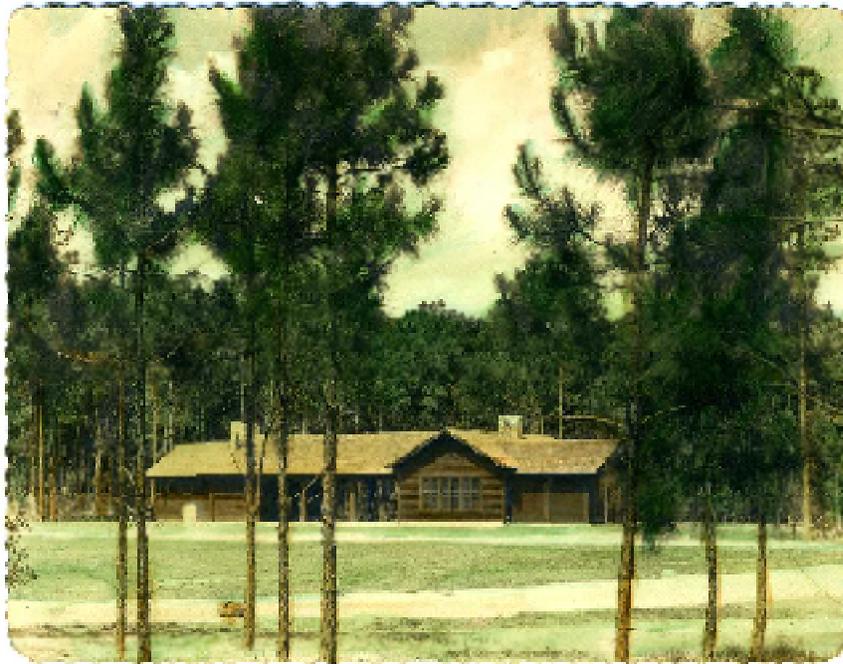


Highlands Hammock



HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK
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1st Printing 1966

2nd Printing 1979

3rd Printing 2008

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Note to the Reader

Please keep in mind that the first portion of this work was produced and published in 1966. It was added to and published again in 1979. Although it has now been republished, many of the references are still to a Sebring as was known in the 1960's. Much of the story reads as if told in person, and unless noted in the text, that person is Allen C. Altvater (Sr.).

For more information:
Allen C. Altvater, III
49 Lake Henry Drive
Lake Placid, Florida 33852

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FOREWORD

“At no point in the history of Florida has there been such a lavish and unrestricted outpouring of words of admiration and praise for an area by knowledgeable people as those offered with reference to that area known as Highlands Hammock.

“So pronounced were the expressions in the 1920’s and 1930’s that other communities recognized the advantages gained by the sections endowed by nature with charm and beauty, and they attempted to make up the deficit by planting exotics to draw attention to their locations. One area (Orlando) planted sweet peas in profusion. Another (Lake Wales) used azaleas en mass - but none attained the degree of praise enjoyed by Highlands Hammock. AND JUSTLY SO.

“Therefore, when machinery was set up creating state parks and providing for their maintenance, practically every community in the state offered a site and reason for consideration - so the half dozen state parks of the 1930’s became 150 parks within the next 50 years.

“In recording the remarks about the Hammock area, no effort has been made to separate the affairs of the Hammock, the Botanical Gardens, the DeSoto State Forest Park, and the Civilian Conservation Corps as it is realized that each is closely related to all the others.

Although it is not known exactly when Allen Altvater penned the above words, it matters not, because a close look at the history of Highlands Hammock gives clear proof to these statements - even in 2008.

The first portion of *Highlands Hammock* was published by Allen in 1966. It was printed by hand on a Multigraph Printing press, each page painstakingly set letter-by-letter. In 1979, Allen published it again with the material found in part 2 being added. This edition of his work seeks to stay true to his original work, while at the same time applying corrections that were impractical to fix at the time of the earlier publications. Some will feel that the greatest accomplishment of this edition is the increased font size for easier readability, while others will appreciate the ability to access and research this material via their personal computer.

Considerable effort has been spent looking at Allen’s source documents to assure editorial accuracy. Wherever possible, original photos or negatives have been scanned to yield the best photographic quality for this publication. I have tried to include all of the photos used in the 1979 edition, but rather than keep these photos in the exact order

or place where they appeared in the previous book, I've moved or grouped them where they fit various stories in the text.

One could fill volumes with the photographic histories found in the collections at the Sebring Historical Society and the Highlands Hammock State Park CCC Museum. I'm sure any reader with a previous knowledge of this work will appreciate the additional photo content. I assure you, it was a difficult task when presented with so many historical pictures and the decision concerning which ones to include or exclude.

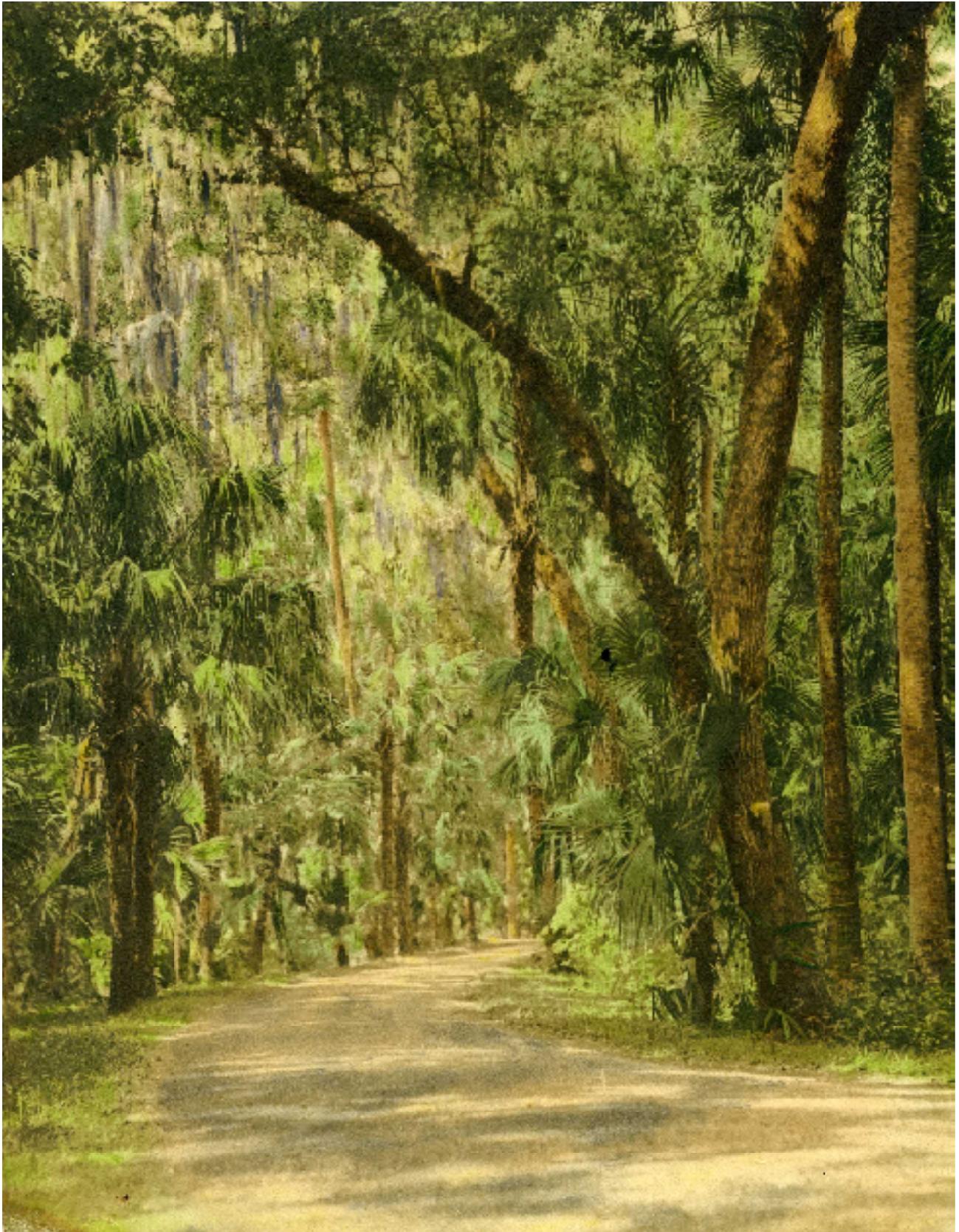
I want to extend my sincere appreciation to Carole Goad, archivist, for her assistance at the Sebring Historical Society in helping locate many of the photographs. Carole and the volunteers at the archives have accomplished an awesome job by compiling historical documents, notes, and pictures into notebooks. This makes the job of referencing source documents and pictures easy work!

It's a difficult task to find a local resident who is totally unaware or unfamiliar with Highlands Hammock State Park. From my youngest days, I can recall assorted memories of the park. Perhaps this is the reason why I quickly assume that others should share these same memories. However, it was not until Allen's passing in 1994 and the time spent in sorting through his notes that I would realize what relationship the Hammock held with my family, and thus the reason for many of my childhood memories. Yet the typical visitor may remain unaware of the infrastructure that lies beyond the public access areas of the park. The service area, remote primitive camping area, and expanse of graded roads built by the CCC will evade the knowledge of the infrequent visitor.

In preparing this edition of *Highlands Hammock*, I wish to express my most humble thanks to Ranger(s) Darrel Smith and Dorothy Harris for taking the time to take me "behind the scenes." Suffice it to say that there is much more to Highlands Hammock than the eye may readily perceive.

Lastly, please know that this project was undertaken in part to continue Allen's hobby of transmitting our local history to future generations. It has been added to the on-line collection located at www.allenaltvater.org. Visitors are welcome to freely download this document (as well as other histories) for their personal use with the permissions noted on the copyright page. The document you hold in hand is available in limited quantities and may be purchased on CD-ROM by giving a donation to either the Sebring Historical Society or the Highlands Hammock State Park CCC Museum.

Allen C. Altvater, III



Welcome to Highlands Hammock State Park

HOOKER HAMMOCK

A verdant, luxuriant sanctuary, carefully hidden away
Where one can linger with nature and let their thoughts hold sway,
This bountiful spot of woodland, fashioned by the Master hand.
A mighty forest cathedral unspoiled by taint of man.

Gigantic oaks moss-bearded stand like Druids of old
Beside wild orange trees loaded with treasures all of gold.
Cypress, elm and pine, nesting birds of brilliant feather
While underneath, a virgin jungle, where tropical foliage gather.

Murmuring winds through palm fronds whisper of forgotten lore,
With hints of Spanish adventurer, of red-skin life and more,
Perhaps of camp fire picturesque, when brave deed is told,
Or a tale of a princess' wedding, or the death of a warrior bold.

A woody fragrance of perfume permeates the air
As I abide in close communion, lost to worldly care.
With gaudy butterflies flitting, a bee buzzing in blossoms close by
The reverie is broken by woodpeckers' tap and a wild bird's cry.

They have called it Hooker Hammock, this place of natural delights,
I would that I could name it, The Garden of Paradise.
This lovely southern garden, may all its beauties laud.
For it's here nature has gathered her choicest gifts from God.

E. A. Houck
(October 1930)

INTRODUCTION

A generation has passed since the beginning of the movement to acquire the land and create Highlands Hammock State Park. Most of the people who were active in this movement have departed this life and it is only a matter of a few more years until all others will have passed on.

It has been felt that some effort should be made to make a record of the beginning and the early efforts to preserve this beauty spot of Florida so that such a record might serve as a guide to future planners and administrators.

None of the original staff are still employed in the park and in the first thirty years of the operation of the Hammock as a unit of the State Park system, there have been six state directors and twice that number of superintendents of this particular park. Therefore, the tenure of office of directors has averaged barely five years and that of superintendents less than half that period. It can easily be imagined that these men have scarcely time to become acquainted with the park and its background before they are replaced.

The purpose of the following materials is to make available, in a very brief form, some of the background of Highlands Hammock and the experiences of those who gave so much of their time, talents and money in order that future generations may enjoy a section of unspoiled Florida. It is also a purpose to record a few of the names of some who labored long and diligently to make the preservation of this area possible.

It is realized that changes, from time to time, are necessary in park practices and planning, just as they are in other patterns of living standards. The past thirty years have seen some very radical departures from the original concept of Highlands Hammock, but it is believed that the fundamental policies will not be distinctly altered where understanding is attained.

Therefore, one of the principal purposes of this record is to set forth the original image and to admit some of the mistakes and failures as well as to picture some of the more successful actions; this, in the hope that errors may be avoided and that public service may be improved.

THE OAK REPLIES

I wandered in a silent wood
To where an age-old oak tree stood,

And, leaning on his sturdy breast,
And peering through his lofty crest,

I make my fickle fancy say:
“Friend Oak, what is the time of day?”

Then spake this venerable tree:
“And who are you to question me?”

“My green lips kiss the face of God:
You crawl or rot, a worm, a clod.

“I was a tree when through these groves
The nude brave chased elusive loves.

“I was a tree before these sands
First felt the feet of alien bands.

“I was a tree when Genoa’s son
From mystery a New World won.

“I was a tree when Ponce sailed,
Hernando fell, Panfilo failed.

“And what your name, your fame, your creed?
A lifeless leaf, a wayside weed.

“What your brief hour of fears and tears
Against my immortal years?”

“I will be here when you are dust,
Your plaudits mute, Your treasures rust

“And God will smile on me and say:
‘Friend Oak, what is the time of day?’ ”

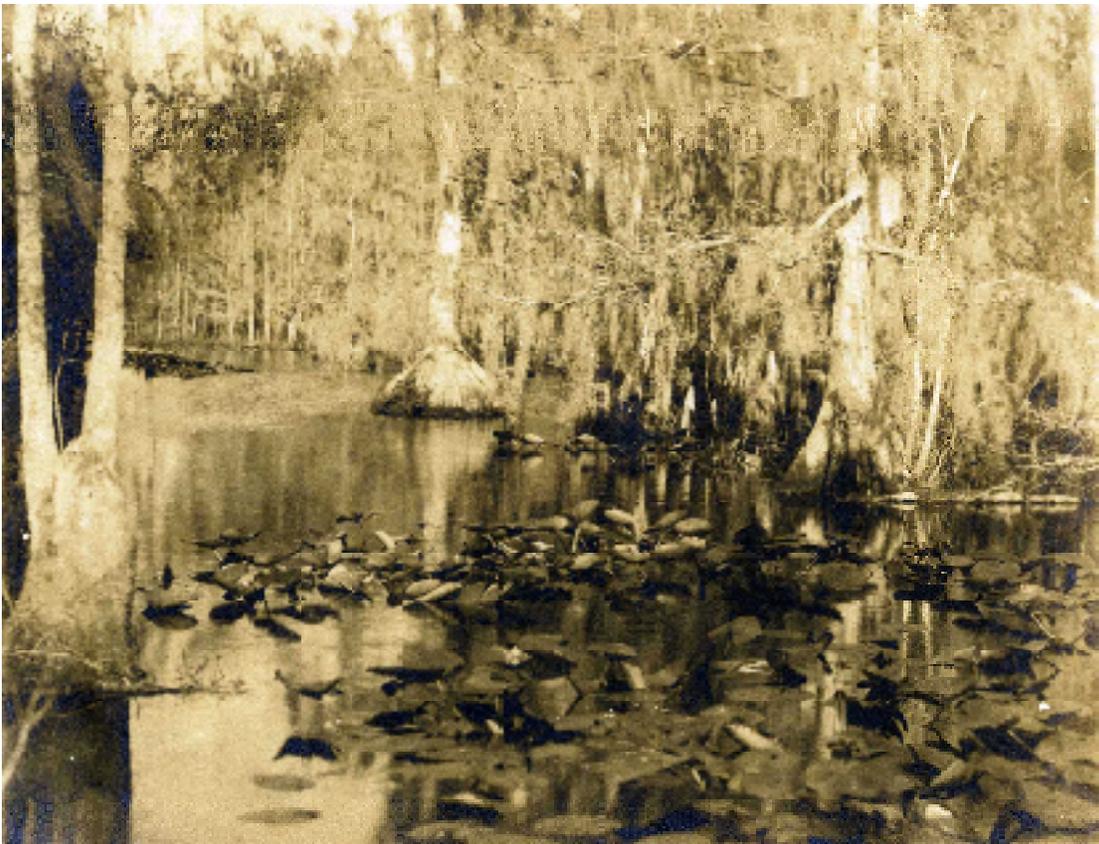
(Mr. Ed Lambright, editor of the Tampa Tribune, was inspired
to write the above during a visit to the Hammock in 1933)



Scenes on Charlie Bowlegs Creek



L to R: Mary Altvater, Mrs Irving Zuelke, Dave Gallaher,
and Mrs. Cordelle (Zuelke) Gallaher. ca. 1938





Scenes on Charlie Bowlegs Creek





EARLY HISTORY

The word “hammock”, when not used to describe a certain type of swing, is defined as a corruption or variation of the word “hummock” - “in the southeastern United States, especially in Florida, an area characterized by hardwood vegetation, the soil being of greater depth and containing more humus than that of the flat-woods or pine lands, hence being more suitable for cultivation.” Florida has many extensive areas of deep, rich soil as those found in the Everglades. There are also some upland areas where hardwoods and broadleaf trees abound but only where both these conditions are found, are known as “hammocks.” Many times, these are like oases in high pine lands and in flat-woods or prairies. Although high moisture content of the soil is necessary to support the dense vegetation, hammocks should not be confused with swamps.

The story of Highlands Hammock actually had its beginning over a million years ago in the era when mastodons and other gigantic creatures roamed the countryside of what is now Florida. There are still relics of that age in evidence in the park and there are living trees still standing which were old when Columbus came to America.

Florida history records the settlement of the Peace River Valley during the first half of the 19th century. Most of the present communities of that era were established at that time. Until the mid-1880’s, the only community between the Peace River and the Kissimmee River, was Crewsville which, at that time had a larger population than it enjoys today. It was named for one of the more prominent families in the area and even boasted of a post office of which Dempsey Crews was postmaster.

“Hooker’s Hammock” was located some five miles north of Crewsville. The property derived its name from the fact that a Captain Hooker maintained a “cow camp” a short distance west of the hammock. He was a veteran of the Indian wars of the 1840’s and 50’s and was stationed at Fort Meade.

One authority states that neither Captain Hooker, nor Cab Collier ever owned the Hammock but Johnathon Skipper purchased from them any claim they may have had to the property. His son, Chesley A. Skipper, believes that Johnathon bought his holdings from the Atlantic Land and Improvement Co., about 1881. Courthouse records show that he proved up on 40 acres (Section 66, T35S, R28K.) in 1881.

Johnathon Skipper cleared land, planted an orange grove and built a log house on Section 6, only a very short distance from the site which was later developed as a residence area for Park Service personnel. To assure himself of continued help, he gave five acres, immediately adjoining his homesite, to W. L. Eiland who later acquired acreage in the

eastern part of the Hammock where he cleared land, planted a grove and built a one-room house about the turn of the century. Thereafter, to some folks, the area was known as "Eiland's Hammock," although the name "Hooker's Hammock" was not forgotten.

Old maps of Florida show the creek flowing through the western part of the Hammock and give its name as "Charlie Apopka." It flows from the south to several miles north of the park limits where it joins another creek to form what has been known as the "Big Charlie" and the two tributaries were called the south prong and the north prong of the "Little Charlie."

East of Ft. Meade, some twenty miles north of the Hammock, is another small creek which has always been known as "Bowleg's Creek." Both Bowlegs Creek and Big Charlie are tributaries of the Peace River.

Recently, some question has arisen as to the origin of the name "Charlie Bowlegs Creek" which has been substituted for the name "Charlie Apopka." Prior to 1930, the only designation for this creek was the "Little Charlie" or "Charlie Apopka." It is believed that the name was originally *Sharlo* or *Charlo* (Seminole - meaning Trout) *Apopka* (Seminole - meaning Eating), which was probably corrupted to Charlie Apopka and, for everyday use was shortened to simply Charlie. After the park was established in 1930's, one of the park officials, wishing to add something romantic that would link the tract to Seminole history, dubbed it "Charley Bowlegs" which name has been continued since then.

Extensive research fails to reveal any records that mention a person by the name of Charley Bowlegs except a reference in a book published in 1939, containing contributions by writers for a W. P. A. project ("Florida, A Guide to the Southernmost State"). The article describing Highlands Hammock State Park, states in part;-

"A footbridge leads into a cypress swamp, through which flows Little Charley Bowlegs Creek, its clear waters mirroring the dense swamp foliage. The stream was named for an Englishman, William Rogers, who married an Indian woman and became known as Charley Bowlegs. A former associate of the notorious pirate, Jean LaFitte, Bowlegs buried his bloodstained gold in the Florida sands, settled on the neary Gulf coast to guard his treasure and lived to a ripe old age. So far as known, he never spent his ill-gotten wealth, nor has it ever been recovered."

This tale is patently an imaginary legend, dreamed by the author or told him by another visionary. None of the pioneers of the area have ever heard the tale and no reference to

such a person as the Charley Bowlegs as described here, has been discovered in any reliable history book.

However, there is confirmation available to the effect that the Charlie Apopka Creek marked the northern boundary of the territory assigned to the Seminoles by an agreement made with Indians in 1839.

There are no records of any engagements in the immediate vicinity of the Hammock, between the military and the Seminole forces during the Indian Wars, but there are many evidences of occupation by Indian tribes as early settlers tell of finding large quantities of flint arrowheads, knives and other artifacts, in the process of clearing and tilling the land. Several mounds are known to have existed on the park property and at least one is still in evidence. Mr. Chesley Skipper tells of opening one of these mounds and finding skeletons and fragments of pottery, so it is assumed that these were burial mounds as there is a legend that, at the death of an Indian woman, her utensils and personal effects were broken and interred with her body. One arrowhead that was found on the property was sent to Washington for appraisal by experts and the report was returned that the flint was of a type commonly found in northern Alabama.

It was natural that Indians should choose such a location for their habitation as the dense vegetation of the hammock offered cover for all kinds of game and wildlife and the wonderfully rich soil was well suited for raising their crops. And, where there was game there were also predatory animals. One such was responsible for the naming of Tiger Branch (a creek rising in the northeast corner of the park and flowing southwest). It is told that one Henry Prescott, son of pioneer Sammy Prescott who settled here in the 1870's, killed an enormous panther near this creek, with his hunting knife.

To the south of the park, is a broad expanse of marshy prairie and, in the southeastern corner, is a creek draining into the marsh. These were known as "Hall's Flats" and "Hall's Creek," respectively, for a pioneer of the same name who lived in the vicinity. Later, the creek was shown on maps as "Haw Creek," probably a corruption of the original name.

The mid-1920's marked the end of an era of the history of this part of Florida. Until that time, ownership of land was not considered as necessary by those who lived on it or used it. Many owners of huge herds of cattle, ranging over hundreds of acres, owned only a few acres where they built their homes or planted groves of citrus. Large tracts were held by land-grant railroads and other parcels were opened to homesteaders while many pioneers merely "squatted" on sites that met their fancy.

By the year 1920, Chesley Skipper had acquired title to several hundred acres of the Hammock and the immediate surrounding area. At that time, a corporation of Sebring businessmen was formed under the title of Hooker Hammock Farms. The principals were Col. Wm. Evans, John A. Taylor, P. A. Naylor, G. F. Bobb, A. E. Withers and E. W. Harshman. They purchased the Hammock from Mr. Skipper for \$ 50 an acre, giving a corporation note and mortgage for \$ 22,500. The stated purpose of the company was to encourage farming, as this was almost ideal land for that use when it was cleared. Several small tracts were sold to Sebring residents in parcels of from three to ten acres. None of the purchases were made by the types of people who had any interest in agriculture and no effort was made to prepare the land for cultivation except for sporadic work by George and Tommie Whitehouse on a ten acre tract.

Included in the land deal with Hooker Hammock Farms was a half section near Lake Jackson and, when the boom of 1924-26 was near its peak, the corporation had an opportunity to sell this tract at a fantastic figure if it could be released from the blanket mortgage which included the Hammock. Mr. Skipper agreed to this arrangement providing the principals endorsed the note as individuals. Later, he sold the note to a Tampa bank. With the collapse of the boom, the bank began pressure for payment and, as the individuals were all men of means, they cast about for some method of salvaging at least a part of their obligation.



Hooker Hammock
Mr. & Mrs. Fred VanNoy and
Mrs. C. E. Gibbs with her mother



Squirrel Hunters at Hooker's Hammock
(L-R: Guy Ruhl, Tom Dimberline, *unknown*)



Hooker's Hammock was also known as Eiland's Hammock
Back of photo reads: Taken Nov 25 Thanksgiving Day Island's Hammock
Sebring, Fla. (ca. 1920's, possibly 1925)



An Indian Chickee

CONSERVATION OF THE HAMMOCK IS STARTED

On 30 March 1928, the following letter from B. L. Laird (a Sebring Realtor) was published in the Sebring American:

I am in receipt of the following letter from Dr. F. H. Newell, President of Research Service of Washington DC, and former director of the U.S. Reclamation Service and if you are in sympathy with the suggestion made in this letter and care to use it I shall be glad to have you do so. I do not choose any publicity in the matter but I do want to help preserve Hooker Hammock as a great natural beauty spot that should be of increasing importance to Sebring, Highlands County and Florida, if kept in its natural state.

“You will recall that on February 26 you took me out to see an oak, hickory and cabbage palm hammock about six miles west of Sebring. I was greatly impressed with the beauty of the semitropical vegetation and attracted by the many unusual trees and plants and the bird life. It struck me, as it must all visitors, as a feature not only of entrancing interest but something which should be preserved as far as possible in its present condition, with a few roads or paths laid out to make possible the full enjoyment of the natural beauties.

“There is possibly no one thing which I saw in Florida which has remained more firmly fixed in my memory. Of course, the seashore and lagoons have their own charm, but many repetitions tend to dull the enthusiasm of the tourist. Because of this condition and because it is so easily accessible to Sebring and other centers of population, it is my belief that you should make special efforts to see to it that this beauty spot is preserved and made known to your winter visitors as well as to the citizens of your state.

“If possible to do so, a few photographs should be made, the locality outlined on a map and then special efforts made to bring about the setting aside of this area under the direct care of the city or county or some other public body having authority to preserve it as nearly as possible in its natural condition. Properly made known to the world there will be a continual procession of people from the North going to Sebring for the special purpose of enjoying these beauties during the winter season.

Cordially yours,
F. H. Newell

(As Dr. Newell is an engineer and traveler of great experience his suggestion is worth while, of course.) B. L. Laird

This letter may have been the inspiration that sent Col. Wm. Evans (a year and a half later) to Mr. Ray Greene who was, at the time, managing Harder Hall Hotel for the owner, Mr. Charles N. Thompson. Both Mr. Greene and Mr. Thompson were highly enthusiastic about the proposal and, from that time until the final acquisition and development of the property, Mr. Greene was the spark that fired others to action. It was by his own personal work that the proper persons were persuaded to take part in the movement; that the proper steps were taken to form a corporation; that options were procured and later exercised; and that arrangements were made to push ahead when interest would have otherwise lagged.

It was he who generated the interest and active participation of C. S. Donaldson, then mayor of Avon Park, who had an intense enthusiasm for any project embracing the subject of horticulture and who had an extensive knowledge of the subject.

Ray Greene also enlisted the interest and active participation of Rex Beach, the internationally known author who, at the time was a guest at Harder Hall and was in the process of acquiring a home and other property in Sebring. The value of Mr. Beach's tremendous influence toward the early success of the project cannot be estimated.

During the latter part of 1929, a movement was initiated to have the Hammock designated as a national park or a national monument. The story of these efforts and their results can best be recounted by quoting from the newspaper accounts of that period.

Highlands County News, 21 February 1930

HOOKER HAMMOCK WAS INSPECTED BY FEDERAL OFFICIALS

Is Said to be Ideal as a site for a National Park

Hooker Hammock underwent a thorough inspection Tuesday morning for the purpose of ascertaining the advisability of converting the Hammock into a National Park site. The survey was made by Roger Toll, a National Park official of the Department of Interior and Ernest F. Coe, chairman of the Tropic Everglades Park Association of Miami.

The officials arrived at Sebring from Avon Park at 9:30 a.m., and were met by a large delegation of representative citizens from Sebring and Avon Park, headed by Mayor C. S. Donaldson of the latter city, who accompanied the officials during their tour of the Hammock property. The survey by the National Park officials was the direct result of Mayor Donaldson who has been working through the park commission of the Department of Interior to have the Hammock taken over by the Federal government and made into a National park.

The officials expressed themselves freely about the beauty and virgin state of the tropical

tract and were much impressed with its possibilities as a park site. Mayor Donaldson pointed out the fact that the tract is rich in botanical material and grows many rare and beautiful plants that should by all means be preserved.

The Hammock is composed of approximately 480 acres of muck land underlaid with marl rock, of this amount 12 acres are planted in bearing citrus trees.

It is understood this tract was originally purchased by a group of citizens for the purpose of dividing it into small farms. This has not been done and it is learned on good authority that it can be purchased for park purposes for \$ 50 per acre. Suggestion has been made that a bill be introduced at the next session of the state legislature to appropriate the sum necessary for this purpose and present the tract to the nation for a National Park.

After the inspection the officials lunched at Harder Hall as guests of Ray Greene, associate manager of the hotel.

During the afternoon the officials made an aerial survey by plane and expressed themselves as being very much impressed at the extent of the tropical area. Late in the afternoon the officials left for Avon Park where Roger W. Toll entrained for Washington. Among those comprising the Sebring delegation were: Mayor W. B. Crawford; L. C. Pearce, chairman board of County Commissioners; Allen Altvater, president Chamber of Commerce; Col. Wm. Evans; E. W. Harshman; Gregg Maxcy; John Taylor; Attorney R. R. Rhudy; and many others.



Congressman Herbert Drane Inspected the Hammock in 1930

L to R: A. C. Altvater, Pres. C of C; Oscar Spivey, William Becket, News Reporter; Rep. Drane; C. F. Saunders, Sec. C of C.

DELEGATION REVISITS HOOKER HAMMOCK

A delegation of more than 30 met in Hooker Hammock Monday to formulate an organization and lay plans for having the Hammock made into a National Park. The principal figure in the delegation was Dr. J. Horace McFarland, president of the American Rose Society who is also a member of the advisory committee on parks in the Department of the Interior.

After a survey of the hammock property the delegation assembled and was addressed by Dr. McFarland on the subject of parks. He pointed out the many difficulties that will have to be overcome before there is any hope of success for the venture. Pointing out the fact that Hooker Hammock is too small an area for the government to consider and also stating that the government has never in any instance bought land for park purposes. Dr. McFarland suggested that they form an organization to back a project that will take in more area. Starting with Ocala and Silver Springs, taking in Mountain Lake and the Bok Tower, thence to Hooker Hammock and through the glades to Royal Palm Park below Miami, making a series of connecting parks would be a better idea, he claimed. In order to do this, Dr. McFarland said it would be necessary that the state take over the property and present it to the federal government. In order to accomplish this, he said, an organization would have to get back of the project and fight the matter through the legislature and on up to the parks department of the federal government. A long hard road, warned Dr. McFarland.



Delegation from the National Park Service

Inspecting the Hammock in 1930

Immediately following Dr. McFarland's speech, the delegates formed an organization to be known as the "Florida Parks Association" with the following officers and directors elected to serve in the association: Rex Beach, president; Chas. N. Thompson, vice-president; C. S. Donaldson, secretary and treasurer; John E. Connely, Edgar R. Keiss, D. E. Stabler, Major H. M. Nornabell, Ernest F. Coe, and F. B. Studwell.

Keen disappointment was experienced when the opinion was expressed that the project was too small to interest the National Park Service and that the State had no avenue through which to work. But too much momentum had been generated in the movement to preserve the area in its natural condition, so it was agreed to proceed to carry out the project by private subscription.

No definite thought was given to any plans for future maintenance or improvement but there was a strong determination to acquire the property and to this end, a corporation was formed with a roster of officers and directors of some of the most prominent names in Florida of that time. During the organizational period, these men and women met practically every week to work on plans and the project became the primary interest of practically every civic organization and many individuals in the county.

Unfortunately, the idea was advanced at a time when available money was at its lowest point in decades. The Florida land boom had collapsed a couple years previously and the stock market crash in the fall of 1929 had imperiled the fortunes of many wealthy people who would have eagerly supported the movement. Nor were the less opulent in any better position to help, even though the ardent desire was present. Jobs were scarce and those who had work were content with low pay.

Help and inspiration came rather unexpectedly through a chain of circumstances. George E. Sebring, Jr., had sold an airplane to Mr. Donald Roebing of Clearwater. During the negotiations, mention was made of the efforts of the community to acquire the Hammock property. Mr. Roebing's father and mother (John A. and Margaret Shippen Roebing) were planning and building an estate at Red Hill, a few miles south of Lake Placid. They arrived in Florida the latter part of January 1930 and were guests at the Lake Placid Lodge that winter season. In February, Donald Roebing took them in his plane for a visit to his home and, in the course of the trip, flew low over the Hammock. His mother was greatly impressed with the beauty of the area so when she returned to Lake Placid, she inquired about the plans for its acquisition and preservation.

A committee composed of Ray Greene, Mayor Donaldson and Rev. O. G. White, presented

the plans of the organization to her in such an effective manner that she became intensely interested. She made this very evident by contributing \$ 25,000 to be used for the purchase of the land composed of 500 acres of the Hammock and a “buffer” area around it which was considered necessary for the proper protection of the Hammock. When the corporation was formed in April 1930, Mrs. Roebing was one of its charter members and a director on the board. Mr. Alexander Blair, the engineer in charge of the planning and construction of Red Hill, was named as a vice-president of the new corporation and, as Mrs. Roebing remained in Florida only a short time after the Tropical Florida Parks Association was formed, she asked Mr. Blair to serve as her representative and trustee in matters concerning the Hammock.

On the thoroughly capable shoulders of Ray Greene fell the task of contacting the many land and mortgage holders and negotiating for the purchase of the needed property within the limits of the money in hand. Almost all the property owners were willing to sell their holdings for the amount they had paid with no profit while Tom Whitehouse and Dr. McPeck gave their land without any payment. Chesley Skipper also gave a 320 acre block. Through a bank transaction, the City of Sebring had acquired a note for \$3,080 against the Hammock property and the City Council wanted to cancel the note but the then City Attorney advised that they could not legally do this but they could sell it at a discount so they accepted \$ 2,000 in full payment. These are but a few examples of the spirit that prevailed at that time when everyone was willing to make sacrifices of their time and money in the promotion of the community project.

The officers and directors of the new association were not content with the mere acquisition of the land - they wanted to make its beauties accessible by the public. At the same time, they recognized the fact the public use would pose increased hazards by fire and vandalism. For decades the Hammock had been a popular hunting ground open to the public for that purpose. It was true that in some seasons, one had to be almost amphibious to get in and out of the area while in drier seasons, even the rich peat soil could be set afire by a campfire or careless picnicker.

The logical answers to these problems lay in the construction of roads, bridges and foot trails to make all parts of the Hammock accessible; fences, firebreaks and guards to prevent fires, hunting and depredation; water control structures to conserve water supplies for dry seasons and drainage for flood conditions. In considering these problems and their solutions, the policy was established that **NOTHING OF AN EXOTIC NATURE WOULD BE INTRODUCED INTO THE 500 ACRE SECTION** (designated as the “inner area” or “oval”) **AND ALL CONSTRUCTION WOULD BE HELD TO AN IRREDUCIBLE MINIMUM AND BE SO DESIGNED AS NOT TO ALTER OR DETRACT FROM THE NATURAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.**

The views of several nationally known and eminently qualified engineers and landscape architects, as well as botanists and naturalists, were freely contributed in designing and carrying out these policies and all plans were made with a view to permanency rather than temporary expedencies just to make a start. These plans called for steel sheet piling for minor water control structures; concrete, granite and steel for the major dams; concrete fence posts in lieu of wooden poles; all nine gauge wire fencing was specified, and similar high standards of quality for all materials and workmanship.

Since the decade of the 1930's was a period of severe economic depression, competent men were available in the county for planning and construction work, including some professionally trained. At this time, Mr. and Mrs. Roebling were having a property developed for their future residence at Red Hill, about 30 miles south of the Hammock and they requested their design and construction engineer there, Mr. Alexander Blair, to represent them in taking charge of any Hooker Hammock work they contemplated doing.

The first step was to get Mr. Joe Hawkins to make a complete land survey which was followed by Mr. Hawkins' willingness to serve as resident engineer, assisted by Mr. Norman Lane. Later, Mr. Ray Vinten, a landscape engineer, joined the staff.

The work done by this group of men, first alone then in conjunction with C. S. Donaldson as curator, was a valuable service and with others less technically skilled but equally devoted (such as Ralph Eyman, E. L. Green, Tom Page, Roy Belcher, Oscar Spivey, et.al.) their contribution might be considered as a "labor of love" in large part.

Beginning in late June 1930, work proceeded steadily with the aim of opening and dedication late in the year. But, due to unforeseen happenings, these plans had to be postponed.

It was believed that there was enough popular interest in the park project to ensure adequate financing by subscriptions and the sale of memberships in the park association. A few thousand dollars were remaining after the land was paid for and this was augmented by several hundred memberships. But the payroll for the crew (11 men at first) soon melted this small reserve and a very definite problem of financing was evident. Several promotional meetings were arranged in Avon Park, Wauchula, Lake Placid, and Sebring and, although enthusiasm for the project ran high, money was in short supply. The outlook was rather bleak until again Mrs. Roebling came to the rescue with an offer of another \$ 25,000 with two conditions attached, viz., (1) that the local community raise \$ 5,000 as evidence of their interest and (2) that the employment policies as were in force at Red Hill, be adopted.

These policies are worthy of special note as they preceded by several years, similar action by the government. In the prosecution of the work, special emphasis was placed upon the use of man power (to relieve unemployment) rather than the use of mechanical equipment. Instead of using machinery to mix concrete, it was "cut" by hand - earth that was to be moved by truck, was loaded by hand - sodded areas were sprinkled from a hose held by a man rather than by a mechanical sprinkler, etc. Jobs were planned with a minimum percentage of the total costs for materials and a maximum for labor.

Raising the \$ 5,000 was a colossal task but it was accomplished in a manner that proved to Mrs. Roebling that her generosity was appreciated. It was proof that the citizens of the county were solidly in favor of the movement and if further evidences were needed, the county commissioners supplied that by building a road from Lake Jackson to the park entrance.

The wholehearted response and participation on the part of the public is worthy of special mention. Practically every citizen contributed funds in proportion to his income, from a dollar (which was often a real sacrifice) to \$ 500 and \$ 1,000. The officers and directors were especially generous in their subscriptions and the first monies collected were used to make complete surveys (including a very detailed topographic map) and to build roads, foot trails and a watchman's cottage.

The officers and directors knew that a complete program of development and maintenance would cost well into the hundreds of thousands of dollars but they deemed it unwise to broadcast these figures lest the public consider the program an impossible task and become discouraged.

Therefore, they made their plans on a step-by step basis with the hope and expectation of having other wealthy and generous donors accepting responsibility for each of the several phases and the county providing funds for maintenance from tax monies.

The entire county was stunned when, on 24 October 1930, word was received that Mrs. Roebling had died suddenly at her home in Bernardsville, New Jersey. The citizens of the county sincerely mourned her passing, not because they expected her to further carry the costs of essential construction in the new park, but because she had made possible the acquisition of the area and access to it and because she was so deeply interested in the project, the accomplishment of which the absorbing ambition of the entire community.

After the death of Mrs. Roebling and of being informed of the effect upon the country's deepening depression, Mr. Roebling conceived the idea of carrying out his wife's wishes so far as they were known to him: of opening up and conserving the Hammock, as a fitting memorial to her; viewing this as his own "relief" project, helpful to the county.

In November 1930, he authorized Mr. Blair to make known his suggested plan, so far as he was able he would finance this work to a measurable degree of completion, withdrawing earlier requirements that some portion of "matching funds" be locally provided. In place of the matching funds requirement, Mr. Roebling, in offering to provide the entire funds, asked from the sponsoring group very definite assurance that, upon completion, future maintenance of the property would be provided from tax funds of the county, or otherwise, on a permanent basis.

To meet this stipulation, legal machinery was set in motion by the passage of a bill by the state legislature in the spring of 1931, authorizing the expenditures on a county park, subject to a favorable referendum by the taxpayers in June 1932. For the first year, during the progress of construction work, little maintenance was needed that could not be done by the building crew but as there were no more intense campaigns for money, public attention was not constantly focused on the activities so that, as a natural consequence, those who had been the moving spirits in the early periods, became quiescent after a year or so when no requests were made for their services or efforts.

This probably could be excused to a degree because, in the past when an emergency arose, the officers and directors or the Roeblings gave the necessary money so, in the spring of 1932, just prior to the imminent election, it seemed that nearly all voters felt that if they just sat still and did nothing, the problem of financing would go away or solve itself. There was a rude awakening when, in January 1932, work was suddenly discontinued as it was felt that public interest in the project was nonexistent and that it would be folly to expend further huge sums on construction unless there was definite assurance that the investments would be safeguarded by the provision of proper maintenance. Fear was expressed that the voters would not ratify the action of the legislature authorizing the county to levy taxes for maintenance. President Rex Beach issued the following statement which clearly presented the problem:

"The idea seems to be prevalent that the people of Highlands County are being asked to take up the maintenance work of Highlands Hammock as a project which the Roebling family started and should continue. NOTHING COULD BE FURTHER FROM THE TRUTH. The people of Highlands County conceived the idea of turning "Hooker Hammock" into a National Park late in 1929 and endeavored to interest the government in such a plan. Upon investigation it was found that the area proposed to be embraced

in the national park was too small for this purpose and the idea was therefore abandoned. The plan to make a State Park of it was substituted but no State machinery was found by which this could be done and therefore the idea was abandoned in February 1930.

“It was then proposed to form an association for the purpose of raising, by voluntary subscription, sufficient money (approximately \$ 18,000) for the purpose of purchasing this land and with nothing definite in view towards the development as a park area nor anything concrete by way of future publicity or maintenance.

“Early efforts to raise this money resulted in the interest of Mr. and Mrs. Roebing being secured and as no precedent had been established by others they felt that they would be willing to bear, as their contribution, the original cost of the land. The original idea was to have the Hammock proper (about 550 acres) included in the progress but this was later changed to embrace an additional 1,500 acres and therefore the Roebing gift of \$25,000 was made in April 1930, or approximately six months after the conception of the idea. It should be distinctly borne in mind that they entered the picture as contributors at the request of citizens of Highlands County. Mrs. Roebing was assured at that time that maintenance would be provided by the public at large when and as required, and that her contribution would be only one of many and in amount merely a proportion of the whole.

“Probably because of their evident interest in the project, search for additional large contributors was not diligently carried forward by the public. Mr. and Mrs. Roebing agreed to do the development work as it was brought to their notice. Probably because of their willingness to do so the effort to secure other large contributors was not prosecuted, and the public, following the line of least resistance, failed to do this work.

“At mass meetings in Sebring and Avon Park in August 1930, and at trustees meetings Mr. Blair, as representing the Roebings, agreed to furnish a system of roads for the Hammock, provided the community raised the maintenance funds and this proposition was so enthusiastically received at the time that he started work upon the promise only that the communities would carry out their part of the agreement. **THEREFORE AT THAT TIME** it was definitely understood by practically everyone that the maintenance fund was the obligation of the people of the county.

“The Roebing family was so well pleased with the first efforts that were made that at the end of 1930 they felt that public interest in the Hammock was great enough to justify them in the further expenditure of \$ 48,000 for a permanent fence around the property and for better than \$ 10,000 worth of tree surgery work on some of the larger and older trees in the park. The announcement of the beginning of this work was made

early in 1931 and from that time until the end of the year practically nothing was done toward providing a maintenance fund other than to collect a few of the pledges that had already been made.

“On the other hand the trustees of the Hammock, realizing their part of the obligation, contributed a total of \$ 4,800 which carried the maintenance along without resorting to any local drive for any substantial amounts.

“In case there may be some misunderstanding as to the present situation regarding the expenditure of Roebling funds for further development in the Hammock and for the necessity for county maintenance it should be brought to mind that a plan for a definite county-wide maintenance was the original plan, but in view of the fact that contribution or subscription method was too cumbersome to be put into effect it was thought best (in the latter part of 1930) to have a statute enacted by legislature whereby the county might accept the park, if tendered them, as a gift and provide definite permanent maintenance through the medium of taxation. This statute was enacted in 1931 session of legislature contingent upon its approval by the citizens at a referendum election. This election will be held in June and will be the expression of the people of the county that the Hammock will be of sufficient value either financially or esthetically, to warrant inclusion of a sufficient millage in the tax levy to provide for maintenance.

“Since the beginning of the Hammock project the Roeblings have contributed more than half of the maintenance funds, in view of the evident interest in the project on the part of the citizens of the county. At the present time they feel that further expenditure of funds in development work would be misplaced if no permanent maintenance were provided, and although they are willing to complete the construction work, which had been outlined, they feel that some more definite steps should be taken than have been up to now. They feel that they now have done everything they have been asked or which they agreed to do and are delivering to the people of the county a completed product which will require very little further expenditure in the line of construction or development and which will require a minimum of maintenance as compared to the value to be derived from the Hammock. What we do with the park is now distinctly up to us. If we feel that it is not worth the expenditure of further public funds the vote should be negative in June, but on the other hand if we wish to show our appreciation for the help given by the Roeblings and if we feel that it will be a distinct asset to the county to have such a park for our own use and as an attraction to others, we should give it wholehearted support at that time, however, the fact should always be borne in mind THAT IT IS NOT NOW NOR HAS IT EVER BEEN A ROEBLING PROJECT TO WHICH THE PUBLIC HAS BEEN ASKED TO SUBSCRIBE BUT IT IS EXACTLY THE CONTRARY.”



County Road Bridge



County Road Bridge Construction in August 1932



Bridge Construction - Dec 13, 1932

Looking North along Eastfence line showing small timber bridge across protection ditch.



Finished Bridge - Jan 12, 1933

The public reacted immediately. Emergency meetings were called; committees were appointed; contributions were solicited and received. Construction work was resumed. But there was an area of opposition to the referendum so the trustees of Highlands Hammock, Inc., cast about for other possible avenues of supporting funds.

For several months, very serious consideration was given to a proposition made by Mr. J. Ray Arnold, a promoter who agreed to maintain the inner section in accordance with the standards and policies set up by the founders but to otherwise operate the park as a private enterprise. While the trustees did not favor the thought of turning the project into a commercial activity, it appeared at the time, a very logical move. Experience had proved the sheer folly of expecting to raise several thousand dollars every year from voluntary contributions and the possibility of the failure of the referendum ballot seemed very likely. Hence, the subject was not placed on the June ballot.

Work continued through 1933 and 1934 under the direction of Mr. Blair and Mr. Hawkins, using funds principally contributed by Mr. Roebing and the trustees. On one occasion, when it was necessary to raise a large amount of money in a short time, the trustees subscribed the following amounts:

| | | |
|-----------------|----|----------|
| Rex Beach | \$ | 500.00 |
| C. S. Donaldson | | 500.00 |
| Francis Gudger | | 100.00 |
| R. N. Durrance | | 100.00 |
| Alexander Blair | | 250.00 |
| | | |
| L. Maxcy | \$ | 500.00 |
| Gregg Maxcy | | 1,000.00 |
| Frank Sebring | | 500.00 |
| O. F. Gardner | | 500.00 |

At the same time, gifts were received from others including

| | | |
|------------------|----|----------|
| P. A. Naylor | \$ | 450.00 |
| John A. Wilson | | 2,000.00 |
| Mrs. Hazel Ewing | | 1,200.00 |
| Kenilworth Lodge | | 250.00 |

Mr. Roebing's participation in the financing ran into many thousands of dollars.

During this period, negotiations were carried on through Mr. Harry Lee Baker, the State Forester, for the State of Florida to accept the tract as an outright gift to be the first unit of a system of State Parks. At the time, there was no Florida Park Service and no Park Board, so the State Forester was also designated as "Park Executive." These negotiations were brought to a focal point in the latter part of 1934 as is best shown by the following letter;-

The Honorable Fred C. Elliott,
Secretary, The Internal Improvement Board,
Tallahassee, Florida

December 8, 1934

Highlands Hammock - Highlands County, Florida

Dear Mr. Elliott:

I am today writing to Governor Sholtz indicating that all work originally contemplated at Highlands Hammock, Florida, which had been undertaken on behalf of my client, Mr. John A. Roebling, has now been completed so that the project may be considered as in readiness for operation as a forest park, should the state desire to acquire it.

State Forester, Mr. Harry Lee Baker, and some of the members of the State Board of Forestry after a recent visit to the Hammock expressed a keen interest in this property and have given favorable consideration to its acquisition by the State upon the condition that it be conveyed in a manner acceptable to the Governor and the officials of the State and without an undue burden for maintenance.

The attached key map shows some of the prominent features in the Hammock and the reverse side describes briefly the ownership which is vested in the Trustees of Highlands Hammock, Inc., and some of the steps which have been taken in opening it up and providing for its protection. In all, to date, over \$ 350,000 has been expended by the Roebling family for this purpose.

It is now proposed by Mr. Roebling that if the State is willing to take this over that he will contribute a sum of money which is approximately equal to one-half of the estimated maintenance cost for the next five or six years, contingent upon the State assuming responsibility and providing by appropriation, the requisite amount to insure the carrying out of a sound policy for the future preservation of this valuable natural beauty spot.

I am sending to Col. J. M. Lee colored photographs of Highlands Hammock showing some of the features of interest and would like you to take the opportunity to see views as soon as convenient. I am sending you the botanical key or booklet descriptive of the plant life.

This Hammock property ties into the tract which was conveyed to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Board on April 10, 1934, for development as a botanical garden and arboretum.

An invitation has been extended to Governor Sholtz to give early consideration to the question of the State taking over this forest park, and it is earnestly hoped that you will be able to accompany the Governor in making the trip to Highlands County. I must report to Mr. Roebing early in January on the response of the State Administration in order that he may determine what provision he is willing to make, as his share of its future maintenance, before finally relinquishing his responsibility.

My appointment with Mr. Roebing is definitely fixed for early in January and I, therefore, would ask you to treat this matter with some degree of urgency in order that I may report to him at the appointed time which is the only opportunity I shall have of conferring with him before early summer.

Should there be any further information which you would like me to furnish concerning this proposal which you cannot obtain direct from Mr. Harry Lee Baker, please do not hesitate to advise me since it is my desire to inform you as fully as possible regarding this project.

With best wishes,

Respectfully yours,
(signed) A. Blair



The Internal Improvement Fund Trustees lost little time in acting on Mr. Blair's proposal and early in 1935, a party consisting of Mr. Blair, Senator Henry Murphy, Senator Spessard Holland, George Marchand, and Allen Altvater made a trip to Tallahassee to finalize arrangements.

Mr. Roebling made available \$ 25,000.00 for maintenance and a Board of Trustees was set up to handle these funds under an agreement that at first, this Board would meet the larger part of the maintenance budget for the first few years, gradually decreasing the annual contributions as the State could increase its proportionate share. The budget for the first year (\$ 7,840) now appears pitifully meager but, to get it in proper perspective, several factors must be considered:

- 1) This was the first year the State had engaged in operating parks and no appropriations had been made for the specific purpose. Funds were drawn from Forest Service accounts.
- 2) A dollar, in 1935 (a depression year) would pay for many times the materials and services than can be purchased with today's dollar.
- 3) The 200 man CCC camp in operation on the property reduced the number of men on the State's forces needed for adequate protection.
- 4) Mr. Blair had completed the major construction and had turned over to the State an area complete with all facilities and equipment needed to begin operations; thus eliminating the necessity for immediate capital expenditures.

In retrospect, it appears that the Trust Fund worked to the great disadvantage of Highlands Hammock as later State Park administrations viewed with great disfavor any requests for increases in State budget funds. Then, too, the fact that they knew that the Trust Funds were on hand, may have influenced them to believe that if they failed to provide adequate funds, the Trustees would see to it that the Hammock did not suffer for the essentials.

The State Forester and Park Executive agreed to this plan of financing the first few years of operations although it was not reduced to a formal contract but he was placed in an embarrassing position when he was forced to report to the Trust Fund Trustees that he had been unable to get sufficient State funds to meet the State's obligation in fulfilling the understandings.

It must be remembered that Highlands Hammock was the first operating state park in Florida and, at first, there were no standard modus operandi. This park was therefore the testing ground for all types of procedures (such as entrance charges, parking fees, season tags, guide services, etc.) to be either found impractical and discarded, revised

and re-tried or adopted for use in this park and all other Florida parks. To assist the State in making analyses of the experiments and trial actions, the Board of Directors of Highlands Hammock, Inc., was asked to continue to function in an advisory capacity to the newly created Florida Park Service. This was the forerunner of the system of Advisory Councils.

The Directors spent a great deal of time and thought on the affairs of the park and recommended actions to be taken. The first report of the effects of the efforts to produce revenues, gave the following figures for the period from 1 October 1936 to 30 June 1937:-

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Receipts from admissions | \$ 1,363.15 * |
| Sale of post cards and guide books | 40.40 |
| Citrus sales | 932.75 |
| Guide service | 11.85 |
| Camping | 1.00 |
| TOTAL | \$ 2,349.13 |

This figure includes the sale of 59 season tags at \$ 1.00 each.

| | |
|------------------------------------|--------|
| Total persons visiting the Hammock | 16,083 |
| Total cars entering the Hammock | 4,163 |

The original Trust Fund Trustees were Judge W. J. Barker, Dr. W. A. Davison, E. W. Gallaher, R. N. Durrance and Col. F. N. K. Bailey. Upon the death of Dr. Davison, Ed Todd of Avon Park was appointed to fill his place, and to fill the position of Ebb Gallaher, deceased, Mrs. Susan Fort Jeffreys was selected. At the time, she was a member of the Florida Forest and Park Board and it was felt that the appointment of one of its members would make the Board more aware of the problems of the Hammock.

A coordinating committee was formed in the summer of 1936, with representatives of Highlands Hammock, Inc., Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association, DeSoto State Forest Park and State Forester, to direct the "selection of projects calling for the proper use of CCC manpower and funds, available through Camp SP-3."

The experience gained in the first few years of operation, indicated the need of several new structures in the Hammock. As one of the primary objectives of the Civilian Conservation Corps was to teach young men the several construction trades, the building of these structures were valuable training aids. The supervisory personnel held classes

several nights each week where the enrollees were taught the principles of plumbing, electric wiring, carpentering, stone and brick laying, blue print reading and drafting as well as related subjects. The following days, they demonstrated what they had learned by putting their knowledge into action in the field.

The workmen's cottages, the refreshment building, the museum and wild life display building, picnic shelters, etc., were all built by CCC workmen and were so substantially constructed that they will be there for many years as suitable reminders of worthwhile, well-planned and efficiently executed training programs. It might be of interest to know that the frame buildings started with the trees in the forest, felled by CCC crews, cut into lumber on a CCC mill, were kiln dried and finished by other CCC crews and fabricated without outside help. Plumbing and electric wiring were installed by CCC enrollees and even the furniture and wrought iron lamp fixtures were made in CCC shops.

Mr. Ray Vinten, in his masterful "Report Dealing with a Basic Analysis and Conclusions" for Highlands Hammock, states in part, "Throughout the planning, construction, and operating programs, first attention should be given to the scenic and biological values of the area. As stated above, in this report, the use of restraint in providing facilities and conveniences should be given careful study as the scenic intrusion may result in a loss of park character."

The dreams and ambitions of the men and women who pioneered the acquisition of the area, were to preserve the Hammock for future generations; to make its wonders available to the public by a system of roads and foot trails; to take every step necessary to provide adequate protection against fire and vandals.

It was felt that here was a very unique area where students and scientists could learn a great deal because of the wide range of plant life closely grouped in a relatively small area. At the same time, the sheer beauty of the place would appeal to those who were not concerned with the technical interests. Especially in the first decade of the area's existence as a park, college classes and other student groups used the Hammock as an out-of-doors class room and several major colleges sent scientists here to make studies in depth. (For three successive summer seasons, Harvard sent teams to study mosquitoes and other insects and a later expedition made a four months study of mushrooms to be found here.)

Advanced high school groups were numerous but there were some suggestions that the trips were not always as productive as they could be because of the fact that travel time from and to their home towns, consumed the major part of a day leaving barely enough

Civilian Conservation Corps Supervisory Personnel

James McFarlin, Botanist; Robert Mann, Engineer; Fred Ley, Clerk; J. P. Lighthiser, Mechanic; Allen Altvater, Superintendent; Wm. Norris, Foreman; Wilbur Cornell, Architect; Lamont Wolff, Foreman; Tom Bass, Blacksmith.

Not shown: George Hicks, Foreman and Clara I. Thomas, Landscape Designer.

State Park Personnel (1935)

Tom Page, Vincent Durrance, Cornelius Lee, Dick Dickson, Roy Belcher, A. J. Simpson, E. L. Greene (Foreman).

The man of the far right is not identified as he was temporarily assigned to this park.



Civilian Conservation Corps Supervisory Personnel



State Park Personnel (1935)

time for a superficial view of the park and very little time for study. It was almost universally agreed that a greater service could be offered if some type of overnight accommodations were constructed so that more time could be made available for study groups.

Consideration was given to a plan to build such quarters in section 6 near the west line of the Hammock, just south of the park personnel residence area, using the facilities at the picnic area (the refreshment and combination buildings) for conference rooms and dining services. The extensive herbarium files of the Botanical Garden were established as a part of this plan. Had the CCC been continued, it is probable that these facilities would have been provided but since they were not made available the vision of expanding the scientific and study features of the Hammock, has gradually faded. School groups still make infrequent visits.

Early plans did not include any established trailer or camping facilities - not that there was any opposition to the idea - just that the Hammock was not viewed as that type of a park. At that time, the only camping permission given was to Scouts and similar groups to use the "Indian Village" section on relatively rare occasions. Camping by the general public has developed only since World War II and, like Topsey, has "just growed." In fact, it has grown to such a point that it promises to overpower other features of the park.

With the increasing popularity of camping all over the United States, the Hammock has enjoyed more than its share of patronage. It is well and favorably known among those who visit the better camps and this activity accounts for a major part of the income of the park.

When the State took over the Hammock, it inherited a maintenance crew of men, most of whom had been employed there from the very beginning of construction. Although they had not had any previous training in park practice, their knowledge of every intimate detail of plant and animal life in the area, together with their association with scientists of note who visited the Hammock, soon made them almost experts as guides and interpreters of the wonders of wildlife. To them, their duties meant much more than just a job at which to make a living for they loved the Hammock - so much so that they offered no complaint when called upon to serve six or seven days a week and ten to twelve hours a day.

Each man on the staff took his turn at the several maintenance jobs or guiding parties of visitors and each could point out the wonders to be found along the trails and in the forests. They had no set routines or speeches but they learned to almost instinctively sense the interests of their guests and adapt their tours accordingly.

To aid them and to call attention to the various features to be found along the trails, several display stations were constructed along the trails and exhibits were arranged which not only created a great deal of interest but were also highly instructive. Frequent changes of subject materials to keep them current with the seasons, added to this interest and value.

Prior to World War II, the words “interpretive program” were seldom heard nor had the thought of a formal “program” been formed in connection with the Hammock and yet, most of the visitors left the park with the feeling of really having SEEN it. Scientific persons were usually conducted by a member of the CCC technical staff.

The advent of the war brought an end to this type of handling the visitors. With the exception of one or two of the older men, all of the personnel went into the war effort and, of course, the CCC technicians went to other stations. Following the war, a completely new staff was employed and, as the trail-side displays had suffered from the elements, they were removed and not replaced.

It was found necessary to substitute some type of mass transportation for the personally conducted tours of earlier times. This was not caused solely by the fact that the personnel was so familiar with the interesting details but also for several other reasons, one of the principal ones being that the public seems to have developed an aversion to walking. This gave birth to the idea of a jeep-drawn train in which a score or more passengers could be transported and shown only such features as occur along the roads. The driver was provided with a microphone and suitable loudspeakers. This has proven to be a satisfactory method of handling large groups so the equipment has been improved. A more comfortable and modern “train” has been acquired and trips are scheduled every afternoon.

Just before World War II, Mr. Leonard Giovanoli was employed as gate attendant. He was preparing for his master’s degree in herpetology and spent all his time when free from the duties for which he was hired, in exploring the more hidden secrets of the Hammock and making photographs (at which he was an expert). Nature lovers learned of his activities and many of them insisted on accompanying him on his trips. As a result, he was relieved of his duties at the gate to carry on an informal and very popular interpretive program. Apparently, his nature pictures were lost during the war years.

From 1949 through 1965, Miss Carol Beck made her headquarters at Highlands Hammock and served as naturalist for this park and consultant for all the other Florida State Parks. She was recognized as an authority on all kinds of wildlife and contributed a great deal to efforts of interpretation but, in 1966, she was transferred to the Tallahassee office leaving the Hammock with no professional in this type of work.



Mrs. Beck and Mr. Green in the 1950's



Carol Harriet Beck

October 23, 1903 - September 4, 1988

Carol was reared and educated in Lafayette, Indiana where she attended Purdue university, receiving a bachelor's degree in biology and a master's degree in botany with side majors in English, chemistry, psychology and educational techniques, and Spanish. She did work later with Tulane, Duke, and Florida Universities. She came to Florida as a high school science teacher in 1934 and taught 10 years.

Starting with part time botanical work for the Florida State Park system in 1942, Carol became a full time botanist in 1945. She was named chief naturalist, and in 1969 became conservation specialist. Most of the years with state parks, she made her headquarters at Highlands Hammock State Park, where she also gave nature tours and lectures.

Her Memorial Service was held on September 11, 1988 at Highlands Hammock State Park.



Tour Train - 1950's





Interpretive Program

Capitola Kelly pictured at one of the displays in 1936.



Bike Riders

L to R: Ethel Ives Lewis, *unknown*, Betty Jane Lewis (Westburg),
and Suzie Leaphart (Estes) in 1936.

THE HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK ADVISORY COUNCIL

Although authorized and created by law and appointed by the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials, the Advisory Committee has no authority in the administration of a state park. As the name implies, it acts only in an advisory capacity, and its effectiveness is determined by the energy and devotion of its members and the willingness of the State Park Board to listen to the Council's recommendations and advice. Since its membership is made up of citizens living in the neighborhood of the park, it is assumed that they are more likely to be more familiar with its condition and needs than are the governing groups that compose the Florida Park Service and the Park Board. The Council is, therefore, privileged to make recommendations to these bodies.

The Advisory Council of Highlands Hammock State Park is made up of five men, each of whom was chosen with specific qualifications in mind. Messrs. Blair, Heacock, and Altvater have been identified intimately with the park in some capacity since it was originally proposed, Mr. Blair being especially valuable on the Council because of his engineering ability and Mr. Heacock as a local civic leader. Mr. Lanier, having served several terms as a representative in the State Legislature, is well qualified to suggest ways and means of using political channels to get results.

The park service background of Mr. Archbold really started before he was born as his father was intimately connected with Yellowstone National Park feasibility report before that area was accepted as a park. By training and profession, he is especially competent to offer advice on botanical subjects as he has been the head of the world-famous Archbold Expeditions which he founded and has managed for many years.

There have been two other members of this Council since it was established. The late Hayden Williams who served as superintendent in the very early days of the Hammock, was an excellent newspaper correspondent and, as such, provided more favorable publicity than it has had since his demise. Mr. Robert Taylor, who is one of Florida's finest hydraulic and hydrological engineers, served on the Council for several years and severed his connections only when a change of work projects made it necessary for him to move to a distant city. However, he continues to make frequent visits to the Hammock to conduct surveys and give valuable guidance to the Council, even when it entails great inconvenience to him.

This type of dedicated service has always been common to all members of the Highlands Hammock Advisory Council.

Highlands Hammock Advisory Council

L to R: Ford Heacock, Richard Archbold, Charles Lanier,
Alexander Blair, and Allen Altvater.

Park Personnel in May 1979

L to R, Front Row: Capt. Jim Crane, Superintendent;
Deborah Russ, Clerk Typist; Charlie Wright, Linda Epperson, Clerk
Typist; George Lamb, Craig Wilcox, and Henry Haralson.

Back Row: Mike Coker, Jamie Trescott, David Jowers, Phil Klein,
Lt. Bob Henry, Assistant Superintendent.

Not shown: Ranger Robert Rahberg.



Highlands Hammock Advisory Council



Park Personnel in May 1979



Vesper Services in the Ampitheatre

Feb 1, 1935

VESPER SERVICES

After the start of work on the roads and trails in the Hammock, in the summer of 1930, progress was so rapid that by the early part of October, the public was permitted in the area on the weekends and it had been hoped that the dedication could be arranged for that fall but the unexpected death of Mrs. Roebling changed these plans. It was not until the spring of 1931 that the ceremonies were held.

On a beautiful Sunday afternoon (15 March 1931) a crowd of 4,000 citizens of Highlands and surrounding counties, gathered to formally open the Hammock. It was an event unparalleled in the history of the county which was reported in the newspapers and magazines throughout the state. The Sebring Chamber of Commerce and the Sebring Volunteer Fire Department had charge of the physical arrangements while the reception and ushering committees read like the county's "who's who." A deeply solemn and reverential atmosphere dominated the entire service and the audience went away with the feeling that here was a place and an occasion where truly God was present. After such an impressive ritual it was only natural that it should be considered by the Trustees of the Hammock and the clergy of the county, that here was a natural place for worship so they laid plans for Sunday evening services to be held during the tourist season of 1931-32.

Rev. O. G. White, who was a great lover of nature, a leader of the Boy Scouts and pastor of the Christian Church, arranged the program for the first Vesper Service to be held in the Hammock and, as it was later to become one of the more attractive activities, the account as recorded in the Highlands County News (23 June 1930) should be interesting:-

"The Vesper Service held at Hooker Hammock Sunday evening followed a program symbolic of the purpose of the park.

"The Scouts who set the trail symbolized the trails of nature that are to be made and those who followed the trails defined the different human interests which will find the objectives of their quests hidden in the park's cool retreat.

"Here shall come the lover of Nature to hold communion with the trees, the flowers and plants. Here shall come those weary with the burdens of life and shall commune with Him. Here shall come the lovers of birds, the naturalist who shall find ample opportunity to study the wildlife of this natural garden. Thus the program told the story when, in the cool of the evening, more than a hundred people gathered beneath the great trees and offered up a service. It was the first formal service conducted in the park. Out of the shadows came the sweet notes of the bugle.

1. The Morning Breaks. Reville - Bernard Coker and Mecham Hawk.
2. Blazing Nature's Trail - Eagle Scouts Max Brunk and Woodrow Harshman.
3. Followers of the Trail

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| “Communing with Nature” | C . F Saunders |
| “Talking with God” | Rev. C. B. Toombs |
| “God’s Revelations Declaring Him” | Dr. W. J. Layton |
| “Appreciation of the Trees” | solo - Mrs. Louise Campbell |
| “The Birds Medley” | violin solo - Miss Martha Marsh |
| “Nature and God” | Dr. O. G. White |
| “Taps” | Bernard Coker” |

Again, the organizing ability of Ray Greene and the generosity of Charles N. Thompson were called upon. Mr. Thompson offered the facilities of Harder Hall Hotel for the entertainment of several nationally known public figures with whom Mr. Greene arranged for the first year’s program in 1932. Of these, the first was Dr. Lewis Seymore Mudge, moderator of the Presbyterian Church of the United States and its chief permanent executive. He was followed by Dr. Richard M. Vaughn, professor of Christian Theology at Andover-Newton Theological Seminary (a Baptist College); Bishop William Ainsworth of the Methodist Episcopal Church; Dr. Kerr Boyce Tupper, a Baptist lecturer and author; Dr. Frank B. Seely, president of the General Synod of the Reformed Church of America. In all these services, all the churches of the county participated as well as the bands of Lake Placid, Avon Park and Sebring.

Dr. Lewis Mudge again opened the 1933 series of Vespers and was very popular during the entire month of January. He was followed by Dr. Lindsay McCain (Presbyterian) of Orlando. An unusually large audience attended the first service in February to hear Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick of the Riverside Baptist Church of New York. At the time, Dr. Fosdick was the most widely known and quoted radio minister in the United States. Dr. Clarence Gallup (Baptist) of Providence, Rhode Island, was the speaker for the second Sunday in February and Dr. John R. Mott followed him. Dr. Mott was the chairman of the International Missionary Council and was president of the World Alliance of the Y.M. C.A.

On 19 March, Dr. Kerr Tupper conducted a special memorial service in memory of Mrs. Roebing and, at the same occasion, there was a brief but very impressive tribal ceremony in her honor by a group of Seminole Indians. Mrs. Thomas A. Edison was a visitor at

this ceremony and Rex Beach was made a member of the Seminole tribe by its medicine man, George Osceola. Mr. Beach was given the name "On-Ta-Kee" meaning "Father of the Big Hammock."

Although there were several open dates in 1934, the Vesper series included several speakers of special interest. The first was Dr. Daniel Webster Kurtz, president of Bethany Seminary (Church of the Brethren). Others in the series were Bishop John D. Wing (Episcopal); Lt. Commissioner Damon (Salvation Army) of Atlanta; Raymond Robbins, Commissioner of Red Cross; Roger Babson, noted economist; and Dr. Charles S. MacFarland, Senior Administrative Officer, Federal Council Churches of Christ.

Several different denominations were represented in the programs of Vespers for 1935. Dr. H. K. Ober, Moderator General Conference (Brethren) and president of Elizabethtown College; Dr. Lucid Spivey, president Florida Southern College (Methodist); Monsignor J. J. Curran (Catholic); Dr. Louis K. Dichson, president Florida Conference Seventh Day Adventists; Dr. Henry A. Atkinson, Chief Executive Officer of the Church Peace Union and World Alliance (Congregational Church); Dr. W. S. Allen, president Stetson University; and Bishop William Anderson, (Methodist) president Boston University.

Only five Vespers were celebrated in 1936 but, if the program was short in numbers, it was long in power. Speakers were, Dr. W. S. Allen; General Edward J. Higgins, head of the worldwide organization of the Salvation Army; Dr. Clarence Ellis, president Juniata College (Brethren); Dr. John J. Tigert, president University of Florida; Dr. Harry McC. Lintz of the Moody Bible Institute.

The only lecture open to the public in 1937 was Mrs. Linwood Jeffreys, chairman of the Florida Forest and Park Board. This was very inspiring although it was not in the usual religious vein.

The 1938 series featured return engagements by Dr. John J. Tigert, General Edward Higgins, and Dr. John R. Mott, with additional programs by Dr. W. F. Quillian, general secretary Board of Education of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and Dr. Charles D. Bonsack, president Blue Ridge College and moderator General Conference, Church of the Brethren.

No services were arranged for 1939 and 1940 but the demand for them was so great that they were resumed in 1941 with a widely diversified number of subjects, thus attracting the interest of a greater number of people. The titles of the speakers will give a good key

to the subject matter that they chose. However, no matter how far they were from religious topics, they were always of a dignified character and, as the opening and closing rituals were of a religious nature, the audience left with a feeling of nearness to their Creator.

On the 1941 calendar, were Dean Walter Matherly of the University of Florida; Dr. James Mooney, president University of Tampa; Dr. Ansley Moore (Presbyterian); Dr. Carl P. Russell, National Park Service; Dr. Max Bernd Cohen, artist, lecturer and art critic from Florida Southern College and headmaster Ringling Art Museum; Hon. J. Hardin Peterson, member of Congress; Miss Josephine E. Tilden, professor of botany University of Minnesota; Mr. Reynold Carlson, National Recreation Association; Miss Juanita McComb, lecturer on bird life and affectionately known as the "Bird Woman." On 16 March 1941, one of the largest crowds of the entire season came to hear a concert by the massed bands of Highlands County High Schools.

Governor Spessard Holland opened the 1942 series. He was followed by Conrad L. Wirth, then assistant Director National Park Service; Harold W. Colee, president Florida State Chamber of Commerce; Dr. Doak S. Campbell, president Florida State University; General Higgins conducted the final service. Travel restrictions that were imposed during the war years made it impossible to continue Vesper services and, after the war, they were not resumed. So, the 1942 series was the last that has been arranged.

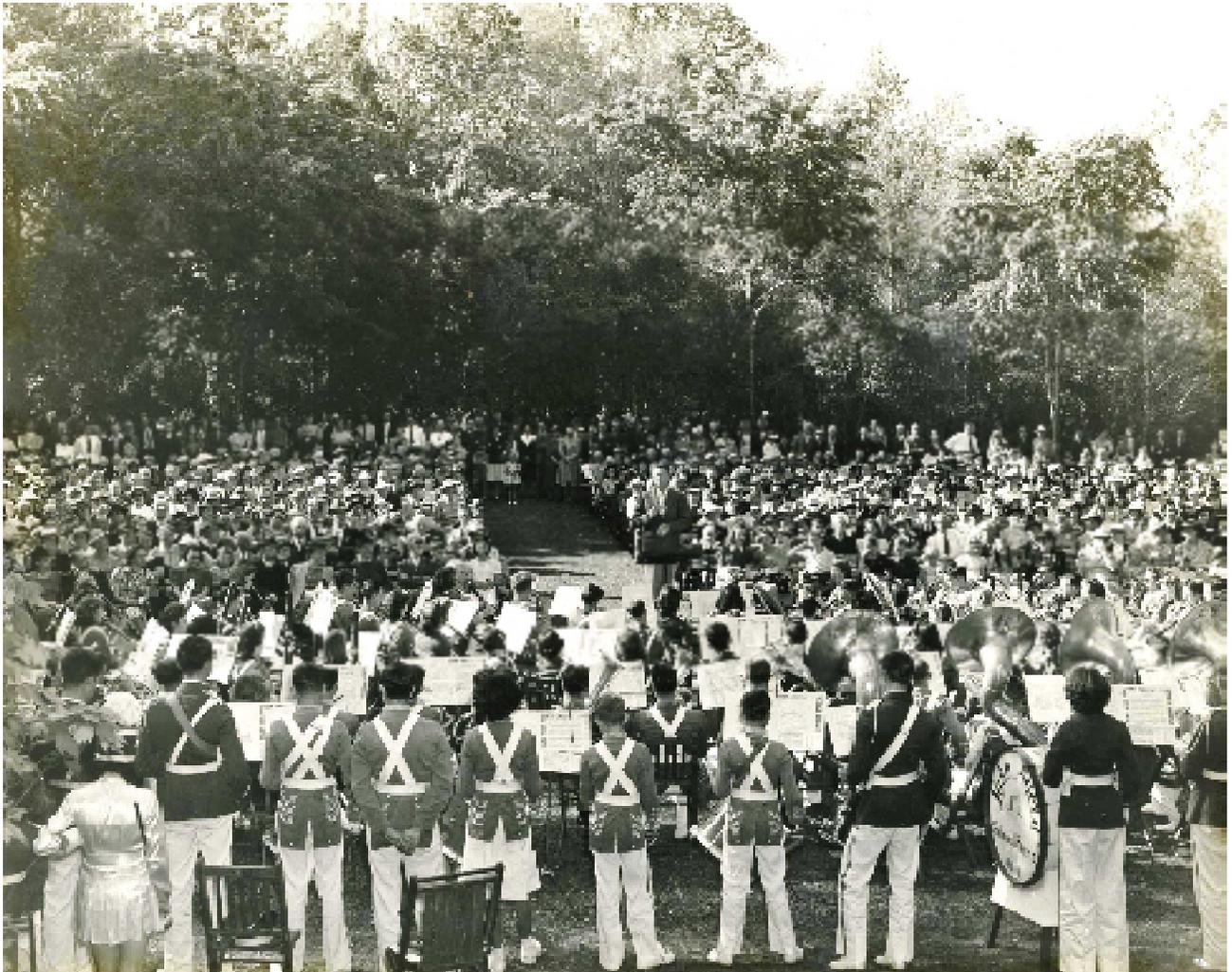
The Vesper service programs were established several years before the Hammock was accepted by the State as a part of the State Park system and so long as they were continued, no admission charges were made for an hour prior to the starting time of each Sunday evening service, even after the State accepted responsibility. A collection was taken at each service but the returns were very meager. (One season it was figured that the average contribution was slightly under four cents per person.) This money was used to help pay for printing song sheets, programs and other minor expenses incidental to arrangements. Deficits were made up personally by Hammock trustees.

The speakers were never paid for their services or expenses. Either they paid for their own transportation or it was arranged by the church or individual that invited him. The really big cost - that of their hotel accommodations - was carried by Charles N. Thompson at the Harder Hall Hotel and, in some instances, by Kenilworth Lodge. Nor was there any expense for musicians, clergy, ushers or other personal services.

There were very few occasions when the weather was not favorable to holding outdoor services. A few times they were moved to the lobby of Harder Hall and twice they were held in the high school auditorium.

The cultural advantages and the publicity value to the park, were of inestimable worth. It is possible that some revenue may have been sacrificed but any losses of this nature were easily overcome by expanded good will and increased pride on the part of local people. It was found that the churches were eager to give their help in scheduling speakers of their denominations because these speakers would often fill their pulpits and, as they were the very finest of their profession, they drew large audiences.

There can be no question to the statement that the Vesper programs created the finest possible image of the Florida Park Service in general and Highlands Hammock in particular.



Vesper Services

Sebring High School and Lake Placid High School Bands
in combined performance, ca. 1937.



Anne Baker and Friend



"Nellie" the Calico Deer



"Billy"

ANIMALS

The abundant natural protective cover for bird and animal life in the Hammock has proven to be a boon in encouraging the native fauna of the area. Although the policy was adopted by the founding fathers that nothing of an exotic nature should be introduced into the Hammock, this principle was not strictly observed. However, very little damage was done as Nature took care of the situation very satisfactorily.

The wildlife indigenous to the Hammock included deer, turkey, raccoons, bob-tailed wild cats, squirrels, otters, alligators, etc. Due to the fact that hunting had been permitted here for many years, some of the game type animals had been depleted almost to the degree of extinction. By 1930, deer and turkey were rarely seen so the game department released a trio of deer and a brood of turkeys.

The deer appeared to begin to thrive immediately and in the matter of a very few years, it was estimated that the deer population had reached 100, a count that seemed too large to stem from the original trio so it was supposed that other deer had been attracted to the area and, under protection had added to the increase. However, after the first abnormal gain, the population has not appeared to increase appreciably. After 30 years, there are no great herds nor has the park foliage been damaged by overgrazing.

In the mid-1930s an albino fawn was observed by park personnel for several months. A man, known to be an expert hunter, suggested that the albino might be a product of inbreeding since only a trio had been introduced. So it was thought best to arrange to bring in some new blood. Mr. Will Ward, then superintendent of Chinsegut Hill, near Brooksville, offered a big buck that had become such a pet as to be almost a nuisance. "Billy," as the buck was known, would come if whistled up and seemed to appreciate offerings of bread, grain, tobacco, or other food which he would take from one's hand. To the contrary, when he came up and no food was offered, he became belligerent and on one occasion he chased a young man who escaped only by climbing a tree. At another time, an older man made the mistake of putting his hand on Billy's antlers in a defensive effort. The man was afraid to let go and found that he couldn't hold on. Fortunately, there was a group of CCC men working nearby and they rescued the man.

After that, Billy was trussed up and transported several miles outside the park and released. He was back in the park before the truck got there but he was not so friendly after that. Since then, park patrons and employees have been urged not to hand-feed the deer or become friendly and, as a result, all deer are shy and may be seen only at a distance.

Friendliness was also the downfall of the flock of turkeys that were released. At first, as half-grown pullets, they were very shy but they soon learned that picnickers left behind many scraps of food. Next, they found that if they presented themselves near enough, folks eating picnic lunches would throw food to them. This, in time, made them so bold that they would sometimes fly up on the table in the midst of the food. By that period of their lives, they were apparently not frightened by anything. One morning, when they did not appear in their usual feeding areas, park attendants went looking for them. Under the roosts were found many feathers and some remains. They had been the victims of wild cats or other varmits. No turkeys have been seen in the park since then.

Bobcats and panthers, being night-feeders, are rarely seen in the day time but there is evidence that there are some making their habitat in the park. The bobcats are prone to restrict their activities to a relatively small area but the panthers have been known to range for miles. The latter have rarely been seen in the Hammock, however, the park has always been closed to public traffic at night.

Late in the 1930's over a period of approximately five years, as many as half a dozen people reported seeing a large, black, cat-type animal, at various places inside the fenced area of the Hammock. Even after wide publicity, no reports were received from any source of people having seen it outside the park and it was always observed at night - never in daylight. It was always described as being a little larger and heavier than an average size bird dog or setter; very dark (probably black); its tail almost as long as its body and deeply curved (never straight). Mr. A. Hyatt Verill, a wildlife authority, stated that it was probably a "Teyra Cat" or "Jaguranda" (*Felis Jagurandi*). Another, and more descriptive, name is "dog killer" because of its utter fearlessness. No reports of such an animal have been received since 1947.

Another unusual animal that excited quite some interest when seen on several occasions was a skunk "in reverse." It was white where it should have been black and black where it normally should have been white.

The Florida Game Department introduced into the Hammock, a number of wild guinea fowl and into Charlie Bowlegs Creek, several beavers. The motive behind this move was not established but as it was done about the transitional period between private and public ownership, no objection was raised even though it was clearly contrary to the policy that nothing of an exotic nature be introduced into the Hammock. In the space of a very few months, the guinea fowl were victims of varmit residents of the Hammock and nothing is known of the fate of the beavers.

Alligators have become numerous in all parts of the Hammock since they have been

given the extra protection of the bird and animal sanctuary. An old history of South Florida (“A Veteran of Four Wars”) contains an interesting paragraph although its exact accuracy may be open to question:-

“In those days there were millions of alligators. Capt. Boggess says he has seen lakes of water of two acres in extent that anyone could have walked in all directions on their heads if they had been stationary. But, owing to the great demand for their hides they are now scarce and wild.”

That condition may have obtained a hundred years ago but in 1930 ‘gators’ were hard to find in the Hammock. Now, thirty years later, the alligator population numbers several hundreds and some of them show very little fear of humans.

In the mid-1930’s one of these reptiles, about seven feet long, became so tame that she could be called and would come ashore to take food from the hand of anyone who would feed her. Her education took quite a few months. At the time, the entrance gate was only a few yards west of the fork where the county road bears to north off of the main access road. The gate house was built over the waters of the small canal and was attended by Oscar Baynard, an accomplished naturalist and taxidermist. In the operations of mounting his specimens, he would throw the offal into the canal and he noticed that a gator always came to dispose of it, so he made it a practice to give a whistle just prior to tossing away the entrails. Soon, the gator associated the whistle with food and, from then on, it was just a question of patient teaching to get her to come ashore and take food from his hand.

On one occasion, Mr. Baynard was demonstrating the trick to some visitors from Ohio and at the time that Mississippi (the name given her) closed her mouth on the offering. Oscar looked away momentarily so that her bite included his fingers. She did not intend to be malicious but, with her mouth open, she could not see his hand. She was as startled as was Oscar when he tried to jerk away but she would not release her grip. After that, Oscar was more careful at feeding time as he was unable to do much work with his right hand for several weeks.

Nobody is sure what became of Mississippi but it is thought that someone called her up, captured her and carried her away. She left behind, a brood of several dozen very small offspring.

Hayden Williams succeeded Mr. Baynard as a gate attendant and he claimed he could hand-feed two very large bull frogs.

Nobody is certain exactly when or under what circumstances armadillos came into the Hammock. None had been observed until the 1950's but since that time, their number has increased until they may now be seen in all sections of the park at practically any hour of the day.

The literature that is handed to the visitor at the entrance has always carried the information that "deer can be seen - - particularly in early morning and late afternoon." One day, two ladies who had been in the park several hours, stopped on their way out and asked the gate attendant, "Can those two short-tailed cats that we followed on the board walk, be seen at this time of day very often?"



Ray Vinten Feeds "Mississippi"

BIRD LIFE

by Oscar Baynard

Every Christmas day, thousands of bird students and bird lovers, go forth into the woods, fields, marshes, beaches, etc., and see how many different kinds of birds they can identify between sunrise and sunset. These trips cover from small areas observed to many hundreds of miles in trips and any time a list of over 60 species is found it is considered an outstanding list.

In Highlands Hammock State Park, an area of 1280 acres or two square miles, a list of 84 species were identified Christmas day. Of course, this is a bird sanctuary and a rigid supervision has been in force for several years. This, with a great variety of cover, various kinds of natural feed and safe hiding places from their natural enemies, makes it an ideal place for birds to spend the winter. No great flocks of birds are seen here usually, but to one who will carefully scout about in various trails, the birds can be seen.

On this Christmas day list, is a pair of Ivory Billed Woodpeckers, one of the birds that is almost extinct. This record is the eighth for the year of this bird and the second time a pair has been seen, so it is hoped that this rare bird will use the park for a nesting site this year, and if so will be a great attraction to the bird lovers of the whole country.

Of this list of eighty four, 60 are birds that are known to nest in or in the vicinity of the park. The other 20 are winter tourist birds.

During the past year, a careful survey has been made and a list of 167 species of birds has been found in Highlands Hammock State Park and, of this list, 106 are known to nest in or close to the park.

December 1937

The observations of Mr. Baynard, although made almost 30 years ago, are practically accurate today, with some slight variations. The Ivory Billed Woodpeckers have not been reported in recent years but another rare bird, the swallow tail kite has taken up residence here and at this time, the locations of two nests are known.

Mr. Baynard was a recognized authority on bird life, so his remarks may be accepted in establishing the fact that the student may find a profusion of bird life in this sanctuary. Of special interest to bird lovers, are the rookeries of water fowl on the park property.



Two Men and Trees
Hayden Williams on Left

THREE TREES

There are three giant, old oak trees in the park that are worthy of special attention. These were chosen, shortly after the death of Mrs. Roebling, by her son, Donald, as specimens on which tree surgery should be practiced in order to prolong their lives. This, he arranged to have performed as a gesture to the memory of his mother.

The processes employed were very interesting, at least to the layman. Most of the large oaks in Florida are hollow at the core, the center having rotted away leaving only a relatively thin shell; so the first step taken by the professional tree surgeons, was to open an aperture so that the men could work by actually going inside the trunk.

All of the deteriorated material was then removed down to the living wood and a disinfectant or preservative was applied to discourage further decay. The entire tree was then filled with concrete, strongly reinforced with steel rods, and brace cables were arranged on the outside limbs to prevent flexing which would tend to crack the concrete.

These old trees each have many tons of concrete in their interiors. The process is very similar to the operations performed by a dentist in filling a tooth. In time, the tree forms new wood and bark to cover the openings so that, in a very few years, it is impossible to detect where the apertures were made.

Charles S. Donaldson describes the three trees, the largest of which is found near the entrance road on a foot trail named "Laurel Oak Trail" to indicate its presence and species.

"LAUREL OAKS:- The Laurel Oak (*Quercus Laurifolia*) is in the water oak group yet has its own characteristics, such as thinner and narrow leaves, which shed here in South Florida just as the tree puts on its new foliage in March, while further north the branches are bare for a period. The Laurel Oak may be distinguished from the Live Oak, whose leaves are similar in shape, by the absence of gray down or fuzz on the under side of the leaves. The largest Laurel Oak in the Hammock measures 31 feet in girth 4 feet from the ground, and its base is greatly gnarled. This monarch needed the most tree surgery. It had started life about the year 1111 AD., or near four centuries before Columbus discovered America. After the expenditure of several thousand dollars on it, the tree doctors think it is good for another eight centuries."

"LIVE OAKS:- The Live Oak (*Quercus Virginiana*) is abundant in the park, many specimens exceeding 15 feet in circumference. One, 23 feet in girth, arching a drive, was doctored within and without by surgeons who, by taking cross sections, estimated

its age at nearly a thousand years; it started growth in 970 A. D., or half way back to the time of Christ. This oak is the oldest living thing in the Hammock.”

“MEMORIAL LIVE OAK:- A smaller doctored tree in the Hammock is the Memorial Live Oak, which started life in 1502 A.D., the year Columbus discovered the mainland of Central America. Beneath this tree is the bronze and granite marker to the memory of Mrs. Margaret Shippen Roebling, the donor of the park. The oak reaches 86 feet into the sky, and its branches an equal distance as a broad canopy shading the drive and shrine.”

The memorial tablet mentioned by Dr. Donaldson, was purchased with funds given by Hammock Trustees personally, and was dedicated at the ceremonies on March 15, 1931. A photograph of it appears on the program of that event.



Laurel Oak
31 feet in girth
Estimated to have started life
in 1111 AD

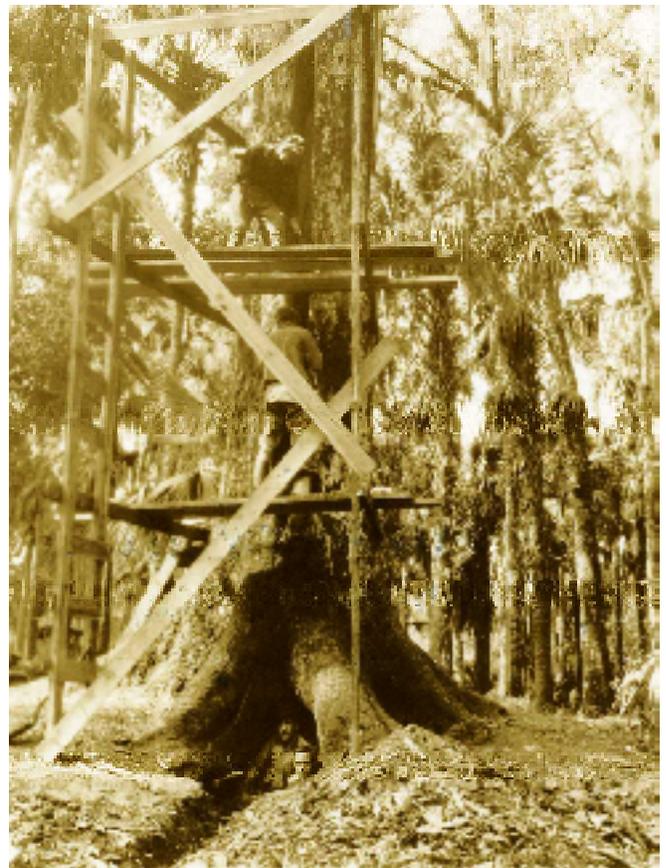
**Two Gigantic Old Oaks
Whose Life Span was
Increased by Surgery**



Live Oak
Estimated to have started life
in 970 AD



**Surgery Under Way on the
“Memorial” Live Oak**





Above photo: ca. 1935



Above photo: ca. 1935

The “Memorial” Live Oak
is estimated to have started life
in 1502 A. D.

PLANT LIFE

Many studies have been made of the trees and other forms of plant life in the Hammock, by learned authorities, and several excellent brochures have been printed. Charles Torrey Simpson found and listed 26 varieties of ferns. Mary Francis Baker identified almost 100 wild flowers and described them under the heading of *The Wild Flowers of Highlands Hammock*. One of the most interesting studies of the plant life of the park is a painting by Mrs. Wilhelmena Greene (wife of Ray Greene) in which she grouped practically every wild flower to be found in the area and has identified them on an accompanying graph. This is not only a work of great educational value but is also an artistic masterpiece.

James B. McFarlin wrote *A Guide to the Plants Along the Laurel Oak Trail* while Charles Snyder Donaldson published a catalog of several hundred trees, shrubs, and bushes under the title *The Plant Life of Highlands Hammock*.

There was such a demand for these publications that the original editions were soon exhausted and, unfortunately, there has been no effort made to reprint them or to issue similar publications of a comprehensive nature in the past 25 years. All these works were written so that they were valuable from a scientific point of view but were also understandable by the layman. They formed a basis for an interpretive program that created much interest.

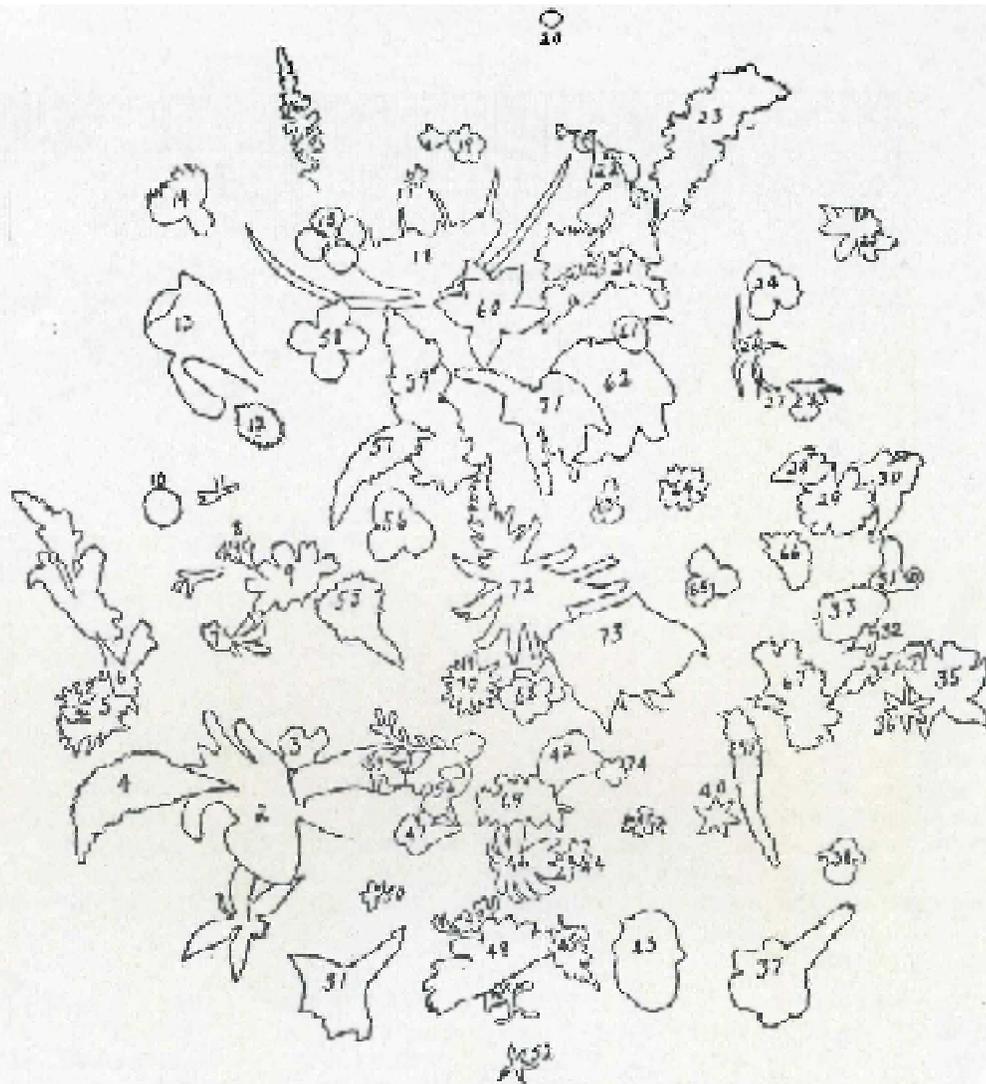
Without such a program, many visitors to the park look at the many natural wonders but “see” very few of them. After the features are pointed out, the visitor readily recognizes them. One instance is the unusual grouping of trees. In the area of the north central part of the oval, many fine specimen pine trees are found but practically none are located outside this area. In this same area, none of the larger oaks are found in the abundance that they exist in the southern half. The elms, sweet gums and other species, each has its own sections of the park where it grows more prolifically than in other parts.

During recent years, due to insufficient personnel, the maintenance of several miles of foot trails has been abandoned and the sites of these trails have reverted to their natural condition. Originally, these trails were located to permit the park visitor to get a closer view of the plants and trees that predominated in the several areas and the trails were so named:- “Pine Hammock Trail,” “Wild Lemon Trail,” “Limeberry Trail,” “South Oak Trail,” etc.

Only in one instance was an effort made to alter in any way, the normal, natural growth along the trails. Along the side of a small creek, for a distance of about 200 feet, a planting was made of all the ferns native to the Hammock. Each variety was labeled so



SPRING WILD FLOWERS OF THE SOUTHERN COASTAL PLAIN
Collected at Highlands Hammock, Sebring, Florida, in late March



SPRING WILD FLOWERS OF THE SOUTHERN COASTAL PLAIN

- | | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Wild Tainette | 56. White Top Sedge | 71. Morning Glory |
| 2. Bear Flag, Lin | 57. Red Sedge | 72. Roseholo ferns |
| 3. Battle Box (escape) | 58. Lin Flower | 73. Rose Pogonia |
| 4. Cecelia's Plant | 59. Sunflower | 74. Seal Cap |
| 5. Amsonia | 60. False Foxglove | 75. Amnospura Olinum |
| 6. False Dragonhead | 61. Dwarf Cornelia | 76. Grayman's Ivy |
| 7. Grass Pine | 62. Yellow-Eyed Grass, Hardhead | 77. Rabbit Tobacco |
| 8. Vanilla leaf, Deer Tongue | 63. Triangle, Orange Milkweed | 78. Meadow Beauty |
| 9. Florida Dandelion | 64. Pink Milkweed | 79. Blue Lupine |
| 10. Sunflower Ede. | 65. Grass Pink Yucca | 80. Marsh Pink |
| 11. Dispericum | 66. Four-leaf Grass | 81. Horse Nettle (fruit) |
| 12. Thimble | 67. Turnip Vine | 82. Paw-paw |
| 13. Indian Star, Corn | 68. Sand Pea | 83. Blue Sedge |
| 14. Thistle | 69. Leopard's Tail | 84. Wild Cucumber |
| 15. Princess Willow | 70. Star Grass | 85. Blue Penstemon |
| 16. Little Root | 71. White Topped Aster | 86. Bishop's Weed |
| 17. Hornet's Weed, Milkweed | 72. Blue Eye Flower | 87. Tall Milkweed |
| 18. Spider Lily | 73. Butterfly Dot | 88. Hairy Kudzu |
| 19. Beard Tongue | 74. Two-leafed, Spurge Nettle | 89. Milkweed |
| 20. Boxen Pipewort | 75. Beggar's Ticks | 90. Yellow Aster |
| 21. Southern Elder | 76. Black Eyed Susan | 91. Goldenrod |
| 22. Korte Box (escape) | 77. Calophanta coloriflora | 92. Cherokee Bran |
| 23. Pickers' Weed | 78. Fuscous Flower | 93. Pinky Fruit Galium |
| 24. Arrowhead | 79. Vetch | 94. Blue Hoop |
| 25. Richweed | 80. White Violet | |

that the visitor could compare it with others and so that all could be recognized when encountered in other points in the park. Although this was one of the more popular points and was of great educational benefit, it was one of the trails that has been abandoned.

In the 35 years of the Hammock as a park, some species of plant life have thrived because of the protection given them while others are either on the decline or have completely vanished.

When work was first begun on the Hammock the orange trees were overgrown with native plants but were bearing good fruit. The wild growth was cleared out and some attention was given the fruit trees. The citrus that was not enjoyed by visitors was sold and a nice profit was realized, especially from the sour variety. However, for the past 20 years, it would appear that a studied neglect has been practiced until there are very few sweet seedling trees remaining. The sour varieties were never planted in formal groves and they seem to thrive without care although the fruit is no longer harvested for sale. It does have a great value for its beauty.

Among the vanished trees is the *Zanthoxylum* (commonly called "Hercules Club," "Prickly Ash," or "Toothache Tree"). In the 1930's the small area where these trees were found, was always a point of great interest. They were not native to this section of the state and their presence here was never explained nor has any explanation ever been made as to how and why they disappeared some 15 to 20 years ago.

Among the most interesting tree families in the Hammock is that of the oak. Dr. Donaldson used eight members in his study and other botanists have claimed that there are one or two more. It is interesting to listen to discussions between scientific men, pertaining to positive identification of the various members. In one such discussion, a man whose knowledge of the subject should not be questioned, said that there were evidences of cross-breeding of varieties in some of the specimen trees.

The lush growth of the Hammock is primarily due to the rich organic soil. This is generally under-laid with a stratum of a hardpan which discourages the growth of the taproot, hence it will be noted that many of the large trees have developed buttress-type lower extremities and root systems close to the top of the ground. Some of the more violent storms, over the years, have overturned a few of the larger trees so that their root structures, as well as the hardpan, have been exposed.

This condition, which limits the depth to which the root systems may penetrate, makes the Hammock vegetation dependent solely upon the moisture content of the relatively

shallow top soil and, as the Hammock plant life requires vast quantities of water, moisture control is probably the most vital of all concern, with the exception of fires (which are also affected by moisture control).

The matter of moisture control has been the primary concern of planners and administrators of the park since its beginning. There can be no doubt that the very existence of the area was brought about over the period of thousands of years by the moisture conditions that have prevailed here and these same conditions have protected the vegetation from fires that have ravaged other Florida lands for centuries.

Many of the greatest recognized authorities in the world of botany have visited the Hammock and have offered freely of their scientific knowledge as evidence of their interest and their appreciation of the fact that the Hammock is one of the finest natural features in the nation and one to which they wanted to make a contribution toward its conservation. A very minor part of the list of these notables would include Dr. Charles Torrey Simpson, Dr. David Fairchild, Dr. H. Harold Hume, Dr. H. Beaman Douglas, Dr. J. K. Small, and Dr. Fredrick Law Olmsted; all eminent men and experts in their field.

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT SUGGESTIONS THAT THE MAJORITY OF THESE EXPERTS OFFERED WERE IN THE AREA OF THE CONTROL OF THE SUPPLY OF WATER IN THE HAMMOCK PORTION OF THE PARK. THEY ALL AGREED THAT THIS WAS ONE OF THE MOST VITAL FACTORS IN THE CONSERVATION PROGRAM.

There are three primary sources of water supply which, in order of volume are 1) Charlie Bowlegs Creek; 2) Tiger Branch and 3) Haw Branch.

Haw Branch rises a short distance to the southeast of the park and enters at the southeast corner, emptying into the broad flats at that point. Its flow volume depends on the amount of rainfall. In seasons of little or no rain, this is often a dry bed.

The flow of Tiger Branch, although influenced by the amount of rainfall, has some flow in all seasons as it is spring-fed. Its source is in the northeast corner of section 33 and it flows to the southwest. Before any roads or trails were built, the stream ran through section 33, crossed the southeastern corner of section 32 into section 5, where it emptied into the marshy flats to the east of Charlie Bowlegs Creek.

The source of Charlie Bowlegs Creek is several miles to the south of the Hammock and, except in very dry seasons, its waters spread out over broad areas of Halls Flats. Prior to 1932, there were seasons when even the bed of the creek was so dry that large cracks

opened in the mud bottom. Of course, all fish were killed and aquatic animals and birds were forced to find other habitats. These droughts were injurious to plant life and fire was a continuous threat especially in the savannas of Halls flats where there were several large rookeries. In these seasons, the only moisture in the Hammock came from the meager flow of Tiger Branch.

Such a season was experienced in 1931 so Mr. Blair, Mr. Hawkins, and their staff, worked out a system of water control which would guarantee some retention of water in the Hammock under the most severe conditions and make the best possible use of the Tiger Branch supply. This system was cleverly integrated with the plans for the fences and road grades. In the more than thirty years since the control structures were built, there has never been a year when the park was entirely devoid of surface water although there have been some seasons of prolonged drought which would have produced such hazardous conditions that would have made mandatory the closing of the park to public use except for the wise precautions that had been provided. These benefits also served the cattlemen south of the park.

The fences were erected on fills which were several feet above normal water levels where fences went through low marshy areas. To procure materials for these fills, earth was drag-lined, thus forming rather deep reservoirs alongside the fills on the north and south sides of the Hammock.

Similar operations were practiced on the main access road and county road but, in these canals formed by dragline operations, dams were constructed of heavy gauge, interlocking steel sheet piling to restrict the flow in dry seasons and to impound water during droughts. In the fence fills, steel culverts of large cross-section were installed to equalize the levels on either side of the fill.

The principal control was a masonry dam built at the point where Charlie Bowlegs Creek intersects the half-section line of section 31 (the north fence line of the park). This was constructed with gate valves and flash boards in such a manner that levels could be lowered or raised as conditions dictated.

One of the most unique and valuable features of the design of the control system was the diversion of the outfall waters of Tiger Branch so that they were routed through the ponds of the central part of the "oval" When the fills were made for the access and county roads, they changed the course of this creek. To correct for this change a catch basin was built and a pipe line was laid to a point known as Pond #1 on the original survey. From this point, the water flowed through natural channels and/or planned ditches through ponds #2, #3, #6, #5, #4 (in that order). Any excess to the needs of these areas

was drained into Charlie Bowlegs Creek. Thus, needed moisture supplies were distributed to sections of the Hammock where they would do the most good.

When the pipe was laid, money for materials was in short supply so 8 inch vitrified clay pipe with leadite joints were used instead of more durable materials. In the course of a few years, settlement of the unstable type of soil, encouraged by the vibration from the adjacent road, resulted in cracked pipe and joints into which roots of neighboring trees and plants found their way, completely cutting off the flow.

This condition continued to exist for more than 15 years following the war, with each succeeding administration promising to find a way to correct it and endeavoring to find the money with which to do it. In 1961, a "Roto-Rooter" was used to clean out the roots. This machine employs a rotary cutting blade that is forced through the pipe, chewing up the roots as it proceeds. While this process cleans the pipes, it can be considered as only a temporary expedient that must be employed every year as the roots grow back.

In 1964, the vitrified clay pipe was replaced by a line of transite pipe, an asbestos-cement composition which has greater flexibility and is more impervious to roots. This promises to give much longer, maintenance-free life. About the same time, the lower reaches of Tiger Branch were cleared of fallen tree limbs and other debris which were impeding the flow and diverting the waters to new channels, thus starving the intake to the pipeline. It was learned at that time, that frequent inspections should be made of this important section of Tiger Branch and the stream bed kept free of trash.

One of the more persistent problems of water control in the Hammock has been the run of Charlie Bowlegs Creek. For the period between 1930 and 1940, it provided few difficulties but in the late 1930's a new owner took over Halls Flats to the south of the Hammock and clandestinely drag-lined a canal across the south half of section 6 (state owned land) which formed a natural ridge holding back the waters in the Flats. The new owner probably figured that he could increase his pasture land by reducing the area of the naturally overflowed acreage.

However, the canal was not the total solution that he had hoped for as the equalizing culverts under the south fence fill were not designed to carry off the augmented flow so he brought pressure to bear to have a cut made in the fence fill to the width of the canal that he had made without permission. The Park Service, wishing to maintain friendly relations with its neighbors acceded and installed a bridge. No record was made of the understandings that were mutually agreed upon at the time (1951) but the cattleman was satisfied with the terms.

The lack of documentation of these agreements is most unfortunate because, in due course of time, the cattleman died and land owners upstream from his holdings began to drain hundreds of acres into Charlie Bowlegs Creek, thereby tremendously increasing the flow volume that had to be handled by the stream through the park. In order to help handle the abnormal increase during seasons of high water, the Park Service drag-lined a part of the creek run through the north half of section 6. The State has experienced a great expense, not only in keeping the creek run open, but also in removing hyacinths and other growths further downstream so that flood waters can be discharged expeditiously.

But there is another side to the problem. Since the normal season of high park use (December through March) is also the normal season of little rainfall, it is essential that the moisture in the park be maintained at a high level prior to the time when rains fail to fall, in order to minimize the fire hazard. Fire could ruin this magnificent area of natural beauty in a few short hours and is therefore the greatest danger to the park but tremendous damage could be done to the plant life by prolonged drought.

Water is the life blood of the Hammock and its conservation, use and control will continue to be the major factor in the maintenance of this park. The well-being of the Hammock plant life is entirely dependent on the wise management of the water resources.



Halls Flats

Bird Rookery in the Distance

FIRE CONTROL

A costly lesson in fire prevention and control was learned on the weekend of Easter 1956. Prior to that time, no effort had been made to train park personnel in forest fire suppression and, because of the fact that the Sebring Fire Department had quickly contained the previous few fires, adequate equipment and watchfulness had not been stressed in the park's programs.

The Easter fire originated quite some distance south of the park and crept steadily north without any organized interruption until it entered Section 4. However, by that time, control was almost too late. The absence of adequate fire breaks, low humidity, tinder-dry undergrowth which had not known fire for 2 years, and high spring winds, made conditions ideal for a real conflagration which swept practically all of Section 4 before it was contained.

By this time, it was realized that several very serious mistakes had been made: 1) The fire should have been attacked before it threatened the state owned property, 2) adequate firebreaks should have been provided around the perimeter of the property to prevent fires from entering from the outside, and 3) interior breaks would have facilitated control if fire got in before it was contained.

The more glaring and costly error, however, was made when, at the end of the day, when the wind had died down and the flames had been quenched, it was considered that the battle was won and damage had been confined to Section 4, south of the entrance road. The fire fighters were permitted to take their work-weary bodies home for some well-earned rest, leaving smoldering logs and stumps flickering along the battle lines.

The following day, the morning breezes fanned the embers and blew them across the road into Section 33 and the eastern edge of Section 32 with devastating effect and only the county road and canal saved the main body of the oval section of the Hammock. Only a comparatively small portion of the dense growth in the hammock proper was damaged by the flames. Most of the damage was to the botanical garden and arboretum areas. It was the timely response by the National Guard, the Sebring and Avon Park fire departments, a force from the Archbold Expeditions of Lake Placid, and personnel from the Florida Forest Service, and the Fish and Game Commission that saved the park from being totally destroyed.

A verbal order from Governor LeRoy Collins, called out Battery C of the 712th AAA Battalion at Avon Park. The move to get the guardsmen was initiated by Sheriff Broward Coker, who contacted Lieutenant See, of Wauchula, battery commander.

Lt. See, unable to contact the adjutant general's office Sunday, telephoned Governor Collins and explained the emergency. Within an hour, men and equipment were at the park on the governor's order.

The batteries at Sarasota and Lake Wales were on a standby basis Sunday, awaiting call. The fire was brought under control about 3:30 Monday morning. Park personnel and Sebring firemen had been battling fires around the park since Thursday, well into the nights. The outbreak on Sunday was first noted by Mrs. Robert Baylor, wife of a member of the park personnel. It was east of the picnic area where many picnickers were enjoying the Easter holiday.

Campers and trailerites in the park joined the firefighters in combating the fire which reached the edge of the camping area but did no damage to tents or trailers. Only one building, a garage, was destroyed. A Game Commission plane was used in spotting the fires and, by radio contact with ground forces, directed them to the scenes. The National Guard remained on duty until late Monday evening.

One of the more valuable units in this battle was that of the Archbold Expeditions under the direct supervision of Richard Archbold, a member of the Advisory Council. This equipment consisted of a 500 gallon water tank mounted on a four wheel drive truck. A front-mounted pump furnished high pressure to the hose lines. The truck was capable of negotiating all types of terrain.

So great was Mr. Archbold's interest in the safety of the Hammock that when it was realized that its fire protection equipment was inadequate he gave this truck to the park; at the same time pressing for still more special protective devices to be furnished by the state. Studies were made, hoping to design some type of machinery that could be transported over the trails and bridges in the inner portion of the oval but no satisfactory answers have been evolved to this important problem.

The Advisory Council considered that the best practical defense available in the deep hammock, was a high moisture content and, as the greatest threat to the entire park was from fires entering from outside the park, (as did the fire of Easter 1956) additional preventive measures should be taken. To initiate a comprehensive program, they voted to spend the last of their monies in the Trust Fund (\$ 4,376) for a tractor and plow to be used specifically for fire fighting. The Florida Forest Service entered into a cooperative agreement and has designed and built an adequate system of fire breaks around the perimeter of the park and in some of the open areas.

Since the greatest damage in the Easter fire came after a human error in judgment, probably caused by inexperience and lack of training, Superintendents Pellicer and Baylor instituted a series of training sessions conducted by Highlands County Ranger R. L. Williams of the Florida Forest Service.

While it is realized that this was a very costly fire, it is possible that it may have had its benefits in that it awakened some persons in authority to fire dangers but, with personnel changes and the memory erasing factor of time, these benefits may soon be lost unless a comprehensive and continuing program of education in fire prevention and fire suppression is maintained.



Ranger Station
at Park Entrance



The Discovery of a Prehistoric Turtle



AN OLD TURTLE

When workmen were excavating in preparation for laying a pipe line through the first orange grove near the Hammock entrance, they uncovered two excellent specimens of mastodon tusks which were laid on the ditch bank. Supervisory personnel were called and as they were grouped around admiring the unusual find, the tusks, with an almost imperceptible hissing sound, suddenly disintegrated. Later, the discoverers were told that the tusks should have been given a protective coating of some material to exclude the air, immediately upon being found.

The following day, within a few feet of the point where the tusks were found, the workmen came upon a substance which they didn't immediately recognize so, remembering the loss of the mastodon tusks, they called for the supervisors before proceeding with the excavations. A Mr. and Mrs. Jack Connery were recommended as persons who had knowledge of proper procedures and they took over the task of unearthing what appeared to be, from the very small exposed section, the fossilized remains of an animal. At first, since it was near the site of the tusks, it was assumed that it might be a part of the mastodon.

The Connery's went to work on the fossil, carefully scraping the soil off of a few square inches and then applying a coating of shellac to exclude the air. It was only after hours and hours of patient and painstaking work that the fossil was fully uncovered and identified as a gigantic turtle measuring nearly three feet high, four feet across, and five feet long. It has been estimated that, when alive (more than 35,000 years ago) it weighed about a ton.

Several years later (in 1939) Mr. Clarence Simpson, of the office of the State Geologist, replaced the very few missing pieces with plaster parts. Dr. Harry Ladd, geologist for the National Park Service, examined the specimen and gave his opinion that it had been a near relative of the Testudo family of land turtles, similar to turtles found on the Galapagos Islands.



THE FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDEN AND ARBORETUM

It would be practically impossible to be certain exactly who conceived the idea of a botanical garden and arboretum in connection with Highlands Hammock.

The first effort in the movement was made by C. S. Donaldson in the early months after the acquisition of the land was assured. As curator of the newly formed park, he arranged for the purchase of a large number of royal palm trees with which he proposed to line the entrance road up to the first grove. He also planned to set a quantity of azaleas at strategic points in the woods along the road.

Mr. Donaldson's vision was to create a park whose beauty would rival that of Cypress Gardens in South Carolina, with beautiful flowering plantings in a less formal setting than that of the mall in Avon Park, which he had so skillfully brought into being.

However, when the plan was laid before the Trustees of the Tropical Florida Parks Association, it was promptly vetoed, almost without discussion, because it violated the basic policy that the Hammock was to be maintained forever in its natural condition with nothing of an exotic nature added. It is not known whether Mr. Donaldson conveyed his vision to Miss Anne MacIlvaine, the sister of Mrs. Roebing, but it is a matter of record that that lady suggested the idea of a botanical garden to certain members of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs in a meeting at the Hammock on 25 February 1933.

Harry Lee Baker, the State Forester and Park Executive, thought well of the plan and, during the summer of 1933, he started a party, under the direction of Mr. Reinsmith, on a topographical map of Section 33 and the eastern portion of the Hammock in order to form a nucleus of a planning scheme. On 31 October, some of the officers of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs met in Sebring to consider plans for developing a botanical garden and arboretum. The following steps were urged:

- 1 Completion of topographic survey.
- 2 General removal of dead trees and stumps.
- 3 Establishment of taxonomical test plots.
- 4 General planting of north half of Section 33 to a cover crop of slash and long-leaf pine.
- 5 Soil survey.
- 6 Retention of a master planner; John Nolen being suggested.
- 7 Securing CCC labor.
- 8 Appointment of an advisory committee familiar with Florida horticultural conditions.

Mrs. Arthur G. Cummer of Jacksonville, was designated as chairman of the Federation's committee and she urged the immediate preparation of a master plan while, in November, Mr. Baker suggested the acquisition of Section 4 and urged that the Trustees of Highlands Hammock determine if they would assume responsibility for bringing the Botanical Garden and Arboretum into existence. He indicated his willingness to make it a CCC project.

At that time, Highlands Hammock, Inc., appointed a committee consisting of Col. Bailey, Ray Greene and W. F. Coachman to organize an association and a charter was drafted and filed on 18 January 1934. The first meeting of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association was convened on 16 March 1934, at which time officers were elected.

John C. Gifford, President
 Dr. W. A. Davison and Mrs. A. G. Cummer, vice-presidents
 Mrs. Clara I. Thomas, Secretary
 W. T. Coates, Treasurer

An imposing Board of Trustees was elected, representing many diverse interests and all sections of the state.

Trustees for three years

| | |
|-----------------------|----------------|
| Dr. H. Harold Hume | Gainesville |
| W. F. Coachman | Lake Placid |
| Mrs. Arthur G. Cummer | Jacksonville |
| Mrs. Clara I. Thomas | St. Petersburg |
| Dr. John C. Gifford | Coconut Grove |
| Mrs. William Fielder | Tampa |
| Dr. W. A. Davison | Avon Park |

Trustees for two years

| | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| Col. F. N. K. Bailey | DeSoto City |
| Miss Grace Edwards | Winter Park |
| Rex Beach | Sebring |
| Mrs. E. E. Barton | DeSoto City |
| J. E. Sims | Lake Placid |
| Norman Reasoner | Oneco |
| A. O. Smith | Wauchula |

Trustees for one year

| | |
|--------------------|----------------|
| B. F. Welles | Arcadia |
| Mrs. Edna Fuller | Orlando |
| Sen. Henry Murphy | Zolfo Springs |
| W. T. Coates | Avon Park |
| Alexander Blair | Lake Placid |
| Mrs. Herman Kelley | St. Remy, N.Y. |

Advisory Committee

| | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Dr. H. Harold Hume | Dr. David Fairchild |
| Dr. John K. Small | J. Horace McFarland |
| Dr. L. H. Bailey | Dr. Elmer Merrill |
| Col. Robert Montgomery | Walter Buswell |
| Alfred Kay | T. R. Robinson |
| Prof. Herman Kurz | Mrs. Arthur Cummer |
| Fredrick Olmstead | Dr. John Nolen |
| A. D. Taylor | W. R. Mattoon |
| Harry Lee Baker | Dr. C. Korstan |

It may seem to some that the recording of the above names is an irrelevant gesture serving no good purpose as most names are forgotten a generation later but a closer look at the list will reveal the names of civic leaders, scientists, world-famous authors, botanists and horticultural experts whose contributions to education and culture will live forever.

The selection of Mrs. Clara T. Thomas as secretary, was a happy and fruitful choice. She was indefatigable in her efforts at organizing and publicizing the new project, appearing before garden clubs, civic groups, and any organization that would listen to the plans for the new association. Her enthusiasm was infectious as she enlisted aid for the project. It was also fortunate that she was chosen by the National Park Service as one of the supervisory personnel of the CCC camp which was assigned to the work in June 1934.

It was likewise most advantageous that Mr. Ray Vinten was available at that particular time for the position of superintendent of the CCC camp which was designated as SP-3. By training and experience, he was probably the best qualified man that could have been found to plan and organize the initial work on the project. It was also fortunate that when he was promoted he was in a position to continue to exercise close supervision of progress.

In the first year, during which Mr. Vinten was superintendent, work went forward at a very gratifying pace on such basic projects as clearing section 33 of stumps and dead trees, building truck and foot trails and beginning the building of a nursery, propagating sheds, an herbarium and structures to house equipment and tools.

In those early months, there was never a dearth of well-qualified personnel for planning and for professional services of eminent botanists, horticulturists and landscape architects. The Board of Trustees was built largely around this type of individual. It will be noted that of the original 20 members, only one was picked from Sebring and, at the end of the first year, no Sebring residents were added.

When the Trustees of Highlands Hammock, Inc., endorsed the formation of the Botanical Garden Association and lent their aid in its organization, there was no intention of diverting Hammock monies to the purposes of the Association nor, at that time, had the Hammock been accepted by the State for maintenance. So great was the enthusiasm among the promoters of the Association that it was assumed that no difficulty would be experienced in finding a great number of people who would be eager to contribute large sums that would provide adequate maintenance. Hence, no significant emphasis was placed on raising funds, in the agenda of the many meetings that were held.

During the 1934-35 period, only 49 dues-paying members were on the rolls and in the succeeding year, the treasurer reported total collections of only \$ 165.00. The government began to question the justification for continuing the operation of the CCC program since it was questionable whether maintenance could be provided upon completion of the project.

Dr. A. J. Grout of Bradenton succeeded Dr. Gifford as president of the Association at the annual meeting in March 1935 and he served two years in that capacity. Although he made many contacts that were beneficial to the botanical and scientific angles of the Garden, his programs for raising money were dismal failures.

As the government became more insistent that the Association show some more tangible evidence of financial responsibility, more local interest was generated. The mid-1930's were still years of deep national financial depression and the CCC camp was a large factor in the economic life of the community so, when threatened with the loss of the camp, the local citizens took a more active part in the affairs of the Association. At the annual meeting in March 1937, a slate of officers composed almost entirely of Sebring residents, took over the affairs of the Association.

Col. F. N. K. Bailey, president
Selwyn Ives and Miss B. B. Enyart, vice-presidents
M. M. Ferguson, secretary
Ford W. Heacock, treasurer

| | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| Executive Committee: | Col. F. N. K. Bailey |
| Selwyn Ives | M. M. Ferguson |
| J. B. McFarlin | M. F. McGee |

By this time, the future of the Hammock was practically assured but the financial status of the Garden could have hardly been worse. Mrs. Clara I. Thomas had resigned in 1936 so the liaison with the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs was weakened and even the

meager support that they could give was lost. Various plans were discussed, including the employment of an Atlanta firm of professional solicitors, but none of the schemes bore fruit.

The early Trustees of the Garden had been determined that all of the work of the CCC be applied to the Botanical Garden and Arboretum and only under extreme pressure, did they agree that a maximum of 10% might be diverted to the Hammock or other projects. However, when later the Trustees learned that some more definite proof of ability to provide maintenance was essential, a movement was started to form a merger of Highlands Hammock, Inc., the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association, and the DeSoto State Forest Park, with a view of making the groups into one operating unit. This was a practical approach and one that was acceptable to the National Park Service, since most of the construction work in the Garden had been accomplished and there were a number of projects badly needed by the Hammock.

Although the amalgamation was not finally completed until February 1939, the administrations of the three organizations were in such close accord that there was no disagreement in the distribution of man-power and funds. The members of each organization were intensely interested in the affairs of the others, to such a degree that in some instances a person was a member of the Boards of all three groups and it was not unusual to adjourn a Hammock meeting and convene one of the Garden by merely changing chairmen and secretaries.

Under this arrangement and with the skilled advice of the National Park Service, the Garden began to take on the attractive form that had been visualized by Mr. Baker, Mrs. Thomas, the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs and others.

The renown and interest of the original advisory committees, together with their powerful connections with other botanical gardens, government agencies, commercial nurseries, and garden clubs, made it possible to gain the cooperation of many sources of plant materials, seeds, and technical services. At the end of the first year (March 1935) 5,590 plants, 923 cuttings and 42 flats of seedlings had been acquired.

In the botanical department, an herbarium collection had been started with the cooperation of the New York Botanical Garden. A total of 4,625 specimens made up the beginning year's work.

As work progressed, tens of thousands of native shrubs and trees were transplanted to provide plantings for various areas which were devoted to displays of certain types of trees and plants as, for instance, a palm area, a conifer area, aquatic plant pools, a bamboo

area, and gardens to test and display various flowering plants and shrubs such as azaleas, hibiscus, camellias, day lilies, and many others.

In the arboretum (section 4) many test trees were planted. One of the primary purposes of the arboretum project was to find tree species which would be economically profitable for culture in South Florida. Seeds were received from many different areas of the world. These were placed in flats and later transplanted in the field. Very precise records were maintained of the germination ratio, the rate of growth, and even the mortality. Temperatures and rainfall were also recorded. This entire project could have been of tremendous economic value to the state had it been continued. A scattering of isolated specimens are still living.

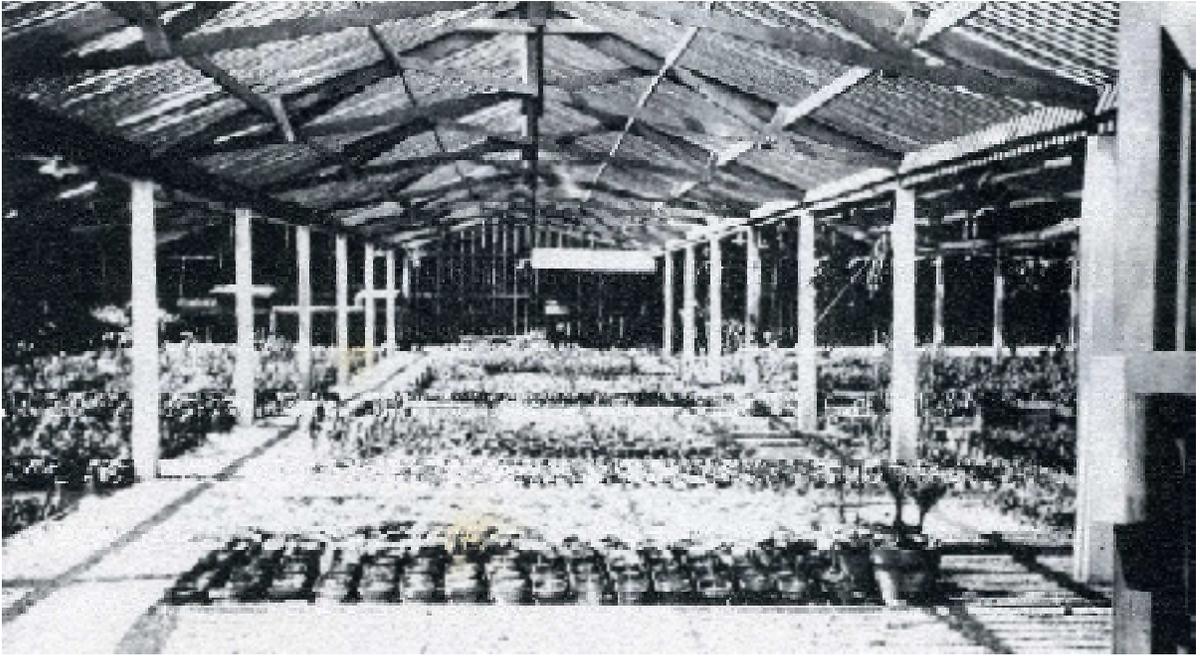
By 1942, several of the display areas were coming into full bloom and were furnishing colorful attractiveness in their seasons. A greenhouse had been built: collections of unusual and beautiful plants had been started. There were literally thousands of plants, either set in their field locations or ready to be transplanted there.

Then came World War II and, like the bursting of a bubble came also the end of the Botanical Garden and Arboretum. No provision had been made for fencing or locking the plant collections and, when all but two or three of the park personnel left to join the armed forces or to accept better paying war-connected work, those who were left could not possibly protect the vast area. As a result, the wonderful collection of specimen plants rapidly disappeared and, by the end of the war, the pools and trails had been wiped out by forces of nature (The disastrous fire of Easter 1956 helped to complete the devastation.)

There can be no doubt that, except for the intervention of the war, Highlands County would have had one of the most beautiful attractions in Florida as a complement to the Hammock. It would have been spectacular and impressive as well as a valuable scientific purpose. Similar, and much smaller areas of far less potential, have been promoted by private interests since World War II and have been highly successful.

But the Botanical Garden can be classified as a “war casualty” as all interest in it died when war was declared. An effort was made in 1950 to revive the idea but the organization lacked the spark and fire of dedicated personnel and, after a few struggling months, the plan was abandoned.

There are still some isolated areas where the display plantings labor to compete with native growth which is slowly and relentlessly taking over again.



Arboretum Propagation Building



Palm Trees



Rustic Wooden Bridge

THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS AT HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK STATE PARK

By C. R. Vinten

INTRODUCTION

1930 to 1943 - - These were the years of the Great Depression in the United States. They were not only years of “hard times” throughout the land, but they were particularly tragic for Florida where the collapse of the Boom of the 20’s was not only a vivid memory but also an economic reality. Bank failures, foreclosures, poverty, and unemployment had a double-barreled reason for taking possession of the spirit and morale of both town and country.

But, here in Sebring, we find a group of pioneers whose optimism and devotion were stimulated by disaster to such a degree that they joined forces at such a time for the purpose of saving a superlative natural forest. It was no wonder, therefore, that in the years following such a beginning in 1928, that others like the Roebings, the National Park Service, the Florida Forest Service, the Civilian Conservation Corps, and finally the Florida Park Service, followed one another as sponsors and supporters, or as planners and developers, in the enlargement and improvement of the area which was born of hardship and reared by an inspired leadership from these small beginnings to one of the three parks so frequently called the “Crown Jewels of the United States” - Highlands Hammock.

THE CCC ARRIVES

Soon after the inauguration of President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933, he drew a rough sketch of an organization chart on a piece of scratch paper. It established a construction organization which was destined to become a great national asset in defining the course for preserving and developing our extensive system of public forests, parks, and wildlife sanctuaries. At its peak of strength, this Civilian Conservation Corps consisted of 1500 separate outdoor construction camps, which were assigned to a wide range of conservation projects in the national, state, and county parks, forests and wildlife preserves, where the cooperating agencies were qualified and desirous of carrying out essential public conservation work. In 1933, one of these CCC companies was assigned to Royal Palm State Park, under the sponsorship of the Florida Federation of Women’s Clubs; for this was the only eligible area in public ownership available, and there was no agency that was legally qualified to administer State Parks.

About this time, plans for expansion of Highlands Hammock were discussed with the idea that a CCC camp would be assigned if sections 4 and 33, lying east of the Hammock property, could be made available for development as a "Botanical Garden and Arboretum," in order to assure an adequate work area for a 200 man company. There is no need to discuss here the procedures employed for doing this, but the programs for each area were adjusted in a series of orderly steps, the Hammock programs at first continuing and the Arboretum developments expanded as plans, personnel, and equipment for the CCC program became available. It was soon apparent that through the Civilian Conservation Corps the dreams and objectives of the founders of these conservation areas were now to be realized. Here was a 200 man construction unit, headed by a superintendent, with a technical and supervisory staff for developing plans and directing the work on fences, roads, buildings and utilities, clearings and plantings, as well as for training the raw recruits to work as a construction unit, for they were largely young teen-agers from the depressed areas of New York and New Jersey, and later from Alabama, Mississippi, and Florida, not only untrained but frustrated and without confidence when they arrived. And, this unit came at first with temporary camping equipment, later standardized barracks layouts, in which the Army took over the job of being "Housekeeper," cook, teacher and recreation director for 200 boys away from home. Both the Army and construction agencies came with fleets of trucks, tools, shops, and limited amounts of material for use in park construction.

The sponsoring agencies served as procurement offices and central fiscal and personnel headquarters. The work was much like the program designed in 1930-34 by the Roeblings, as it featured labor and craftsmanship as a means of increasing employment, and frowned on any type of "automation." The CCC programs produced trained and competent men from the recruits, giving credit to proficiency in both skilled and unskilled tasks, according to the capacity of the individual.

WORK ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE CORPS

Beginning in June 1934, and working from a temporary camp located in Lake Sebring subdivision, this eager construction organization set out to perpetuate the sound design and construction principles established by the Roebling staff. No time was lost in getting the crews in the field to remove stumps and dead trees; to begin construction of the park roads through sections 4 and 33; to improve the water catchment areas at the head of Tiger Branch which was designed to maintain favorable water levels in the Hammock; to clear and plant numerous forest test plots as experimental areas for testing new forest trees in new environments. Firebreaks and truck trails were graded roughly after clearing

as an early protection feature, and a fire lookout tower and Ranger Station was constructed near the highway in Section 4, in cooperation with the Florida Forest Service. The park fence was increased from 6 miles to 10 miles.

With the appointment of A. C. Alvater as Project Superintendent, the camp was relocated to a more central location in Section 35, just west of Lake Jackson and north of the road to Highlands Hammock. All roads in the Arboretum were surfaced with red sand-clay and several basic Botanical Garden features were developed in Section 33, including an herbarium building and collections, a small greenhouse and propagation garden for ornamental shrubs, an extensive Bamboo Garden featuring many kinds of bamboo; extensive plantings of palms, oaks, and native shrubs along the road and park entrance to improve the park-like character of the highland sections, and the essential caretakers' houses and service buildings for the Arboretum were planned and constructed, along with a small park Entrance Station.

It was at this time that special permission was granted for the purchase and construction of a very efficient saw mill. Local talent could always be found for such specialized and hazardous work as harvesting timber and cutting it to the sizes needed for structures in the residence area, the auditorium and picnic areas, the Arboretum and utility areas. In fact, all the buildings within the 10 mile fence, except for a few of the oldest, were produced during this era of structural accomplishment for the CCC enrollees; and it is difficult to determine which of these productions was of greatest value, the physical structures or the human development. This was the picture as of November 30, 1941.

THE END OF A PROGRESSIVE ERA

So, amidst a national scene of financial disaster, of widespread hardship and privation for the people of the United States, and against a broad panorama of numerous federal and state agencies which were created to relieve the shock of this national emergency, the Civilian Conservation Corps has stood the test of time of the past quarter century and today it still stands out as the finest of the "Noble Experiments" which were designed in these trying years to give productive employment to young Americans. The accomplishments at Highlands Hammock and the Arboretum are a lasting symbol of the great gains in the field of conservation which advanced the Federal and State programs for parks, forests, and wildlife sanctuaries so substantially that essential work was done in this nine year period which would have taken at least a half century to accomplish in normal times, if it could have been done at all. This was the case in Highlands Hammock and the Arboretum where a small group of dedicated pioneers looked hopefully for a

miracle to support their vision for the permanent preservation of this superlative natural area so that it could contribute to the sound enjoyment of the present and future generations of Americans. The Civilian Conservation Corps provided that miracle and assured that future.

From June 1934 to December 1941, the planned development and preservation work of the Corps went forward without interruption. The Army “kept house;” the “Using Services” in cooperation with the Florida Forest Service and later Florida Park Service, and the Hammock and Arboretum lay organizations, worked together to define the jobs for the National Park Service staff to plan and develop. It was a program unique in the nation’s history, where the vision and resourcefulness of citizens’ groups, combined with the authority of State agencies, provided the lands and about 5% of the development costs; and the manpower, equipment, materials, and know-how of the National Park Service produced the other 95% of the “Miracle” of park developments, which led to the dedication of the area as a State Park on March 30, 1936. From this date until November 30, 1941, Civilian Conservation Corps Company #453, otherwise known as Camp Fla., SP-3 and later SP-10, moved forward with this progressive program, investing 228,047 man-days of directed effort and labor, and applying it with devotion to the broadest public interest and advancement. On the latter date, old Company #453 was disbanded and the Camp closed. It folded up and moved out quietly, without ceremony; but with the regrets of both the local population and those who had come here to serve.

CONCLUSION

But, the story of the CCC boys does not stop here. The date of the closing of the Camp, November 3, 1941, was a short week before the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. In assembling the national Armed Forces the military agencies were cognizant of the abilities of the CCC supervisors and men. For 7-1/2 years they had learned all there was to be known about military life except military drill and shooting a gun. They had already served on land and water in all kinds of weather and terrain, and on all kinds of jobs. They were experienced in living and working together, both in the big out-of-doors.

So, here they show up again in all parts of the world in the Army and Navy, and especially the Seabees, as veterans of the CCC who were sought after by Commanders who had a tough job that needed doing.



Refreshment Building
- - -
Construction to Completion





Service Area



The Herbarium and Office



The Garage

Nov 1938



Repair Shop (Greenhouse)



Truck Shelter & Tool Storage



Comfort Station

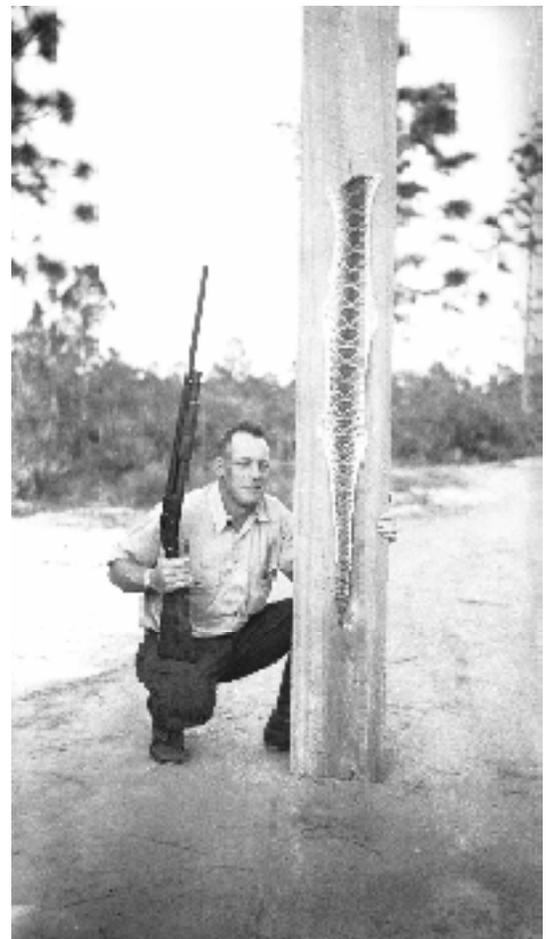


Signs for Forestry Co-operative

Richard Green, May 12, 1938



Personnel Housing Nov 1938



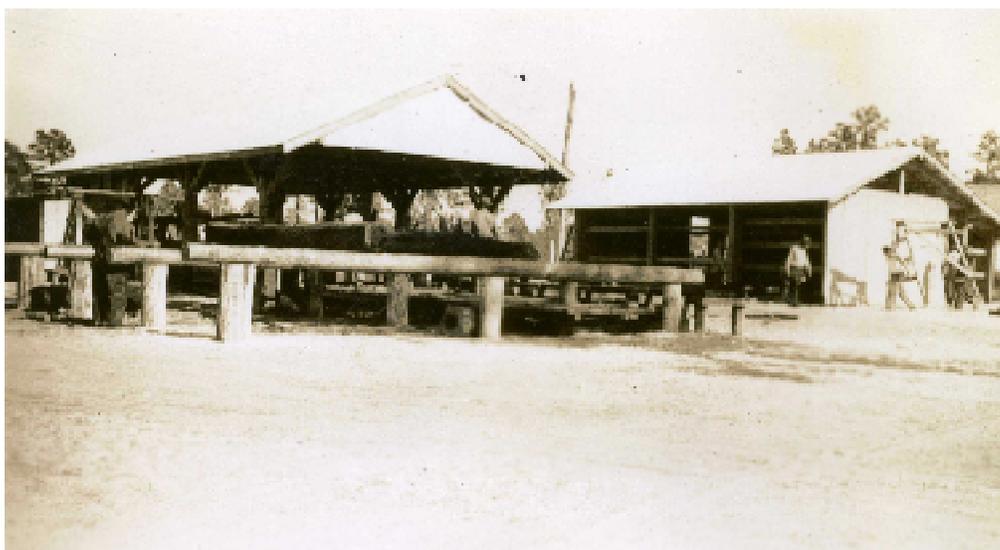
Rattle Snake killed in Sec. 4

Logs for The Saw Mill



Cypress Logs

Nov 1, 1937



Dec 18, 1939



Nov 1939



60in Saw Mill in Operation

Nov1939



Shipment of sand-hill pine lumber for Tallahassee Office, Apr 22, 1938



Dr. Hamilton Holt
March 15, 1931 Dedication Address

*The Dedication of Highlands Hammock
in Highlands County, Florida
Sunday Afternoon, March 15th, 1931*

Presiding Officers--G. F. Gardner, Lake Placid, 2nd Vice President of Highlands Hammock, Inc.
Mr. C. S. Doubleson, Avon Park, Secretary.

- (A) Music: "Forest Murmurings," by Highlands County Band; P. J. Gustaf, Conductor.
- (B) Invocation: Rev. W. J. Layton, Sebring.
- (C) Scriptural Selections: Mr. Grosvenor Dawe, Lake Placid.
- (D) Choral Singing: "Praise Ye the Father," by Highlands County Chorus, P. J. Gustaf, Leader.
- (E) "The State's Interest in Conservation" by Secretary of State H. A. Gray, representing Governor Doyle E. Carlton.
- (F) Transfer of Highlands Hammock title papers to Mr. Rex Beach, President of Highlands Hammock, Inc., by Mr. Alexander Blair, representing the Roebling family.
- (G) Acceptance of title papers by Mr. Beach, President of Highlands Hammock, Inc.
- (H) Dedicatory Address: Dr. Hamilton Holt, President, Rollins College, "The Effect of Outdoor Beauty on the Individual."
- (I) Dedicatory Prayer: Rev. Dr. C. B. Toombs, Sebring.
- (J) Choral Singing: "The Heavens are Telling," by Highlands County Chorus.
- (K) "An Appreciation of Highlands Hammock," by Hon. Herbert J. Drane.
- (L) Explanation of the Memorial Tablet and Announcements.
- (M) Congregational Singing: "Abide With Me," led by Highlands County Chorus.
- (N) Benediction: Father Harcourt Johnson, Avon Park.
- (O) Informal Reception of Visitors: Under the direction of a committee of Highlands County women: Mrs. George E. Sebring, Sr., Chairman.
- (P) Placing of wreath on the Memorial Tablet by St. Agnes Guild.
- (Q) Inspection of Hammock.

The Official Bodies in Highlands County That United To Issue Invitations To
The Dedication Of Highlands Hammock

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

G. F. Farlow, Lake Placid, Chairman.
Charles Beverly J. Sebring, John Lloyd, Avon Park.
Felix Hibbard, Deltona City, W. G. Egan, Hooah.

COUNCILMEN AND MAYOR OF SEBRING

W. B. Crawford, Mayor.
O. D. GARCIA
P. A. HAYES
H. K. Brown.
L. A. URRIL
A. J. HOOKER.

COMMISSIONERS AND MAYOR OF LAKE PLACID

J. M. Anderson, Mayor.
O. F. Sullivan.
J. E. Sims.

THE DIRECTORS OF HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK, INC.

Rex Beach,
Dr. Edwin Dawe,
G. F. Gardner,
J. Wade McGrath,
E. A. Sebring.

Alexander Blair,
C. S. Doubleson,
RIZ GORRE,
Grace Houser,
C. E. Thompson.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Col. F. M. E. Balbo, Sup't. of Public Instruction.
E. V. Conway, Sebring.
E. E. Williams, Lake Placid.
V. C. HAYES, Avon Park.

COUNCILMEN AND MAYOR OF AVON PARK

E. B. Doubleson, Mayor.
W. J. HALL.
J. L. GARDNER.
D. A. Helaney.
O. E. HALL.
F. G. McPherson.

Forest Hymn

By WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT

The groves were God's first temples. Ere man learned
To hew the shaft and lay the architrave,
And spread the roof above them.—Ere he framed
The lofty vault, to gather and roll back
The sound of anthems; in the darkling wood,
Amid the cool and silence, he knelt down
And offered to the Mightiest, solemn thanks
And supplication. For his simple heart
Might not resist the sacred influences,
Which, from the still twilight of the place,
And from the gray old trunks that high in heaven
Mingled their mossy boughs, and from the sound
Of the invisible breath that swayed at once
All their green tops, stole over him, and bowed
His spirit with the thought of boundless power
And inaccessible majesty.—Ah, why
Should we, in the world's riper years, neglect
God's ancient sanctuaries, and adore only
Among the crowd, and under roofs
That our frail hands have raised.

Father, thy hand
Hath reared these venerable columns, thou
Didst weave this verdant roof. Thou didst look down
Upon the naked earth, and, forthwith, rose
All these fair ranks of trees. They, in thy sun,
Budded, and shook their green leaves in thy breeze,
And shot toward heaven. The century-living crew
Whose birth was in their tops, grew old and died
Among their branches, till, at last, they stood,
As now they stand, massy, and tall, and dark,
Fit shrine for humble worshipper to hold
Communion with his Maker. These dim vaults,
These winding aisles, of human pomp or pride
Report not. No fantastic carvings show.
The boast of our vain race to change the form
Of thy fair works. But thou art here—thou fill'st
The solitude. Thou art in the soft winds
That run along the summit of these trees
In music;—thou art in the cooler breath
That from the inmost darkness of the place,
Comes, scarcely felt;—the bony trunks, the ground,
The fresh moist ground, are all instinct with thee.
Here is continual worship!

Dedication of Highlands Hammock

March 15th, 1931

INVOCATION

Rev. W. J Layton

Almighty God, unto Whom all hearts are open, all desires known and from Whom no secrets are hid, cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that we may heartily love Thee and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

May the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our strength and our Redeemer.

REMARKS BY MR. O. F. GARDNER

Presiding Officer of Ceremonies

Friends, we are here to formally dedicate this temple, whose architect and builder was the Maker of heaven and earth.

We have tried to arrange this program in harmony with the spirit of her who realizing, perhaps more keenly than most of us realize, the influence which can creep into our lives from surroundings like these, made them possible.

You all have programs. I ask you to follow them closely as we are going to make no announcements of speakers or subjects from the platform in order that there may be no interruptions. Follow your programs and they will not be needed.

THE STATE'S INTEREST IN CONSERVATION

Secretary of State R. A. Gray representing Governor Doyle E. Carlton

This is an occasion of more than passing moment. It should have, and will have a historical interest for this section of Florida and for the entire state.

I am impressed by the atmosphere of solemnity that surrounds these ceremonies and the air of reverence that permeates the program. Out here in these woods and in this hammock and among these trees, it is easy for us to get close to Nature and Nature's garden, because in the woods are His temples. But in this era of commercialism when we are so much taken up with the veneer of civilization and we are so much engrossed with our economic problems in attempting to follow feverishly the course of this hectic age, we are prone to forget some of the finer things of life - we are prone to forget the forests, the quiet peace of nature that we may find out in the groves and among the trees. We forget the joys that we might have in closer association with them, and we are forgetting almost to preserve them.

Millions of acres have been ruthlessly destroyed and sacrificed in the past by those who have been following only the moneymaking urge.

One of our eminent Americans of today has said that America has so ruthlessly and so wastefully destroyed its forests and its natural resources and for this characteristic the Americans are more conspicuous - for the manner in which they have treated their trees - and continuing he contrasts us with the countries of Europe, especially France, calling attention to the frugality with which the people of that nation conserve their timber and their forests. I have had the pleasure of noting that myself and was impressed very much with it. Over there even the twigs pruned from the fruit trees are carried home for fuel, and where we build a scaffolding of good lumber to erect buildings and repair them and then turn around and throw them away and waste it, they have scaffolding made of poles at carefully shaped and tied together at the ends, and after they have completed the building or structure in which the scaffolding is used, it is carefully taken down and laid away and used again and again. No nation on Earth compares with us in the reckless way in which we have destroyed and wasted our timber.

In waste areas which were once filled with trees and now on which nothing grows, it is said that America leads all the nations of the World by a tearfully large margin.

In our own state, we have been a little slow about taking note of this great need, but I am

glad to say that we have made a beginning and we believe we have made that beginning in a scientific way. Florida now has some two or three departments of the State Government, the theory of their establishment and the purpose for which they exist being conservation. We have a Forestry Department and, while it is new and yet in its swaddling clothes, we hope to see it grow and we hope to see the public interest grow more and more until there shall be an awakened public consciousness and we shall all become “conservation minded.”

It is not my purpose to make a lengthy talk this afternoon. I am not here to attempt such. I am here mainly that by my presence - because I know if I should fail to try to do so in words - but merely by my presence to express to you, or attest to those who have in charge this occasion, the interest that your state government has in occasions of this kind and the particular interest that we have in this ceremony, and I am also here to express to you the personal message of the Governor of this state, who yesterday afternoon, as I left the cabinet meeting to come, said that he would be glad if I would say to you that he was so very, very sorry that he could not come in person but he did want you to know that his personal interest is in this dedication and the interest of all his official family.

There is much more to come on this program today, so I should be, and will be, brief, but before I close I ask your indulgence to refer only to one other phase of my impressions of this program and this ceremony and that is the spirit of the donor of Highlands Hammock in setting it apart for the public welfare. Such a spirit as this is a great spirit. It is the spirit that can appreciate and does appreciate the needs of all the people, the masses of mankind, can have in her heart a kindly, a considerate and a friendly desire to contribute to the happiness of all men, and so I want to pay briefly this word of praise to the lady who has given this beautiful, this remarkable gift to the people of this section and to Florida, and to the World.

I hardly know how I can express the way that I should like to interpret that expression, only to ask your indulgence to refer to an old-fashioned bit of verse, if I can recall it because it has been many years since I read it. But it seems to me that nothing would more fittingly portray what was in the heart of the donor than this old-fashioned piece of verse:

“Abou Ben Adhem, may his tribe increase,
Awoke one night from a deep dream of peace
And saw within the moonlight in his room,
Making it rich like a lily in bloom,

An angel, writing in a book of gold.
Exceeding peace had made Ben Adhem bold
And to the presence in the room he said
“What writest thou?” The vision raised its head
And with a look made all of sweet accord
Answered, “The names of these who love the Lord.”
“And Is mine one?” said Abou.
Abou spoke more low, “Write me then
As one who loved his fellow men.”
The angel wrote and vanished and the next night came again,
And showed the names of those whom the Love of God had blest,
And lo, Ben Adhem’s name led all the rest.”

REMARKS BY MR. ALEXANDER BLAIR

It is with very mixed feelings that I perform the duty allotted to me today, in that my first thought is of deep regret that the person most concerned in the preservation of this spot is no longer with us.

The honor has fallen to me of formally presenting the document representing the transfer of title of Highlands Hammock from the donor, Margaret Shippen Roebling, to the officials of Highlands Hammock, Incorporated.

To have known Mrs. Roebling has been a privilege, and to represent her in this project has been a source of great pleasure to me.

The knowledge that she had not only of plant life and of bird life, but all forms of animal life, I think contributed very largely to her keen appreciation of that. She seemed to have a much greater understanding of them than the average person has, and it was remarkable the manner in which she could cultivate plants or make the friendship of birds and animals. This knowledge was so extensive as well as broad that it resulted in her husband calling her “The Botanist of the Expedition”.

Mrs. Roebling’s first sight of this hammock, I believe, came from an airplane. She was taken over this hammock by her son, Mr. Donald Roebling, who pointed out the beauty of it to her. I believe after this her interest was keen and she then came into the hammock with several people, one of whom was Mr. Donaldson, and after she had once been

through it she was filled with the desire to preserve it in its present form and to protect it from any form of injury.

Mrs. Roebing loved the forests but she was greatly concerned about their future. Mr. Gray has just told you about the way in which we neglect our plant life and trees in this country. Mrs. Roebing, with her wide knowledge, was very familiar with this and it used to disturb her to see the beauties of Florida being burned up - being destroyed not only by fire but by so-called improvements and she felt that here was a spot that it was within her power to preserve and conserve. This park, she felt, was as near Paradise as any place on Earth.

The hammock was so beautiful in its natural state that she once made the remark that she hoped that nothing would be done to in anyway change it. She desired to have nothing brought into it that would alter its character or detract from the beauty that was here.

Her desire was to open it up in such a manner that all nature lovers could come in and see it and find rest and peace here. This wonderful outdoor temple she felt was so filled with the sights and sounds of nature, and the beauty of it so impressed her that she could find her purest form of recreation in merely spending time in this hammock. It was a great regret to her that she was not able to see more of it because at that time the hammock was not accessible.

Having regard to the great generosity of the donor and the purpose she had in mind in preserving this for you, her expressed desire was that the public should know that she was merely contributing her part. She was not doing the whole thing, she was merely doing what she felt was her due in purchasing this hammock and she desired that the public at large, that Highlands County and the people of Florida, would generously participate in this.

I know that nothing would have given her greater please than to know that Highlands County and Florida were taking care of this matter and were generously responding to the donating of the funds for the work that was started.

In Mrs. Roebing's name, I have pleasure in handing to Mr. Rex Beach, as president of Highlands Hammock, this document, which will, I hope, be later replaced by a document properly engrossed on parchment which may be placed in the archives of Highlands Hammock so that it may be fittingly preserved and recorded.

REMARKS BY MR. REX BEACH

On behalf of Highlands Hammock and the people of Highlands County and the people of Florida, I thank you. This document I will surrender to Mayor Donaldson of Avon Park, the curator of the park and the secretary of the park association.

It is largely due to his interest and his industry in the association that we have gone so far with the enterprise as we have.

You have witnessed an extraordinary act of benevolence. This is the most noteworthy gift of the sort in the history of Florida. Less than a year ago this forest, one of the rarest beauty spots in Florida, was a wilderness all but inaccessible. To most of us, even to those who lived nearby, it was little more than a name. In a few short months, thanks largely to the generosity of a public-spirited woman, its wealth of beauty has been uncovered, in part at least, and its surpassing loveliness has been made yours.

When the idea of preserving this tropical paradise, and of dedicating it to the public was conceived, there was no expectation of immediately realizing that ambition. It was too utopian for the moment, so we believed. There was no lack of willing hands, but they were weak and funds available were insufficient. Then, almost without solicitation, assistance came and it has continued. You are here today by reason of the beneficence of a gracious, an unselfish woman to whom beauty pleaded in a voice more potent than that of any orator; one who recognized in this tranquil retreat a temple built by hands divine.

Someone has said that beauty is God's handwriting - a wayside sacrament. Through the generosity of Mrs. Roebing, a generosity exceeding only that of her husband, these towering trees, these friendly, sheltering limbs, so long as they stand, will pronounce a perpetual benediction upon all who come.

Others have given as liberally as possible of their time, their thought and their money, to be sure. Those willing hands have worked, our residents of the ridge section have contributed, our county commissioners have been liberal in their help, but the principal donor, the one who made the dream a reality, was that modest woman to whom we have placed a tablet. It is as simple, as unostentatious as the act of charity which inspired it. In our gratitude for her beneficence we are saddened by the fact that she is not here today so that we might have the selfish pleasure of knowing and of thanking her. The bronze of that tablet and the granite which frames it are long-lived, but neither will

outlast the shady walls of this cathedral in which it rests, for while the metal may wear and the stone crumble, nature will repair the damage done to this green mansion and from the soil will spring new trees, new shade, new marvels of that beauty which Mrs. Roebling so passionately worshipped.

Mr. Blair says it was her wish that this wilderness should be perpetuated in its natural simplicity so far as possible and that human hands should alter it only insofar as necessary to accentuate its charms and to make them more accessible. That wish we shall observe.

Ladies and gentlemen, those of you who feel an inward joy in the contemplation of beauty, (and who does not?) will doubtless agree that “Nature was here so lavish of her store, That she bestowed until she had no more”, but let me urge you to think forward for twenty, forty, sixty years: to close your eyes a moment and picture this hammock as it will be when your children and your children’s children visit it.

In spite of fires, in spite of careless and of ravaging hands it has become what it is. Can you or I imagine the wealth of beauty and the profusion of life which will inhabit it when it is no longer scarred by fires and mutilated by trespassers, when it shall have become a granary for birds and when shy wild creatures recognize it as a blessed sanctuary in which to live and raise their young? I attempt to visualize that picture but I fail and I am envious of those who will come here after I have become a “sighing dust, a robe of ashes.”

It is not intended that this shall be a park for today or for tomorrow, but for all time. Neither is it your park or my park. It is our park. We are all equal partners in it and our children, rich or poor, great or humble, will share it equally with each other.

In accepting this gift for you and for them, your park association accepts an obligation, a sacred trust. It is an obligation, a trust binding upon us and upon you, the obligation to care for this gift and to cherish it. Highlands Hammock, if it is to endure, must have your interest and your support, and I assume that it will have both for it is inconceivable that a thing so lovely, so precious, so rich in promise for those generations to come could be allowed to languish or to die.

That support need not take the form of money, although parks do not maintain themselves, and every dollar subscribed will go into its care and its beautification. You can give us real support by becoming acquainted with this paradise, by loving it, and by using it and respecting it. We want you to know that it belongs to you and to your families, we want you to cherish and to take pride in it. We know you will.

If you believe that is a thing worth while, we invite you to help us make it such by enrolling yourselves as members of our association. You will note that facilities for doing so have been provided. To you who feel an urge to assist more generously we promise that your help will be appreciated not alone by us but by every nature lover for we have only begun to explore the beauties of this fascinating place and there are unlimited opportunities for development. But whether you join our association, whether you help us or not, this is still your park, your playground, your tranquil garden.

On behalf of our association, and I think I speak for all the citizens of this county and this state, we bid you welcome, and hope that in this heavenly wilderness of growing, budding things you will find a keen delight and a lasting satisfaction.

In closing, and in tribute to that woman who made this gracious gift to us, may I quote four lines from Byron:

“Who doth not feel, until his fading sight
Faints into dimness with its own delight,
His changing cheek, his sinking heart confess
The might - the majesty of Loveliness?”

DEDICATORY ADDRESS

by Dr. Hamilton Holt

I am deeply sensible this afternoon that friends beyond this county are invited to participate in this historic occasion. Not only is this park a paradise for the people who live about her but for the state and for the nation, and it is quite fitting that a representative of the United States Government, who will speak after I do, and a representative of the state, who has already spoken, should be here.

I assume that I have been invited to speak for the higher life of Florida, for I am certain that this park, whatever part it plays in this state now and hereafter, will be largely for the encouragement and enrichment of the culture and the higher life of Florida.

I had only leaned about Highlands Hammock the other day from Mr. Rex Beach, who I am proud to say, is a Rollins College graduate and the president of the Alumni Association. I supposed Highlands Hammock was beautiful but until this morning, until I had seen it, I had no conception of what this wonderful place is, and most of the citizens of the state must feel as I have felt when they come here, and they will come here now very, very soon.

It is a wonderful thing that the people of Florida are beginning to turn their attention to higher things. You know Florida is the only state in the Union that has been under five different flags. We were under Spain in 1513, under France in 1562 and under England in 1573. We have been under the flag of the Confederacy and, of course, of the United States. We have neglected our history. Most of us know that St. Augustine is the oldest city in the country, but how many of you know that the Spanish Missions, five or six of the ruins of which are now to be found in this state, are the oldest missions in American, far out-dating the California missions, which California justly makes so much of.

But here is history that goes away back of every kind of history. Those of you who have read that remarkable History of the World by H. G. Wells know that he does not start with when man came on the Earth but he goes back to where the Universe is supposed to have been gas and comes down to the time when the Earth was a ball of fire.

But this park is a great deal more than history. This represents science at its best, but even more than science it represents nature, and nature at its best. It represents real beauty in a supreme degree.

I am always surprised to think how little in our daily lives we attempt to beautify our surroundings, and yet when we once hear of something that is beautiful, we go miles and miles and miles to see it. I suppose the Sistine Madonna is worth the interest on a billion dollars to the city of Dresden each year.

What is more attractive to the people of the United States than the Yosemite Valley, the Grand Canyon of the Colorado, the Yellowstone National Park or Niagara Falls? What are the things in the State of Florida that people get to know and in the largest numbers to see? Is it not the Bok Tower? Is it not the Rolyat Hotel at St. Petersburg, the most beautiful building in the United States (I am excepting the Harkness Building at Yale). Will it not shortly be the Ringling Museum at Sarasota? And now I am sure that this will be one of the four things that every person who crosses our borderline in an automobile will come to see. I do not know whether I shall live to see it, but I hope that up at little Rollins we will have such beautiful buildings and verdure that people will come to see that, and that perhaps, will be the fifth thing.

But how will this park rank, we will say, with those things made by man - maybe a picture by an old master in the Ringling Museum. Well, I do not know how we could compare the two. I know that sometimes the artist is better than Nature, I know that the pig is not newly so valuable as the painting of the pig by Rosa Bonheur, but I do not believe that any picture can be painted of these beautiful trees, of these palms, that can equal in beauty what nature has taken five hundred or a thousand years to perfect. Nothing

can compare with what God has taken five hundred or a thousand years to do, and that is what we see around us here.

I want to say in closing, for I must be very, very brief, that I believe our schools and colleges of the state will bring their students here as time goes on; that whole classes will come down here to camp if you permit camping. If not, they will be coming in and going out every day. I would be very much surprised if our professor of Botany, when he comes here, does not want to bring his class down, and I am sure that teachers will wish to use this place as a great lesson to the youth of our state.

I cannot close without saying a word as to the donation itself - the giving of this gift. I suppose the Roebing family, like most other families that have come from other parts of the country, came down here at first for health and for pleasure. Well, Florida gives both health and pleasure, but this family had not been here long until they tried to do something for the good of their fellowmen. It is a wonderful thing that we live in a country where people who have more means than others use their means for the welfare of their fellow beings. I am glad that I live in a country that has done more along those lines than say other country in the world, and the fact that we have people who are beginning to do this in Florida speaks a great deal for our population for the future of our state.

But nothing that amounts to anything in this world is done without vision. You can't build a building, you can't raise a child, you can't do anything that amounts to anything without having faith. Indeed, you can move mountains by faith. You won't believe it until you try it, but try it and see if it it does not work. I have found that in my own experiences.

If you lose your life, you do find it. It is more blessed to give than to receive. One would naturally think it is more blessed to receive but try and see if the other way is not better. I therefore congratulate this good woman who had the faith to give this park which will be a lasting picture of Nature for all time to come. And I congratulate her husband and her son for the part that they have had in carrying it out. I congratulate Mr. Rex Beach and the others who with him have the honor to conduct this park for the good of all the people for all time.

DEDICATORY PRAYER

by Rev. C. B. Toombs

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth and the earth was without form and void; and darkness reigned upon the face of the deep and God said, "Let there be light" and there was light.

O Thou great and infinite God, we thank Thee for Thy wonderful omniscience, omnipotence, and omnipresence.

Father, we look up into Thy face this afternoon, realizing that Thou has been good to us. As we look about us we see so many things that remind us, Father, of that wonderful attribution.

We feel as the Psalmist did - That the earth is the Lord's, the fullness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein. For He hath founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods. Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? Or, who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity nor sworn deceitfully.

O Christ, our Savior and our King, we have met together this afternoon to dedicate this Highlands Hammock. We pray Thy blessings upon us and, Father, this afternoon our hearts are filled with joy, yet there comes a touch of sadness as we realize that Thou, in Thy infinite mercy, did see fit to call from this world, that one who was so interested in the progress and development of this park.

O God, we thank Thee for the life of Mrs. Roebing, for her spirit and her love, for her Christian faith. We pray Thee, O God, that Thou will help us to get this lesson that she tried to leave for the world - the keen sense of appreciation that she had for the beautiful things of nature and in her investment here. It was her intention to see these things preserved and this be made a sanctuary.

O God, we pray Thee that in this dedication we may realize that the greatest way we can show our appreciation will be when we shall, indeed, consecrate our own energies and ourselves so that this Highlands Hammock shall be preserved in its beauty here so many people will be able to come as they go on the journey of life and find here in the hours of meditation something that shall bring them closer to Thee, O God.

We pray Thy blessings upon us and upon this family and upon all of the ties that bind our hearts together as a people.

Lead us out into the pastures green and help us today to live our lives in such a self-forgetful way that even when we kneel to pray, our prayer shall be for others, and when on earth our work is done and even when our new work is begun, may we forget the crowns we have won while thinking still of others.

We ask it in Jesus' name. Amen.

AN APPRECIATION OF HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK

by the Hon. Herbert J. Drane

George Innes, the master artist, whose name will go down in the ages along with that of Michael Angelo and Rembrandt, not long before he died, painted what most people thought was his masterpiece. To all lovers of beauty on canvas throughout this nation, and I am not sure that it did not go abroad, they said, "Surely this is the most beautiful picture ever painted."

It found its last resting place in a modest little chapel over here at Tarpon Springs by the Gulf, along with other pieces of his master hand, just before he found his last resting place in his Mother Earth.

I have taken many pilgrims into that little chapel to rest and pray and enjoy the beauty at that man's handicraft, his art, and invariably after looking around, they would say, "This is not the masterpiece - this is the masterpiece."

The name of what they think and what I think was his masterpiece is called "The Lord Is In His Holy Temple, But All the Earth Stands Silent Before Him." It is a picture merely of a forest primeval with the sunlight trickling through the trees - just like we have here.

I never see that picture that I do not think of this place. The first time I ever saw this place I thought of that picture and I have often wondered if perhaps sometime in his journeys about the Earth, looking for the beauty spots, if he might not have tarried here for a moment for surely it would seem that same divine thought must have come from within these trees to that man, some magic influence from where we stand here must

have guided his master hand because even though he might have stood here where I stand, he could not have conveyed upon canvas a picture more like than what we have as I stand here this afternoon.

It was not my privilege for a long, long time to see this place even though it was hard by my home for more than forty years, I often heard of Hooker Hammock but I did not realize what it was until some months ago. A Friend of my boyhood persuaded me to come out here and I have wished ever since that I had come sooner because I have always felt since then that something was lost out of my life by not seeing it sooner.

It has been my privilege to see a great many of the beautiful parks of this country and parks abroad, and particularly in tropical or semitropical countries like Central America, Mexico and the Canal Zone, the Hawaiian Islands, the Philippines, China and Japan, but I want to say to you in all sincerity that I have never seen anything more beautiful than there is right here before us.

Truly Bryant may have written that "The Groves were God's first temples," and this surely was one of them.

I would not close this little word of appreciation unless I should say something about the gracious lady who has gone to Heaven, but before she went she found a little bit of Heaven in her heart. She discovered this little bit of Heaven here and she left it that you might remember her.

It is said that Scipio Africanus, who did great things for his country, went one evening up the hill in Rome to the Capitol and there he met the populous and the Senate, and the multitude showed him by every method possible their affection and their esteem and their appreciation for what he had done for the country. He died that night and it was recited of him later that the happiest hour of Scipio's life was the hour just before he died.

And so I can imagine, if I may draw a parallel, that the happiest hour of this good woman's life - if in her modesty of mind she could realize what she was doing for her fellow citizens - that the happiest hour of that woman's life was the hour just before she died.

I read a long time ago of something said by the Vagabond Poet after he had grown weary with much traveling and wanted rest, and I think he must have referred to this place.

In all My wanderings round this world of care,
In all my grief's, and God has given my share,
I still had hoped my latest hours to crown
And mid these rural scenes to lay me down;
To husband out life's taper at the close
And keep the flame from wasting, by repose,
I still had hoped, for Pride attends us still,
Among the swains to show my book-learned skill;
Around my fire an evening group to draw,
To tell of all I felt and all I saw,
And like the hare whom bounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first he flew,
I still had hoped, my long vexations past,
Here to return; at home to rest, at last.



Herbert J. Drane ca.1935
Photo from the Dan Sanborn
Photo Collection

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The County Commissioners have asked me to say to you that the road which is the approach to the park is simply under construction. It does not represent what it is going to be when they have finished it. In a short time, the approach to the park will be in as good condition as the road within the park.

It may be of interest to you to know that a fence will be put around this park for its protection and for the protection of the animals that may find shelter here.

Words of good will have come to us today from three great botanists in the state. They appreciate what we have here. They are H. Harold Hume, David Fairchild and H. Tony Simpson.

At the close of this dedication service, I am going to ask Mr. Walter Coachman and Dr. Melvil Dewey to join with our three distinguished guests and speakers here in front of the platform in order that we may have a chance, in a very informal way to meet them.

At the close of the service too, the wreath will be placed on the memorial tablet - the tablet which has already been mentioned and explained to you and the Rev. Father Johnson will lead the way immediately after the close of this service here.

I feel that we cannot close without expressing our appreciation for the work which has

been done in preparing the park, in preparing for this dedication this afternoon. I have never seen better work than that which has been done by the Sebring committee and we are certainly all going to appreciate the work which Dr. Donaldson has done in naming the trees and shrubs, making it possible for us to go about and study and learn and appreciate intelligently some of the trees and shrubs which are here for us. We owe him a great debt of gratitude and we also want to express our appreciation to Mr. Blair for the untiring zeal with which he has followed out the work in this part. He goes about it very quietly but he goes about it very efficiently and I know that I am speaking for all of you when I say that we all most heartily appreciate what he has done and is doing among us as he represents the Roebling interest - as he gives expression to their interest and what they are feeling and doing for us.

BENEDICTION

by Father Harcourt Johnson

In the name of the Ever Blessed and Glorious Trinity, three Persons in One God, Who has revealed Himself to us as perfect beauty, we hallow and bless this place of beauty and peace to His eternal honor and glory and to the delight and use of the children of men.

May the peace of God ever abide in this place. May His blessing be ever upon those who come here seeking Him in His revelation of beauty. May He who watches with fatherly concern even the fall of a single sparrow, bless and multiply His creations, the birds of the air and beasts of the forests, who find sanctuary here.

May He who has arrayed the lilies of the field with greater beauty than the material riches of kings, protect these trees and flowers, these shrubs and creeping vines from the fury of the storm and the depredations of man.

May He grant a place of eternal light and peace to the soul of His handmaiden Margaret, to whose blessed memory this spot will stand for all time.

Finally, upon all gathered here we call down to our hearts the peace and blessing of God, saying in His name: Unto God's gracious mercy and protection we commit you. May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. May the Lord lift up the light of His countenance upon you and grant you His peace now and forevermore and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen.

SCRIPTURAL SELECTIONS

O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom has thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches. (Ps. 101:24)

In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth; (Gen. 1:1) and the earth brought forth grass and herb, yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind; (Genesis 1:12) and the Lord God planted a garden and there he put the man whom he had formed; (Genesis 2:8) and the Lord saw everything that he had made and beheld it was very good (Genesis 1:31).

I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia, and the myrtle and the oil tree. I will set in the desert the fir tree and the pine and the box-trees together, that they may know the Holy One hath created it. I will make the wilderness a pool of water and the dry land springs of water. (Isaiah 41:19) Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name. (1 Chr. 16:29)

The trees of the wood sing out at the presence of the Lord; (1 Chr. 16:33) for in! the winter is past, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come. The fig tree putteth forth her green figs and the vines with the tender grapes give a good smell. (S. of S. 2:11)

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. (Ps. 11:26) (and from the 31st chapter of Proverbs we quote words that fitly describe the donor of Highlands Hammoek) "Her price is far above rubies. She openeth her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness. She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea she reacheth forth her hands to the needy. She considereth a field and buyeth it. Let her own works praise her in the gates."

O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard. (Ps. 66:8) Bless the Lord, all his works in all places of his dominion: Bless the Lord, O my soul! Let the heaven and earth praise him, the seas, and everything that moveth therein; (Ps. 69:34) Sing unto the Lord (1 Chr. 16:29).

ADIDE WITH ME

H. F. Lyta

W. H. Monk

1. A - bide with me! fast falls the ev - en tide;
The darkness deepens; Lord, with me a - bide!
When other - or help - ers fail, and comforts flee,
Help of the helpless, oh, a - bide with me!
2. Swift to its close ebbes out life's lit - tle day,
Earth's joys Grow dim, its glo - ries pass a - way;
Change and de - cay in all n - round I see;
O, Thou who changest not, a - bide with me!
3. Come, then, in light be - fore my closing eyes!
Shine thro' the gloom and point me to the skies!
Heav'n's morning breaks, and earth's vain shadows flee;
In life and death, O Lord, a - bide with me.

(A favorite hymn of Mrs. Beeching)

**MEMORIAL COMMITTEES ON HIGHLANDS
HAMMOCK DEDICATION**

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Robert H. Love

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Mrs. M. C. Sebring, Sebring.

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THE MEMORIAL TABLET



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
~~SOUTHEASTERN NATIONAL MONUMENTS~~
St. Augustine, Florida

March 26, 1950

Mr. Allan Altwater
Kenilworth Drive
Sebring, Florida

Dear Allen:

Here is my file copy of my State Park System and Highlands Hammock analysis, made back in 1938. It's the only one I have, so please keep it as long as you want to and then return it.

It should be read with the idea in mind that it was written to meet a situation that existed in 1938. Even so, many of its conclusions can be applied today, especially those which say "sell the area as a scenic wonderland, and a chance for interpreting nature in a Florida paradise." That means promotion, organization and appropriate public service. The same nature program is put across by Naturalist Stupka at Great Smokies. Maybe a session with him, or a visit by him to study the problem would do some good.

It was good to see you again at De Soto, and I had hoped to see you Sunday in Sebring, but I rushed through.

Keep in touch with me.

Sincerely,


C. R. Vinton
Superintendent

Attachment

**AN ANALYSIS OF
VALUES OF THE STATE PARK SYSTEM OF FLORIDA,**
to determine the Nature of
Planning, Development, Administration and Operation.

FOREWORD

The State Park system of Florida had its beginning in 1934 as a result of interest stimulated by the Civilian Conservation Corps. During the following seven years a large investment was made under the supervision of the National Park Service in order to preserve the scenic and scientific resources of the State which are represented in seven very characteristic areas of statewide significance and three undeveloped areas possessing similar values.

Since the beginning of this program there has been a real need for an analysis of the values represented in the State Park system which might lead to important conclusions regarding planning, construction, and future operations. In fact, these conclusions must be determined and accepted before work of planning can be safely and effectively executed. This agreement on policies is important since the present work is being accomplished under cooperative Federal-State guidance, whereas future administration, planning, and operation will be a State responsibility entirely unless the State requests and secures future Federal assistance.

The attached analysis, therefore, is submitted as a technical report to the State Park Authority with the request that review and comment be made which will permit revision and final acceptance by all concerned as a basic policy. By such action we shall establish clear fundamental specifications upon which to base a State Park program of planning, conservation, development, and all other phases of this important field of conservation. In fact, by the approval and acceptance of these specifications we automatically determine definite objectives and lay a course of study and progress toward a goal of a permanent and comprehensive public service.

Furthermore, the purpose of presenting this report is to secure a mutual understanding, prior to planning and construction, of the policies of future park operation in order that we may build toward a definite plan which will serve as a guide to both present and future State Park accomplishments. It has been prepared in order that the future course of planning and operation may be guided by sound and mature judgment which is based on a clear understanding of major values. It is quite clear after a study of these values that any program which is based upon secondary values will result in minimizing or subordinating the most valuable elements for which the park was established.

Upon final acceptance it is recommended that their report be submitted as a part of the Master Plan for each State Park.

A STATEMENT OF POLICY FOR THE GUIDANCE OF STATE PARK PROGRAMS IN FLORIDA

In order to distribute the benefits of State Parks to the greatest number of people and to secure the strongest support for the permanent advancement of the State Park program, we recommend the following approach to an analysis of State Park values in order that the work of planning, development, and operation may result in the fullest use and the greatest benefit.

This study is considered the second step in the Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area study and follows those recommendations which have been accepted by all concerned as a mutual basis of procedure in building the structure of the State Park system.

At the outset, we can readily accept the fact that much can be learned from the experience of other states with problems of a similar nature. We can avoid costly or embarrassing experiments by profiting from the experience of others. However, the acceptance of important policies which have been established in other states should not be accepted for the State of Florida, or for individual parks in the system, until the relation of State Parks to the State and its people is carefully studied and evaluated and the wisdom of accepting these policies judged in the light of a broad analysis of all conditions.

It is quite evident that the State of Florida is different from other states and that the present State Parks are highly distinctive and of superior quality. For this reason no effort should be spared to secure an accurate and practical analysis of all related values and to weigh these values from a technical standpoint so that a logical statement of policy can be presented. Based on such an analysis the policies which result will be those which will guide all phases of the State Park program in the safest and most beneficial course.

State Parks, as a system, should be studied from the standpoint of their broadest and most valuable contribution to the state as a whole. The planning of their programs should be carried on in a manner that will return the most lasting and substantial values to the most people for the longest period of time. The various cultural and economic levels of the people should be recognized, the varied interests and ambitions of the people studied, so that State Parks will not be developed for service to one level or one degree of intelligence alone.

It should never be forgotten that while the success of the State Park system depends in a material way on the number of people served, the most productive support for a permanent service will come from those who are impressed by the fundamental values which the State receives. The values of most importance are derived in the form of a higher degree of intelligence, greater educational service, moral and spiritual stability of the people, pride in our country, and the improvement of social conditions. In other words, the program must impress the leaders of the State by providing a real and lasting service to all possible levels and interests. Therefore, in building up a State Park system which will inspire active support, we must provide the type and quality of service that will most surely demand the support we need.

In analyzing the State Park system, and each unit in the system on this basis, it is apparent that the logical steps to take in determining policies and plans are first to establish the values of the units themselves and then determine the functions of each in relation to the State of Florida and all the people who may be within its borders. Once the values and policies are determined, the minor problems of detailed planning, development and operation, programs, etc., will follow in logical order. In this way only can the areas and system be properly planned, developed, and operated with the assurance that major values will be given proper attention.

The Park, Parkway and Recreational Area study has reviewed the history and character of the State and its people, its resources, industries and social problems. Certain conclusions have been drawn and presented in the form of recommendations. In building the State Park system we have, therefore, a guide already established which covers problems of legislation, budgets, personnel, land acquisition, planning, development, and operation of the system. It is important that the future effort of all concerned with this program be directed toward the accomplishment of these objectives at the earliest date possible.

The fact that the population of the State has increased 28.6% in the past ten years indicates that early progressive action is needed in order that the system keep pace with normal growth. Such progressive action involves studies to meet changing conditions, acquisition, and development of areas to meet existing and changing needs, and the building up of the administrative and operative organization to carry the various responsibilities involved.

The policies and programs already established by mutual agreement in the Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area study indicate the need for a definite analysis of each unit of the State Park system in order that its function may be in line with the policies which have been accepted for the system. The following report is submitted with this in mind and is recommended for adoption as an important part of the Master Plan for each park. As a

result of this analysis, which attempts to clarify the approach to planning, it has become evident that the acceptance of certain principles automatically establishes a guide to all phases of the park problem from general planning studies to the detailed work of operation and maintenance.

HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK STATE PARK

(A supplement to the Master Plan Report,
Dealing with a Basic Analysis and Conclusions)

INTRODUCTION

This analysis of the Master Plan of Highlands Hammock State Park deals with the various elements of the area in the order of their importance. It can be said at the outset that the area is worthy of national recognition. As such, the problem becomes one of analyzing the various elements which result in this exceptional merit and to arrive at conclusions regarding the manner of preserving, and interpreting to the park visitor, the most important assets which the area possesses. When these assets are clearly understood the problems of planning for public use become simplified and major objectives are easily determined. Conversely, the expenditure of effort in the direction of unwise or inappropriate adventures may be eliminated, and this effort concentrated on a logical program which will result in the fullest public enjoyment of the things for which the area was originally dedicated.

This analysis considers Highlands Hammock State Park as an important unit in the State Park system and for this reason local interest is considered of secondary importance to state-wide interest. When proposed uses are studied which may conflict with one another or be incompatible with the character of the area, the major values of the park should serve as a basis for a determination of the plan. In this case, however, it is logical to assume that a control of planning which produces greatest state-wide values will likewise produce greatest local values, whereas planning on a basis of local values alone might result in a temporary local advantage which in the long run could result in a loss of the interests of both. This principle is fundamental to the success of a real State Park. It does not preclude the abandonment of local interests but points out the necessity for a study along lines which will result in the greatest permanent benefits that the park renders.

This comment is made in the introduction to the analysis in order that the approach to planning may be clarified as far as conducted tours, nature study, active recreation, picnicking, and the character of public gatherings is concerned. The acceptance of this approach will naturally control the nature of the conclusions which are reached as local uses may not be compatible with state-wide uses as far as important values are concerned.

BASIC ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following outline weighs the major elements of the area and defines and establishes the most important policies and principles for the control of future planning and operations:

I. RELATIVE VALUES OF HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK STATE PARK ARRANGED IN ORDER OF IMPORTANCE

A. Scenic Values

Highlands Hammock State Park is an unusual example of the sub-tropical hardwood and palm forest of South Florida. The majestic concentration of aged trees and palms supplemented by a luxuriant undergrowth of native shrubs, vines, and ferns produce the effect of a natural cathedral covering an area of about 550 acres. The luxuriance of plant life in this park results from favorable natural conditions and from protection during recent years against adverse conditions and uses.

B. Biological Values

In addition to the broad field of botanical interest, Highlands Hammock supports a heavy population of animal, bird, and reptilian life. The presence of deer, alligators, and lesser species of mammals are not found in equal abundance in a natural environment anywhere else in the State, especially under similar conditions which encourage them to live and multiply under restricted but close human association.

C. Geological and Archeological Value

Geological evidence of prehistoric marine life and animal occupation has been found in sufficient quantity to indicate a need for further exploration. Mounds exist in the western part of the area which may have been associated with early human occupations. The addition of these interests to the scenic and biological interests of the park is of definite value although present findings and studies indicate a place of secondary or incidental importance.

D. Inspirational and Educational Values

Since the beginning of Highlands Hammock as a public area, the inspirational and educational values of the park have been given priority in the minds of those who were primarily responsible for its establishment. The work of planning and construction has

been subject to considerable restraint in order that transgressions from the original policy might not endanger the principles laid down at the time of its conception. Such a policy is sound and will assure most permanent and widespread benefits.

It is based upon important fundamentals which must be thoroughly understood before the work of planning can even begin or the jobs of construction and park administration safely attempted. In this case we must first determine and understand the foundation we have to build upon and then develop our plans and organize our forces to build to the best advantage. Scenery and biological interest, therefore, provide the framework around which the program of Highlands Hammock should be developed.

II. POLICIES FOR THE CONTROL OF PLANNING

A. Scenic and Biological Consideration

The preservation of natural conditions and the introduction of public use facilities must go hand in hand during all stages of planning. In other words, any plan for Highlands Hammock State Park must first recognize the use facility as an artificial intrusion in a scene which might otherwise be a pure example of scenic and biological perfection. The problem of retaining this ideal association of plant and animal life and guiding it in the direction of logical public service is one which calls upon the most intelligent and sympathetic capabilities of the planner, administrator, and park operator. They must all follow a course which will lead to the same objective, namely, preservation of the major elements of value, the use of restraint in development and activity programs, and the maintenance of standards in scale with the impressiveness and stately dignity of the park. The approach to all planning from this angle, including the planning of development, operation, and maintenance, will never be cause for regret or failure, either from the standpoint of personal satisfaction or public support and approval.

B. Relation of Geological and Archeological Values to the Elements of Scenic and Biological Interests

Present discoveries in the field of geology and archeology indicate values which are clearly subordinate to the scenic and biological interest of the park. Unless explorations reveal findings which establish the state-wide importance of the area as a geological or archeological site this element should be accepted as a feature of casual interest, of value from the standpoint of general education only, attention and effort being directed to the more important park features. In this way the park visitor will be given an orderly

picture of major park values and will not leave the area bewildered by a disconnected story which emphasizes everything but results in no definite or lasting impression.

C. Planning for Public Use.

Current Master Plan proposals are considered adequate for many years to come. The problem here is to complete the construction program already planned as far as major facilities are concerned.

1. Planning Needed for All Phases of Park Work

Studies are urgently needed for the guidance of the interpretive program. During these studies a need will no doubt become evident for minor facilities or an adjustment of existing facilities to meet specific demands. A planned demonstration of actual public use will serve as a most practical guide to future planning and is recommended for immediate establishment.

The importance of coordinating park programs with park planning can scarcely be overstated. In fact, the program needs to be adopted and capable personnel available for its execution before the facility can be properly designed and produced in the field, or safely completed in either plan or structural form. In this regard the experience of personnel in the field can be most valuable during the planning stage if economical construction and operation is to be assured or if the construction of inadequate or unnecessary facilities is to be minimized.

2. Planning the Interpretive Program

A knowledge of conditions at Highlands Hammock indicates that future planning of the interpretive program should be accomplished in the order listed below.

- a. A complete analysis of the problem of interpretation, including the general character of the program, the exact story to be told, the type and extent of the tours, number and qualifications of personnel needed, and kinds and sizes of parties to be served.
- b. Preparation of uniform nature talks based on accurate information dealing with biological, plant, and animal life associations.
- c. Training of personnel in charge of public contacts, guide service, and research.
- d. Planning and construction of necessary facilities.

- e. Organization of schedules and lectures for outside public contacts.
- f. Guidance of visitors in the park.

Continued studies of methods, research and training for the improvement of programs and the stimulation of interest.

D. A Basis for the Guidance of the Park Program

As Highlands Hammock State Park can rest on its merit as a scenic and biological area of first importance the interpretation of these values must be given attention prior to any other secondary uses. The approach to a solution outlined above takes cognizance of other uses such as picnicking or the milder forms of recreation. The opinion has been expressed frequently in recent years that park visitors must be given something to do; that attractions must be provided, regardless of the fact that an attraction already existed which was far superior to many commercial areas receiving general public support. Then followed archery equipment and a croquet lawn both of which have provided no solution because no excuse existed for these facilities. In straining to attract people to the park the real drawing power to the area, namely the scenic perfection and biological wealth, has been given minor attention. Either one of these interests could readily be adopted as a basis for a park program. Since both resources are present in very generous proportions it appears that the need for early studies to initiate such programs is a matter of real urgency deserving the most careful and serious study. The expenditure of effort in this direction is therefore the only safe investment which can produce an assurance of permanency or result in a type of use for which the park is best suited. To introduce any use which would distract from scenic and biological interests, merely for the convenience or pleasure of a few, could easily ruin the area as a place of enjoyment for many.

In recommending such a program we realize that we are all dealing with something which must be accomplished by leaders and subordinates who have had no experience or possibly inherent ability in this field. It might be easier to concentrate on the promotion of the park as a fine place for an evening drive, a picnic for family group, a place for a game of archery or croquet; but how long would people support such programs or drive long distances for such forms of recreation, and what proportion of the people would be interested or satisfied with these activities in comparison to the number which could be benefited by a complete experience combining a real inspiration, a painless exposure to education, and appreciation of the intriguing work of nature, and knowledge of the simple plants and animals that are a part of the world in which we live. If a picnic lunch fits into the picture so much the better, but it should not become the controlling objective of Highlands Hammock State Park.

The source of potential park patrons of such a program appears to be as follows:

1. Tourist hotels - local and at reasonable distance.
2. Tourist clubs, churches, civic clubs.
3. Conservation clubs, Audubon Societies, Garden clubs.
4. Schools and colleges - nearby and at a distance.
5. Youth groups, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4H clubs, etc.
6. Business organizations, civic clubs, etc.

Each of these groups may require a slightly different method of contact which should be made only after all details have been carefully worked out, personnel trained at least in methods of public contact and public guidance, the presentation of the story, and experimental and practice tours.

Secondary Activities; When the problems of primary use have been adequately solved the secondary interests and uses of the park will take care of themselves. In fact, when limited funds and personnel are available, the more forcible becomes the dictate for using all available resources for the accomplishment of objectives which are so clearly fundamental. If spare time cannot be found to care for the inconsequential, no great harm will result. It all boils down to the use of time, personnel, and resources to secure the highest returns from the investment which has been made. This is a serious problem worthy of serious study and one which has a definite bearing on the success or failure of the area as a state park. The danger lies in the promotion or encouragement of secondary programs at the expense of the major programs.

1. The Nature of Public Gatherings

In the preceding paragraphs the need for different methods of presenting the interpretive program for Highlands Hammock State Park to meet the needs and interests of different groups has been emphasized. The importance of State Park operation along lines which will appeal to all social levels and all degrees of intelligence has been stressed. In following this phase of the study from this standpoint, especially as it relates to Highlands Hammock it is very evident that a clear distinction should be made when various kinds of public gatherings are planned. Such programs can include various features of interest to adults, to youths and to children, by planning the event to appeal to the group concerned.

To lower the standards of adult Sunday programs in order to attract lower age groups, or to mix all interests into one type of feature, would probably result in a loss of present support with very little gain in attendance from these who have not yet indicated any special interest.

2. Vesper Services

The Sunday afternoon gatherings, or “Vesper Services” are considered the most appropriate and most valuable form of public gathering for this particular park. When planned from the standpoint of impressiveness, inspirational character, and dignified reverence, they become a natural complement to the quiet and majestic surroundings of the Hammock itself, which also grows in significance when an atmosphere is created in harmony with the real spirit of the park. Highlands Hammock State Park has been called “The Cathedral of Green,” and as such, its use, for purely educational, patriotic, semi-religious, or religious gatherings, can be guided so that both the park and the activity will continue to gain the highest public regard and respect. Leadership for such an adventure must be capable of establishing and maintaining these standards.

There is no apparent reason why programs of this character should not receive the support of those outside of the older tourist and resident groups, unless it is the fact that attendance by the younger people is not promoted or encouraged. The majority of programs in past years have been of a nature which would justify the attendance of high school students and upward, and the fault for absence of younger age groups probably lies in the lack of efforts to encourage this attendance. However, the wisdom of planning youth programs for Sunday afternoons is questionable, as more appropriate times can be selected which would not conflict with normal youth activities, nor result in a sacrifice of the benefits derived from the “Vesper Service” series.

3. Youth Gatherings

A great deal more study can be given to the subject of youth gatherings than is possible in this report. The demands upon the time of the youth of the State are so heavy and the interests so varied that organization for this type of activity must recognize the need for maintaining a high degree of interest if a continuous program is to succeed.

Possibly an approach to a solution could be indicated as follows:

- a. Cooperation with school officials in determining:
 1. The character of the gathering, such as a local youth congress, Scout lectures by leading Scout officials, outdoor high school assemblies to hear outstanding educators, explorers, etc., as an annual feature for particular districts or groups.
 2. The logical time for these gatherings, either as introductions to the

regular school program or on special days.

3. Transportation to the park.
4. Character of programs which would be most interesting.
5. Leadership.

b. An annual pilgrimage for all schools and colleges within a radius available to school bus or chartered bus for attendance at special outdoor classes, including for one day:

1. A short nature talk on scenic and scientific park interests.
2. A nature tour of the park.
3. A picnic lunch.

4. Other Public Gatherings

A real possibility exists for the introduction of certain public gatherings which could become annual events of state-wide significance. Possibly two or three of these could be established with real effectiveness:

- a. Special Christmas programs.
- b. Special patriotic programs.
- c. Special memorial services. (A memorial service to Mrs. Roebing could be made a beautiful tribute to her foresight and generosity.)
- d. Easter sunrise services.
- e. Concerts and recitals.
- f. Pageants.
- g. Dedications.
- h. Celebrations (such as CCC birthdays)

The importance of the above proposals should be judged according to the appropriate nature of each, especially from the standpoint of how they may supplement the value of the park as a scenic and biological exhibit. Such things may be overdone. The controlling scale should be quality and impressiveness rather than quantity alone.

III. A STATEMENT OF POLICY FOR THE GUIDANCE OF CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMS.

The current Master Plan includes general proposals for facilities which should be adequate for many years in the future. In studying these planning proposals from the standpoint

of featuring the park as a scenic and biological attraction, the following priorities are listed in order to assure a logical and adequate protective and operative set-up.

A. Protective Facilities

A complete study of fire protection facilities to determine adequacy of detection and suppression systems and organizations which can function independent of CCC cooperation. Such a study might reveal the necessity for raising water levels in Charlie Bowlegs Creek in order to impound water for use in dry seasons, better methods of fire break maintenance, training of park personnel in detection and suppression work, and a need for more dependable protection facilities. This may include housing of personnel at the park, as well as organization of local communities and communication and equipment needs for protective work. A further study of fire breaks, and truck trails along boundaries of state-owned marginal lands also seems advisable in order to assure proper fire protection as far from the actual park area as possible. Fire seems to be the most serious threat to the scenic and biological values of the park. Drainage of adjoining lands will run a close second. For this reason the park organization should be developed to meet the threat of fire danger through competent administration and progressive training. The control of drainage on adjoining lands must be accompanied by actual ownership or cooperative agreements.

B. Public Use and Interpretive Facilities

Studies of actual public use should be made to determine adequacy of

1. Parking areas - location and capacity.
2. Signs and markers (types and quantities).
3. Footbridge and trail landings or rest places.
4. Museum facilities.
5. Nature trails and labeling.
6. Guide maps.
7. Trailside exhibits.

All the above should be based upon a determination of needs which follow the establishment of an organized and logical interpretive program.

C. Preservation of Scenic and Biological Values

Throughout the planning, construction, and operation programs first attention should be given to the scenic and biological value of the area. As stated above in this report, the

use of restraint in providing facilities and conveniences should be given careful study as the scenic intrusion may result in a loss of park character. The archery targets at the concession area seem to create just such a conflicting situation, with nothing gained from the intrusion and serious losses experienced by those who expect to see a real example of primitive Florida jungle. The targets in this case express the spirit of the athletic field which is scarcely in harmony with Highlands Hammock, although they may be well justified in a proper setting. Decisions on such matters rests upon a fine point of distinction, which, if judiciously followed in the direction of safe planning will result in the protection of primary park values and public interest as well. The wisdom of procedure along this line will become more apparent as time and experience prove the case.

The protection of biological values involves the protection of all forms of plant and animal life. Possibly the only exception would be the destruction of poisonous snakes and elimination of poisonous plants near the trails. It would not involve so-called mosquito control work, which often results in more harm to wildlife than to mosquitoes, or the destruction of any type of predatory animals or fish which help maintain the natural balance. Over population of deer may ultimately result in harm to native vegetation, and if such occurs, action may be necessary to move some deer elsewhere, drive them from the park or destroy some under supervision of park employees.

D. Personnel Housing and Utility Structures

Protection of scenic and biological values involves the employment of capable men trained in problems of operation, maintenance and protective work. The distance from the City of Sebring indicates the need for a 24-hour protective crew especially during fire seasons. The housing of personnel at the park is justified on this basis, although the provision of separate residences for families appears to involve construction and maintenance costs which scarcely justify the expense when brief seasonal hazard is considered. If increased domestic contentment of employees result, the experiment may prove to be sound, although this is gained at a price which seems excessive. There may be a compromise solution which will combine the ideal and practical phases.

IV. PARK MAINTENANCE

The approach to the problem of maintenance from a casual standpoint may indicate a need for maintenance of roads, trails, and physical improvements only. However, when

planned as a part of the program of an area which possesses exceptional scenic and biological merit, the problem of maintenance falls into fundamental order as follows:

Protection facilities:- firebreaks, fences, detection systems, suppression equipment, truck trails, control dams, etc.

Public use facilities:- Roads, parking areas, bridges, trails, public use structures and furnishings, utilities, signs and markers, nature exhibits, etc.

Service facilities:- Employee residences, service buildings and utilities, construction and maintenance equipment, etc.

The general policy for park maintenance seems to reach far beyond the mere problem of maintaining structural improvements or natural conditions. An atmosphere of dignity prevails here that can vary in impressiveness according to the attention given to sound and orderly maintenance policies. The program of planning, construction, and maintenance must, therefore, be related as high standards in one field may be lost if the intentions of the planner or builder are not followed by the custodian.

Roads, trails, bridges, structures, furnishings, signs, markers, map stands and trailside museums, shelters, etc., which have been planned and executed with meticulous care both in design and craftsmanship, all contribute to the attractiveness and public appreciation of the area if carefully maintained. A lack of maintenance is likewise more readily apparent as it is so closely associated with a perfect natural setting. This becomes a problem of good housekeeping, judiciously applied.

The maintenance of natural conditions in the hammock should recognize public use and attention to appearances as well as elimination of hazards. It is considered logical to keep dead limbs, palm fans and other natural accumulations cleared from roadsides, trails and use areas; and dangerous limbs above roads and trails removed. Mowing of grass on road shoulders and in the citrus groves is proper, as well as daily removal of fallen fruit. These are artificial features which can be a part of the attraction when maintained in an orderly condition. Citrus fruit especially, when left on the ground for long periods, can be highly objectionable to the average park visitor who may be sensitive to odors or insects. This type of daily maintenance work adds to the pleasure and safety of the visitor without affecting the natural setting. It produces an orderly foreground and intensifies the ruggedness of the jungle which is out of reach except to the one who wishes to crash the brush and wrestle with vines and spider webs.

Maintenance of trailside exhibits and markers is an important part of the nature program.

Changing exhibits, well presented, will impress the newcomer and stimulate the interest of the regular park patron as well as the park naturalist who prepares them.

Maintenance of plant and animal life calls for restrictions against collecting by scientists and amateurs. A policy for the control of such activities is recommended which would grant the custodian authority to issue permits to a limited number of collectors for specified collections of the most common species of flora and fauna. It is recommended that collections of rare materials be prohibited entirely or subject to strict administrative control by the State Park director in order that valuable materials may not be seriously affected. In this class would be native orchids, rare ferns, or any form of animal life which has not been restored to a normal population.

V. ADMINISTRATION

The success of the administration of Highlands Hammock State Park as a scenic and biological area depends largely upon the personnel responsible for the planning and execution of the park program. The area has been called by competent authority "one of the three outstanding examples of conservation in the United States." It is logical, therefore, to assume that it can only fulfill its functions properly if guided by individuals who possess qualifications of equal merit. The problems to be solved here involve planning, organization, knowledge of construction and maintenance, protection, public contacts, programs, promotion, business ability or salesmanship, and an ability to acquire a working knowledge of a complicated but vital public service. The success of the venture cannot be determined by the central office, but must be assigned largely to the park superintendent, who must have an appreciation of the area and ability to administer it. The detail of the operation must be solved in the field, according to specifications laid down by the central office, if plans for local programs or activities are to proceed with any degree of efficiency or success.

The accepted recommendations of the Park, Parkway, and Recreational Area study include specifications for administrative and technical personnel which should be made effective in time to perfect an organization for the coming winter season. Recommendations in this "study" for the Highlands Hammock maintenance and operating organization are underestimated, which is reflected in the general condition of park facilities during recent years. As the burden of maintenance will increase with added facilities and increased public use the problem of maintenance must be followed closely if costly reconstruction costs are to be avoided in the future.

VI. FEES AND CHARGES

Prior to the inauguration of a progressive interpretive program it is recommended that serious consideration be given to the problem of entrance fees. Past experience seems to indicate that the high entrance fees at Highlands Hammock have not produced additional revenue, but have merely restricted park use to those who could afford the higher fees. The encouragement of heavier park use by the introduction of a well-planned interpretive program involving studied contacts inside and outside the park may result in a continued restricted use if present excessive entrance fees are continued, whereas, a nominal 10 cents per head or 25 cents per car charge will eliminate the impression of a paid admission and result in an increased total revenue as well as a more complete public service. A standard nominal entrance fee would justify the abandonment of both seasonal tags and free Sunday admissions which tend to complicate the issue by granting special privileges to certain individuals and which result in a complete loss of revenue at a time when the area is most heavily used.

Note: By approval of this report in full or in part, it will be possible to fix certain policies which are mutually accepted by the National Park Service and Florida Forest and Park Service, and to permit further revision of those policies and specifications which are not mutually agreeable. In this way we can clarify much of the program immediately and pave the way for future complete agreement by specific study and revision of those points which are not acceptable to all concerned. It will be assumed the specifications and recommendations which are not specifically rejected are mutually accepted.

MORE ABOUT THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS

The system of State Parks was started in Florida, with Highlands Hammock as its first unit, in the 1930's and it was in this same period that the government introduced several programs designed to relieve the unemployment problem which was so general all over the United States in those years of deep depression.

Among the more successful "make work" ideas introduced at that time, was the Civilian Conservation Corps and, since the movement was responsible for the acceleration of Florida's progress in the establishment and development of parks, it is fitting that a better understanding of their operations should be offered.

The purpose of the Civilian Conservation Corps (universally known as the "CCC") was to provide work, income, and training, principally for young men. These men, designated as "enrollees," were assigned to "camps" of 200 men and a camp to which they were sent was usually several hundred miles from their homes, to discourage desertion during the first weeks when homesickness might offer temptations until they became settled.

A very few camps were established in which the enrollees were older, ex-service men or "veterans" but the vast majority offered placement of young, unmarried men in their teens or early twenties. Although there were a few camps doing work on various other projects (such as Soil Conservation, etc.) most of them were either "Forestry Camps," working under the direction of the U. S. Department of Agriculture, or "Park Camps" administered by the National Park Service, Department of Interior. (SP-10 at Sebring was a Park Camp.)

A camp was divided into two sections; the "Army" using about 25 men who worked in the camp area (cooks, clerks, etc.) and the "Using Service" or "Technical Service." The latter had no responsibility for the men except during working hours and only on the work projects. The Army, on the other hand, had no authority on the work project but at all times was responsible for housing, feeding, clothing, paying, recreation, discipline, etc.

The Army personnel was made up of a Commander, a subaltern, camp doctor, and educational advisor. The commander and subaltern had military rank which had been earned in ROTC, the Army or Navy.

The Using Service personnel varied according to the project but in the case of the Highlands Hammock camp, it consisted of a superintendent, engineer, architect, landscape

architect, botanist, blacksmith, and two or more labor foremen. It was also permitted a few L.E.M. (local Experienced Men). These were employed in specialized work such as mechanics, carpentering, etc., and although they were in the status of enrollee, they were usually older, married men and had certain special privileges such as living out of camp.

Enrolled men earned \$ 30.00 per month with the benefits of housing, food, and clothing. He drew \$ 8.00 in cash with the balance allocated to a dependant or parent or it could be set aside and held until his discharge from the service. He was not permitted to have the use of a personal car even if he could afford it. A certain percentage of the work force could be promoted to the grade of assistant leader at \$ 36.00 per month and another group could earn the rank of Leader at \$ 45.00 per month.

Camp life in the CCC followed closely the pattern of a military life without the use of weapons or associated training. A man enrolled for a period of two years and he could “re-up” for another two years. Being under the direction of military men, their lives when off of the work project, were much the same as they would be in the military service (even to KP duty).

The Technical Service was responsible for the men who were assigned to them each day. This responsibility had two directions:- 1) to train the men in such a manner that they knew how to turn out a good day’s work and 2) to construct park facilities, build roads and bridges, plant trees, and perform the work on the project to which they were assigned. With few exceptions, the men were eager to learn and they spent much of their off-duty time in the evening classes offered by the members of the supervisory personnel. The Army Educational Advisor taught regular classes in “readin’, writin’ and ‘rithmatic,” while the technical supervisors taught such subjects as plumbing, brick and block laying, drafting, and other crafts. The days following, the men enrolled in these classes put their knowledge to action on the job. The eagerness of the men to learn seemed to inspire a similar eagerness on the part of the supervisors to teach.

(If a parenthesis may be pardoned at this point, a personal experience may be of interest to others. At a Forestry camp in North Florida [Old Town], an older LEM was enrolled as an assistant to the project engineer. The engineer knew the qualifications of the LEM when he was enrolled. The superintendent had figured the quantities of materials to be used in the footings of a fire-watch tower and he asked the engineer to check his figures. The superintendent noticed that the LEM took down the dimensions as they were given to the engineer and he also noted that the LEM laid down his pencil and sat back several minutes before the engineer finished. All three arrived at the same quantities. Later, the

engineer confided that the LEM had been a professor of mathematics at Columbia University but came to Florida for his health. Soon after this episode, he agreed to teach a class of supervisors in higher mathematics.)

The men took pride in their work and in this they were well justified. They also took pride in the maintenance of their equipment. Operators of trucks and tractors spent many of their free hours on weekends cleaning and greasing the equipment assigned to them. This same care when applied to their personal appearance, earned them the reputation of being the best dressed company in the District.

And the supervisors took pride in the progress of their pupils and in the products of their work. Many true stories could be told that would illustrate the reasons for the pride that the technical service and the Army had in “their boys.” One or two might suffice:

About fifteen years after the end of the war, one of “the boys” visited Sebring and when asked about his employment, he showed that he owned controlling interest in three Miami drug stores.

Another visiting ex-enrollee was still in his major’s uniform although he was planning to retire in a few years after more than 20 years of military service.

An enrollee of a forestry camp took a position in a commercial forest after his discharge from the CCC and returned to it after the war. Thirty years later, he had advanced step-by-step until he was a recognized expert consultant and had written several technical books on forestry. The latest reports indicate that he had been sent to Africa on a government mission.

Roy Brooks, who had been an enrollee in the Park Camp at Myakka River joined the Florida Park Service and, before his death in 1979, had advanced to the post of Assistant Director.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to find a man who had served in the CCC (enrollee or supervisor) who would not be proud to boast “I was in the CCC.”

With all its proud records of problems and successes, life in the Corps had its lighter moments and, after several decades, there are still pleasant memories. Some of them should be shared.

Fla. SP-10 had many friends in both the Army and the National Park Service and it was

always a pleasure when they dropped in for a visit. It was a special honor to be the host to “schools of instruction” to which the superintendents and key personnel from all camps in Florida were privileged to attend. These schools were conducted by the finest of instructors from headquarters. Since one of the primary objectives of the Corps was to teach the enrollees, a school was arranged to “teach the teachers how to teach.”

The opening statement was to the effect that the instructor proposed to demonstrate the most effective formula of teaching - the “Four Step Method.”

First step - Get the attention of the class or student by a snappy opening and a statement of the subject.

Second step - Explain the problem and the method of solving.

Third step - Demonstrate; go through all operations so the class can see.

Fourth step - Have at least one student go back over all four steps, step-by-step, and repeat them before the class to prove that the subject is completely understood.

Before dismissing the class at the end of the first day, he went through a full routine and told the members to come back prepared with a subject of his own choosing. He stated that everyone would be called upon. (It is certain that every superintendent and foreman wanted to be impressive with a unique and brilliant performance because not only was his “boss” present but also his bosses’ boss.)

Several very interesting and clever demonstrations occupied the next morning session but after a good meal and a few more routines, there was a general feeling that the session was getting lengthy.

About the middle of the afternoon, the teacher called upon Mr. Van Dyne, a naturalist from Myakka River State Park, who announced that he proposed to prove that wildlife would not show fear of man if man would treat them gently and make no sudden moves to startle them.

He stated that because of such short notice, he had very little choice of wildlife so he had brought the creature easiest to capture. Taking the ties off of a gunny sack, he explained that in the sack he had a small but entirely harmless snake which would prove his point. As he thrust his arm into the sack, he declared that inasmuch as they had come over in a rough-riding truck, he had filled the sack with Spanish moss to protect the

snake. After fumbling around, he finally located his specimen and brought out a small, garden-variety, brown snake about two feet long and as thick as a broom handle.

Van Dyne asked his audience to be very quiet during the balance of his demonstration and then he placed the snake carefully on the floor and moved very slowly away from, it. The snake lay perfectly still and calmly looked around at its distinguished audience. Van Dyne then moved in slowly, retrieved his subject and returned it to the sack. He had proved his point.

The call went out for a volunteer to perform step four but the only response was complete silence as each man smiled at the others. All breathed easier when Superintendent Lowrey of Florida Caverns State Park (Marianna) stepped boldly forward. His repetition of steps #1 and #2 indicated that he had paid strict attention to the Van Dyne discourse. He did well on step #3, too, clear through the explanation of the Spanish moss to the point where he thrust his hand into the moss.

At that point, he literally froze and momentarily he had a look of real terror, but he recovered almost immediately and brought out of the bag a beautiful specimen of an Indigo snake, at least four to five feet long and as big around as a man's arm.

Step number four ended at that point.

In the camp to which I was first assigned, the camp commander presided over a table for the officers of the camp in the mess hall while the technical personnel occupied a table on the opposite side of the room.

A new junior officer came into camp and from his uniform when he came to mess, one would imagine that he had just stepped out of a story book. He had the "Sam Brown" belt, spurs (sans rowels) and he carried a swagger stick. He was received politely (no snide remarks or covert smiles) but at the next meal, one of supervisory foremen came to mess wearing a lineman's safety belt, climbing spurs and carrying a machete. This was hint enough for the junior officer.

Col. Richard Lieber was considered one of the nation's leading authorities on State Parks although the subject was purely a hobby with him. He had made his fortune in an Indianapolis brewery. He had gained such a position in the world of parks that many would reject the opinions of professionals if they were in conflict with those of Col. Lieber.

When he first visited Highlands Hammock, he made the statement that this was one of the three finest natural State Parks in the United States and an outstanding example of conservation. These statements did not make any enemies for him in the circle of friends of the Hammock - in fact, they named a trail in his honor, the Richard Lieber Trail.

At a time when he was making one of his several visits to the park, one of the problems that was under consideration was the location of a proposed "Refreshment Building." His opinion was sought and he suggested a tour to look at the possible sites. Without any invitations being issued, quite an entourage assembled as it appeared that they wanted to see this acknowledged authority in action.

The first stop was made at a lovely nook near the entrance but the ranking CCC member turned thumbs down quickly. From what he didn't say he gave the impression that the lady who had become his wife, had made that spot the "holy of holies."

The second point to be inspected was near the cat walk but it was rejected on the grounds that it would have violated the park policy as an exotic introduction. It was at this point that one of the CCC foremen, wishing, no doubt, to be impressive by asking a profound question, remarked, "Colonel Lieber, what is your opinion on serving carbonated drinks in a park refreshment building?"

Without hesitation, the colonel replied, "In order for me to give an intellectual answer, I would have to know whether they were to be used as a mixer, a chaser or a beverage."



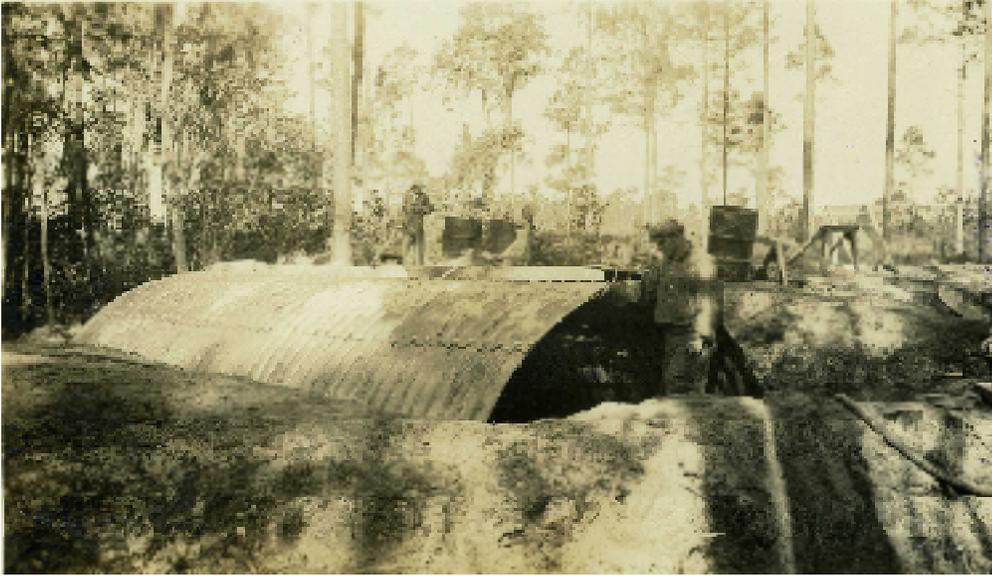
**Col. Richard Lieber
(cir. late 1930's)**



CCC Recruits at Work



Water Control Structures



Culvert at Tiger Branch

Feb 1, 1935



Feb 1937



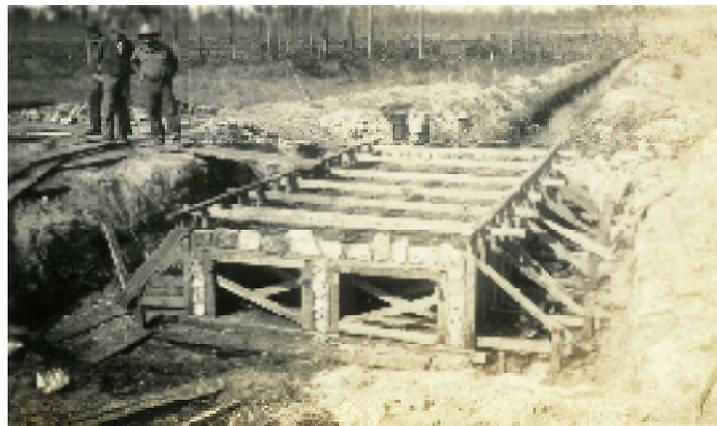
Completed Culvert at Tiger Branch



Flow Control of Tiger Branch at Water Garden in Sec. 32 Jun 4, 1937



CCC Constructing Box Culvert





Fences

Manymiles of fence were constructed both by the CCC and the Roebeling's prior to the CCC. Much of this is still present to this very day!





Jan 24, 1935



HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK

Let us drive to the Highlands Hammock,
Highlands Hammock on the Ridge.
Around the placid Lake Jackson
And over the quaint old bridge.

West, we'll drive o'er the prairie
And pass the forester's tower.
Heading straight for the beautiful Hammock
For a pleasant, eventful hour.

Ah, like a mirage before us,
It appears as a beautiful dream,
As we enter the forest of bird-land
Where the wild life reigns supreme.

See the fronds of the sable palmetto
Majestically waving above,
While the birds of the Hammock are singing,
Singing their songs of love.

One the trails at our every turning
The squirrels scamper and play,
And hide themselves to the tree-tops,
Then scold the intruders away.

Let us search for the deer of the Hammock,
The buck, the doe and fawn,
Proudest of forest creatures,
Swift as the wings of dawn.

Through the paths o'er hung with mosses,
And the ferns on every side,
We'll wander through the woodlands
Where the forests fold abide.

Let us see the art of the craftsman
Preserving the mammoth trees,
The heavy oaks and cypress,
Home of the birds and bees.

In this Eden, each worker a warden
These charges are placed in his hand,
A service to God he is rendering,
Obeying the Master's command.

H. Yeatman

AFTER HALF A CENTURY

Mrs. Roebling, Rex Beach, and Harry Lee Baker would enjoy a tour through Highlands Hammock today and would be highly pleased to see how well their dream has been managed for the past fifty years. Every wish that they expressed has been meticulously observed and, if any changes have been made, it can honestly be said that conditions are more nearly ideal today than they were in 1929 and 1930 when the movement was started to preserve the area.

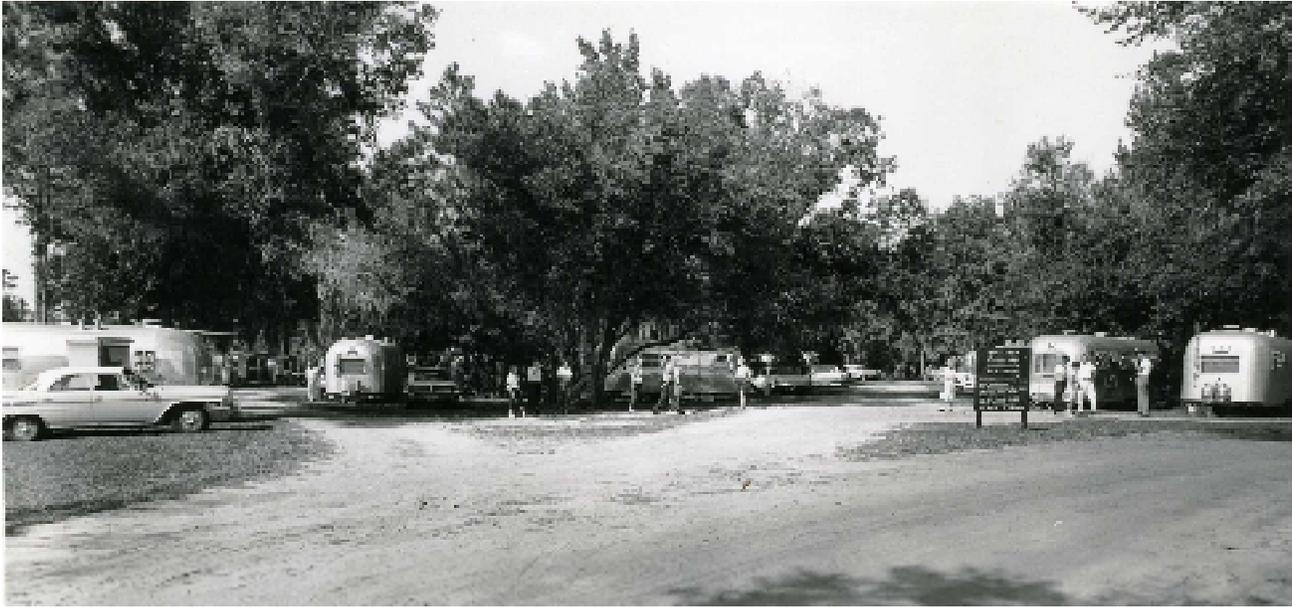
Prior to that time, an occasional woods fire or drought season would cause temporary damage and even though nature overcame the injuries, harm had been done which only time could heal. Now, for half a century, fire has been excluded in the vital area of the park and control of the soil moisture has eliminated the periodic setbacks occasioned by dry seasons. It is clearly evident that Highlands Hammock has had fifty years of Tender Loving Care.

From the maintenance point of view, perhaps the most difficult years were during World War II but there have been others when funds were inadequate to meet all needs. In fact, it is probable that there will never be a time when all essential needs can be funded. This is readily understood when it is considered that when the State Park system came into being in Florida in the early 1930's, only four areas formed the original nucleus while in 1979, the system includes 123 areas, 83 of which are open to the public. No doubt, the other 40 would also be used if money could be made available to develop and staff them. And more park properties are being acquired each year.

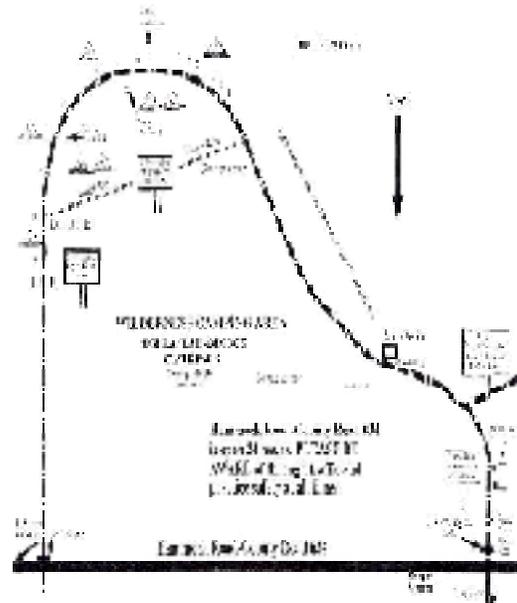
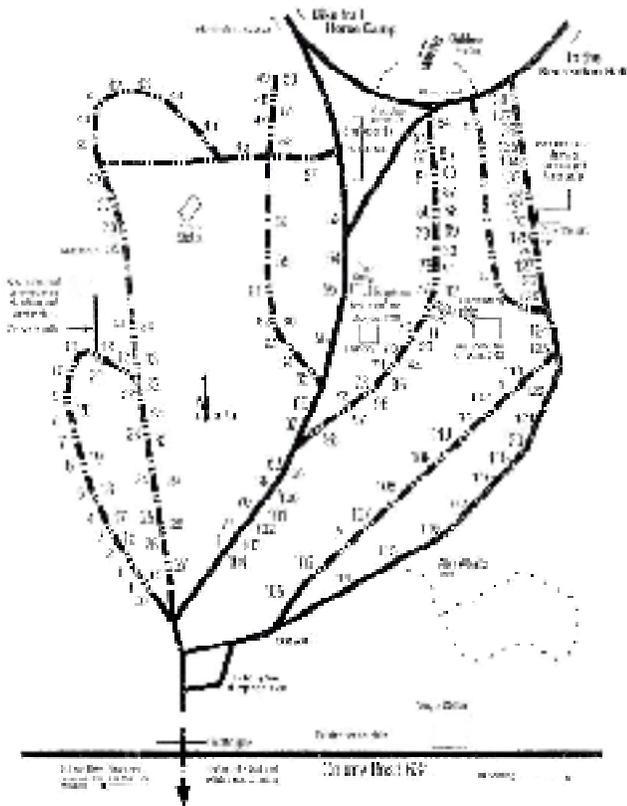
It has been suggested that the personnel roster is hardly larger today than it was at the time the State accepted the park even though the number of visitors has exceeded the highest estimates that were imagined and the demands of camping have added a greater work load since then. However, several forms of temporary help have been available and generously used, including prison inmates, C.E.T.A., student summer employment programs, etc.

Other advantages would include the use of labor-saving equipment such as bulk loaders, bush-hogs, bulldozers, etc., any of which can accomplish more results than a dozen men.

A quick glance at the attendance records will furnish any needed justification for added maintenance and/or interpretive personnel. Remembering that the first records showed an annual attendance of 16,083, the recent figure of 142,644 in one year is rather startling.



Recreational Vehical Camping Area - 1950's



Camping Areas - 2008



Picnic Shelters



Service Men & Women from Hendricks Field during WWII

No maximums were ever established or even considered as limits of visitors the Hammock could accommodate satisfactorily but there are now seasons when one is inclined to wonder when such limits will be reached. A superintendent recently stated that an average of 4% per year increase in attendance has been experience.

Camping, which had practically no place in the original plans of the park has become one of principal attractions. The roads, toilets, water supplies and other facilities in section 33, that were installed to accommodate botanical features and their visitors, formed an ideal setting for recreational vehicle campers and in section 4, the CCC-built roads afforded ready access to areas suitable for "primitive" camping. Sixteen sites for primitive camping have been provided and there are 138 locations for trailers or recreational vehicles. These latter sites are consistently in high demand.

By far, the most attractive and most used trail in the Hammock has continued to be the "Cat Walk" or Cypress Swamp Trail. The parking area at this point is usually filled with cars. Needless to say, the Cat Walk is a high-maintenance-cost feature as the price of treated lumber needed to maintain a safe standard is staggering. This factor was not anticipated in the original planning nor is any satisfactory substitute readily envisioned. One fact is certain, this trail (or something exactly similar) can never be abandoned without a definite loss to the appreciation of the park. This trail is probably THE focal point of the area.

It would be inaccurate to say that there have been NO fires in the Hammock but it is very close to the truth to say there has been no fire damage. Lightning has struck several times but any results have been quickly contained. Rangers operating in the park are given, instruction in fire control and in the operation of fire suppression equipment. The fire watch tower in section 33 is manned by the Forestry Division and provides early warning of any threatening conditions.

Among the personnel of the park, an appreciation of the value of intelligent interpretation is apparent. Service to the park visitor starts at the entrance gate where the attendant provides an attractive brochure, which will help him identify trees, plants, or features to be found in the park by a system of numbered specimens. The visitor may also be provided with a list of birds in the area.

On specified days, guided walking tours are arranged for trips over the trails and on certain nights, illustrated campfire talks are featured, particularly for the benefit of campers. These services are available at no cost to the visitor while, for a small fee, he may take the trail train which is operated by the concessionaire.

It is particularly appropriate that each Sunday, a minister from a Sebring congregation holds a religious service in the park. These services are especially well attended on special religious holidays. Although it has often been urged, the Vesper Services of the 1930's have never been re-established.

After the many years of use, Mr. Blair, Mr. Hawkins, and the several members of the National Park Service who planned and approved the construction features, should give a shout of satisfaction in the life of the facilities.

Among the first items provided for protection in the early 1930's was a four foot high fence of "woven wire" on concrete posts, on the exterior lines of the north halves of sections 5 and 6, and the south halves of sections 31 and 32 - a total six miles. The CCC added four more miles of similar construction on the exterior lines of sections 4 and 33. Now, after almost 50 years, these fences are intact and, to all appearances, will give good service for several more decades, with no appreciable repairs.

All water control structures are in perfect operating condition with the exception of one minor dam in section 33 which really is non-essential. And, at present, all buildings appear to be structurally sound and give evidence of adequate maintenance.

The four water wells, installed in the days of CCC, are all in good condition and delivering a satisfactory flow.

While future plans for additions and revisions do not appear at this time, to be extensive, the items under consideration are important. Thought is being given to reducing the cost of maintaining electric service to the east end of the park. The pole lines are not only unsightly but are also expensive to maintain. These conditions could be alleviated if the lines were placed underground or if the supplier of power would assume responsibility.

Plantings in sections 4 and 33, which were a part of the plans of the Botanical Garden and Arboretum, and which have thrived since then, are being removed if they are not native to the area. These plants include palms, bottle brush, eucalyptus and bamboo. Animals (such as armadillos) which are exotic, are also being moved out.

Another forward step, now in progress, is the relocation of the State Road #634. Plans are now under way to re-route this road north along the east line of section 33, then west along the north line of sections 33, 32 and 31 to join with the road which now runs along the Hardee County line. The fences along the half-section lines of 32 and 31 will be moved to the north lines, thus providing greater control and protection.

It may be noted here that the present location of the road, which skirts the “oval” area of the Hammock, was a compromise solution of a situation in the 1930’s. The township line bisects the “oval” and the planners offered the right-of-way if the county would renounce its claims to the right to build a road on the township line. It was a plan to divert traffic around the vital “oval.” At that time, the Hammock did not own sections 4 and 33.

The great advantage in the re-location of Road #634, is that the daily, routine traffic from eastern Hardee County which must now go through the Hammock, will be routed completely outside the park boundaries.

The north half of section 33 is well provided with roads although the area is not open to public access. However, the north halves of sections 31 and 32 are completely undeveloped. They contain areas that are different from any other sections of the park property in topography and appearance but are equally interesting and beautiful. A little skillful planning could add new pleasures by way of making available a different native Florida landscape.

Some very important administrative changes have taken place in the past decade. In the reorganization of State agencies, the independent Department of Parks and Historical Monuments was made a division of the Department of Natural Resources of which Mr. Ney Landrum was designated as Director of the Division of Recreation and Parks, replacing Mr. “Bill” Miller. About this same period, the state-wide advisory board was abolished as were the advisory councils for the individual parks.

The Park Service is no longer a “step-child” among the functions of the State government. Today, it really has STATUS. And, for a half century, Highlands Hammock has continued to be a source of beauty and pride.

A FEW UNCLASSIFIED FACTS

The total contribution of the Roebling family, for the purchase of the land and the construction of access and protection facilities, was in the neighborhood of \$ 400,000. Included in this figure was \$ 15,000 for the tree surgery on the three giant oaks. No records are available giving the subscriptions of local people and others but a realistic estimate would be around \$ 25,000.

For many years, the Florida Park Service included a group of prominent (non-paid) public figures representing sections of the state. These members were not selected because of their park experience but rather for their influence. At one time, one very powerful member of this board, who gauged the value of any park by the number of visitors or the size of revenue, recommended that a swimming pool be added to the attractions of the Hammock. If his proposal had been followed, the run of Tiger branch would have been dammed to form an "old fashioned swimmin' hole" or a formal pool would have been built in the Vesper parking area.

One of the projects of the CCC was the construction of a greenhouse for the propagation of plant materials. With the abandoning of the Botanical Garden plans, a building for this purpose was of no value but the Hammock personnel have converted it into a carpenter shop and small equipment maintenance building. For these purposes, it is practically ideal.

In 1976, the Division of Recreation and Parks constructed a most attractive exhibit which depicted the operations of the CCC. On June 6, 1976, this display was placed in a building in the recreation area and was dedicated in a very enjoyable ceremony during which Director Landrum spoke on "Florida's State Parks and the Nation's Bicentennial." He also presented a scroll which designated the Hammock as a salient point on Florida's Bicentennial Trail as one of the state's outstanding features.

The event was also the convocation of the alumni of CCC enrollees and supervisors with CCC veterans coming from all sections of the state, even from the far-away pan handle. Some of them related their unique experiences while in the C's.

The theme of the day was expressed in this excerpt from the printed program:- “The Bicentennial Exhibit at Highlands Hammock State Park recognizes the lasting accomplishments of the Civilian Conservation Corps in Florida and throughout the Nation, particularly its role in developing Florida’s first state parks. The original park buildings at Highlands Hammock were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1935, and this rustic theme will be perpetuated so that the entire park will stand as a permanent example of the respected CCC tradition.”

One of the visions of the organizers of the Highlands Hammock park movement was that it would serve the education and scientific communities. This vision has proven to be far from visionary.

Over the years, many expeditions have used the Hammock as a scientific laboratory. One, from Harvard, sent teams for several successive years, to study mosquitoes. Another made an exhaustive examination into the study of mushrooms. More recently, the organized scientific studies have included fireflies and wasps. The Hammock is rich in source materials for these and many other subjects.

Classes from elementary schools, high schools and colleges are frequent study groups. One example of the latter is the annual visit of a class in park administration of the Junior College of Lake City, Florida.

While other interests have waxed and waned over the years, Highlands Hammock has never ceased to be the number one source of pride and satisfaction in the hearts of the communities of Sebring and Highlands County. From the earliest days, when it was known as Hooker Hammock or Eilands Hammock, and when it was a full day’s trip to go and come in a horse-drawn surrey, the newcomer to town has been shown the beauties of the Hammock immediately upon his arrival and invariably he has been enchanted. And, its allure has continued to increase with the years.

State of Florida



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

HARMON W. SHIELDS
Secretary

4000 BILBINGHAM / 201 SOUTH STREET / TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA 32304

ROBERT O'D. ASKEW
Governor
GRICK A. SMITHERS
Secretary of State
ROBERT L. SHEVIN
Adjutant General
GERALD A. LEWIS
Comptroller
EDWARD J. ABLETT
Treasurer
JAMES H. HANCOCK
Commissioner of Agriculture
RALPH D. BURLINGTON
Commissioner of Education

May 12, 1976

Mr. Allan Altwater
Box 54F
Sebring, Florida 33870

Dear Mr. Altwater:

On Sunday, June 6, at 2:00 PM, we will be dedicating a new museum exhibit at Highlands Hammock State Park to recognize the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the establishment of the Florida state park system. We would very much like to have you join us as an honored guest for this ceremony.

Actually, all of Highlands Hammock State Park will serve as a memorial to the CCC efforts in Florida, as the original CCC architectural styles and building techniques will be emphasized in all future construction and renovation work. Already, many improvements have been made to strengthen this original development there. Highlands Hammock, of course, is just one of nine state parks in Florida in which the CCC played an instrumental role.

Dedicating the exhibit and the park in recognition of the CCC accomplishments is a part of the Division of Recreation and Parks' Bicentennial program, in which twenty-two units of the state park system have been selected for special thematic emphasis. It is hoped in this case that the effort will help keep alive the memory of the Civilian Conservation Corps and its outstanding contributions in the field of parks and natural resources conservation.

Please plan to be with us on June 6.

Sincerely,

Ney C. Landrum
Director
Division of Recreation and Parks

NCS/jay

State of Florida



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

HARVON W. SHIELDS
Executive Director

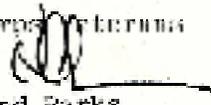
CROWN BUILDING, 7002 BLOUNT STREET, TALLAHASSEE 32301

KEITH W. ASKEW
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Secretary of State
ROBERT L. STEVENS
Adjutant General
GERALD A. LEWIS
Comptroller
PHILIP J. ASHLER
Treasurer
D. Y. CONNER
Commissioner of Agriculture
RALPH T. HUNTER
Commissioner of Education

July 1, 1978

MEMORANDUM

TO: Civilian Conservation Corps Veterans

FROM: Roy C. Landrum, Director 
Division of Recreation and Parks

SUBJECT: Recent CCC Ceremony at Highlands Hammock State Park

I want to thank each of you again for your interest and participation in the recent ceremony at Highlands Hammock State Park honoring the Civilian Conservation Corps.

As reminders of the occasion, we thought you might like to have the enclosed group photograph, list of the CCC veterans who registered, and copy of the talk made by Mr. David Wright.

Again, please accept our sincere thanks for your participation.

RCL/jck
Enclosures

REMARKS OF DAVID G. WRIGHT, DEPUTY REGIONAL DIRECTOR, SOUTHEAST REGION, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, FOR THE DEDICATION OF AN EXHIBIT DEPICTING FLORIDA ACTIVITIES OF THE CIVILIAN CONSERVATION CORPS, HELD AT HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK STATE PARK, FLA., JUNE 6, 1976.

A 1937 tribute to the CCC, This New America, proclaimed “The Civilian Conservation Corps will come to be considered... as the beginning of a unique renaissance of American life.” If this prophecy was an overstatement in the long run, for depression America it was truth.

It was hard, even in the bitterly partisan arena of the mid-1930's, to find a strident critic anywhere of this stroke of “New Deal” genius. Historian Rexford Tugwell said that the CCC “quickly became too popular for criticism.”

On March 21, 1933, President Roosevelt sent a message to the Congress advocating an experiment: “I propose,” he said, “to create a Civilian Conservation Corps, to be used in simple work, not interfering with normal employment, but confining itself to forestry, the prevention of soil erosion, flood control and similar projects.” By April 5, 1933, the CCC was a reality and the people waited for creation of “Roosevelt’s tree army.”

In March 1933 there were 13 million-689 thousand unemployed in the United States. Mournfully played was an unending refrain of pay cuts, layoffs, part-time work, distracted social volunteers, apple vendors, bank closures, panhandlers and riots of the unpaid and unemployed. It was a time of social and psychic aimlessness, as well as economic depression. People needed purpose, courage and pride—they needed jobs.

In 1933, the condition of the land of America was also desperate. A 19th-century sense of abounding natural wealth, once real, still prevailed. It was, almost fatally, a false sense.

Farmers had not yet learned how to protect the land they farmed. An estimated annual “wash away” of three billion tons of topsoil was threatening our most critical resource.

Forests were being devastated by fire and insects as well as ignorance. Although the technology to vastly improve timber resources and yield existed, there had been too few hands and feet to carry out this hard, demanding work.

National Parks needed tens of thousands of man-hours of hard work to build campgrounds, trails, roads and ranger stations so that people could visit them with something less than extraordinary effort. America’s natural resources were in trouble, although in 1933 not many realized it.

In a nation still close, in time, to its frontier, work “in the outdoors” had an irresistible, sentimental attraction—even for those who had neither the youth nor vigor for it. The concept of battalions of well-muscled young men “saving the forests” had tremendous sales appeal.

The CCC was an idea whose time had come.

In retrospect, it’s amazing the organization functioned as well as it did. The keystone was interagency cooperation. In 1933, no one office or department of government had the expertise to handle the job of organizing a quarter-million young men into a broad, but intensive, conservation effort.

The organizational pie was cut into many pieces. The Department of Labor was charged with selection of non-veteran men, 18 to 25 years of age. The Veterans Administration selected World War I veterans for their own CCC companies. The major functions of the War Department were to operate the hundreds of camps and provide for assignment, transportation, command, construction, administration, supply, sanitation, medical care, education and welfare. They were advised in education matters by the Office of Education.

Technical supervision of work operations was delegated to bureaus within the Departments of the Interior and Agriculture mainly, including the General Land Office, Office of Indian Affairs, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, Division of Grazing, U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Biological Survey, Bureau of Animal Industry and Soil Conservation Service. The National Park Service had, in one sense, only a “small piece of the pie.” The bulk of CCC conservation work was done on U.S. Forest Service lands.

By October 31, 1936, there were 2,090 camps. The National Park Service directly supervised the work at 76 camps in national parks and had strong cooperative involvement in 346 camps established in state, county and municipal parks.

The National Park Service also participated in special park development projects funded by relief funds. The “Federal Recreational Demonstration Areas” employed both CCC and relief labor. By 1936, there were 46 projects in 24 states.

If the parks were only a smaller slice of the CCC pie, one can only think— “some pie!”

The tangible benefits of the CCC idea for the parks were enormous and apparent early. Between 1933 and 1937, the CCC built 3,247 bridges, 960 cabins, 13,959 shelters and towers, 990 impoundment dams, 538 sewage systems, 395 water systems, 5,011 miles of truck trails, and 5,392 miles of foot and horse trails.

Impressive? There's more: 24,263 check dams, 570-thousand-848 man-days of fire control activity, 9,909 miles of fire breaks, 223 fish-rearing ponds, 4,758 acres of food and cover planting, 15,967 acres of picnic grounds and 18,657 other campground facilities. This was as of 1937, and the CCC would continue for five more years.

Park facilities in America moved a generation ahead in only nine years because of the CCC. And durable work? Look at some of the structures still in service in the parks today. We, in fact, just can't afford to "build some of them like that anymore."

As war drums became louder, the CCC, as well as peace, was nearing an end.

The ranks of the CCC depended upon a supply of jobless young men the full-employment economy of war could not provide. Further, the temporary organizational amalgam of federal departments was falling apart. Fundamentally, the CCC had never been able to disavow its association with relief and was not able to grasp fully the opportunity to develop a comprehensive education program.

When the CCC finally expired in 1942, the corps was eulogized by the New Republic magazine, proclaiming that the CCC had made "immense contributions to the conservation of soils and forests that enriched the national wealth by far more than the sums spent on it."

But the millions of men who lived the CCC saw it in intensely personal terms. CCC days would be boldly woven into the fabric of their lives as a deep, experienced commitment to conservation. And through them, their children can know the same commitment. Enrollee Charles F. Pierce of Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, wrote in 1936:

When the great experiment has ended,
And the echoes of axes have died,
When the last of the trees have been planted,
And accomplishment fills us with pride;
We'll all say goodbye—and regret it,
Stand by for a decade or twain,
To rejoice in the fact that as builders
We have not builded in vain."

nps/ser

June 6, 1976



**Director Ney Landrum (R) presents Bicentennial Citation.
Allen Altvater (L)**



CCC Reunion (1976)

A FEW OF THE FRIENDS OF THE HAMMOCK

The evolution of Highlands Hammock, from its original state as a primeval forest to a state park, affording pleasure to thousands of people each year, has had many friends and helpers in the process. The marvel of this fact is that these friends come from all walks and all classes of society. Practically none of them have had anything to gain for their assistance.

There is a grave danger in attempting to nominate all the individuals and groups who were responsible for the success of the idea and the development of a distinctly unique and attractive park which has been recognized by the best informed park authorities as “one of the three outstanding natural parks in America.”

In the case of Highlands Hammock State Park, there were so many persons who were involved in the early processes that the list of those who played major roles would be almost identical with the county census list. As an instance of the unsung heroes of the first years, would be the Sebring Chamber of Commerce. All organizing and corporation meetings were held in the offices of the Chamber and when Mrs. Roebling made her offer to supply the original \$ 25,000 if the community would raise \$ 5,000, all eyes turned to the Board of Directors of the Chamber, to organize a campaign to raise the money. The Board consisted of the following;-

| | | |
|----------------------|----------------|-----------------------|
| J. Lee Johnson | C. F. Saunders | A. E. Lawrence |
| A. L. Butler | R. N. Durrance | H. K. Brown |
| Rod Arkell | R. A. Rasco | Ray Morgan |
| Louis Alsmeyer | Mike Kahn | P. G. Gearing |
| Ada Rippberger, Sec. | M. R. McDonald | A. C. Altvater, Pres. |

In retrospect, one cannot help but wonder how a community of no more than 1,500 could get together \$ 5,000 at a time of deep depression; a high rate of unemployment, and low pay for those who had work. The going rate of pay, at that time, was 20 to 25 cents per hour and it is doubtful if as many as ten employed people in the county earned more than \$ 3,000 a year. Hence, it was a major task to separate contributors of more than a dollar or two from people who worked hard to earn them, for the purpose of financing a dream. Frankly, the most persuasive “sales pitch” was not the idea of the establishment of a park (which was nebulous at the most optimistic view point) but, rather, the creation of a payroll. It was all right for the incorporators to give their \$ 250, \$ 500, or \$ 1,000 in other funds because these amounts did not represent as much to the donors as the \$ 5 bill that represented two or three days work to the workingman.

Therefore, some of these latter persons should have their names on the roll of honor.

And, as is the case of many other endeavors, the stories of the really difficult tasks are not always inscribed in the minutes of the meetings. Elsewhere in these records is a simple statement that a committee waited upon Mrs. Roebling and she offered \$ 25,000 to purchase the land. While this statement is true, there was more to the process than is implied in this statement. Without going into detail, it may be said that Mr. Charles Thompson, who was, at the time, general manager of Buck Hills Hotel (Pennsylvania) was also a friend of Mr. and Mrs. Roebling who were living in New Jersey. Mr. Ray Greene was employed at Buck Hill and together Mr. Thompson and Mr. Greene made several visits to the Roebling home to talk about the Hammock.

(Mr. Thompson's daughter laughingly relates an incident that occurred on one of these visits when they found Mrs. Roebling in a less-than pleasant mood. It seems that Mr. Roebling who was an inventor of sorts, had had one of his experiments on which he had been working on in his home basement, rather suddenly leave through the roof.) So, it can be truthfully stated that, although very little is officially recognized, the efforts of Mr. Thompson and Mr. Greene were largely responsible for "getting the show on the road."

While it might be argued that Joe Hawkins, Norman Lane, Ralph Eyman, and others who were employed by Mr. Blair, were merely doing a good job for which they were being paid, their interest in the Hammock went far beyond the mere performance of duty. The excellence of results attest to that fact.

Therefore, it is with many apologies that only a very, very few of the friends and developers of Highlands Hammock State Park are introduced here. It would be gratifying to the authors to be able to relate all of the efforts and sacrifices that were made and which played an essential role in the program (like the contribution of Willard Percy who, without pay, took several weeks to dismantle and bring to Sebring, an entire set of CCC buildings from North Florida, when Sebring was threatened with the loss of Camp Fla. SP-10 due to the lack of housing.)

Such a record would be too voluminous. For the same reason, biographies must be held to mere sketches.



John A. and Margaret Roebling



Alexander Blair

MARGARET SHIPPEN ROEBLING

Margaret Shippen Roebling was the wife of John A. Roebling whose father, Col. Washington A. Roebling, made the actual plans and built the Brooklyn bridge, the most significant engineering feat of that era.

Mrs. Roebling was a highly cultured lady with a broad taste for literature and science. In addition to being a devoted churchwoman, she was well-known for her wide philanthropic work.

One of her greatest interests was the study of botany and wild-life. She maintained an extensive library on these subjects as well as beautiful gardens in which were collections of local flora of New Jersey and desert plants of Arizona. She was especially interested and devoted to the study of birds and was particularly capable in their taming; so much so that the feathered inhabitants of her estate would answer her call and fly to her and take food from her hand. She maintained a bird refuge at her home.

With such a background, there is small wonder that she should visualize the tremendous possibilities in the area we know as Highlands Hammock and her deep humanitarian instincts led her to make it possible to preserve the natural assets of the Hammock for the pleasure of generations yet to come.

ALEXANDER BLAIR

In 1929, Mr. John A. Roebling persuaded Mr. Alexander Blair to go to Lake Placid, Florida, to develop a tract of land on which he proposed to build a winter home since Mrs. Roebling had been advised to spend her winters in a warm climate. This involved the design and construction of roads, railroad sidings, fences, electric power and lighting, water supply, building of garages, houses for permanent employees, buildings to house repair shops; machines for various uses, tools, and units in which to store materials and furnishings of all kinds until the house could be built.

Alec also planned and supervised the area known as Highlands Hammock. For this work he built up a separate organization. After the work at the Hammock was completed, he was elected chairman of the park's advisory council and continued in that capacity for 35 years.

Through the years, many honors came to Mr. Blair, including President Florida Engineering Society; President of Florida State Board of Engineering Examiners; President National Council of State Boards of Engineering Examiners; Life member of American Association of Engineers; Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers; Centennial Award from the University of Florida, and a member for many years of the U of F Dean's Advisory Council of the College of Engineering.

Mr. Blair was an active member of the Rotary Club, of which he was president in 1948-49. From that club he received a plaque as "Outstanding Member; from the Sebring Firemen a "Certificate of Appreciation;" a similar award from the Forest Fire Prevention Board. The American Legion presented a citation as did the American Red Cross for his activities in Disaster Relief.

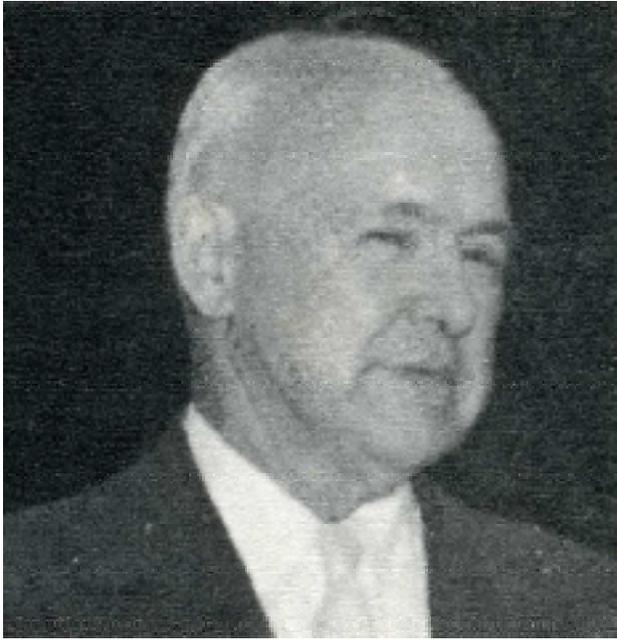
To perpetually link his name with the Hammock, a trail has been designated as the "Alexander Blair Trail."

CHARLES N. THOMPSON

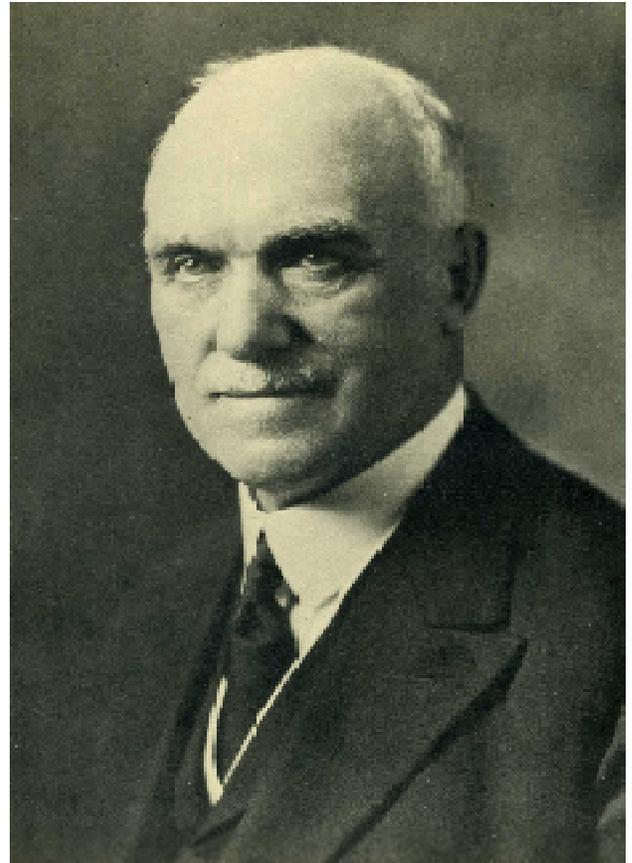
Charles N. Thompson was the manager of the prestigious summer resort at Buck Hills, Pennsylvania before coming to Florida in 1929. His friend, Melville Dewey, (of Lake Placid, New York) had persuaded him to accompany him in his quest for a Florida location.

Mr. Thompson acquired the unfinished Harder Hall Hotel which he completed and made into a show-place which attracted such celebrities as Rex Beach and Fred Stone.

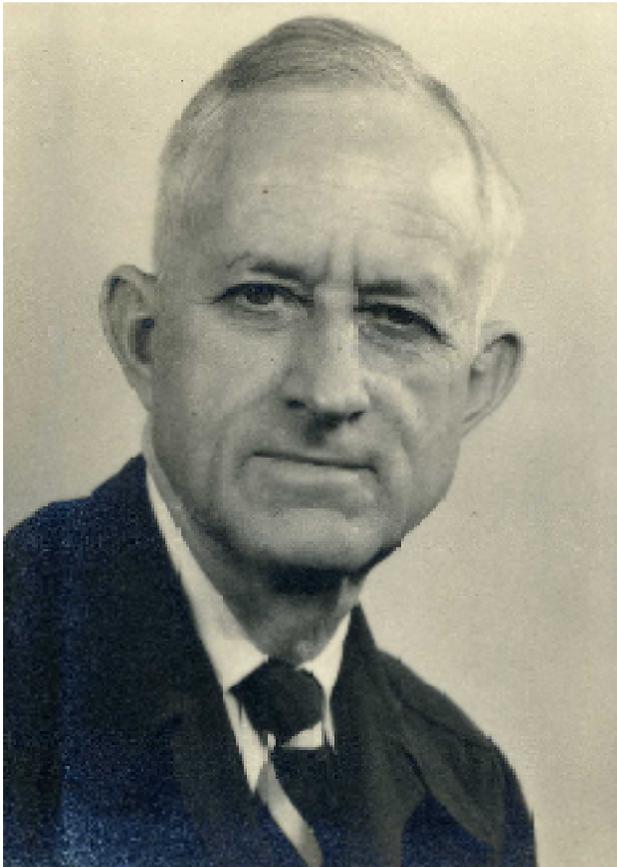
On his first visit to the Hammock he was so captivated that he wanted to be a part of its acquisition. When the Association was formed, he became its vice-president and a member of the charter Board. It is remembered that when parties were organized to entertain inspection groups, Mr. Thompson furnished lunches but his major contributions were made during the era of the Vesper Services when he entertained the renowned speakers - sometimes for a period of weeks - without pay.



Charles N. Thompson



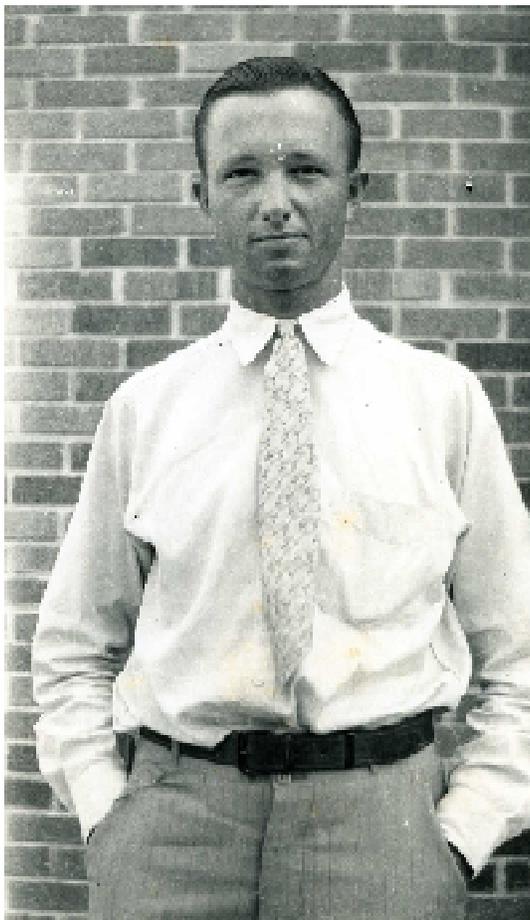
Dr. W. A. Davison



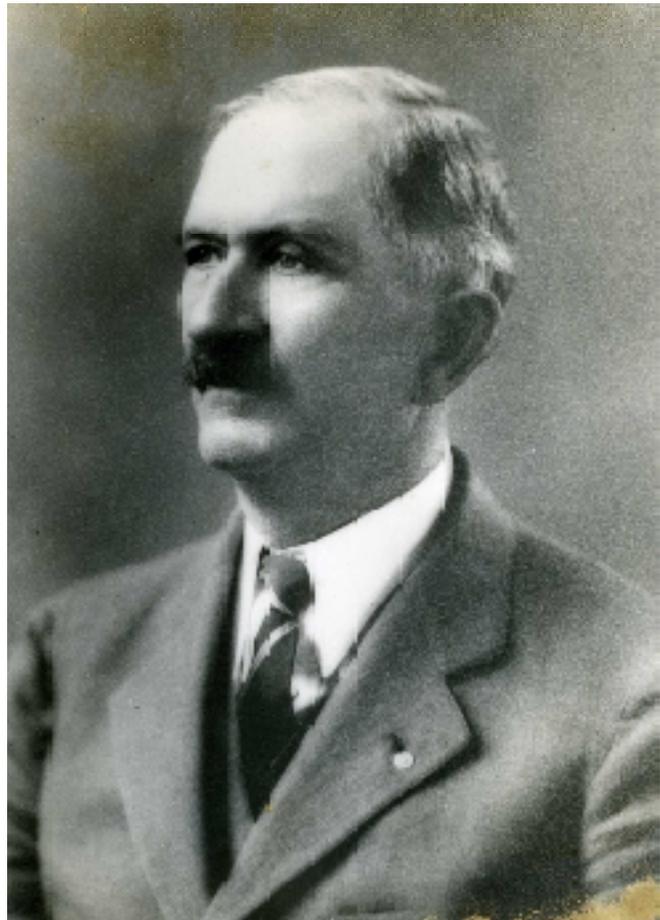
Raymond Greene



M. M. Ferguson



E. W. Gallaher



Col. F. N. K. Bailey

MAX MITCHELL FERGUSON

M. M. Ferguson received his Bachelor Degree from the Pennsylvania State University and his Masters Degree from Columbia University. Upon graduation, he came to Sebring in 1926 where he started his career in education. He was quickly promoted and served as Supervising Principal in the Sebring schools until the State Department of Education persuaded him to move to Tallahassee in 1951 to fill a much more responsible position in the field of education.

In his career, he served as President of the Florida High School Athletic Association (1944-49); Director of Florida Education (President 1948-49); District Governor Lions Club; Member Sebring Firemen, B. P. O. Elks, F. & A. Masons and Scottish Rite Consistory.

“Mitch” served many years as a member of the Board of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association and Highlands Hammock, Inc., and as secretary for both corporations.

COL. F. N. K. BAILEY

Col. Bailey came to Florida in 1922 after retiring as founder and owner of Bailey Military Institute in Greenwood, South Carolina for 31 years. He was prevailed upon to accept the office of Superintendent of Education in Highlands County to which post he held for 20 years, retiring in 1944.

Col. Bailey accepted many responsibilities while a citizen of Florida, including a seat on the Board of Trustees of Stetson University of which he was president from 1941 to 1954; Board of Trustees, Florida Baptist Children’s Home; President Florida Cooperative Committee of Narcotics Education; Citizens Education Committee (under five governors); President Florida Education Association and Chairman of its Legislation Committee.

For fifteen years he was President of Highlands Hammock, Inc., and was a powerful influence in arrangements to have the Hammock established as the first unit of the State Park system.

CHARLES S. DONALDSON

The mile-long esplanade of beauty on the main street of Avon Park will be a perpetual memorial to the memory of Charles S. Donaldson, former mayor of that city. In that park-like area, he planted many flowering trees and shrubs so visitors all remark favorably about its unique concept and attractiveness to the business district.

Mr. Donaldson was one of the first and most vigorous proponents of an organization to acquire the Hammock for park purposes and he was named the first secretary-treasurer of the corporation and the park's curator. He compiled a most comprehensive catalog and description of the plants and trees growing in the Hammock.

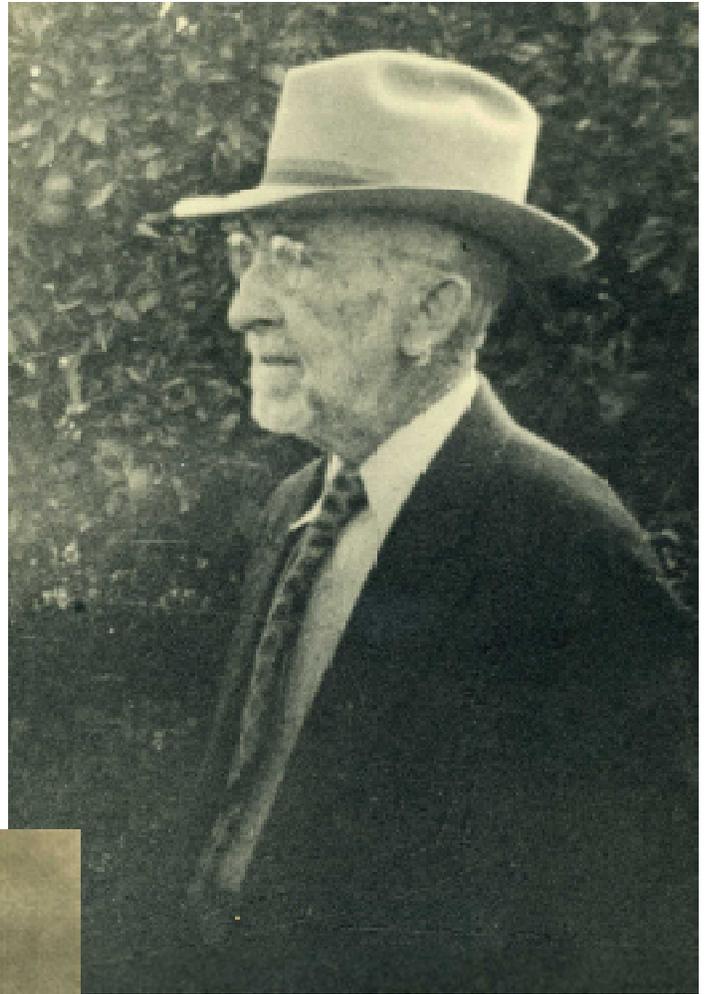
When representatives of the federal government stated (in 1930) that the Hammock did not meet the criteria for a National Park or a National Monument, they did not intend to give the impression that the area was without merit as a park or that it failed to excite their interest. Later, when opportunity presented itself, the National Park Service provided services which were not simply helpful but which could be considered almost indispensable as there was no state agency or funds that could provide the experienced advice and direction offered by the National Park Service.

Working through the medium of the CCC, projects were initiated which provided buildings and other facilities that would not have been possible through other channels for decades. But the greatest advantage they provided the State of Florida was the expert counseling at a time when the State had no personnel qualified to properly plan future parks.

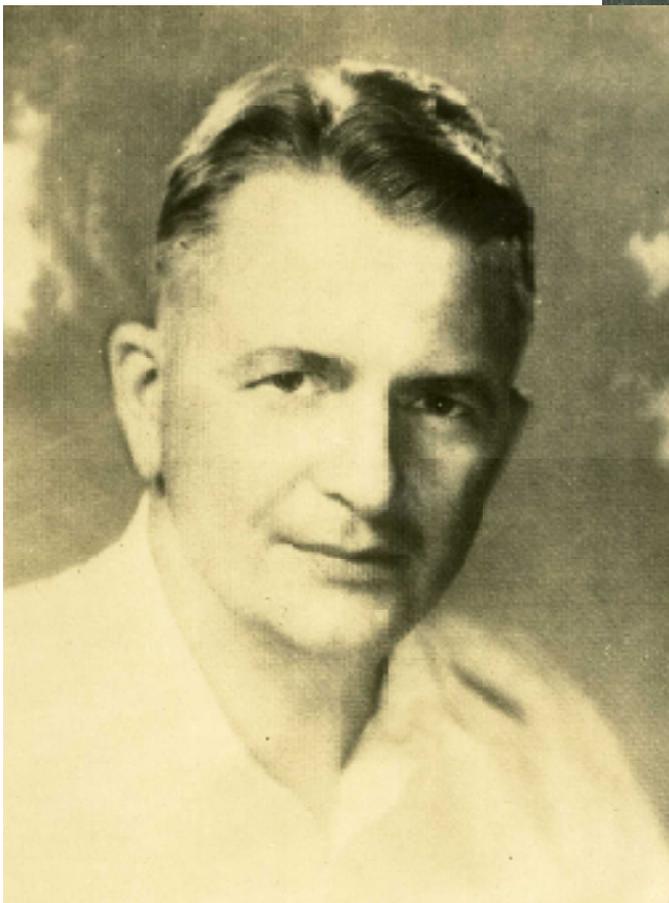
CHARLES RAYMOND VINTEN

The first professional landscape planner, C. R. Vinten, entered upon the planning process of the Hammock, as a member of the Alexander Blair staff, in 1932. Here, his primary interests lay in coordinating engineering plans, laying out foot trails, planning the Vesper Service and parking areas. He had had years of experience in this type of work on various commercial enterprises so the adaptation to park facilities was no great departure from his previous occupations.

After graduating from the Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1922, Ray joined the staff of A. D. Taylor, a nationally recognized firm of community planners, golf course builders, and landscape architects. With this group, during the next ten years, he gained experience which was valuable in his later career.



Charles S. Donaldson



C. R. Vinten

When a CCC park camp was established in Sebring in 1934, Ray was the ideal selection to head that organization as superintendent and a member of the National Park Service. His capacity for organizing and management was soon recognized and, after a year in charge of a single CCC unit, he was advanced to a position of supervising inspector over all park camps in Florida.

With the start of World War II and the concurrent end of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Mr. Vinten was named the Coordinating Superintendent of the Southeastern National Monuments with headquarters in St. Augustine. Ray retired in December 1962 but has been recalled to service many times over the years for special assignments and consultation.

His training, dedication, and good judgment are reflected in many of the features and facilities of Highlands Hammock.

IRA B. LYKES

It was a fortunate circumstance for the Hammock when, in 1936, Ira Lykes was assigned temporary duty as Inspector in Florida while Ray Vinten was on leave. Since that time, Ira has consistently shown an active interest in the park and has offered his help in every possible way.

At that time, he was employed by the National Park Service as Projects Manager and subsequently served the Park Service in many capacities including Manager of King's Mountain Recreation Area, Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Prince William Forest Park, Shiloh National Military Park and several others. He gained wide experience and served with exceptional dedication which earned him every honor the National Park Service could offer.

In April 1968, Mr. Lykes retired from his position of a Division Chief in the Director's office, to devote his time to general consultation and to teaching a course in Park Management at Lake City College, Florida. In this capacity, he brings his classes to Highlands Hammock on field trips.

HERBERT EVISON

It was in 1934, in company of Inspector Ray Vinten, that “Herb” Evison first visited - and was charmed by Highlands Hammock. Primarily a reporter and editor, Evison’s career in conservation began in 1919. He launched, and served as executive secretary of the Washington Natural Parks Association. In 1921, he took an Association-prepared state park bill to Olympia, where the Washington legislature passed it with 15 minutes to spare.

In 1933, after four years as executive secretary of the National Conference on State Parks, he was drafted by National Parks Director Horace Albright for the position of Supervisor, State Park Emergency Conservation Work (CCC) under Assistant Director Conrad L. Wirth. When the “emergency” activities were regionalized in 1936, he became Regional Officer for Region One, extending from Maine to Louisiana; later, from 1937 to 1940 and from 1943 to 1945, he served as Associate Regional Director of the Region. Of his 25 years with the Service, he was for 12 years from 1946 until his retirement in 1958 - its first Chief of Information.

After retirement, he established and edited the *National Park Courier* for two years. He arrived at his 87th birthday April 1979, at his home in Venice, Florida.



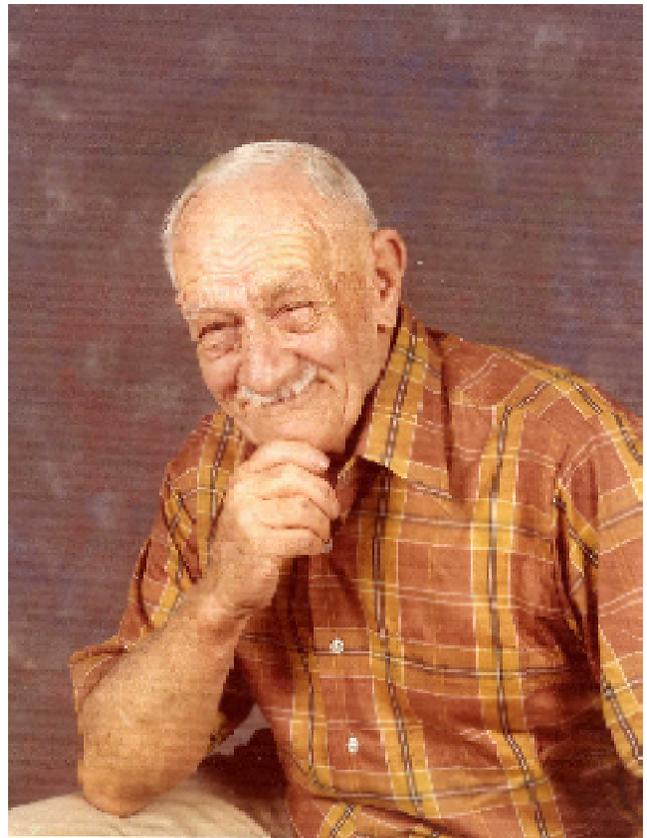
Ira B. Lykes



Herbert Evison



Joe Hawkins



Allen C. Altvater



Robert N. Durrance

BOOKS AND BOOKMEN

By Ed Lambright, Editor Tampa Tribune

April 8, 1934

A poet wrote of “sermons in stones” and “books in running brooks.” It may not be the exact quotation, but it conveys the idea. Anyway, what he meant to say was, one may hear and read nature.

So I am going to devote this column today to a wonderful book from which I read last Sunday – a book not printed, not paged, not bound between covers, yet, withal, beautifully written beyond the genius of mortal authors, gloriously illustrated beyond the skill of mortal artists.

I was fortunate in the time selected for my introduction to this book – one of Florida’s brightest, sunniest Easter Sundays. The Resurrection Day gave something of reverence to the reading, invested it with the impressiveness of a divine service. The title of the book is “Highlands Hammock,” the author is God. It is one of His great books, divinely published for the admiration and joy for those who read His eternal works. It is open and free to all who may wish to see and peruse it – near the shore of green-rimmed Lake Jackson, just outside the pretty little city of Sebring.

A beauty-spot, not only of Florida but of the nations, is this 1,200 acre tract of prodigal nature, set strangely, almost inconsistently, amid immediate surroundings which offer little variety. It seems as though the Creator had there contrived a striking, even startling contrast – you pass from the unvarying pine woods, where the vegetation is familiar and readily described, into a veritable jungle of riotous and unrestricted growth, baffling the knowledge of learned botanists and veteran foresters. Here one finds nature in timeless virginity, touched by the hand of man only to protect it, to make it visible to lovers of the purely beautiful.

Fact fully speaking, this hammock had been known for years to residents of the ridge region; but its possibilities as a Florida attraction were not recognized and appraised until Mrs. John Roebing discovered it, and bought it for dedication as a nature shrine for present and future generations. She envisioned it as what it always will be – a spot to which will be drawn admiring sight-seers from all states and many lands, because it is the one scenic marvel which cannot be duplicated anywhere on earth. Mrs. Roebing’s plans were temporarily interrupted by her death in 1930, but they are being carried on and financed by Mr. Roebing, sponsored by a public-spirited association headed by

Rex Beach and practically directed by J. W. Hawkins as Chief Engineer. And there is nothing “for sale” in it or in connection with it.

The purpose has been and is to encroach as little as possible upon native beauty, to preserve fully that “nature in the raw” which the Hammock contains. The tract has been fenced to exclude animal marauders and human despoilers. Motor roads and foot trails wind through its forest fastnesses and make accessible its “wildwood privacies, closets of lone desire.” Irrigation has been supplied where needed, guide-posts placed, trees and plants labeled, and the sky-roofed amphitheater cleared and seated for religious and other assembly. There are palm groves and lily pools, grottoes and rock gardens, trees, herbs and shrubbery in infinite variety, wild fruits, aquatic plants so rare that botanists have been unable to name them, clear brooks that “go on forever,” tropic fowl and harmless four-footed forest folk – and a center of interest, a massive laurel oak, 800 years old, rivaling in majesty the great trees of California. One could spend weeks, seeing new wonders each day.

It would be impossible to review this marvelous Book of Nature in this cramped space; indeed, I could not do it justice in unlimited columns. So we leave the Book, with its stories in wood and palm and vine, its poetry in leaf and frond and flower, its imperishable pictures in light and shade, resolving to return for further reading, for we have in a few hours barely sensed its sublime significance – although capably sprightly American, and Mrs. Clara I. Thomas, Secretary of the organization which plans a botanical garden and arboretum as an adjunct to the Hammock.

I felt that I would reach mortal books and a bookman before I finished this column – and here we are at the attractive Florida home of Rex Beach, author, adventurer, sportsman and farmer, where we are graciously received for a delightful visit. He is in his “writing clothes,” his favorite dog at his feet, going over the manuscript of a just-completed novel soon to be added to the series with which he has enriched the fiction treasury of the world; but not too busy to talk of his faith in Florida, his love for its woods and waters, and his enthusiasm for the beauties of Highlands Hammock.

A PARADISE IN FLORIDA

By Rex Beach, cir. 1930

Florida has numerous beauty spots, one of the finest of which is located in Highlands County. It consists of a "high hammock," so called, a jungle of delightful confusion, a densely compacted forest of mighty trees of many kinds, growing amid a tangle of tropical undergrowth, some common and some exceedingly rare. Nowhere in the state is there a more perfect paradise, a more natural park.

At one time, Florida boasted of many similar beauty spots but very few remain. They were destroyed by fires, or by colonists and land developers. When they stood in the path of progress, they were cleared away and they can never be replaced. It took nature centuries to fashion the Garden of Eden which lies close to Sebring and Avon Park. Human hands could never duplicate it. Happily it is to be preserved for posterity to enjoy.

Hooker Hammock, as this garden of shade has been called, has long been famous locally. Scientists, naturalists, botanists who visited it have declared that it should become nationally known. All recommend that it be protected as a public park but not until recently were steps to that end actually taken. Last year a group of public spirited citizens, residents, and visitors to Highlands County, organized the Tropical Florida Parks Association and raised sufficient money to purchase 2,000 acres of land in the center of which the Hammock stands and to begin work on its development. They have dedicated it to the public use and they are devoting careful thought and effort toward making it the loveliest botanical garden in the south, a "Green Mansion" for native birds and animals. That development will call for earnest planning, good judgment, and considerable expense. It is a work in which every man, woman, and child who make up that public can, and doubtless will, join. Love of beauty is one of the strongest motive powers in the world and to date, the response has been liberal and enthusiastic.

This rare natural forest is no low-lying, miasmatic swamp; it lies on the Scenic Highlands, that splendid ridge which forms the backbone of South Florida. It forms an ideal bird and game sanctuary for it is rich in food bearing plants and shrubs. As for trees, nowhere is there a more magnificent assortment or variety. There are huge oaks, some of enormous girth and majestic spread and stately cabbage palms by the thousand, to say nothing of the pines, cypresses, elms, sweet gums and maples whose tops form a living canopy a hundred feet above the ground. Beneath this roof of evergreen is a riot of vines, plants, and small shrubs, such as dogwood, snowballs, wild coffee, avocado, etc. There are

wild orange groves, too, bearing both sweet and sour fruit. The place is a natural arboretum of enchanting beauty.

Many of the plants await classification by the botanists.

Work has begun on roads and walks designed to make the place accessible and convenient and it will be pushed as energetically as possible. A hard surfaced highway leading into the heart of the Hammock will be completed in time for the winter tourist season and ambitious plans for continuous development have been formed. These include the construction of a handsome lodge or visitors' headquarters, driveways and footpaths wandering into every part of the park and the erection of boundary fences, the maintenance of patrols and measures for adequate fire protections, etc.

The men and women who have applied themselves to this undertaking are volunteers, they are animated by no selfish motives. They are therefore the more intensely interested in its success and the more deeply appreciative of all public and private support. It is their ambition to make the Park a place of local and national interest, a rendezvous for all nature lovers, a sanctuary where the visitor can make friends with birds and shy wild creatures, a playground and a resting place for man and bird and animal. They hope to make it an ornament to Florida and a credit to America.

Signed: Rex Beach

"A Paradise in Florida" was published by the Sebring Chamber of Commerce and was printed in leaflet form by the Highlands County News.



Rex Beach

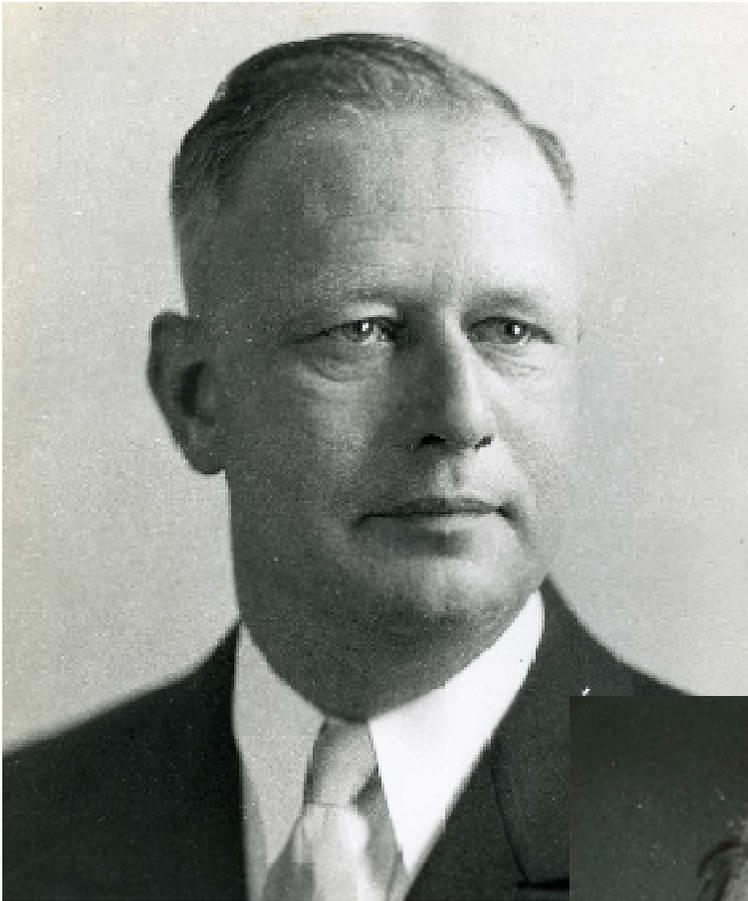
MISS HARLEAN JAMES

Few people have had greater opportunity to observe conditions and development of parks than Miss Harlean James. For many years before visiting Highlands Hammock on 30 March 1936, she had served the American Civic Association and the American Planning and Civic Associations as the Executive Secretary. In addition to this responsible position, at the 1935 National Conference on State Parks, she was selected as Executive Secretary of that organization.

Miss James authored two books which are so profound in their scope that, even though they were published in 1939 and before, they are still regarded as authoritative handbooks in their field (“Land Planning in the United States for the City, State and Nation” and “Romance of the National Parks”).

The “off-the-cuff” remarks of Miss James, following her visit to Highlands Hammock, are worthy of study and careful consideration by all future administrators who have any responsibility for this area.

“I am not going to make a speech for it would be in the nature of an anti-climax but I am glad, however, of the opportunity to congratulate you upon what has been done here. I have visited a great many parks but seldom go into one which has not been marred or even ruined at the hand of man. I am glad that you have not tried to improve upon scenery which the Creator gave you here. I am sure that you deserve a good deal of credit for the discrimination you have shown and during the rest of our lives, those who have been privileged to come here, will go about their country pointing to a good example of a State Park which has not been ruined. I KNOW OF NONE MORE BEAUTIFUL.”



Harry Lee Baker
State Forester and
Park Executive
1928-1940



Conrad L. Wirth
Director National Park Service

**STATEMENT OF DIRECTOR CONRAD L. WIRTH
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
ON HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK STATE PARK, FLORIDA**

The depression years of the 1930's wrought many changes in our national life not the least of which was an increasing emphasis upon the preservation of our wonderlands on nature. Emergency work programs, instituted on a national scale, provided the means by which these national heritages could be developed to the extent that generations still unborn would turn to them for refreshment and inspiration.

Highlands Hammock State Park is such a place. This veritable fairyland of Nature's handiwork has been recognized in earlier years by pioneers, such as the Roeblings and others in the field of conservation, but its greatest development period began with the establishment of a Civilian Conservation Corps camp on the shores of Lake Jackson. The National Park Service is proud to have had a part in the design of many of the Hammock's facilities, and the development of its features.

The Vesper area, the circle road opening now and again onto citrus groves which were old long before the park was established, Charley Bowlegs trail through the cypress forest and swamp, host to many wild things, the giant live oaks in verdant settings of palm and fern – these and many other gifts of nature's bounty come to mind whenever I hear mention of Highlands Hammock.

The Florida Board of Parks and Historic Memorials can be justly proud that this area is a part of its system, for it shall endure to bring beauty and pleasure not only to Floridians, but to people from across the nation and across the world as the years wear on.

Conrad L. Wirth
Director
National Park Service

September 1963

To the Editor, Sebring Daily American;

May 10, 1938

Dear Sir:

After open house day, several citizens mentioned to me that this poem, "The Highlands Hammock," should be put in print.

It was written and illustrated by scenes in a booklet on Highlands Hammock by Yvonne Zuelke, age 13, Grade VII. If you have the space, I think your readers will enjoy the poem.

Thank you,
Lena Marchand

THE HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK

The highlands Hammock is to me
A place most wonderful to see.

With cypress tall and ferns so green
And mighty oaks with vines between.

Over smooth, wide roads the tall trees meet
And the air is heavy with fragrance sweet.

A rustic bridge of cypress logs
Leads us over knolls and bogs.

The late sun shining thru leaves of palm
Shed over all a deep, deep calm.

The streams and creeks are clear and cool
With here and there a lily pool.

A place to rest and dream awhile
Our walks that wind for many a mile.

A nearby feeding place for deer
With song birds singing sweet and clear.

The humming birds and honey bees
Sip nectar from orchids in the trees.

So come with me for peace and rest
To the place in Florida, I like best.

Yvonne Zuelke

POSTSCRIPT

The first 130 pages of this study were published in 1966. This edition was limited and was soon distributed. As there have been requests for these publications, it was felt that it might be of interest to note any changes in the conditions, administration or plans that might have taken place between 1966 and 1979. That study has been interesting.

While there are none of the original incorporators of Highlands Hammock, Inc., still alive and but very few of the contributors and workers still around to see the results of their efforts, any of these would be pleased with the manner in which the original plans have been carried out. True, the plans for the Botanical Garden and Arboretum were casualties of World War II and a great deal of work there was lost but the Hammock is still meeting all the optimistic predictions of half a century ago.

There is a limit to the ability to give proper credit to all those responsible for the success of the Hammock park project. (How can one record the value of Ray Greene's contributions?) In addition to the organizers, one would be compelled to list all of the State Directors (Baker, Scoggins, Schaefer, Maisberger, Coldwell, Hill, Miller, Landrum) and all of the superintendents and even the rangers. It is to be hoped that a later study can be initiated to record this history.

Nor is it possible to present all the expressions of admiration that have been expressed by visitors to the area. There have been literally thousands of magazine, letter, and newspaper expressions of appreciation, only a few of which are offered here; these by some who could be considered most knowledgeable on the subject. Probably the most sincere tribute which could be offered comes in the form of attendance records. Park personnel report that many visitors from remote points, return time after time and that year after year, attendance records increase. This indicates that the average visitor is pleased and that he tells others as this is the only form of advertising that has been employed.

The conditions at the Hammock in 1979 clearly prove that the promises made at the dedication and the policies outlined by the founders have been faithfully adhered to during the first fifty years. The successes enjoyed by these practices should encourage continued constancy to these precepts.

Sebring Historical Society
June 1979

Copy of the Charter of Tropical Florida Parks
Association. Highlands County, Florida.

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT NINETEENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT. HIGHLANDS
COUNTY, STATE OF FLORIDA

TO THE HONORABLE V. J. BARKER, JUDGE OF THE ABOVE COURT:

We the undersigned desiring to form a Corporation, not for profit, hereby submit to you a proposed charter of said Corporation for your approval in accordance with the laws of the State of Florida.

1st. The name of this Corporation shall be, TROPICAL FLORIDA PARKS ASSOCIATION.

2nd. The general nature of the objects of this Corporation; To own in it's own rights, real estate for the purpose of developing thereon parks; to secure property and preserve any and all kinds of plant, vegetable and animal life thereon; to endow and secure endowments for the perpetual developments, maintenance and care of said parks; to have the right to dedicate said parks as owned by this corporation, for the perpetual use of the public; to buy, sell, mortgage and exchange any and all kinds of real and personal property as might be necessary in developing and carrying out the aims and objects of this corporation.

3rd. The qualifications and manner of the admission of members shall be that any person of good moral reputation shall be qualified to become a member of this Corporation upon the payment of membership dues of \$ 1.00 per year, that the payment of membership dues shall constitute and make the party so paying the same a member of this Corporation.

4th. The term for which this Corporation shall exist shall be perpetual.

5th. The names and residence of the subscribers hereto, are as follows:

| NAME | ADDRESS |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Rex Beach | Sebring, Florida |
| G. S. Donaldson | Avon Park, Florida |
| Francis Guiger | Sebring, Florida |
| G. D. Ordway | Durlington, Vt. |
| Raymond Greene | Sebring, Florida |

6th. The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by the following officers; A President, First Vice-President, Second Vice-President, Third Vice-President, a Board of Directors, consisting of twenty members, five of whom are to be elected each year at the annual stock holders meeting, and a Secretary-Treasurer and an Executive Committee to be appointed by the Board of Directors. All of said officers to be elected at the stock holders meeting of said Corporation which meeting shall be held on the third Monday in February, of each and every year; that twenty members of this Corporation shall be and form a quorum at any stockholders meeting.

7th. The officers who are to manage the affairs of this Corporation until the first election under the charter shall be;

| | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| Rex Beach | President | Chas. H. Thompson | First Vice-president |
| G. F. Gardner | Second Vice-Pres. | Alexander Blair | Third Vice-president |
| G. S. Donaldson | Secretary-Treasurer. | | |

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Rex Beach | Chas. H. Thompson | G. S. Donaldson |
| E. R. Kwiss | F. A. Gulger | H. C. Sebring |
| Gregg Hussey | H. M. Hornsbel | W. L. Phillips |
| D. K. Stabler | E. F. Coe | F. E. Stahwell |
| C. D. Ordway | O. F. Gardner | Melville Dewey |
| F. A. Sebring | Alexander Blair | Margaret Roebing |
| Hazel Ewing | | |

8th. The Board of Directors of this Corporation shall make the By-Laws of said Corporation with the right to alter or rescind the same.

9th. The highest amount of indebtedness or liability to which this Corporation may at any time subject it' self shall be One million Dollars.

10th. The amount in value of the real estate which this Corporation may hold shall be \$1,000,000.00, subject always to the approval of the Circuit Judge, having jurisdiction over this Corporation.

Rex Beach
Subscriber

G. S. Donaldson
Subscriber

C. D. Ordway
Subscriber

Francis A. Gulger
Subscriber

Raymond Greene
Subscriber.

STATE OF FLORIDA }
COUNTY OF HIGHLANDS }

Before me the undersigned authority personally appeared Raymond W. Greene who being by me first duly sworn, makes oath that it is intended in good faith to carry out the purposes and objects set forth in the foregoing proposed charter.

Raymond W. Greene

Sworn and subscribed to before me
this the 25 day of April A.D. 1930.

D.V. Rouse (SEAL)

The foregoing proposed charter being duly presented to me and I, having examined the same, find the same in proper form and for an object authorized under the laws of the State of Florida, and do hereby approve said charter and that the subscribers thereto and their associates and successors are hereby incorporated under the name of Tropical Florida Parks Association, with full approval of the foregoing charter.

Done and ordered in Chambers at Sebring, Highlands County, Florida, this the 25th day of April A.D. 1930.

W. J. Barker
Judge.

BY-LAWS OF HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK, INCORPORATED.

1. Name The name of this corporation shall be Highlands Hammock, Incorporated.
2. Location Its main office shall be at Sebring, County seat of Highlands County, Florida.
3. Year Its fiscal year shall be the calendar year.
4. Object To own and administer Highlands Hammock for the perpetual use of the public as a park for preserving all kinds of plant, vegetable and animal life.
5. Associates Any person or organization wishing to share in the Hammock work, after approval by membership committee may be enrolled by paying to treasurer each year, \$1.00 for an associate; \$5.00 for a contributing associate; \$50.00 for a sustaining associate; \$100.00 for a fellow; \$1000.00 for a patron.
6. Life Associates By a gift to the Hammock of ten times the annual fee for any purpose approved by its trustees, any associate, fellow or patron may become a life associate, fellow or patron exempt from annual payments.
7. Honorary Elections These may be made ~~by~~ only by unanimous vote of trustees.
8. Termination Whenever in their judgment Hammock interests will be promoted by such action the trustees may by unanimous vote and without hearing expunge any name from roll of officers or associates.
9. Trustees Twenty five trustees shall ^{full} have power to control and administer all Hammock property, business and policies, elect their successors and fill all vacancies. Trustees shall ~~have~~ be divided into five classes so that the term of not more than five shall expire each year. All elections shall be by trustees for term of five years or for unexpired term in filling vacancies. No trustee shall receive compensation as such.
10. Officers Trustees shall elect annually a president, one or more vice-presidents, a secretary, a treasurer, and any other desirable officers and an executive board of five. President and secretary must be trustees. One trustee may hold more than one office.
11. President The president besides his usual duties shall be, subject to these by-laws and trustees' rules or votes, executive officer in charge of all Hammock business not otherwise specifically assigned. He shall be a member of the executive board and ex officio of all committees. Subject to instructions by trustees or board, he shall vote any securities standing in the Hammock name.
12. Vice-Presidents Senior vice-president ~~present~~ present shall, in president's absence or incapacity to act, have such of his duties and exercise such of his powers as may be necessary for proper transaction of corporate business. Board may assign to any vice-president special duties, title or supervision of special departments or work. Any vice-president who is not also a trustee shall have a seat and voice but no vote at meetings of trustees.
13. Secretary The secretary shall send all notices and keep accurate records of all meetings of trustees, executive board and associates. He shall have custody of seal, records and all personal property not otherwise specifically assigned. With president he shall execute all instruments given under Hammock seal, including instructions as to voting securities standing in Hammock name. He shall keep the roll of associates and solicit desirable candidates to join. If any member is present at only a part of

any meeting its minutes shall show when he entered and left (if before adjournment) insert of () Enclosing his initials with 'in' or 'out'.

14. Treasurer The treasurer, under direction of executive board shall have custody of money, securities and accounts. He shall deposit in Hammock name, in banks designated by the board, all corporation money received, and shall keep full and accurate accounts open always to trustees' inspection. He may negotiate such notes and other evidences of debts in the Hammock name as its executive board has authorized. Except by specific vote or general rule of the trustees or board he shall pay no money and incur no liability for the Hammock.

15. Executive Board In intervals between trustees' meetings this board may by not less than three trustee votes transact such Hammock business as trustees may authorize by their rules or by special vote and may by affirmative vote of four members act for the full board of trustees on any matter when all four members vote that such prompt action will best serve Hammock interests. This board may make for itself any rules not inconsistent with law. These by-laws or trustees rules or votes and such rules shall be reported to next trustees' meeting and shall have full force of by-laws until altered by trustees' vote. This board may also appoint any other needed officers, Committees or employees. ~~Three shall be a quorum~~ Three shall be a quorum but it shall require the approval of four to validate any action but if one or two members are absent their approval may be filed in writing.

16. Absent directors Within forty-eight hours after any vote by trustees an attested copy of full minutes shall be mailed to each trustee not present at the meeting and if he files with the secretary within 10 days an objection to any action he shall be recorded as disapproving that action. If he files his written approval it shall be counted the same as if he had been present and voted in person. If no disapproval is filed within ten days the action of a legal quorum shall stand as if approved by absent trustees.

17. Committees Board shall appoint finance and membership committees and the Chairman of any committee may appoint added members who need not be trustees.

18. Acting officers In absence of any officer an acting officer appointed by executive board (and who need not be a trustee) shall have his powers and duties, but only during his absence.

19. Meetings The annual meeting shall be at Sebring the 3rd Monday of each February unless board notifies all trustees at least five days in advance of a different time and place. Special meetings may be called by the executive board as needed, on 5 days notice or without notice on waiver of ten trustees. Ten shall be a quorum.

20. Seal This shall be circular with the words Highlands Hammock on circumference, and 'Inc. 1930' in center.

21. Checks and notes Checks, notes and other negotiable instruments shall be signed by treasurer and countersigned by president.

21A. Bank accounts Board may provide subsidiary bank accounts against which checks may be drawn with or without countersignatures, by such persons and for such amounts and purposes as Board has authorized.

22. Authority for obligations; No officer or agent may incur any obligation or sign any papers binding on this corporation unless clearly authorized by specific vote or general rule of Board.

14
23. Annual budget Each December Board shall make a budget of expenditures for each department. Each officer or department head shall limit his expenses for the year to this amount. There shall be no outgo beyond this limit until board amends budget.

24. Votes in writing. Executive board shall on request of two members submit by mail to all trustees any questions to be voted on in writing, and such written votes shall have the same force as if cast at a regular meeting provided that 4/5 of all votes received are affirmative. Executive board may also vote by mail provided four votes are affirmative.

25. Amendments. The charter or these by-laws may be amended by 4/5 vote of executive board ratified by 4/5 vote of trustees provided the proposed change in exact form adopted has been submitted with notice of meeting but no by-laws or rules requiring more than majority votes for any action shall be suspended, altered or repealed by a smaller vote than is required for such action.

E. N. Durrance, Secretary.

On March 21, 1932, Section 9 was amended to provide 30 trustees and on February 18, 1935 the same section was again amended to provide 45 trustees.

REX BEACH
SEBRING, FLORIDA

May 28th, 1951

Mr. C. N. Thompson,
The Inn,
Buck Hill Falls, Pa.

Dear Mr. Thompson:-

I understand Mr. A. C. Alvster has written you on behalf of the Board of Trustees of Highlands Hammock urging you and your associates to make as liberal a subscription as possible towards maintaining the Park during the balance of this year.

Steps have been taken to introduce a bill at this session of the State Legislature enabling either the State or County to take over the Park and presumably it will be successful. The State Forestry Department is keenly interested in the project and would like to use the Hammock as a nucleus for a comprehensive reforestation plan which would utilize not only the land we own outside of the Hammock property but also certain adjoining cut over lands. In the meantime, however, the Park must be maintained. Expenditures have been cut to the minimum and Mr. Roebling has very generously offered to assume approximately one half of the expense. A local committee is energetically at work raising funds through small subscriptions but times are as hard here as elsewhere and we will need as much outside assistance as we can get. A number of us have individually subscribed and I think you and your associates appreciate as keenly as we do the value of carrying on until such time as the Park maintenance can be taken over by the State or County and the burden distributed in the form of a small tax millage.

Your subscription need not be paid all at one time, it may be distributed over the next several months, but the Committee must know approximately what it can count upon.

Please be as liberal as possible and be assured that we who are here are making a determined effort to handle this undertaking as economically as possible.

With kindest regards,

Sincerely yours,

Rex Beach

RB:F

CHARLES N. THOMPSON
President

ALBERT L. ELLINGE
Vice President

RAYMOND W. GREENE
Secretary

GENESE W. ELLINGE
Treasurer



HARDER HALL
ON LAKE JACKSON
Sabring - Florida

ELTINGE BROTHERS
Managers

March 21, 1932.

Dear Mr. Thompson:-

I must write in confidence tonight but we spent a whole afternoon today on Highlands Hammock in Trustee session.

A million dollar corporation, headed by a Florida Lumberman, who has been for sometime chairman of the beautification committee of the state Chamber of Commerce, is interested in employing Olmstead Brothers and spending several hundred thousand dollars in and about Highlands Hammock in developing the most wonderful flower gardens that can be developed in Florida. It means leasing of the property with reservations. The corporation would charge for entering. It would spend much money to get people here. The whole thing would depend on what attitude the Roeblings took. It is possible, according to Mr. Blair who sees the possibilities, that Mr. Roebling will allow this to be done, the income from present investment going to some worth while institution here.

Dr. Dewey had this in mind a year ago. But it died out and now new interest is being taken.

Just wanted you to know that the old hall is rolling our way and the future of Harder Hall looks better all the time. Please don't mention this until you hear again.

Hope everything is getting on nicely. Best to you and all.

A year ago, 18th we had 15 and 13 on the 19th. This year on the 18th we had 38, then 37, then 42 and to night 36.

Sincerely,

Ray

CHARLES H. THOMPSON
President

ALFRED L. ELTINGE
Vice President

RAYMOND W. GREENE
Secretary

FRANK O. ELTINGE
Treasurer



HARDER HALL
ON LAKE JACKSON
Sebring - Florida

ELTINGE BROTHERS
Managers

March 26, 1932

Mr. Charles F. Thompson
The Inn
Duck Hill Falls
Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Thompson:

I have your letter of the 23rd. We, too, are very sorry you have not found it possible to come to Florida this winter. I am sure you would have enjoyed the delightful weather this season, and we would have liked to have had you meet some of the new people who have been here, as well as greeted again the old guests. Our guests have been very outspoken in their words of commendation of our management, which of course is very gratifying. I am glad that favorable reports have filtered back to you.

I am somewhat concerned about the tax situation and wish that some way might be found to clear this up. I am enclosing a memorandum of the amounts due at the present time. I am also writing Mr. Wilson. Possibly the Philadelphia National Bank might be willing to have some of the cash which they hold used in this way.

Mr. Dunby arrived last Friday on the 3 P.M. train and left again at midnight. He seemed very much impressed with Harder Hall. Before coming here he had interviewed several applicants for the management of Ponce de Leon Inn, and while he did not say so directly as the matter was going to be decided at a meeting to be held yesterday, the inference was he would recommend me for the position. The whole matter came up so unexpectedly, and there being a number of reasons making it difficult for me to decide, I wired him yesterday morning to eliminate me from their consideration. I realize the advantage of being connected with their organization, and have a feeling that the matter may come up again. I am very glad to know your attitude as that was one of the reservations I had.

As soon as possible next week I will send you a tentative statement of our season's business which I feel will be quite gratifying to you.

Trusting you are having a satisfactory number of guests at The Inn for the Easter vacation period, and with kind regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Alfred L. Eltinge

WVE/z
encl.

SUMMER SEASON: MONMOUNOCK INN, CALDWELL, N. J.

COPY

May 7th, 1932

Mr. John A. Roebling,
Bernardsville,
New Jersey

Dear Mr. Roebling:

At a recent meeting of the Trustees of Highlands Hammock, the Board requested either Dr. Davison or me to go to New Jersey and present to you in person the situation which has arisen in connection with the Hammock.

Dr. Davison finds it impossible to leave here and I cannot get away until some time in June. Meanwhile the nature of our perplexity will not permit of delay, hence it devolves upon me to write you.

Recently the Highlands Hammock Board of Trustees was enlarged to include representative citizens from all parts of the County, one purpose of that action being to enlist their active support of a proposal for the County to take over and maintain the Park. Our financial situation made it imperative to submit that proposal to a vote as quickly as possible.

At that Trustees meeting Mr. J. Ray Arnold of Groveland, Florida, appeared before the Board with an offer to take over the property, to further develop and beautify it and to operate it along the lines of the privately owned horticultural gardens at Charleston and elsewhere.

He came into the picture unsolicited; as a responsible citizen and head of the Beautification Committee of the State Chamber of Commerce his proposal warranted attention and a committee consisting of Mr. Coachman, Mr. Blair, Mr. Gilbert Freeman, editor of one of our County papers, Mayor Covington of Avon Park, Dr. Davison and myself, was appointed to reduce his proposal to such a concrete form that the Board could intelligently consider it.

When finally worked out it was so at variance with the ideas we all held regarding the Park that nobody would venture to approve of it without first consulting you. In the hope that Dr. Davison or I could discuss it with you, the Trustees urged either or both of us to go North in company with Mr. Blair.

In view of the general hullabaloo about high taxes and the pledges of every local candidate to immediately reduce them, there is a strong feeling among the Trustees that the proposal for the County to take over the Hammock and levy an additional millage for maintenance should rest until November or possibly until even a later date.

Let me say here that the intelligent people of Highlands County deeply appreciate your generosity and public spirit as evidenced not only in your financing of this Park development but also in so many other directions. They are happy to consider you a neighbor and proud of Highlands Hammock; they intend to do their utmost to preserve it, in fact many who are unable to contribute money have volunteered their labor if it can be utilized.

Mr. John A. Roebling #2 5-7-32

However, taxes are high, money is unbelievably scarce, a certain class of voters are not at all interested in civic betterment of any sort, and the majority of our Board are doubtful whether any proposal to increase taxation, even to the extent of two mills, would carry at this time. Furthermore, some of them wonder if it is wise to risk making the park a political plaything for public officials either now or at any other time.

The problem confronting us therefore is whether to seriously consider Mr. Arnold's proposal, or if we dismiss it, how to provide for adequate maintenance of the Park either indefinitely or until such a time as the County can or will assume that burden.

It appears impossible at present to raise anything like enough money in this community by voluntary subscription to adequately care for that property and yet none of the Trustees feel at liberty to entertain the Arnold offer if it is displeasing to you.

Undoubtedly it presents one way of safely maintaining the property and preserving it for all time. Mr. Arnold would add to its beauty and develop its resources, his plans are ambitious and under his proposed contract he would bind himself to expend upon it a minimum of \$150,000 plus taxes.

I must repeat that none of us feels at liberty to argue for or against his proposal without some expression of opinion from you. Will you therefore weigh that proposal, and indicate to us whether you approve or disapprove of it? In the latter event you may be sure that the Trustees will dismiss it from further consideration.

In view of your splendid generosity I share their reluctance in asking you either for advice or for further assistance but the situation is not of our making and our deep sense of obligation stops us from seriously considering Mr. Arnold's deal without first submitting it to you.

Due to the sudden illness of Mrs. Beach I could not attend the last meeting when the Arnold proposal was finally put before the Board but I submitted a statement which was read. A copy is enclosed in case you care to read it. Inasmuch as the Board decided to ask your advice at once — before rather than after a general meeting of the members — I assume the statement pretty well reflects their feelings.

May I take this occasion to express my personal appreciation of your generosity and your public spirit as manifested by your development of this natural beauty spot. It is a pleasure and a privilege to assist in a small way by devoting what time and means I have in promoting its welfare.

With all good wishes, and apologies for the length of this letter, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Encl.
RB : F

Ladies and Gentlemen:-

As I see it we have three alternatives to choose from:

1. TheArnold proposition.
2. County ownership and maintenance.
3. Continued maintenance by this Association as in the past.

If we accept the Arnold offer he will immediately assume the burden of upkeep. The park will be developed, it will be beautified and it will be advertised. That much your committee has undertaken to safeguard in shaping the deed and contract you are considering. Failure to perform will involve a reversion of the title without undue delay or expense on our part.

The second alternative, County ownership and maintenance, involves submitting the proposal to the voters of the County. The earliest that can be done is next November. The outcome, I take it, is uncertain. In any event this course will necessitate the continued upkeep of the park by us until such time as the County can take it over provided the vote carries.

Mr. Blair estimates we will require approximately \$5,000 to maintain the park for the balance of this year. Of that amount he offers to supply \$3,000 if we will raise the rest. There is no money in the treasury, we owe something, but we have pledges amounting to about \$1,200. Presumably most of that is collectible which would leave another thousand, perhaps more, to be found.

The third alternative will present itself in case the voters decline to accept the park and provide for its maintenance by an increased taxmillage. That would leave the responsibility up to us for an indefinite time. Under neither of these last two alternatives is it likely that the property can be further developed or beautified for some years without unexpected aid.

Doubtless we can economize by calling for volunteer labor to keep up the park roads and work of that character. Our citizens may be reluctant to increase their taxburdens but they have always stood ready to contribute lavishly of their time and their labor in support of every public betterment.

Nevertheless certain monies would have to be provided and here again Mr. Blair has volunteered his good offices. He offers to appeal to Mr. Roebling for further assistance, if and when it becomes necessary. In view of Mr. Roebling's unparalleled generosity in the past it is likely that he will respond as freely as he is able provided we prove that we have

done and are doing our best. We could neither ask nor permit him to carry the entire burden; our full share must be borne by us.

This pretty well sums up the situation as I see it.

Against the Arnold proposal it has been argued that it is poor business for us to surrender a valuable property for no consideration and without some tangible guarantee that the grantee will faithfully carry out his undertaking. It may be a one-sided deal. Most deals nowadays are one-sided for this is a "buyers market." Large bank accounts are scarce and rich men are all but extinct.

Mr. Arnold informed us at the start that his project was commercial: that he expected to make money out of it. He also argued that this was the best and the surest way in which Highlands County could reap substantial benefit from its Hammock. Quite probably his plan is in a promotional stage and he runs some risk of a costly failure. He may spend considerable money on the park and be forced to let go of it. He is therefore entitled to any profits he can make. In considering his proposal it should be borne in mind that his plan, if successful, will involve the expenditure of more money than the amount guaranteed in the contract. All figures therein are bottom figures, not top figures.

Assuming that he takes over the park and carries out his plans of beautification, will the Hammock become more valuable to the citizens of this County than it is or than it would be if the County takes it over or if the Association continues to maintain it?

Are privately operated projects such as the gardens near Charleston real assets to their localities?

Is the Hammock in its natural beauty as appealing, as valuable, or can it be made as famous as if it were developed and added to?

Are we willing and able to shoulder, either in full or in part, the burden of adequately maintaining it either by taxation or by voluntary subscription? And if we shoulder it will we be able to carry it on?

These are some of the questions you must answer, and there is still another.

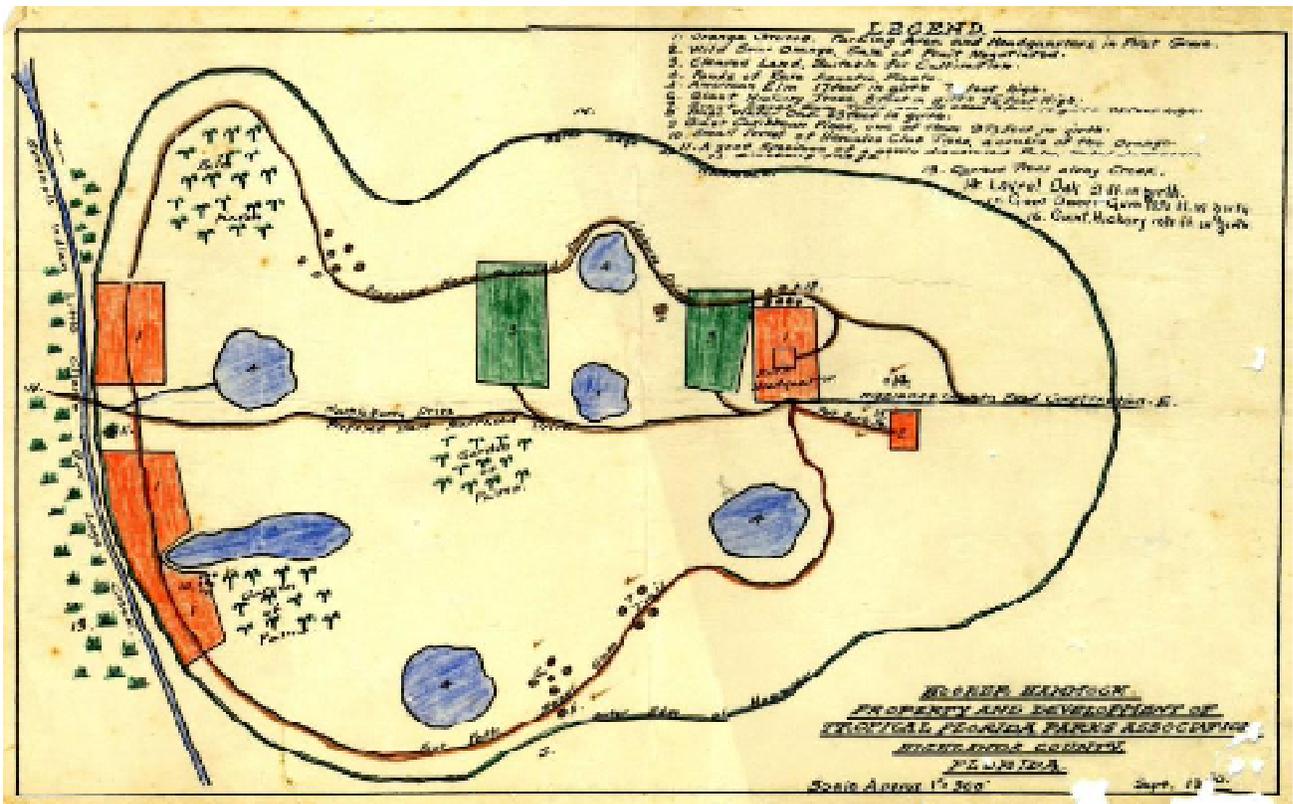
Are we, as trustees or as an association, morally estopped from disposing of this property along the lines under discussion? There appears to be no doubt of our legal right to act according to our best judgment, but I, for one, am not ready to act merely upon that legal right. I feel the moral obligation to proceed, if possible, according to the wishes of the man whose generosity, whose sentimental interest and whose public spirit is responsible for Highlands Hammock.

Let us say frankly that under present conditions I believe the interest of State and County and the future of Highlands Hammock itself will be best served if the park is developed along the lines of the Arnold proposal. I have little faith in public ownership, or in political administration of anything other than political business.

Nevertheless, I cannot bring myself to support any action by this board which would displease Mr. Roebing or which would lead him to infer that we are unappreciated of his generosity or insensible to his desires.

If you decide to reject the Arnold proposal that settles it. If you decide to recommend to the membership its acceptance, I feel that the sentiment of the trustees and the members, provided they agree, should be made known to Mr. Roebing and he should be asked for an expression of his wishes. Presumably his opinion may be influenced somewhat by an honest statement of the situation here and an explanation of our perplexities.

If he is unwilling to express his wishes, then it should be our duty to act as the majority considers best.



Hooker Hammock Map

cir. Sept. 1930



Hickory Trail Catwalk

REX BEACH
SEBRING, FLORIDA

May 18th, 1932

Mr. Ray Greene,
Buck Hill Falls Company,
Buck Hill Falls, Pa.

Dear Ray:-

I read with interest your letter of May 12th and am returning herewith the check endorsed by me as Chairman of the Board of Highlands Hammock as per your request. Before you do anything with the check or go farther in negotiating for the purchase of additional lands to be included in the Hammock you must await the outcome of our negotiations with Mr. Arnold.

The situation is this. At the last meeting of the Hammock Board which I could not attend due to Mrs. Beach's sudden illness, the Arnold proposition was discussed and it was resolved by the Board to put that proposal before Mr. Roebling and get an expression of opinion from him before taking any definite action at this end. The Board hoped that either Dr. Davison or I could go North and explain in person to Mr. Roebling exactly what the situation is here. Neither of us could get away and Mr. Roebling is travelling. On the request of Dr. Davison and Mr. Coachman I wrote Mr. Roebling fully, not alone about the Arnold proposal and what it involved but also I tried to make plain our situation here as regards further efforts towards raising money for park maintenance. For your information I am enclosing copy of that letter, also copy of some remarks which I dictated and which were read at the Trustees' meeting. Presumably I will receive an answer to my letter upon Mr. Roebling's return. Meanwhile, we are marking time, here.

Now then about this check of Mrs. Ewing's. You will of course agree that if the Arnold proposal is accepted Mrs. Ewing's money should not be used to purchase this or any other lands and if it was donated with that purpose and no other in mind it should of course be returned to her.

If, on the other hand, Mr. Roebling opposes the Arnold proposition there is still a grave question in my mind whether the Highlands Hammock Association should accept this additional land. Ownership of the tract is not essential to the Hammock and it strikes me that the Association by accepting it would merely be adding to its burden of maintenance which is already unbearably vexatious.

If we carry on in the future as we have in the past we will not need more land but more money and if Mrs. Ewing is sincerely interested in the project could you not prevail upon her to allow her contribution to be applied towards that necessary upkeep?

Personally I hope that Mr. Roebling will feel that the best thing for the Hammock itself and for the State and County is for Arnold to acquire it under the plan drafted by his and our attorneys. That opinion I feel sure is shared by most of our Trustees but none of us is willing to make a move which would displease the man who has so generously developed the Park and made it accessible. If he wishes us to carry on as best we can, we shall do so. Until we hear from him and are able to either accept or reject the Arnold deal you should hold Mrs. Ewing's contribution intact. To spend a dollar of her money at present would be

REX BEACH
SEMINOLE, FLORIDA

Mr. Ray Greene #2 5-18-32

unwise to say the least. We have no right to touch it.

Thanks for the information about the addition to our hunting preserve.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely yours

Rex Beach

Encl.

RB:F



Hammock Auditorium (now Museum)

cir.1960's



September 2008

Sebring, Florida
April 12, 1933

To All Trustees of Highlands Hammock:

March 15—18, three pageants of Florida history and two Indian ceremonies were staged at the Hammock. Twenty one Seminoles were here from March 6th to March 20th.

During the stay of the Indians more than 250 delegates of the Florida Federated Women's Clubs meeting at Avon Park attended one of the pageants and were delighted with the Hammock. Much favorable publicity should come from this visit.

State wide publicity was given to accounts of pageants and ceremonies. I have 235 inches clipped but items sent to the other papers I was not able to clip. County School children admitted free to one pageant.

Seven Indian houses are now at the Camp and should last five years and used for many other purposes.

The Seminole Indians Association was reorganized which should mean considerable to the welfare of the Indians.

An effort was started to have W. Stanley Hanson named Indian Agent for the Seminoles.

Mrs. Thomas A. Edison visited and was present for one of the ceremonies and was so delighted with the Hammock that she wishes to come in the future with friends.

Suggestion made for the organization of a Pageant Association to stage important events in Florida history at the Hammock annually.

Our expenses were \$760.61. We estimated \$750.00. Our income from all sources was \$363.70 and we have to raise \$296.91 to balance. Had not the Bark holiday come at that time we would have been able to accomplish much more in advanced sales as well as sales at the gate.

We now ask each Trustee to contribute generously to this deficit believing it was all well worth while. Please make check payable to Indian Pageant Committee.

Trusting we may have your cooperation, we remain,

Indian Pageant Committee,

Col. F. N. K. Bailey,
Allen Altvater,
Joe Hawkins,
Mayor Covington,
Ray Greene.

December 8, 1934.

The Honorable Fred S. Elliott,
Secretary, The Internal Improvement
Board,
Tallahassee, Florida.

Dear Mr. Elliott:

Highlands Hammock - Highlands
County, Florida.

I am today writing to Governor Shultz indicating that all work originally contemplated at Highlands Hammock, Florida, which has been undertaken on behalf of my client, Mr. John A. Roebling, has now been completed so that the project may be considered as in readiness for operation as a forest park, should the State desire to acquire it.

State Forester, Mr. Harry Lee Baker, and some of the members of the State Board of Forestry after a recent visit to the Hammock expressed a keen interest in this property and have given favorable consideration to its acquisition by the State upon the condition that it be conveyed in a manner acceptable to the Governor and the officials of the State and without an undue burden for maintenance.

The attached key map shows some of the prominent features in the Hammock and the reverse side describes briefly the ownership which is vested in the Trustees of Highlands Hammock, Inc., and some of the steps which have been taken in opening it up and providing for its protection. In all to date over \$350,000.00 has been expended by the Roebling family for this purpose.

It is now proposed by Mr. Roebling that if the State is willing to take this over that he will contribute a sum of money which is approximately equal to one-half of the estimated maintenance cost for the next five or six years, contingent upon the State assuming responsibility and providing by appropriation the requisite amount to insure the carrying out of a sound policy for the future preservation of this valuable natural beauty spot.

I am sending to Colonel J. M. Lee colored photographs of Highlands Hammock showing some of the features of interest

The Honorable Fred C. Elliott -2-

December 8, 1934.

and would like you to take the opportunity to see these views as soon as may be convenient. I am sending you the botanical key or booklet descriptive of the plant life.

This Hancock property ties into the tract which was conveyed to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Board on April 10, 1934, for development as a botanical garden and arboretum.

An invitation has been extended to Governor Sholtz to give early consideration to the question of the State taking over this forest park, and it is earnestly hoped that you will be able to accompany the Governor in making the trip to Highlands County. I must report to Mr. Roebbing early in January on the response of the State Administration in order that he may determine what provision he is willing to make, as his share of its future maintenance, before finally relinquishing his responsibility.

My appointment with Mr. Roebbing is definitely fixed for early in January and I, therefore, would ask you to treat this matter with some degree of urgency in order that I may report to him at the appointed time which is the only opportunity I shall have of conferring with him before early summer.

Should there be any other information which you would like me to furnish concerning this proposal which you cannot obtain direct from Mr. Harry Lee Baker, please do not hesitate to advise me since it is my desire to inform you as fully as possible regarding this project.

With best wishes.

Respectfully yours,

AB/B
Encls.

A. Blair

MEMBER
AMERICAN
A.S.E.

ALEXANDER BLAIR
CIVIL AND CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
WESTFIELD, N. J. AND LAKE PLACID, FLORIDA

REGISTERED ENGINEER
NEW JERSEY
FLORIDA

LAKE PLACID, FLORIDA

December 11, 1934.

Mr. A. C. Altvater,
Supt., Camp P-72,
Old Town, Fla.

Dear Allen:

I do not know if you have heard that the Trustees of Highlands Hammock are taking steps for the turning over of the Hammock to the State as a state forest park, the intention being to place the property for administration in the hands of the State Forestry Board. From the enclosed copy of letter written to Mr. Elliott you will get some of the essential details of the steps that are being taken and you will see that we are seeking to have the Governor and the members of his Cabinet visit the Hammock in the immediate future, and also asking them to recognize the desirability of approving a small appropriation to be voted by the Legislature for this purpose.

I have personally written the Governor and each one of the Cabinet members a letter somewhat similar to the enclosed. At the same time Dr. Davison has extended an invitation on behalf of the Trustees of the Hammock and Senator Murphy and Representative Jack Sims are adding their invitation to ours.

My position, as Mr. Roebling's representative, is briefly as follows:

Recently Mr. Roebling requested me to notify the Board of Trustees that his interest in the Hammock would terminate on January 15th. That he was willing to place in their hands a sum of approximately \$20,000.00 for the future maintenance of the Hammock, providing he was assured that the problem would be satisfactorily handled. I am to report back to him before securing these funds and at this time, which will be early in January, I hope to report favorably but I shall have no further opportunity of seeing him until the summer.

I believe that if I can report that a satisfactory response has been received from all the State officials, including the Governor and his Cabinet, that I can not only secure the amount mentioned but a slightly larger amount,

Mr. A. C. Alvater

-2-

December 11, 1934.

perhaps \$25,000.00, which, according to the budget forecast prepared by Mr. Baker and myself, would more nearly represent one-half of the estimated cost for a period of five or six years. The assumption of this amount would be, in Mr. Baker's opinion, sufficient stimulus to the Governor and his staff as well as to our Legislature to justify the State's acceptance of the Hamock.

The picture I want to convey is this:

If on my reporting to Mr. Roebbing in a few weeks I can show a definitely favorable response, I can secure sufficient money to make the conveyance a practicable thing from all points of view. If I am to convey an unsatisfactory or unfavorable response it endangers even the securing of a lesser amount.

It, therefore, seems desirable that we should all concentrate our efforts at this time on making the consideration of this matter so successful that the Governor and his Cabinet will respond favorably.

I am giving you these facts believing that possibly you may see fit to write a few lines stressing the importance of the matter and also indicating the reason for the degree of urgency in the matter, ~~to the Governor.~~

I hope that all is going well with you and that you are feeling much better now that the colder weather is here. I was sorry not to be able to listen to you on the radio but I heard from Neil that your talk was one of the finest he ever listened to (personally I think this is only flattery so don't let it unduly swell your head!).

Everyone here sends very kindest regards and we are hoping to see you some day soon.

Sincerely yours,

AE/R
Encl.

Alex. Star

Highlands Hammock, Inc.

Highlands County

Sebring, Florida

April 26, 1935.

Mr. A. C. Altwater,
Sebring, Florida.

Dear Mr. Altwater:

It is believed that a brief statement reviewing the main facts of acquisition and the present status of Highlands Hammock will be very helpful at this time to all of the Trustees, whether newly elected to the Board or not.

"Hooker Hammock", as it was known in 1930, was acquired by the Trustees by purchase from the owners, with funds raised by private subscription and by gifts of land. Although it was never the property of the Roebeling family and, since its acquisition, was always owned by the Trustees of Highlands Hammock, Inc., it has been made accessible to the public and protected by conservation features with moneys given by John A. Roebeling. This conservation work is now completed at a cost of over \$320,000.00. The Trustees have now offered Highlands Hammock to the State as a State Forest Park.

On February 15, the Governor and his Cabinet visited the Hammock and were very much impressed with its natural beauty and the measures which have been completed for its preservation. Following upon this inspection tour, the Budget Commission recommended an appropriation of \$8,000.00 in the state budget under the item "State forests", thereby enabling the State to share in the maintenance cost of the project. By this action it is to be inferred that the Governor and his Cabinet are in sympathy with the plan which has been outlined for the maintenance of the Hammock. According to this plan, moneys contributed by John A. Roebeling to the Highlands Hammock trustees, amounting to \$25,000.00, will be matched by a like sum appropriated by the State, the expenditure of which is to be spread over a period of about six years. The amount requisite for the State's appropriation is to start small and is gradually to increase, while the amount being taken from the Roebeling funds held in trust by Highlands Hammock, Inc., starts with a larger annual contribution, which gradually decreases.

Your acceptance of Trusteeship indicated your keen interest in the Hammock and approval of the steps outlined above for the conveyance of Highlands Hammock to the State of Florida, which we understand is to be consummated upon the recommendation of the Florida Board of Forestry after passage of the appropriation bill by the legislature.

Harry Lee Baker, State Forester, advises us that in the item "State forests" is included not only the moneys for the Highlands Hammock State Park but also it provides for other state Parks which have been fostered recently by the Florida Forest Service. Mr. Baker's words are quoted in part as follows:

"I regard it as important that the Senators and Representatives for Highlands, Hardee, DeSoto, Manatee, Sarasota, Hillsborough, Clay, Putnam, Suwannee, Hamilton, Madison, Lafayette, Taylor and Dixie Counties be informed concerning the situation in order that they may jointly recommend to the appropriation committees that this item of \$8,000.00 be included in the Senate and House appropriation bills.

The Representatives and Senators in these counties should be approached from the standpoint of a State park system, each, of course, being interested in the particular project of his own county. I refer to maintenance funds required for the Myakka, Highlands Hammock, Hillsboro, Gold Head Branch, and Suwannee River state forest parks. All but the last mentioned project have been established, or will be established in the near future. Sentiment is developing rapidly at Live Oak in favor of the Suwannee River State Forest Park and an FERA crew is making a survey. The project has been approved by the Florida Board of Forestry.

I am under the impression that there are a number of individuals sufficiently interested in the parks mentioned above to endorse any program that might be adopted. I am under the impression that the old slogan 'In unity there is strength' will apply with reference to legislation and appropriations regarding State forest parks and particularly to the \$8,000.00 item. We would not need much of the \$8,000.00 to maintain certain parks during the next biennium so long as the CCC camps were located on them. Possibly the Florida Board of Forestry would not need \$2,000.00 to \$3,000.00 for the Highlands Hammock forest park and the balance would be used either to maintain the other parks or to finance a Branch of Parks with this Department."

At this time you can render very effective aid by speaking to your Representatives in the legislature, interesting them in this project and securing their support of the appropriation, as recommended by Mr. Baker.

It is a pleasure at this time to reassure those Trustees who have served on our Board during the past years, of our appreciation of their willingness to share in the conservation of this beautiful forest, which it is desirable to retain, as nearly as possible, in its natural state, undisturbed by planting or improvements and serving as a sanctuary for wild animal life.

We hope that you will broaden the interest in this park by speaking of it to your friends and extending to them an invitation to visit it and to explore the beautiful features it contains.

If you will advise the Secretary in advance of any prospective guests, it can be arranged to have the watchman at their service to show the many interesting spots which are not readily visible and can be seen only in this special manner.

Yours very truly,

William A. Dawson
President.

R. Baker
Chairman of the Board.

RESUME OF HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK HISTORY
(WITH BOTANICAL GARDEN AND ARBORETUM DEVELOPMENTS)
FOR PRESENTATION AT MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF
EMERGENCY CONSERVATION WORK AND NATIONAL PARK SERVICE OFFICIALS

By Alexander Blair March 30, 1936.

In this brief resume of the Hammock history no attempt is made to do justice to all that has transpired or to mention by name those who have done so much, in various ways, for the Hammock before it reached the present stage of its development.

About six years ago a small group of men from Avon Park and Sebring organized the Tropical Florida Parks Association with the purpose of acquiring "Hooker Hammock" (as it was then called) which was privately owned, and of preserving it as a natural forest for the benefit of the public. By a curious coincidence Mrs. Margaret Shippen Roebing (Mrs. John A. Roebing) was taking the only airplane trip she had ever made, with her son Mr. Donald Roebing, and saw the luxuriant vegetation of the Hammock, while flying above it, en route to Sebring, and at that time, conceived the idea that the Hammock should be conserved, without knowledge of what already had been started. When invited by the Tropical Florida Parks Association, which was then soliciting funds, to become one of the subscribers she was, therefore, quite ready to cooperate and offered a donation which was adequate to purchase the greater part of the land (some of the lands being offered as a gift by their owners). This enabled the other subscriptions raised, amounting to nearly \$ 10,000.00, to be used during the first two years for the expenses of a curator and a small maintenance force.

Owing to the financial stress existing it was soon obvious that the Trustees of the Tropical Florida Parks Association could not raise sufficient funds to carry out the necessary work in opening up the Hammock, nor to maintain it. At this point, Mr. and Mrs. John A. Roebing volunteered their assistance. They made funds available as required, for opening up and making accessible the important points of interest in the Hammock proper, by the construction of roads and trails. (By the Hammock proper, wherever the term is used in this report, is meant the 500 acres lying within the heart of the Hammock property, comprising typical Hammock growth). They made available funds which, in cooperation with those furnished by the County Commissioners, resulted in a paved road being constructed by the Commissioners from Lake Jackson up to the Hammock property, on the right-of-way existing (which at that time was laid out through the center of the Hammock). Recognizing that such a road, if carried straight through, would be a violation of the spirit of the Hammock it was necessary to build this on a new right-of-way around the north edge of the Hammock proper to the northwest corner of the property at the Hardee County line.

Since Mr. and Mrs. Roebling had been so greatly impressed during their trips through Florida by the havoc and destruction to vegetation wrought by forest fires they provided funds for the protection of the Hammock from outside woods fires by means of firebreaks around an area of approximately 1,300 acres (that is, 4 half sections) which was then enclosed by a wire and concrete post fence built to prevent damage due to cattle, hogs, etc. They made possible the further protection against fire and the safeguarding of the plant life by means of a water control system, which was designed to prevent damage due to erosion during storm periods, and in times of drought was to furnish a supply of water to the interior pond area that would otherwise have been dry during the winter season, infinite care being taken to avoid disturbing ground water conditions so that no plant life would be injuriously affected thereby.

This water control system included the building of a main dam in Charlie Bowlegs Creek at the north line of the Hammock and also a number of smaller secondary dams in the tributary drainage ditch, to break the continuity of flow in order to prevent erosion of the bottom and banks of the ditches. It also necessitated piping a stream of water into the Hammock proper from a constantly flowing stream in the higher lands to the east (now in Botanical Garden and Arboretum property) sufficient to allow for normal evaporation loss from the ponds in the dry season. In all of this water control work there has been a limited amount of money available, necessitating great economy and even severity in design in such features as secondary dams and pipe lines. Limited funds also governed the work which was done on the County Road which it is now recognized should, in certain areas, ultimately be vacated and rerouted completely around the property so as to cut off through-traffic, which may be detrimental to the best interests of such a natural forest park. All work in the Hammock was done with a limited number of men over a period of about five years, serving as a project that would assist the County and the State in dealing with the unemployment problems, but without financial aid from any governmental sources.

All construction work in the Hammock was done with a view to disturbing as little as possible the natural wild beauty of the plant life; man-made improvements were introduced only where essential and with a view to harmonizing with their natural surroundings. The principle was established by members of the Roebling family that nothing exotic should be introduced into the Hammock proper (which was complete in itself) also that no structure be erected within it which would conflict with its natural beauty, and that the Hammock remain always as a preserve for wild animal life.

Believing that the name "Hooker Hammock" did not carry a true significance, the Trustees, after the death of Mrs. Margaret Shippen Roebling and desiring to comply with her wishes that the Hammock be renamed "Highlands" reorganized in February,

1932, under the name of Highlands Hammock, Inc. Some months after Mrs. Roebling died the Trustees on March 15, 1931, held a service dedicating Highlands Hammock to the public. A bronze tablet was placed by the Trustees on a rock which now stands under one of the finest oak trees, as a fitting tribute to her memory. This tree was one of the three trees restored by tree surgery by Mr. Donald Roebling in memory of his mother.

During the carrying out of this program of gradual development the State Forester, after several visits, became keenly interested and conceived the idea that Highlands Hammock could fittingly be made the nucleus of a State Park. Believing that a State Park might properly incorporate other features than those found in the Hammock, the State Forester, with others, created enthusiasm in the formation of a Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association, and aroused the interest of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs to sponsor such a project in property adjacent to and closely tying in to Highlands Hammock. This Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association was organized in April, 1934, chiefly under the direction of certain members of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs and by certain Trustees of Highlands Hammock, Inc., with technical cooperation from noted botanists, landscape architects and others interested.

Consultation with Mr. Frederick Law Olmsted resulted in the evolution of the idea for its development by the technical staff of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association, and all these individuals and the groups named succeeded in securing Federal cooperation in this scheme through Emergency Conservation Work under the National Park Service.

The property selected as the nucleus of the Botanical Garden and Arboretum was then owned by Highlands Hammock, Inc., and was a section of land lying east of and adjacent to the Hammock. This was immediately deeded to the State of Florida in the name of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund. By the suggestion of Mr. Olmsted and at the request of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association, Highlands Hammock, Inc., deeded a further piece of property to the State for Botanical Garden and Arboretum purposes, consisting of a tongue shaped strip of land which at that time lay inside the fenced area of Highlands Hammock, Inc., bounded on the west by Charlie Bowlegs Creek, on the south by the new road which was known as the County Road and on the north and east by the Highlands Hammock fence. A CCC Camp began work on this Botanical Garden and Arboretum project under the direction of ECW and the State Forester in June, 1934.

During these negotiations and while work was being carried on in the Botanical Garden and Arboretum the final construction work in Highlands Hammock was completed, a total of about \$ 400,000.00 in all having been made available for purchase,

construction and maintenance by members of the Roebing family. At the annual meeting of Highlands Hammock, Inc., on February 18, 1935, Mr. Roebing's responsibility for the upkeep of Highlands Hammock was formally relinquished by him and a sum of money was given to Highlands Hammock, Inc., to be used toward the maintenance costs during the next few years, with the understanding that the Hammock would, at an early date, be taken over by the State of Florida as a State Park and that these funds would be made available to the State, to be used solely for maintenance purposes, in conjunction with moneys to be appropriated by the State Legislature also for that purpose. These trust Funds are in the hands of a group of Trustees of Highlands Hammock with the State represented by certain members of the Florida Board of Forestry. The Florida Board of Forestry, an agency of the State, accepted the deed to the property from Highlands Hammock, Inc., in July 1935, in accordance with an Act which, owing to the efforts of many interested, was unanimously passed by the State Legislature and approved on June 4, 1935.

At the request of the Florida Board of Forestry the Board of Trustees of Highlands Hammock, Inc., has been continued in existence, and in order that this Board might be more truly representative of all parts of the State the number of Trustees was increased from 25 Trustees, as originally constituted, to a total of 45, thus affording reasonable geographical representation to different parts of the State, with the purpose of widening the interest and use of the Park and securing greater support in legislative matters concerning it.

Highlands Hammock State Park is under the administration of the Florida Board of Forestry and operates under the direction of its park representative of the Board, the State Forester and the Director of the Florida Forest Service. The Trustees of Highlands Hammock, Inc., have been requested by the Florida Board of Forestry to function in an advisory capacity so as to ensure wise and proper use of the Hammock and to retain responsibility for some of its useful activities, such as the conducting of Sunday Vesper Services throughout the winter season. These Vesper Services have become widely known, largely because of the high quality of speakers who have participated in them during the past four seasons and the number of people attending these services has gradually increased.

In carrying out the original idea of the State Forester, to which reference has already been made, of creating a State Forest Park considerably greater in magnitude than either of the two projects referred to in the foregoing, it was proposed that an encircling tract of about 50,000 acres (made available chiefly by delinquency of taxes) would serve to protect both of these valuable properties. The idea of this Park was acceptable to the Florida Forest Service and it was understood that it should be known

as DeSoto State Forest Park, the property serving the public in a recreational manner. The acquisition of some of the lands in question has been completely by the consent of the owners, and with their cooperation.

It was recognized that there are problems common to all of these three projects and because of their intimate relation one to another, that the creation of an organization be contemplated which should have power to consider and administer the related interests of all three projects in cooperation with and under the direction of the Florida Board of Forestry. In the meantime steps have been taken leading to the creation of a committee which shall be representative in its character of all three, being composed of Trustees selected by each respective body, given power to deal with the problems of each. It is suggested that the control of the ECW funds and manpower might now be fittingly placed in the hands of the joint committee and that ultimately the whole park, composed of these three units, should function under one general directing organization and adopt policies which would be for the best interests of the State and of all concerned.

Alexander Blair
Civil and Construction Engineer
Lake Placid, Florida

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**REMARKS BY MRS. LINWOOD JEFFREYS
AT HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK
ON MARCH 30, 1936**

It is a singular and great honor to have with us today one who know a great deal about State Parks, who knows whereof he speaks when he talks about parks, and the chairman has given me the honor to present him to you. He is the President of the National Conference on State Parks and he has done such outstanding work in the State of Indiana that, often, the parks of that state are considered a monument to his genius. It is with a great thrill that I introduce Colonel Lieber.

REMARKS BY COLONEL RICHARD LIEBER
AT HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK
ON MARCH 30, 1936

We are very happy to be here with you. We feel such a sense of relief when we come once more into this beautiful State Park.

When you enter that magnificent natural preserve of the united States, Yellowstone National Park, from the north and pass under the archway you see the inscription there in the language of those that created the preserve, which reads, "For the use and enjoyment of the people."

Now what makes the National Parks so outstanding? What makes them so imposing? What quality do they possess that other countries have come to learn from us? I remember that a late well-known international figure discussed the question with our good friend Steve Mather and got his directions how to build the big African National Park in Belgian Congo. It is a simple recipe - FIND NATURE AND LEAVE IT ALONE! Do not think that you are all going to be County Commissioners some day and must have a plaque that says, "In the year of our Lord 1936 these eminent people created something." We cannot create State Parks! We are very, very lucky to find them. So the slogan should be for us, "PRESERVE AMERICA."

When we sing about "the land of the Pilgrims' pride" if some of the pilgrims should wake up and see what we have done to the country and the devastation man has caused by fires and in other ways, they would not merely turn in their graves, they would keep revolving in the earth. But here, in Highlands Hammock, we have a perfect example of leaving nature alone, and, while this stands as a monument to Mrs. Roebing, it also should be considered that the man who has followed Mr. and Mrs. Roebing's have done here. Mr. Blair spoke about working with a limited amount of money as affecting certain structures such as county roads. Blair aren't you glad you didn't have enough money? Most people who have too much money simply work like the "nouvea riche", they want to overdo the thing. Although the amount which the Roebings put in here was anything but small, in preparation for the reception of people here, an amount of tact and judgement was shown, which, in itself, is an example to other State Park builders.

Let us remember, my friends, that parks, after all, are patriotic monuments of the highest order. I liken this place to a monument to which you can't possibly add anything but from which you could detract a good deal if you didn't use good judgement. This is one of the crown jewels of State Parks that I have seen. These parks not only remind us

of our rights as American citizens, but also of our duties to the country. If we want to look for another inscription at the gate of some place, we can take this park as well as the outstanding ones elsewhere in the country as an expression of that age-old and glorious promise which is contained in the Declaration of Independence and have the park dedicated "TO A FULLER LIFE, TO A GREATER LIBERTY, TO A VASTER PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS."

REMARKS BY MR. C. H. SCHAEFFER
AT HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK
ON MARCH 30, 1936

I came into the picture of Highlands Hammock late in its opening up, dealing with it not as a park but in the way of fire protection, in charge of 30 counties in this part of the State. Colonel Lieber, in his reference to fire devastation, didn't think much progress had been made, but if he had been here three or four years ago he couldn't have made that pleasant drive from Clewiston to Sebring without driving through smoke, but if the Colonel had seen the original condition he would have found the contrast made a great difference.

In Highlands Hammock we have the concrete example of a dream, of a vision, that Mrs. Roebling, and of the Roebling family, an idea of the Highlands Hammock Association that later was adopted by the peoples of Highlands County, DeSoto County, Hardee County, and the entire State.

The process of adopting Highlands Hammock as a State Park was not an easy matter nor was that of legally transferring it to the State. The proposal was made in the midst of the depression and, naturally, the Governor and the Florida Board of Forestry did not wish to assume an obligation they could not adequately carry, although believing the State of Florida should accept Highlands Hammock. Many, in good times, forget the poor times but we who had to deal with the problem in those days, still remember the difficulties. There were things that could have been done in regards to Highlands Hammock and other State Parks which could be secured through Federal organizations, but it is not wise to carry out much work unless the projects can be maintained afterwards. It would be a disgrace to the community, to the State, to the nation, and reflect on the C.C.C. if they did much in the way of opening up or of construction, if the money were not available for maintenance of such work after completion, so the State desired to proceed slowly but surely. This policy of ability to maintain is therefore the one that we are trying to bring out in the operation of Highlands Hammock and in the development of other State Parks.

The people of Florida and the Highlands Hammock Association still own and still have Highlands Hammock to enjoy. Because last July the Florida Board of Forestry turned over the park to the Florida park Service does not mean that your local stewardship has ended, but that the park has been adopted over the entire territory of the State and the Florida Park Service is now interested in preserving and maintaining it as the original donors would have done. In fact, Mr. Baker, when the park was accepted by the State, secured from Mr. Blair an expression of what he considered the wishes of the Roeblings and what all the people who had conceived and had participated in the venture desired, and that statement of policy was issued as a guide to each of the employees of the Highlands Hammock organization and to each person connected in any way with its operation. We have no intention of violating these principles so laid down.

Before the Hammock was turned over to the State and accepted, no legislation existed whereby the Florida Board of Forestry could accept land. At that earlier period, property had to be deeded to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund. Recognizing the need, the Governor, through his committee on Conservation (of which Mrs. Jeffreys was a member) suggested to the Legislature that laws be enacted setting up the Florida Park Service and providing basic legislation to acquire, establish, and maintain parks. Excellent support was given by everybody in the State. Jack Sims from Lake Placid was the wheel-horse who got the Florida park Service legislation through the Legislature.

Many things are required in the Hammock. Colonel Lieber said it was a jewel. The Hammock itself should not be added to, there is nothing that could be done further that would add to its natural wild beauty. However there are auxiliary facilities which are needful. A crew of six men maintain this Hammock property. The C.C.C. boys have not yet worked in Highlands Hammock. Mr. Greene and his crew have kept up this whole property but because of the limited State appropriations available and the desire to conserve the Roebling maintenance funds, they have to show low expenditure.

We need a pavilion. What would have happened here today if it had rained? We should have had to get into our cars for a time at least, and if it had continued for several hours we should have had to go to Sebring and request one of the hotels to permit us to meet there. We need houses for the members of the maintenance crew. At present only one man lives on the property. In case of fire or trouble of any kind he has to send to Sebring for help. A few minutes lost in a forest fire makes a world of difference. With men living on the property it can be protected infinitely better. We also need picnic grounds for group picnics. Those now existing are suitable but inadequate and arrangements of a more permanent nature must be made. It is proposed to provide all such improvements here mentioned outside the Hammock proper.

A combination building where folks can rest and where a real museum can be started is essential. A fossil turtle was dug up about three years ago, probably a million years old, which is now only temporarily sheltered from the weather, and requires some place where it can be exhibited and where other essential features could be housed to create additional interest and attraction in an educational way. A place is needed where visitors can register, where dignified souvenirs can be sold in order to help in maintaining the park, but nothing unsuitable or unfitting to the surroundings should be considered. Anything of that character would be kept inside and not displayed as in a filling station. In the combination building, quarters for a watchman or for the person selling post cards and souvenirs could be provided. We need a small contact station, probably at the easterly entrance of the park, a place where folks can be directed to the Arboretum or to Highlands Hammock State Park.

These improvements can be secured through the C.C.C. organization. Mr. Gadsby of the National Park Service and Mr. Vinten have been highly cooperative in helping the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum project to get started, and it is our hope that it will be possible to work out ways and means to get those needful things for Highlands Hammock State Park through the National Park Service.

Any suggestion or criticism regarding the operation of this State Park should be freely expressed and the Park Service will do its best to comply with reasonable suggestions. You are cordially and earnestly urged to visit other Florida State Parks. I cannot close without stating that this park sets the standard which we will try to achieve in our other State Parks. The Higher Power creates this natural beauty of these parks and man merely makes them accessible and usable.

REMARKS BY MR. ROBERT FECHNER

AT HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK

ON MARCH 30, 1936

(Mr. Fechner head of the Civilian Conservation
Corps for the entire United States.)

When I was a youngster someone told me if I wished hard enough for anything I might have it sometime, and I was reminded of that today because from the first time I heard of this locality I have been most earnestly wishing and hoping that it might be my privilege some day to visit and see it, and that wish and hope have been realized here today. It has been a very pleasant surprise to me to realize that, as is not very often the case, the things that I have heard about the locality and the things that I had looked forward to seeing, when it was my privilege to visit the locality, have not been overstated

or overemphasized. I certainly doubt that it could be possible to overpraise this beautiful spot and I am delighted that it has been my privilege to come here to meet you and to see this place in which I am sure each of you take such a deep pride.

I have heard for the first time today something about the history of this Hammock, how the beauty was first called to the attention of those who were in a position to preserve it. I am reminded of the fact that only within our generation has very much progress been made along that line. We are still a young nation and up to the very recent past we were so busy building our nation, in getting established, so busy with what we had termed facetiously a few years ago "our rugged individualism" that we paid little attention to the development and the preservation of recreational areas. We were all working so hard that we didn't realize the need for anything of this kind. I sometimes think that it must take a sever wrench to our national existence, such as we have experienced during the last five or six years, to make us understand that we were missing something that was of great value to us, something that was necessary in the development of our national life.

I think that we owe a great deal to our President who had the vision and the courage to ask Congress to strike out along new lines at a time when almost our entire citizenship were so distracted with problems, they didn't understand why anyone would suggest the spending of Federal funds for this new organization, but Mr. Roosevelt had given long thought to this matter. It wasn't a sudden idea on his part. He had realized during the four years that he had served as the Governor of our most populous state that there was a great problem confronting the nation because of the inability of the army of young men coming out of school or coming of working age each year and finding it impossible to secure a place in the business or industrial life of the nation.

Mr. Roosevelt had heard almost daily the reports of the tragedy of young men having to stand in idleness on street corners or wander aimlessly over the nation without any hope of improving their conditions no matter where they might travel and he had, long before he was nominated for the Presidency, resolved that if the opportunity ever came to him he was going to try to make a real effort to solve this problem, to provide healthful employment for the largest possible number of idle young men and at the same time to make it useful employment, not a charity or a dole, but something that would be of present value and of increasing value as years went by, and I think it is very significant that the first measure in the President's national program for recovery had to do with the accomplishment of this double purpose to place at work the largest possible number of idle young men and to undertake a conservation program that had been understood for some years past but for various reasons had not been undertaken.

I am sure that the incentive that was given by our President and by the National Government has been an inspiration to all of our States, to carefully consider this problem of providing suitable recreational facilities for all their citizens, and during the past three years there has been a tremendous number of beautiful areas donated in most cases to the States by patriotic citizens who were in a position to make that contribution because of the fact that the Federal Government was making it possible for these State Parks and recreational areas to be immediately developed, or at least for the development program to immediately start so that it would no longer be said that America did not realize the importance and necessity for providing proper recreational facilities for its citizens.

Colonel Lieber mentioned Yellowstone National park and I am reminded that it is said to be the first national park created by any nation for the use and the enjoyment of its own citizens and for the citizens of other nations who might be so fortunate as to go there. I am also reminded of the story as was told when I visited that wonderful natural beauty spot that the nation owes a great debt to just a small group of men who, some seventy years ago, visited out of their own curiosity to see if the stories they had heard of that natural wonder of the world were really true and they found that it was true and there were some among that small group who followed the American tradition and immediately commenced to talk about the way they might capitalize that natural beauty spot for their own personal advantage or profit, and it was quite natural that they should look at the area from that point of view, but fortunately there were others in the group who said "no, that is not what this should be devoted to. We should preserve it for the benefit of all the people, making it free to all who may have the opportunity of coming here." That is the way our first National Park was created because of the belief of such a few men that such a spot was intended by the Creator to be for the use and enjoyment of all of the people.

Fortunately that group has been followed by others and by individuals, and I know I will be repeating what has already been stated but I want to pay my tribute to the woman who made the preserving of this spot possible for the enjoyment of you and me and all others who may have the opportunity to follow us here. There are men and women in America, always I am sure, who are glad to render an unselfish service to their country and to their fellowmen.

I am sure we can never repay the debt that we owe to Mrs. Roebling and her husband who so faithfully supported her plans to create this beautiful spot here, for the vision that they had, for the willingness that they showed to develop this spot in a way that would preserve all of its natural beauties. While individuals may do a great deal to carry out a plan of this kind, it is impossible for any one person to do it alone.

It is quite well known that one of the best measures of a person's ability to realize their vision and their plans is the ability to select others to work with them and from what I have learned Mr. Roebling and Mrs. Roebling were very fortunate in their ability to draw about them a group of people, who not only understood and sympathized with the purpose they had in mind here, but had the ability to carry out their plans. I am told that Mr. Alexander Blair, who has been the representative of the Roeblings for some years and whom we all listened to with a great deal of interest this afternoon, has accomplished a most outstanding work in the contribution that he made here; and because skill and training is necessary to preserve the natural beauties of an area of this character, it was necessary for a competent engineer to be associated in the work and here again the founders of this park were fortunate (for) the services of Mr. Joe W. Hawkins as the resident engineer.

In seeking the aid of some permanent organization to generally supervise the work, I am told that a Board of Trustees was created whose Executive Committee was composed of Mr. Rex Beach, Dr. W. A. Davison, Col. Bailey, Mr. Durrance, and Mr. Gallaher, and these men have shown by their devotion that they appreciated and realized the responsibilities that were placed upon them as Trustees of this beautiful property and have faithfully carried the trust that was reposed in them.

Of course it is necessary for some one to call such projects to the attention of those who are in a position to really do a job quite frequently because if their attention isn't addressed to the particular project they would never know anything about it. I am told that two men are mainly responsible for first calling the attention of Mrs. Roebling to the wonderful spot that existed here. These two men were Mr. Donaldson and Dr. White.

I am sure we all must appreciate the vision of all those who have made and continued to what is undoubtedly one of the finest examples of the preservation of a natural beauty spot that could be found anywhere on the face of this earth. I am not going to attempt to own what has already been said about Highlands Hammock. I couldn't improve upon it for none of us could possibly pay the tribute to this place that it deserves. We can only try to enjoy it to the very best of our ability.

Before I close I want to say just a word about the organization I have been privileged to be associated with for the past three years. While I didn't have any part in the immediate development here because it came along before our organization was created, we have had a very important part in creating hundreds in other localities that I am sure that those responsible for them will try to make them as beautiful as this is. I am

glad to hear Captain Warren pay tribute to the C.C.C. boys who have worked so faithfully and so successfully in the development and preservation of forests and parks, and I like to think that this organization is the best refutation that I can think of to the old slander that young people today don't want to work.

These boys have shown by personal conduct that they appreciated the privilege that was offered them and they have rendered a good day's service for every day that they have spent in a C.C.C. camp. Everyone connected with this organization has shown the finest possible spirit, from the heads of the National Park Service and the U. S. Forest Service on down through all of the steps, to the corps themselves, and if it hadn't been for that outstanding service and deep personal interest that has been shown by all who have part in the work, I am sure that organization could not have accomplished the record that has been performed and we could not have been able to win the local support we have in all of the 48 states. I am glad to pay my tribute to the army officers who have shown that they can suitably lead our young men without the necessity of having military discipline at their command. I pay tribute to the splendid efficiency with which they have conducted the camp for the welfare and the well-being of the young men who in the past three years have had an opportunity to have healthful employment in these camps.

It was very necessary that the work of these boy should be competently supervised. We are told that it is an ill wind that blows no good and because of the serious unemployment created by the depression we were able to draw to our service a great army of trained technical engineers and supervisors of all kinds who, under normal conditions, we could not have possibly secured to serve in this organization. I am glad to say that although these men are working for a very small part of the salaries that they would normally be able to command, they have given the finest service of which they were capable and they have been just as keenly interested in this work as any of us has been, and because of this spirit we have seen this organization go forward accomplishing things that just a few years ago no one dared dream possible, by seeing set up now within our lifetime a series of parks of which the nation will be proud for all time to come.

I am glad to hear one of the speakers acknowledge responsibility and admit the necessity for the State adequately providing for the maintenance and continued improvement of this and other parks, and I hope that that realization will come home to all of our state authorities, to our State Legislatures and our tax payers, because it is only through their support. Through money continually provided by them, we can hope to preserve and continue these beautiful recreational areas.

I am delighted to know that our C.C.C. boys have had such an important part in this work and I am proud of the service that they have rendered. No doubt most of you, and I hope all of you, are familiar with the camp that for three years almost has been located at the edge of your city. I hope that many of you have visited the camp and have become personally acquainted with those who are carrying on the work. If not, take advantage of your first opportunity to stop in and talk to the officers, the project superintendent, talk to the boys and learn personally of the fine work that these boys are doing not only for your welfare but for their own welfare and you will become just as enthusiastic as I am or anyone having a part in the work. I am sure I have never been privileged to be associated in any enterprise that has become a more personal pleasure and satisfaction than in having a part in carrying on the work of the C.C.C. camp.

I am delighted to be here today. I am only sorry that the visit is so brief, but can assure you that I will carry with me most pleasant memories of one of the most beautiful spots that I have seen in America and I will tell others of what they are missing. I hope that this locality may continue forever to furnish pleasure and inspiration to all who may have the privilege of coming here.



Robert Fechner Speaks to an Enrollee

Camp NP-14, Rock Creek Park, DC January 1939
photo from newdeal.feri.org

FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDEN AND ARBORETUM

March 1985

Highlands County, and indeed the entire State of Florida, suffered a major casualty in World War II in the loss of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum (FBG&A). A Project which promised to become a beauty spot of the first magnitude and also an experiment with immeasurable potential, economic value became a victim of conditions brought about by the war.

In the words of Longfellow, "Hardly a man is now alive who remembers - - -." But, fortunately, the Sebring Historical Society has on file more than 200 pictures showing the development of the property in preparation for introducing, propagating, and protecting trees and other plants which were envisioned as the most complete development of its kind in the nation. There are also newspaper clippings which relate some of the plans and progress of the project.

The files also include a memorandum, dated December 13, 1935, prepared by Mr. Alexander Blair for his own file (as a kind of diary). This memorandum is made a part of this account and it will be noted that several references are made to the minutes of the FBG&A, to a legal folder and to other memos, none of which are presently available (the search for them continues).

But, aside from these records and two square miles of land on which the attractions were planned, very little evidence remains - not even memories.

When Mr. John A. Roebling chose an area in Highlands County as a site on which to build an estate, he started a train of conditions which was to lead to the concept of the FBG&A.

Mrs. Margaret Shippen Roebling was intensely interested in trees and plants of all kinds and Mr. Roebling saw opportunities for improving several conditions in Florida in the era immediately following the October 1929 crisis in the nation. He set men to work at livable wages, doing work which could have been done more cheaply by using labor-saving machinery instead of manpower. He initiated this practice a couple of years before the government recognized the need to provide employment for families victimized by the depression.

At the time, Florida had no defenses against fires which were damaging great areas of natural forests. Mr. Roebling recognized the need for action so, in order to encourage a

system of woods fire suppression in Highlands County, he provided specially designed trucks to five communities in the county with the agreement that the fire fighting units would be formed to reduce the damage to the forests. This was the first effort in the state, of this nature and the first movement of any kind, of timber interests in South Florida. Mr. Alexander Blair, who was Mr. Roebing's chief engineer and personal representative in Florida, was also an enthusiast in the interest of conservation and, with his employer's concurrence, built some of the first tall steel lookout towers, together with cottages for spotter personnel and he promoted sentiment for volunteer fire fighting.

All this attracted the attention of officials in Tallahassee and especially that of Harry Lee Baker, the State Forester.

Mr. Baker saw the possibilities of the association with the apparently successful Highlands Hammock project, Mr. Roebing's and Mr. Blair's interest in forestry, the state-wide organization of garden clubs, and the enthusiasm of the citizens of Highlands County, so he threw his entire efforts toward the formation of the FBG&A Association and a related project, the DeSoto State Forest Park.

Mr. Blair's memorandum, very graphically, paints a picture of the early days of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum:

December 13, 1935

MEMORANDUM SHOWING THE STEPS IN DEVELOPMENT OF THE
FLORIDA BOTANICAL GARDEN AND ARBORETUM PROJECT

Feb 25, 1933 Following upon the suggestion of Miss Anne MacIlvaine, certain members of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs met at Highlands Hammock during the early spring of 1933 in order to see the beauties of the Hammock and apparently with the establishment of a Botanical Garden and Arboretum in mind.

Summer 1933 Mr. Harry Lee Baker, State Forester, started the party on a topographical survey of Section 33 and the easterly portion of Highlands Hammock adjacent thereto in order to furnish the nucleus of a planning scheme.

Oct 31, 1933 Some of the officials of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs met in Sebring to consider the plans for development of a Botanical Garden and Arboretum, in which the following steps were urged:

1. Completion of topographic survey

2. General removal of stumps and dead trees
3. Establishment of taxonomical test-out plots
4. General planting of north half of Section 33 to a cover crop of Slash and Long Leaf Pine
5. Soil survey
6. Retention of a master planner, John Nolen being suggested
7. Securing C.C.C. camp labor
8. Appointment of an advisory committee, familiar with Florida horticultural conditions

Nov 15, 1933 Discussion with Mr. Harry Lee Baker of an organization plan drafted by Mrs. Thomas about September 1933, which represents her personal views and not necessarily those of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, since it has not yet been approved by Mrs. Cummer, chairman of the committee.

Mr. Baker stated that plans had been drawn for the northerly half of Section 33 indicating a proposed arboretum layout. Mr. Baker stated that Mrs. Cummer urges the preparation of a master plan for which funds must be available, estimated at \$ 500.00, but Mrs. Fielder is willing to follow Mr. Reinsmith's plan prepared under Mr. Baker's direction. (I advised Mr. Baker that I could not use Roebling funds in preparing plans or doing any construction work following out the Arboretum idea since these would be contrary to the wishes of members of the Roebling family.)

Nov 19, 1933 Harry lee Baker suggests that Section 4 be acquired, also that the Arboretum be divided into two parts, blended together. Urges that Highlands Hammock Trustees determine if they would assume the responsibility for bringing the Botanical Garden and Arboretum into existence, since the Federation of Garden Clubs has not specifically endorsed the project.

Urges raising of funds to be expended in accordance with a definite plan of planting. Indicates is willing to make it a C.C.C. camp project.

Nov 21, 1933 Letter to Mrs. Thomas from A. Blair advises that Dr. Davison will present the Botanical Garden and Arboretum project to Highlands Hammock Trustees at the meeting on November 22. (It is incompatible with my position as Mr. Roebling's representative that I should do so.)

Nov 23, 1933 Wrote Mrs. Thomas recording action of Trustees of Highlands Hammock, appointing committee to proceed with the organization of an association. Col. Bailey, Ray Greene, and W. F. Coachman were named and were authorized to

proceed on definite lines indicated in Mrs. Thomas's report.

Nov 28, 1933 Mrs. Thomas wrote Col. Bailey offering to give study to constitution and bylaws and prepare a list of persons.

Dec 22, 1933 Wrote Col. Bailey at the suggestion of Mr. Harry Lee Baker urging the acceptance of Section 33.

Dec 29, 1933 Harry Lee Baker wrote suggesting the drafting of a statement of purposes leading up to a constitution and bylaws.

Jan 4, 1934 Wrote Mr. Baker that I cannot take any personal steps in regard to this project because of Mr. Roebeling's attitude.

Jan 4, 1934 Wrote Mrs. Thomas that I could not undertake any duties connected with the Botanical Garden project. Mr. Roebeling approves the use of Section 33 and Section 4 for this purpose but is not interested in furthering the project.

Jan 10, 1934 Meeting at offices of W. F. Coachman to discuss constitution and bylaws of proposed organization of State Forest Park to include the Botanical Garden and Arboretum, also Highlands Hammock.

Jan 15, 1934 Baker wrote urging immediate action on the following if a C. C. C. camp is to be secured for Sebring:

- 1 - Formation of Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association
- 2 - Submission of plan for development with method of financial indicated
- 3 - Acceptance of land by State

He commented that the Florida Forest Service had made a complete topographical survey. This letter was sent to certain members of the Garden Clubs and certain Trustees of Highlands Hammock.

Jan 18, 1934 Draft prepared by Treadwell & Treadwell of charter of Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association. 21 Trustees named in charter. (See filed copy in legal folder)

Jan 31, 1934 Mrs. Thomas was authorized by Mr. Harry Lee Baker to spend ten days in promotion of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association.

Feb 3, 1934 Mr. Baker suggests that Mrs. Thomas draw a location map of the Botanical Garden to tie in with Reinsmith's plan since she already has the topographic map prepared by Reinsmith and has studied the layout of various Botanical Gardens.

Feb 8, 1934 Meeting at Harder Hall to hear Mr. Frederick Law Olmstead comment on the project as he had spent several days looking over conditions.

Feb 14, 1934 Mr. Olmstead wrote Mr. Greene two letters, one of which referred particularly to the steps suggested concerning organizing and action requisite regarding Section 33 and Section 4; the other bearing on the planting recommendations and enclosing random notes prepared by Mr. Olmstead for the detailed layout of certain areas. (See attached memo)

Mar 4, 1934 Mr. Olmstead in a conference at Harder Hall supplemented his earlier recommendations. One of these was that special areas should be provided for growing things not readily grown in Sections 33 (evidently referring to the unsuitability of the soil in Section 33).

He recommended at this conference the acquisition of the strip of land lying east and north of the Hammock proper which lies within the fenced area of Highlands Hammock, Inc. (See attached memo)

Mar 7, 1934 Mr. Reinsmith wrote Mr. Olmstead concerning layout plan, requesting criticism on these suggestions. (See attached)

Mar 17, 1934 First annual meeting of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association. (See minutes of meeting)

After the close of this meeting the Advisory Committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Hume met and discussed immediate plans for the work in the Arboretum, in connection with Dr. Davison and Mrs. Thomas.

Mar 24, 1934 Dr. Davison submits copy of proposed charter and bylaws (Charter filed Jan 18, 1935, bylaws filed Mar 26, 1935)

Mar 31, 1934 Wrote Dr. Davison regarding proposed FERAPROJECT, indicating that Mr. Hawkins had been requested to render assistance to Mrs. Thomas, in preparing the project.

Apr 19, 1934 Wrote to Dr. Davison offering engineering aid in locating fence, etc.

- May 22, 1934 C.C.C. camp arrived for work on Arboretum.
- June, 1934 C. R. Vinten made superintendent of C.C.C. camp.
- Mar 16, 1935 Annual meeting of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association.
- Mar 22, 1935 A. C. Altvater made temporary superintendent of C.C.C camp.
- Apr 1, 1935 A. B. Weissinger left terminating position as superintendent of C.C.C. camp.
- Jun 3, 1935 Joint meeting of Highlands Hammock, Inc., and Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association regarding safeguarding of water rights, leasing by State of Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum property.
- July 25/26, 1935 Joint meeting of Trustees of highlands Hammock and Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Executive Committees with H. L. Baker, State Forester, C. H. Schaeffer, Gadsby, and C. R. Vinten, regarding same matters.
- Dec 16, 1935 Meeting of Executive Committee at Sebring regarding drainage problems of intensive areas adjacent to Tiger Branch and also as to method of raising funds.
- Dec 17, 1935 Meeting of Dr. Davison, Dr. Grout, A. C. Altvater, and C. R. Vinten regarding method of working out of all problems pertaining to project.
- Dec 17, 1935 A. Blair wrote Dr. Grout regarding drainage problem of Arboretum and Hammock.

There have been several good books and numerous shorter articles published, telling of the many successes of the Civilian Conservation Corps (C.C.C.) in the 1930's. Another record of the basic factors and the story of camps in Highlands County, might provide at least one or two new additional ideas.

- 1) The plan, implemented in 1933, provided a two-part organization - part military and part technical, or educational.
- 2) A normal camp was composed of about 200 enrolled men; four (sometimes

more) of the Army staff and a varying number (usually 6 or more) on the technical staff.

3) The Army was responsible for housing, feeding, clothing, and disciplining the men. The Using Service (Technical) in the Sebring camps, was responsible for directing the manual training of the men and the prosecution of work projects and programs.

Within a few months after Franklin D. Roosevelt was inaugurated in 1933, the first C.C.C. camp was assigned to Sebring and was built on the southern shore of Lake Sebring with the Lake Sebring Casino as its headquarters. The troops were quartered in tents along the lake shore. The Technical Service was assigned a vacant home as its headquarters.

The first camp was under the sponsorship of the U. S. Department of Agriculture and was known as a "Forestry camp" but in the spring of 1934 it was transferred to the U. S. Department of the Interior and became a "Park camp."

As there was no state bureau of parks in 1934, the Florida State Forester (Harry Lee Baker) was named as "Park Executive" and served in a dual capacity as head of both forestry and parks divisions. However, the State's budget did not include funds for maintenance or operation of parks.

At this point in time, the relation of the C.C.C. to Highlands Hammock and to the proposed state park system, was very meager. The apparent sponsor and authority on the work program was the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association. A news release dated 22 March 1934 gives an idea of the concept:

"The Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association held its first annual meeting Saturday at Harder Hall . . .

"The thought of a Florida Botanical Garden originated several years ago with Mrs. Cummer, who was the first president of the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, but not until last year was it decided to locate a state development at Sebring, as a natural compliment to Highlands Hammock Park. On February 24, 1933, Miss Anne McIlvaine, sister of Margaret Shippen Roebling, called a meeting in this subtropical park, of persons prominent in the botanical and horticultural life of Florida. Later, the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs, gave their hearty and unanimous endorsement of the project of a botanical garden and arboretum for Florida in connection with Highlands Hammock. Subsequently, at a meeting of the trustees of Highlands Hammock, Inc., Dr. Davison,

president, was instructed to appoint a committee to draw up a charter which has been approved.

“The Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum is destined to become the greatest show place in Florida with the bringing together of all trees, plants, and flowers that will grow in this subtropical section of the state and, in addition the flora of other countries of the world having similar climate, will be brought in and tested. Approximately 1,500 acres will be developed. The National Park Service will send a 200 man camp here to work on the project. The Department of Agriculture will assist in the experimental plantings and the Florida Forestry Service will furnish several thousands of nursery trees as initial test and background plantation of the arboretum . . .”

When it was proposed that an association be formed to promote and develop a botanical garden and arboretum, the group that had been active in establishing Highlands Hammock had experienced signal successes which were recognized widely throughout the state so it was but natural that the arboretum and garden sponsors would recognize the advantage of the favorable conditions offered by relations with the Hammock. These were numerous but the more salient ones were:

- 1) Land adjoining the Hammock was available at no cost to the new group.
- 2) Several of the ardent workers (and the prestigious names) on the Hammock Board were persuaded to take an interest and a place on the Board of the new group.
- 3) Miss Anne MacIlvaine, sister of Margaret Shippen Roebling was interested in the garden program. Mr. Roebling was still continuing his financial activities in the Hammock and it was hoped that he would become aware of the value of the arboretum as he had shown a deep interest in Florida forests.
- 4) The Hammock was attracting great state and national attention and was drawing persons of renown to visit the area. No doubt, these persons could see the merits of a botanical garden and arboretum and would lend their influence and support to such endeavors.

The objectives of the FBG&A were simple. In the Arboretum (Section 4) every type of tree would be grown and tested to determine whether it would survive in this climate; whether it would have an ornamental or economical value; under what conditions could it be propagated, and also to make records of all characteristics and growth data.

The botanical gardens would be developed to demonstrate all types of horticulture with specific areas devoted to various specimens of plants, such as palms, azaleas, bamboos and grasses, water-loving plants, etc.

Immediately following its organization in 1934, the FBG&A Association applied for a C.C.C. camp and it was granted and was assigned on 22 May 1934.

To understand the position of the C.C.C camp at this time, it is essential to realize the relations of the various agencies involved. The lands involved consisted of areas in Sections 4, 5, and 6, R 28 E, T 34 S, and Sections 31, 32, and 33, R 28 E, T 35 S. This property had been acquired mainly through the efforts of Ray Greene in connection with the establishment of the Hammock but after several meetings of the two groups, Sections 4 and 33 were turned over to the FBG&A for use and maintenance.

As the camp was assigned to the FBG&A, no plans were made to use the camp and facilities on Hammock projects. In fact, when suggestions were made leading to such use, they drew violent objections from the garden group.

Of course, the first work on the gardens and arboretum, as had been the case in the Hammock some four years earlier, was directed toward protection and accessibility of the areas so fences, fire breaks, and roads were given first attention.

The plans for the fencing were similar to those employed by Mr. Blair on Sections 5, 6, 31, and 32. For the four miles of new fences on the north line of Section 33, the east line of 33 and 4, and the south line of Section 4, four miles of fences were erected using special woven wire of 9 gauge, four feet high and more than two thousand concrete posts which the enrollees made on the job. (Now, more than 50 years later, these fences are in good, serviceable condition.)

Several miles of roads were surveyed, cleared, and graded by the men of the corps. They also loaded clay from pits near Avon Park on camp trucks and made a system of roads on Sections 4 and 33. Culverts, bridges, dams, and other ancillary structures were built by the men.

Members of the camp who were interested in the propagation of ornamental trees, shrubs, and other plants were given every opportunity to learn the secrets of these arts and trades. Seeds were germinated in flats and cuttings were rooted. These were all set out in "lining out beds" and, when sufficient growth was attained, the plants were set in the field. In all operations, accurate records were kept including the length of time and percent of germination, rate of growth, rate and cause of loss, temperatures and moisture,

and other factors affecting the plants. If plants failed to develop or if they died, the loss was not considered a disaster if the causes were known - whether conditions were too hot, too cold, too dry, too wet or whatever. At the present time (1985) it is not known what became of those records, but it is hoped to learn more on this subject, later.

The Sebring camp was most fortunate in having to foremen on the staff who had practical knowledge in horticulture and who had the ability to impart this knowledge to the enrolled personnel. And it was also fortunate that there were other staff members capable of planning and building structures and facilities for efficiently carrying out the functions that were planned.

The first facilities were something of a makeshift nature but, as time and experience progressed, really practical appliances and buildings were provided. Although the first "hothouse" was made of cast-off windows and scrap lumber, it served its purpose very nicely until a "store-bought" model became available. In the first crude building, the men learned how to prepare the seed flats and how to tend the young plants.

A very efficient "potting shed" was built with concrete bins for mixing and retaining suitable potting soils and it had a work bench where young plants could be transferred from the seed flats to pots. The potted plants were then placed in the "slat shed."

The slat shed was so-named because it was designed to admit one half sunlight and one half shade. Here, the plants were allowed to grow until they were large enough to go into the "lining-out beds" or to their permanent locations in the field. It was not long before the slat shed became a focal point of great interest to visitors. In a very short time a variety of exotic and beautiful plants were accumulated and put on display. This not only stimulated interest of the camp personnel but also attracted huge numbers of visitors - sometimes almost too many.

In some cases, plants were not potted but were sent directly to the lining-out beds. A clearing was made to the west of the slat shed and, as work progressed, the demand for space increased until these beds exceeded five acres in area. As the work of the botanical garden became more widely known, seeds, cuttings, and even mature plants came in from all manner of sources. One of the best known plant introductory stations in the United States became a regular donor of materials and other gardens became willing cooperators. Seeds came in from remote parts of the world - some even from the Philippines.

The areas set apart for demonstration plots began to take form early. Visitors who saw the progress, contributed some specimen palms as well as other unusual and exotic

mature trees and shrubs. A collection of 22 different bamboos formed one display. These bamboos ranged from two to forty feet in height. A number of different lotus, shell flowers, and other water-loving plants made up the beginning of a garden on the course of Tiger Branch just west of the present location of the camping area. This was a truly beautiful setting. Next to this was a group of mimosas and another of different colored bauhinias.

It would be impossible to describe the favorable reaction to the idea of the botanical garden, by the public and to the imagined potentials for its success.

* * *

Classes were offered and taught by the foreman on the Technical staff and the students were given the basics in brick and rock laying, plumbing, electrical wiring, concrete forming and finishing, sawmill operation, and other crafts. Then, they had the opportunity to practice on-the-job. Before the program was ended and the C.C.C. camp disbanded, many of the men had become proficient in several of the crafts as is evident by the structures which are still in place in Highlands Hammock and on the land that was to have been FBG&A.

In preparing the land for roads, gardens, buildings, and other improvements, it was often necessary to remove trees. These were hauled to the service center where the sawmill transformed them into lumber. This was then put through a "dry kiln" or was air-cured after which it went through a planer. All these operations were carried on by the young men of the C.C.C.

The men were then taught to fashion the lumber into buildings. Every step was carried out by the enlisted men from the foundation to the finished structure. They even manufactured the shingled (or "shakes" as they were called) as well as laying up the fireplaces and fashioning the fireplace tools.

Under the direction of a competent mechanic, the men learned to handle and repair trucks, tractors, and other types of machinery. They were especially briefed in "preventive maintenance." (In World War II, those in charge of motor pools, equipment centers, and repair depots, claimed they could spot ex-C.C.C. men immediately by the care they gave their equipment.)

* * *

As the minutes of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum are available for reference,

they will give some idea of the problems encountered in the prosecution of the program but they do not tell the entire story of the operations by the C.C.C. To understand what happened, it is necessary to know at least a few of the details. Since the various Board members were familiar with the details, it was not essential that the secretary write the minutes in a manner that would make the problems clearly evident. First, it was necessary in order to obtain a C.C.C. park camp, for the project to have a "sponsor." That meant that some organization would clearly demonstrate the feasibility or need; plan the improvements; furnish any funds or personnel beyond those allowed by the government and would guarantee adequate maintenance after the project was completed and the government forces were withdrawn.

In the case of the FBG&A, it appeared that the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs would be the sponsor but it also appeared that Mr. Harry Lee Baker, the Florida State Forester, was so definitely enamored with the idea of an arboretum that he approved the camp even before either plans or an organization were finalized. One person was the moving influence in the pre-organization activities. Clara I. Thomas, a landscape architect from St. Petersburg and a member of the Federation of Garden Clubs was designated as chairman of a committee of that organization to promote the botanical garden. She was also the "executive secretary" of the FBG&A and was a member of the technical staff of the C.C.C. (employed by the U. S. Department of the Interior). She and Mr. Baker worked together to "get the show on the road." Without the enthusiastic support of Mr. Baker, the project would have died before birth. At the end of the first year, the organization had only 48 members with dues at \$10 per year; seven were club memberships at \$15. At the end of the second year, the bank balance was only \$274.92 with bills for \$247.86.

Aside from establishing a committee, the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs displayed small interest in the project. It did schedule an inspection trip which was not an overwhelming success; it did pay the \$15 annual dues or membership fee for two years and it did make a \$200 contribution toward a specific planting. Several individual Garden Club members took a deep interest and several made presentations of fine specimen plants but the fact that there was not a great deal of club enthusiasm was evident. As a result, the government, in the spring of 1935, began to question the ability of the Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association to maintain the property after the C.C.C. work was accomplished.

The Association cast wildly about for methods of financing - first, exploring the possibility of hiring professional fund raisers - - next, by allocating a percentage of the C.C.C. labor to other uses (such as the Hammock, DeSoto State Forest park, and forest fire

control) thereby involving the State in the responsibility for financing and maintenance.

The final outcome of the unsuccessful efforts directed toward fiscal stability, was a merger of the three organizations (the Hammock, DeSoto State Forest Park, and the FBG&A.) However, Highlands Hammock, Inc., which was a substantial organization with a solid future status, became the “sponsor” with the authority to regulate the composite organization.

This loss of status did not sit well in some cases so, at the annual meeting on March 21, 1936, Mrs. Thomas resigned as Executive Secretary of the FBG&A and shortly thereafter, Dr. Grout resigned as president and trustee and neither of them took any further interest in the project.

The transition of power came at an opportune time. There was no question about the ability of Mrs. Thomas and Dr. Grout in the field of botany or horticulture but their expertise in fiscal affairs and management left much to be desired. The tension which was the primary cause of Mrs. Thomas’ resignation, was mainly the result of the fiscal situation and it was augmented by the threatened loss of the camp and the fact that the owner of the camp site had cancelled the contract for the land on which the camp was located.

A coordinating committee representing the three organizations soon reorganized operations and set up a smooth-running regime. The City of Sebring administration indicated its confidence and interest by authorizing one of its members (Willard Percy) to move all of the buildings of an abandoned camp from North Florida 200 miles, to a new location near the Hammock where the camp remained for the next five years, until the C.C.C. disbanded.

The FBG&A Association was completely reorganized and after the annual meeting in 1937, the camp was in position to work on both the Botanical Garden and the Hammock. As continued maintenance could thus be assured, the C.C.C. camp remained in place until the entire movement was abandoned nationwide, when the nation began preparing for war. The camp was phased out in December 1941 but a “side camp” of 40 men from Myakka River State Park was sent to complete a few unfinished projects.

The DeSoto State Forest Park did not progress as had been expected, probably because the leading exponent (Ray Greene) moved from Sebring to his former home in winter Park and no successor had been indoctrinated. However, the land that had been acquired was sold and the proceeds (\$10,000) was put into the Hammock Trust Fund. This,

further strengthened the financial position of Highlands Hammock, Inc.

Mr. Harry Lee Baker was replaced in July of 1940, as State Forester and Park Executive, by Mr. Henry Malsberger. This was something of a turning point in the fate of FBG&A as the Garden had been favored by Mr. Baker while his successors lacked the enthusiasm that he displayed. The final year (1941) of the C.C.C. was devoted to completing construction in the Hammock on such buildings as ranger's cottages, a combination building, picnic facilities, archeological explorations, and in the Garden, a greenhouse.

However, the garden did not suffer. It had reached the point where just a little addition produced pronounced effects. The slat shed drew numbers of interested visitors - several gardens needing very little work, displayed pansies, roses, day lilies, and other colorful bloom and display areas added interest in collections of eucalyptus, palms, bamboos, etc. There was much to justify predictions of success for the Garden and the Hammock had already attained its position of eminence in the world of State Parks.

In September of 1941, the FBG&A Association was consolidated with Highlands Hammock, Inc., and became a part of Highlands Hammock State Park, with every favorable omen on its horizon.

* * *

There is little need to remind anyone that December 7, 1941 changed the lives of everyone in the world. There was an immediate effect on Highlands Hammock State park. The members of the maintenance crew found that they could earn twice the pay that the State could pay, by working on the Army Air base which was under construction. At the same time, interest in the Garden and the State Park was diverted to the war effort which was mounting at such a rate that it was impossible to find the manpower to protect the property against the visitors who carried away all the plants that could be moved - even those that could be dug up.

At one point, during the war, it became necessary to close the park to public use, to protect it against vandalism and fire but the thousands of unusual plants were lost to the garden which was a major casualty in World War II, and after the war, the park officials were so busy patching up the State Park system that they ignored the Botanical Garden entirely. With the passing of Harry Lee Baker, there was no champion in the Botanical Garden and Arboretum's corner.

May 5, 1938

The annual meeting of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association met on April 30, 1938. The fifth annual meeting of the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association was held this date at the Nan-Ces-O-Wee Hotel in Sebring, Florida, with Colonel F. N. K. Bailey, president, as presiding officer.

Present at this meeting were:

| Name | Address | Organization Represented |
|-----------------------------|-------------|---|
| Mrs. C. R. Vinten | Sebring | Third V. P. of the State Federation of Garden Clubs |
| R. N. Durrance | Sebring | |
| Mrs. Swain Bowers | Lake Placid | P. T.A. President |
| Mrs. L. C. Crews | Lake Placid | Woman's Club President |
| W. W. Bell | Sebring | |
| C. F. Saunders | Sebring | Chamber of Commerce |
| W. Z. Carson | Sebring | |
| Allen C. Altvater | Sebring | |
| Payne M. Sebring | Sebring | |
| Mrs. Agnes F. Carson | Sebring | |
| Mrs. Cora Timmerman | DeSoto City | Woman's Club President |
| Mrs. R. M. McDonald | Sebring | P. T.A. President |
| Mrs. Emily Fries | Sebring | Garden Club President |
| Mrs. George E. Sebring, Sr. | Sebring | Womans Club President |
| Mrs. A. L. Kelley | Sebring | |
| Colonel F. N. K. Bailey | DeSoto City | |
| T. V. Conway | DeSoto City | |
| James McFarlin | Sebring | |
| Ford Heacock | Sebring | |
| Mrs. W. S. Betts | Avon Park | Woman's Club President |
| Mayor N. E. Covington | Avon Park | |
| Ray Vinten | Sebring | National Park Service |
| H. J. Malsberger | Tallahassee | State Forest Park Service |
| Mrs. F. N. K. Bailey | Desoto City | |
| S. C. Ives | Sebring | |
| Mrs. Paul Garber | Avon Park | P. T.A. President |
| M. M. Ferguson | Sebring | |

The minutes of the last meeting and these of the meetings of the executive committee held during the year were read; and when no comments were offered, they were approved. The treasurer's report showing a balance of \$118.78 as of April 30, 1938, was read and

approved. Mr. Hancock, treasurer, also made a report of the receipts on hand from the sale of flower bulletins from Mrs. Wilmena Green of \$114.22. This money by direction of the trustees has been placed in a special account to be used for advertising purposes in the future.

Allen Altvater read a paragraph of a letter written by H. J. Malsberger, director of the Florida Forest and Park Service, with reference to the last approved renewal for our C. C. C. Camp. In this paragraph it was definitely stated that federal funds could no longer be spent in the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum unless the association could guarantee maintenance of these projects, and the area itself, after the C. C. C. camps activity had ceased (at the end of the C. C. C. federal grant).

Mr. J. B. McFarlin, botanist, in charge of the work in the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum area, gave what he understood as the essence of this paragraph mentioned above as just read:- "that June first, 1938, help from the C. C. C. camp in this area will cease on the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum." "Our need to carry on a garden in the future is an immediate one."

Under the latter he mentioned the preparing of a catalogue classifying all living material in the garden; the preparation of a collection of dead materials which have been dried and mounted; and third, a collection and classification of various kinds and species of wood. Dr. McFarlin also told the association of the publication, first, of a pamphlet entitled "Plants Found Along the Laurel and Oak Trails": and second, a scientific paper describing the complete flora of the garden area.

Altvater gave an estimate of from \$4,000 to \$5,000. He also said that he believes that if \$1,500 to \$2,000 a year could be raised that Forest and Park Service and the National Park Service would be much more interested in allowing C. C. C. labor to be used on the garden and arboretum projects. The meeting was adjourned at this point for lunch in the dining room of the Nan-Ces-O-Wee Hotel at 12:30. The meeting reconvened at 1:30 o'clock. Upon motion made by Mrs. Vinten and seconded by R. N. Durrance it was decided to add a five dollar individual membership for citizens residing in Highlands County to the already classified membership of from \$1,000 to \$500; \$100 memberships and \$10 memberships. Motion carried. Mr. T. V. Conway added a few remarks about a possibility of securing special tax legislation for maintenance of Highlands Hammock and the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum after the federal government and C. C. C. camp steps out of the picture. Colonel F. N. K. Bailey appointed the following nominating committee: S. C. Ives, chairman; W. Z. Carson, Mrs. Garber, Mrs. L. C. Crews, and Mrs. W. S. Betts. Also a resolutions committee composed of: T. V. Conway, chairman; Mrs. Bailey, and C. F. Saunders.

A letter was read by the secretary from Mr. Ray Greene of Winter Park, Florida; strongly urging the association to select with care the incoming officers and to do everything

in our power to stimulate interest and activity for the botanical arboretum. Mrs. Vinten moved that the nominating committee besides nominating the officers, which are president, first vice president, second vice president, recording secretary and treasurer be also empowered to nominate an executive committee to be composed of five men and four women. Motion carried.

Selwyn Ives moved that the nominating committee make their report back to this body not any more than fifteen days hence.

It was moved by Ives that our executive committee be authorized at present time and in the proper way with regard to a consolidation DeSoto State Forest Park and our association. McFarlin seconded this motion. Question was put by Colonel Bailey and carried.

The secretary then read the resignation of Mr. Alexander Blair as a trustee of our association and moved that the resignation be accepted with regrets; also that a resolution be drafted thanking him for his many past services and the interest in our association. Motion carried.

Colonel Bailey called on Mrs. Vinten who spoke of the part the State Federation of Garden Clubs have played in the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association. She suggested that a resolution be drawn and sent to Mrs. Ray Greene as an expression of the associations appreciation for her hard work and interest in it. She also suggested the possibility of sending wild flower folders to the Presidents of the Woman's Clubs, P. T. A. organizations, Garden Clubs, and so forth for sale.

In response to a request from the presiding officer, Mr. Vinten talked of National Park Service in this area and explained the relation of the National Park Service and Federal government to the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association, and how the C. C. C. and the Federal government had in these projects been allowed to do work which met definite specifications. Work began on the arboretum in June 1934. As a rough figure to maintain the area at present if federal aid ceased it would take \$2,500 annually. He suggested that perhaps instead of annual memberships, a drive might be made "shooting" at \$10,000 so that a program could be decided upon and may be over, say for a four or five year period. State Park and Forestry representative H. J. Malsberger then spoke of the states relation to such botanical garden and arboretum projects. He suggested to our association that we inform his board, as soon as we have concrete evidence, of the amount of money which we spend annually for maintenance. This association will then have power to request the board of Florida to do much more toward maintaining the garden and arboretum area in the future than they could at present. Mr. Malsberger, in closing, very kindly offered to make arrangements for the sale of the flower bulletins at the gateway of the hammock immediately.

C. F. Saunders, secretary of the Sebring Chamber of Commerce, spoke on our opportunity to interest the tourists in our association.

It was moved and carried that the membership fee for garden clubs over the state will be \$10.00 instead of \$15.00 a year.

A resolution was offered that we send a telegram to Miss. E. E. Enyart of Winter Park expressing to her our regrets and how keenly we felt her absence today. Motion carried.

Ray Vinten offered a suggestion that if followed up might lead to a request for a small appropriation from our state legislature to help maintain the area occupied by the Florida Botanical Garden and Arboretum Association. Mr. Carson moved that our next meeting of the association be held in the Nan-Ces-O-Wee Hotel, Saturday afternoon, on May 14, at two o'clock. Motion carried.

It was moved by Allen Altvater that the chair appoint now a membership committee and publication committee. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 3 P.M.

Secretary,

M. M. Ferguson



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

September 20, 1938

Mr. C. E. Vinton,
Inspector, National Park Service,
Sebring, Florida.

Dear Mr. Vinton:

We have read with interest the description given by Project Superintendent Altvater, Fla. SP-10, of the fawn at Highlands Hammock which appears to be a radical departure from the normal, at least in so far as color is concerned.

The "calico pattern" apparently is due to a partial albinism, although the true white may appear later or the entire color may conform to that of a normal deer toward maturity. Albinos appear to be more common in isolated districts, but it has reported in regions well stocked with deer. The white is not always complete. It is entirely possible the fawn is only a partial albino and there is no way of determining what the color will be at maturity.

Regarding the shape, we are reminded that during the recent war when ships, guns, trucks, etc. were camouflaged they did not appear normal in shape. Perhaps the color pattern of the fawn tends to create an apparent change in stature.

We shall be pleased to further comment on observations of the fawn.

Sincerely yours,

Carl P. Russell,
Regional Director.

By *O. E. Taylor*
O. E. Taylor,
Acting Regional
Wildlife Technician.

In duplicate
cc: Washington, Wildlife Div.



L to R: Joe Mcbeth, M. M. Ferguson, Capt. James Crane, Lt. Gov. Nixon, and Bert Harris.

Highlands Hammock State Park

Celebrating 50 Years
March 14, 1981



Capt James Crane



L to R: Capt. James Crane, Allen Altvater, Lea Marrs, and Joe Mcbeth.



DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF EMIL BILLITZ SR. AND
COUNTLESS OTHER C.C.C. ENROLLEES WHO WERE INJURED,
DISABLED OR LOST THEIR LIVES IN PERFORMANCE OF THEIR
DUTY. WE ESPECIALLY REMEMBER THE 228 C.C.C. MEMBERS
WHO PERISHED SEPTEMBER 2, 1935 DURING A HURRICANE
AT THREE CAMPS, UPPER KEYS, FLORIDA

DONATED BY
HENRY BILLITZ
AND N.A.C.C.A.
1997

Today statues stand as sentinels to America's landmarks

“Their presence informs Americans about the legacy and value of natural resource conservation and the care of public land.”

“Iron Mike”, dedicated August 2, 1997. The fourth CCC worker statue was donated by Henry Billitz in honor of his brother, Emil Billitz who suffered complete paralysis as the result of a truck accident while serving in the CCC. Through hard work and therapy he regained the use of his upper body. The statue is also dedicated to the 2,876 men who lost their lives while working for the CCC between 1933 and 1942. For more information on these statues, go to www.ccclegacy.org/statue_program.htm.



CCC Museum and Signage



September 2008

Highlands Hammock State Park
Park Superintendents/Managers

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| C. R. Vinten | 1934 - 1935 |
| Allen C. Altvater | 1935 - 1942 |
| E. L. Greene * | 1946 |
| Guy Van Duyn * | 1948 |
| Joe Brown | 19 ? - 19 ? |
| J. R. Tipping * | 1954 |
| Paul Walker * | 1959 |
| James Cook | 19 ? - 1965 |
| Bob Baylor | 1965 - 1967 |
| George McGraw | 1967 - 1977 |
| James Crane | 1978 - 1983 |
| Peter A. Anderson | 1983 - to present |

* Although we do not know exactly when their service began or ended, records do show they held this position for the year shown.



Main Entrance - Ranger's Station

September 2008



Entrance into the primitive camping area



CCC Museum



Ranger's Station

Our Purpose

Dedicated to research, preservation, and the education of future generations to create a better understanding of the Civilian Conservation Corps and its continuing contribution to the American life and culture.



"Passing the legacy to the next generation"

Current Projects

Support construction of the CCC Interpretive Center Exhibits

CCC Workers Statue in every state

Educational Program Development

Our Goals

Honor..... those who became stewards of the land economic crises

Preserve... the stories of people and projects

Support..... and preserve the heritage of the CCC

Build..... support for a CCC Interpretive Center

Strengthen..... the CCC legacy.

What is the legacy?

Originated **modern conservation methods**

Created the infrastructure of the **outdoor recreational system**

Developed **forest fire fighting methods**

Restored depleted fish and wildlife

Established and maintained **fish hatcheries**

Built roads and hiking trails to benefit work and recreation

Replenished depleted forests by **planting nearly 3 billion trees**

Camp life **developed potential soldiers** to support WWII effort

Financial allotments **supported enrollees families**

Serves as the model for the **modern Conservation Corps system**

Join us!

Help us...

*Continue our
Commitment to the
Corps!*

*Please
Volunteer*



Civilian Conservation Corps Legacy

“An invitation to pass on the legacy”

**30 years of commitment - combined with
second generation appreciation**

Membership Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Yes, I will join the effort to honor the CCC !

Dues Amount: _____

Additional Contribution: _____

Total Contribution: _____

*Become a
MEMBER!
Help us honor
the CCC!*

Dues \$20 per individual

Dues are subject to change
without notice

Mail membership to:

**CCC Legacy
P.O. Box 341
Edinburg, VA 22824**

Phone: 540-984-8735
Fax: 540-984-4418

ccc@ccclegacy.org
www.ccclegacy.org

*CCC Legacy is a Virginia tax
exempt heritage organization
Donations are tax deductible.*

I was an enrollee of the CCC ____ OR a family member was an enrollee ____

Name _____

Relationship _____

Company No. _____ Location _____ Dates _____

Company No. _____ Location _____ Dates _____

Company No. _____ Location _____ Dates _____

Type of work performed _____

Date of Birth (optional) _____

OR I am interested in "Preserving the Legacy" _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Request for Discharge Papers

All CCC personnel records are held in the National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis, MO. These records are not public information, but are available upon request to next of kin. When requesting, please be patient as this can take several weeks.

If you are requesting information on a deceased individual, proof of death must accompany the request. You can use a dated obituary, funeral brochure, or death certificate. Try and include as much information itemized below as possible. **Fill out the information on the bottom of this page and mail it to the address below. For your reference, save a copy of the request and make a note of the date it was mailed.**

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)
National Personnel Records Center
Civilian Personnel Records
111 Winnebago Street
St. Louis, MO 63118
Telephone: 314-801-9250
Fax: 314-801-8270

Request for Discharge Papers CCC Enrollee Information

Enrollee Name: _____
Last First Middle Nickname

Enrollee Birth date: _____ Branch of Service: Civilian Conservation Corps

Hometown at time of enrollment: _____

Separation Date: (if known) _____

Location of Camp: (if known) _____

Social Security Number: (if known) _____

Requestor Information

Your Mailing Address: _____
Street or P.O. Box

_____ City State Zip

Your Name: _____ Date: _____
Printed or typed

Your Signature: _____

A look at Highlands Hammock State Park today!



Start of the "Turkey Trot" 5K race (November 24, 2008)



CCC Enrollee's - L to R: Norman Welch, Velmar Mack, Sydney Mander, and Phil Simpson (Jan 2009)



Ellen Andrews, Florida Park Service, and Dorothy Harris, PSS

OVER THE YEARS...



Peter Anderson
Park Manager

Over the years some things have changed, while others have remained the same. We have continued to work on the restoration of plant communities; including the cutthroat seeps, pine flatwoods and scrublands. The Cypress Swamp Trail “boardwalk,” our most popular trail, had a face lift in 1988. The beginning of the walkway was widened from just four boards to a wheelchair-accessible width, including railings. The park’s former interpretive center building became the state’s Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Museum around 1993-94, and then in 2002, a \$250,000 renovation project was completed. It became a store house of information, a showcase of memorabilia and an excellent example of the outstanding workmanship

that helped shape park facilities as we see them today. Our bridges (South Canal, dam and Cottage Road) experienced complete restorations, retaining the original wooden CCC-era appearance. The park’s Recreation Hall facility was upgraded from an open screen room to glass-enclosed facility with central heat/air conditioning, new flooring and upgraded kitchen appliances. The park’s administration office moved several times from it’s origins in the ranger station, to the Herbarium building, and finally to its present location in a renovated forestry building in the East Residence area.

Prescribed fire continues to shape the landscape here. This control burning, or fire management, is what keeps the most important things the same – our natural resources. The long term care of the park’s plant communities, the wildlife management, and the preservation of the park’s cultural resources are the things that I am most proud of participating in during my years here. Today we are offering more activities, events and programs to let visitors know what we have and to show how much we care about it.

The citizens of this county have always known the importance of Highlands Hammock State Park to their community. This community support began in the 1930s and continues today with the Friends of Highlands Hammock, the park’s Citizen Support Organization (CSO). This great group of individuals continues to show their love and support of the park through their supportive efforts.

So you can see there have been changes in facilities and that's needed, but what hasn't changed is the historic appearance and design of the park. It is good to hear visitors share their memories of past visits to the park, especially when it was years before and they remark on how little things have changed.

So many accomplishments and improvements have been implemented over the years, really too many to list in this brief narrative. Some of special note would include:

- The park's volunteer program grew from 6 people to 75-80 active volunteers.
- We celebrated our 23rd year of CCC festivals in November 2008.
- Interpretive programs have been transformed from a simple slide program to PowerPoint presentations via a laptop computer and projection unit.
- Outdoor, evening concerts were added in 2002, raising thousands of dollars for park improvements via the Friends of Highlands Hammock.
- Camping reservations evolved from handwritten "pink" cards to a fully computerized, nationwide reservation system (ReserveAmerica.com).
- The park is well featured on many web sites, including two that are park specific.
- Park attendance in the 1980s was 142,000 and by 2007 it had increased to 214,000 annual visitors.
- Back in the 1980s not much was said about economic impact, but in 2007 the park's direct economic impact on our community was \$ 9,920,627!
- The Hammock Inn, our park concession, has changed operators over the years but the "famous" Wild Orange pie is still served today.
- The park itself has increased from around 3,800-acres to 9,250-acres, including the 845-acre Lake June-in-Winter Scrub State Park which is also managed by Hammock staff.
- Employees have changed over the years, but the vision of preservation for Highlands Hammock continues.

So while some things have changed and needed to change, others continue to stay the same, ensuring that Highlands Hammock State Park remains a very special place.

Peter A. Anderson, Park Manager
June 1983 to present
Highlands Hammock State Park
January 9, 2009

Park Staff - Front row (kneeling), L to R: Blake Lewis, Park Ranger; Rick Sanchez, Park Ranger; and Steve Barrera, Park Ranger.

Second row: Gordon Bayless, OPS Maintenance; Judy Buchanan, Park Ranger; Torrey Riley, Park Ranger; and Brenda Broder, Park Ranger.

Back row: Peter Anderson, Park Manager; Debbie Klein, Administrative Assistant; Carla Sherwin, Park Ranger; Dorothy Harris, Park Services Specialist; Cheryl Evans, OPS Clerk Typist Specialist; Mike Sawyer, OPS; George Molinaro, Maintenance Mechanic; Jerry Dooley, OPS Maintenance; and Jeanne Parks, Asst. Park Manager.

Not in photo: Scott Paterson, Park Ranger.

(OPS = Other Personnel Service)

Park Volunteers - Front row (kneeling), L to R: Ken Stickle, Lewis Young, Jerry Stoops, Ray Toplak, Merrie Metzger, Lori DeBok, Pat Toplak, Ron DeBok, Grace Sogonia, and Neva Young..

Second row: Steve Wells, Valeta Siebeneck, Mary Wied, Esther Stoops, Margaret Stickle, Kate Filer, Julia Arnold, Jim Arnold, Jim Filer, and Ellen Lamb.

Back row: Darrel Smith, Jeff Naylor, Norman Welch, Ian McDougall, Richard Heaton, Norman Siebeneck, Jim White, and Rod Holloway.



(Photo editing by Mike Sawyer - January 2009)



Museum Volunteers - Front row (kneeling), L to R: Steve Wells and Darrel Smith.

Second row: Richard Heaton, Jim White, Neva Young, Merrie Metzger, Grace Sagona, and Mary Wied.

Back row: Ellen Lamb, Lewis Young, Norman Welch, Ken Sticklely, Margaret Sticklely, and Ian McDougall.

CCC Chapter 169 - Front row (seated), L to R: Betty Simpson, Velmar Mack, Verna Mander, Sydney Mander, and Elaine Levey..

Second row: Helene Rivers, Phil Simpson, Edwina Clifford, and Larry Levey.

Back row: Dennis Faulkner, Clifford Faulkner, Boyd Coudriot, and Norman Welch.

(Underlined name indicate CCC Enrollee)





Highlands Hammock State Park

5931 Hammock Road
Sebring, Florida 33872
(863) 386-6094

General Information



Tram Tours, Programs, & Nature Walks: Ride the tram through the hammock visiting remote areas of the park. Cost is \$4.00 per adults; children age 6-12 are \$2.00, under age 6 are free. Sign up at Ranger Station. Tram Schedule: Tuesday-Friday: 1:00 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday: 1:00 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. Tram tours are one hour in length and travel to areas of the park where visitors will see alligators, turtles, wading birds and more.



Ranger's Programs are presented seasonally on Thursday nights and Interpretive Programs and Campfire Circles are presented seasonally on Saturday nights. Please inquire at Ranger Station. Nature Walks are led on Mondays at 10:00 a.m., Nov. 1 - Apr 30. Sign up at Ranger Station.



Picnicking: When you visit Highlands Hammock, don't forget to pack a basket or cooler and enjoy a leisurely picnic in the park. Designed areas for picnicking are located throughout the park. There are several reservable picnic pavilions for large gatherings. Rental deposits and reservations are required for the pavilions, so please call (863) 386-6094 to either make a reservation or obtain more details. Please do not litter, trash receptacles are available throughout the park.

BBQ grills are also available. The Hammock Inn, our park's concession, and the State of Florida's Civilian Conservation Corps Museum are also located in the picnic area.



Facilities: Restroom facilities are located throughout the park and many are ADA accessible. Highlands Hammock State Park contains many historical structures and continues to upgrade visitor facilities for accessibility. For your convenience, please inquire at the Ranger Station upon arrival for specific locations of ADA-accessible facilities.



Access: Again, some facilities and activities are accessible to the handicapped. See the park ranger for special needs.

Camping: There are three camping areas: a family campground for tent and trailer camping, a wilderness camping area, and a youth camp area.



The family campground is a full facility campground offering water, electrical hookups, a dump station, and access to restrooms with shower facilities. Nearly all sites offer some shade, and are close to nature trails, picnic area, and the Hammock Inn concession. Reservations may be made up to eleven months in advance. One night's camping fee deposit is required. For more information on camping in our park, please visit Reserve America on-line at www.ReserveAmerica.com, or call 1-800-326-3521.



The Wilderness camping area offers primitive sites with no electricity or running water. A composting toilet is in the area and showers (in the family campground) are available to patrons. Camp sites have ground fire rings and picnic tables - they are located in an open pine flatwoods area.



The Youth Camping area is situated in an oak hammock setting in the western portion of the park property. A restroom facility with running water, electric, and shower is located on site, along with a fire ring and picnic tables. Please contact the Ranger Station to inquire about availability, rules & requirements, and required fees for its use.



Pets: Pets are welcome in all outdoor areas, including campgrounds of the park. For their safety, please refrain from walking dogs on boardwalks without double railings. (Alligators may be present in all wetland areas of the park.) Pets must be confined, leashed (not to exceed six feet in length) or otherwise under the physical control of a person at all times. Tethered pets must not be left unattended for more than 30 minutes. Quiet hours must be observed from 11:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. Pet owners must pick up after their pets and properly dispose of all pet droppings in trash receptacles. Florida law requires that all pets be vaccinated against rabies. Any pet that is noisy, dangerous, intimidating, or destructive will not be allowed to remain in the park. There may be additional rules concerning pets, if so, you can obtain these at the Ranger Station. Remember, failure to abide by these rules may result in the camper being asked to board the pet outside the park or to leave the campground.



Bicycling: A paved loop drive through the hammock offers nature study and is ideal for cyclists as bicycles are not permitted on the nature trails. This drive is smooth and suitable for roller-blading, or skating. A dirt trail begins at the ranger station and travels through the remote camping area, crossing over County Road 634 and then through remote areas east of the main campgrounds. Total mileage: 8 miles. Bike rentals are available at the ranger station.



Hiking and Nature Study: The park's fine system of trails and interpretation offers excellent hiking and nature opportunities. Stroll along the elevated boardwalk over Charlie Bowlegs Creek and search the tea-colored water for alligators. Walk along the boardwalk of the Memorial Trail and view the colorful, scattered leaves. See fall in Florida, and maybe observe a flock of white Ibis feeding. Walk deep into the woods under the expansive tree canopy of the Ancient Hammock Trail. Wonder over giant oaks and their airplants-laden branches. Additional hiking opportunities through scrub habitats are available at the Lake June in Winter addition. Inquire at the Ranger Station for more details and directions.



Fitness Trail: For a trail of guided markers, follow the paved loop drive through the hammock. Be sure to bring water and stretch before any strenuous activities. Total mileage is 3.2 with 20 exercise stations on intervals located along the path.



Horse Trail: Horseback riding is available for those wishing to ride their own horses on firelane trails through remote natural areas of the park. Be sure to bring a negative "Coggins" report. Daily equestrian fee is \$6.00. Please contact the park to make reservations.



Birding: The park's varied habitats provide excellent birding opportunities for all enthusiasts and are part of the Great Florida Birding trail. A bird checklist is available at the Ranger Station.



Concessions: The Hammock Inn Restaurant offers meals, refreshments, snacks, cold drinks, and souvenirs. Restaurant Summer Hours are: Tuesday-Sunday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Live music is performed on special occasions on Friday nights from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. For more information, please call (863) 385-7025.



Playgrounds: There are three playground areas, the largest in the picnic area, another in the family campground area, and the third at the park's Recreation Hall area. Playgrounds are located within a 10 minute walk from each other. Please use playgrounds at your own risk.

The county road that goes through the park, CR634, is open 24 hours. Please be aware of through traffic and practice safety at all times.

Campground Rules and General Information

1. Check out time is 1:00PM. Please stop at the Ranger Station to check out.
2. Fires must be contained in grills only.
3. For your safety, feeding of wildlife is prohibited.
4. Gathering wood is not permitted. Firewood is available for purchase at the Ranger Station for \$ 4.00 a bundle.
5. 11:00PM to 7:00AM are quiet hours to be observed by all campers.
6. Visitors under 18 years of age must be in the company of an adult during their visit to the park.
7. Please do not use trees to tie or hang lanterns, hammocks, or clotheslines.
8. Please ask for information on motor cycle regulations at ranger station.
9. Please do not use sinks inside restrooms for washing dishes. This destroys drainfields and surfaces of fixtures. Wash sinks are available at RR 43 near site 93.
10. Bicycle rentals are available. Check with the Ranger Station for details. All bicycles must follow traffic flow (to the right on Loop Drive) and single file. **State Law requires helmets for children under 16.** The Ranger Station has a limited number of helmets available for guests.
11. Camp supplies, coffee, soda, snacks, and souvenirs are available at the Hammock Inn.
12. A book exchange is available at the laundry near site 75.
13. Please use closed containers for sink gray water by order of the County Health Department. Gray water can then be disposed of at the dump station.
14. **Pets must be kept on a six foot, hand held leash and well behaved at all times.** Owners shall pick up and properly dispose of all pet droppings in trash receptacles. Pets which are noisy, vicious, dangerous, disturbing, or intimidating to other persons, and pets which damage park resources are considered to be nuisances and will not be permitted to remain in the park.

Emergency Telephone Numbers

| | |
|---|-------------------------|
| <i>Ranger's Station</i> | <i>863-386-6094</i> |
| <i>Park Manager</i> | <i>863-386-6097</i> |
| <i>Asst. Park Manager</i> | <i>863-386-6098</i> |
| <i>Emergency use of campground phone,</i> | <i>dial 9, then 911</i> |
| <i>Ambulance or County Sheriff</i> | <i>911</i> |
| <i>Florida Heartland Hospital</i> | <i>863-314-4466</i> |
| <i>Highlands Regional Medical Center</i> | <i>863-385-6101</i> |

“FRIENDS ARE IMPORTANT”

The Friends of Highlands Hammock State Park is a nonprofit 501(C)(3) organization whose purpose is to promote partnership between the community and our local state park by:

- Promoting environmental programs, camping, picnicking, hiking, bike riding, wildlife education, and the State of Florida CCC Museum.
- Fund-raising to provide additional amenities throughout the park.
- Hands-on assistance to the park management in facility maintenance, resource management, interpretive programs, and recycling.

Membership Includes These Benefits:

- **Membership Outings**
- **Special Tours**
- **Quarterly Newsletter**
- **Participation In State CSO Meetings**
- **Community Involvement Through Special Events**
- **FREE Park Admission For Your Family Twelve Days A Year**

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please print page, complete the form, and return by mail with donation to the below address.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL _____ TELEPHONE (____) _____

Interests, hobbies or skills you might want to share as a park volunteer:

Yes! I would like to help the park!

_____ Individual membership \$ 15.00 _____ Family membership \$ 25.00

All Memberships run Oct 1st through Sept. 30th. New members may prorate donations by subtracting \$ 1.25 for individual or \$ 2.00 per month for Family memberships.

_____ Business membership \$ 75.00 _____ Lifetime membership \$ 500.00

_____ I am interested in participating as an active volunteer member.

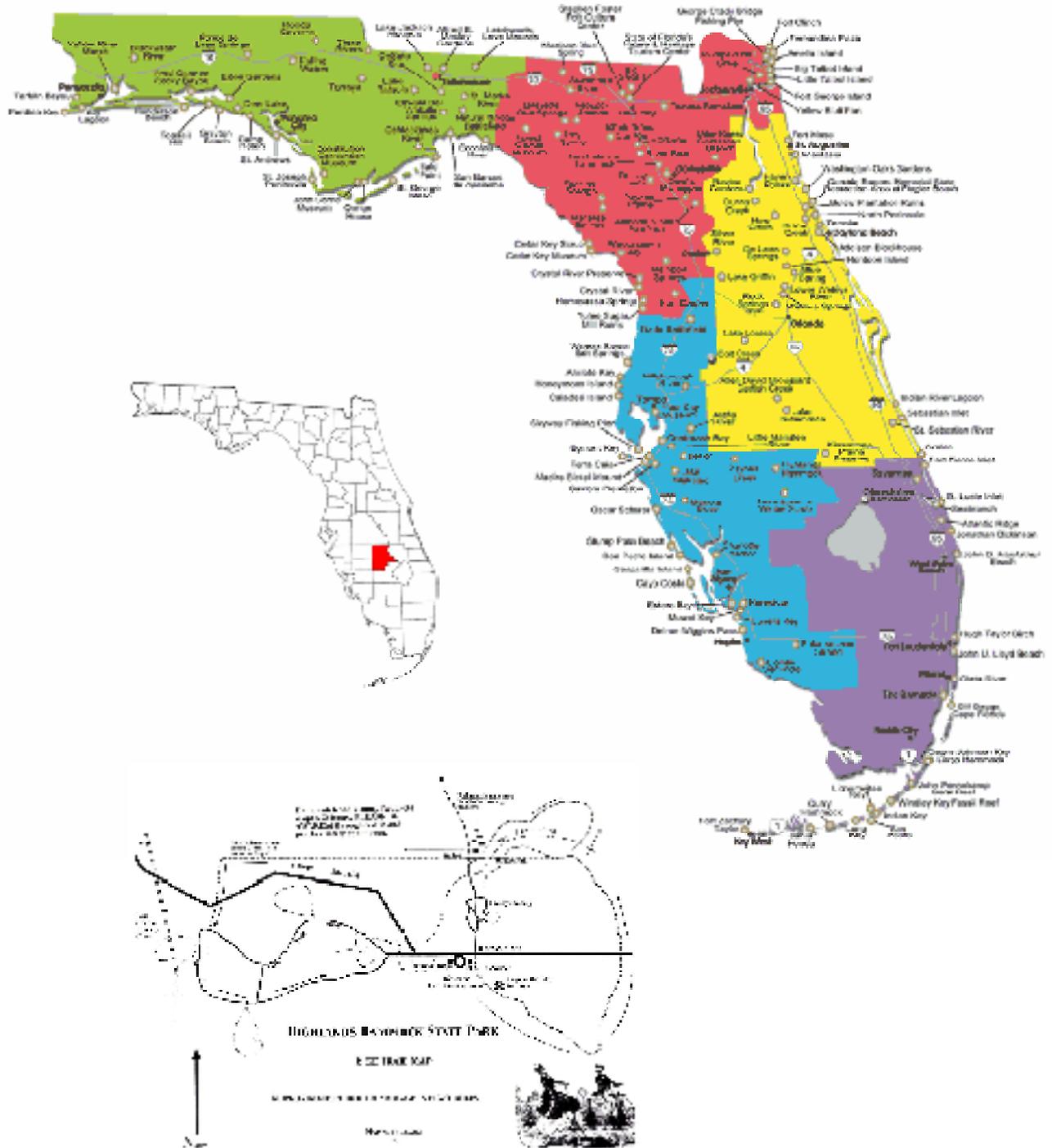
_____ I am interested in being a silent partner. _____ I am interested in serving as a board member.

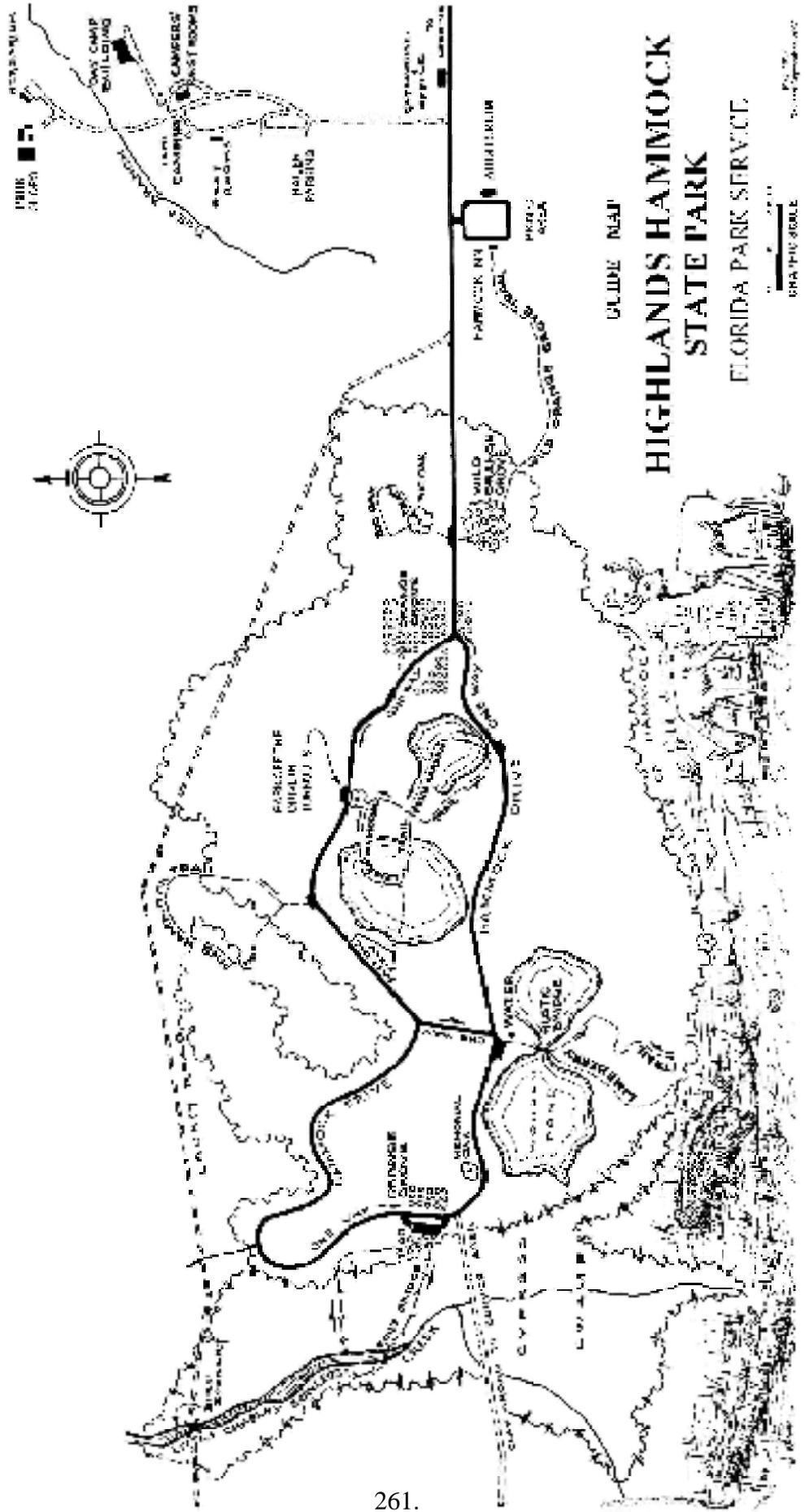
_____ I would like to know of other ways I may help contribute, please contact me.

Please send your application and donation to this address:

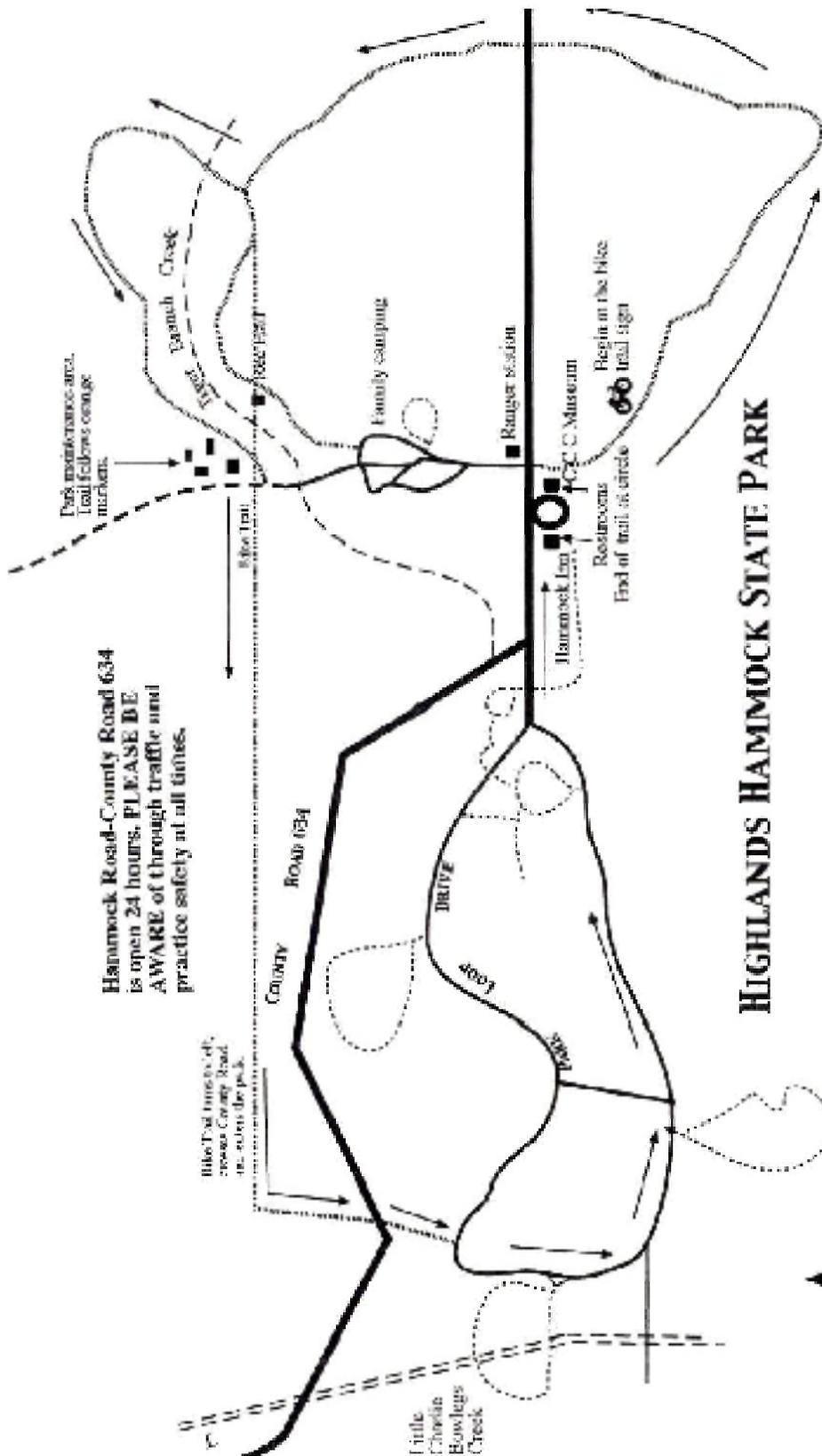
Friends of Highlands Hammock State Park
5931 Hammock Road
Sebring, FL 33872

- Maps -





GUIDE MAP
**HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK
 STATE PARK**
 FLORIDA PARK SERVICE



Hammock Road-County Road 634 is open 24 hours. PLEASE BE AWARE of through traffic and practice safety at all times.

Bike Trail branches off across County Road 634 into the park.

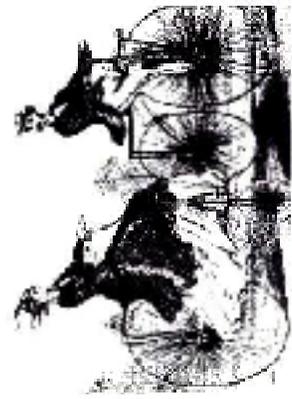
Park maintenance area. Trail follows orange markers.

HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK STATE PARK

BIKE TRAIL MAP

APPROXIMATE ROUND TRIP MILEAGE IS EIGHT MILES

MAP NOT TO SCALE
1/8"



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