unwilling to leave faced a period of hard times that tried the stoutest hearts.

When the Floranada development was discontinued, all equities were paid in full. This was indeed an unusual procedure for land development companies then. Mr. Grebel resigned his post on the city commission and was replaced by Logan T. Brown. Later, Mayor-Commissioners Cromwell and Commissioner Col. Wright resigned. These two were replaced by J. M. Bailey and J.B. Johns.

At a special election held on November 7, 1927, J. Dewey Hawkins was elected mayor. He held this post for twenty years thereafter. In 1947, he refused to run and was succeeded by Maloy Turbeville, who served one term. In 1949, Mr. Hawkins was again reelected to serve as mayor and in 1951 he was unopposed for that office. Mr. Hawkins’ present term of office will expire in November 1953.

Lee. J. Stevens served as city clerk for a period of twelve years. At the death of Mr. Stevens in 1945, his daughter, Mrs. Eustace Orr, finished his term, under appointment by the mayor. At the end of this time, S.P. Hollinrake was elected, followed by Ira Bartley who died before his term was completed. Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker was appointed to finish Mr. Bartley’s term, when she was elected to serve two following terms. She is, therefore, city clerk at the present time [1952]. Previous to Mr. Stevens, the following men acted as clerks: Edward McCloskey; Luther E. Smith; S. Kenneth Allen; L.W. Cooper; C. Barton Baker; and T.C. Moore.

In June 1929 Floranada was officially reduced in size [by referendum], the present form of city government adopted, and it’s named changed back to Oakland Park. Three years later the federal census revealed a population shrunken to 562. Times were discouraging indeed, folks began to tire of the struggle and long for their northern homes. Some of this homesickness is expressed in a poem, part of which we quote here:

There were royal palms and heaps of much,
Orange groves and fields of truck...
Evening glow in a tropical sky
Morning sun on a sapphire sea
Fern-like foliage and stately tree

Yet the prettiest sight as I set them forth
Is the Dixie Flyer, when she's heading NORTH!

There were those, too, who kept faith in Florida and struggled for better civic improvement. Through cooperation of the citizens and county, the road to the beach [Oakland Park Boulevard once called Ocean Boulevard] was hard surfaced. A bridge which had spanned the Intracoastal Canal at Las Olas was moved up to Oakland Park at the canal where it remains today.

PTA

January, 1926, found Mrs. C.B. Cook from Girard, Pa., organizing the first Oakland Park PTA. The first meeting was called, but none of the mothers seemed to know one another. Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker, wearing a yellow dress, was startled to hear a voice announcing "I nominate that lady over there in a yellow dress as vice-president." Thus, she was nominated and elected. Mrs. Cook had been elected president but served only a month when she moved away. Mrs. Tucker finished Mrs. Cook's term.

Oakland Park PTA has a record of unceasing work for the school of which they have every right to be proud. At the present time, membership includes ninety-three active members and they are working for a new addition to the present group of buildings. During the school term, they meet every first Thursday of the month at three o'clock at the school. Officers include Mrs. Earl Tucker, President, Mrs. James Beckett, Vice President, Mrs. Sidney Jones, Secretary, and Mrs. Paul Wheeler, Treasurer.

VOLUNTEER FIREMEN

J.B. Fraser, Sr., presided over a mass meeting held in city hall Oct. 15, 1941, for the purpose of discussing the organization of volunteer fire department. Thirty-six men became members of the new department that night. Officers elected were: J.B. Fraser, Jr., President; Frank J. Hawkins, Vice President; Ira Bartley, Secretary; U.F. Tucker, Treasurer. Directors were listed as I.J. Kinsey, Floyd Hamilton, C.W. Wilcox, Phillip Booth, and Eustace Orr.

In 1946, cooperating with the city, Oakland Park Volunteer Fire Department began work on a new two-story fire hall, west of the city office. Work was done by volunteers and March 1947, found the floor down and the blocks laid up for the walls but the belt course was yet to be poured. On the second Sunday morning of the month, the firemen awoke to find that a small twister had passed through Oakland Park, toppling their new building to the ground. No other serious damage was done in the town, but the volunteer firemen lost many hours of hard labor. The work was begun anew, however, and the building completed the same year.

The Volunteer Fire Department at the present time has an active membership of fifty-five with ten associate members. They have a women's auxiliary, newly formed, with a membership of thirty-two. The two pumpers, with capacity of 450 gallons each, a booster line of 600 feet, 1000

feet of 2 1/2in hose, are city owned. A new truck was purchased April 17, 1952. During the past year, the volunteers have from their own funds equipped the two trucks with flashlights, boots, axes, etc., a project on which they spent some \$300. At present, they are redecorating the fire hall.

The Volunteer Fire Department meets the second Thursday of the month at 8PM. There are two monthly fire drills, one being a day and the other a night drill.

The career of the present fire chief, Ed Bailey, began in a most unusual manner. When Edward was a youngster, his father was an active volunteer. One evening, the elder Bailey and Ural Tucker prepared to burn off a large stretch of vacant lots on the west side of town. Grown high with weeds and palmettos, they were tinder dry and the two men agreed they would have to be extremely careful to keep their blaze in hand. They did allow young Edward and two or three friends to ride along on the back of the fire truck, however, Edward was given a box of kitchen matches with the instructions that he might pass them out to the boys to light the fires when the men decided just where they wanted to start them. When the truck reached the west end of the big plot, Mr. Bailey and Mr. Tucker stopped to look the situation over. Unfortunately, Edward misunderstood and thinking it was time to pass out his matches, he handed them to the boys, who scrambled down and started several spot fires. So intent were Firemen Bailey and Tucker on their safety plans, they never looked back to see what had happened. In a few moments, they drove to the opposite end of the plot where Edward again carefully doled out matches and the boys delightedly started new fires. Not until then were the first blazes discovered but from then on the situation grew very tense. An hour and a half later, with the assistance of a good many neighbors, the fire was under control. But young Edward Bailey's popularity as assistant volunteer fireman stood at an all-time low.

Chief Bailey never forgot that incident and it is probably one of the factors interesting him in firefighting today. Needless to say, the attitude of the Volunteer Fire Department towards him has improved vastly since the night of the west side's big brush fire.

Officers of the Volunteer Fire Department are: Ralph Green, President; Hubert Hughes, Vice President; John Rankin, Secretary; Leo Holfelner, Treasurer; Edward Bailey, Chief; Fred Judge, Assistant Chief; Dick Martin, Captain; Layton Mainguy, Lieutenant. Directors are Roy Chadwick, Nick Faillace, Ralph Green, and John Barnhill.

BOY SCOUTS

Boy Scout Troop 101 is one of the oldest troops in the county, but is not now active. Mr. Herman Swisher was the last scoutmaster. However, there are eighteen active Explorer Scouts with Joe Lee Goodbread, advisor, at the present time.

Mr. Jack Colquitt is Cub Scout Master at present, assisted by Mr. Bill Karney. Mrs. M. Ken Krassy is treasurer. There are five dens, numbering thirty-five Cub Scouts. Den Mothers are Mrs. Lee Lawson, Mrs. Paul Wheeler, Mrs. Richard Anglin, Mrs. J.W. Colquitt, Mrs. B. E. Roddenberry, Mrs. Sidney Jones, Mrs. Clarence Waterhouse, and Mrs. Richard Humes. Raymond Otis, John Joyner, John and Ronald Colquitt, Ronald Bentley, and Kenneth Long are Den Chiefs.

GIRL SCOUTS

At present there are about seventy-five Girl Scouts in three troops, which includes the Brownies. Ephraim Adkins is the Finance Chairman of the Oakland Park Girl Scout Association. Mrs. L. A. T. Petersen is Neighborhood Chairman. Leaders and co-leaders include Mrs. Bill Stevens, Mrs. Brady McGee, Mrs. Nina Green, Mrs. Paul Wimberly, and Mrs. James Ritchie.

SHUFFLEBOARD

Oakland Park Shuffleboard Club was organized in January, 1941, with a membership of twenty-two. T.C. Moore was the first president. The clubhouse on Northwest First Street [35th Street] and the shuffleboard courts were finished in 1944. Its present membership is eighty-five and its officers include President Harry K. Powell, Vice President W. Earl Smith, Secretary-Treasurer Rose Wisenbuhler [?]. Trustees are Laura Yates, Mr. and Mrs. John Schomer, Lyle E. Tobias, Emil Kaufmann, Martin Echmann, John Savage, Edna Smith, and Charles Heimbach. Each year, a special Christmas dinner is held at the clubhouse and later in the spring, an annual Masonic Dinner.

WORLD WAR II

During the war years a total of fifty-two names were listed on a wooden plaque in front of the post office. However, due to the confused conditions of those times, there were probably many more Oakland Park people in the armed services and the merchant marine. A partial list follows:

John Lloyd
Newton Dominick
Clayton LaBar
Eustace Orr
George E. Smith, Jr.
Robert Smith
Ernest Joshlyn
William L. Holt
Vernon Holt
Luther Holt
Edward Reed
Jack J. Johns
Bill Harrison
Earl Tucker

Clifford Tucker
Allen Bennett
Wilton Hollingsworth
James Ammons
James Harrison
Revis Harrison
Amos Cutice
Elmer Matthews
Al Cherry
Raymond Cherry
Courtland Adkins
Larry Harrington
Dick Humes
Seymour Baumgarten
Bill Stevens
Sam Mitchell
Jack Colquitt
Jack Darch
Robert Mainguy
Jack McLeieer
Arlon McCarty
Roy Griffin
Wallace Griffin
Joe Griffin
James Strickland
Hiram Alderman
William Auld
Robert Street
William Hasenauer
Royce Delegal
James Delegal
Eugene Delegal
Gerald Delegal
Sandford Delegal
Samuel Delegal
Clarence Delegal
Jack Hawkins
Joe Lee Goodbread
Worth Goodbread
Herbert Wimberly
Paul Wimberly

Frank Woodworth
Cecil Orr
Jack Ehrke
Marjorie Harrison
Mary A. Matthews

Danzil Raymond, son of Mrs. Edna Platnik, was killed in action and David Dominick, Jr., lost his life in the merchant marine.

During the war, two contingents of able bodied men, not in the draft, volunteered their services to the Army Engineers. The first group worked in South America for periods up to seven months. Of this group, the late William LaBar was one. Others were Ralph Green, Walter Andrews, Colin and Giles Orr, and Charles Smith. On military mission under the Army Engineers in the Azores for periods up to one year to eighteen months were George and Clarence Wilcox, Joseph Hillerman, John Phillips, George Smith, Leon "Fritz" Groenboom, Walter Andrews, and Ural Tucker. Ural Tucker died in the Azores on November 8, 1944. A military funeral was held and his remains interred in Belgium. The flag which draped his casket was sent to his widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker. In 1950 she donated the flag to the city for use as a park flag.

PLANE SPOTTING

An airplane spotter group [Aircraft Warning Service, AWS] was organized early in the war. Walter Andrews was Chief Observer with Mrs. Andrews acting as assistant chief. At first the Andrews and Charles Hunter families assumed full responsibility for manning the observation tower located on NW First Street near the Andrews home. [According to an interview with Joy Jones the spotting tower was the top of the Hunter family's wash house on NE 35th Street. According to Frances Parnell Salvatore, who was a spotter, the tower was near NE 36th Street and Andrews Avenue.] The tower, unprotected from the weather, was extremely uncomfortable during cold or rainy spells. The telephone was kept under a bucket for protection. As the spotter organization went along with their work, however, better facilities were provided. At the time of Chief Observer Andrews' resignation, Mayor Hawkins took over the spotters group. He divided the town into four sections, appointing a spotter from each section whose duty it was to see that the tower was manned at all times. This method was continued until the end of the emergency.

LIONS CLUB

On July 1, 1947, the newly organized Lions' Club of Oakland Park received its charter, having a list of twenty-two members. Worth Goodbread, President; L.W. Bradley, Vice President; Thomas Moore, Secretary; Ephraim Adams, Treasurer; Allen Bennett, and Tail Twister Fred McCormack.

The Lions' major project has been the development of City Park, and they have all worked wholeheartedly towards that purpose. With the support of the city and community citizens, they

built the pavilion refreshment stand and toilets. They laid roads, built and sodded the baseball diamond, and are now working on tennis courts.

Present officers are President Joe Lee Goodbread, Secretary Everett Bates, Treasurer Edward Zier, Tail Twister Russel Daniel, Lion Tamer M. Barnhill. First, second, and third vice presidents are, in that order: Clark Keebler; W.A. Ryan; and Hiram Alderman. Directors include Lennis Cahill, Worth Goodbread, C.P. Cone; Mitchell Ziegler; and H.C. Dew.

1947 FLOOD

The summer of 1947 brought constant heavy rains so that by August the whole southern part of the state was experiencing high water. Canals overflowed and the land was so sodden it could absorb no more of the continuing downpours. Lake Okeechobee was unnaturally high.

On September 17, 1947, South Florida was again struck by a severe Atlantic hurricane, packing winds up to 155 miles an hour. Its calm center passed over Fort Lauderdale and Oakland Park, the lull lasting about fifty minutes. While there was a great deal of damage to roofs and some buildings were demolished, there was nothing like the havoc of 1926. However, the weather continued constantly raining until October 12th, when a second hurricane passed over Oakland Park from the Gulf. Although its winds were not so heavy, this hurricane brought remarkable displays of thunder and lightning, accompanied by a fifteen inch rainfall. The deluge fell over hundreds of square miles in an area that was already flooded. In the terse words of one newspaper columnist, it was a "rain that would have made even Noah nervous." The resulting flood was the most disastrous in the state's history. Millions of dollars were lost in groves, property, and livestock. At the present time, a huge system of dikes and artificial lakes are being constructed in the glades to prevent a repetition of such a disaster.

FLORANADA CLUB

Oakland Park suffered its share of carnage during 1947's trying months and it was some time before affairs returned to normal. During this period no new clubs were formed but on June 23, 1945, twelve women met at the home of Mrs. Earle Beebe to form the Floranada Club. Mrs. Frederick Hudlett was its first president; Mrs. William Bartley, secretary and treasurer. Mrs. Bill Stevens was co-hostess on this occasion. The Floranada Club now has thirty-six members and is sponsoring Brownie Scout Troops 65 and 98.

BAPTIST CHURCH

On August 29, 1951, a prayer meeting was held in the Oakland Park Woman's Club building which was attended by twenty-five persons interested in establishing a branch Baptist Church in the town. Rev. Terry Thorpe conducted the meeting. It was decided to hold Sunday services each week in the Woman's Club. Later Wednesday evening prayer services were begun. Plans for a new church were drawn up and three lots at the corner of Oakland Boulevard [NE 34th Court] and NW 3rd Avenue [NE 8th Avenue] were purchased. The first building of the church program is now

being completed, with a capacity of about 300. Later, this will serve as a Sunday School. On the building committee are: Charles Morrison, supervisor; E.L. Smith; Henry Crowdus; Palmer Delegal; James Beckett; and Tom Smith. The Oakland Park Baptist group counts its membership at 80.

CITY IMPROVEMENTS

In 1944, the present city hall was completed [on the west side of Dixie Highway] and the city offices moved into it from the Saxon Building. Police Chief John M. Barnhill took up his duties in April 1946. Since that time, five foot sidewalks have been laid in the city the entire length of the Dixie Highway and many new streets have been opened. Since January, 1951, a total of \$30,122.27 has been spent of street improvements.

In the Spring of 1951, the Florida legislature passed a bill expanding Oakland Park's city limits to include Ocean Boulevard [Oakland Park Boulevard] and the undeveloped land east of the city to the beach. [This was later disallowed due to lawsuits by owner Arthur Galt, instead becoming Coral Ridge, part of the City of Fort Lauderdale.]

A new water system, costing in excess of \$220,000 was begun in October, 1951, and completed April, 1952. Water service to Wilton Manors began July of the same year. Oakland Park Water Department is now supplying water to approximately 1,000 families, operating under Superintendent Leon "Fritz" Groenboom.

Present city officials include Mayor J. Dewey Hawkins, Councilman Bill Stevens, T.C. Moore, Frank J. Hawkins, Charles Hunter, and Colly White. City clerk Elizabeth Tucker is assisted by Mrs. Emil Erickson. Mrs. Tucker estimates the present population of the city to be 1500.

OAKLAND PARK

by Ruth Brenner

In The blazing sun of a September afternoon of 1899, just three years after the first train had run from Palm Beach to Miami, a very thin, pale young man arrived at the settlement of Ft. Lauderdale. The traveller was Thomas J. Whidby, 34, come to Florida from Georgia in the hope that the climate would restore health lost while fighting in the Spanish American war. He planned to do some farming if his health permitted but the "big freeze" of that winter discouraged him and he returned to Georgia.

But Tom Whidby couldn't forget Florida and he kept thinking of a piece of land he'd wanted to farm. It was way out in the pine woods between Ft. Lauderdale and Pompano, but people were bound to settle along the new railway. Already a sand road meandered between the two villages; it was when riding up that way with an acquaintance to do a bit of hunting that he'd seen the very place he wanted to build his house.

So in 1901, Thomas Whidby, with Mrs, Whidby, returned and secured their portion of pine and palmetto wilderness, situated in what is now the northeast section of Oakland Park. Tom set about immediately cutting poles from the woods for the frame work of his new home. He sent to Palm Beach for the finishing materials and they were shipped by rail and set off the train almost at his doorstep.

Fifty years later Uncle Tom Whidby, Oakland Park's oldest resident, was still living within a hundred feet of his first home. (The first Mrs. Whidby died in 1927 and Uncle Tom passed away on April 29, 1952 at the age of 86).

But in 1901, the Whidby's were not thinking of the years ahead, they were trying to get the land ready for the fall planting. Imagine their excitement when they learned they had a neighbor. "Had a neighbor" seemed to be the right term for when Tom stumbled into the driftwood house lost in the brush late one afternoon, he found it deserted.

It was several weeks before Mr. Joe Farrell, the owner, who did not make the house his permanent home, returned and stopped by the Whidbys to get acquainted. Mr. Farrell told the Whidby's he had secured the driftwood for his house from the beach in the vicinity of New River Inlet, laboriously floating the pieces up the inlet, with the tide. He then bound them together, towing them up New River with a row boat to a place where he could reach them with a team. From there, the horses with the creaking wagon of driftwood, plodded out the sand trail to Mr. Farrell's plot.

This driftwood house was occupied by the Oscar Wilkerson family when the 1926 hurricane destroyed it. It had been built just north of the present J. J. Fletcher residence on the Dixie Highway.

At this time Mr. Whidby talked to us, he mentioned one other inhabitant of the area in 1901. According to Uncle Tom, "there was an old colored bachelor by the name of Poole. He lived in a little shack off in the woods and helped me with the farm work when he wasn't too busy fishing."

But the Seminoles were friendly and often camped for a month under the shade of Whidby's trees while they hunted and fished. There were thousands of cottontails, swamp rabbits, deer, quail, turkeys, doves, - with wild cats, bears, panthers, and alligators for good measure!

There was then a permanent Seminole camp west of Oakland Park. It is interesting to note that there are five Indian mounds in this vicinity. Rev. Sam Tommie, resident pastor of Baptist Mission, Dania Reservation, whose mother was the last of the great Seminole medicine women, tells us that these mounds were not necessarily used as places of burial. They were pointers toward a spot where the Indians had concealed articles they valued when they left Florida at the close of the Seminole war. They hoped some day to recover the buried articles or send for them, but pitifully few belongings were ever retrieved by their owners.

From Rev. Tommie we also learned that the Seminoles caught many snook in the north branch of "middle river", and so they named it "Salooppee Hatchee" or "Snook River". (Since the Seminoles have no written language, the writer has endeavored to catch the sound of the words as Rev. Tommie spoke them. She did note that his word for waterway seemed nearer "hutsee" than the harsher "hatchee." but she has retained the accepted spelling.)

The South branch of Middle River had a bed of glistening shells, plainly seen through the crystal water. The Indians named this waterway the "Colo Hutsee or Hatchee"; meaning Shell River.

Two miles north of the Whidby place is the creek to which the Seminoles came when they made cypress dug-outs. "Suahkee Hatchee" meaning Cypress Creek, was the Indian name for this stream and we have retained its name until today,

As the seasons passed, Uncle Tom's liking for his Indian neighbors grew into a bond of firm friendship.

"They were good people", declared Uncle Tom. "I trusted them with anything I had and they never disappointed me." He sighed. "Yes, I knew many of the Jumper tribe ... and there was Aunt Annie as she was called...most of the older people I knew so well have passed away".

Then his mind passed to more cheerful memories and he chuckled. " You Know", he said, "I used to ride my bicycle down to Miami once in a while in thoes days. Had to get up early in the morning ride down the one lane road to the big city, When I got my buying done, I'd ride home on the night train. They'd always and put me and my bike off in front of my place here.

"Got in an argument with a fellow I met up with in Miami one day. Got so hot under the wollar, I called him a Yankee and he had me arrested. Judge fined me ten dollars for it, too."

FIRST FAMILIES

So the years passed. Farmers from Jasper, Jennings, Live Oak drifted into the area, planted winter crops, returned north in the summer.

Untile 1915, Dade and Palm Beach Counties joined at Prospect Road, just north of Oakland Park limits. The picnic spot on the beach, south of Lauderdale-bt-the-Sea, called "Boundary Line" marks the spot where the old county line ran. By act of the legislature in 1915, Broward County was formed by taking a part of the two old counties to form the new.

About 1918, the first families moved into the area to build permanent homes. Some of these newcomers were the L.R. Kinseys, the J.M. Baileys, the R.J. McBride family, the G.S. Goodbread family, the J.D. Peacheys.

A bit north were the farms of R.D. Lloyd, the Lindseys, J.W. Luke and George Umstead, Frank and Worth Delegal, Joe Johns, Frank Oliver, R.G. Parnell; Monroe Whidby.

HOW NAMED

In the early part of 1922, Mr. A.T. Barkdull and Mr. and Mrs. Pitt of Skipdull Improvement Company of Miami were driving along the Old Dixie Highway, not yet hard-surfaced, when they observed the building owned by the Southeastern Packing Company on the bank of Middle River. Cattle from the Okeechobee region were floated down here on rafts. It's manager, J. Ben Fraser, who later became president of the Tidewater Construction Company which build the first highway to Key West, was busily inspecting cattle being unloaded.

Mr. Barkdull and the Pitts were discussing the plant as they drove by. They were in the real estate business in Miami and had come to this section for land to start a development.

"There's a packing plant over there. We might start our development here and name the town "Payroll Town", because the employees of the plant must be paid off here," observed Mr. Barkdull.

Mrs. Pitt, after a moment's thought, replied, "see thoes oak trees? Why not call it "Oakland Park; the payroll Town?"

So it was that when the Skipdull Improvement Company, Miami subdivided this area later in 1922, Oakland Park received it's name.

Mr. W. Luke, who was connected with the Skipdull Improvement Company, was the first to call the area Oakland Park.

Mr. T.C. Moore, who was connected with the Skipdull concern at the time, informs us their offices were on N.E. 1st. St., Miami, and they brought prospective buyers up here in cars. He relates that Oakland Park subdivision was officially opened on Feb. 23, 1923, with one of the biggest barbeques ever held in the county. He is very proud of a large photograph taken at the barbeque on that day which is hanging in his office.

Mr. Moore brought a prospect up to the barbeque but, instead of selling lots, the day ended with Mr. Moore having bought five acres in the area where his office now stands (was new shop-- Red Williams) and an additional fifteen acres west of the town - (Harlem McBride.)

"And that", says Tom Moore, real estate salesman, "Is how I came to be a resident of Oakland Park."

Families who came to the new town about this time were the R.E. Newtons, Charles Rouse, J.M. Harrison, J.M. Strickland.

The Harry Wimberleys, operated the first grocery store in a building north of the present Lloyd's garage. Later, a store was opened at the corner of Oakland Park Boulevard and the Dixie by a Mr. Crackenbush while G.S. Goodbread started a grocery business on Ocean Blvd. Crabtrees also operated a store later. (Mary Carter Store)

J.D. and Frank Hawkins, Charles Chadwick, Ward Crandall, and Chris Graber came to make their permanent homes.

The first white child born in the little town was to be a family of transients. The second child, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Roy Chadwick, was named Darleen. She is now Mrs. Sam Mitchell and with her husband and two children still lives in the town of her Birth and is the city City Clerk in the town of her birth.

EARLY SCHOOL

Before Oakland Park Elementary School was Built, Children were taken to school in Ft. Lauderdale in a horse drawn covered wagon driven by Mr. Ed. Brass. Later, the school board purchased a school bus, whose first driver was the present Judge Boyd Anderson. Other drivers were Iriedell (Buck) Kinsey and Owen McBride.

During 1924 and 1925, a big pavillion on the west side was the scene of many publicized lot sales. Dinners were the main attraction, each dinner ticket was a free chance on a lot given away every Sunday after the meal was over.

Sunday School and church services were held in a packing house, located on the Dixie Highway near Colohatchee. Its rough pine walls and sawdust floors are remembered by many an Oakland Park youngster of that day.

FLORANADA

In 1925 the American British Improvement Association brought up the land north and east of the town from Arthur Galt, a Chicago Attorney. One million dollars was paid down and a balance of six million was to be paid later. Members of the American British Association included such famous names as James H.R. Cromwell, Edward T. Stotesbury, Mrs. Horace E. Dodge, Samuel M. Vauclain, an ex-king of Greece, the Viscount Molesworth and the Countess of Lauderdale.

The M.P. Whidby home, north of the present city limits, was selected as temporary headquarters and town hall. Oakland Park merged with the new undertaking and became Floranada.

Floranada was incorporated in November 1925, under the mayor-commissioner form of government. Its boundaries were Cypress creek to the north, Oakland Park Blvd. on the south, the Atlantic Ocean to the east; and Route #7 on the west.

The imposing list of Floranada's first city officials read as follows: Mayor-Commissioner James H.R. Cromwell, and Commissioners, Walter A. Hall, Col. Ed St. John Grebel, Col Wright, and J.D. Hawkins. Mr. Hawkins was the only local man on the commission. The Mayor-commissioner form of government was retained - with many changes in personnel - until 1929.

By 1924 and 1925, Logan T. Brown and his family, Homer and Lee Stevens, Ural Tucker, the Crabtrees and the Charles Zellers were living in Floranada.

BOOM

Building operations and real estate speculation were carried on at fever pitch. The tremendous demand for building supplies, coupled with a freight embargo, resulted in scarcity of all types of materials. Even had the people been aware of need for hurricane proof structures, they could not have secured proper lumber and nails. Carelessness was not always the cause of the flimsy construction. Often, one nail did the work of three, because the other two were not available.

Oakland Park Methodist Church was organized on March 28, 1926 with Rev. W.R. Weare serving as first pastor. Later in the same year, he was succeeded by Rev. Bart Peck.

By the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. G.E. Mitchell, this first church building was erected on their property under a three year lease free. The edifice was constructed in four and one - half days. It is recorded that on Saturday, March 27, 1926, forty seven volunteers, under the direction of Ural Tucker, worked on

the building. The ladies prepared a dinner and the men sat down to eat, Within the hour the material that had been used for temporary tables was nailed down as flooring. Electric lights were installed on that same day and on April 27, 1926, just one month later, the church building was paid for in full and was ready for dedication.

Sad to relate, on Saturday, September 18 1926, less than six months later, the new building was destroyed by a hurricane. The George Bartlett home now occupies the site and his front stepping stones were those used for the church walk.

It was decided immediately to rebuild the church on a new site. A lot at the corner of Adams St. and Hibiscus Ave. was donated by Mr. and Mrs. L.C. Milton. The building committee included W.H. Corson, W.A. Edwards, J.D. Hawkins, G.E. Mitchell. and Lee Stevens. Corner stone of the new edifice was laid Nov. 21, 1926, and the present spanish style building was started. The adjoining parsonage was completed later.

The congregation consisted of twenty-two members. Rev. G.H. Guy had succeeded Rev. Peck. Mr. Ed. Mitchell was first Sunday School Superintendent. First Sunday School teachers were Mrs. Homer Stevens and Mrs. Neva Bates.

Later, through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. George Fix, neighbors and friends of the church, three building lots opposite the present church site, were presented on Jan. 6, 1941 and a pavilion was built on the newly acquired property.

At the present time, a new church building with seating capacity of 300 is being constructed on this site. On March 11, 1951, a ground breaking ceremony was held. The ceremony was attended by District Superintendent of the South Florida Methodist Conference Dr. J.H, Daniels, the following members of the Church

SW ←
NE 10th AVE
NE 37th St
↗

NE ← 8th

building committee, J.B. Fraser Sr., J.D. Hawkins, Frank Hawkins, Eustace Orr, Harry White and members of the congregation with their friends. Following the ceremony, a dinner was served on the church lawn.

WOMEN'S CLUB

During the early years, women from Oakland Park joined Colohatchee Women's club which had its clubhouse near the triangle south of Wilton Manor Drive and Old Dixie Highway. Each Thanksgiving Dinner to which many families from the community came, bringing bulging baskets of good things. Long tables were set out under the trees and they sagged under the weight of roast turkeys, ducks chickens, and all the fixins. The ladies vied with one another as who could lift the most delectable homemade pies, cakes, and cookies from her basket and set it proudly on the table. No wonder those dinners have been long remembered throughout the county!

Colohatchee Women's Club was organized in 1916; county federated in 1922; state federated in 1925. In 1937, the club moved to Oakland Park, still retaining its name of "Colohatchee Women's Club". Mrs. George Smith, a member since 1928, was the first president of the newly located club.

Some time later, the city offered the Women's Club the use of lots on the Dixie Highway, where the present club house now stands. The club members are discussing plans for the construction of a new building.

In 1950, the name of the Women's club was officially changed to Oakland Park Women's Club and in 1951 they sponsored the publishing of the first Oakland Park City Directory. At the present time, the womens club is planning publication of a 1953 Directory.

They have also cooperated with other groups in sponsoring the Girl Scouts and Brownies who have used the club building for their meetings. At this writing, Oakland Park Women's Club has a membership of 61 and meets on the first and third wednesdays of the month at 1;30 p.m. at the Dixie Highway Clubhouse. Mrs. Harry K Powell is president, Mrs. H.C. Dew first Vice President, Mrs. Charles Krassy, second Vice President, Mrs. A.H. Christensen, Rec Secretary, Mrs. Ward Crandall, Corresponding Secretary, Mrs. Harrison Mann, Treasurer, Mrs. Earl Smith, Finiancial Secretary. Mrs. George Ftich and Mrs. W,J. Palkey are listed as members at large.

SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT

The East Coast Improvement Company, connected with the Skipdull concern, donated land on the west side of the park and a school building was started in 1925. The entire program with the auditorium was completed by 1927. One of the first teachers was Mrs. F.L. Huff, whose husband was a Fort Lauderdale dentist.

Mrs. Huff aided the children in presenting several minstrel shows which were highly successful. Members of the casts included Adelaide Matthews, Jo Mildred Hawkins, Betty Fraser, Earl Rucker and many others.

The School building of Spanish architecture was large, light, and airy. No further additions were necessary until 1947 when a new cafeteria with facilities for accommodating sixty children, was built east of the auditorium. In 1949, an annex containing three rooms was constructed south of the cafeteria and in 1950 an office for Mrs. Lucile Waters, the principal, was built in the patio.

Mrs. Waters informs us that she has been school principal and Mrs. Ena Hawkins has managed the cafeteria for the past twelve years.

When she became teacher-principal, Mrs. Waters recalls, there were thirty-five pupils and three teachers - Mrs. Loucine Fox, Miss Dudley Hudson, and herself. At present, there are 275 pupils enrolled with nine teachers plus one music and one speech teacher.

at the time Mrs. Huff was interested in the school minstrels, an adult orchestra was organized which gained a good bit of recognition in the county. Some of the musicians were Johnny Graber, Gertrude Stevens, Joe Cunningham, Fred Steibel, Dr. Huff, and Roy Chadwick.

In 1926, Leonard and H.C. Dew had been residents for three years Ural Tucker operated a general store on the Dixie Highway, Judge Peacock was running a drug and sundry store nearby. Mrs. A.N. McCarty bought the had bought the grocery business which had been operated by Thomas Cottrell. Mr. Cottrell acted as postmaster for a brief time in Oakland Park but when Mr. McCarty bought the Cottrell business, he was appointed postmaster, also. Thr Lee Stevens were operating a lunch room called "Mothers Place and Daughters Pies", and the population of the town was listed at 2,000, the largest it would be for years to come.

The little town fairly rang with the sound of hammers as new residents hurriedly erected dwellings on lots purchased in the booming community. Families were living in tents, shacks, flimsy "cottages" anywhere there was shelter.

As a sample of the fever pitch of building, it is related by one of the carpenters here at the time that as he went to work in the morning, he noted several men laying out the framework for what was to be a small dwelling. It was dark that evening when he returned, but imagine his astonishment next day when he passed to see the little building up, its roof on and a tiny porch on which its owner sat in a rocking chair quietly smoking his pipe!

1926 STORM

But on September 18, 1926, during the time of full moon, the granddaddy of all hurricanes struck, its center passing over Miami, leaving a toll of death and destruction over this whole area.

People had been warned by the papers that a storm was approaching but they had no conception of a tropical hurricane and made no preparations to meet it. The furious storm found them in matchstick houses, tents, temporary shacks and it simply picked these up and blew them away leaving their occupants unprotected in a nightmare of wind and rain. Many of the more imposing buildings suffered but these, with the sturdy houses of native pine that went off the blocks or were crushed under fallen trees but held together, proved that proper construction could make buildings almost hurricane proof.

Nearly every house in Floranada suffered some damage; many were blown completely away, leaving only floors. The long line of Australian pines which had proudly lined the Dixie Highway from Pompano to Fort Lauderdale, lay across the road tangled with communications and power lines.

Thoes buildings left standing sheltered five and six families each. The Lee Stevens family, struggling down by car from New Smyrna the day after the storm arrived after a wild journey over fields, around fallen trees, through flood waters. They found their own home unroofed. The two bedroom house of their daughter Mrs. Neva Bates, was still intact, but was overflowing with five refugee families who were taking turns cooking on her two burner oil stove.

They learned that there had been no deaths in Oakland Park, probably the most seriously injured was young John Lloyd, whose leg had been badly mangled when he was pinned beneath hes father's

windmill as it toppled over.

Merchandise in all stores was drenched, the labels lost or unreadable. So great was the demand for food, however, that these were sold "pig in a poke", and the customers ate whatever they found when they opened their sopping prizes.

"Peaches, Ugh!", shudders one Oakland Park woman recalling those days. "It seemed as though every can we managed to buy contained peaches. I never ate so many canned peaches in my life and I've hated them ever since!"

BUST

1926 marked the end of the land boom, and in the resulting crash, many lost all they possessed. So disheartened and anxious to get away were they, that few made any attempt to salvage part of the wreckage. Those unable or unwilling to leave, faced a period of hard times that tried the stoutest hearts.

When Floranada development was discontinued, allequities were paid in full. This was indeed an unusual procedure for land development companies then.

Mr. Grabel resigned his post on the city commission and was replaced by Logan T. Brown. Later, Mayor-Commissioner Cromwell and Commissioner Col. Wright resigned. These two were replaced by J.M. Bailey and J.B. Johns.

CITY OFFICERS

At a special election held on November 7, 1927, J. Dewey Hawkins was elected mayor. He held this post for twenty years thereafter. In 1947, he refused to run and was succeeded by Maloy Turberville, who served one term. In 1949, Mr. Hawkins was again reelected to serve as mayor, and in 1951 he was unopposed for that office. Mr. Hawkins present term of office will expire

in November 1953.

Lee J. Stevens served as city clerk for a period of twelve years. At the death of Mr. Stevens in 1945, his daughter, Mrs. Eustace Orr finished his term, under appointment by the mayor. At the end of this time, S.P. Hollinrake was elected, followed by Ira Bartley who died before his term was completed. Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker was appointed to finish Mr. Bartley's term when she was elected to serve two following terms. She is therefore, City Clerk at the present time,

Previous to Mr. Stevens, the following men acted as clerks, Edward McCloskey, Luther E. Smith, S. Kenneth Allen, L.W. Cooper C. Barton Baker, and T.C. Moore.

In 1929, Floranada was officially reduced in size, the present form of city government adopted and its name changed back to Oakland Park. Three years later, the Federal Census revealed a population shrunken to 562 (white).

Times were discouraging indeed, folks began to tire of the struggle and long for their northern homes. Some of this homesickness is expressed in a poem part of which we quote here.

"There were Royal Palms and heaps of muck,
Orange groves and fields of truck.....
Evening glow in a tropical sky,
Colors never carried by painters eye;
Morning sun on a sapphire sea,
Fern-like foliage and stately tree,
Yet, the prettiest sight as I set them forth,
Is the Dixie Flyer, WHEN SHE'S HEADIN' NORTH!"

There were thoes too, who kept faith in Florida and struggled for Civic betterment. Through cooperation of the citizens and county, the road to the beach was hard-surfaced. A bridge which had spanned the intercoastal Canal at Las Olas was moved up to Oakland Park at the canal where it remains in service today.

P.T.A.

January 1926, found Mrs. C.B. Cook from Girard, Pa., organizing the first Oakland Park P.T.A. The first meeting was called, but none of the mothers seemed to know one another. Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker, wearing a yellow dress, was startled to hear a voice announcing." I nominate that lady over there in a yellow dress as vice president!" Thus, she was nominated and elected. Mrs. Cook had been elected President but served only a month when she moved away. Mrs. Tucker finished Mrs. Cook's Term.

Oakland Park P.T.A. has a record of unceasing work for the school of which they have every right to be proud. At the present time, membership includes ninety-three active members and they are working for a new addition to the present group of buildings.

During the school term, they meet every thursday of the month at three o'clock at the school. Officers include Mrs. Earl Tucker, President, Mrs. James Beckett, Vice President, Mrs. Sidney Jones, Secretary, and Mrs. Paul Wheeler, Treasurer.

VOLUNTER FIRMEN

J.B.Fraser, Sr., presided over a mass meeting held in City Hall, Oct. 15, 1941, for the purpose of discussing the organization of a voluntary Fire department. Thirty-six men became members of the new department on that night. Officers elected were J.B. Frase, Jr., President, Frank J. Hawkins, Vice President Ira Bartley, Secretary; U.F. Tucker, Treasurer.

Directors were listed as I.J. Kinsey, Floyd Hamilton, C.W. Wilcox, Phillip Booth and Eustace Orr.

In 1946, cooperating with the city, Oakland Park volunteer Fire Department began work on a two story fire hall, west of the City Office. Work was done by volunteers and March, 1947, found the floor down and the blocks laid up for the walls, but the belt course was not yet poured. On the second Sunday of the month the fireman awoke to find that a small twister had passed through the Park, toppling their new building to the ground. No other serious damage was done in the town, but the volunteer fireman lost many hours of hard labor. The work was begun anew, however, and the building completed the same year.

The volunteer Fire Department at the present time has an active membership of 35, with ten associate members. They have a women's auxiliary, newly formed, with a membership of 32. The two pumpers, with capacity of 450 gallons each, a booster line of 600 feet, 1000 feet of 2½" hose, 200 feet 1½" hose, are city-owned. A new truck was purchased on April 17, 1952.

During the past year, the volunteers have from their own funds, equipped the two trucks with flashlights, boots, axes, etc., a project on which they spent some \$300. At present, they are redecorating the Fire hall.

The Volunteer Fire Department meets the second Thursday of the month at 8:00 p.m. There are two monthly fire drills each month, one being a day and the other a night drill.

The career of the present Fire Chief, Edward Bailey, began in a most unusual manner. When Edward was a youngster, his father was an active Volunteer. One evening, the elder Bailey and Ural Tucker prepared to burn off a large stretch of vacant lots on the west side of town.

Grown high with weeds and palmettos, they were tinder dry, and the two men agreed they would have to be extremely careful to keep their blaze in hand.

They did allow young Edward and two or three friends to ride along on the back of the fire truck, however. Edward was given a box of big kitchen matches, with the instructions that he might pass them out to the boys to light the fires when the men decided just where they wanted to start them.

When the truck reached the west end of the big plot, Mr. Bailey and Mr. Tucker stopped to look the situation over. Unfortunately, Edward misunderstood and, thinking it was time to pass out his matches, he handed them to the boys who scrambled down and started several spot fires.

So intent were Firmen Bailey and Tucker on their safety plans, they never looked back to see what had happened. In a few moments, they drove to the opposite end of the plot where Edward again carefully doled out matches and the boys delightedly started new fires. Not until then were the first blazes discovered, but from then on the situation grew very tense.

An hour and a half later, with the assistance of a good many neighbors, the fire was under control. But young Edward Bailey's popularity as assistant volunteer fireman stood at an all-time low.

Chief Bailey never forgot that incident and it is probably one of the factors interesting him in fire fighting today. Needless to say, the attitude of the Volunteer fire department toward him had improved vastly since the night of the west sides big brush fire.

Officers of the Volunteer Fire Department are Ralph Green, President, ..Hubert Hughes, Vice-President...John Rankin, Sec.

Leo Holfelner, Treasurer...Edward Bailey, Chief...Fred Judge, Ass't. Chief...Dick Martin, Captain...Layton Mainguy, Lt.,...Directors are Roy Chadwick, Nick Faillace, Ralph Green, and John Burnhill.

BOY SCOUTS

Boy Scout Troop # 101 is one of the oldest troops in the county, but is not now active. Mr. Herman Swisher was the last scoutmaster. However, there are 18, active Explorer Scouts with Joe Lee Goodbread, Adviser, at the present time.

Mr Colquitt is Cub Master at present, assisted by Mr. Bill Karley. Mrs. Ken Krassey is treasure. There are five dens, numbering thirty five cub scouts. Den mothers are Mrs. Lee Lawson, Mrs. Paul Wheeler, Mrs. Richard Anglin, Mrs. J.W. Colquitt, Mrs. H.E. Roddenberry, Mrs Sidney Jones, Mrs. Clarence Waterhouse, and Mrs. Richard Humes.

Raymond Otis John Joyner, John and Ronald Bentley, and Kenneth Long are Den Chiefs.

GIRL SCOUTS

At present, there are about 75 Girl Scouts in three troops, which includes the Brownies. Ephraim Adkins is finance chairman, of the Oakland Park Girl Scout Association. Mrs. L.A.T. Petersen, is Neighborhood Chairman. Leaders and co-leaders include Mrs. Bill Stevens, Mrs. Brady McGee, Mrs. Nina Green, Mrs. Paul Wimberley and Mrs. James Ritchie.

SHUFFLEBOARD

Oakland Park shuffle board club was organized in January, 1941 with a membership of twenty-two. T.C. Moore was first president. The club house on N.W. 1st St., and the shuffleboard courts were finished in 1944. Its present membership is eighty-five and its officers include President; Harry K. Powell, Vice President; W. Earl Smith, Secretary;

Secretary - Treasure, Rose Widmer Wisenbohrer, Trustees are Laura Yates, Mr. & Mrs. John Schomer, Lyle E. Tobias, Emil Kauffman, Martin Eichman, John Savage, Edna Smith and Charles Heimbach. Each Year a special christmas dinner is held at the Club house and, later in spring an annual Masonic dinner.

SERVICEMEN

During the war years, a total of fifty-two names were listed on a wooden plaque in front of the post office. However, due to the confused conditions of thoes times, there were probabky many more Oakland Park people in the armed services and the Merchant Marines. A Partial list follows.

Royce, Palmer, Eugene, Gerald, Sanford, Samuel, and Clarence Delegal
 Marjorie Harrison WAC Mary A. Matthews WAVE

John Eloyd	Newton Dominick	Clayton LaBar
Eustace Orr	George E. Smith Jr.	Robert Smith
Ernest Joshlyn	William L Holt	Vernon Holt
Edward Reed	Jack J Johns	Billy Harrison
Earl Tucker	Clifford Tucker	Allen Bennett
Winton Hollingsworth	James Ammons	James Harrison
Revis Harrison	Amos Curtice	Elmer Matthews
Al Cherry	Raymond Cherry	Courtland Adkins
Larry Harrington	Dick Humes	Seymour Baumgartner
Bill Stevens	Sam Mitchell	Jack Colquitt
Jack Darch	Robert Mainguy	Jack McLeleer
Arlon McCarty	Roy Griffin	Wallace Griffin
Joe Griffin	James Strickland	Hiram Alderman
William Auld	Robert Street	William Hasenauer
Jack Hawkins	Joe Lee Goodbread	Worth Goodbread
Herbert Wimberley	Paul Wimberely	Frank Woodworth
Cecil Orr	Jack Ehrke	

Danzil Raymond, son of Mrs. Edna Platnik was killed in action, and David Dominick Jr., Lost his life in the Merchant Marines.

During the war two contingents of able bodied men, not in the draft, volunteered their services to the army engineers. The first group worked in South America for periods up to seven months. Of this group, the late William La Bar was one. Others were Ralph Green, Walter Andrews, Colin and Giles Orr and Charles Smith.

On Military mission under the army engineers in the Azores for periods from one year to eighteen months were George and Clarence Wilcox, Joseph Hillerman, John Phillips, George Smith, Leon "Fritz" Groenboom, Walter Andrews, and Ural Tucker.

Ural Tucker died in the Azores on November 8, 1944. A military funeral was held and his remains interred in Belgium. The flag which draped his casket was sent to his widow, Mrs. Elizabeth Tucker. 1950 she donated the flag to the city for use as a park flag.

AIRPLANE SPOTTING

An airplane spotter group was organized early in the war, Walter Andrews being Chief Observer, with Mrs. Andrews acting as Assistant Chief. At first, the Andrews and Charles Hunter Families assumed full responsibility for manning the Observation tower located on N.W. 1st St., near the Andrews home. The tower unprotected from the weather, was extremely uncomfortable during cold or rainy spells. The telephone was kept under a bucket for protection. As the spotter organization went along with their work, however, better facilities were provided. At the time of Chief Observer Andrew's resignation, Mayor Hawkins took over the spotters Group. He divided the town into four sections, appointing a spotter from each section whose duty it was to

see that the tower was manned at all times. This method was continued until the end of the emergency.

POST OFFICE

In 1941, a new post office was completed on Dixie Highway. Previously, a portion of the Saxon Building had served as post office. Mrs. Mildred Delegal has been postmaster since a few months prior to the completion of the new building. But so rapidly has Oakland Park's population grown in the past few years, that a larger building is sorely needed and citizens are now working toward that end.

LIONS

On July 1, 1947, the newly organized Lion's Club of Oakland Park received its charter, having a list of twenty-two members. Worth Goodbread, president..L.W. Bradely, Vice president.. Thomas Moore, Secretary... Ephraim Adkins, Treasure... Allen Bennett and Tail Twister Fred McCormack.

The Lion's major project has been the development of city park, and they have all worked wholeheartedly toward that purpose. With the support of the city, community of citizens, they built the pavilion, refreshment stand, and toilets. They laid roads built and sodded the baseball diamond, and are now working on tennis courts.

Present officers, are President; Joe Lee Goodbread... Secretary Everett Battes, treasure.. Edward Zier, Tail Twister, Russell Daniels, Lion Tamer, J.M. Barnhill. First, second and third Vice Presidents are, in that order, Clark Keebler, W.A. Ryan and Hiram Alderman. Directors include Lennie Cahill, Worth Goodbread, C.R. Cone, Mitchell Ziglger, H C Dew.

1947 Storm

The summer of 1947 brought constant heavy rains so that by

August the whole southern part of the state was experiencing high water. Canals overflowed, the land was so sodden it could absorb no more of the continuing down pours, Lake Okeechobee was abnormally high,

On September 17, 1947, south Florida was again struck by a sever Atlantic Hurricane, packing winds up to 155 miles an hour. Its calm center passed over Fort Lauderdale and Oakland Park, the lull lasting about fifty minutes. While there was a great deal of damage to roofs and some buildings were demolished, there was nothing like the havoc of 1926.

However, the weather continued constantly rainy until October 12th, when a second hurricane passed over Oakland Park from the Gulf. Although its winds were not so heavy, this hurricane brought remarkable displays of thunder and lighting, accompanied by a fifteen inch rainfall. The deluge fell over hundreds of square miles in an area which was already flooded! In the terse words of words of one newspaper columnist, it was a "rain that would have even made Noah nervous!"

The resulting flood was most diastrous in the State's history. Millions of dollars ate lost in groves, property and live stock.

At the present time, a huge system of dikes and artificial lakes are being constructed in the glades to prevent a repetition of such disaster.

Oakland Park suffered its share of damage during 1947's trying months and it was some time before affairs returned to normal. During this period, no new clubs were formed, but on June 23, 1945, twelve women women met at the home of Mrs. Earl Beebe to form the Floranada Club. Mrs. Frederick Hudlett was its first President;..Mrs. William Karley, secretary.and treasure. Mrs. Bill Stevens was co-hostess on that occasion. The Floranada Club now has thirty-six members and is sponsering Brownie Scout

troops 65 and 98.

BAPTIST CHURCH

On August 29, 1951, a prayer meeting was held in the Oakland Park Women's club building, which was attended by twenty-five persons interested in establishing a branch Baptist church in the town. Rev. Terry Thorpe conducted the meeting. It was decided to hold Sunday services each week in the women's club. Later a Wednesday evening prayer service were begun. Plans for a new church were drawn up and three lots at the corner of Oakland Park Blvd. and N.W. 3rd. Ave., were purchased. The first building of the church program is now being completed with a capacity of about 300. Later, this will serve as Sunday School. On the building committee, are Charles Morrison, Supervisor.. E.L. Smith, Henry Crowdue, Palmer Delegal, James Beckett and Tom Smith. The Oakland Park Baptist group counts its membership at 80.

CITY IMPROVEMENTS

In 1944, the present City Hall was completed and the city offices moved into it from Saxon Building. Police Chief John M Barnhill, took up his duties in April, 1946.

Since that time five foot of sidewalks have been laid in the city the entire length of Dixie Highway. Many new streets have been opened. Since January 1951, a total of \$30,122.27 has been spent on street improvements.

In the spring of 1951, the Florida Legislature passed a bill extending Oakland Park's city limits to include Ocean Blvd. Park and the undeveloped land east of the city to the beach. A new water system, costing in excess of \$220,000, was begun on October 1951 and completed April, 1952. Water services to Wilton Manors began July, of the same year. Oakland Park water

Department is now supplying water to approximately 1,000 families operating under Water Superintendent Leon "Fritz" Groenboom.

Present city officials include Mayor J. Dewey Hanks, Councilmen Bill Stevens, T.C. Moore, Frank J. Hawkins, Charles Hunter and Colley White.

City Clerk Elizabeth Tucker is assisted by Mrs. Emil Erickson. Mrs. Tucker estimates the present population of the city to be 1,500.

Mrs. Sam Brenner

1001 N.E. 38

Oakland park