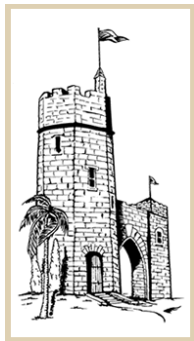


This is a compilation of various articles about Neville and Roy McJunkin, early Wilton Manors pioneers. The primary source of the information is from various McJunkin family members.



WILTON MANORS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

HISTORICAL NOTES

2017/2022

Neville and Roy McJunkin

Revised by Mary Ulm 2022
Wilton Manors Historical Society

The McJunkin Brothers

By Mrs. J.M. McJunkin, daughter-in-law of Neville McJunkin, 1978

A flip of a coin decided the fortunes of Neville and Roy McJunkin, aged 19 and 21, the South Carolina brothers who were "The Gold Dust Twins" to their peers. They had just finished a job for the Appalachian Apple Orchard in North Georgia and were waiting for a train in the little station at Cornelia. They had the promise of another job further north in Virginia and the train was due in 30 minutes, but in 10 minutes the Southern was due heading south. Young and adventuresome, they flipped a coin. This time the South won!

At Jacksonville they changed trains, and the Coastline brought them on down to Tavares arriving after dark. They found a boarding house and went to bed.

Next morning, they were surprised by the large number of buzzards that were roosting on the roof tops. Surprise turned to dismay when they learned that all the drinking water came from cisterns that caught the rain water from the roofs. They drank no water their entire stay, but drank only "sody water".

Roy got a job working fruit across Little Lake Harris and rowed back and forth to work. Neville worked in a small grocery store. The alcoholic owner of the store was having a struggle making a go of it because of poor management and carrying people on the books". He got out his accounts and went over them with Neville. There was over \$250,000.00 in unpaid accounts for Neville to try to collect. The old man went down the list -- "old man Blake is dead - cross him off. Sam Howell has moved to Oklahoma - cross him off" - and so on down the list. Finally, the practical amount was reduced to \$2,500.00 and Neville set out with the revised list to pry some money out of these people. At the end of a long day, he came back with one - one dollar bill!

When the owner's daughter began reaching in the till without her father's knowledge, Neville decided it was time to change jobs and joined Roy's crew in the orange grove across Little Lake Harris. When the crop was packed, they came on down to Fort Lauderdale for the winter of 1912.

Fort Lauderdale had one paved street 2 blocks long and the alligators roamed that at night.

They both found work with Southern Growers which was farming a stretch of land in what is now Oakland Park between Old Dixie and Federal Hwy. The boss allowed them and 3 other boys who were working for him to camp in the loft of his packing house. Its peaked roof was too low for standing upright except right in the very center. For a time, the mule slept downstairs or rather

down ladder while they slept in their cots overhead.

The spring of 1913 found Neville running a tomato packing house for the settlement of Japanese farmers on Yamato Road, Palm Beach County. They were very honorable, good farmers, and easy to get along with.

When World War I broke out in 1914, Neville went home to Carolina to volunteer, but was turned down for poor eyesight. Sight failure had already caused him to withdraw from the College of Charleston before his first year was over--cancelling his plans to become a doctor. Not to be outdone, he applied at another enlistment center and when that doctor also wrote a negative eye report and gave it to him to take back to the sergeant, he tore up the paper as he was crossing the compound, reported for duty, and served in France where he became a 3 stripe Sergeant and was in officers' training camp in France at the time of the Armistice.

Roy was deferred because of his farming. In 1919 he bought The Post Card Shop on Brickell Avenue (NOW. 1st Ave.) from Lucian Craig for \$1650. This price included 2 pianos (one a player), 2 typewriters, desks, chairs, show cases and the stock of merchandise (magazines, office supplies). He housed the postal telegraph service, a desk for D. C. Alexander's real estate business, the *Miami Herald* and sold everything from typewriters to refrigerators. He and Myrtle (Shealy) had no children but became "Uncle Roy" and "Aunt Myrtle" to the whole community. The Post Card Shop moved from Brickell to Andrews, to Las Olas, to S. E. 1st Street before it was finally sold in the late 1940s.

The summer of 1919 saw Neville discharged from service and heading toward Colohatchee with his wife Jessie (Pitts) and baby Kathryn. For the first time now, he farmed on his own on the south side of Middle River from what is now the N. E. 4th Avenue Fort Lauderdale High School parking lot to Andrews Avenue Extension. He grew tomatoes, peppers, eggplant and beans.

For years he would farm in Broward County during the winter and follow the fruit crops and run packing houses in the summer. Times were hard, and at one time, his sole possession, besides a wife and 2 small children, was a one-eyed mule.

Finally, through hard work and close management, Lady Luck began to pay off, and the one-eyed mule transformed into tractors, and spreading farm acres increased for both brothers.

Joseph Neville McJunkin died July 8, 1988. He would have been 95 on August 9 of that year. He was active and alert until just a few weeks before his death. He had sustained a broken hip; complications followed. At his funeral, Mr. Dwight Rogers, local attorney commented, "Mr. McJunkin's death is the end of an era."

Joseph Neville McJunkin, 95, Pioneer Broward Farmer

Sun-Sentinel Obituary, July 9, 1988, By Ray Lynch, Staff Writer

Joseph Neville McJunkin, a pioneer Broward County farmer who moved to Florida in 1911 after losing a bet, died at his home in Wilton Manors on Thursday. He was 94.

As the family story goes, Mr. McJunkin, then 19, was picking apples in north Georgia when he and his brother, Roy, 21, started looking about for more work.

Roy wanted to go to Florida but Neville insisted they head north to Virginia. A coin was tossed and brother Roy won the bet, said Mr. McJunkin's daughter, Jerry Lee Jones.

The brothers, nicknamed the "Gold Dust Twins," were soon camped out at Little Lake Harris in Central Florida, running a citrus picking crew and packing the fruit near Eustis in Lake County.

A year later, the brothers were living and working in the Fort Lauderdale area. Roy McJunkin, who died in 1979, didn't like farming and eventually had a store and managed a school cafeteria in town.

But "Daddy liked to farm," Jones said.

As the years went by, Mr. McJunkin, who fought in France during World War I, squatted on land, then rented or bought it. He also sharecropped, often buying the property later on. He camped out in what is now Wilton Manors for several years before moving into Fort Lauderdale where his wife, Jessie, raised their children. Jessie McJunkin died in 1981. The couple had been married 64 years.

Using a mule and plow, Mr. McJunkin planted beans, tomatoes, eggplants, cucumbers and other winter vegetables on several sites, including land that is now the entrance to the Fort Lauderdale- Hollywood International Airport, in Parkland where the Cypress Head development is located and between the Hillsboro Canal and Holmberg Road on the west side of State Road 7.

A granddaughter once asked Mr. McJunkin why he hadn't bought oceanfront land when he'd had a chance. He thought a while, then answered: "Beans don't grow very well on the salty sand," Jones said.

After his son, Morgan, returned from service in World War II and took over much of the farming duties, Mr. McJunkin began to take it easy.

"He only worked 10, 12 hours a day instead of 14, 16 or 18," said his daughter.

"I worked hard back in the old days," Mr. McJunkin said in a 1978 interview. "People say the old days were miserable. If I was miserable, I didn't know it."

Most of Mr. McJunkin's farmland is now developed, a point that irritated him 10 years ago.

Honored as a pioneer by the Broward Historical Commission in 1978, Mr. McJunkin said: "Growth has been too fast. The developers have taken away all of the land from the farmers. They have driven us out and subdivided everything."

Survivors include two daughters, Jones of South Carolina and Kathryn Brown of California; his son, Morgan of Fort Lauderdale; 11 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

Services will be at 8 p.m. today at Fairchild North Federal Funeral Home in Fort Lauderdale.

McJunkins of Wilton Manors by Georg McJunkin, as told to Mary Ulm, 2019

Georg McJunkin, the grandson of J.N. McJunkin, was raised in a house across the street from his grand-father. His great-uncle, Roy McJunkin, lived about a block away in the 1960s, as did several of the other family members mentioned herein. Footnoted material is from the research of Mary Ulm.

Roy McJunkin (1891 – 1979) married **Myrtle Shealy** (1894 – 1965). They had no children, but were known commonly within Wilton Manors as "Uncle Roy" and "Aunt Myrtle".

Roy farmed from 1912 – 1919. In 1919 he purchased a post card shop in Fort Lauderdale, which he ran until the late 1940s. Seminole Indians had a trading camp on the New River near his store. The Indians would trade venison they caught for the tobacco that Roy sold in his shop. Roy returned to farming in the 1940s on land he purchased near J.N.'s farmland within an area considered part of today's Parkland.

Myrtle was active in the Women's groups of a prominent church downtown and there are numerous listings of her name in the *Fort Lauderdale News* during the 1940s as the weekly host of such. The 1940 census shows the address of the couple as 525 N.E. 2nd St., Fort Lauderdale.

Roy and Myrtle moved to Wilton Manors in the early 1960s. They resided at 549 NE 21st Court, which was a house Georg has been told was built by Dave Turner, the first Mayor of Wilton Manors. They lived there until their respective deaths sometime in the 1980s.

Joseph Neville McJunkin

Joseph Neville McJunkin (J.N.) (1893 – 1988) married **Jessie Moselle Pitts** in 1917. The couple had a son and two daughters: **Joseph Morgan** (1921 – 2018), **Katheryn Neville Brown** (1919 – 2016), and **Jerri Lee Jones**.

J.N. turned to farming after he was forced to give up his studies to become a physician due to poor eyesight. His first jobs were in fruit packing operations. He later turned to farming full-time and ran up to five farms at once. One of his packing house jobs was near the Colohatchee railroad station at N. E. 24th Street and Dixie Highway. Georg recalls his grandfather talking about farmers bringing their crops to the station on ox sledges. The softness of the sand would not allow travel by wheeled carts.

J. N. and Jessie lived at 644 N.E. 22nd Drive. In addition to the Broward County holdings listed herein, he owned a 95-acre bean field that became Bradley Field¹ and is the site of today's Mills Pond Park.

Within Wilton Manors he owned land that was eventually developed into Edgewater Estates², Edgewater Estates Amended, property that once was the site of the Science of the Mind Church (southeast corner of NE 26th St. and NE 15th Ave.), the lot where CVS drugstore is located today (southeast corner of NE 26th St. and Dixie Highway), and most of the land bounded by Wilton Drive to the west, N. E. 21st Ct. to the south, N. E. 7th Ave. to the north, and N. E. 20th Drive to the east.

J. N. McJunkin was a shrewd businessman, but maintained a sense of fairness. E. Grothan, one of the largest and most successful tomato growers in South Florida was mentor to J. N. and helped him make the transition from fruit packing to farming. When Grothan decided to sell his tomato farm to J. N., he offered a price at the closing that was too low, in J. N.'s view. So, J. N. argued him up.

The March 30, 1970 *Fort Lauderdale News* reported that J. N. led a life of a semi-hermit due to an acute allergy to tobacco smoke. Georg elaborates that his grand-father was acutely allergic to anything aromatic, stemming back to his exposure to toxic gas in WW I.

Kathryn Neville McJunkin-Brown

Kathryn Neville was born in 1919. She lived at 549 NE 21st Court in the 1950s with her children: **Neville, Paul, Don Leslie, and Mary Lou**. She was one of the first female crop dusters in Florida and also held a flight instructor rating³. She was also a concert trained violinist.

Joseph Morgan McJunkin

Joseph Morgan (1921 – 2018) married **Eugenia Tatum Avant McJunkin** (1947). The couple resided at 633 N.E. 22nd Dr with their four sons: **David Morgan, Neville II, Georg Avant, and Marshall Lee**.

¹ Scott, Patrick S., Early Broward County Airports. *Broward Legacy* 2004 – 2005, page 8.

² Broward County Plat Book 40, page 7, Edgewater Estates mortgage held by Jessie McJunkin; and Broward County Plat Book 45, page 2. Edgewater Estates Amended mortgage held by Jessie McJunkin

³ Kathryn Neville McJunkin-Brown obituary, Appalachianfuneralservices.com

Morgan graduated from the University of Florida, where he was President of his graduating class and holder of swimming titles in the SE Conference. He served in the marines for 3 years, two of which were in the Pacific⁴.

He became a farmer, owned a nursery on Wilton Drive, and built Pearce's Five and Dime. He served on the Board of Directors of the Wilton Manors National Bank for several years. He moved to Lake Placid with his wife, Eugenia, in 1980.

W. S. McJunkin

Son of William Henry McJunkin (who was the older brother of J.N. and Roy), **W.S. McJunkin** and his wife, Frances, resided at 549 N.E. 21st Court in the 1980s after Roy and Myrtle McJunkin died. W.S. was like an adopted son of the couple. 549 NE 21st Court was sold after the death of W.S. in 2013. It has been developed as townhomes.

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⁴ *Tallahassee Democrat*, September 29, 1946 and March 9, 1947.