

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 Roebing 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 Roebing 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. Roebing'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 FERA project, 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.