

The **SEVENTY - FIVE**

Years Of

SEBRING

1912 - 1987

History and Official Program

OCTOBER 11-18, 1987

PUBLISHED BY
BOOK PUBLICATION COMMITTEE
Sebring Historical Society



A View From Allen

Every year there is a compounded interest in the history of Sebring and demands for information about events and personalities that have transformed a village of less than a hundred property owners in 1912 to a community (seventy-five years later) in which it is almost impossible to find a vacant building lot.

It is well that a pause is taken periodically as is now in progress in 1987, to reflect on the progress and especially to document the strides that have been taken. It is suitable that records be made of the businesses, the civic and religious groups, the fraternal and social clubs and, especially, the people who are prominent in all walks of life in the community. The "Seventy-Five Years of Sebring" constitutes such a record.

In 1962, an ad hoc committee published a booklet titled "The Fifty Years of Sebring" and it became the spark plug that fired the movement to form the Sebring Historical Society. Old-timers and pioneers responded with stories of experiences and their family histories. Since then, the ripples on the pond have widened and two other historical societies have been added in Highlands County. All three are healthy and active.

The observance of the 75th Anniversary also provides an opportunity to call attention to some of the products of Sebring schools who have emigrated from Sebring and have brought great credit to the City in their successes in their various fields of endeavor. To name a few, these would include Dr. Howard Weems who has earned national recognition in the field of Entomology; Dr. John Price, Dean

of Law, University of Washington; Dr. Hugh Price, Professor of Law Harvard; Dr. Max Brunk, Cornell University; Parker Lee McDonald, Chief Justice Florida Supreme Court; Dr. Clarence Campbell, Florida State Veterinarian; Orval Sebring, noted Philadelphia Attorney; and in the business field three recognized Certified Public Accountants, George Marchand, Carl Tripp and Claude Hamrick. Then, there was the World War II Flying Ace and Congressional Medal winner, Tommie McGuire.

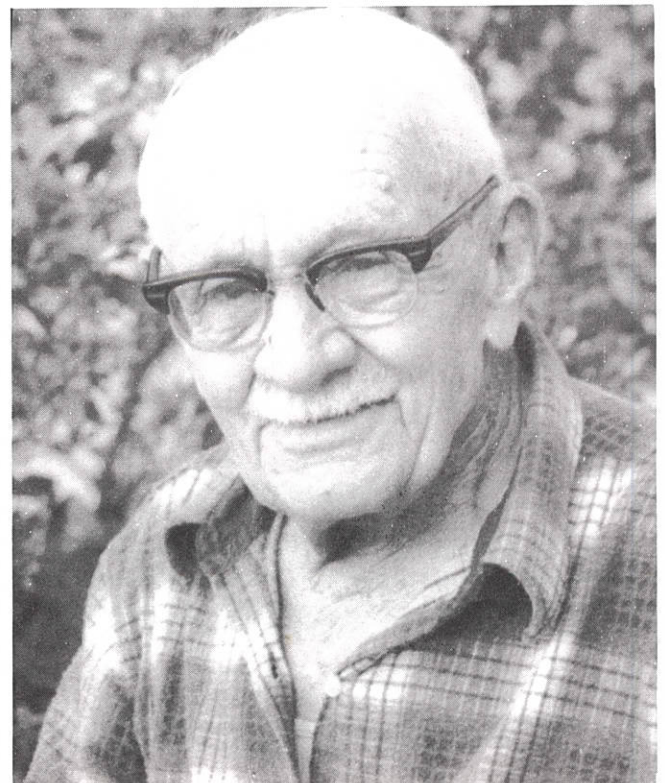
At the risk of being criticized for omitting the names of many who have remained in Sebring, attention is called to a few examples of Sebring students who have continued to keep Sebring on a steady and prosperous course in the area of government and business; the Schumacher boys, Doyle and Floyd; Woodrow Harshman; the Heston boys, Norman and Cecil; Jake Butler and Smith Rudasill; Gene Sauls and the Kahn Siblings, Ruth, Marvin and Bucky; Dr. Howard Crawford and Jim Crawford; Ellene Fields; Bill Young; Miles Baker and the Sebrings, Payne, Billie, and Gene III; and Jack Stroup.

There are, of course, many, many more who merit prominent mention in history. Increasing interest in the story of Sebring will guarantee more documentation and more detailed information. It is hoped that the "Seventy-Five Years of Sebring" will help provide stimulus to this increasing interest.

Allen Altvater

ALLEN ALTVATER

Allen arrived in Sebring in 1915. He worked in the construction business. In 1925 he became the fire chief and due to his leadership, the Sebring Firemen have become a leading influence in the field of recreation in Sebring. When the depression of the thirties arrived, Allen assumed the job of City Manager and helped to restore the City's credit. This was followed by the role of Superintendent of the CCC camp at Highlands Hammock. He has always assumed paternal interest in Highlands Hammock, in its founding and operation. He served as a Seabee during World War II in the Pacific. On his return to Sebring he served for many years as manager and promoter of the Sebring Air Terminal. All the while, Allen has become known as Sebring's chief historian, not only in writing, assembling, but actually physically printing books, articles and bulletins on his printing press.



ALLEN C. ALTVATER

Official Program

75TH DIAMOND JUBILEE CELEBRATION OCTOBER 10-18, 1987

EVERY DAY, October 12-16

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM — Registration at Chamber of Commerce

SATURDAY, October 10

9:00 AM - 4:00 PM — Heartland Heritage Sampler
Arts, Crafts, Country Furnishings, Antiques
Highlands County Fairgrounds

SUNDAY, October 11

10:55 AM — Sebring First Baptist Church - Dedication of New Sanctuary

3:00 - 4:30 PM — 75th Jubilee Musicale
Sebring Lake Poets (National Poetry Week)
Music By: Sebring Schools

MONDAY, October 12

9:00 AM — Diamond Jubilee Prayer Breakfast - Sebring Woman's Club

12:00 Noon — Rotary Club Luncheon

3:00 - 7:00 PM — Historic Homes Tours

TUESDAY, October 13

12:00 Noon — Lion's Club Luncheon

WEDNESDAY, October 14

12:00 Noon — Kiwanis Club Luncheon

7:00 PM — Union Church Service - First Baptist Church New Sanctuary -
Sebring Ministerial Association

8:00 PM — Gospel Sing in the Circle

THURSDAY, October 15

— Homecoming Parade
— Art League - Sebring Art Display
— Water Show on the Lake
— Highlands Little Theatre

FRIDAY, October 16

— Sebring High School Homecoming

SATURDAY, October 17

9:00 - 5:00 PM — Downtown Sebring "Heritage Sale Day"
Window Display Contest - Sponsored by Main Street

9:00 - 4:30 PM — Hammock State Park CCC Festival Day
Second Annual Celebration of CCC Camps Statewide -
Special Events - Tours

— 75th Diamond Jubilee Ball - Sebring Special Events Committee

SUNDAY, October 18 — GRAND FINALE AT THE FAIRGROUNDS

12:00 - 2:00 PM — 75th Diamond Jubilee Barbecue - Fairgrounds
Sponsored by Firemen's Association

1:00 PM — Highlands County Band Concert

2:00 - 3:30 PM — Sebring Historical Society Presents:
Sebring's Pioneers: Introduction and Recognition
Speaker: Orvel Sebring
Pioneer Social Hour





Book Publishing Committee for "The Seventy-Five Years of Sebring"

Seated Left to Right: Perry Arthur, Vernon Bielefeld, Howard Crawford, Allen Altvater, Jack Ingle, Ruth Sebring, Herbert Karpicke; Standing Left to Right: Audrey Vickers, Happy Stephenson, Weldon Emmett, Albert Fulton, Charles Rafferty, Gordon Rose, Tom Mitchell, Gene Scheck, Ray Graddy, Steve Scheck, Culp Dottery, Luther Safriet, Jo Ann Walz, Larry Lynd, Al Tumbleston, Chuck McCormack. Missing from picture are: Clagett Taylor, Jr., Ray Deloney, Bruce Sherwood, Ruth Niebauer, Terrill Morris, Mark Breed, Ruth Davis, Billy Cason, Dan Johnson and Dave Nicholson.

Forward

The 75 Years of Sebring: as history goes, Sebring is very young. There are still folks around that can remember the beginning in 1912. Thanks to M. W. Baker, who took lots of pictures in the early days, and John Newcomb, who made a detailed diary of day to day events, we have a very accurate picture of what went on from 1911 to 1916.

There were many people involved in the production of this "history" book; many more than pictured above. Under the guidance and suggestions of Allen Altvater, we hope we have a book that tells the story of the city we love in an interesting fashion.

Specifically, the ad sales were undertaken by Jack Ingle, together with many willing helpers, listed above. Jack and his crew devoted many days and hours to the project, and they should be applauded loudly. After all, it was the ads that actually paid for the books, which incidently exceeded the purchase price. This was the plan from the beginning: produce a book that you would be proud to have in your library; and charge a small enough amount that anyone who desired a book could afford one; and above all, not to lose money on the project.

The sum you paid for the book will go toward building a permanent home for the Sebring Historical

Society, which is now housed in the basement of the Sebring Police station and is inadequate.

Dr. Howard Crawford, as editorial chairman, together with Audrey Vickers have put together the literary and editorial content of the book. They have solicited help from many others in the community. They have done an excellent job as you may well see, as you make your way through the book.

Aida Schumacher has taken on the monumental job of distribution of the books through clubs and organizations throughout the city.

Ruth Dottery has been in charge of the mail order copies and her enthusiasm has really been appreciated.

Last, but certainly not least, Ray Graddy, (who was chairman of the Fifty Year Anniversary issue) took over the responsibility of the final completion phases of the book.

I wish to thank all those that contributed time and money to this project. It has really been appreciated. It is my hope that this book will be a catalyst that cause us all to be more conscious of our heritage, and no matter how recently you arrived in Sebring you will want to join the Sebring Historical Society.

Tom Mitchell, Chairman

"The Seventy-Five Years of Sebring" Book Committee

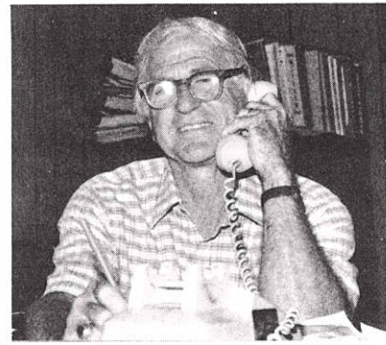
WHEREAS, George E. Sebring, with the visionary creativity that made him a leader with many talents, decided in 1912 to build a very special city on the shores of the pristine waters of Lake Jackson and to name this city Sebring; and

WHEREAS, George E. Sebring's plans for the city of Sebring were very complex and required many people to work diligently, so he brought to the city of Sebring hard-working people who were builders, merchants, farmers, professionals, and laborers, who worked hard and all prospered, thereby causing the city of Sebring to grow rapidly; and

WHEREAS, the sickly and elderly found the sunny, warm climate helpful, so George E. Sebring did give direction to promoting the city of Sebring as a year round healthy home or winter haven for the ill and elderly even today; and

WHEREAS, George E. Sebring was a man of strong religious faith who encouraged the establishment of many churches and, for many years, donated land to religious groups to construct their place of worship so that today the city of Sebring is noted for its large number of churches and for the diversity of religious groups;

NOW, THEREFORE, as I view the growth, prosperity and well-being of the city of Sebring and its citizens, I, Smith J. Rudasill, Jr., by virtue of the



SMITH J. RUDASILL, JR.

authority vested in me as Mayor of the city of Sebring, do hereby proclaim the year 1987 as the

DIAMOND YEAR OF THE CITY OF SEBRING and urge all citizens, groups, clubs and societies to join in year-long celebration.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City of Sebring, Florida to be affixed this _____ day of _____, 1987.



Smith J. Rudasill, Jr.
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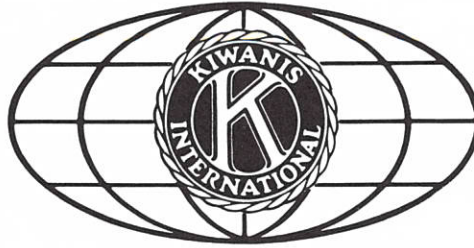
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OUT OF THE PAST

By Marguerite Stewart Skipper

It is not known who is responsible for the quotation "the best tool for self enrichment is the study of the past", but to Dr. Max Rafferty, California school superintendent, is credited the statement, "...need to learn about the past. Without such knowledge, they must walk down the long corridor of life with shut doors barring rays of light as guides for the next step."

When Howard Crawford called to ask me if I would write some of the early history of what is now Sebring and Highlands County for the "75 Years of Sebring Anniversary" book, I accepted.

Later after many hours of misgiving thoughts, wondering where to begin, . . . HERE I GO. . . Marguerite Skipper from "Stake Ford Marsh" with a few "Cracker Stories" and historical facts that I hope you will enjoy.

February 22, 1821 President James Monroe proclaimed the Adams-Onis Treaty making Florida a territory of the United States. On March 12th of that same year Secretary of State John Quincy Adams issued to General Andrew Jackson three commissions: to receive, possess, and to occupy the ceded lands; to govern the Floridas; and to establish territorial government. Jackson refused to enter Pensacola until he could go in as governor. History indicated that Jackson was never happy at Pensacola. He disliked very much dealing with his old enemies the Spaniards, who had been given six months to conclude their affairs.

He also had discovered that President Monroe had appointed the most important officials for the Territory without consulting him. It was now late in the summer and the weather was at times uncomfortably hot and humid. He seemed most of all unhappy about having been called out of retirement for what he considered a thankless assignment.

One of Governor Jackson's first acts was to organize the Floridas as a single territory and the two original counties were formed. Escambia County covered everything west of the Suwannee River and St. Johns County covered all the area east and south of the Suwannee River. All the territory south of the Georgia line to the Florida Keys was included in St. Johns County.

County division talk started from the beginning in 1821. The settlers moving further into the frontier wanted their seat of government to be nearer to them, also the large counties were anxious to divide their vast territories because it was impossible for the officials to travel such great distances to collect taxes, serve warrants, hold court, etc...

In the span of 166 years the present Highlands County has been in the area of five different counties. In 1824 Alachua County with Newsmansville as the county seat, in 1834 Hillsboro County with Tampa as

the county seat, in 1855 Manatee County with Pine Level as the county seat, in 1887 DeSoto with Arcadia the county seat.

Then in 1921 old DeSoto County was divided to form four new counties, Highlands, Hardee, Glades and Charlotte. This was one time that county division was difficult to obtain; but with organized efforts of a great many people, Dr. J.E. Etheridge from DeSoto City being a state senator, it came about.

So promptly, at one o'clock April 23, 1921 Wm. Reck, Secretary of the Campaign Committee for division sent a telegram to the Sebring White Way newspaper saying, "Five county division passed house at one o'clock unanimously."

When my father-in-law, the late Chesley Allen Skipper, would be asked when and where he was born, he would reply: March 24, 1886, NW 1/4 of NW 1/4 of Sec. 6 TWP 36S Range 28E.

The earliest homestead on record in the area, now Highlands County, is dated December 15, 1881 and belonged to his father Johnathan Skipper. Sec. 6 TWP 35S, Range 28E. This is about where the "wild orange grove" is in Highlands Hammock State Park.

"Ches" Skipper; as he was called, would laugh about the "wild orange grove," and say "that grove isn't wild, Papa planted those trees."

He would also remark, "I have lived in three



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counties (because of division) and haven't ever moved over twenty miles from where I was born."

While we all agree our lovely Highlands County is a wonderful place to live, rich in natural beauty and assets, this wasn't always thought to be true. In 1822, the year after the United States took over Florida from Spain, William Pope Duval a judge of East Florida, who was the first territorial governor, decided to send someone to the central and southern part of the state to see if there were any more lands suitable for settlement.

Governor Duval and his territorial council engaged a man named Horatio Dexter, a man with much knowledge of Indians and wilderness life, for the job. He was suppose to come as far south as he thought practical and report his findings to the Governor. Excerpts from his report read in part, "Except for a few scattering hammocks bordering the streams, the land is flat and covered with palmetto and pine.

The hammock lands are rich and suitable for growing cotton, etc... It would be unwise to spend public money to open roads into a country that God Almighty has left in such an unfinished condition. There are a few areas that are fit for human habitation." So it was thirteen years after this report was made before the first roads into the area were started.

Noted historian, the late Park DeVane wrote: One can't talk about the history of roads and trails in

South Florida without talking some about the military history of Florida. The two are inseparable because the soldiers of the United States Army, during the long Seminole Indian Wars, opened most of the roads, beginning in 1835.

They were still opening roads 23 years later in 1858. A 1823 map shows there were many Indian foot paths in South and Central Florida. These were small paths because the Indians traveled in single file. One trail extended from Tampa Bay across the state to Jupiter Inlet, a distance of nearly 200 miles.

After Dexters' report, thirteen years later, the powers in Washington decided that the Indians that had been being pushed further south all the time, must all be captured and moved west. So an army of Indian fighters was assembled in various parts of Florida — upwards of 6,000 men. Colonel William Davenport, with 600 men and a supply train, started his march from Ft. King at Ocala, south to Lakeland, Lake Wales and Frostproof, then west of Avon Park and Highlands Hammock, then south across the prairie to Ft. Reynaud.

Part of this road became Davenport Road. After the Indian War, known as the "Billie Bowlegs War," Davenport Road, in 1855, was re-named "Hooker Trail." This was after Capt. William B. Hooker commander of Co. "M" of Florida Volunteers. Some of the early cattlemen of the Highlands area who fought in the Seminole Indian Wars were, Capt.

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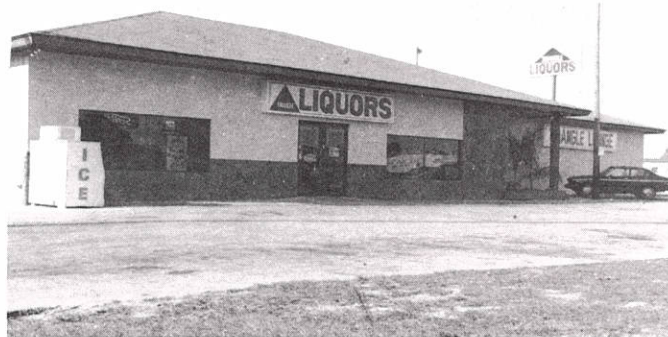
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Hooker, whose headquarters, as well as his cattle pens were located on the west side of Hooker Hammock (Highlands Hammock), Eli Morgan, Aldermans, John L. Skipper, Durrance, Williams, John Mizell Pearce, Whidden, Follier and many others. I wish we could print the "Old Soldiers Roster;" many of the pioneers have descendants still living in this area.

After the "War Between the States" the road was re-named "Footmans Trail" after Maj. William Footman who commanded one of the companies of South-central Florida men, whose duties were to gather cattle for the southern armies.

These Confederate soldiers, sometimes referred to as the "Cow Calvary", were sort of a home guard unit. When a sufficient number of cattle were collected from the rich grazing prairies east of Peace River, they would drive them north to the railhead at Baldwin, Florida where they were delivered to Confederate Commissary Agents; Baldwin was the southern-most railhead at that time. The cattle drive would usually take 45 days and a 700 pound animal lost about 150 pounds in the process; this did nothing to improve the quality of the beef.

This duty was very uninteresting and unglamorous to these men, since this was what they had done all their lives. When the men were in South Florida, some were permitted to go to their homes and families;

some even took time to plant crops and attend to other chores between cattle drives.

Maj. Footman, a dashing young Southern Calvary officer, had heard reports of the great battles of the war that were being fought further to the north, in which the southern soldiers and officers had distinguished themselves on the battlefields; he yearned for a more active part in the war.

While he and his company were on search for cattle deep in the southern part of Florida, around the Caloosahatchee River, he decided the time was right for cattle drivers to take upon themselves a most important role.

Being near Ft. Myers, a Union stronghold, it was decided to capture the fort. First the plan was to storm the fort and surprise the defenders but Maj. Footman decided he would do it as a true "Southern Gentleman"; three men were sent to the Union pickett lines carrying a white flag and a note to the fort commander demanding surrender.

This of course, gave the commander time to muster all his men for battle. Lines were formed and a battle took place. After a few hours of fighting, in which several men from both sides were killed, Maj. Footman withdrew his forces and retreated to the prairie, re-grouped his men, and continued his cattle drive. Due to his efforts the people of Southwest Florida honored him by naming several trails after him.

This story is one of my favorite to re-tell because the old "Footman Trail," winding it's way through the "flat woods" toward Arcadia, goes through our ranch. It was with a real feeling of nostalgia when we had to disc up a part of history several years ago in order to plant pasture grass.

Remember the early settlers, some who were soldiers that were sent here in 1837-38, with their families plodding along day by day, enduring untold hardships in order to settle this area. Little remains to mark their passage. An interesting sidelight: the heavily laden supply wagons of the Army had worn deep ruts in most places, and the pioneers had neglected to notice that the Army wagons had a wider tread than the standard ox cart or wagon. The difference was about ten inches and the settlers discovered it was very uncomfortable to be in and out of the wide tracks.

The TV and newspaper ads a few years ago urged people to "come up to the wide track Pontiac." Pioneers had no choice but to "come up to the wide track ox cart or wagon." The blacksmiths were kept busy extending the cart axles to fit the ruts.

Names of roads, as well as communities, have changed over the years. A few of the old names remaining on the 1981 Highlands County map perhaps you will find of interest.

Venus, (meaning bright and shining star) was the first permanent settlement within the present bounds of Highlands County. It was first called the "Upper Fisheating Creek Settlement." No clear story has ever

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been unearthed about the "Fisheating" part. Albert DeVane did offer a romantic story about the "Venus" designation — how a early settler, returning home after dark from Arcadia, would set his course by the star Venus.

Henscratch, which first bore the name "Guano Hammock", has been the subject of much speculation as to its claim to fame. The generally accepted version is that the area, a sand scrub, was where the wild turkeys would come to dust themselves, and scratch for acorns under the trees.

The first settlers had many "scientific methods" of determining the quality of good land; color being one of them. Hicoria was first known as "Red Lands." The Florida gopher, sometimes called the land turtle that used to be plentiful in the area, digs a hole eight to ten feet deep. The soil, or overburden, that he throws out around the hole is red clay. The name "Red Lands" remained thus until about 1914, when the railroad in surveying for the right of way changed the name to "Hicoria." This is in honor of the scrub hickory (*Hicoria floridana*) which is unique to the ridge of Florida.

About ten miles south of Highlands Hammock (Sec. 29 TWP 26S Range 28E) was an area inhabited by a group of "squatters", runaway slaves, Indians and outlaws who cleared a small area for farming. They soon decided to abandon the "farming bit" for a more relaxed way of life, "live off the land."

The cattlemen and settlers, after letting this go on many years, sometime in the 1880's decided they were tired of their cattle and other crops being stolen; so they got together, mounted on horseback, and with guns, "cleaned out" the "Knoll Residents."

Hog Island, located near the beginning of "Fish-eating Creek", was noted for the many wild hogs that roamed free in the area. It was a hammock, perhaps where Indians' had a house-site camp, in the middle of a large saw grass marsh. After the War Between the States it was many years before people would trust any type of currency other than silver or gold.

One of the principal markets for cattle, in this area, was with Spanish-owned Cuba.

Jacob Summerlin, pioneer, land owner, cattle baron, sometimes referred to as "King of the Crackers" built a wharf at Punta Rassa, where the Caloosahatchee River empties into the Gulf of Mexico, near the present site of Ft. Myers. The wharf, which extended 600 feet out into the bay, to reach deep water, was built out of heart pine logs. Cattlemen would drive their herds, mainly composed of steers, to the wharf where they were loaded on boats for shipment.

Tampa was another port for export. Driving cattle is no easy task; a whip, cracked at the wrong time, a clap of thunder, any unusual sound will "spook", stampede them. When you see the "cowboy in the



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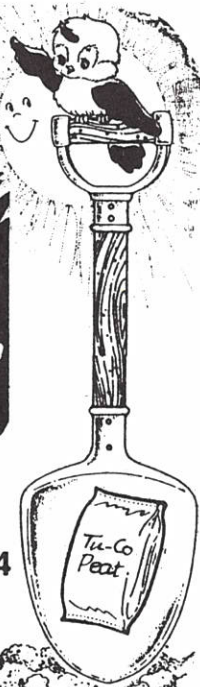
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movie", riding along, "sing-song talking" to the animals, this is truly one of the ways a cattle drive is implemented.

The cattleman would be paid for his livestock, at the loading dock, in silver.

My father-in-law would tell that as a small boy, he remembered being at his grandfather John L. Skippers' home and seeing \$8,000 in silver, which was to be distributed to family members, on the dining room table.

John L., and his sons' had returned from a cattle drive to the Tampa port. The payment, which was in silver, had been carried home on the back of horses in saddle bags. The men stopped over night, to make camp and rest in the "little town" of Bartow. Even so, by the time they reached home the backs of the horses were rubbed raw in spots from the weight of the silver dollars.

I am sure, a small boy, seeing \$8,000 in silver stacked on a table, was a sight he wouldn't ever forget.

Do you remember the "Little Orphan Annie" rhyme: "and all us other children, when the supper things is done, we set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun, A-list'ni to the witch tales that Annie tells about. AND THE GOBBLINS 'el GET YOU EF YOU DON' WATCH OUT."

According to Raab, as a 10 or 11 year old boy, sitting around the campfire after supper at "Dark Cow Pens", listening to one of the range riders, Mr. West Rohan, tell ghost stories is something he always remembered.

Legend is, one of the cattlemen, by the name of

Hendry, (Hendry County was named after the same family), while returning home from selling his cattle, received word he was going to be ambushed and robbed. He and his drivers decided to make camp at "Dark Cow Pens" and bury their money. The outlaws attacked them that night, killing several of the men, including Hendry. As the story goes, the robbers did not find the buried silver. For years, fortune hunters would go to "Dark Cow Pens" and dig for the money.

This area was, at one time, part of the old Skipper ranch; many times I have been to "Dark Cow Pens" and seen evidence of fresh dug ground.

About 15 years ago, a man, thinking we still owned the pasture came to our house and asked if he could go, with his metal detector, and see what he could find. We explained we didn't own the land anymore.

If anyone ever found the buried money, they haven't ever admitted to it.

Years ago, before the engineered drainage of our State, "Stake Ford Marsh", most of the year, was partly under water. The cattlemen on their drives to Punta Rassa, coined the name. The reason being that several of the men, on horseback, would go ahead of the main herd and put stake up on the firmer, higher land so the rest of the drovers could route the cattle that way.

Now you know where I live; north of "Dark Cow Pens", "Hog Island", west of "Henscratch" and east of "Marguerite Road." This county dirt road, like the old "Footmans Trail" will take you to Arcadia.

Horatio Dexter wouldn't believe he had written his report.

75 YEARS OF SEBRING

By Ruth Davis

Some early memories of businesses in Sebring was the "Try-me" Bottling Plant on South Commerce, right next to our home, which was on the corner of Commerce and Pine.

On that same block was Gearing's Furniture Store, Mitchell's Electrical Supply and Florida Shop, and on the corner on the Circle was the open Farmer's Market.

Every Saturday morning farmers from all around brought in their fresh fruit and vegetables, plus other items such as preserves and hand made items that the women would sell for "pin money."

On the opposite corner on the circle was the Whitehouse Grocery Store, opened about 1912 by Thomas Whitehouse. Later it was run by his sons George, who managed the meat market and Tommy who ran the grocery department. It was known as the Whitehouse IGA Store until it closed in 1979.

In the early years there was the Tasty-Toasty Sandwich Shop run by Dorothy Doane Wheeler. I remember the small white tile floor, the horseshoe shaped counter, the French toast and waffles.

Another good place to eat was the Cafeteria on the

circle which was operated by the Peterson family. Later on Mr. and Mrs. Gordon ran the Cafeteria in the same location, followed by Mrs. Bennedict.

During World War II a bar and pool room operated a restaurant there where it became a "happening" in Sebring. That's where everyone met to eat. In 1986, another restaurant opened in that spot, the Circle Restaurant.

Some of the earlier businesses were Leona's Dress Shop (on the Circle & Ridgewood, S) run by Leona Jeager; Corwin's Gift Shop (where the Cathouse Restaurant is now); McRae's 5¢ & 10¢ Store on North Ridgewood opened in 1925 by Mr. and Mrs. McRae and her sister. Later they sold out to C.C. "Speedy" Miller.

When Michael Kahn first heard about Florida he was living in a small town in Georgia, Sales City. He accompanied a friend to Avon Park about 1921, and heard there was a new town a few miles south being developed. He followed a narrow dirt road into an exciting new adventure.

The first person he found was George E. Sebring who greeted him with a welcome he never forgot. Mr.

Sebring rented Mike a store and soon he was operating Kahn's Store, General merchandise. It was located on North Ridgewood on the east side.

Most of the stock was brought down from his Georgia store where he had catered to the farmers. It didn't take Mike long to figure his market. He had the farm trade but also had other customers who demanded a better quality merchandise. He learned from his new friends in Sebring what kind of store they wanted. Soon his inventory included national names such as Florsheim shoes, Stetson hats, Nelly Don dresses and other quality items for the entire family and home.

When Mike Kahn first started, he had his brothers-in-law Hymie Shear and Phil Abrams to help him. As the business grew, Mike moved his store across the street in the Nancesowee building. Now his double front store became Kahn's Department Store. Among the loyal people who worked during those years were Dick Dorton, Dick Baker, Helen Long, Lillian Wooten, Narcie and Susie Leaphart, Ann Wilhite, Annette Kahn, Toddie Butts Howard, and Carlene Sessions.

Kahn's Department Store was not only where the entire family could be outfitted with quality merchandise but a place to meet your friends. Saturday night was the event of the week. Many people went to town early so they could get a good parking place. Sometimes there was a softball game (where the 1st National Bank is now!), other times there was a band and street dances.

In the late 30s Mike Kahn hired a young DCT student, Holly O'Brien. He trained her to do the buying and to take on other responsibilities. In 1939, while on a buying trip in New York, Mike took his young daughter, Ruth, into the market place, introduced her as his "buyer", gave her a few instructions and left her to place the order.

When Mike Kahn died in December 1943, it was a shock not only to his family but the entire community. Leon was in Tulane Medical School, Ruth was a sophomore at L.S.U. and Bucky and Marvin were still in public school. Ruth came home to help with the department store while Sadie took care of the groves.

World War II had made many changes in the merchandising business. No longer did sales representatives stop by the store. Holly and Ruth made many trips to Miami, Tampa, and Atlanta to buy merchandise for the growing business. Soon they were also making at least 2 trips to New York to secure and maintain lines of merchandise and to get deliveries when needed.

A.J. "Bucky" Kahn took over the management of the store in 1949. The next decade was one of many changes not only in Kahn's Department Store but in peoples buying habits. Even at that time the big stores in near-by cities took much of the business out of town. In the mid-sixties the Kahn Family decided to sell out and close Kahn's Department Store.

ANNE'S PASTRY SHOP AND THE KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN "Y-DRIVE IN"

By Donna Crawford

Anne and Miles Baker started Anne's Pastry Shop during 1950 in one of the small downtown stores located on South Pine Street.

The Baker's hired Ernie Scheuermann on a part-time basis and later Marge Scheuermann worked as a clerk. The Scheuermann's, together with their daughter Donna and Marge's parents (Richard & Amy Kuechel) had moved from Illinois to this area in 1950 and were looking for a location to start a bakery of their own.

The Kuechel's had owned & operated a small family bake shop for about 40 years and Ernie & Marge had worked in that business for 20 of those years.

In 1951, Anne's Pastry Shop was sold to the Scheuermann's and the business then became a "family affair". They owned and operated the shop until about 1959 when it was purchased by Betty and Jim Walsh (Anne Baker's sister and brother-in-law).

In 1961, Ernie and Marge started planning for another type of business venture which would also become part of Sebring's history. The new enterprise was called the "Y-DRIVE IN", but it was also known as "COL SANDER'S KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN."

Commercial property was purchased from the MOODY Bible Institue, Ed Koch and his mother Wilma. The land was located between Ed Koch's "Phillip's 66" service station and Gus Smith's "Great Fruit Company" just south of Sebring on the then 2-lane U.S. Highway 27. Ernie would actually build the structure himself with the exception of laying the cement blocks, electrical wiring, plumbing and paving.

The only fast food restaurant in the immediate area was an "A & W ROOTBEER" stand which was situated where "WENDY'S" is now. There wasn't a "McDONALD'S" or "BURGER KING".

Neither was there a "SAMBO'S" or "VILLAGE INN FAMILY RESTAURANT", "ARBY'S", "DAIRY QUEEN" or "CAPTAIN D'S". There wasn't a "WAL-MART" or even a "DESOTO SQUARE MALL". The "JIM BLACKMAN FORD/LINCOLN/MERCURY" showroom and garage was still located in downtown Sebring where the Sebring Post Office currently is.

Approximately 1970, the Scheuermann's decided to take an early retirement. They rented the KFC building to Col. Harland Sanders' grandson (Harland Adams). Later in 1983, Ernie would agree to sell the property to Lowell Ashe from Cocoa, Florida.

The original building has been renovated and expanded. Sebring's "KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN" restaurant is still located on busy 4-lane

U.S. Highway 27 South of Sebring. The surrounding area has "exploded" with a variety of commercial buildings and shopping centers which extend continuously from Avon Park to south of Sebring.

THE BAKERS

There have been 3 generations of Baker family in business for more than a span of 70 years.

Between the years 1911 and 1987, Milton W. Baker opened the first grocery store.

His son Miles Baker, started the first concrete block business and in 1947, Miles started the first septic tank business.

Baker's Septic Installation is now owned and operated by Miles' son, Bob Baker.

Miles was honored in 1987 by the Sebring Chamber of Commerce as "Pioneer of the Year".

FIRST HOME FEDERAL

By Donna J. Crawford

In the years following World War II, many of the former GI's who had trained at Florida military installations returned to our Sunshine State to become permanent residents. Former trainees at Hendricks Field (now Sebring Airport) flocked back to the Ridge, and joined a growing stream of senior citizens. Together they produced a housing "crunch" in Highlands County.

To meet the needs for financing homes and businesses, First Federal Savings and Loan Association was born - chartered in December, 1955.

The founding meeting for the association was held in the Chamber of Commerce building (the southern end of the old Sebring Tourist Club where the Florida National Bank is currently located). That meeting was held January 30, 1956.

Five directors were elected Frank Bryant, Stanley Davis, William Schaeffer, Sadie Kahn and Henry

Crutchfield. Later, when officers were chosen, Bryant was named President, and Davis, Vice-President/Secretary.

In April, 1956, Dr. W.S. Coon and Ed Hainz were added to the Board, completing the administration for the association which opened for business May 19, 1956.

On that opening day, total assets were \$350,000. Stanley Davis and Mrs. Vera Heim were the only full-time staff in those days.

In 1957, Davis became Executive Vice-President and Treasurer. Schaeffer was named Vice-President and Haywood O. Taylor (who joined the staff in November, 1956), was Secretary.

Within that first year, assets climbed to \$615,601. At the close of 1960, the assets were up to \$5,094,395; by 1964 to \$9,943,947. This grew to \$14,462,386 by December 31, 1968 and at the close of 1971, the record was up to \$21,626,827.

By the end of 1959, First Federal employees numbered four, Davis, Taylor plus Olive B. Pillinger (who joined the staff in 1958 and after 16 years was the association's first retiree), and Donna J. Crawford who started in August of 1959.

Midway in 1973, even the usually conservative Davis was terming First Federal's rate of growth as "fantastic." Within the first 6 months of 1973, the assets jumped by \$5,838,000.

The first offices for First Federal Savings and Loan were on N. Ridgewood, in the Kahn building. Some years earlier the arcade portion of the building had been enclosed to provide additional business space fronting directly on N. Ridgewood Dr.

This was the space taken over by First Federal, and later it was remodeled to provide more efficient offices. Now those buildings have been replaced by the Sadie Kahn Memorial Park.

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Outside the U.S. displays include the Independence of Antigua BWI, Jamaica's 21st Independence Anniversary honoring Princess Ann, and Pirates Week in Grand Cayman.

Pyro Display Co., supplied the U.S. Representative, Grucci, with Kolisek ring shells & meteors in the 1979 International Pyrotechnic Competition at Monte Carlo. It won for the U.S. its first and only blue ribbon.

Many remember the fireworks celebrating Sebring's Fiftieth Anniversary which were donated by Ed and Florence Kolisek.



FLORENCE KOLISEK

This page is sponsored by Ed Kolisek as a Memorial to Florence.

THE SEBRING FAMILY.

Founding cities was not new to the Sebring family who came to the Ridge area in the year 1911-12 from a town in Ohio.

George E. and his son, Orvel, and later George's brother Frank used many of the same, sound ideas in founding Sebring, Florida as were used earlier when the family founded Sebring, Ohio.

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purchased in the center of the state, George Sebring proceeded in an orderly manner to lay out the town, provide for the early infrastructure such as streets and utilities as well as a form of government to replace the earliest Real Estate operation.

He and his family members brought a religious influence which has remained throughout the years as the basis for an area which is again experiencing the kind of growth predicted in the early 20's before the bust.

Today's family members include Leila Sebring, who has moved from one of the family homes to the Palms Retirement Community in downtown, in an apartment which overlooks the entire Lake Jackson and much of the city.

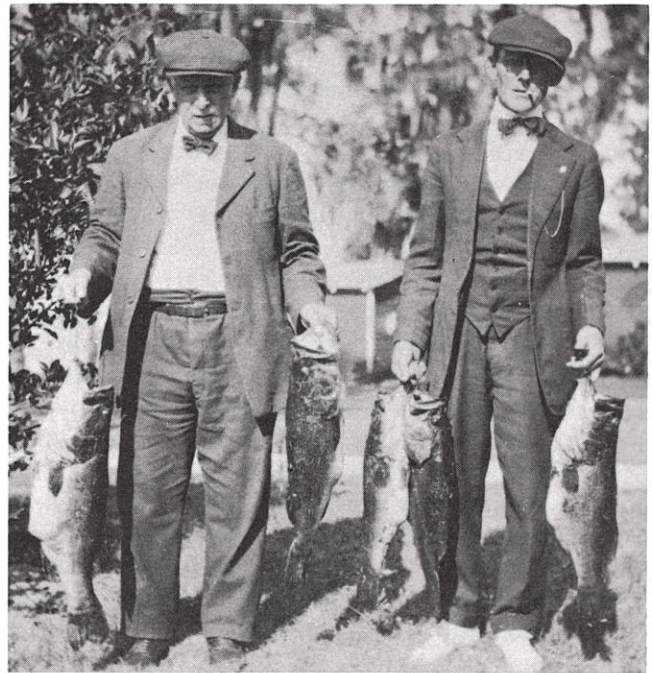
Her brother, Orvel, a now retired Philadelphia, Pa. attorney and members of his family are frequent visitors to the area and will be on hand for the October 75th Anniversary as he was for the kickoff in January, 1987.

Now widowed, Ruth Sebring, whose father, W.F. Amy built the early Arrowhead Hotel on Lake Jackson, continues to be a force in the civic and cultural life of the community, with her daughters, Verdelle Sebring Medlin and Jackie Sebring Trevelyan, as well as her son, Billy Sebring, who is a former member of the Sebring City Council.

Bill's children, Dannisue, Cindy, Chris, Paul, Beverly, Susie, Randy and William, were educated in

the Sebring schools and most still live in the community in various positions.

Hart and Martha Sebring make their home now in Fairfax, Va.



A 1921 photo of W. J. Amy, father of Ruth Sebring; and Frank Miller.

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CITY GOVERNMENT

By Jack Stroup

Much has been set forth in this booklet about the people who have served in the administration of the City throughout its first 75 years. While the author of this portion is well versed in happenings over the last 30 years, the preceding 45 are more difficult to comment on.

It must first be noted that the administrations prior to 1958, particularly in the early years of Sebring were people of great vision.

This is displayed by the plats that were recorded with sufficient right of way, drainage, and dedicated parks.

Priorities that were given in those early years, such as paved streets, storm sewers, cemeteries, parks, playgrounds, sanitary sewers made an easier job for those that followed. Not that the later administrations were without problems, but there were many years after WWII that thoughts were mainly given to routine replacement and updating of equipment and general operations of the City and the Sebring Air Terminal.

This held true until the middle 1960's when growth demanded needs for expanded public facilities such as a library building, sewage treatment plant, expansion of recreation areas, and a look into the future building of a new Tourist Center, City Administration Building, more sewer expansion, Youth Center, and a Civic Center.

Thoughts were also given to obtaining grants for housing rehabilitation and commercial revitalization. All of these were accomplished in the last 25 years, but it does not end here as it is an ongoing process.

You often wonder why a person would want to be a Mayor or a City Council member for \$1.00 per year. In spite of this the City of Sebring has been very fortunate. We have some of the finest and capable people elected to these offices for administering the affairs of our City.

It was in the early 1970's that the State of Florida began to look at what they had created because of the financial burdens they were experiencing.

This brought about the first real shared revenues from the State. It also brought about more guidelines from the State for the Cities to follow in order to participate in this revenue sharing.

The first of these were minimum pay for police, and that each police officer must obtain a basic certificate before they could be certified by the Police Standards Board and put to work as a bonafide officer with arrest powers. It also provided that the Police Officer be paid for these certificates in addition to their regular salary.

This was just the start of many mandates that were to follow. To name a few: Adopt a Comprehensive Plan and Land Use Plan, adopt the Uniform Accounting System of the State of Florida, use

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September 30th as the start of the fiscal year and adopt a Growth Management Plan.

So you can see that local government is not so local anymore. Even the Federal Government has its say over the Health Insurance programs, Pension Funds, and Audits of Local Government, as well as the Federal Labor Standards.

In spite of all this, the City continues to learn to live with these rules and operate within their frame-work, even though some have added great financial burdens to its operation.

In 1973 came the advent of Municipal Home Rule, which away with most of the general laws of the State pertaining to municipalities and allowed the Cities to change their Charter by ordinance with ratification by the electors.

It was along in this year that Municipal Courts were

SEBRING MAYORS

J.H. Lopp, 1913; R.G. Haskins, 1913-1914; J.B. Brown, 1915; H.C. Brown, 1916; William Reck, 1917; Ed Harshman, 1918-1920; A.E. Lawrence, 1921; Ed Harshman, 1922; James Carlton, 1923; J. Ross Blythe, 1923; A.E. Lawrence, 1924-1925; William Parrish, 1926-1927; W.B. Crawford, 1928-1935; M.F. McGee, 1936-1941; P.M. Sebring, 1942; M.F. McGee, 1943-1948; J.D. Mitchell, 1949-1953; Ted Cason, 1954-1956; J.D. Hunt, 1957-1963; J.A. Butler, 1964-1971; Eugene Sauls, 1972-1974; Smith Rudasill, Jr., 1975-1987.

abolished and the present two tier court system (County and Circuit) is used.

Also at this time the legislature enacted legislation for the County to assess and collect all ad valorem taxes, thereby eliminating the city from having a Tax Assessor.

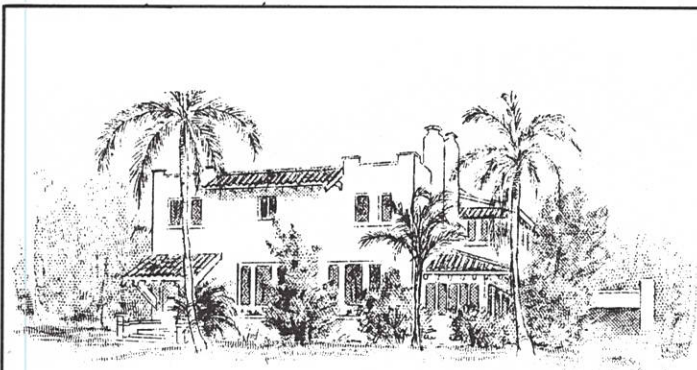
This was a good act and has proved to save the City many dollars. This is the reason today that only one tax bill is mailed out which contains levies by the City, County, School Board, Special Districts, etc. Every taxing entity must follow the same procedure for the levy of taxes, which is incorporated in the budget process.

The Sunshine Law was an example of legislation that did not create a financial burden on local government, and perhaps one of the better pieces of legislation that has come down in this decade.

Today government is every changing to meet the needs of the time we live in. Some good and some bad. We can be justly proud of Sebring and its people that have served it and met its challenges.

Sebring has come a long way in its 75 years of existence and will continue to do so by the leadership of those elected and appointed to serve its best interest.

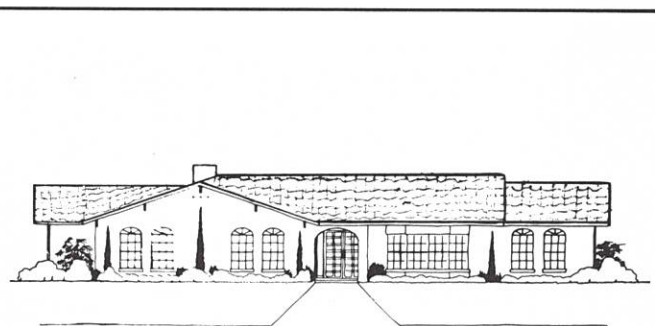
There are more and more people moving to Sebring for exactly the same reason we have always lived here; Its good government, fine weather, schools, recreation facilities and most of all its fine people.



**WE FIRST LOVED YOU IN 1922.
I STILL LOVE YOU SEBRING.**

**IN LOVING MEMORY OF
DR. HOWARD V. WEEMS**

By Vail J. Weems



**THANK YOU SEBRING.
FOR A LIFETIME OF LIVING
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THE MACBETH FAMILY

COL. BAILEY

By Jack Ingle

One of Highlands County's top educators in the early years was Col. F.N.K. Bailey, who was born in Selma, Alabama in 1867.

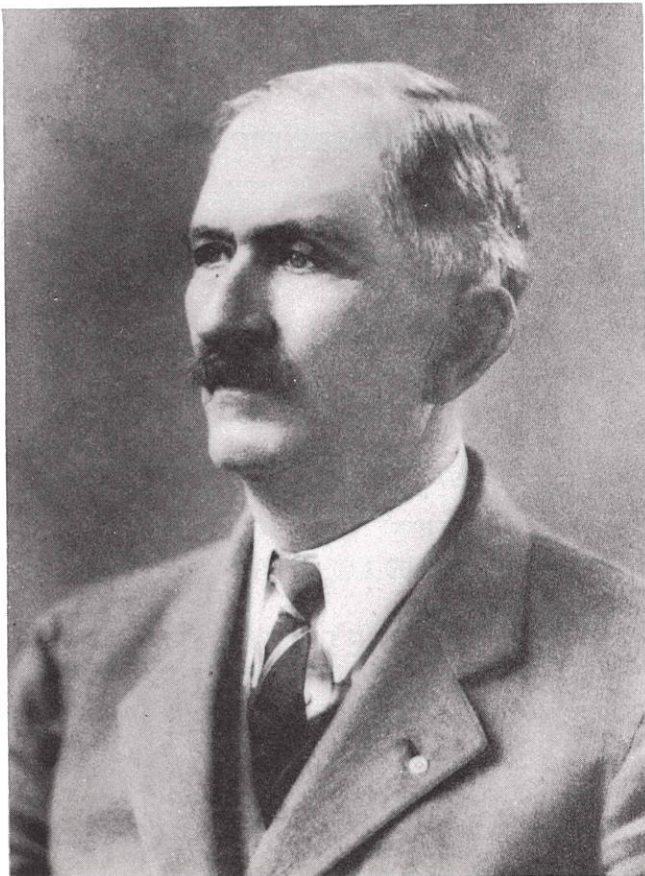
He moved to South Carolina in 1891, where he founded and was owner of Bailey Military Institute of Greenwood for thirty one years.

Col. Bailey was advised to retire for health reasons and he came to DeSoto City in 1922. After two years of Florida sunshine and orange juice, his health was restored and in 1924, he became the first elected county Superintendent of Schools in the new Highlands County.

He was elected to five consecutive, four year terms—serving twenty years until his retirement in 1944.

Many former students remember his frequent appearances at school assemblies urging students to remind parents to pay their poll tax and vote at the elections. (At that time, a poll tax had to be paid before being eligible to vote and the proceeds went to support the schools).

Col. Bailey was active in the effort to get the state to support schools financially. He served many years on the governing board of Stetson University. He was president of Highlands Hammock Inc., which later was accepted by the State of Florida as Florida's First State Park.



Col. F. N. K. Bailey

THE SCHOOLS

By Jack Ingle

Information for this article came from interviews with Ruth Sebring, Jeny Estes, Lula Stephens, Edna Pearce Lockett, Ester Ridder, Julia Titus, Allen Altvater, Sophia Mitchell, Willy Taylor Noland and Willard Durrance.

School Board minutes of Highlands County beginning May 30, 1921 are available except for several years that have been lost.

No School Board minutes prior to 1921 from DeSoto County which then included what is now Highlands County are available.

They were destroyed in a fire at the Arcadia, DeSoto County, Courthouse.

Also, information was used from published works such as History of Sebring High School by Julia Titus (Based primarily on interviews with Mrs. George E. Sebring); Memories A History Of The Lorida Community by Nell Ashton Prescott; The Devane Papers published by the Sebring Historical Society and Avon Park School Sketches by Mrs. Leoma Maxwell.

Schools in this area paralleled settling people. First came explorers, then wandering trappers, cattlemen, sometimes military and finally settlers with plans for permanence. At this point schools began taking form.

As we look at the populated areas of our County, it is difficult to realize that Sebring with its greatest population is the youngest.

To get some historical point of reference, prior to 1855 Hillsboro County encompassed all of Central Florida from the Gulf to the Kissimmee River.

Manatee County was created in 1855, which includes the counties of Manatee, Sarasota, Glades, Collier,

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Hardee and Highlands; and was the most recent and youngest county of Florida.

In 1921 DeSoto was divided into Glades, Collier, Hardee and Highlands; and were the most recent and youngest counties of Florida.

The oldest community in what is now Highlands County is Fort Bassinger. It was founded as a federal military fort during the first Seminole Indian War in 1834.

The log fort was built and commanded by Col. Zachary Taylor, who later became a U.S. President.

When Indian hostilities were concluded in 1854, permanent settlement was made at the end of the Civil War. Ft. Bassinger was a thriving community of 500 people and supported a three teacher school.

The Fisheating Creek - Venus area and Avon Park started schools in 1888.

In 1888 David Waldron and George Drawdy petitioned the County Commissioners of DeSoto County at the County Seat in Pine Level (since moved to Arcadia) for aid for a school at Indian Prairie (now Palmdale).

It was granted and Issac Winegrove of Orlando was employed. He proceeded by foot over military trails via Ft. Christmas, Ft. Drum, Ft. Bassinger, Fort Center to Indian Prairie.

The school families had constructed a palmetto thatched hut with a dirt floor. There were 11 children in the school.

After a successful year, Winegrove returned to Orlando traveling by oxcart to the new town of Arcadia then via the new ACL Railroad to Orlando.

Venus began to develop and received a Post Office in 1891.

In 1891 there was a one room log school at Sweetgum, homestead of Rabon Durrance (Henscratch area west of Lake Placid).

In 1892 Joshua Lastinger established a one room school at Lake Stearns (now named Lake Placid). His daughter taught the class the next few years and in 1903 a 12 x 18 foot wood side plank floor, palmetto thatched roof school house was constructed.

Before 1930 students either brought their lunch or if close enough walked home for lunch. 1930 was the beginning of a school lunch program in Sebring.

The Sebring P.T.A. petitioned the school board to be allowed to serve lunch from the Ruhl house next to school. At first only sandwiches were served but finally mothers were collecting enough gift vegetables to serve a hot lunch. Louise Altvater Cameron was one of the organizers of this first lunch program.

Sebring had a teacherage on campus to house unmarried female teachers. This building has been moved from Center Street to Lemon Street and is used as auxiliary classrooms.

In 1922 the following schools were in operation in Highlands County. Fort Kissimmee (Bombing Range) 1 teacher; Avon Park, 10 teachers; Crewsville, 1 teacher; Venus, 2 teachers; Hicora,

1 teacher; Lake Stearns Station, 1 teacher; Cowhouse, 1 teacher and DeSoto City, 1 teacher; a total of 33 teachers.

By 1930 the two local banks had failed and the depression really hit the economy of the young county.

School Board minutes of March 3, 1930 read, "Board notified trustees of the eight school district that each school district would have to run on district millage and to arrange for closing or continuance of schools."

The April 1930 school board minutes reflect much correspondence about school board notes in defunct banks.

Schools were being forced to close early and a plea to parents went out to make up monies to keep schools open.

The total Highlands County school budget in 1931 was \$73,350.00. Teachers were paid \$60.00 per month for a total of eight months. At times teachers pay was in "script" which would be accepted by merchants at a substantial discount.

School problems with facilities, finances and attendance improved only marginally until the beginning of World War II when Hendricks Field, a B-17 bomber training base was opened.

Suddenly there was an influx of new people and school pupils.

The County was sorely pressed to provide edu-

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cational opportunity with a shortage of buildings, personnel and finances.

But, after the war many new people came to live in the area and people, physical growth and school needs have grown at an ever increasing rate.

Higher education came to the county with the location of South Florida Community College at Avon Park in 1966.

Facilities have been added almost yearly to house an every expanding curriculum and increasing enrollment. The junior college is part of the State of Florida's Community College system. It serves Highlands, Hardee and DeSoto counties.

In addition to the traditional, two year liberal arts program, it offers vocational courses in many fields.

Many adults and senior citizens take advantage of continuing educational courses in a wide range of interest.

The public school system of Highlands County for 1986-1987 had student enrollment of 8,231; employs 522 instructional and 555 non-instructional personnel. It has an annual budget of \$41,019,601.23.

Today's public schools are Avon Park High School, Avon Park Middle School, Avon Park Elementary School, Sun 'n Lake Elementary School, Sebring High School, Sebring Middle School, Woodlawn Elementary School, Fred Wild Elementary School, E.O. Douglas School, Lake Placid High School, Lake

Placid Middle School and Lake Placid Elementary School.

What a lot of progress in these "Seventy Five" plus years.

We salute all of those early school pioneers who gave so generously of their time, labor, finances and love that we may enjoy our present blessings.

At Avon Park, a Mr. Dewey taught school from 1888 to 1890 in a one room building on Main Street west of the now Seaboard Air Line R.R. tracks. By 1890 there were 19 pupils. Walter Byrd was their teacher.

School in the Sebring area was first held in 1912. Miss Sally Chapman was the teacher of approximately 30 pupils. This first school was a one room shack on the corner of Franklin and Center Streets.

The following year the group met in another one room building on Lake Jackson near what is now the Fountainhead Condo. Older boys constructed rough benches and tables for the school.

By 1914 enrollment had outgrown the lake school-room and the school was moved to a larger one room structure on North Ridgewood Drive opposite the present Nancesowee Hotel. A large burlap curtain divided the building into two crude classrooms. Miss Michner joined Sally Chapman as a second teacher.

A year later the school was moved again to a building across the street, next door to the present



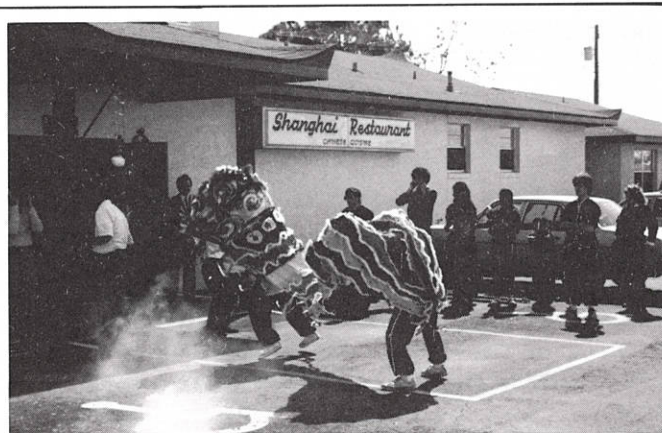
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This authentic chinese restaurant is owned and has been operated by Ernest and Alice Lelong since 1977.

They met as college students in Taiwan. They have two children; Ernest, who will be attending college in California and Ting, a Sebring High School student.

The Lelong's are proud to be members of this community and wish to thank their many friends and patrons for their love and support.

Johnson Sporting Goods Store and a third teacher was employed.

In 1916 a three story brick building was constructed facing Pine Street on the present site of the Sebring Middle School. During its construction pupils attended school in three different locations.

High school was held in the old First Methodist Church, intermediates in the old Presbyterian Church on Maple and Pine Streets and primary classes were held in the jail back of the present fire station.

This first brick school building was dedicated in February of 1916. It started with a staff of six teachers and met the needs of the community for the next nine years.

Sebring's first graduating class of 1919 was composed of Mrs. Naomi Warren McClenaghan and J. Clagett Taylor, Sr.

Both are still living and attended the 66th class reunion.

With the large influx of residents by 1925-26 this building was totally inadequate and a new two story wing was added on the south side of the older brick building, with an auditorium capable of seating the entire student body. This auditorium served a dual purpose as a community auditorium until the two Civic Centers were built by the County and City respectively.

In 1940 a bandroom was added to the rear of the auditorium. 1942 saw the building of an agricultural shop classroom by teacher H.B. Hinshaw and his eight students.

The present gymnasium of the now Sebring Middle School was built in 1948 to serve as a gym and cafeteria.

By 1955, facilities housing grades 1 - 12 became so taxed that a new Woodlawn Elementary School (grades 1 - 6,) consisting of 18 classrooms and supporting facilities was built. Since that time there have been two additions.

Before intergration Negroes attended separate school. In 1925 a wooden frame building on the corner of Highlands Ave. and Harris Street served the Sebring black community.

New facilities were located at the present Highlands Schoolboard offices and E.O. Douglas School after World War II with buildings moved in from Hendricks Field.

The old DeSoto City two story, eight classroom, brick school (now housing New Prospect Private School) was built in 1925 and served until students moved to Fred Wild Elementary School (named after school superintendent Fred Wild). Fred Wild school, was begun in 1951, with additions in 1963, 1971, 1978 and 1983.

The new Sebring High School on Kenilworth and Highlands Ave., was constructed in 1971 and the old High School became the Sebring Middle School.

In 1979 all of the 1916 and 1925 buildings were removed and the present modern facilities were added at the Sebring Middle School.

The Lorida area had a school at Cowpens sometime prior to 1921. In 1922 its name was changed to Suniland School and a new frame four room building was constructed. This building is still in use by Community groups but all area students attend Sebring Schools.

SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY

1921—I.C.M. Eclenburger (Appointed)

1921-24—W.A. Marshall

1925-1944—Co. F.N.K. Bailey

1945-1960—Fred M. Wild

1961-1964—Andrew Miracle

1965-1975—George Douglas

1975-1976—J. Ferrell Smith (Appointed)

1977-1981—Dan A. Davis

1981-1984—Billy C. Cason

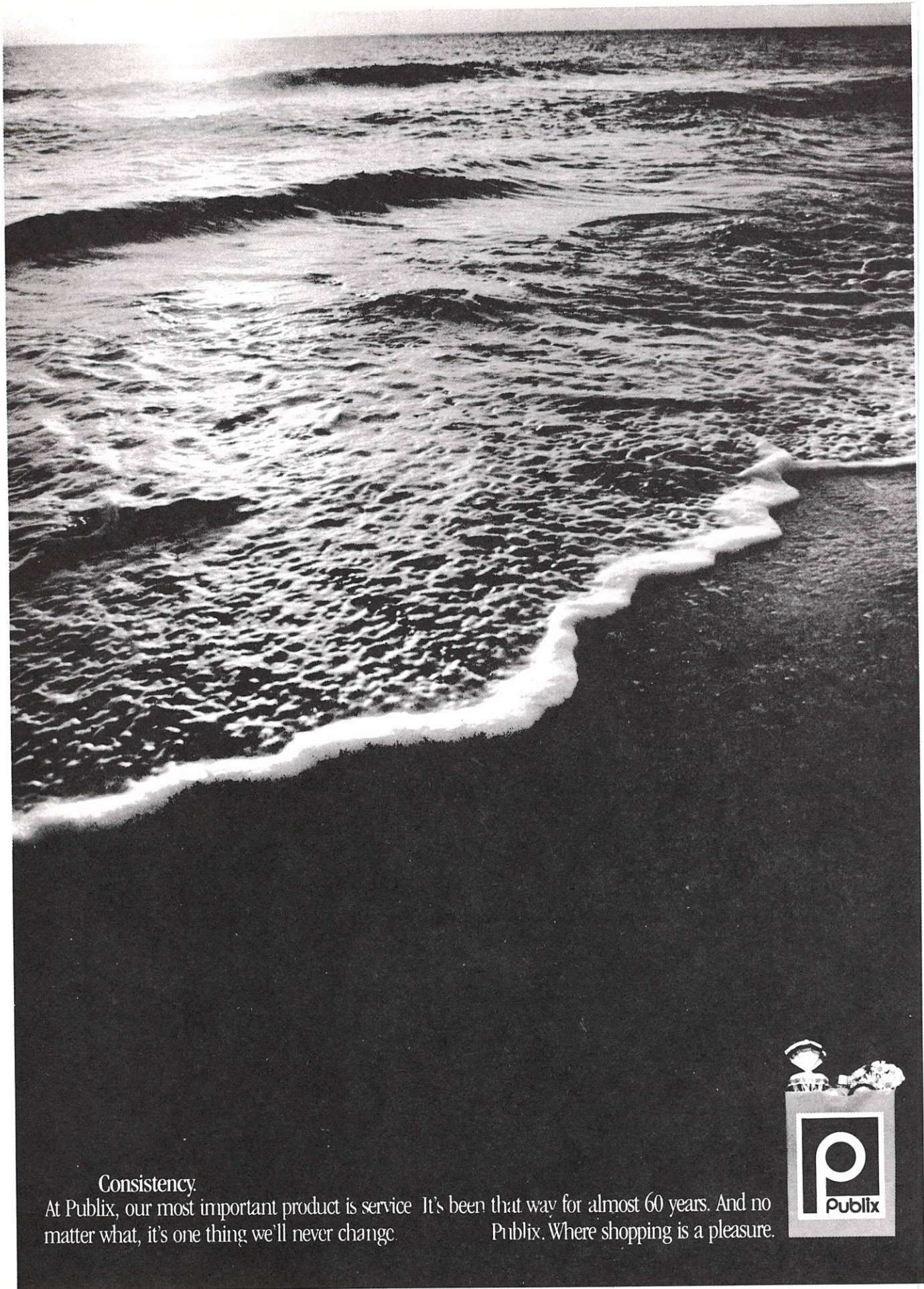
1985-1988—Ruth E. Handley

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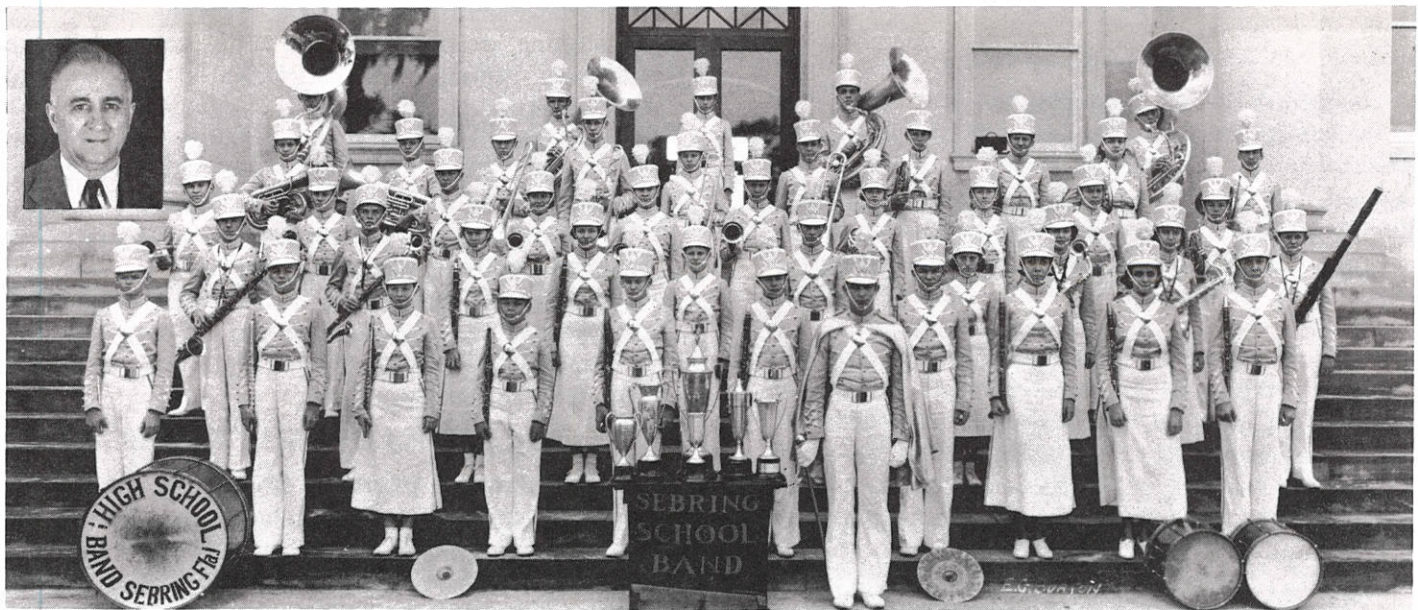


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SHS BAND A WINNER

By Jack Ingle

The Sebring High School band of 1938 was certainly one to go down in history. This band won first place honors in the State of Florida contests, earning the right to represent Florida in the southeast U.S. competitions held in Rock Hill, S.C.

It was then judged the best overall band in that contest, making it the best band in the southeast.

The remarkable feature was that the enrollment of Sebring High School was just 153 students that year and 60 of them were in this band.

Imagine a school of this size competing with school centers like Atlanta, Charleston and Charlotte.

The secret weapon was the band's director, Professor P.F. Gustat, pictured in the photo inset.

"Prof," as he was called, was born in Alsace-Lorraine and was a professional musician after coming to this country. He lived in Illinois, Montana and Texas before arriving in Sebring in 1925.

He first directed an adult, city wide band as a boomtime city promotion. In 1926, he joined the Sebring School faculty and the Sebring Rotary Club sponsored the band. The school system paid part time salary and furnished no band equipment. The rest was up to the Rotary Club, City of Sebring and parents.

The band was an important civic focal point of interest and community pride. It played Sunday concerts during the winter months in the band shell on the filled area of the city pier.

The Sebring band in the thirties and forties was a model and an inspiration to other Florida bands. In present times, almost every Junior High School has a band completely sponsored and mostly financed by the school system.

Music is one of life's most refining influences. P.J. Gustat was a valuable citizen of Sebring, accomplishing much for its youth!

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RELIGION

By Howard Crawford

The growth of our community has been steady and in the last decade almost explosive. This is particularly evident by the increase in places of worship. We support over fifty religious organizations which literally go from A to Z or from Alpha to Omega.

From its inception, Sebring welcomed persons of many faiths and the founding fathers would be pleased to see how well this idea has continued.

In the following brief histories of various groups it would be impossible to give credit to each of the authors, but a special thanks must be accorded Rev. Joe Benson who solicited and collected these histories.

They are arranged in alphabetical order and in the main, the words are those of persons who submitted the histories.

ALLIANCE CHURCH OF SEBRING

The birth pangs of the Sebring Church were actually endured in Lake Placid. In a bulletin dated July 22, 1984, a notation was made as follows: "Pastor is assisting a number of Alliance residents of Sebring to establish a week-nite bible study in Sebring, with district encouragement. The first meeting will be August 7th at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Bill Molesworth.

This meeting attended by six people was really the beginning of the Alliance organization in Sebring.

From this humble beginning the following have served as meeting places: homes, a City Restaurant, the Christian School, 5606 Highway 27 North, and Central Plaza.

It is since meeting first on January 4, 1987 at Central Plaza that our congregation has really begun to grow from six to sixty.

On March 23, 1987 our congregation with twenty-six charter members became a part of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. Great strides have been made since this charter was adopted. With God's help and cooperation, a building fund is under way to have a church home entirely our own.

BIBLE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

Bible Fellowship Church of Highlands County, Inc., began August, 1973 in the home of businessman Walter E. Harshman of Sebring. Walter, a life long resident of Sebring, along with his family and three other adults were the beginning of the church. The three other adults were Dr. R.V. Herbold; his wife, Gladys; and Lydia Jantz, all former missionaries to Africa under SIM International. This infant group was born out of a genuine hunger for the Word of God.

The group met each Sunday for eight months in the Harshman home. In April, 1974 Eugene Bengston (who had grown up in Sebring, was college educated in Tennessee, and trained for the ministry in Texas) joined the fledgling group.

Herbold, Harshman, and Bengston formed an

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advisory committee and a church name was chosen based on Acts 2:42. Also, a petition was granted by the Highlands County School Board to use the Sebring High School facilities for Sunday morning worship services.

Bible Fellowship Church held services in the Sebring High School library for five years.

While there the group developed a doctrinal statement, a set of by-laws and ultimately became incorporated. During that time the church practically outgrew its allotted space. Prompted by this growth, the church leadership began to look for other facilities in which to meet.

Finding none suitable, land was purchased on Hammock Road. A new building was constructed and paid for in a year. Further growth led to an addition to the building and it too was paid for leaving no burdening debt.

Bible Fellowship Church is not denominational in nature. People from various church backgrounds gather to worship each week. This church is happy to have been founded in Sebring, a town established by George E. Sebring to be a place for many churches. The public is welcome to attend its services.

ATONEMENT LUTHERAN CHURCH

The Lutheran Church in America organized Atonement Lutheran Church on April 19, 1959 with John Walters as mission developer and first Pastor.

After the organization, the church purchased its present location as its site (1744 S.E. Lakeview Drive.)

The first service held in the sanctuary (presently the parish hall) was May 27, 1962. After Pastor Walters' resignation the Rev. Rudolf Nilson became the second pastor. The Rev. Elmer Gregg became the congregation's third pastor on June 9, 1968 and it was during his pastorate that Atonement-Sebring and Resurrection-Avon Park became separate parishes.

On January 17, 1974 the Rev. William Kaiser became the fourth pastor of the congregation. Upon his retirement from the ministry, the Rev. Eugene Fernsler became the fifth pastor on May 1, 1976 and is the present pastor.

In 1981 a new sanctuary was built with the dedication on Sunday, May 17, 1981. However, in 1986 the choir and altar areas were remodeled and the Garden of the Resurrection (columbarium) was built for the interment of ashes.

Atonement on a regular basis since 1982 has Easter Vigil Service with St. Agnes Episcopal and has their youth ministry together. Atonement is one of the established churches of Sebring. It developed from a mission to a stable congregation. The rapid development was greatly promoted by the supervision and encouragement of the Lutheran Church in America, the dedication of the pastors, and the many voluntary services performed by the members.

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CALVARY CHURCH

Calvary Church, an independent non-denominational congregation now located at 1825 Hammock Road in Sebring, began as Calvary Baptist Chapel, a mission of Southside Baptist Church, in June of 1961. The founding pastor was the Rev. Lewis Llewellyn, who is still pastor in 1987.

The congregation became independent of Southside Baptist Church in September 1964, when Southside voted to sever the relationship. The congregation then organized itself into an independent Baptist church with the name of Calvary Baptist Church.

Through the kindness of the Sebring City Council, the congregation conducted its services in the city-owned building at the corner of Kenilworth Boulevard and Roseland Avenue from June 1961 until Easter Sunday, March 30, 1975, when the first service has held in the present sanctuary on Hammock Road.

In the latter part of 1977 the congregation voted to take the name of Calvary Church, instead of Calvary Baptist Church. Since that time the church has been independent and non-denominational.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE SOCIETY

Beginning in 1925 as the Christian Science Society, the congregation of First Church of Christ, Scientist was organized as a Church in 1953.

The present edifice, located at the corner of



Franklin and Pomegranate was dedicated in 1950. Services on Sunday are 10:30 A.M., Sunday School - 10:30 A.M. Wednesday service, first and third Wednesday of the month at 5:00 P.M.

CHURCH OF CHRIST

About 1930, the Sebring Church of Christ first met in the Woodmen Of The World Building on East Center Street located back of the IGA store.

Early membership included A.J. Tubbs Family, H.T. Piety Family, Mrs. Noel Gilbreath and Children, Lamont Wolfe and Wife, The Gore Family, The Dudley Family and others.

In 1942 the church bought a frame building and moved it onto the corner of Orange and Nasturtium which they used for many years.

About 1960 the new ocala block Church Building was built that is presently being used.

Land has been purchased on Fairmount for a new church to be built in the future.



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THE CHURCH OF GOD

In 1925, Rev. Lomax came to Sebring, Florida from North Carolina. There was no Church of God in Sebring at that time. Every Sunday morning, Rev. Lomax would preach on the porch of an old "tin top building" across the street from the African Methodist Episcopal Church on Lemon Street. He held services there until he left town.

There were other Pentecostal Holiness denominations in Sebring at that time. These people of God came together in fellowship and in giving to help build a Church of God on the corner of Tangerine and Harris Streets.

A Rev. Williams was sent to serve with the new mission, but soon left.

Bishop G.C. Sapp came to Sebring, during the latter part of 1929 from Eustis, Florida with a group of Saints. They remained in Sebring for a long while conducting revivals, preaching and teaching about the church of God at Corinth.

People young and old, were saved, healed, and delivered. A blind lady named Mrs. McIntyre received a miracle. Her sight was restored through faith in God, with a prayer handkerchief.

Bishop Sapp lectured to us on proper procedure of church organization, using the Bible, Church of God Minutes and other books and literature.

Some of the "old pioneers" in the organization were Mother Jackson, who was appointed "church

mother", Sister Jessie Saffold, Sister Lenora Grady, also Mother India Serency, who labored in the church until the Lord called them home.

In 1930 or 1931 Sister Bernice Johnson, who is now Evangelist Bernice J. Douse, a young woman right from college, felt the call to come to Sebring.

Some of the former pastors of Sebring's church were; Rev. Willie McClendon, Rev. A.L. Robinson, Rev. Jerimah Cox, Rev. R.L. McMillon, Rev. J.Z. Smith, and Rev. Jesse Anderson to name a few.

The Church of God is presently located at 809 Harris Street, Sebring, Florida under the spiritual leadership of the Bishop W.T. Sherrill.

FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH (1950 - 1987)

The beginning of Faith Lutheran Church dates back to an accidental meeting in Sebring during the summer of 1950 when two of three Lutheran Pastors who were driving through the area, recognized Ralph Brinkman of Lake Placid and stopped to talk with him.

When it was learned that such a large area did not have a Lutheran Church, Rev. August Bernthal of Winter Haven placed a notice in the newspaper asking those interested in forming a church to attend a meeting at the Woman's Club building on Oak Street. The ten Lutherans who responded were Ralph and Dorothy Brinkman, Joe Filepeck, Dan and Cleta

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SEARS



Senkarik, Merle and Jeane Applegren, Ernie, Marge and Donna Scheuermann.

On February 18, 1951, a complete religious census was made in the Sebring area, through the combined efforts of the membrs of Winter Haven, Lakeland and residents of the Sebring, Lake Placid and Avon Park areas. On March 22, 1951, the first service was conducted by the Rev. August Bernthal in the Woman's Club building.

By March 22, 1952, the group of nineteen Lutherans took courage and organized a congregation of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod. Donna Scheuermann made a suggestion that the new church be named "Faith" because it would take faith in the Lord of the church to accomplish His task. The congregation adopted the name Faith Lutheran Church, taking Rom 3:28 as the theme, "that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the Law." The word "Faith" also expressed the need those first 19 members could forsee in building a congregation.

Rev. Edward G. Tippen became the first resident pastor, August 3, 1952. During his pastorate, the church was planned and constructed. The church property (located at 2230 N.E. Lakeview Drive) was purchased by the members for \$3,800. The building was financed through the \$10,000 Church Extension Grant and a District loan of \$15,000. The building was dedicated April 8, 1956.

Since then we have had six pastors. Rev. William Bischoff, Rev. Gustav Reschke, Rev. H. Lohrman, REV. Wm. L. Duerr, Rev. Karl Stumpf, and present pastor, Rev. Robert P. Aumann.

One pastor who was of great help, though not a full time pastor, was Rev. A.C. Krueger. He served the congregation during vacancies. Other pastors who served during vacancies were Rev. Weber of Vero Beach, Rev. Kutz of Orlando and Rev. H. Kramer of Lake Wales. Several vicars also served during this time.

From that original group who met over 36 years ago, three congregations have begun.

The first was Atonement Lutheran Church of Sebring.

The two sister congregations are Wauchula (Peace Valley) 1962 and Lake Placid (Trinity) 1974. Also, Resurrection of Avon Park.

Under Rev. Aumann's leadership the church has grown, approaching 400 souls.

The Lutheran Women's Missionary League of Faith Lutheran Church has three groups that meet regularly.

Faith Lutheran Sunday School was organized in October of 1952, with John Senkarik serving as the first Sunday School Superintendent.

Faith Lutheran Church School was opened in September 1975 with Betty Gose as teacher. The Pre-kindergarten started with 9 pupils and expanded to 13 pupils during the first year. At the present time Faith School consists of classes for two, three and four years old and kindergarten through 3rd grades, with an enrollment of 98 pupils. The future goal of Faith Lutheran Church School is to have 8 grades.

Faith Lutheran Church extended a call which was accepted to Jon Wareham of Belle Glade, Florida to serve as principal of the school. He will assume his duties of the school as of July 1, 1987. Mr. Wareham is a graduate of Concordia College, River Forest, Illinois.

A youth group was formed early in the church history in 1958. The group was called "C.O.O.L." This meant, "Children Of Our Lord." These young people have been quite active in church functions and in youth fellowship.

Men of Faith Fellowship was formed in early spring of 1986 and is responsible for ushering in the church as well as sponsoring projects that the church is in need of and also to have Christian Fellowship.

The Young Adults of Faith Lutheran Church began meeting in the Fall of 1986 planning various fellowship activities.

A choir was formed in the Fall of 1953. Ruth Tippin was the director. Marge Scheuermann was organist and continued as organist for twenty-five years. The choir is now under the direction of Rev. Dr. Paul Lassanske.

The future plans for Faith Lutheran Church includes a home for the elderly so that the church may take care of body and soul for the entire life of a person from the cradle to the grave.

FAITH MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

The Sebring Church was sponsored by Faith Missionary Baptist Church of Lake Wales. The mission met May 25, 1969 and formed the organizing council. The council was as follows; Julian Pope, Donald McCoy, W.E. Higgins, Lamar Herdon, Hugh Harris and E.J. Brenson.

The church voted to affiliate with the Florida State and American Baptist Associates.

The first pastor of Faith Missionary Baptist Church was Charles J. Baker. Others serving were; John Suttle, Woodrow Beaver, Bobby Schnell, Kenneth Hardee, Charles Rutherford, Charles Dorman, James Alderson, and Lester Tolar. The present pastor is Toby W. Cribbs, Sr.

Historical Houses of Sebring



This house was built by Paul Ripberger in 1925.

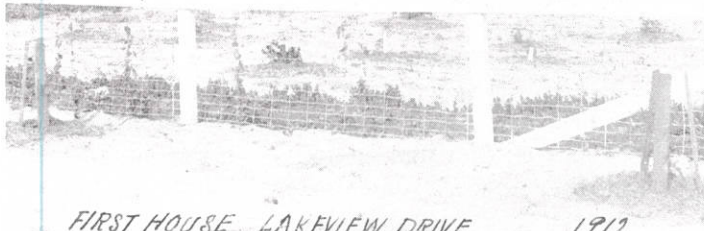
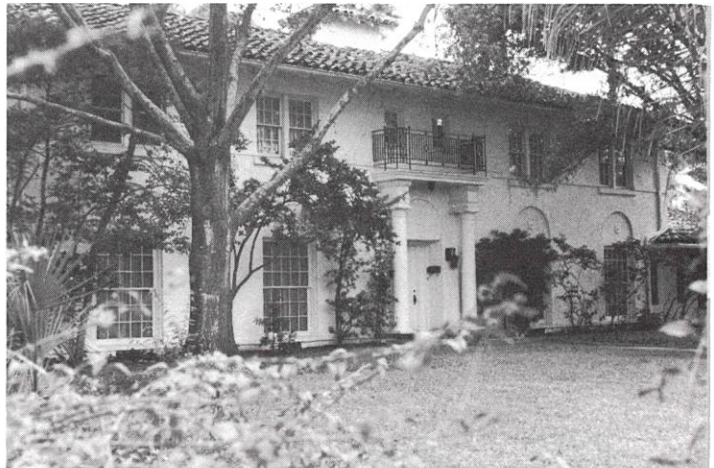
It was lived in by Mr. and Mrs. Francis Gudger from 1927 - 1934. Mr. Gudger was a retired U.S. Senator from N.C. who was married to Marjory Rambeau a leading silent film actress. Mrs. Rambeau dedicated the present Firemen's Field.

This lovely restored home is presently occupied by the Jack Jones family.

The home at the right was built by Geo. Kline in 1925.

It was occupied by Rex and Gretta Beach from 1928 to the mid fifties. Rex Beach was an extremely popular author of many novels. Mr. Beach was a graduate of Rollins College. The two met in Alaska, the setting of many of Mr. Beaches' novels.

Mrs. Namoni Drane is the present owner.



FIRST HOUSE LAKEVIEW DRIVE 1912

The photo at the left depicts the Henning home as it appeared in 1912. It was given to their daughter and son-in-law, Harry McCorkle who lived in the home until their death.

It is reported to be the oldest home in Sebring. Note the hog wire fencing for protection from the same.

Presently occupied by the James L. Livingston family.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (Corner of Lemon St.)

On February 11, 1922, The First Baptist Church of Sebring, Florida was organized by a group of 24 laymen. A great deal of credit is due those faithful few who had the vision to organize a church in this area, a church that still stands on the original site.

The first Sunday School was organized on March 5, 1922 and met each Sunday afternoon at 3:00 P.M. in the Presbyterian Church. The first pastor was called on May 17, 1922. Opening day in our new white one-story frame church was May 6, 1923. Woman's Missionary Union was organized in 1924.

A new red brick church was built in 1935; our first organ purchased in 1940.

During World War II, a church bus made trips to Hendricks Field each Sunday bringing an average of 35 to 40 soldiers to our services. These soldiers were a blessing to our people—many returning after the war to make their homes here.

People everywhere found the spirit of First Baptist to be fulfilling and meaningful to their lives. The continued growth demanded that additional educational facilities be constructed, and eventually it necessitated the planning of our present auditorium.

The church has established three missions, one of which is now the First Baptist Church of Lake Josephine. Our Whispering Pines Chapel has plans to

acquire more property so as to start construction of a church.

How far the little church with 24 members has come in these three score years; but now we are again facing a major challenge to move forward in the Lord's ministry.

The congregation is planning to dedicate the new Sanctuary on October 11th of 1987, and hopes to be in the new building on July 12.

HISTORY OF FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH (662 Lemon Street)

In October 1913, the First Baptist Church of Sebring was organized with 16 known members Rev. Bossie Watson; Deacons Dudley, Wright and Russell; Brothers Rufus Robinson, Oliver Williams, W.M. Dillard, Dan Jones, Dan Hall, and Will McKinney; Sisters Amanda Simmons, Willie Hall, Carrie Williams, Lula White, Essie Fayson and Sister Dan Hall. Rev. H. Singletary served as the first pastor.

In 1918, the Church location moved from near Lake Jackson to the present site on Lemon Street. The foundation was laid under the pastorate of Rev. R. Wright and completed under the pastorate of Rev. H.R. Hill. The name then was the First Calvary Baptist Church. During construction, worship services were held on the second and fourth Sunday at Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church.

In 1929, Rev. Bossie Watson was called to preach and was ordained by Rev. McDuffie.

In 1940, under the leadership of Rev. T.L. Jenkins, the present stone building and parsonage was built and paid for.

Our present pastor is Rev. C.C. Reaves.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

In May 1913, four families of Presbyterians banded together to establish a Sunday School. At that time there were no Presbyterian children, and Sebring had no Sunday School. Meetings were held in the Hires and Barber planning mill until late fall, when the school house became available. In the fall of 1914, two Presbyterian families with children moved into town.

The first real Church building—a crude structure, unplastered and unfinished in many ways, was built on a lot given to the Presbyterians in February 1914 by George E. Sebring, Sr. (The lot was on North Pine Street, the location of South Florida Motor Company.)

The First Presbyterian Church of Sebring was organized on May 3, 1914. Early in 1923, the church building was moved to a more favorable location on Oak Street, but the majority of the congregation continued to be "winter people", and a pastor was provided for the season only.

In the early twenties, church attendance increased during the winter months to such an extent that the little church was filled beyond capacity, and there was



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talk of a new building. (There was not enough chairs for the congregation, and the ushers went to the neighbors, Dr. Weems and others, and borrowed chairs for the Sunday service. During the singing of the last hymn, the ushers removed and returned the borrowed chairs, making it possible for the people to get out of the church).

In May 1924, a committee selected and purchased a triangular plot on Poinsettia Avenue, and on November 13, 1925, the cornerstone of the new sanctuary was laid and dedicated. The cornerstone was donated by George E. Sebring and held, among other items, a copy of the Sebring Daily American News announcing the date of the dedication ceremony. (The Rev. E.P. Brown, Methodist, gave the invocation;

the Rev. James S. Day, Baptist, read the scripture, the Rev. William Schmits, pulpit supply for the church, gave the address, the Rev. H.A. Brown, Methodist, made the prayer of commitment, and Elder J.H. Moore, Church of the Brethren, gave the benediction.)

The church's educational building was built in 1954, the opening service for the Sunday School being held on July 18. The minister at that time was the Rev. Luther L. Price, D.D.

The Rev. George C. Stulting, D.D., was installed on July 17, 1955 and continues to serve as pastor of First Presbyterian Church.

The First Presbyterian Church of Sebring was a part of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (Southern) until April of 1982 when the Church became part of the Associate Reformed Presbyterian denomination.

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Methodism came to Sebring with the founder, George E. Sebring, whose name the town bears. A church service was held every Sunday after his arrival here. Services were held under a tree, under a canvas, on a pavilion reaching out into the lake, in a temporary school building, and in the Arrowhead Hotel. Laymen, Salvation Army officers, and visiting preachers conducted the early services.

The Methodist Church was organized in the Arrow-



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head Hotel by Rev. E. P. Michner, a retired preacher from Kansas, December 15, 1912, with Bishop F. D. Leete, and R. A. Carnine, district superintendent. There were 10 charter members, six full members, and four probationers.

One year later, December 1913, a temporary church building—28 by 60 was erected in one day by volunteer labor. Sixty men worked from 6 A.M. to 5:20 P.M. A volunteer band paraded the streets at 4:00 A.M. telling the people to wake up if they were going to help build the church in one day.

Schools were dismissed and business stores and offices closed. The ladies of the town served the two meals to the workmen. The building was completed with one coat of paint, electric lights, furniture, and organ moved in. A praise service was held at 7:30 that evening with over 100 in attendance. The site for this building was near the present-day Sebring Police Department.

Dr. L. H. Shumate was appointed pastor in 1916. During that year the second church building was erected. The site for this new building was near the corner of Pine and Center Streets. It was donated by Mr. George E. Sebring.

The 1928 hurricane did much damage to the church building. The two beautiful art glass windows were destroyed. One of these was a memorial for "Father and Mother Sebring," given by the Sebring family. The windows were rebuilt under the direction of H. O.

Sebring, using the windows from the back of the church.

The present sanctuary and education building was the dream of Dr. Perry B. James when he became pastor in 1943. The educational building was erected during Dr. James' pastorate but the ground breaking for the new sanctuary came later, October 12, 1952.

The sanctuary was officially opened and consecrated May 31, 1953 while Dr. E. F. Carwithen served as pastor. Three years later all indebtedness was eliminated and the sanctuary was dedicated on the evening of May 20, 1956. "To God be all the Glory!"

GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH

The First Baptist Church of Sebring saw the need for a new church in the Sparta Road area of Sebring. With the help of the Home Mission Board, the Florida Baptist convention, and the Orange Blossom Baptist Association a new work was begun.

On Feb. 15, 1987, six people met for the first time in a house in the Lake Haven Estates area of Sebring. As God began to open doors a new meeting place was made available.

On March 22, 1987, twenty five people met for Bible Study for the first time in the old Oldsmobile-Chevrolet building on Highway 27; which is very near the Sparta Road area.

This new mission church is now known as Grace Baptist Church. The pastor is Dr. Lane Fordham. The name Grace Baptist was appropriate because the parties involved felt that it was by the Grace of God that the church started.

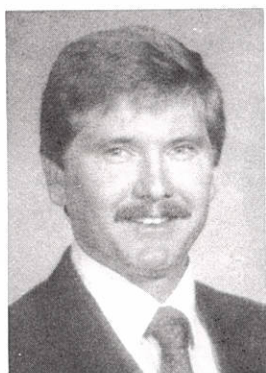
GREATER MOUNT ZION AFRICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH (730 Lemon Street)

By Reverend Charles Joseph Watson (Deceased)

Mount Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church was organized the Second Sunday in March, 1915, by Reverend G.A. Walker, Pastor; Rev. S.J. Patterson, Presiding Elder; and three members, Brothers David Watson, John Watson and James Mosely.

In 1916, Rev. W.L. Gaynor became the pastor. In

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1917, Rev. Gaynor moved the Mt. Zion African Methodist Episcopal Church out of the Union Church with the First Baptist, which was pastored by Rev. J.W. Lewter. The location of the Methodist Church was what is now known as North Eucalyptus Street, behind the Sebring Body Shop.

Brothers David Watson, James Mosely, Charles J. Watson, Robert Gray, S.B. Chestnut and Sister Effie Young were the builders of New Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church. In 1918, Rev. Gaynor moved Mt. Zion from the rear of the Sebring Body Shop and rebuilt at its present location on Lemon Street, the 7th addition to the City of Sebring. In 1919, Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church opened her doors to the First Baptist Church for the congregation to engage in worship service.

Greater Mt. Zion A.M.E. Church has had 34 ministers, 26 of whom have deceased, with the surviving 8 pastoring and serving as Presiding Elders. The present pastor is Rev. Marcus H. Burke, Jr.

Mt. Zion is in the Eleventh Episcopal District Diocese, comprising the State of Florida and the Bahama Islands, it is the fourth church in size of the Fort Pierce District of the South Florida Conference. Mt. Zion has a membership of 214 parishioners.

RIVERSIDE TABERNACLE

**Of The
Assemblies Of God**

Located on Highway 27 just south of Sebring

proper, is Riverside Tabernacle. The church building is marked and easily spotted by its tall steeple-belfour.

Church members have strong feelings for their church and steeple. The church characteristically representing man's approach to God, and the steeple because it represents a period of their lives given to constructing and erecting the project. The marquee reads: In memory of. . . Still today the steeple stands.

Churches are historical markers in a community. They represent places where people find God, learn His ways and build families. Sebring Riverside Tabernacle is such a church. Organized in 1980 by an indigenous mission minded family, the doors to worship were opened in April of the same year on Easter Sunday.

Riverside Tabernacle is supported by Citizens of Sebring and the surrounding area.

Scheduled services are Sunday (morning and evening), and Wednesday for evening services. The pastor is Rev. Wesley C. Olsen.

ST. AGNES EPISCOPAL CHURCH

St. Agnes Episcopal Church had its beginnings in the mid-1920's as the Mission Church of the Good Shepherd. Services were held in a small rented building on North Pine Street by clergy assigned by the Diocese. In 1926 a larger place of worship (commonly known as "The Shack") was founded at 12 East Center St. T.V. Conway, head of the county school

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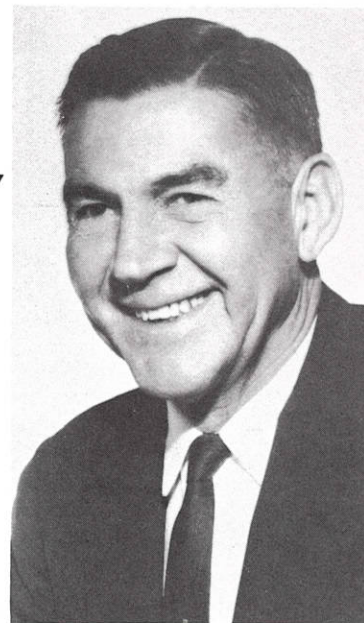
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committee was Senior Warden and Bishop Wing sent Fr. John M. Luke as a fulltime vicar. There was a Woman's Guild and the beginnings of a Sunday School. Some 40 families were listed on the church rolls.

In 1929 the mission acquired a duplex house on Hickory Street for \$1,000 and remodeled it for church purposes. An adjacent garage was used for Sunday School. At this time the name was changed to St. Agnes Mission and the building was dedicated by Bishop Wing with appropriate ceremonies on the 12th of April 1929.

During the next few years the Mission grew slowly. After Fr. Luke left in 1932, services were held by a series of part-time vicars supplemented by lay-readers. Among these were Frs. Johnson, Weller, Merriman, Shelling, Brown, Edmunds, Bull and Stryker. Times were hard but the mission survived, thanks to the tenacity and faithfulness of its members.

The first regular vicar after this period was Fr. Eldred Simpkins who served from 1944 to 1948. He was followed by F.J. Seddon of the Church Army, then by A.J. Lively (1949-52) and Francis Willard (1952-57). During the tenure of the latter a parish hall was built and a house at 819 S. Lakeview Avenue was purchased to serve as a vicarage. Perhaps more noteworthy and indicative of the dedication of the members was the tenure of Mr. Hilan Rogers as clerk and treasurer from 1928 to 1958.

In 1958 a bequest from Blanche Boorum made possible the construction of the three unit church complex and rectory on the Lakeview Drive property, during the tenure of Fr. Stuart M. Stewart. This period marked another step forward for, with its increased financial prospects, St. Agnes achieved parochial status. The new church was dedicated on the 24th of January 1960 by Bishop Henry Louttit. The Hickory Street property was then sold to St. Catherine's RC parish.

Fr. Ray Storie became rector in 1961 followed by H.L. Vanaman in 1963 and "Dr. John" Mulder in 1965. Feeling that a younger man could better serve the challenges of the growing parish, Fr. Robert Askren was called in 1969 and served until the 1977 Christmas season when he left to become rector of St. Patrick in Ocala. After a six-month interim period the present rector, Fr. Stephen Caldwell was chosen and was installed by Bishop Folwell on November 2nd, 1978.

ST. CATHERINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

"The Vacce", Miami's Diocesan weekly on May 1, 1958, reported priests from Tampa rode horseback during the early 1900s to celebrate Mass in what is now Sebring.

Miss Charlotte Varena recalled that the first Mass was celebrated in her parents' upstairs apartment by

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Father Charles Lashley, S.J., in 1918. The location was the corner of Franklin and Pomegranate Streets. Later on, Mass was celebrated in various homes - Captain Robinson's and Mrs. Ranahan's homes among them, and in the Sun Room of the Kenilworth Lodge, before the church was completed in 1924.

The name St. Catherine was given to the church and parish through the efforts of Mrs. Ranahan's daughter, Catherine. Father Patrick O'Brien was the first resident pastor and had living quarters in the southern portion of the church.

The Highland County News of December 24, 1954 named the pastors and others who served St. Catherine in the early years. The Benedictines from St. Leo filled in during the vacation time, including retired Abbot Fidelis Dunlop and Father Marion Bawman, a retired Abbot.

Father James Cann built the rectory. It served as home base during the World War II for the priests who served Avon Park, Arcadia, Wauchula, Punta Gorda, Boca Grande, Usseppa Island and Gasparilla Island.

Father Emil Heiring came in 1954. During that time St. Michael's Mission in Wauchula was transferred and Masses were held in Avon Park after a lapse of years.

Plans were started for building the county's second church, Our Lady of Grace, a Mission of St. Catherine, in Avon Park.

In the early 1960s a church was built in Lake Placid by the Mackle Brothers, named St. James, a Mission of St. Catherine. It grew rapidly and was separated from St. Catherine in July of 1974, with Father Charles Schneider named as its pastor.

Father Jose H. Ruiz, our present pastor, is a native of Spain. Due to the parish's tremendous growth, he has moved quickly on our long-delayed building plans. A \$220,000 drive was organized under the direction of Art Dorman. He was the chairman of the drive assisted by Lupe Fernandez. December 12, 1976 was a red letter day in which \$145,000 in pledges were collected in three hours by over 100 canvassers.

The ground breaking took place on January 22, 1978. Joining Bishop Grady, Father Ruiz, Father Joseph O'Brien and visiting priests, were Mayor Rudasill, Mr. & Mrs. Oliver Goolsby and Mr. & Mrs. Art Dorman. Patriotic music was provided by the Sebring Middle School Band, directed by Albert Fulton.

A contract was awarded, construction was completed, and Sunday, November 19, 1978, was chosen as the date for the Dedication of St. Catherine's new church. The dedication was performed by Our Bishop, Most Reverend Thomas Grady, assisted by our pastor, Father Joe H. Ruiz, and a large number of priests. Mrs. Mary Weaver represented the parish as she gave Bishop Grady the keys of the new church.

Since then, a rectory has been built on Bay Street. Also, and Educational Social Building has been

completed, parking lots purchased with an appropriate sign erected and landscaped on the corner of South Lakeview Drive and Hickory Street.

At the present time, plans are in the making for an addition to St. Catherine Church to relieve crowding during the winter months.

In retrospect, St. Catherine Parish has always enjoyed the kindness of the entire Sebring family. St. Catherine has lived in mutual respect and appreciation since its inception in 1924.

SAINT SIMON OF CYRENE

Saint Simon of Cyrene, Anglican catholic Church of Sebring, was founded in January 1978, with the first services of Holy Communion celebrated by Bishop Peter Watterson at Harder Hall. Shortly thereafter, permission was obtained to use the City Council chambers and services were set at 6:00 p.m. Sundays.

The first vestry was formed March 12, and the following vestrymen were elected: Paul Trammell, Sr. Warden; Jack Stroup, Jr. Warden; Kathy Smith, Secretary; Carl Ryan, Treasurer; Bob Angelo and Dick Ryan, Vestrymen.

In March, St. Catherine Catholic Church, donated a church school building to Saint Simon of Cyrene, as they were rebuilding their church at that time and that building was to be discarded. After many weeks, the building, which is now Saint Simon of Cyrene, came to rest on its current location at the corner of Rainbow

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Avenue and Youthcare Lane. The first formal service of Holy Communion was celebrated in the new church home November 19th, by Father Sterling Rayburn.

Saint Simon of Cyrene, today continues in Sebring, as the only Anglican Catholic Church in Highlands County, subscribing to the original services of the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and the sacraments of the One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. Father Herman Nelson extends an open invitation to all to join us in worship and Christian fellowship.

SEBRING CHRISTIAN CHURCH

The Sebring Christian Church began November 4, 1984 at the Stephenson-Nelson Funeral Home. Forty (40) members of the Avon Park Christian Church helped form its nucleus. On April 1, 1985, Ted Moore became its first minister.

A planning committee was formed to buy property and plan a building. In December 1986, the congregation purchased the "Loop" skating rink on Hammock Road. Within 30 days the congregation renovated 8,000 square feet of the 20,000 sq. ft. into a beautiful sanctuary. The church now plans to renovate the remaining 12,000 sq. ft. into offices, more classrooms and a recreation area.

The membership of the church now stands at 187.



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SEBRING CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

Elder J.H. Garst and his brother-in-law, C.E. Kinsey from Virginia visited Sebring in 1915 and liked what they saw. Early in 1916 they contacted Elder J.H. Moore, a recently retired Editor of the denomination's official paper, who was spending the winter in Eustis and persuaded him to come to Sebring.

Elder Moore moved here early in the summer of 1916 and built a home on North Ridgewood. With his long white beard and broad brim black hat he was a familiar sight on the streets of Sebring in those early



Church of the Brethren — 1918-1919

years. He soon began to intrigue Brethren in the north with his stories about Sebring in the denomination's paper. Many Brethern families arrived and made their home here.

George E. Sebring donated a lot on Poinsettia Ave., for a church. A bungalow style building was erected with B.A. Cope as contractor. A lot for a parsonage was also donated by Mr. Sebring.

The first Brethren service in Sebring was held in the home of Elder Moore, November 5, 1916. On December 3rd, a song service was held in the new chapel. On December 12, 1916 the church was organized with 14 charter members in the nearly completed building and early in January the building was dedicated. With George Sebring's encouragement and enthusiasm they raised more than enough money to finish paying for the building that day.

The women met December 16, 1916 with 9 present to organize an Aid Society. Mrs. Moore became the first president. They soon earned a reputation for beautiful quilting, as well as making comforters, clothing and other things that help in Local and Church World Service. The Society has continued to be an active organization.

On January 7, 1917 the first Sunday School was held with 40 present. A.M. Stout, a teacher at the Sebring High School was the superintendent. January 4, 1917 the first prayer meeting was held with 20 present.

The Church held a Bible Conference in 1918 with Elder A.C. Wiend as teacher and Elder J.A. Dove as Evangelist. This became a yearly event. Many of the

leaders of the denomination have been leaders for this Conference.

As the church grew the little chapel on Poinsettia Ave., became too small and two small rooms were added to the back to be used for Sunday School classes.

Mr. Sebring was approached for another location and he exchanged that lot for a larger one on the corner of Oak Ave. and Pine St. for a small concession. In 1920, the chapel was moved to this site and a Sanctuary was built on the front.

A Kindergarten Building was built on the Oak Ave. side so that the first kindergarten in Sebring was started in 1922 with Miss Anna Miller as teacher.

In 1925-26 another building was erected near the back corner of the Church by the young people and the ladies aid to be used as class rooms and a place for the ladies to do their sewing and quilting.

In the late forties the present sanctuary was build and dedicated in January, 1950. The former sanctuary was retained and named Garst Chapel. It was re-furnished and dedicated as part of the 60th Anniversary Celebration in 1976.

An Educational Building was added in 1966-1967 and dedicated to the momory of J.M. Blough, a former missionary and Elder of the Church.

During the early years the church promoted a number of Mission Points in the surrounding area. The Lorida Church of the Brethren was one of them.

They continue to reach out beyond to places like Puerto Rico helping to establish and support new churches and struggling churches.

They also help maintain Camp Ithiel at Gotha near Orlando where many of the youth of the Church and community have spent a week or more of fun and learning in a Christian environment.

Because of continued growth in membership and the help of many winter residents, the Church is active in The Palms, The Health Care Center and Local Relief Agencies. They also support World-Wide Missions.

SEBRING GRACE BRETHREN CHURCH

Sebring Grace Brethren Church was founded in October 1980. After about one and one half years of Home Bible Studies, the first service was held on October 8th, 1980 at the Sebring Christian School.

On March 27, 1982 members began clearing our newly purchased five acres at the corner of Thunderbird Road and Thunderbird Hill Road. On December 1, 1984 they dedicated the new church building.

On April 12, 1987 a new addition consisting of new classrooms and a fellowship hall was dedicated.

Jay M. Fretz has been pastor since 1983.

SOUTHSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

On April 17, 1947, Southside Baptist Church was formed with 20 charter members. Rev. Woodrow Fountain became the first pastor in June 1947 and



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continued until November 1949. The first home for Southside was a tent which was put up on Orange Street, 2 blocks north of where the church is now located. The tent was blown down during a hurricane in September 1947. The lot on the corner of Orange Street and South Commerce was purchased at a tax sale at the courthouse and construction of a church sanctuary began immediately. The first service was held in it on Easter Sunday 1948.

Rev. Harrison Crews came as pastor in 1950, and the pastorium on South Eucalyptus Street was built. Pastor Crews left in 1953. Rev. J.J. Dorough was pastor for about 10 months — until September 1954. In December 1954, Rev. Leland E. Brooker became pastor and remained in that position until the Lord called him home on June 29, 1983.

1955 saw Sunday School classrooms added. In October 1957, a sign advertising the church was erected on Rt. 27, and remained there until the Sun Bank was constructed in 1985.

A steeple was built on the church in 1958. In June 1961, Southside started a new Sunday School in Highlands Homes on the corner of Kenilworth Blvd., and Roseland Avenue.

In 1965, Southside began its solo sponsorship of the Moody Bible Institute Conference. Heretofore, the Conference was sponsored by the Sebring Ministerial Association. In May 1966, it was voted to begin construction on an educational building.

A major change of affiliation was voted on in 1967 and Southside Baptist Church withdrew from the Southern Baptist Convention to become an Independent Baptist church. In 1967 the church voted to fellowship with the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.

In 1972, the church sent Pastor Brooker on a missionary journey to South America, primarily Peru.

Many changes in staffing and expansion took place in the following few years. . . our first official, but unpaid youth director, a maxi van was purchased, the education building was expanded, a baby grand piano was purchased, first paid youth director (part time), associate pastor was called, parking lot expanded. . . ground breaking for new sanctuary took place on January 27, 1980, by January 1981 construction progress made it necessary to vacate the old sanctuary.

The first service in the new sanctuary was July 19, 1981, and was dedicated November 22, 1981. Meantime, Pastor Brooker suffered his first serious heart attack. The Brookers built a new home so the parsonage was sold in 1983. May 17, 1983, Pastor Brooker was hospitalized with a cardiac condition. He requested that the Deacons hire Layman Russell Lethbridge as a summer assistant.

The church asked Associate Pastor Chelsea Stockwell to be Interim Pastor while they began the search for a new pastor. . . a process which had not been necessary for 29½ years. In the end, the congregation voted to have the summer assistant as pastor, so November 20, 1983, Russell E. Lethbridge, Jr., began his official duties as the fifth pastor of Southside Baptist Church.

A Spanish ministry Iglesia Bautista de Sebring was begun under the leadership of William Large, a "retired" missionary to Peru. A church library was opened October 30, 1983.

A second van was purchased in 1984. The brickwork was continued so to have the entire front of the church in brick in 1985.

January 1986, the church celebrated the final payment of their expansion debt; \$325,000.00 had been paid off in 5 years.

May 3, 1987, was the final Sunday for Associate Pastor Chelsea Stockwell, concluding 9½ years of ministry at Southside Baptist Church. The Stockwells are retiring and so the church begins the process of selecting a new associate pastor.

SUNRIDGE BAPTIST CHURCH

Sunridge Baptist Chapel was a mission of the First Baptist Church of Avon Park. The missions committee of the First Baptist was composed of A.S. Turner, Leon Garner, Idessia Rutman, Reba McWilliams and Robert Gay. During the church year 1978-79, \$15,000 was budgeted for the future development of a mission south of Avon Park.

On Sunday afternoon, January 7, 1979 the first service was held in a recently vacated grocery store at

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the entrance to Sebring Ridge. Sunday School and morning worship were begun the following Sunday. Sunday evening worship and mid-week services were started in March. The first Vacation Bible School was held in August with 60 enrolled.

Pastor Aden Childress, who served Sunridge from January 7, 1979 to January 1, 1986, was joined on the church staff by Joe Keating, Minister of Music. March 30, 1980, a dedication for the new sanctuary, converted from a warehouse was held.

On September 7, 1980, Sunridge Baptist Chapel was constituted into a Southern Baptist Church. On August 29, 1982, a ground-breaking was held for an enlarged sanctuary and additional educational space. During this change from an east-west sanctuary to a north-south direction, several services were held where the church pews were moved in on Saturday, services held Sunday, and the pews moved out on Monday so the workmen could finish their work. Through the purchase of a neighboring house, sufficient Sunday School space was available until 1987.

On January 1, 1986, Reverend Childress retired for the second time. . . a pulpit committee was formed to search for a new pastor and on March 16, 1986, Reverend Paul D. Howard began his ministry at Sunridge.

The first missionary to be commissioned by Sunridge was Miss Vesta Lee Hall, commissioned as a

journeyman missionary to the Phillipines on April 20, 1986.

On August 1, 1986, the church voted to appoint Cynthia B. Howard as sunridge's first part-time minister of education. The church joined together on December 14, 1986 for a ground-breaking ceremony for the Aden and Ann Childress educational building.

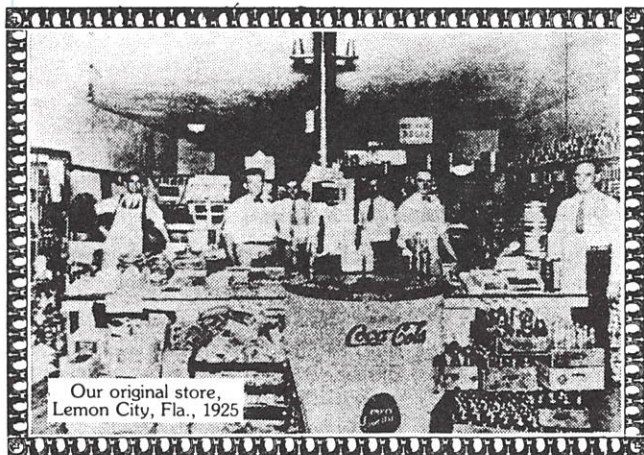
Now, as we enter into 1987, Sunday School attendance is 125-130 with over 200 in Morning Worship Service.

TEMPLE BETH ISRAEL

When Michael and Sadie Kahn settled in Sebring in the early 1920's, Mr. George Sebring, who founded the town in 1915, greeted them, extending a warm welcome. He stated that no town could be a success without a Jewish community and offered a lot for the Temple to be built upon at such a time as there would be enough people to support it.

The first Temple in Sebring, Temple Beth Israel was built about 1925. Among the first Jewish settlers and members of our first Synagogue were Mike and Sadie Kahn (Leon, Ruth, Abraham, Jacob and Marvin), Doris and Phil Abrams (Sol and Anna Merle Abrams), Lena and Hymie Shear (Jackeline), Harry and Sarah Dunn (Jacob and Bessie), Annette Kahn, Joseph Kahn, Saul and Sadie (Jennie and Blossom),

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Dora Wolfstein Bernard, Jack Bernard, Joe Bernard, Mark Bernard, Mr. and Mrs. Srodus, Mr. and Mrs. Weiner (Sam and Bessie) from Wauchula.

There were other members who came for the High Holidays from Clewiston, Belle Glade, Pahokee, Okeechobee and South Bay.

During the depression years the only time the Jewish congregation got together was during the special holidays and the women of the congregation made special traditional dishes and minyan.

During the early 1940's Mike and Sadie Kahn were instrumental in having a Passover Seder for about 200 Jewish servicemen and their families from Hendricks Field and the Avon Park Base. This was held at Temple Beth Israel and among the guests were Sebring's Mayor "Mac" McGee.

Michael Kahn, one of the founders of the Temple, died on December 18, 1943. He left a legacy of love and concern for his community.

Jewish families who were here from the mid-forties to the mid-fifties were: Izzie and Lil Paster (Saul, Marvin, Paula), A.J. "Bucky" and Ann Kahn (Libby and Mike), Stanley and Ruth Davis (Michelle, Jimmy, David and Sara), Marvin and Elsa Kahn (Leah and Steve), Martha Fink, Janet Fink, Irving and Rosalie Fink (Richard and Eddie), Reg and Henry Holland, Sadie Ellman, Paula and Nat Blumm, Sylvia and William Kobrin, Victor and Eva Jacobson (Gail and Randy) David and Phyllis Jacobson, (Georgia), Goldie and Harry Piolet, H. Simon, Barney and Harriette Rubel, Harry and Ruth Kosove, Felix and Sadie Pyms, Belle and Charles Battle.

In the mid-fifties the Temple had to be razed due to structural damages. Subsequently the lot was sold and the proceeds were put into a savings account. In 1985 this savings account was turned over to the treasurer of Temple Israel of Highlands County, Alex Jaret, to the building fund.

In the period from 1950 to 1965, most of the Jewish children traveled to Temple Emanuel in Lakeland for Jewish education.

When Dr. Al Marrow joined the staff of South Florida Junior College, Vi and their twin daughters Beth and Rachel and later Heidi became valuable members of the Jewish community. Al headed up a study group with topics such as "What is a Jew?" and later to study the book JEWS, GOD, AND HISTORY. As interest grew, numbers grew as well, and the group decided to have a religious service once a month. Soon most homes would not hold the growing numbers. Mickey and Frances Miller graciously donated the use of a room at Leisure Lakes Club House.

Dr. Marrow was the first president of Temple Israel and the congregation grew under his leadership and those who followed; Dr. Mike Wesson, Frances Miller, Carolyn Kaplan, Nate Sadowsky, and Bernice Jaret.

As numbers grew, the need for religious leadership

was filled when Rabbi Morton M. Applebaum came to lead High Holiday Services in 1979. He has served as the Temple's Rabbi to the present.

Ivo Gerscovich was our first Bar Mitzvah on February 16, 1985 at the Sebring Civic Center. Ivo with his parents, Dr. Eugene and Pauline Gerscovich, his brother Dan, and his Grandfather, Manuel Kopeloff participated.

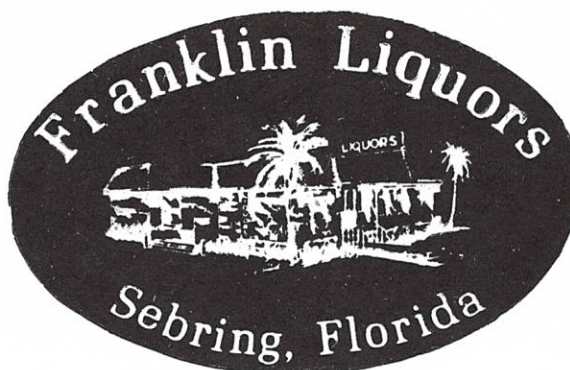
During the years between 1984 and 1986 the small group, Temple Israel raised over \$100,000 for the building fund. Tom and Marjorie Wohl donated a building site for the new sanctuary.

On October 2, 1986 ground breaking ceremony was held at the site with Rabbi Morton Applebaum leading the program.

WHISPERING PINES BAPTIST CHURCH

On July 13, 1980 eleven members of First Baptist Church of Sebring began a Mission-Sunday School only-meeting in the Sebring Country Estates clubhouse. Four years earlier the Church had bought 12 lots in Whispering Pines Subdivision as a Mission site. Later, the church bought several more lots and the members of Whispering Pines Chapel bought one lot, making approximately 5.2 acres on White Pine Drive.

In November 1980 Rev. Jim Annis was called as part time mission Pastor, adding Sunday Morning



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Worship and mid-week prayer services. Sunday evening services were added in September, 1981, when Rev. Annis was called as full time Mission Pastor.

We held first services in our present sanctuary, (which seats about 200), on July 24, 1983, with Dedication Service on August 28, 1983.

Four years and six weeks after beginning, on August 26, 1984, Whispering Pines Baptist Church: was constituted into a self-supporting Southern Baptist Church with 109 charter members, and with Rev. Annis the first Pastor.

In May, 1986 we began work on a 6,360 square-foot educational building which is progressing with mostly volunteer labor. We also welcomed Rev. Steve Marine as Pastor, as Rev. Annis was called to another field of service on February 1st. Presently a growing Church, there are 166 members. Of the original eleven members these six remain active in this Church Sam Bowers, Opal and Roy Hensley, Edith L. Payne, Treva Payne and A.W. Pollard.

ZION HILL MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH

The Zion Hill Missionary Baptist Church located at 301 Highlands Ave., was organized in the year of 1924. Its first pastor was the late Rev. M.H. Hill.

Since its organization the building in which the church worshiped was preceded by the two frame buildings. The second building and the present one

were constructed during the pastorate of the late Rev. C. Dean who served from 1925 to 1960.

The present parsonage was constructed during the present pastor's stay. Rev. J.W. Dean has been pastor since 1960.

HEALTH AND MEDICINE IN SEBRING

By Verna Vail Weems MacBeth

Sebring has enjoyed more than its share of capable, conscientious doctors. Their love for the people and the town has been returned to them, many times over. We love our doctors, nurses and health care people.

According to early residents, the first medical doctor in Sebring, in 1913, was Dr. P. J. McMurray. Educated in Ohio, he had practiced in Illinois before he came south. His office was on West Center Street, behind Ed Hainz' drug store.

The second doctor was Dr. Keisling, who built the house on North Commerce that in recent years served as the Highlands Art League headquarters, and has been torn down this year. The site of his office is vacant now. Dr. Keisling moved to Jacksonville, and in 1919, Dr. James H. Bogle, a surgeon from Roanoke, Virginia, purchased the Keisling home, and had his office in his home. Though a young man,

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Dr. Bogle's own health had failed. He was finally seeing patients as he himself was bed-ridden. Well-loved, Dr. Bogle died in 1923.

Around this time, Dr. Marion Hubert and Dr. J. W. Mitchell were in Sebring briefly. Other doctors, visiting from the north in the winter, also did what they could to treat the sick.

Brochures distributed by the Chamber of Commerce in the early 1920's boasted about Sebring's remarkable health water, and some thought was given to bottling it for distribution elsewhere. A City Drug Store ad in 1920 proclaimed, "Read what doctors say regarding the cures and benefits derived from temperate living and drinking Sebring's famous water. We can furnish a countless list of testimonials from doctors and people who have been cured of, or helped in, the following diseases: kidney trouble, bladder trouble, diabetes, neuritis, gout, colitis, exzema, stomach trouble, laryngitis, asthma, high blood pressure and the exhaustion so common among overworked business men."

In 1922, Dr. Howard V. Weems arrived. Having driven down through the center part of the state, often on dirt road highways, he thought Sebring to be the most beautiful small town he had ever seen. He had come at the invitation of a fellow tennis enthusiast, Dr. Frank Manley, a Sebring druggist. For most of the previous year Dr. Weems had been hospitalized, near death from blood poisoning, contracted as he served his internship at Grady Hospital in Atlanta, Georgia. He needed to be in Florida for his health, and also for his pocketbook. Florida was on the move, and his intention was to earn enough quick money to return to Atlanta to practice medicine.

On his arrival, the two men stood in front of Manley's drug store (subsequently Roy Gilbert's store, and now the Lunch Box.) A lady stopped to ask the druggist what medicine she should take to treat her cold. Dr. Manley said, "Here is a doctor. Let him prescribe for you." Which he did, and the lady paid him \$2.00. Having arrived in Sebring with only \$2.00 in his pocket, he found that he had doubled his fortune in his first ten minutes in town! He had obviously come to the right place.

His wife Vail said that as she and their baby son later traveled further and further south with him, to settle in the small new town, she really thought he was bringing them to "the jumping-off place." Then they drove into Sebring, and she, too, fell in love with the town at first sight.

Dr. Weems opened his office above Dr. Manley's drug store, and he was in business. When the county offices, located on the same floor, needed more space, he knew he needed an office. He had performed operations in makeshift conditions, and had provided limited overnight care of patients in the garage apartment behind his home on East Center Street. He knew he desperately needed a hospital. The solution was to build and run one. In 1925 he built an office and hospital building next to his home on Oak Avenue,

just behind the site of the Sebring Hotel (built in 1925, and now the location of The Palms.)

With a later addition, and the conversion of his two-story home into hospital space, Weems Hospital grew from a 5-bed accommodation to a 26-bed complex, with operating room, laboratory, and with x-ray work done first by wife Vail, later by Ruth Sebring (who was also his bookkeeper for over thirty years.) His right arm office nurse and lab technician for almost thirty years was Autna (Mrs. J. D.) Smith.

Remarkable was the faithfulness of his Staff. Worthy of note, too, is the fact that at one time, seven of Mrs. Smith's relatives also worked for Dr. Weems; Autna and three sisters, her daughter, two nieces and a first cousin. Small wonder that being in Weems' Hospital was like being in family!

Dr. Walter C. Touchton and Dr. Isaac Chandler came often from Avon Park to assist with surgery, and doctors from Lakeland and Orlando came for consultation occasionally.

These were the years when doctors made home calls, and Dr. Weems made many a trip to Venus, Hicoria, Henscratch, and vaguely described places with no names. One-way dirt roads caused many a delay. A shovel, a sharp hatchet to cut palmetto fronds to lay over the sand for tire traction, and a pistol for snakes or wild pigs were standard equipment. Patients came

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Sometimes a baby delayed in arriving, and the weary doctor would stay for a meal or two, or spend the night. A few times when he lay down to rest, between labor pains, he would find himself covered with bedbugs. He was never sure that his health lessons given at such a time were remembered.

During the depression, and all through the years, bills were often paid with whatever a family grew or shot or caught. There were hampers of beans and okra, gallons and gallons of sorghum and honey, chickens, hogs, wild turkey, venison, bear, fish and gator meat. Furniture, a portable sewing machine, loans; a doctor was part banker, part family confidante and advisor. Dr. Weems was diagnostician, lab technician, surgeon, obstetrician, business manager, adoption agent, instructor, and friend. Surgery was his first love, and he did reconstruction work and intricate repairs. It was said that antagonists, in the midst of disputes and attempting a knifing or shooting, would say, "I'm gonna get you but good! Doc Weems will patch you up!" His hand was steady and sure. He thrilled to the birth of each baby, and there were over 8000 of them in his fifty four years of practice.

He gave free medical advise and service to other doctors and dentists and their families. This was a reciprocal courtesy offered by some professionals. He

also extended free medical care to ministers of any faith, and to officers of the Salvation Army, all of whom he admired as saints.

Mention of medical costs might be of interest. From 1922 to 1950, the charge for an office call was \$2.00. A raise to \$3.00 was eventually doubled to \$6.00, which still included all the lab work, and injections. Meanwhile, the charge for a hospital bed went from the 1920s' \$5.00 to \$8.00, and finally in 1950 to \$10.00 per day, including meals and medications. Prenatal care and delivery costs were \$25.00, then \$50.00, and by the 1950s, \$75.00. Most babies born back then were actually worth more than that!

Dr. Weems served as Seaboard Airline and Atlantic Coastline surgeon for many years. In the event of an emergency on board a train, the train would be delayed while he was called. Sometimes a passenger required hospitalization, and stayed for an unexpected vacation in Sebring.

Doctors were expected to give mass inoculations at the school. (There was only one school for the twelve grades.) Members of the Junior Woman's Club and the Woman's Club gave attention to public health needs. In August, 1919, the first month after organizing, the Woman's Club decalred that "we must insist that the state laws governing health be enforced, and that a city ordinance be drawn especially with a view to eliminating the spitting nuisance." In December a rat campaign to rid the town of rodents

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was organized, with a ten cent payment for each rat killed. Early in 1920 the Woman's Club actively campaigned and succeeded in having outdoor privies outlawed in Sebring.

In 1924 the club sponsored a health survey of public school children. Two medical doctors, a dentist and an eye-and-ear specialist from Arcadia conducted the survey and sent reports to parents. Those were the days when there was no government welfare. The Club paid for dental work, medical services, clothing and groceries, and even paid for the burial of one child. Whenever help was needed, George Sebring gave money for those in need; others contributed, too. The Club had a program of sewing dresses for needy youngsters, similar to The Clothesline activities today. (Excerpts from "Reflections") tell how Agnes Carson (now Cochran), Emilie Gearing, Sophy Mitchell and others served with caring hearts.

In 1937, the county accepted the costs of hiring a doctor and of our first public health nurse. Most of the doctors have stayed only one or two years, and they did not enter into the life of the community. However, Dr. G. L. Beaumont served from 1948 to 1954 (he then entered private practice here), and Dr. T. W. Weeks from 1954 to 1959, while Dr. William Hill was here from 1957 to 1966.

This staff has been responsible for some major steps through the years. There have been notable changes in communicable diseases, tuberculosis, measles, mumps, scarlet fever, diphtheria gave way to conjunctivitis (pink eye) caused by screenless windows and gnats hopping from eye to eye.

In the early 1960s, Family Planning Services became a major emphasis and weekly clinics were established at the health department. Construction of what is now the Highlands County Health Department, in the Courthouse Annex, was completed in 1964. The full story of the varied and always timely service of this public department deserves the telling!

In 1930, another General Practitioner and Surgeon arrived in Sebring. Dr. L. W. Martin was born and "raised" fifteen miles from Rome, Georgia, where Dr. Weems was born. He was a basketball enthusiast and organized a team that engaged competition from neighboring towns.

Having practiced in South Carolina, then in Avon Park (where his uncle lived) and in Punta Gorda, Dr. Martin learned that in Sebring Dr. J. W. Mitchell's health was necessitating his retirement. Dr. Martin's wife, Maxine, remembered Sebring happily and agreed that the move would be just right for their family.

They bought Dr. Mitchell's home on State Road 17 North, where the four upstairs bedrooms had been used for patients; a miniature hospital. With his office over Molter's Drug Store (now Arbour View Florist), Dr. Martin tried several downtown locations to serve his hospital needs, finally settling in the Tropical Bank Building (on the corner of the Circle and West Center Street, now a parking lot).

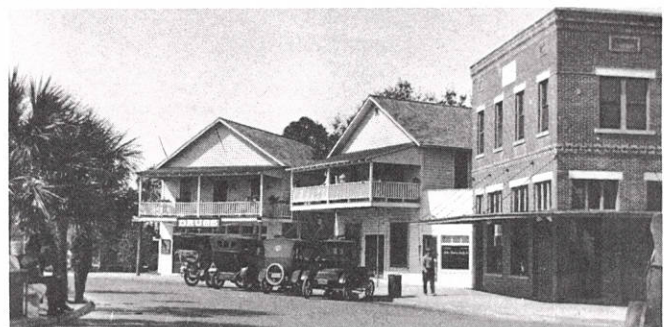
Here he had room for laboratory, x-ray and surgery, as well as over thirty beds; and there was an elevator!—one of the few in town.

Both Martin's Hospital and Weems Hospital stayed near capacity, and the doctors worked grueling hours, from 7:00 a.m. until 10:00 p.m.—then delivered babies—on the baby's schedule. Nurses worked in two twelve-hour shifts, but stayed wonderfully cheerful and kind.

During World War II many of the soldiers at Hendricks Field preferred to pay for local medical care rather than use the free care offered at the base. The local doctors were especially preferred for baby cases. Retired doctors Dr. J. D. Holliman and Dr. H. N. Rafferty were lending help in surgery during these years. Dr. Beaumont and Dr. Seron were kept busy.

Dr. Martin's hospital closed in the '50s, and Dr. Weems phased his hospital into a Clinic when Highlands General Hospital opened and he served as its first Chief of Staff when it opened in 1965, with fourteen doctors on the staff, Harold O'Neal Administrator and Barbara J. Kurtz, Director of Nursing Service.

In the years since its beginnings, Dr. Robert Rengarts and Dr. Julio Sanguily each served two terms as Chief of Staff, and Dr. Boley has served three terms. Dr. Fabio Oliveros is presently holding that position. The original Board of Directors' members were R. L. Dressel, Robert King, Jr., Miles



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Hospital Landscaping

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The original building was constructed at a cost of \$1,077,820. There have been two additions, to accommodate the growing needs. There are now 77 doctors on the Staff; 42 active, 12 consulting, 15 courtesy, and 8 emergency. Employees now number 285!

County Management proved difficult, and the Hospital is now operated by the Health Management Association of Naples, with a Board of Directors composed of James L. Brooks, Bruce J. Lybarger, Thomas Clinard, Kelsey Payne and James Wohl - Chairman.

One of the interesting developments is the number of family connections among members of our local

medical personnel. Chiropractors O. A. and James R. Spiegel are father and son. Husband and wife doctors include the Sonni's, the Nagrani's, the Rajaram's, the Ruas'es, the Thakkar's, and the Seralde's (Victor and Cirilo are also brothers). Each of the Seralde brothers operates a Walk-in Clinic, which is relatively new here, and very convenient.

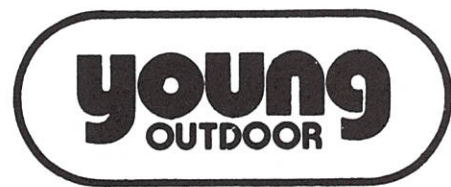
As in other hospitals large and small, volunteers were needed, and in 1963 the "Pink Ladies" were organized. Presently the Highlands Regional Medical Center Auxiliary numbers 120 active members, including 22 men. In 1986 these compassionate people gave 27,600 heroic volunteer hours of service. Through the years the Auxiliary members have not only given their cheerful hours; they have also raised money for landscaping, equipment, surgical equipment, a portable electrocardiograph, 58 Lazy Boy chairs; a fantastic number of varied needs! Their latest big project was the furnishing of the new Chapel. In its 22 years, the Auxiliary has benefited "our" hospital with goods valued at over \$142,698.00!!

In the early days, the doctors formed medical societies, to keep abreast of the times and to get to know and enjoy one another. First there was a 5 county organization; Highlands, Hardee, Polk, DeSoto and Glades. As the number of doctors increased, a Highlands County Medical Society was formed, with the wives enjoying fellowship in an Auxiliary. With the influx of specialists, and with

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required study and training, even this group has become inactive.

It is interesting to ask our neighbors how they happened to settle in Sebring. Family ties and happy memories of growing up in Sebring have helped to draw Dr. Kenneth Johnson, Dr. V. Gregg Watters, Dr. Alice Johnson King (and her husband Dr. Nelson King, Children's Osteopaths), Dr. Joe Mitchell, Chiropractic Doctors Duane Davis and Richard Taylor, and in 1987 General and Vascular surgeon, Dr. Allen Skipper (son of Raab).

We remember with sadness the death in World War

II of one of Sebring's first homegrown medical doctors, Manne Adams, killed by a sniper's bullet in South Pacific. Our hearts still extend to other doctors who grew up here, but settled elsewhere; names are familiar to old timers; Dr. Clyde Anderson (St. Petersburg; his son is also a doctor), Dr. Richard Baker (North Carolina), Dr. Donald Watters (Vero Beach, now deceased), Calvin Martin (Arcadia, son of L. W.), Dr. Bill Martin (Atlanta, son of Herman), Dr. Wallace (son of Stanley, now deceased), brothers Alfred and Edward Hollenberg (Indiana), dentist Dr. Jimmy Pyle (Wauchula), Dr. James Satterwhite who

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served on the mission field in Japan for over twenty years (and has now retired to Avon Park), researcher Dr. Dale Oates, and Dr. E. Howard Skipper (brother of Jack, Raab, and Helen Parker). Dr. Skipper is known internationally as one of the "fathers of chemotherapy." In 1986 he was one of three recipients of awards offered by General Motors Cancer Research Foundation, with a prize of \$100,000.

We remember Dr. Marion Hubert, Dr. Boorum, Dr. Stanley Wallace, from the 1940s. Dr. Anne Newsome was an osteopath who came to Sebring in the early 40s, well known for her green thumb and vast knowledge of plants. Dr. Henry Kost was interning in Chicago in 1952 when a chance conversation with one of his patients led to her boosting of Sebring as the place to live. The lady invited Henry and Rhoda to a dinner and showed them slides of the Circle, the golf course, the lake. They never looked further, and Henry retired in 1976 after twenty-five years of chiropractice in Sebring. Instrumental in the founding of the Highlands Art League, both Henry and Rhoda are established artists.

Dr. Lee Burley came in the early fifties, looking for a nice quiet town, not knowing anyone. He was attracted to the lake, and the friendly atmosphere. Dr. Robert Rengarts came in 1960 and recognized a community suited to quiet family living. He, too, was especially attracted to the lake, with the sunsets made to order from his home on the south end of Lake

Jackson. Dr. Rengarts has contributed greatly to the convenience of doctors and patients alike with his establishment of a Medical Center close to the Hospital. This Center now houses thirteen doctors' offices, and a pharmacy.

Dr. Augustus H. Foster's arrival was in 1961. A surgeon, he was drawn to the area by the reputation of Walker Memorial Hospital. He was also concerned about schooling for his children, and heard good reports about our schools. The next year, Dr. Santford R. Boley, from Ohio and Michigan, wrote to 35 Medical Societies in Florida interested in moving south. A response came from the Medical Society in Highlands County. Dr. Boley came to have a look, and liked what he saw. Like Dr.'s Burley, Rengarts and Foster, he knew no one, but was needed and accepted at once.

Dr. Albert J. Bajohr, Jr., and his wife are native New Yorkers. How does a Big City doctor from New York find his way to a small town in Florida? Dr. Bajohr volunteered in the Navy and was sent to Key West, where he served as a Lt. and Chief of Surgery.

One of their sons had suffered severe asthma attacks in the north; but his problems had disappeared in the Florida sun and air. As his term of service neared the end, Dr. Bajohr expressed his consideration of settling in Florida to a friend—who soon afterward attended a medical convention in Russia. There the friend met Dr. Donald F. Jones from Avon Park,

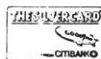
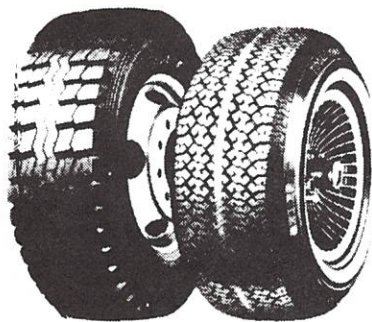
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and in a chance conversation Dr. Jones asked if he knew any doctor who might be interested in moving to Highlands County. Dr. V. Gregg Watters was retiring, and Dr. Jones saw the need for another surgeon in our area.

As soon as he returned home from the convention, Dr. Jones called Dr. Bajohr, flew to Key West to pick him up, showed him the area,—and Dr. Bajohr came to Sebring in 1977, happy to be in Florida, and especially happy to live in Sebring.

By the 1970s the age of specialists was arriving, even in the smaller communities, and doctors from many countries have settled in Sebring; Cuba, India, Latvia, The Philippines, Korea and Haiti.

Fourteen new doctors were recruited to the staff of HRMC in 1986, including internists, medical and radiation oncologists, an oral surgeon, hemotologists, an anesthesiologist, a general surgeon and a general practitioner. Efforts are being made to recruit other specialists.

Meanwhile, dental care in Sebring has not been neglected. The first dentist was Dr. Ernest G. Skiff. He and Dr. E. J. Etheredge, father of Annie Laurie (Mrs. Robert Twitty), had their offices over the First National Bank, located on the corner of the Circle and North Commerce; the building that has this year been renovated and occupied by the firm of Lybarger, Keith and McLean. Dr. J. M. Adams came here in 1929 from Fort Lauderdale, wanting a better, more stable community for his five children. Dr. James Gilbert and Dr. Herman Martin also came about this time. Dr. Martin was another basketball enthusiast like his brother L. W. Martin. There was a Dr. Kirby, then Dr. Connelly, who left to return to Alabama for orthodontic specialization.

In 1950, Dr. W. S. Coon moved to Sebring from Indiana. Having decided to re-settle in Florida, Bill and Harriet liked the looks of Sebring. They met builder E. O. Hunt and mentioned that they would like to live in Sebring. Mr. Hunt showed them a piece of property available on North East Lakeview Drive, which they purchased the same day. He offered to build their house, and they described in general terms the type of house they would like. They shook hands on the deal, they signed no papers. Four months later the Coon family happily moved into their new home in Sebring, where they lived for more than thirty years. Gentlemen's agreements were still possible then.

Dr. C. Fred Wilson came in 1962. Formerly in the hardware business, Dr. Wilson was late in deciding to study dentistry. In school in Alabama, he learned that Dr. Connelly was leaving a small town in central Florida, and he came to have a look. That look convinced him that Sebring had the right family atmosphere for his family, with three teenagers.

Dr. Robert Ross also came with teenage children who had been involved in triple school sessions on the overcrowded west coast of Florida. Both Bob and Beverly had been born and raised in small towns, and

they felt at home in Sebring. Here since 1972, they wish they had found Sebring even sooner.

Dr. James B. Kendrick became Sebring's first full-time orthodontist when he came in 1974. Again, the lake, the pleasant community, and THE RACES proved irresistible. Dr. Kendrick is the only dentist in Florida with formal surgical training in temporomandibular joint disorders, one of three in the United States. His motto is neat; "We shape health, not just teeth." There are now thirteen local dentists, orthodontists, periodontists and maxillofacial surgeons in Sebring.

Dr. Marshall E. Jordan was Sebring's only optometrist until 1952, when Dr. Fred T. Fields was driving around the state, looking for a quiet small town—a change from exploding Miami. He was enchanted with the then oak tree canopied South Lakeview Drive, and Sebring became his home. It has been determined that, in terms of longevity, he is Sebring's "oldest" person in the field of health care who is still at work. Only one Avon Park doctor has outlasted him in Highlands County.

Dr. H. Frederick Keiber found us in 1975. His father, an ophthalmologist in Winter Haven had many patients from Sebring and suggested that there must be a need for one here. Being a boating enthusiast, Dr. Keiber was attracted to the lake. Being a race fan, he was convinced that Sebring should be home for his family. In 1983 he built a fine Eye Center across from

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the Hospital, and has since opened two satellite offices.

There are now eight opticians and optometrists located in Sebring.

Drug stores have also been a vital part of the medical scene in Sebring. The first druggist was Ed L. Hainz who had a drugstore on the Circle and West Center Street. "Doc" Molter had his store on the Circle corner of South Ridgewood, where Arbour View Florist is now located. In the 20s Frank Manley had the drug store on North Ridgewood where the Lunch Box operates now. He was followed by Roy Darling, Charlie Yarborough and Mac McCollough. Paul Cater had a drug store on the Circle where the Colony Shop is now, and J. M. "Doc" Bunch bought the Rexall franchise from him. (Back then a druggist was called "doctor." That custom has ceased.)

As a teenager, Phillip Morgan worked for Doc Bunch. In time he bought Bunch's Drug Store, which had moved to the corner of the Circle and North Commerce (now Gilbert Drugs).

Roy Gilbert came to work at Darling's Drug Store in 1954, bought him out, and operated there until Phil Morgan's retirement, when he moved to the Circle location. Bunch, Morgan, Gilbert, and Ted Cason (who had a "drug store," but no pharmacist; a sundries store) dispensed medicine, but more than that, they fostered the small town friendly meeting place, the old-fashioned soda fountain and ice cream

parlor, the neighborly cuppa coffee, and the cordial welcome to the newcomers in town.

Now there are seven pharmaceutical centers in Sebring, and all of them stay busy!

Until 1971, ambulance service was rendered by the funeral homes, but was proving unsatisfactory. The Emergency Medical Services were first organized and operated by the Sheriff's Department, under the direction of Lt. Thurman Haywood. Four years later it was taken over by the county. Wayne Harris and Jim Brooks were successive directors, and Rick Weigand is the present Director. With a 1.3 million dollar budget, there are four stations in the county (two in Sebring), with 36 field personnel, three shift supervisors, three secretaries and dispatchers.

In the past two years, Highlands County Emergency Medical Service has upgraded its operation from Basic Life Support to Advanced Life Support service, requiring Paramedic training and State certification examination, as well as the purchase of additional equipment. This well-trained, quick-responding, expert team serve the area well. From October 1, 1985 through September 30, 1986, E.M.S. answered 3,293 emergency calls, 1,133 in-county transfers, and 352 out-of-county transfers for a total of 4,385 patients transported!

Highlands County had also continued its concern with health through its County Health Department, since 1937, and in 1974 county nursing director Joan Endicott established the Highlands County Health Fair, aided by local institutions, civic organizations, volunteer health agencies. Services included screening for blood pressure, diabetes, glaucoma, pulmonary function tests, pap smears and flu vaccine. In 1985 HRMC and Walker Memorial Hospital in Avon Park assumed joint sponsorship of this very helpful examination process.

A home nursing program was in operation for years, but in 1970 it was discontinued because of a lack of need. Mrs. Jucille Rankin retired from the health department after 23 years of service in November 1970. In 1977 the need for visiting nurses again became evident, and Joan Endicott established the Highlands County Home Health Agency, with a budget of \$75,000 granted by the county commissioners.

The nationally known firm of Upjohn Health Care Services has been in Sebring for years, providing much-needed home nursing care at different levels.

South Florida Community College offered its first course in nursing in 1970; a Certificate in Nursing Assistant. Two further degrees have been added; the Certificate in Practical Nursing, and the Associate in Science Nursing Administration, plus offerings in Continuing Education for Nurses. Over 1164 have graduated in these programs, and 9292 have participated in the continuing education program! Further, the Emergency Medical Training course was begun in 1974, and averages thirty graduates a year. South

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Florida Community College is doing its part to keep our nursing care up-graded, and our health enhanced.

Nutrition is an important factor in good health, often neglected by the elderly and the infirm. Typical of Sebring's caring attitude, a need was recognized; the need was met. Meals on Wheels was organized in 1974, and has served valiantly through the years. With about seventy volunteers, over seventy-five meals are presently being delivered, with seven routes a day, five days a week, with food prepared at the Sebring Care Center. Voluntary contributions are the sole support of this fine program, with recipients making some payment if they are able; one of Sebring's do-it-yourself super services.

Another do-it-yourself project began in 1975; Hope of Highlands County, organized by Rosemary (Deck) Dunwoody. In 1980 a merger of services created Services Over Sixty which is a fantastic conglomerate of services that includes congregate meals, nutrition education, home health aid, adult care and medical-oriented transportation to and from sites, among other things. Kathy Crivello is the enthusiastic Executive Director. With county assistance, volunteer contributions and assistance, plus Federal funds, Services Over Sixty is one of the splendid adjuncts to health care services in this community.

There are excellent nursing home facilities in Sebring, including the Palms Health Care Center (formerly Cottrell Nursing Home) and Sebring Care

Center. Magnolia Retirement Home, Heritage Home, Fairway Pines, and several homes, with facilities for two to eight patrons also provide important care for the elderly. Each of these facilities has a story of commitment and dedication, of staff, and of Boards of Directors.

With a large percent of Highlands County residents beyond retirement age, it is important that excellent health care be available. Building on a past of respect and love, of needs perceived and compassionately met, Sebring offers a wide variety of services and people concerned with all facets of good health.

People have been attracted to Sebring for a number of reasons; the lake, the sunsets, the quiet, clean small-town atmosphere, the healthful climate, the friendly people. As we grow, may we keep our tradition of caring and continue to provide the medical and health-related services that have enriched our lives in Sebring. Such a rich heritage we have! Seventy-five years of love and service!

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"Sebring is the land winter forgot", an early advertisement stated. "You can depend on the germ-killing, life-giving soft rays of our glorious sun almost every day in the year."

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THE ARTS IN SEBRING

By Fred Pearce

From its earliest days, the residents of Sebring have shown an interest in and an appreciation for the fine arts. Recent years have seen a considerable up-surge in these fields.

Accounts drawn from early newspapers and diaries tell of musical programs presented by local church groups and by the families of pioneer residents. The George Sebring family entertained at a "house warming" party and a concert of vocal and instrumental music was presented. A Town Band was formed in 1914 and Saturday evening concerts on the Circle became a regular feature of community life.

THE SEBRING PUBLIC LIBRARY

The oldest of Sebring's cultural assets is our Public Library. It had its beginnings in 1919 as a community betterment project by the fledgling Women's Club. Local residents donated books to form the initial collection and George Sebring made space available in the Board of Trade building to house them. The Women's Club continued its financial support thru "Tag Days", library teas and baked food sales and a corps of volunteers were the library staff. The City assumed financial responsibility for the library in 1964 and the new library building, located on the site of the Sebring home was opened in 1969 and has become the

nucleus for the developing Cultural Complex at the City Pier.

The Library now has 35,000 volumes and a paid staff headed by a professional librarian. Volunteers from the Friends of the Library also assist in the operation. Plans for library expansion include a new Children's Section and space for the Archives of Sebring Historical Society. The Friends of the Library group are actively engaged in raising funds to assist in this project.

Other groups active in the literary field are the Staff and Book Club and the Sebring Lake Poets. The Staff and Book Club dates from 1931 and its members meet monthly to discuss music and literature. They have been strong supporters of all the arts and were the moving spirit behind the Nan-Ces-O-Wee Pageant. Charlotte Breed is currently president of the group.

The Sebring Lake Poets, now in its tenth year encourages its members in creative writing. Ann Homan is the director and the group's president. The work of its members appears frequently in poetry anthologies and they offer an annual workshop in creative writing at the schools.

REX BEACH

A highlight of literary life in Sebring was the presence of the popular novelist, Rex Beach who made the Sebring area his home for some twenty years. As

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Mike and Sadie Kahn



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Kahn

Ruth K.
Davis

Marvin
Kahn

the author of a score of novels and numerous short stories and essays, he was known as "The Victor Hugo of the West." Hollywood sought him out and several of his works were made into popular movies. His interests and talents were not confined to literature alone for he was also a successful rancher and experimental farmer. He and his wife Gretta gave moral and financial support to community activities and during the hard time of the 1930's he assisted many local families in weathering the depression days.

He encouraged his friends from the world of entertainment and literature to visit Sebring and take part in community life. Among these were the Stones, Mrs. Beach's sister's family. Fred Stone was a popular comedian and dancer in the vaudeville circuits and his three daughters, billed as "The Stepping Stones" were well known in the theatrical world.

Rex Beach's last years were troubled by vision problems and cancer of the throat. He ended his life with a pistol shot in 1949 at the age of 72.

THE NAN-CES-O-WEE PAGEANT

George Sebring died in 1927 and local residents, wishing to honor his memory, established "Founder's Day" in 1930. To add to a special historical touch it was dubbed "Nan-Ces-O-Wee Day" recalling a legendary Seminole princess. Earlier the streets in the Lakeview place subdivision had been given Seminole

names (today it is still called the "Indian Section") and the hotel which Mr. Sebring built downtown still bears the name of the princess.

The program for "Nan-Ces-O-Wee Day" included a parade, a baseball game, street dance and the landing of the "princess" at the City Pier.

In 1934 the festivities were augmented by the addition of a historical pageant written by Mrs. Willard Percy and Miss Eleanor Barker. It told in song and narrative the story of a young Seminole who was shunned by his people for learning the white man's ways and how he was finally forgiven and could then marry the princess Nan-Ces-O-Wee. A Cast of over one hundred local people, dressed in authentic Indian costumes took part. Peter Gustat directed the music and the Staff and Book Club was in over-all charge. The pageant attracted state wide attention and was repeated yearly until 1937. It was revived for a single performance in 1955.

THE HIGHLANDS ART LEAGUE

Founded in 1966 by a group of local artists led by the dedicated efforts of Aronette Schenck, it is our senior organization in the Arts. The following year saw the first of its many projects, a Festival of the Arts which has been presented annually in mid-November in the down-town area. Through the years



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it has developed into one of the best shows of its type and attracts exhibitors from the entire state as well as the south-east.

The League offers instruction in drawing and painting in all media, craftwork, sculpture, ceramics and stained glass. Several exhibitions of member's works are held each year, as well as a program in cooperation with the area schools, for example, the Clothesline Art Show which features student works. The League has stood always ready to encourage other groups in the Arts and assists in the program of art instruction in the schools.

1986 saw the completion of the first unit of the Museum of the Arts located in the Cultural Complex at the City Pier. Additional units will provide increased gallery space and additional teaching areas. Ann Tison is currently the president of the group.

Not to be overlooked in this field is the Highlands Gem and Mineral Club. Members not only collect lapidary specimens, but cut, polish and shape them into artistic forms. Jodie Eggers is currently the group's president and the members present frequent exhibitions of their art.

THE HIGHLANDS LITTLE THEATRE

Highlands Little theatre, founded in 1974, provides the community with several dramatic productions each season. Their home is the Lakeside Playhouse, a part

of the Cultural Complex, which has been extensively remodeled from a former city-owned recreation building. Present plans call for an expansion which will provide new stage facilities. During its early years the group led a nomadic existence using the local schools, the Civic Center, the College and the Elks Lodge for its productions. The acquisition of a permanent home has allowed them to develop most successfully the "dinner theatre" concept. Offerings for the year typically include Broadway musicals, old-fashioned melodrama and standard dramatic works. A gala Christmas show is a highlight of the season. Tina Pollard heads the group as its president.

The Sebring area had two earlier theatrical groups. In the 1930's a Mrs. Hatton, relative of Mrs. Rex Beach directed the productions for several years and, according to local newspaper accounts, they were well received. The group also went "on the road", playing in neighboring towns and in Tampa as well.

The Ridge Theatre Guild made Sebring its home during its short existence from 1959 to 1964. Many local people were active in it, both as actors and behind the scenes. Their productions were staged at the Woodlawn School and also at the airport auditorium, a relict of the Hendricks Field facility.

Also active on the local theatre scene are the Drama Club at Sebring High School directed by Roy Reidy and the College drama classes led by Lynn MacNeil. Both groups offer productions during the year.



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MUSICAL ACTIVITIES

Music has always had a large part in the life of our community. The Newcomb Papers tell of the singing, usually accompanied by violin, banjo or guitar at the open air church services at the Circle and early residents enjoyed informal "musicals" in each others homes.

At the invitation of the city fathers, Peter Gustat arrived in 1926 to direct the City Band but the collapse of the land boom a few months later left him without a job. He persuaded the newly organized Rotary Club to sponsor a Boys Band which soon became a joint effort with the school. (Please see the section on our schools for the story of the band). About this same time Mr. Gustat organized the Sebring Choral Society of about forty voices which gave programs, not only in town but in surrounding communities. Sebring musicians were prominent in the Esteddfor held in Lake Wales in 1930 where they carried off many top honors in competition with other central Florida musicians.

In 1983 the former Sebring Hills Chorale which was organized in the mid 70's became a part of the Sebring Community Education program and extended its field of operation to include the whole community, changing its name to the Delta Chorale. The group of fifty mixed voices is under the direction of David Rinald and presents several programs during the year. The Chorale is now a unit of the South Florida Community College program.

Local instrumental musicians under the direction of Fred Pearce formed the Highlands County Concert Band in 1977. Its roster of forty members include former professionals and service musicians, students and interested amateurs. Like the Delta Chorale, the band is a unit of the college program and its repertoire of Sousa marches, light classics and Broadway show tunes has enlivened the local scene.

Band members have formed several smaller groups including a brass ensemble, a German-style band, "Die Oberlaender" and The Highlandaires which plays the music of the 30's and 40's under the direction of Larry Drake.

Sebring's many attractive features were celebrated in a song "Sebring the Beautiful" written in 1916. The text and music were by a local resident, George Gage and for many years its performance by Ruth Sebring was a part of every local event. It will be featured again during the 75th anniversary.

SOUTH FLORIDA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Established in 1965 to serve our area, South Florida Community College is making important contributions in the Arts. Its well equipped theatre and 1500 seat auditorium are the setting for many community events.

In 1984, the College instituted its Cultural Series and absorbed the earlier Community Concerts organization. The 1987-88 season has been expanded to eight programs which include a major symphony orchestra, a ballet company, a Broadway musical and the duo-piano team of Ferrante and Teicher.

The lobby area of the facility is in almost constant use as an art gallery. Dr. Bette McDearman of the College faculty arranges exhibitions of works by students and local artists as well as playing host to traveling exhibits.

The Adult and Community Education Department presents a nine-week "Enrichment for Seniors" series which regularly attracts audiences of a thousand for its Tuesday afternoon performances. Several Sunday afternoon programs are also scheduled. The series is a showcase for local performing groups from local schools and churches, civic groups and individuals.

The College library is open to the public and the Drama classes present two plays during the year. The Music Department, staffed by Douglas Andrews and Luann Hawk offer instruction on a community basis, maintains a choral group and presents a popular series of Cabaret shows and a Madrigal Dinner at the Christmas season.

We here in Sebring may well take pride in our accomplishments in the Arts and look forward to increased activities in this field during the next quarter century.



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HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS

DeVANES EARLY FLORIDA HISTORY — Very little specific Sebring history.

FIRST 25 YEARS ARE HARDEST — Sketch of Sebring government 1913 to 1937.

AN EXERCISE IN FRUSTRATION — The story of the demise of the lakeside park.

SEBRING FOLKS — A collection of about 100 biological sketches of Sebring people.

THE STORY OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE — A sketchy story of the first years of the Chamber.

THE STORY OF THE SEBRING FIREMEN — A sketch of the history of the Sebring Firemen 1925 to 1960.

THE NEWCOMB-BAKER COLLECTIONS — A transcript of some of John Newcomb's Diaries and Baker's pix.

HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK — The origin and construction work in the Park.

The following are all collections of short articles, biological sketches, legends, and miscellaneous tales:

THE WAY IT WAS
TWICE TOLD TALES
TRIVIA

REFLECTIONS
RECOLLECTIONS
MEDLEY & OLIO

SOME ONE THOUSAND OR MORE PIECES OF MISCELLANEOUS MATERIALS THAT WERE PUBLISHED IN THE SOCIETY'S QUARTERLY BULLETIN.

Our file in the Archives —

HEARTLAND HERITAGE — A collection of articles appearing in the Tampa Tribune written by Lear and Nicholson.

FIFTY YEARS OF SEBRING — 100 page booklet issued in 1962.

FIFTY YEARS OF HIGHLANDS COUNTY — Booklet issued in 1971 - has some Sebring history.

In the Archives, there are several editions of the local newspapers that were issued on special occasions that are rich in information of Sebring history. There is also a single volume of the collection of Vickers' "HIGHLANDS HISTORY" clippings. This may not be taken out, however.

It has been the policy of the Historical Society to give books to the schools and libraries of the county. This has not been practiced in ALL cases.



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HISTORY STAFF AND BOOK CLUB 1931-87

The cultural life of Sebring has benefited for many years by the work of the Staff and Book Club which held its first meeting December 4, 1931 at the home of Mrs. Vail Weems.

Mrs. Mary Frances Percy had a vision for such a club and was its organizer and first president. With Mrs. Percy and Mrs. Weems as charter members were Mrs. Martee Heacock, Mrs. Maxine Martin and Mrs. Sarah Taylor.

The objectives of the club, as stated in its constitution, are to promote interest in literature, art and music and to foster friendships among its members.

Fast and enduring friendships have been formed among its members during the years since formation of the club fifty-six years ago.

Among the members have been talented musicians, educators, artists and writers, but all have been interested in increasing their knowledge in areas of intellectual and artistic achievement.

The membership was limited to twenty until 1980 when it was decided to admit daughters and daughters-in-law of club members into active membership.

All five charter members are living. Mrs. Vail Weems, Mrs. Maxine Martin and Mrs. Martee

Heacock live in Sebring and continue to be active members. Mrs. Percy and Mrs. Taylor live elsewhere.

The programs throughout the years have been concerned with the lives and works of the world's great artists, musicians and authors, although not limited to these subject. In addition, government, politics, economics, and science have been of interest. Many papers based on careful research and concerned with a wide variety of related subjects have been the content of each years programs.

For example, one year, the programs were concerned with the stories of many operas and the lives of their composers. Musicians within the club played and sang excerpts from the operas to illustrate their beauty. Another year, the lives and times of each of the president's wives were considered.

Several ambitious programs were prepared for guest days when friends were invited. "A Day in Ireland" was presented using club talent. There were solos, piano duets and trios, chorus groups, and reading—all pertinent to Irish music and art. A highlight of the program was the dancing of an Irish Jig by six members: Mrs. Ellen Bee, Mrs. Ruth Sebring, Mrs. Jennie Gustat, Mrs. Faith Parker, Miss Constance Gustat and Mrs. Martee Heacock.

In 1940, another memorable guest day program, "Quest of the Gypsy" was presented at the Woman's Club building which was located then on Oak Street.

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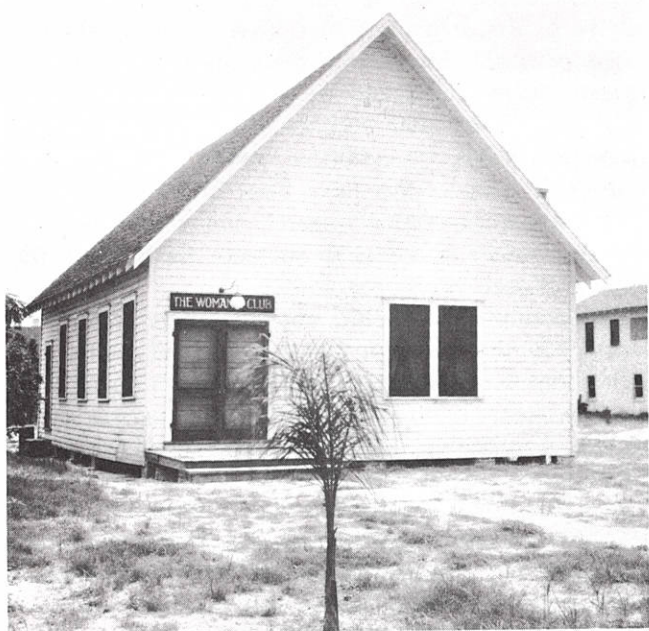
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Club members, dressed in brightly colored Gypsy costumes, greeted guests at the door. After a history of the Gypsy People was told by Mrs. Marion Eyman, an operetta entitled "Quest of the Gypsy" followed. The elaborately costumed characters and the beautiful Romany songs combined to make the program enjoyable for the large number of guests present.

For many years, while the Kenilworth and Harder



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Hall were popular resort hotels, the Staff and Book Club entertained for winter guests once a year. High humor, song and dance, and short plays pulled from past programs were presented.

Perhaps the most spectacular and elaborate program undertaken was the February 15, 1937 presentation of Nan-Ces-O-Wee Pageant Drama.

Months of planning and hard work, as well as creative effort, went into this production. Since all the club members, many of their husbands and children and other members of the community were to act as characters in the pageant, many Indian costumes had to be fashioned and sewn together to look as authentic as possible.

All the costumes and all the props necessary for the setting were made by the club members.

The pageant itself was conceived by Professor P.J. Gustat. The Indian legend, in the form of a narrative poem, reminiscent of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poems, was written by Eleanor Barker and Mary Farnes Percy, with strict adherence to the history of the Seminole Indians.

The narrator of the drama was Mary Frances Percy who read the legend while the actors, in pantomime, dramatized the story. The pageant took place on Lake Jackson beach below the present Civic Center. The legend is a fictional version of the founding of Sebring.

Miss Thera Killebrew took the part of Princess Nan-Ces-O-Wee and Fred Wild took the part of Ko-Nip-Hat-Cho. The time background was from 1880 to 1911.

The story tells of the love and sad separation of these lovers and of their eventual happy reunion. The princess is the fairest child of Chief Charles Osceola whose tribe lived along the edge of Lake Clear Water (Lake Jackson).

After Ko-Nip-Hat-Cho returns from his wandering, he becomes a Seminole Chief and soon marries Princess Nan-Ces-O-Wee at the annual Green Corn Festival.

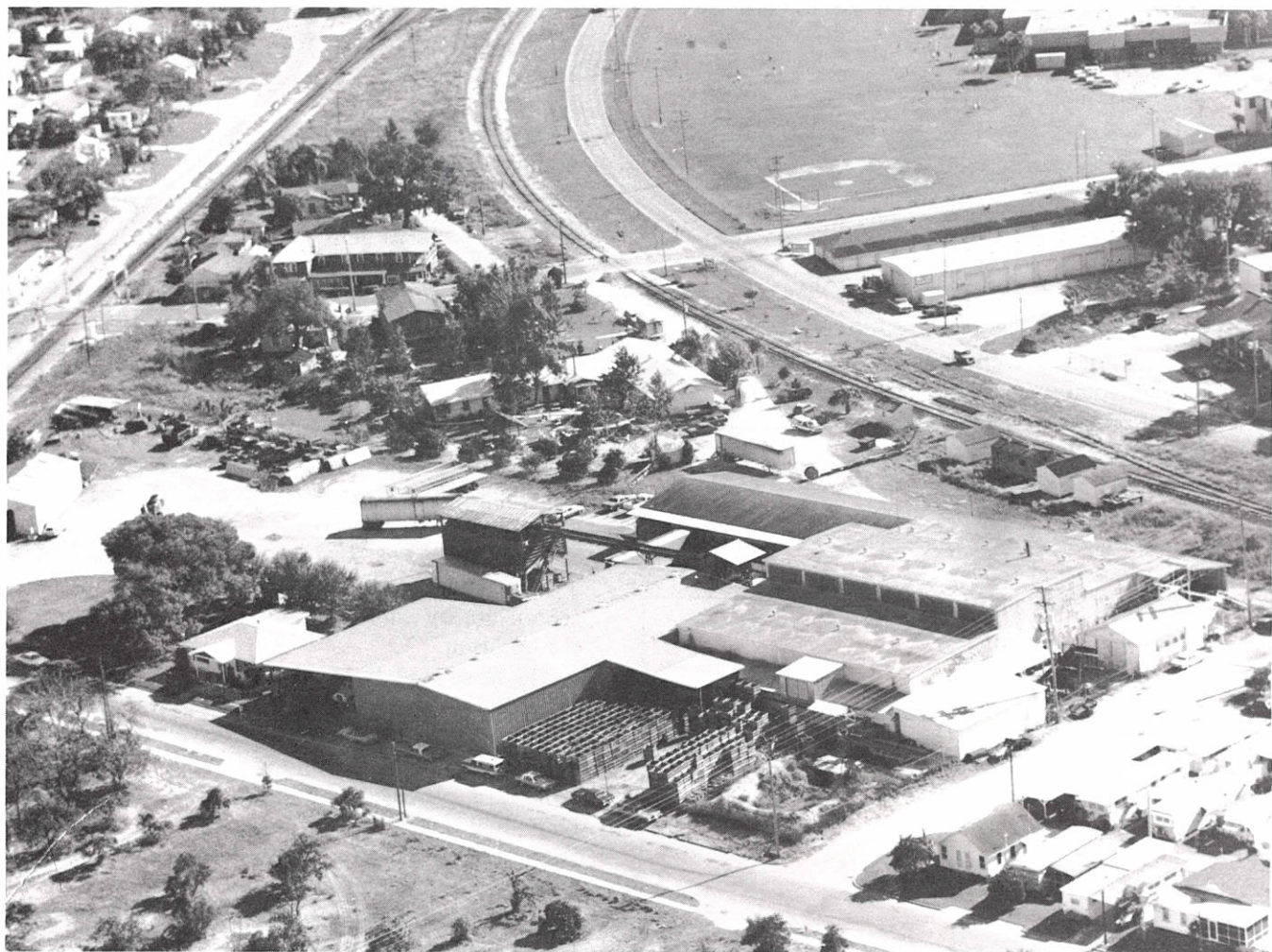
Years pass, and in 1911 two white men from the north arrive with their wagons filled with their possessions. Friendly relations are established and the white men express a desire to purchase land for a future town to be called Sebring.

The white men's names are George E. Sebring and son, H.O. Sebring. The Indian chiefs agree to sell their land and go south to Glades County. The town grew and became a thriving city, with the white man as sole possessor and the Indian, but a legend.

This pageant was so successful in its conception, content and execution, that eighteen years later in 1955, the Junior Woman's Club, using many of the same costumes and props, produced the same pageant again. This time the members of the Staff and Book Club were honorary sponsors.

In 1962 at the fiftieth anniversary celebration of the founding of Sebring, members of the Staff and Book Club were hostesses at a reception for a large

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Sandra Handley, Beverly Ross, Charlotte Breed. Middle row, from left, Azalea Burkett, Martha Lauderbach, Martee Heacock, Ruth Sebring, Sunny Weaver; Top, Vail Weems, Barbara Altvater, Leilah Sebring, Maxine Martin, Verna Macbeth, Marion McAdams.

number of out of town guests as well as community members. Many former club members attended and were joyfully welcomed. The reception was held at the Tourist Club Building, which was located where the First National Bank now stands.

In the 1930s and 1940s, members came to the afternoon monthly meetings formally attired, replete with gloves and hats. The members did not use first names freely until the 1950s and 1960s.

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Times and customs change and a more relaxed and informal relationship developed among the club members. Many joined the work force, making an evening time more practical.

Television and the ever widening use of video equipment has implemented the possibilities for programs. Airplane travel has taken members to all parts of the world and slides of the countries visited have made extensive traveling possible for club members.

For instance, Verna Macbeth shared her impressions of Greece and Asia Minor by showing slides of Athens, Corinth, Trvas and Ephesus and other cities.

Patricia Taylor traveled to Australia and New Zealand and shared the beauty of these countries by means of slides. Other recent programs included a study of the royal families of Europe; the use of fans in oriental and western society since ancient times; an illustration of the basic architectural design of cathedrals with slides showing the great cathedrals of Englands such as Durham, Lincoln and Canterbury.

A study of the Spanish influence on the culture and history of North and South America has been of interest.

As part of this study, Charlotte Breed told of attending a bull fight in Spain and Nancy Hensley of attending one in Mexico.

Every year, the Staff and Book Club has donated a book either to the Sebring Public Library or to a school library which was recommended as needed by the librarian.

The Staff and Book Club have had a influence on the cultural development of Sebring. Its members have been leaders in all areas of the civic, educational and religious life of the community.

It has provided an outlet for the sharing of individual talent within the club and of promoting friendship by means of mutual interest in all facets of the world of arts and letters.

Throughout its long history, the club has identified with and will continue to support all proposals and programs designed to enrich the cultural life of Sebring.

By Marion Roe McAdams

(Ruth Sebring provided past minutes, yearbooks, and program used in writing it.)

SERTOMA CLUB

The Highlands Sertoma Club was chartered in Sebring on December 16, 1977. The first president was William M. Byron.

Sertoma stands for service to mankind. In order to achieve this goal the group has participated in many service projects during the last ten years, with an emphasis on speech and hearing projects.

The club currently has 25 members and meets each Monday at noon at the Lunch Box in Sebring.

THE OPTIMIST CLUB OF SEBRING

Sebring chapter started in 1975, with 20 members. First President was Robert Allen, and Jim Harrison was second official.

Optimist club is affiliated with Optimist International, and the founding of this club marks one of the steps forward to serve the Youth of the area.

Active in youth organizations, the club has sponsored scout troops, youth athletic groups including a soccer team, bowling youth leagues and academic teams.

Principal scholarships have been awarded annually to area youths, and the club has recently (1986-1987) started what is believed to be the first scholarship designed for Vocational students.

In honor of Pappy Rion, one of the charter members, an annual award is presented to a person who is pursuing a vocational course.

This award will pay all costs of a vocational course pursued at South Florida Community College.

The club sponsors an oratorical contest for local youths, and they participate in many of Sebring's community activities in general.

Current President is Edward La Voie.

THE SEBRING ROTARY

The idea of a Rotary Club in Sebring originated with Fairfax T. Haskins and had been occupying much

of his thought for a number of years, so late in the year 1923 he decided the time was ripe.

It was first necessary to select a sufficient number of men with the proper moral standing in the community and a satisfactory professional or business classification Fine Arts & Music. Together they agreed on a third party then the three unanimously selected a fourth and so on until the complete roster of 23 charter members had been selected.

This process necessarily required quite a little time and several meetings, but on July 18, 1924 the final organization meeting was held in the offices of Fairfax T. Haskins, Attorney at Law, Highlands Bank & Trust Company Building. Twenty-three men were present. F.T. Haskins was appointed Chairman of the Organization Committee.

A preliminary organization was effected. The Charter No. 1816 was issued by Rotary International September 8th, 1924. Presentation of our Charter was made jointly with the Avon Park Rotary Club by District Governor Wm. C. Lanier of West Point, GA., assisted by Chas. C. Williams, Secretary of the Lakeland Rotary Club and delegations from Rotary Clubs of Ft. Myers, Lakeland, Tampa, St. Petersburg, Live Oak, Haines City and Orlando, at Lake Byrd Lodge on the evening of September 12th, 1924.

The first officers elected in the Sebring Rotary Club on July 18th, 1924, to act until the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1925 were: F.T. Haskins, President;

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E.O. Douglas, 1st Vice-President; R.N. Durrance, 2nd Vice-President; G.F. Bobb, Treasurer; R.O. Baker, Secretary.

There were 22 members at the close of the year. The Board of Directors included: F.T. Haskins, H.O. Sebring, G.F. Bobb, B.L. Laird, E.O. Douglas, G.A. Nash and R.O. Baker.

Committee chairmen appointed for the first year were: R.N. Durrance, Membership; Dan Andrews, Program; Dick Hart, Fellowship; H.O. Sebring, Public Affairs; B.L. Laird, Rotary Education; T.V. Conway, Publicity; E.L. Hainz, Business Methods; R.O. Baker, Attendance; W.Z. Dalgety, Boys Work; and G.F. Bobb, Classification.

HISTORY OF THE KIWANIS CLUB OF SEBRING

BY Leon Hunter

Our Kiwanis Club was initiated by Dillon Ryan, a past lieutenant governor of Kiwanis in West Virginia. Under the sponsorship of the Kiwanis Club of Lake Wales, Dillon rounded up twenty-nine men and applied for a charter which came in May 1960.

Charter members included Alexander, Arnold, Boggus, Britton, Clayton, Dearmin, Droit, Fagan, Glisson, Grady, Hair, Heston, Hunter, Hyatt, Longbottom, Ketchum, McGrath, Neel, Pepper, Prickett, Richardson, Ridout, Robertson, Ryan, Sherwood, Strickland, Stroup, Vasek, and Wicks.



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Only two of these, Garland Boggus and Hunter, are still members. Many others have died or moved away.

The club has sponsored three new clubs: Avon Park, Lake Placid and our Downtown Breakfast Club. We have reorganized the Key Club in Sebring High School. Our club has furnished three lieutenant governors: Alexander, Grady and Tebeau.

Our club has engaged in many fund raising activities. We have sold candy, peanuts, books, tickets to our Travelog Series; we have conducted golf tournaments and Olympics for the Handicapped.

We have helped at the 12-Hour Sebring Races. We have conducted Flag displays on five national holidays annually, weather permitting, in front of many contracting business or professional buildings.

Our main fund raising projects have been selling pancake breakfasts and conducting our annual Travelog Series.

The proceeds from these activities have been donated to many worthy cultural, welfare, uplift, and character building causes and organizations.

We have supported financially and otherwise Key Club, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H Club, Future Farmers of America, Dixie League Baseball, Sheriff's Boys Ranch - Girls Villa, our City Library, Little Theater, Nu-Hope, Middle School Band, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, March of Dimes, Life Line, S.O.S., Salvation Army and N.J. Mission.

We provide two scholarships annually to our South Florida Community College.

We have given to all fourth and all fifth grades in Highlands County Schools copies of the book Teach Your Child the Consequences of Crime written by our own Judge Clifton Kelly and Sherman Wantz.

Our club has sent delegates to Division, to District, to National and to International Conventions.

From a modest beginning in 1960, our club has expanded our activities, has greatly increased our financial and moral support to more and more worthy causes, has grown in community esteem, and has increased our standing and prestige in the Florida Kiwanis District.

THE SEBRING LIONS CLUB

Through its infancy (the years of the late 1920's) Sebring Lions could hardly muster a meow, and certainly not a roar by all standards of the 1960's and '70's.

Of the 25 members listed on the club charter of July 10, 1926, 17 dropped out by June of 1927. Five of these charter members came back into membership, four of them for periods of one to two years. One remained until 1936.

This dismal membership record must be viewed against the circumstances of the time. Sebring Lions Club was conceived in the heyday of the Florida Land Boom, but came to birth as the Bust was spreading,

a sad forerunner of the Great Depression which crept over the nation in the early 1930's.

Community service type projects are reported beginning 1927-28. However, membership reports are not mentioned until the 1929-30 year and then according to Lions International only five reports were filed.

In 1931-32 the reporting was up to 10 reports for the year, but perfection takes some time so it was 1934-35 before Lions International reports, for the first time, "All membership reports were received on time this year."

The 1936-37 history reported that four charter members were presented the chevrons, and seven key members were presented for the year.

Going into the decade of the '40's Lionism seemed to be on the verge of a period of rapid growth. Activity records show greater variety of club work — until World War II intervened and changed forever the patterns of life in central Florida.

In 1939-40, however, the Ridge was still in the relatively slow growth era. In that year Sebring Lions Club turned "missionary" and sponsored launching of a Lions Club in Avon Park. The following year a Frostproof club was sponsored. The Lake Placid club is a post-war unit, sponsored by the Sebring club in 1949-50.

A unique event for the '40-'41 year was a quail supper Sebring hosted for Avon Park Lions.

Then the war and gasoline rationing intervened, and it was into the '50's before inter-club activity resumed. A family picnic was held with Lake Placid and Avon Park in 1953, and a baseball game with Lake Placid was also held that year.

Inter-club projects with Lake Placid were not limited to fun and games. In 1953 Sebring with Lake Placid sponsored a 4-H project. No details about the project are in the records, but it is noted that it cost \$606.56.

An annual fund raising event during the early years of the Sebring Lions Club was the Minstrel Show. The fund-raising included a great deal of fun-raising.

Although the war was slowing and changing Lions projects in the early '40's, Sebring club did take one step to tie it more closely to international Lionism. In 1942 a convention fund was established.

In 1942-43 Professor M.M. Ferguson was zone chairman, the first Sebring Lion to be chosen for a district office.

Sebring Lions celebrated their 30th birthday in the 1955-56 years. The first printed history of the club appeared that year and was dedicated to the club's only active charter member, Lion P.G. Gearing.

In the 1959-60 year Lion Gearing was made a Life Member and the same year Lion C. Elton Weaver was made Pioneer Member. When the printed history of the club, 1926-71, appeared it was dedicated in memory of Lion Weaver.

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Lion Weaver, incidently, was the first recipient of the LEO Award — Lion Elected Outstanding. LEO was given for the first time in 1949. Lion Gearing was the 1951 recipient.

The 40th anniversary of the club was celebrated with a special banquet at which International President Dr. Walter Campbell was guest speaker.

As Sebring Lions Club neared formal celebration of its 50th birthday, the club was reporting 104 members, one honorary member, four Life members, 17 at-large members. One charter member, Lion P.G. Gearing is still active. He is author of one of the chapters in this history and a resource person for the entire book.

In projects Lions have undertaken in order to set up the "Jingle Jangle" of cash registers are a study in distinctive sounds: The sizzle of frying fish, the chant of a bingo caller, the clink and clatter of gumball machines, and that uniquely Sebring sound, zoom, swish, scream and roar of racing sportscars.

From the start of the Sebring sportscar races, Lions have been involved in some aspect of concessions. Veteran members recall "working at the races" in the earliest years when spectators wandered back and forth across the old runways and crowd control was a completely foreign term. The first mention of the Sebring race project in the club's written records is a concession stand in the 1954 reports.

In 1955 reference is made to the "grand prix stand." That reference also lists an income of \$482.88,

incidently a low point so far as race concession income is concerned.

By 1956 the income was up to \$950, and in 1957 the net profit climbed past the \$1,000 mark. In 1958 Alec Ulmann, prime promoter of the 12-Hours of Sebring, gave the club two pit booths in the permanent pit area of the races. He was made an honorary member of the club.

Not every year has a report on net profit realized from the hours of work almost on the track during Race Week, but these years for which there are reports show returns ranging as high as \$2,500 in 1965.

The booth operated for the last time in 1973. Net profit that year was \$2,282. That is the only year the manhours of labor were recorded along with the cash yield. The 1973 booth required 504 hours — a little more than \$4.52 profit per hour of labor!

The pit area booths were build and re-built over the years in attempts to improve efficiency. The menu, never long, was increased a bit from time to time.

Cleanliness was a goal never realized. Even the most dedicated efforts could not keep pace with the layers of black tire dust pouring through the food stand, just a few short feet away from the pit alley.

The volunteers also gave up really hearing the orders and soon invented systems of hand signals and lip-reading to fetch the food requested by the thousands - and thousands and thousands - who came to the Lions booth.

After a serious fire raced along the pit area in the mid 1960's the race promoters were forced to take greater safety measures, including the walling up of the Lions booth windows opening into the pits.

Gasoline shortage in the winter of 1973-74 led to the cancellation of the famous race. When Sebring resumed in 1975 it was under a new management. The old Lions food booth was no longer available to the club. However, the new management, headed by John Greenwood, provided another fund-raising opportunity for Sebring Lions.

Club members were hired as track security personnel. For these chores Lions Club was paid \$1,600. A ticket-selling project at the 1976 race brought in another \$1,600 — and sent the Race concession income to well over \$20,000 over the years.

In contrast to the hot, dirty, loud, and exciting Race concession is another of the long time projects, gumball machines.

The first mention of gumballs in the club records is in 1948: "Gumball machines were installed in local business establishments." Sometimes annual totals are given, but often not. A clue to their success is found in the minutes for the September 18, 1972 board meeting. "Gum Ball Chairman C. Riggs reports this is the first month that has not produced more than \$100.00. The proceeds were \$63.15."

The January 1974 report shows an income of \$157.47 — the highest for any single month total reported. The monthly and annual reports through the

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years often mention "Gumball project" and tell of re-painting or re-locating of the machines. Veteran members recall that early in the project the Sebring club voted to buy the machines, but this decision is not reflected in the printed history of the period.

If the report from 1973 could be taken as a guide, income from the clink of pennies and the clatter of the simple confection has been considerable. The income in '73 was \$820.41.

This level of income is far above that realized from the weekly Bingo games which were instituted in November, 1974. Again, complete reports are not at hand, but those reports in the monthly summaries show bingo has brought in as much as \$128.15 profit in August 1975 and as little as \$63 in November 1975.

If bingo is not the greatest money-raiser neither is it the poorest in the club's history. A "Dutch auction" held sometime in 1952 netted the glorious sum of — would you believe \$6.00! Maybe it was a small item for the next year another dutch auction was held to realize a whooping profit of \$11.57!

Then sometimes Lions are philosophical about their money projects.

During the 1972 Highlands County Fair the Lions sold light bulbs and daisy discs - for no profit at all! Secretary Norman Smith wrote, "We didn't make any money, but hope our reward will be in the number of people who signed the eye will cards."

If the chant of an auctioneer or a fair worker has not always produced cash, then the jabber of bargain hunters has. The first recorded money project of the club was a white elephant day in 1929. Mentions of white elephant sales are dotted all through the first two decades of the club history. These sales appear to have been a victim of World War II.

With the advent of the new building in the 1970's they re-appear. The white elephant sale held at the new den site in April, 1973, may well be the all-time high money-making event. For a single day a profit of \$3,500 was realized.

On March 18, 1974, the club voted to begin holding a flea market every week. By July of 1974 the flea market was realizing about \$150 per week. In 1975 the income appeared to be stabilizing between \$750 and \$800 per month — part of it realized from direct sales of foods and merchandise, part of it from weekly rent on sales spaces.

And as it is true almost for every organization that ever embarked on a fundraising career, Sebring Lions has staged its share of dinners and talent shows.

In the decade of the '40's Lions sponsored several minstrels which usually netted \$200 to \$300. The last endeavor in that entertainment form was in 1954 when Lions joined Sebring Firemen for a minstrel.

The first food-money reported is in 1948 when Lions ran a lunch counter at the county fair, and netted \$700 for a week of effort.

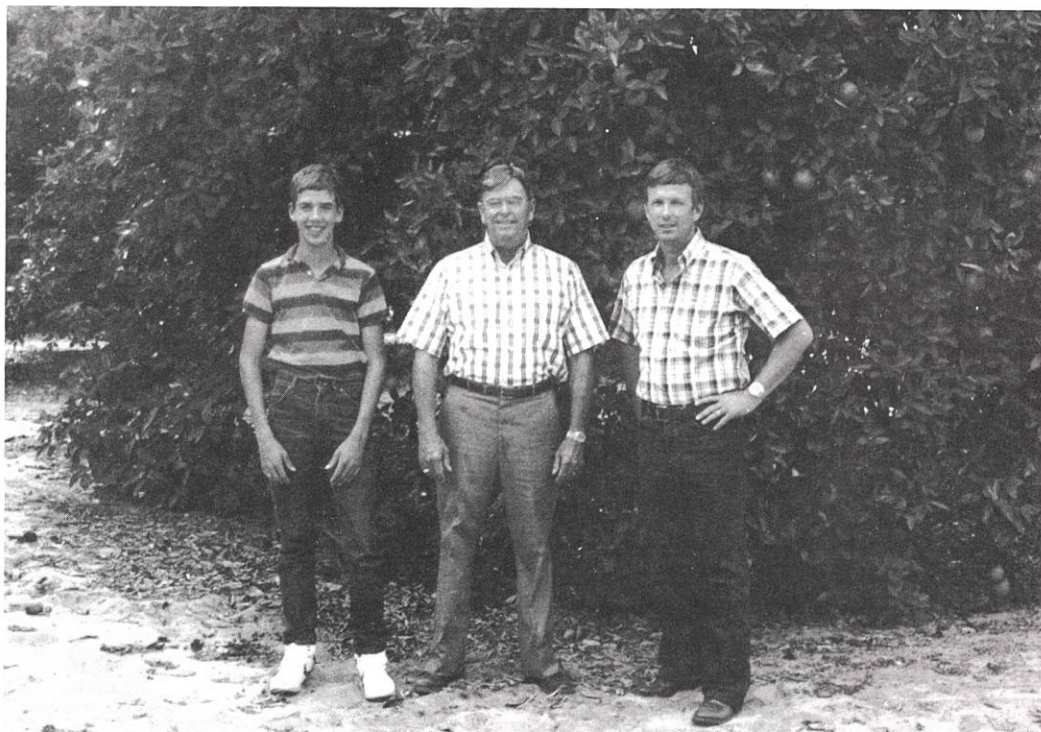
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The 1972 fish fry was a huge financial success. It netted \$1,100. Barbecues of several kinds — ribs, chicken, steak — are reported in the early and mid-'70's.

The Lions also engaged in that other classic fundraiser, raffles, several times and with the raffle of a used Cadillac in 1972 netted \$3,171. Moves by the state attorney to begin enforcing of Florida's long-standing no raffles law has brought a halt to ticket and chance method of jangling the cash register.

Since the club now keeps books on manhours involved in money projects, there presumably is a calculation approach to figure out which projects produce income comparable to time invested.

The Sebring Lions Club building is the culmination of many years of hopeful planning. The Lions Den of the Club's "cub" days had been gone for many years when, about 1945, the possibility of a new den was mentioned.

In 1950, the year the Sebring sportscar races started and Lions had a food concession at the races, the Lions voted to start a building fund. A few hundred dollars a year were deposited in a savings account and by the time the land was acquired, about \$11,000 was available in the building fund.

In February 1971, through the efforts of Lion Harry Lee, the club was given two lots on Fairmount Drive. Mrs. Gregg Maxcy contributed these lots, and Lion Lee himself donated a contiguous lot. The Lions purchased two lots making a tract 500 by 150 feet available, fronting on Fairmount Drive and lying between Cleveland and Avalon Streets.

A fund-raising committee was appointed by President Jim Crawford. Early in June, 1971, President Lee presided for the formal groundbreaking.

District Governor Howard Towns led the groundbreaking ceremony. Foundations and basic plumbing were finished late in 1971.

In 1972, under the leadership of President Tim Hurner, construction continued with blocks being laid, often in late afternoon or on Saturdays with Lions doing much of the work.

Lion members were asked to buy blocks and practically every Lion responded by buying anywhere from 10 to several hundred. Donations were also received from friends of Lions and other interested citizens.

The roof was finally in place in mid-1972. One of the largest material donations was made by the late Paul McGehee who furnished all the windows in the building.

Under the administrations of Lion Owen Young ('72-'73) and Lion Bill Brown ('73-'74) the interior was worked on with toilets, kitchen, storerooms gradually finished. During this period the club board decided no work would be contracted until funds were on hand to pay for it. So, progress slowed somewhat.

Finding suitable meeting space for so large a club was becoming very difficult so the pressure to get into the new building mounted. Much credit must be given to Lions Countus Mayberry and the late Charley Bonebrake. They laboriously finished the kitchen, incidentally furnishing much of the materials needed for this job.

Early in Lion Brown's administration — in August 1973 — the Lions held their first meal in the new Lions Den.

A number of methods were used for obtaining the food for the luncheons. For a time meals were catered and later a pattern of "home cooking"



During World War II Sebring Lions were often hosts for meals and parties for the service men stationed at Hendricks Field, now Sebring airport.

evolved with Lions Mayberry and Bonebrake often preparing and serving the food. Members of the Lions Auxiliary (organized in 1972) and different members of the Lions Club have augmented the kitchen crew.

The Auxiliary was - and is - a tremendous help in the building program. The women have donated much material and several thousand of dollars, besides giving many hours of labor in building projects.

During 1974-75, under the administration of Lion Norman Smith, most of the interior paneling was installed. Plumbing for restrooms was completed and many other finishing touches accomplished.

Anything for the good of the community, sometime, some place, Sebring Lions Club members have put mind and muscle into it! Lions have planned, promoted, prompted, often purchased some needed community facility or service.

These community projects run the gamut from purchase of a neon "Town-boosting" sign (given to Sebring in 1940-41 year), and a publication of a special edition of the Sebring Newspaper (in 1931-32), to establishing a city airport.

The city airport, Lions provided, was located a short distance south of Avon Park, and to the east of the present U.S. 27. That airport did not last long for by the 1933-34 year the club was busy promoting development of a new city airport. The club helped obtain a large tract of land on what is now the

Hammock Road. Traces of this old field can still be seen.

The club was busy indeed that year for club members helped promote a reorganization of Sebring Chamber of Commerce and work toward obtaining a new bank for the city.

Lions had hopped right into the middle of civic improvement work as soon as the infant club was begun. One of the first big projects for the club was mosquito extermination. That was in the 1927-28 year. Two years later Lions inaugurated a program "for the extinction of the Mediterranean fruit fly."

The club had been born at the beginning of a time of economic recession. With work scarce and enforced leisure abundant, recreational facilities were badly needed. As early as '27 the Lions were helping with fish restocking projects for the area lakes, but by the 1920-30 year the recreational needs were more general.

The club established a recreational field and for several years worked to maintain and improve it. They constructed and reconstructed horseshoe and shuffleboard courts, and a baseball diamond and, what is probably the best remembered by old-timers, rustic shelters. These shelters standing where Florida National Bank now rises, gave some protection to the dedicated players of such games as checkers.

The mid-'30's were full of projects to boost the community and, hopefully, help business. In 1930 a

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Business Confidence Week was promoted. In 1935 Lions joined in a program to advertise Florida.

Early in the New Deal a Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp had been established near Lake Sebring. Three years later (1936) the camp needed to relocate, and Sebring Lions undertook what by modern standards was a very strange project. The club helped to obtain a new site for the camp, near Highlands Hammock, then had a building erected on the site in order to save the government money!

This carefulness of federal funds was not, however, altogether altruistic. The Lions were sharing with the rest of the community in a desire to have the CCC work on a botanical garden and arboretum. This work, undertaken at Highlands Hammock, was a victim of World War II, and since the War naturalists have resisted attempts to re-introduce such projects to the Hammock.

As early as 1929-30 Lions were participating in a drive to found an association for the preservation of Hooker Hammock. Hooker Hammock eventually became Highlands Hammock, first Florida state park and internationally recognized as a unique natural park.

In Lion's cub days they helped with the launching of a county fair and encouraged its settling in Sebring. The club's contribution to the '41 fair was a "public resting booth."

The year 1941 began peacefully enough — the resting booth at the fair, ushering for the Sunday evenings vesper services at Highlands Hammock, sharing social events with the Lions Club of Avon Park and Frostproof. By the end of the year the club was sponsoring civilian defense programs including demonstration of techniques for extinguishing incendiary bombs.

The club held drawings for \$25 savings bonds, urged local merchants to keep stocks of savings stamps on hand to use for change.

One of the unique contributions of the war years was the erection of a "Soldier pick-up station." On North Ridgewood Drive, not far from the intersection with the present State Road 17, the club built a little shelter similar to the school bus waiting stations used in some areas.

Citizens willing to help soldiers on their travels, would stop by the pick-up station to offer rides to the GI's waiting there. That station was erected in the 1943-44 year. In 1946 the old shelter was auctioned off; it brought \$21.

Throughout World War II the club members at home carried on an active letter-writing program. Letters were sent to servicemen each week. Christmas gifts were sent to the members who were in the armed services, and sometimes money was given for cigarette funds for servicemen in general. After the air base was established (at the present day site of Sebring Airport) Sebring Lions helped provide for the needs of the servicemen here. Servicemen were invited to the club luncheons on a regular basis.

Youth at home were not forgotten. In the 1944-45 year Lions promoted a youth movement in which the city council and many civic groups participated.

The end of World War II was the beginning of a new era of expansion for central Florida, including Sebring.

In 1946 the club raised \$250 for an iron lung fund, the next year it was \$100 to help in the drive to obtain a hospital for Highlands County. In 1958 the club donated funds to help found a dental health clinic; in '63 it was \$600 for the new Highlands General Hospital and in 1965-66, \$350 for a blood donor chair for Highlands General.

This interest in health affairs would be consistent for a club which in 1935 was working for establishing of a county health unit for Highlands County.

In 1941 Lions joined with other Sebring clubs in staging drives for collection of aluminum — another project which has come 'round again.' In the 1974-75 year the new Lions Den became the collection point for aluminum products to be recycled.

Not all the Lions projects were well remembered. Even the club's "old-timers" cannot, in the club's 50th year, remember anything about the club's providing shelter and clothes for hurricane victims in 1944. Nor, can they recall a project to help French war relief in 1947. But both are in the records.

Some members do recall another project, however, from 1933-34. It was a drive to obtain a direct highway from Sebring to Fort Pierce. No reply has been received from highway officials — yet.

A 1968 project for community improvement are, by their very nature unending. As early as 1927-28 Lions were sponsoring city beautification projects.

Contributions to Sebring City Library have been made from time to time, although the library has not been a major project for the Lions. A few times the club has sponsored concerts, and in 1941-42 a project called a "radio opera."

The club summarized community and charity work for 1973 with the note, \$3,000 contributed this year.

In 1987, the club gave \$1,000 to the Sebring Historical Society.

SEBRING BUSINESS AND PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

By Ruth Sebring

One of Sebring's oldest women's groups is the Business and Professional Women's Club, founded with a dozen charter members in April 1927.

It was a part of the Florida Federation which was organized in June, 1919 with six districts. Sebring is part of District VI serving Polk, Hardee and Highlands Counties.

The national federation was founded in July 1919 also in St. Louis, MO. Florida was the first southern

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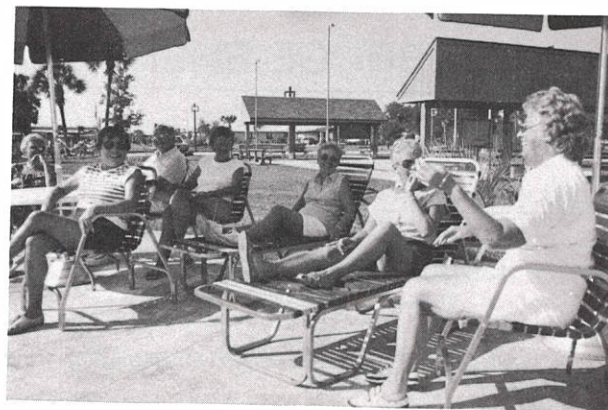
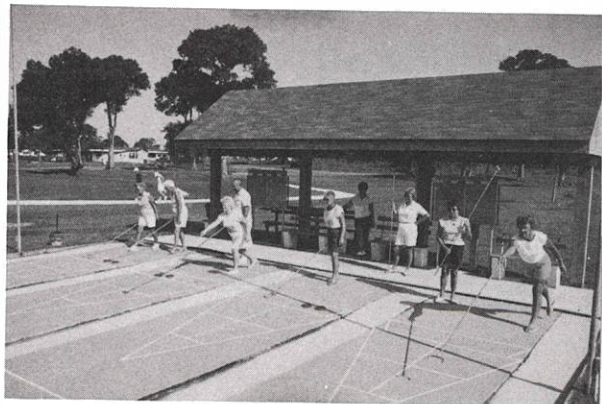
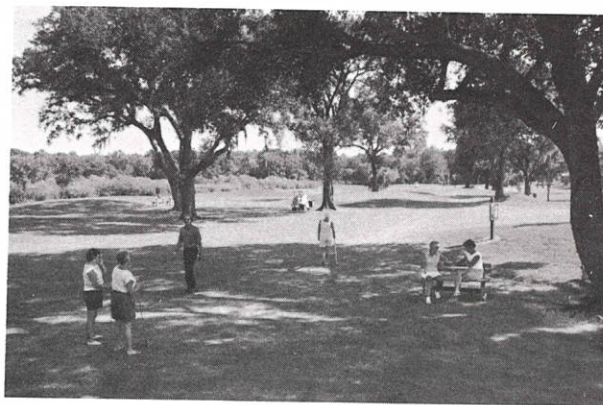


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state to affiliate as a charter member and the magazine, "Can Happen" was the very first BPW magazine.

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Sebring's dozen charter members included first president Nellie Van Beynum Horne; Kate Blythe, Anna Chmela, Pauline Haggard, Patty Mahon, Leta Miller, Gertrude Oates, Betty Perrine, Julia Simmons, Edith Van Derschow, Charlotte Varena and Ruth Wolfe.

The group formed a baseball team called the "White Wings" and August 4, 1927 found the game between the Sebring BPW White Wings and the Avon Park Cardinals being umpired by the National Federation's second vice president.

Benefits of this kind and other projects like the Civic Directory in 1966-67; and the Bicentennial Calendar in 1977-1976 sponsored by the club make up



VEHICLE TAGS — 1921 - 1951

By Jack Ingle

There is a historic collection of past automobile tags in the office of the Highlands County Tax Collector's office which was made by Howard B. Hinshaw and presented to the county in the mid-1950s.

At that time, the offices of Supervisor of Elections and the tag office were combined with Roland K. Droit as the elected official.

The collection is unique in that, beginning in 1921, it spans the entire official time frame of Highlands County.

Beginning in 1938 and lasting until recent years, Florida numbered license plates with a two digit prefix which were assigned—1 through 67—by the county's ranked population.

Dade County displayed No. 1; Highlands County cars would be identified by the Number 27.

With the increased population and number of tags needed, this system had to be modernized to the present system.

Pictured in the collection at the bottom right is a tag given in 1951 titled "Seminole" and given to the residents of Brighton Seminole Indian Reservation, located in Glades County adjoining southeastern Highlands County.

the funds for Scholarships given each year to women who wish to further their education.

In 1965, the first BPW scholarship house for outstanding Florida students on the campus of Florida State University was purchased for \$40,000.

The new \$150,000 BPW Scholarship house on Stadium Drive in Tallahassee was dedicated in October 1977. In 1986, dedication of a BPW house on the campus of the University of Central Florida in Orlando was held.

The Young Career Woman program was established by the National Federation in 1963 and an Individual Development program established in 1968.

National Business Women's Week was established in 1928 and is celebrated during October.

Officers of the Sebring BPWC for 1987-88 were installed May 4 at the Candlelight Restaurant and include Dorothy G. Platkowski, president; Gail Gordon, first vice president; Marguerite Foss, second vice president; Carol Liske, recording secretary; Joanne McAfee, corresponding secretary; and Sandra J. Greenslade, treasurer.

Sebring's BPW club celebrates its 60th anniversary this year and has been an active and strong supporter of the community all these years.

By Ruth A. Sebring, Past President, Sebring Club; past District VI Director.



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ORGANIZATIONS ARE IMPORTANT

One of the important aspects of any city's history is its involvement in civic and fraternal organizations. Sebring's successes over the years have seen most of its long time groups involved heavily in the everyday life of the community which makes it a "good place to live."

One of the earliest groups organized in the city was the Mitzpahah Sunday School Class at the First Methodist Church in Sebring.

Right along behind it in the history books is the Woman's Club of Sebring, which was organized in July of 1919 when World War I was raging overseas and women of the city numbered part of the estimated 750 population.

According to the organizers, there had been two earlier women's organizations besides the Sunday School Class. They were the Parent Teacher Association which had obtained a school library, equipped a stage, and encouraged athletics.

Then the Sebring Civic Club laid the walks, beautified the circle, cleaned up the Lake Park and repaired the pier.

So the Woman's Club began along the same civic pride attitudes. Organized with Mrs. P.A. Ruhl as president; the other 11 who attended the first meeting included Mrs. Howard Boyd, Mrs. T.V. Conway, Mrs. E.G. Skiff, Mrs. P.J. Rippberger, Mrs. Samuel

Degering, Mrs. Milton Baker, Mrs. Elizabeth Wright, Mrs. Ed Hainz, Mrs. E.L. Greene, Mrs. E.D. Kirk and Mrs. J.E. Parker.

The club held a box social at the then Board of Trade, now Chamber of Commerce building, which earned \$65. It declared "we must insist the state laws governing health be enforced and a city ordinance drawn to eliminate this spitting nuisance."

Over the years, the club has had many successes, among them the establishment of a library; a new clubhouse dedicated in 1961, an addition in the seventies; and has involved itself in the cultural and volunteer life of the entire community in many ways.

The Woman's Club will hold a Prayer breakfast to kickoff the Diamond Jubilee 75th Anniversary Week, at the Clubhouse, Monday, October 12, at 9 a.m.



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FISHER'S RESTAURANT

A Sebring Landmark

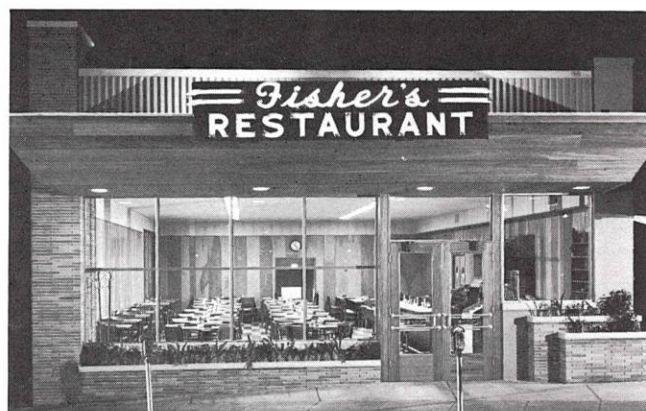
By Gene Sauls

We'll eat at Fisher's!

For over a quarter of a century Fisher's Restaurant, located on the corner of the Circle and North Commerce, was truly a landmark, a major contributor to the social and community life of Sebring, a rendezvous for superlative dining in a warm, gracious atmosphere. Open seven days a week and three hundred sixty-five days a year from six in the morning until nine at night, one of the most modern restaurants in central Florida, with a seating capacity of one hundred ten diners, it was the epitome of Southern hospitality and culinary expertise.

For those who dined there, Fisher's meant home-cooking, home-baking, absolutely fresh foods, a delightful dining experience for even the most critical palates. Its reputation stretched throughout the State and beyond because of its excellent and varied cuisine, famous for its steaks, roast prime rib of beef and roast leg of lamb, fried chicken and frog legs, fresh sea food and freshly-made rolls, biscuits, and pies. A delicacy rarely found elsewhere but common on the menu was wild orange pie, a treat for any connoisseur.

Fisher's best advertising was by mouth and by word-of-mouth. Hundreds of thousands enjoyed the pleasure of dining there, local residents and tourists



alike, including many well-known personalities from the sports and entertainment world.

The restaurant, a family-operated enterprise, was the realization of a dream by Fisher A. Sauls, a native Floridian born in Bowling Green in 1909, who came to Highlands County in 1929 to work with Mark Godwin at his filling station and restaurant (the present location of the Sebring Utilities main office) until he joined with Raymond Canto to open the Sebring Cafe in the old Arcade Building (present site, Sadie Kahn's Park). Old timers will remember the Sebring Cafe as the established dining place for the International League Newark Bears, farm team of the N.Y. Yankees. In 1940 Fisher began his own restaurant, Fisher's Coffee Shop, next to the Nancesowee Hotel (at that time King's Hardware). Two years later,

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SAM J. HART

in 1942, he also opened Fisher's Restaurant on the Circle at North Commerce, replacing Dutton's Appliance Store. He served in the U.S. Army for two years, his two restaurants operating with the help of his family. Closing the coffee shop in 1946, he concentrated his efforts on Fisher's Restaurant, remodeling it in 1952 to become one of the most modern restaurants in central florida, then devoting his energy and attention to develop and maintain its reputation as a quality restaurant until his retirement in 1968, after thirty eight years as a restaurateur, Fisher died in 1976. Fisher's Restaurant, which had maintained the name under different ownership, burned to the ground in 1977.

Fisher's Restaurant was a reflection of the man. Fisher A. Sauls was an intelligent, hard-working businessman, with a soft, easy-going and generous nature, who wanted to help people to enjoy life. No one who was hungry was ever turned away from the doors of his restaurant. As a community service, he provided many free banquets to Sebring athletic teams. For eight years he served as a Sebring city councilman. Fisher Sauls was involved in community life.

Though Fisher's Restaurant no longer exists as a physical landmark, it does exist in the memories of its customers, the kind of landmark called a legend.

TED SHOEMAKER & SON PLUMBING

J.O. Younce, Sadie and two daughters Fern (89 now) and Patricia (79) came to Sebring October 12, 1918 from Kansas. Fern told me that J.O., my maternal grandfather, had a dairy on the old-old Desoto Rd. till 1936.

O.I. Shoemaker, Florence and two daughters Leona (Weaver) and Dorothy (Marchand) came to Sebring in 1923 from Carthage, Missouri.

Dad went to work for Paul Vinson, a general contractor who built the Nancessee Hotel and the Circle Theater.

In 1924 Dad bought the plumbing part of the business from Paul Vinson and formed THE CITY PLUMBING CO., at 4 Circle. He manufactured Solar



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Heaters, sold Frigidaire appliance, worked 16 men at one time in the 1920's.

The company did all of George Sebring's residential houses including the Lakeview Apts. Almost all of the Stucco residences in town were built by George Sebring.

The 1930's work included the CCC Camp on Hammock Rd., Rex Beach, Copper and Gudger homes that helped our family to survive the depression.

During World War II, plumbing material was hard to come by and the business was closed in late 1939.

O.I. Shoemaker went to work for the contractor of Hendrick's Field. While in school I worked for the Army ordinance and as a plumbers helper.

After graduation I went to service and returned in 1949 with my wife Janice to re-open the plumbing business with my father as TED SHOEMAKER PLUMBING.

O.I. retired in 1954. Janice and I along with our children Scott, Celeste and Paul operated the business from the Old Sebring Hotel in the 50's.

The Plumbing Co. is now back on the Circle. Scott is now a Senior CPO in the Navy and with his wife Janet and two children are moving to Jacksonville, FL.

Celeste is married with two children in North Carolina.

Paul is married and as of 1985 has been a partner in TED SHOEMAKER & SON PLUMBING and is a State Licensed Master Plumber.

By Ted Shoemaker

WHITE'S RADIO SALES AND SERVICE

By Shirley White Rarden

Mr. and Mrs. Stanley White came to Sebring in March 1935 and established White's Radio Sales and Service because "going in business for yourself was just about the only way you could get a job." The business was at 105 S. Ridgewood Drive and their residence was next door at 111 S. Ridgewood. George Clarke Jewelers and Doyle's Barber Shop are presently in those locations. They did 25¢ worth of business in the first two weeks, but they stuck it out!!

The business expanded into both rooms the

following spring when the growing family moved upstairs over what is now Arbour View Florist.

In the fall of 1940 they moved across S. Ridgewood Drive to where Mitchell Family Realty and Jellybeans are now located (a shoe shop occupied the northern quarter of the building until 1949, when they bought the building and took it over).

The family moved to Sebring Shores in the spring of 1941. That doesn't seem very far today, but it was far enough that they made only three trips a week when gas was rationed during World War II. They camped in the back of the store when they didn't go home.

When television was new Mr. White, a graduate of Kansas State College, put a set in the window and left it on through the evening. Several citizens moved down a couple of benches from the circle and enjoyed the novel nightly entertainment.

In 1967 they bought their present building on the corner of S. Ridgewood Drive and the Circle. Known as the Brown Building, it was constructed in 1924-1926. The City of Sebring acquired it in 1928, used portions of it for city government offices and rented the rest. In 1931 the city offices were moved out, but the city continued to own the building and rent to private tenants until 1949, when it was sold.

For many years the building housed a hardware store owned by Hinckley-Durrance. Bill Dutton bought it in 1963 and operated an appliance store. At

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one time the upper floor was a hospital. The Whites, now known as Whites Radio and TV, had the grand opening of their new location on March 22nd, the 32nd anniversary of their first opening in Sebring.

The Whites enjoyed being a part of Sebring and watching their business grow with the city. They noted that the birth of each of their three children coincided with a record gross in the business to that date. They always carried the highest quality merchandise and enjoyed knowing it brought pleasure to their customers.

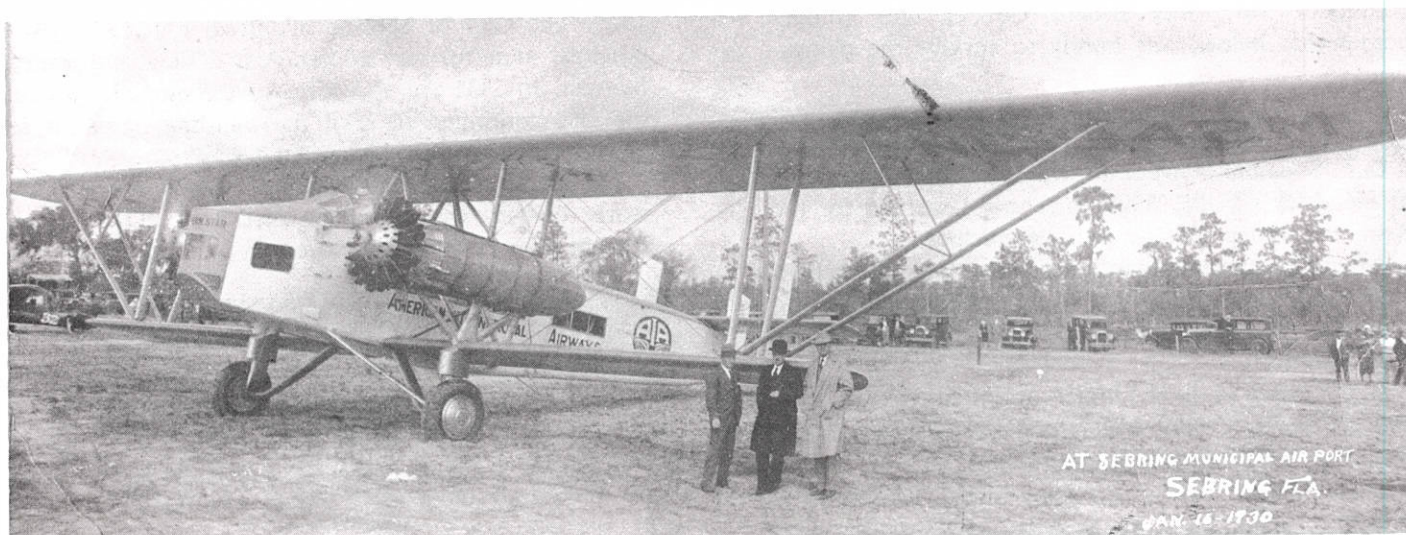
Mr. White died in September 1984. Mrs. White now runs the business on an appointment basis, as well as the Circle Hotel upstairs.

WITHERS & HARSHMAN, INC.

Our business was started in 1913 by Aaron Withers of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, chief of Sebring Real

Estate Company field crew, who owned a couple of teams of mules which he rented out as Withers and Company. Ed Harshman, retired from a grocery in Salem, Ohio, was anxious to find something to do to relieve the monotony of being unoccupied in Sebring. He talked Withers into taking him as a partner and expanded into grove caretaking. The little company found that his workload at Withers and Harshman, Inc., kept him busy full time, so he resigned his position with Sebring Real Estate Company. Mr. Harshman kept the books and Mr. Withers took over full time management of the company.

In June 1922 Floyd Schumacher became associated with the company. Mr. Withers died in 1935 and Ed Harshman managed the company until his death in 1939, when Woodrow Harshman and Floyd Schumacher took over the management of the company. Charles Schumacher became Production Manager in 1956 and Walter Harshman became part of the managerial staff in 1965.



Sebring Municipal Airport was on Hammock Road in the area of the Golf View Development and where baseball fields are located (Max Long Field).

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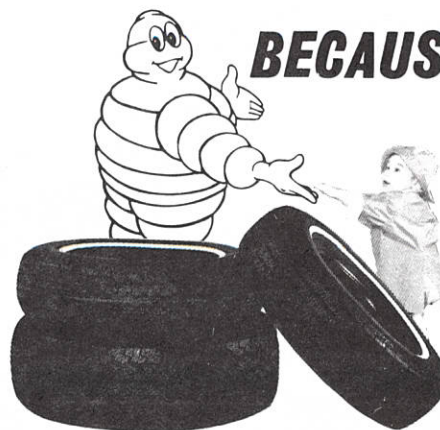
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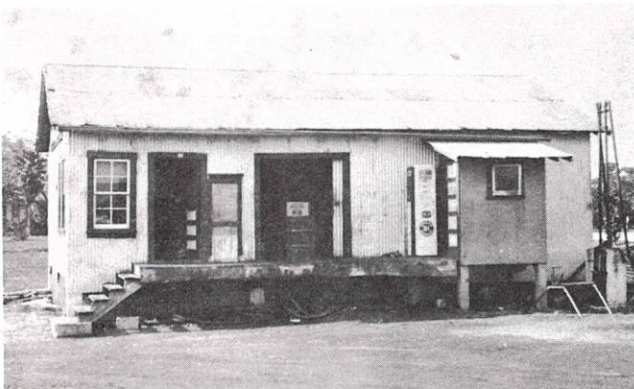
JONES OIL AND TIRE

The 1963 catalog and premium list for the Highlands County Fair Association was jointly dedicated to two of Highlands County's pioneer citizens and civic leaders, the brothers Spencer Jones and Charles Brandon Jones, Sr.

Both brothers were born in Queen City, Texas. Spencer came to Sebring in 1911 and C.B. Jones, Sr. moved to Sebring in 1912. Both were very active in civic organizations and the Sebring Firemen in particular with C.B. serving as president of that organization.

The Jones brothers became commission agents (a partnership) for Sinclair Refining Company in 1926. In 1956 Spencer retired and his nephew, C.B. Jones, Jr. bought into the company. C.B. Jones bought the remainder of the company in 1964 after his father, C.B. Jones, Sr., retired.

The company was incorporated as Jones Oil and Tire in 1980 with C.B., Jr. and his three sons. The business changed from an oil company to tire and auto service repair work and moved to its present location on U.S. 27 in 1975. Thus, Jones Oil and Tire has been a family operated business for over sixty years in Sebring.



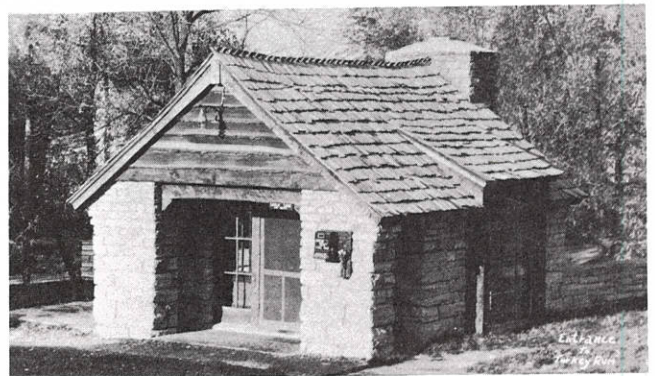
An interesting footnote, the original building for Sinclair Refining Company built in 1926 is still in use at Jones Oil and Tire. Although rather small, it is one of the oldest buildings in Sebring.

HIGHLANDS HAMMOCK STATE PARK

Highlands Hammock State Park is one of the first four original state parks that was established back in 1935. Before being named Highlands Hammock, the present area was referred to as "Hooker's Hammock" for a Captain Hooker who at one time had a "cow camp" just west of the hammock.

Besides Captain Hooker, a Mr. Johnathan Skipper and W.L. Eiland also lived in the area. Both men cleared land, built themselves houses, and planted orange groves.

During the late 1920s and early 1930s, several people got involved in a movement that would eventually establish a state park here in Sebring. One of these persons was Margaret Shippen Roebling. Mrs. Roebling contributed thousands of dollars making the



Entrance to Highlands Hammock

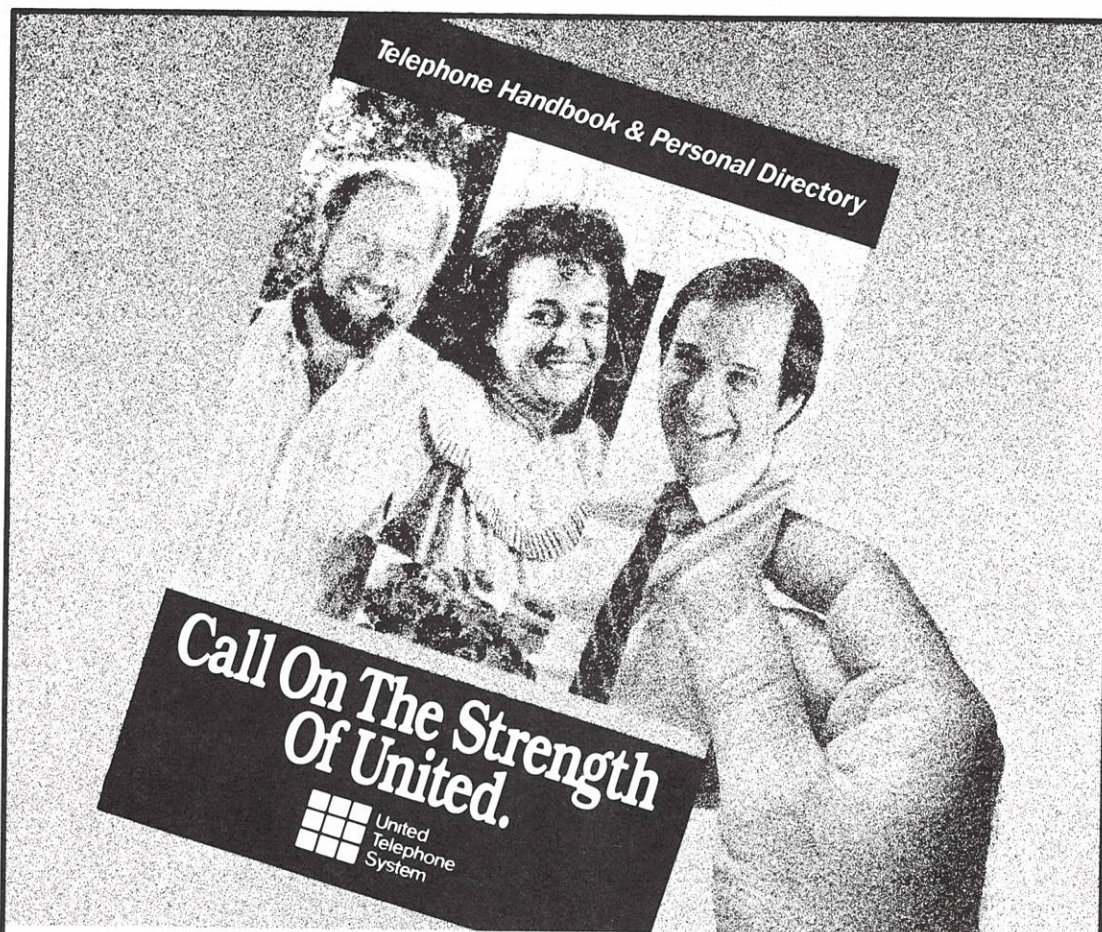
acquisition of the area and access to it possible. Later, from 1934 to 1941, a group of approximately 230 men ranging in age from 16 to 18 came to Highlands Hammock State Park to work. This group called themselves the Civilian Conservation Corps and those here were just one of the many Civilian Conservation Corps groups that worked to help organize state parks throughout the United States up until the time when many of them were drafted into World War II.

These young men constructed roads, bridges, fences, water control structures, and buildings throughout the park, and to this day, these facilities are still being used and stand as a tribute to these fine men.

Today, the management of natural resources as well as cultural resources is a serious problem. Virgin pine forests and cypress stands which once existed are now being removed for lumber, agricultural purposes, and living space and are being replaced by pastures and cities.

The objective of the Florida Park Service is to maintain the parks under its jurisdiction in as natural a state as possible so that they may represent what the "original natural Florida" looked like back when the Spanish first arrived here in 1513.

According to the Florida statutes: The Division of Recreation and Parks "shall acquire typical portions of the original domain, of such character as to emblemize the state's natural values, these values shall be conserved for all time for the use, benefit and enjoyment of the people of Florida."



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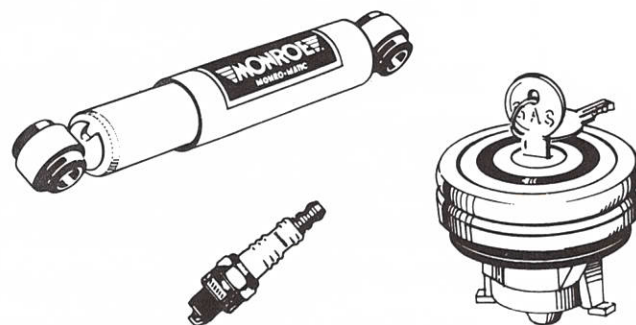


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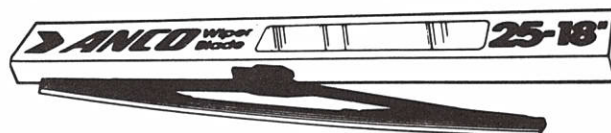


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TWENTY FIVE YEARS OF AGRICULTURE IN HIGHLANDS COUNTY 1962-1987

By Tim Hurner

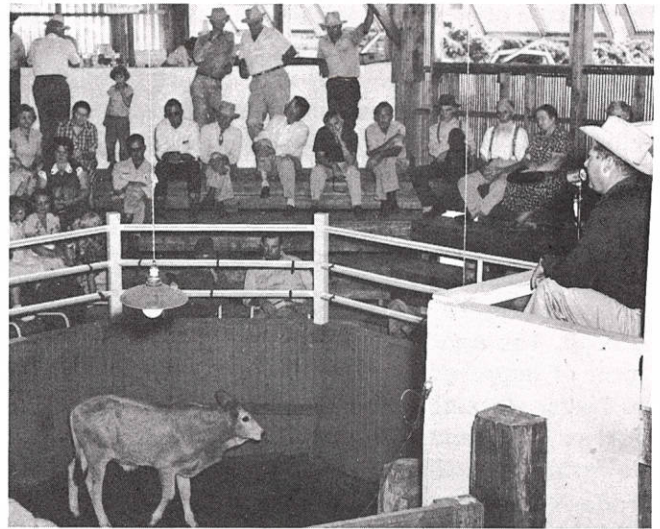
Highlands County Agriculture has grown by over four hundred seventy five percent in value over the past twenty five years. By comparison the population has grown only slightly less than two hundred percent. This is a good indication of the place agriculture holds in the county's economy.

The extremely healthy growth in agriculture has been in spite of a four fold loss of acres to urbanization and a loss of several agricultural crops of production. In 1962 only about two percent of Highlands County's land was devoted to urban life. Today almost ten percent is tied up in houses, commercial, businesses, roads, etc. Since 1962 five agricultural industries; Avocados, Easter Lilies, Poultry, Swine, and Winter Bush Beans, all have disappeared from local production. This loss of products and land has been offset in increases in Highlands County's from main agricultural industries Citrus, Beef Cattle, Dairy Cattle and Caladiums.

BEEF CATTLE

The Beef Cattle industry has been rather stable. The Beef Industry centers around a cow/calf industry supplying feeder calves for western and mid-western feed lots. The Beef Cattle and Calf numbers have

grown by about 20 percent from eighty one to ninety seven thousand head. The cattle and calf numbers peaked at one hundred four thousand head in 1981. Strong feeder calf prices in the middle seventies stimulated growth in herd size until the early eighties when a strong anti-beef campaign began by so called health and nutrition experts. The higher cholesterol and fat contents of beef were brought about by a post war desire for a more tender juicy steak on every plate. A natural trend toward better health through



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nutrition which began in the late seventies has caused the beef producer to re-adjust by producing a lean nutrition source of protein. A new national campaign to tax producers for promotion, marketing and research is holding the promise for a brighter economic future for Cattle.

DAIRY CATTLE

The Dairy Cattle industry is a rather stable industry in Highlands County. Since 1962 herd size has tripled, yet the number of dairies has remained the same. The dairy cow peaked in 1982. Since then dairy milk production quotes, a marginal milk price, federal dairy buy outs, etc., all have kept the dairy industry static in size in the county. The dairy industry will likely remain much the same over the next ten years in Highlands County. State and Federal Regulation will be the greatest hurdle to expansion or staying in business.

PASTURES AND RANGELAND

The reduction in pasture and range-land has been due primarily to encroachment by urban and citrus growth. This trend will likely continue. Better management of improved pastures and native range will lead to higher stocking rates rather than a decrease in the beef or dairy industries. For the past twenty years the cowman has relied on low pasture maintenance. Today's cattle industry will require more pasture care and the "farming" of agronomic crops to feed cattle in a more concentrated way.

FORESTRY, TIMBER AND WILDLIFE

For the past twenty five years the forestry industry has virtually stood still. Harvesting of forested areas for wood products is virtually non-existent. Reforestation efforts and maintenance of existing forest have been more for protection and development of wildlife rather than for sale of forest products.

CITRUS

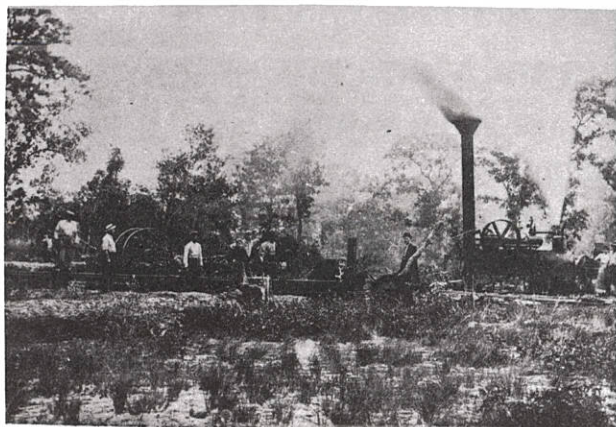
Citrus has been the premier agricultural industry for Highlands County. The acreage has almost doubled over the past twenty five years, with most of that increase coming in the sixties and early seventies. More significant has been almost a doubling in the average production per acre. This is due to a better



Henry Crutchfield — 1969
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technology of growing citrus for higher yields per tree and per acre. Citrus holds the distinction in agriculture of a crop whose product price has risen as fast or faster than inflation over the past twenty five years. Few if any other agricultural products have seen this happen. This rise in market value is due primarily to the invention of the Cinderella Citrus Product — Frozen Concentrated Orange Juice (FCOJ) in the fifties. Another asset has been the establishment of a strong marketing concept in the Florida Department of Citrus. Cost of Production has risen also over the past twenty five years. In most cases production costs have exceeded the inflation rate. This is due mostly to a vast increase in technology for more intensive production which accounts for the increases in yield.

Six major freezes in seven years and an increase in urban pressure has resulted in a general southern movement of the citrus industry since 1980. The geographical center of the industry previously was somewhere in Polk County. That center now is in southern Highlands County. Almost all of the new citrus plantings are on the flatwood soils that begin in southern Highlands County. Again the new technology for growing citrus has enabled growers to plant flatwood acres requiring sophisticated water control. At the present time there is on the drawing board the plans to develop an additional 35-40 thousand acres of citrus over the next ten years. This will double our acreage and production.

CALADIUMS

The Caladium Industry since 1962 has increased but seems to have leveled off in its growth. In the early sixties many growers produced Easter Lilies also. The invasion of the Easter market by several South American countries saw this industry expire. The Caladium Industry being labor intensive with a high return per acre helped numerous small growers (5 acres or less) emerge in the late sixties and early



Leon Tubbs as a caladium grower.



Bobby Heffner
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seventies. The saturation of traditional markets led to a market price squeeze that resulted in smaller growers selling out to larger growers. In the early eighties a Grower Cooperative was formed to investigate new markets. To date all of the potential markets found would require a sizeable increase in production just to enter the market. Some improvements in production techniques and automations of some practices have enabled growers to increase their size of operation.

COMMERCIAL ORNAMENTAL NURSERIES

The most impressive new agricultural industry in Highlands County of the past ten years has been our commercial ornamental industry both wholesale and retail. Most of the new nurseries are moving in from the coastal counties where they have been forced to move out. They have chosen this area due to the accessibility to both coasts where there is a high demand for landscape plants.

VEGETABLES

The vegetable industry in Highlands County has remained rather static. A couple of large winter salad bowl type vegetable farms have remained quite stable over the past twenty five years. A winter bean farm has fallen by the wayside. Watermelon growers have come and gone. Three major agricultural industries have faded out over the past twenty five years. Poultry, Swine, and Avocados were once significant industries. The poultry industry phased out due to a cost/price market squeeze. The weather and an unfavorable feed cost problem resulted in the loss of a swine industry. The avocados were lost to a major

freeze in the early sixties and a market situation that did not encourage continuing.

SUMMARY

Agriculture in Highlands County has fared well for the past twenty five years.

A rapid urban growth over the past ten years and a sharp increase in the Winter Tourist Industry have been met with a healthy Agriculture.

Highlands County Agriculture can toot its horn on a number of fronts most significant are the following:

1. The fourth largest producer of Citrus in Florida.
2. The fourth largest producer of feeder calves in Florida.
3. The largest county in overall Agricultural Production in Florida.
4. Agriculture is the largest contributor to the county economy with over \$129 million dollars in direct sales contributing to over \$300 million in economic health.
5. Over sixty percent of the advalorem taxes come from agriculture.
6. Highlands County farmers spend over \$55 million on direct purchases in the county (feed, seed, fertilizers, utilities, equipment, etc.).
7. In 1980 twenty two percent of all jobs were directly in Agriculture with a payroll that exceeds \$25 million per year and an average wage of over \$5.15 per hour. This is the highest paying wage of any industry in the county.

The strengthening of the cattle market and a stable growing citrus industry should keep the quasi-rural atmosphere alive in Highlands County. The Caladium



From Left to Right - Tom Jones, Louis Alsmeyer and members of the Schlosser family.

and Commercial Ornamental industries will help keep the agricultural economy strong.

The number one problem facing agriculture in Highlands County in the future will be governmental regulations as people interface agriculture. The challenge will be to maintain a sound agriculture in a safe and wholesome environment preserving the way of life we all seem to desire in Highlands County.

Louis Alsmeyer and Jessie Vaugan — 1927



A black and white advertisement for 'Outdoorsman Marine'. A man, Richard Jackson, stands in front of a boat. The boat has several logos: 'CAJLIN' on the left, 'Outdoorsman Marine' in the center with a large 'M' logo, and 'GLASSTREAM' on the right. Below the main logo, it says 'SKI ACCESS, FISHING TACKLE'. The boat's side has the text 'THE FAMILY FUN STORE' and 'FISH MORE... LIVE LONGER'. At the bottom of the boat, it says 'GLASSTREAM'. Text on the left side of the ad provides the address '3975 U.S. 27 South Sebring, FL 33870', phone numbers 'Off: 813-382-3171' and 'Eve: 813-382-6764', and the name 'RICHARD JACKSON'. At the bottom, it says 'Everything For Your Fishing & Boating Needs' and 'Service All Makes Of Boat Motors'.

75 YEARS OF SPORTS IN SEBRING

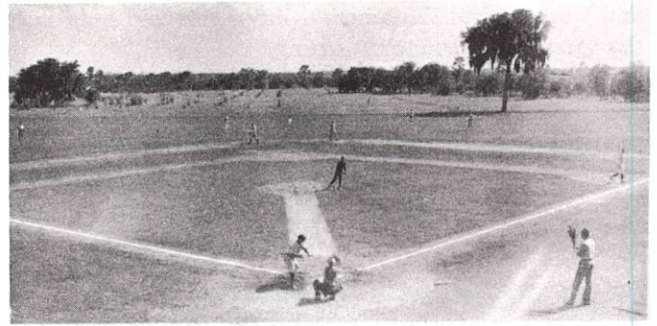
By Rick Moyer

While Sebring is internationally known for hosting the annual 12 Hours of Sebring Race, America's oldest endurance road race, it was baseball that first put the city on the sporting map.

The Sebring Athletic Club represented the city as early as 1914. When it became time to play ball, all business came to a grinding halt and the entire population went to the game.

An early Sebring team was known as the "Sebring Sweets," which was also the brand name for all citrus shipped from Sebring at that time.

Sebring got its first glimpse of Major League Baseball in 1929 when the great New York Yankee



Outfielder Babe Ruth came to town, but not to play the sport that made him famous. The legendary "Bambino" stayed in Sebring for only a few hours, but caused quite a stir behind the wheel of his Stutz Bearcat Roadster and in a local pool hall.

Shortly thereafter, the Yankees brought their top farm team, the Newark Bears, to Sebring for spring training at Firemen's Field. This provided special entertainment to vacationing winter visitors, but also helped contribute to the demise of local "sand-lot" teams who saw their fund raising efforts seriously hampered by the attraction of Major League Baseball spring training in Florida.

The Sebring Firemen played a big part in Sebring's baseball history and at one time fielded a fully paid professional squad. When this team left town, the Sebring Firemen organized an amateur team under the



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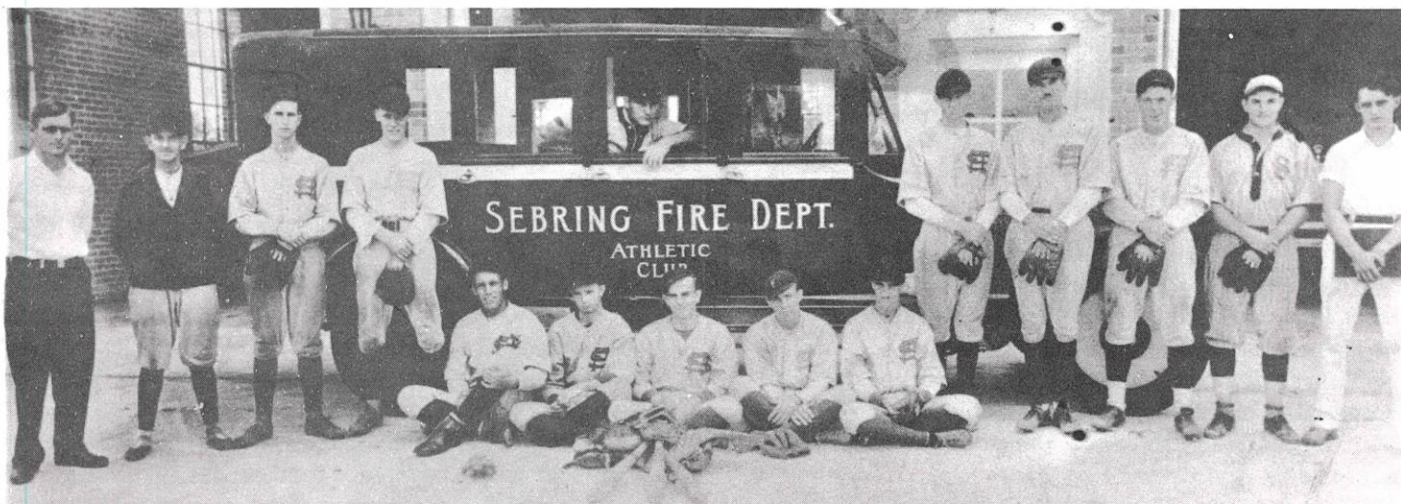
direction of P. G. Gearing, still known today as "Mr. Baseball" in Sebring.

Baseball played a tremendous part in the building of the Sebring Fire Department and created the opportunity for several Sebring baseball players to try the world of professional baseball.

The Sebring Firemen are also responsible for building both the baseball and football fields (both known as Firemen's Field) on which Sebring High School teams compete today.

Sebring had seven baseball players drafted by Major League teams. They are: Jackie Newcomer, shortstop, by the Kansas City A's; Julius Foster, pitcher, by the San Francisco Giants; Buddy Yarbrough, outfielder, by the Kansas City Royals; Johnny Freeland, catcher, by the Cincinnati Reds; Hoyt Ewing, outfielder, by the St. Louis Cardinals; Rick Johns, pitcher, by the Cincinnati Reds, and Jimmy Wheeler, shortstop, by the Chicago White Sox.

Although Hal McRae lived in Avon Park, he played



Top Row, Left to Right - Allen Altvater, P.G. Gearing, Tom Pollard, Bill Mackey, (Tom Timberline in bus), Doug Estes, Zeke Etheridge, Hal Long,

Tommy Whitehouse and Joe Lighthiser. Seated in front of the bus - George Hicks, Ebb Gallaher, Walt Ivings, Jack Parker and Eddie Tulk.



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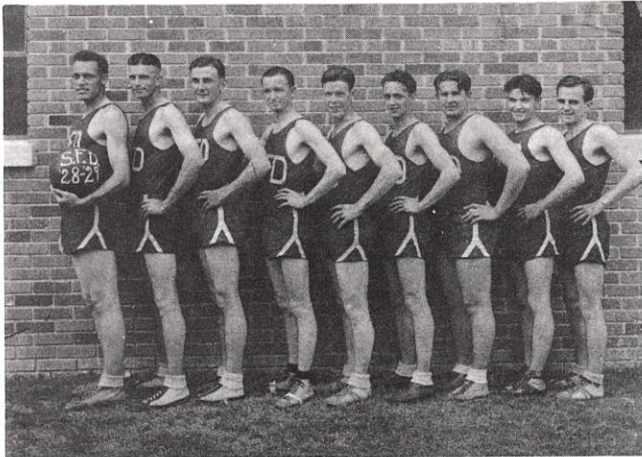


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President**

**J. Clagett Taylor, Jr.
Secretary/Treasurer**



Geo. Hicks, Jim Ingle, Lloyd Brunk, Ebb Gallaher, Hal Long, Joe Lighthiser, Julius Waldron, Tommy Whitehouse and Walter Ivings.

baseball at E.O. Douglass School in Sebring. McRae, a former Major League Baseball all-star, is still active today as a designated hitter and part-time coach with the Kansas City Royals.

Sebring High School has won numerous Ridge and Heartland Conference Baseball Championships, and twice made it to the State Class 3-A quarterfinals before being eliminated.

Believe it or not, high school football in Sebring was first played on the outfield of the baseball complex, but football did so much damage to the outfield,

which was understandable, that the Sebring Firemen decided to build a separate field for football. The field, which was completely lighted, was finished in 1960 and named Firemen's Field.

To this day, Sebring High's main, and often bitter, rival has been Avon Park. The series goes back to 1926, with Sebring winning for the first time in 1928, 7-0, on a 24-play drive culminating in a seven yard touchdown run by Quarterback J. C. Leaphart. No team has ever dominated this series, which is dead even to date.

The Sebring High Blue Streaks made it to the state Class 3-A quarterfinals in 1967 before losing to Clay County Green Cove Springs. Ralph McGill was the quarterback, with Ronnie Purvis and Steve Young the running backs and Charles Eubanks the wingback. McGill received a scholarship to Tulsa University, where he led the nation in punt returns. He later played professional football with both the San Francisco 49ers and the New Orleans Saints, both as a defensive back and a punt returner. He was considered the premier punt returner in professional football until a serious knee injury ended McGill's playing career.

Sebring High School has captured numerous Ridge and Heartland Conference football championships and won four Ridge Conference titles in a row from 1958 thru 1961 under Coach Glenn Odham. In 1961, the Blue Streaks' defense was so stingy that seven

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opponents were held to minus total yards during the course of the games.

Sebring is represented today in professional football by Ronnie Lippett of the New England Patriots. Lippett was both a wide receiver and defensive back for Sebring High School, receiving an athletic scholarship to the University of Miami, where he played strictly defense. In 1986, Lippett led the American Football Conference of the National Football League in pass interceptions with eight.

About the same time Sebring High School was enjoying success in football, the Blue Streaks were also winning titles in basketball. But basketball in Sebring goes way back before the decades of the 50s and 60s.

Sebring High School first fielded a basketball team in 1921 under Coach Homer Wakefield, who was also the school's principal.

In 1927, the Sebring Firemen formed a team managed by Eph Sidders and coached by Jack Lindsey. The Sebring Firemen became very well known throughout the state as a very strong competitor and accepted games with Southern College, the University of Florida and the University of Miami among others.

Sebring High School's glory years on the hardcourt were from 1958 thru 1961, when the Blue Streaks won 47 consecutive Ridge Conference games under Coach

Jim Taveniere, who was a Little All-American basketball performer at Stetson University in Deland. Twice during this period of time Sebring made it to the state Class 3-A regional playoffs before tasting defeat.

The 1959-60 team compiled a remarkable 21-0 regular season record and was the only undefeated high school team in Florida that year. However, the Blue Streaks lost their next game and were eliminated from tournament competition.

Taveniere's 1960-61 team was truly composed of both brains and brawn. The squad went 16-0 in the Ridge Conference and was 18-4 overall. What made Sebring so unusual was the fact that six of the 10 young men on the club were members of the National Honor Society. . . . Billy Clark (who averaged 27 points per game that season), Stanley Wallace, Eugene Bengtson, Len Askeland, Dick Gray and Dick Hollifield.

When you think of the Sebring sports scene today, you think of the 12 Hours of Sebring Race. . . . a race known world-wide and a race that put Sebring on the international sporting map.

The first of what now has been 35 Sebring Races was held on New Year's Eve, 1950. Several American sports car enthusiasts had been searching for an ideal racing site, notably Sam and Miles Collier and Phil



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Stiles. When they noticed the maze of challenging roads at the Sebring Airport (formerly Hendricks Field), they knew they'd found a home.

The first race was administered and promoted by the Sebring Firemen. A three and one-half mile course was laid out for the six-hour event, which was witnessed by some 3,000 spectators. Fritz Koster and Ralph Deshon drove a tiny Crosley into the Winner's Circle as the surprise victors.

Alec Ulmann and Goerge Huntoon saw the old air base as an ideal site for a 12-hour road race and spent a full year drawing up rules, planning safety features and preparing for crowd control.

The second race was held in 1952 and had the backing of the Internationale de l'Automobile and the American Association. This was the first 12-hour race to be held over the 5.2 mile course, a course that would remain unchanged for over three decades!

The race was originally known as "The International Grand Prix of Endurance." Today it's known as "The 12 Hours of Sebring."

The first Sebring Race drew 28 entries. Today, qualifying is held to keep the field to approximately 75 to 80 entries.

Over the years many of the world's finest drivers have raced their sophisticated machines at Sebring, with thousands of enthusiastic spectators crowding their way through the main gate and onto the spec-

tator areas along the course to witness the action. In 1987, it was estimated that over 63,000 racing fanatics were present for the happening.

Among the world-famous drivers who have competed at Sebring over the years are: Stirling Moss, Dan Gurney, John Surtees, Juan Manuel Fangio, Mark Donohue, Pedro Rodriguez, Jackie Ickx, Phil Hill, Jimmy Clark, Mario Andretti, A.J. Foyt, Peter Gregg, Brian Redman and Bobby Rahal to name just a handful.

Hollywood has also come to Sebring with such notable actors as Steve McQueen, James Garner, Gene Hackman, Paul Newman, James Brolin and Bruce Jenner participating.

For awhile in the mid and late 1970s it looked like the Sebring Race would fade away into history, but promoters like John Greenwood, Charles Mendez and now the Sebring Airport Authority helped put the race "back on track," along with the continuing sanctioning of the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA).

The greatest participant sport in Sebring is golf, another in which the city has a long and glorious history.

Harder Hall in Sebring and Pinecrest Country Club in Avon Park received national golf coverage from NBC-TV in 1959 when "World Championship Golf" was filmed for airing the following spring. The



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Tennis Court in front of Firehouse on Lemon St. Thatched roof hut in center of picture built by firemen.



tournament was won by Dr. Carey Middlecoff over Pete Cooper and was narrated for television by band leader Bob Crosby.

The Haig and Haig Scotch Mixed Foursome Tournament was played over the same two courses for several years in the early 1960s. Many outstanding men and women professional golfers came to Sebring, such as: Mason Rudolph, Johnny Pott, Arnold Palmer, Julius Boros, Sam Snead, Tommy Bolt, Louise Suggs, Mickey Wright, Patty Berg, Betsy Rawls, Marilyn Smith and Kathy Whitworth to name just several of many. The total purse was just \$25,000.

The Crutchfield Junior Citrus Tournament was begun in 1956. Founded by Henry Crutchfield of Crutchfield Citrus Caretaking Service, Inc., of Sebring, the tournament, featuring many of the finest junior golfers in Florida and nearby states, is going stronger than ever today. Bert Yancey won the first event, and later went on to star on the PGA Tour. Others who played here and who later made the PGA Tour include Beau Baugh, Hale Baugh III, Gary Koch and Mike Donald. The sons of professional golfers Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player and Julius Boros have all participated in the Crutchfield Junior Citrus Tournament.

The M.E. Stephens Memorial Golf Tournament, one of the finest amateur golf tournaments in the south, was held in Sebring from 1961 to 1986, a period of 26 years. The tourney, named in memory of M.E. Stephens, benefited the American Cancer Society. Many of the south's finest amateur golfers competed, including Kenny Knox, now a rising star on the PGA Tour.

Harder Hall annually hosts the Harder Hall Women's Invitational tournament, with top amateur golfers from around the world competing. Many have

gone onto the LPGA Tour, the latest being Patty Rizzo.

Sebring is also the national home of the Futures Golf Tour, a tour just one step below the LPGA Tour. the latest from the Futures Tour to make the big jump to the LPGA Tour is Tammie Green.

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NEWSPAPER HISTORY

By Audrey Vickers

Though today's Sebring News is merely celebrating its 60th official year, that was the name given the very first newspaper printed and published in the city, though only one issue has been officially documented.

That issue is dated August 1912, and like so many other early communications tools was a means for George Sebring to tout his plans for a city to interested real estate people and prospective property owners.

So what is celebrated by the Sebring News with a special commemorative issue June 24, 1987 is the first issue published under the name Sebring News on June 23, 1928.

In a narrative by the first editor, N.A. Broking, who was also business manager and staffer, the News was established by Eugene Schaefer of the Broking Printing Co.

Mr. Broking and Schaefer were publishing the Bowling Green News at that time in Hardee County and were interested primarily in the printing business in Sebring.

Schaefer sold his interest in 1937 and went to the West Palm Beach Post Times.

Ironically, it was editor Broking who would announce in an issue of March 21, 1946, the sale of the News to the Perry Group of newspapers which included the West Palm Beach Post Times.

By then, Broking had edited for 19 years and 41 weeks, he wrote. He was remaining with Perry as editor and manager.

Broking recalled in his story the double depression which struck Florida in 1927 and the nation by 1929 until 1934.

During the war years, he recalled, printers were not available but one who had started his career at the News in 1928 was Johnny Hryhor who returned after the war.

Dee Long worked from 1937 to 1942 when Broking and Miss Helen Radebaugh made up the staff.

During those 20 years, Broking said, the newspaper experienced steady growth except for a couple of years in the early 1930s.

In fact, he recounted, the widow of the first paid subscriber Mrs. Emma W. Nelson, was still on the News mailing list and had never missed an issue being delivered to her.

Many others who started in the first two months of the News existence were still on the list in the 40's and at least 100 had been added within the last 100 days of Broking's recollections.

Editor Broking recalled that when he came to Sebring, he was a stranger with a small capital saved from a modest weekly wage as a printer.

Previous to the Sebring News establishment, the city enjoyed the news from a variety of publications. Some

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notes made by a later News editor, W.M. Hetherington in July 1971 show a Sebring Recorder, Vol. 1, No. 1, issued February 20, 1913 listing W.J.S. Albright as editor and owner.

A Sebring News listed as Vol. 1, No. 2, dated January 8, 1914 was recorded with C.B. Treadway as editor and W.C. Brown, manager, is included in the list.

That list also shows the Sebring White Way, Vol. 1, No. 1, November 26, 1914, with E.P. Brown, editor and owner to February 24, 1916. Sold to E.E. Skipper, and Ma and Pa Ruhl are listed as the editor and publisher.

Hetherington's listing shows a White Way Publishing Company, January 1923, which was headed by F.T. Haskins, president; H.O. Sebring, vice president; Nellie Van Bynum, editor, March 1923. C.A. Barnes was editor, the notes state, from 1923 to 1924 and in September 1924, W.L. Long was listed as editor.

Rod Arkell was listed from February 27, 1925 until September 11, 1925; Tryon & Sheen, October 23, 1925, Charles Small, editor; November 16, 1929, C.A. Barnes, editor.

Hetherington's last notes show E.W. Gallaher, receiver for the Sebring White Way, November 12, 1926 and the Sebring American, March 8, 1929, with Arkell as editor-owner.

This writer's study of old newspapers in the Sebring

Historical Society Archives found the Broking account and also noted in mastheads of the newspapers such items as "Sebring White Way, \$2 per year, Friday, April 10, 1925."

Then, "The White Way is published every Friday."

Later, "The Highlands American, published Tuesdays. Subscribe to the American and the White Way for \$3 per year."

Finally, the last headline edition for the Sebring White Way, Friday, May 22, 1925, with a notation that a newspaper had to be at least one year old for running legal advertisements," which historian Allen Altwater says accounts for keeping the Highlands American that last year.

Some masthead changes noted during Archival research showed from the Highlands County News, on Thursday, June 11, 1959. The first was Volume News, Thursday, June 11, 1959. The first was Volume XXXVII, No. 45; the second, Vol. XXXVII, No. 46.

The address was then 301 N. Pine Street; the masthead read A John H. Perry Newspaper; W.M. Hetherington, Editor and Manager; Hettie Hetherington, Associate Editor.

W.M. and Hettie Hetherington's stint at the Sebring News was the finale to a career which started for Hetherington (who was born February 22, 1896, in Lebanon, Kentucky) almost 60 years before.

His father owned The Lebanon Enterprise at the time, his first newspaper. Marion Francis Hethering-

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ton was born in 1860's in nearby Bardstown, Kentucky, where he learned the printing trade at the Kentucky Standard, Bardstown's Newspaper.

The senior Hetherington had worked up to be editor and manager, but when he continued to be a "hired hand," so he sought and received enough financial help to buy the Lebanon Enterprise.

And so in the tradition of the family, young W.M. or Bill was brought up in the newspaper business. He was five when his mother developed an illness which required the family to sell the paper and head for San Antonio, Texas and later Miami.

When they arrived, Miami was blossoming. It was the early 1900's. Flagler had found the way to the Magic City with his Florida East Coast Railway, Hetherington recounts in his 1984 book, "The Hetherington-Huckabay Connection."

It was while he lived there that Flagler extended the railroad down to Key West and the little pioneer town of less than 2,000 hardy souls was "getting steamed up."

The senior Hetherington took a job with the newspaper then owned by B.B. Tatum, a real estate developer. He took over as co-publisher and editor for the paper, which is now the Miami News, but then was the weekly Miami Metropolis which became the city's first daily newspaper, and is now owned by the X Cox newspaper chain.

After W.M.'s mother passed away, his father

married again and this time it was a Lakeland woman. The family moved to the central Florida city where the senior Hetherington bought the Lakeland News in 1905.

Lakeland was growing as a big Atlantic Coast Line railroad center and in a few years Hetherington established the Lakeland Evening Telegram, the city's first daily newspaper. It operated for over 20 years, when he sold it, just before the devastating Florida boom hit in 1924.

He then had to take back the paper for nonpayment by its purchaser. He refinanced it, brought it back successfully and then sold it to the Lakeland Ledger, a New York Times property, in a move which signaled his retirement from the news business.

But son W.M. had been going to the office before school to sweep and after school to help. He says he got a chance to work in the plant at most anything the printers could think of. "Cleaning up their mess, mostly," he wrote.

The team used hand-set type in those days, in addition to Linotypes. He recalls "if a combination of type was left standing without a string tied around it, the type would fall apart and that was called a "pi."

Hetherington recalls, "I was the lucky guy - I was the pi cleaner-upper."

He had the benefit of "Old Man" Williams, a foreman about 40 years old, who taught him and within a few years he was laying out and setting page ads, running Linotypes, presses and about everything else, experience which came in handy when he finally had his own newspapers.

When Hetherington graduated from Lakeland High School in May, 1914, he took over the Dade City Banner on lease from Wayne Thomas, who was a former publisher of the Plant City Courier. He was able to buy the paper, buy out the competition, and it looked as if his career was on its way.

But Uncle Sam called and he was to learn about radios in the Signal Corps. Schooled at the University of Florida in Gainesville, and a course at City College in New York, he was ready to ship out of Hoboken, New Jersey when the war ended.

After coming through the war, the boom, the busy years, the big depression, he owned, managed and/or edited and published five different Florida newspapers—The Lakeland Evening Telegram, business manager; Dade City Banner, owner and publisher; New Port Richey Press, owner and publisher; Avon Park Sun, co-owner and publisher; and Sebring News, editor and publisher.

He worked a total of 58 years, with wife Hettie as associate editor, and mother to their four children over those years.

Their son, Simeon Michael Hetherington, began his own career at the Sebring News after graduating from Florida State University. Born in Avon Park in 1939, Mike did not start out sweeping; he learned to use a



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are inseparable.”*

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camera and meet the public, showing merchants and business people the advantages of advertising in the Sebring News.

His success caught the eye of Cecil Kelly, the supervising manager for Perry Newspapers who owned the News, and young Hetherington was sent to Belle Glade where he edited and published the Perry Paper, the Herald, for a year and a half.

Then he was again tapped by Kelly and transferred to the Palm Beach Post, where he is still special sections editor and produces a tabloid called, "Thank God It's Friday."

Along the way in the research for this article it was discovered that a "mystery newspaper" had been born with Vol. 1, No. 1, called the Highlands County Messenger.

A copy dated August 6, 1921 was found when the corner stone of the Sebring home of the Masonic Order was removed in 1979 to be installed at the new Masonic Temple constructed that year.

The clipping was badly damaged by moisture and was practically destroyed. It was the subject of a later Sebring Historical Society bulletin article, which sought information on it.

Since the copy was in such a bad state, it could not be handled, only the masthead was salvaged. It included information such as F.H. Adams, editor; Mrs. P.J. Rippenberger, associate editor; published

every Saturday at Sebring, Highlands County, Florida, by the Avon Park Printing Co.

A search of the minutes of the Board of Trade, which later became the Sebring Chamber of Commerce, showed the subject discussed at a July 1921 meeting.

"A called meeting was to take place of the regular monthly session of July 4th and also to hear from Mr. F.M. Adams as to his purposes and aims in regard to the launching of his newspaper, to be known as "Highlands County Messenger in Sebring."

Mrs. G.H. Adams gave a short talk on his relations with the newspaper, and he stated the entire management and responsibility was with Mr. F.M. Adams.

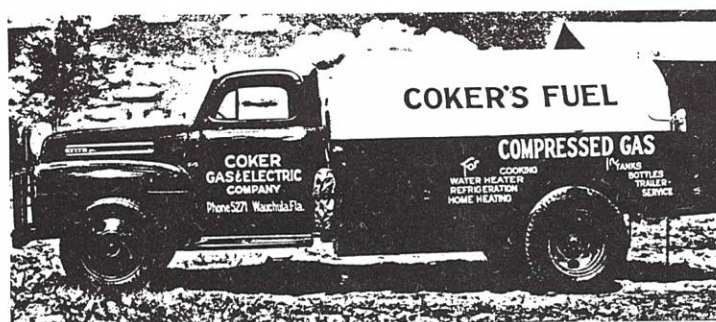
F.M. Adams then stated his intentions and said the paper would be run in the interests of Highlands County as a whole, but promised he would uphold the Town of Sebring, when in right, first, last and ALL THE TIME.

Mr. H.O. Sebring then made some appropriate and pointed remarks and after some discussion gave the newspaper his endorsement and support.

Mr. Ira Rigdon made a good pointed talk followed by Hon. E.J. Etheredge who called a spade a "Spade" and made all to understand the good a live newspaper can be to a community, a county or state.

On motion by H.O. Sebring, seconded by B.L.

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Laird, the Board of Trade went on record as sanctioning the New Newspaper and accord it its support.

Then Mr. F.M. Adams was proposed as a member of the Board of Trade, paid his dues for the balance of the fiscal year and was accepted.

"On motion by Mr. Rigdon the organization went on record as having the greatest of confidence in Mr. P.A. Ruhl and thanking him for his inestimable work for the upbuilding of the Town and the Vicinity for and for the part he has always played for the community both personally and in a newspaper way. This motion was unanimously carried by a rising vote," wrote J. Lee Johnson, secretary.

In an editor's note, the bulletin missive says P.A. Ruhl had for several years been editor of the Sebring White Way and a member of the board of governors of the Board of Trade. Here as a delicate situation with the board endorsing competition for one of its members in a community which was too small to adequately support one newspaper.

After the paper was sold to Perry Newspapers in 1945, the name changed to The Sebring News. Perry also bought the American and merged it with the News, with Hetherington (former owner of the Avon Park Sun) as publisher and his wife Hettie as associate editor.

Rose Mallory Rice, who had been with the paper in 1939 and again in 1943, returned to the News in 1967 as associate editor.

An opposition paper, the Highlands Herald was purchased by Perry and merged with the News.

In July 1971 the Hetheringtons retired and the newspaper, along with the Avon Park Sun were purchased by General Newspapers, Inc., owned by William Matthew and Ted Taylor. They brought in Don Caldwell as publisher.

About six months later Matthew and Taylor sold their holdings to the New York Times Co. With Rose Rice remaining as editor, Gene Wells was made co-publisher with Caldwell, until the latter became publisher of the Lake City Reporter.

In 1973 Rose Rice retired and Janelou Buck became editor in January 1974. In 1975 Gene Wells became publisher of the Lakeland Ledger, another N.Y. Times newspaper, and Richard Hitt was named publisher of The News. Hitt helped carry The News, joined by the Avon Park Sun into a twice-a-week publication with the addition of the Sunday News-Sun, with Mike Leach as Sunday editor.

Hitt resigned in 1986 and Steven Ainsley was named publisher over The News, Avon Park Sun, and the Sunday News-Sun. In January of this year Ainsley was elevated to publisher of a daily in Florence, Ala. and Judy Robinette became publisher of the three local papers.

Over the years the newspapers have been consistent winners in newspaper contests, both statewide and

nationally. In marking its 60th year, The News intends to continue its top coverage of Highlands County, keeping pace with its growth and with our times.

SEBRING, BOOM CITY — 1925

By Rod Arkell

(who owned and operated Sebring's
first and only daily newspaper)

A guardian angel must have tipped off the Arkells to buy the White Way, Sebring Banker's orphan child, in the early part of January, 1925.

For instance, it was more than a coincidence that the Bowden family owned the Ford agencies (with healthy advertising schedules) in Okeechobee, Sebring and Inverness, three small Florida towns where we were destined to own three "matching" weeklies.

I recall that, after operating the Okeechobee News for less than a few weeks, Bryant Bowden, who operated the 'Chobee Ford agency, confided that his father, sheriff of Citrus County was "hurtin'" to sell the "County Chronicle" on account that he was too busy to attend to it "proper." And soon after that, Bryant "Allowed" his brother Basil, up in Sebring, who operated the Ford shop there, would be "Tickled pink" if somebody bought the "White Way", pioneer Sebring weekly, "and turn it into a - well, a newspaper."

So Flo and I - after sinking our last \$5,000 in a cash deal to buy the Chronicle at Inverness, suddenly realized that we were in Sebring on our way back to Okeechobee, broke, but somehow uncannily curious about the weekly paper in this beautiful town which - at the moment - was as quiet as a graveyard on the Sahara Desert. (I was going to say Death Valley, but Sebring was among rolling Hills.)

Flo started it. Sebring's beautiful, but —"

"But what?", I inquired, much too eagerly. "Do you mean -?"

"Yes," Flo answered. "You can say it out loud! The town is —."

"About to bust wide open," I finished. "That's how I feel!"

And then, before Flo could say another word, I had left the car, reached the Circle, met the effervescent Dick Hart, furniture dealer, high powered salesman and banker G.F. Bobb, and had arranged to be in Sebring Monday morning, to buy the "White Way."

This, without knowing the price and not remembering that we hadn't any money, which we were fresh out of, after having bought the Inverness Chronicle.

"Of course, we want \$30,000 for the White Way," banker Bobb suddenly brought me back to consciousness with a jolt.

"What?" I demanded. "Thrity thousand dollars for

a bankrupt weekly in a dead community? I just want the newspaper, not the town."

"Well, of course, the real estate is worth \$25,000," Bobb backed down.

"But it's Saturday afternoon and you haven't got the prospects of raising \$5,000 by Monday morning," Flo reminded me. "Heaven help us!"

An hour later, at the 'chobee-Highlands County Bridge, where old Sid Pearce felt duty-bound to feed all passing travelers, we "et" as Will Rogers used to say; after which we felt much better. Sid's smorgasbords were always free and fabulous. (Later on, I was mighty glad to help Sid's daughter, Edna, run -and win) for office as Florida's first lady legislator!

By the time Flo and I had arrived in Okeechobee, we had just about decided that the Baptist pastor, Rev. Shuler had the cash to buy our recently-built Okeechobee home. His wife and daughter loved it. "We're forced to let Rev. Shuler have our new home at a very low price," I said.

"I hope not at cost?" Flo ventured. "The builder says it's worth \$12,000."

"Let's call on him right now and see what Shuler will do," I said.

"The good Lord will sure enough punish a preacher for transacting business on Sunday," Shuler warned his pretty wife and daughter who were for it at once, even when it called for payment on Sunday.

"You see we must be in Sebring Monday morning

to bid against Paul Poynter, St. Petersburg publisher who wants it because his sister, Jessie McEvoy lives there," I explained to Rev. Shuler.

"Where did you hear that?" Flo wanted to know, almost in a panic. "Must we sell our home before the sale?"

"Mr. Bobb said so. I forgot to tell you." I replied quaking. Flo was almost on the verge of calling the sale off.

"Poynter's rich," Flo said. "How do you know \$5,000 will be enough to buy the White Way? He might bid higher."

Rev. Shuler could plainly see that the bargain must be made at once. "We'll buy your home," he said. "I'll get the cash now!"

Okeechobee banker Gary arranged after church to let Rev. Shuler have the certified check and hand it over. Early next morning, on the way to Sebring, Flo and I decided to discourage Poynter with a little strategy in view of funds being limited.

"Supposing Poynter wants the real estate with the White Way," we wondered? We would follow all the Paynter bids swiftly, reasoning that the St. Petersburg publisher would top our bids cautiously. We'd make him think twice.

It worked! By the time we had bid the White Way price up to \$4,000, Poynter had reduced his bids to \$250, after making little speeches about the "dead town" in between.

"Remember, Rod, this is a cash auction," Poynter warned.

"Sure," I said with a grin. "Let's have your next bid, Paul."

"I've decided! This is my last bid," the St. Petersburg publisher said. "4,750. And it's not worth a penny more!"

"Flo and I sighed our relief. Yes, it was close but the Arkells got the White Way for \$5,000 - and paid off attorney Fax Haskins with Shuler's certified check. Then followed the reaction: were we making a mistake buying a small-town run-down weekly on a hunch?

"Don't lose faith now. Our guardian angel's working over-time," I chided Flo.

Well, every reader knows what happened to the budding Orange Blossom City in those early days. The town grew from 800 to a city of 8,000 in less than six months. It was a bonanza!

It was a miracle! It was a madhouse, too! (Founder George Sebring had the only poker face in town.)

As for us, we had beauty contests to raise money to keep abreast of a fast growing community! We gave away a dozen motor cars in a circulation drive!

We bought \$10,000 in new equipment - on time. We turned the paper into a daily and changed the name from the weekly "White Way" to the "Sebring Daily American."

We had 30 newspaper boys making afternoon deliveries. But the strain was breaking us. Help and housing was scarce.

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Auction advertisers whose daily message failed to get in the paper on time, threatened to sue us - on the theory that had the ad appeared they would have \$50,000 or more, and then - (it was a Sunday) - two young fellows, whose mothers turned out to be Palm Beach widows, offered us \$72,000 for the Daily American. They bid so fast, we couldn't stop them.

And this time, a guardian angel didn't need to whisper that we should sell. We sold out but, confidentially, we didn't get all that money. Well, at least, not right away. After all, we felt very grateful that we sold our home in Okeechobee at mere cost because at just about this time (September) the most vicious hurricane that ever hit South Florida, had struck Okeechobee with a death list of over 2,000.

And, among the building totally destroyed was the new home we had sold to Rev. Shuler, so that insofar as mortals know for sure, God had indeed punished the preacher for a Sunday transaction.

And no more emphasis could have been stressed on the fact that, had the Arkells stayed in Okeechobee, they would surely have been killed, this by virtue of a telegram sent to Rod Arkell in Sebring, right after the big blow had subsided. It was from the Okeechobee mayor, Tom Connelly, and read as follows:

DEAR ROD: DISPATCHING TO SEBRING THIS AFTERNOON BY SEABOARD FAST FREIGHT

REMEMBRANCES

By Orvel Sebring

The following are excerpts of a transcript from Orvel Sebring to Allen Altvater made February 14, 1971.

Now, I have to digress a minute to tell you my reason for Sebring, Florida coming into existence. It all was due to a change in the manner of growing oranges. The exact date, I do not know - it may have been 1907 or it may have been a little earlier, but there was a druggist at Florence Villa or Auburn-dale, named Inman who had discovered that oranges budded onto rough lemon stock, would grow in the sandhills. Up to that time, oranges had been grown in Florida along the rivers. They had been seedlings, for the most part, and this was the accepted method of horticulture, but the seedlings would not grow in the sandhills so, of course, this opened all that great area in central Florida to orange groves and this was the turn of the orange industry because these trees would be hardier to frost and they could take it when there would be dry spells and yet they would

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yield very well. So this prompted grandfather and father to explore the possibilities of a settlement in central Florida in which they would build a town, but the primary reason for the town was the promotion and sale of orange groves.

To come back to my first trip to Florida, as I said, I recollect that Dad and Grandfather would disappear and that we would hear stories when they came back, about their trips to central Florida. The next winter, I was taken by my father (I believe my mother and sister stayed home) to Florence Villa where Mimi, Eugene, Payne and Dorothy were staying in the hotel. Dad and George E. would leave and go to the new settlement. This was in the winter of 1911. The following year my mother, my sister and I joined Dad in the new town of Sebring.

You have no idea how beautiful it was at Sebring in 1910 and 1911. The land was covered by virgin pines. Lake Jackson was a jewel. The lake had a beautiful white sand bottom. It had none of the grass in it that is cursing the lakefront now except over on the north side and some of it over on the south cove. One of our favorite pursuits was wading along this fine sandy shore and looking for arrowheads and usually you would be rewarded. Why they were there, one can only guess. There was one theory that the Indians would climb the trees and shoot down at fish. Well, that was as good a theory as any. They might have had canoe battles for all we know.

Again recollecting (but some years later) I can remember when one time we had a picnic over in the South Cove. There was a slough there, or a hammock, where Jackson Creek flowed out. It's been all cut down now. There were beautiful trees there; there were bay trees in the spring and you could smell the scent of magnolia. But, at this particular time, I can remember counting eleven alligators on the top of the water there, in the dusk.

These are some of the things that one thinks about in retrospect. There are so many more. It was a beautiful town - it was full of hardships - every nail, every piece of wire that went into Sebring, Florida was a struggle in the first few years. Wauchula was the railhead. If it hadn't been for the model T Ford, Sebring, Florida would never have come along as it did. The people who supplied the brains and the brawn - Aaron Withers, Ed Harshman, E.O. Douglas, Will Haskins and Fax Haskins, Paul Vinson, John A. Taylor, G.F. Bobb, Ed Hainz, John Graham, Bill Amy, Col. F.N.K. Bailey, Dr. Etheredge, Ma and Pa Ruhl, Paul Rippberger, Ada Rippberger and Sallie Tucker (wonderful teachers to whom I owe a great deal), Col. William Evans, Austin Heacock, C.F. Saunders, Sam Degering, Will and Herb Reck, Henry Henning, Harry McCorkle, Fred Bee, the Altvaters, the Gearings, Elder J.C. Moore, Dr. MacMurray and Dr. Kiesling, the Whitehouse family, the Capwells, Spencer and Brandon Jones, Will Dalgetty, Bill Muff and so many others - hosts of old-timers whom we recall. Those mentioned were a small part of them, but they were great people. The Salvation Army and the Dunkards had a great influence on the founding of Sebring. How they got there originally, I don't know, but they were friends; they brought their own in; they were wonderful people. I can well remember with great happiness the Christmas Eve carols of the Salvation Army group and their closing, "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." We are flooded by memories! Indeed, Sebring, Florida has a heritage of which it can well be proud!

Happy Birthday Sebring
from

Steve and Nell Roberts
& Everyone
At



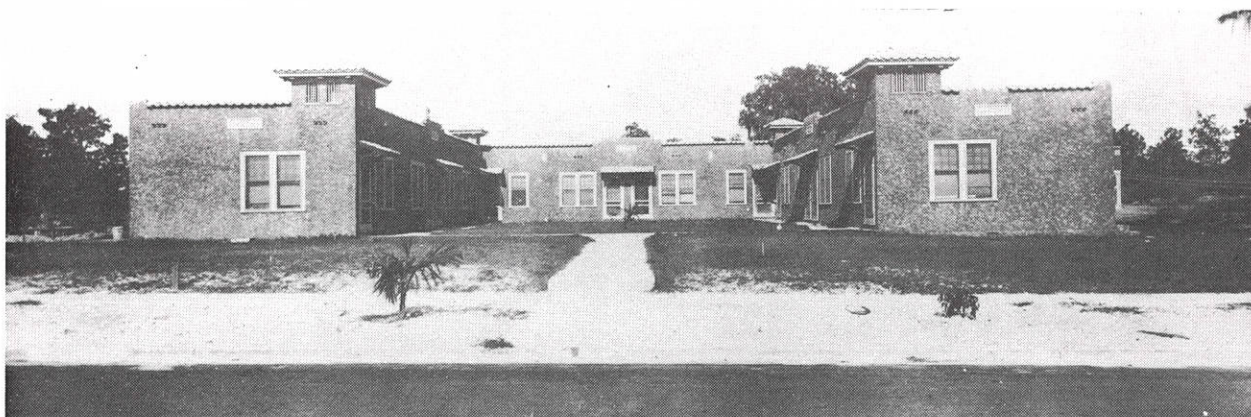
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1963



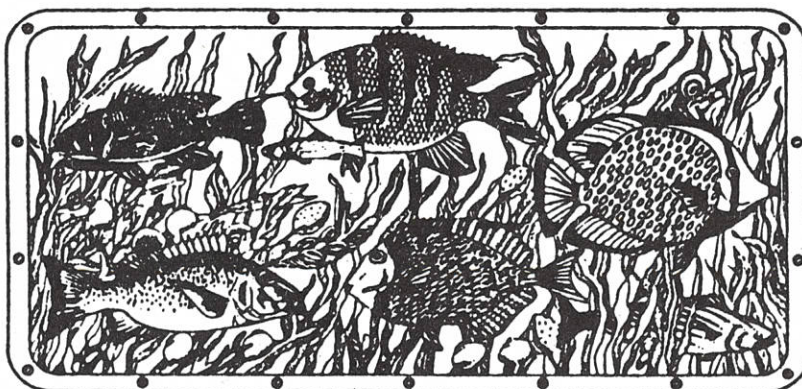
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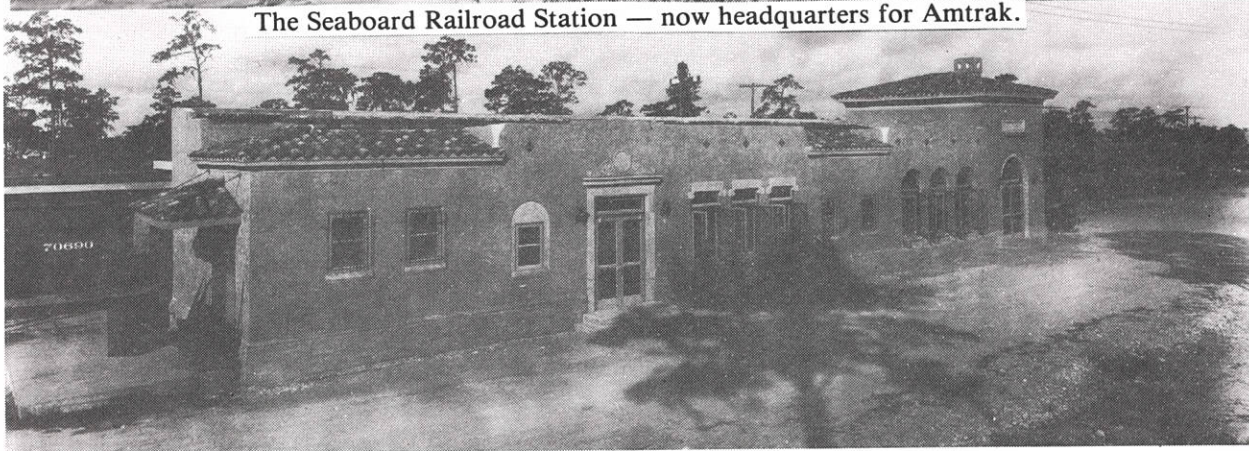


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SEBRING'S "MAIN STREET" ...Then and Now

The imagination, personality and uniqueness of Sebring has been captured in many ways through our last 75 years of history. Multifaceted it stands as a living testimony to who we are today.

One of our greatest natural resources and perhaps the only "international" resource is 35 years of Sebring Racing — The 12 Hours of Endurance.

Making a strong statement of historical significance and tracing a pattern of Sebrings growth, Sebring Main Street would like to recognize this significant part of Sebring history in a race Museum. Sebring Main Street is currently investigating the potential of turning this into a reality. We are encouraging public support, seeking funding and collaborating with Historic Property Associates. Sebring Main Street is endeavoring to collect and inventory our racing memorabilia, to gather narrative, published and media information.

Do you have a personal or family collection to be researched? To be displayed? Can you offer us assistance or give us guidance in locating historical race information? We need your cooperation and support.

I challenge you to become a part in creating tomorrows history. Please contact Shiela Klein at 385-8856 in care of Sebring Main Street, 239 N. Ridgewood, Sebring, Florida 33870.



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The Palms was The Sebring Hotel



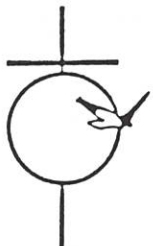
WHAT'S IN A CITY?

Dedicated and devoted city employees who have contributed public services over the years that have led to the growth of Sebring throughout 75 years. CONGRATULATIONS!

WHAT'S IN THE PALMS OF SEBRING?

Highly skilled personnel committed to the continuous care of residents - whether it be in independent-living apartments, assisted-living apartments, personal care units or "round-the-clock" skilled nursing care in the Health Care Center.

WHAT'S IN A LOGO?



The logo of THE PALMS OF SEBRING embodies the focus of our philosophy and seeks to promote an understanding of the motivating purposes of the Board of Directors and its staff. The circle speaks of the wholeness of the caring community where security, comfort, and joy enhance the elements of purposeful living. The bird-on-the-wing tells of an active freedom for the individual to

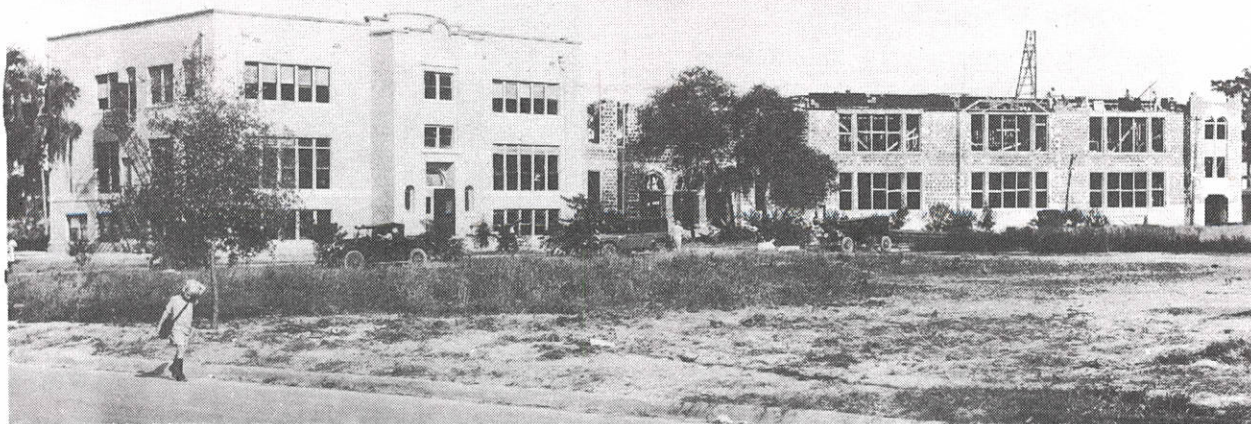
"fly" with grace and ease within or beyond the circle, but, if beyond, always to return home. All of this is within the context of the Christian faith which motivates THE PALMS OF SEBRING in its ministry with older adults.

We thought you would like to know.

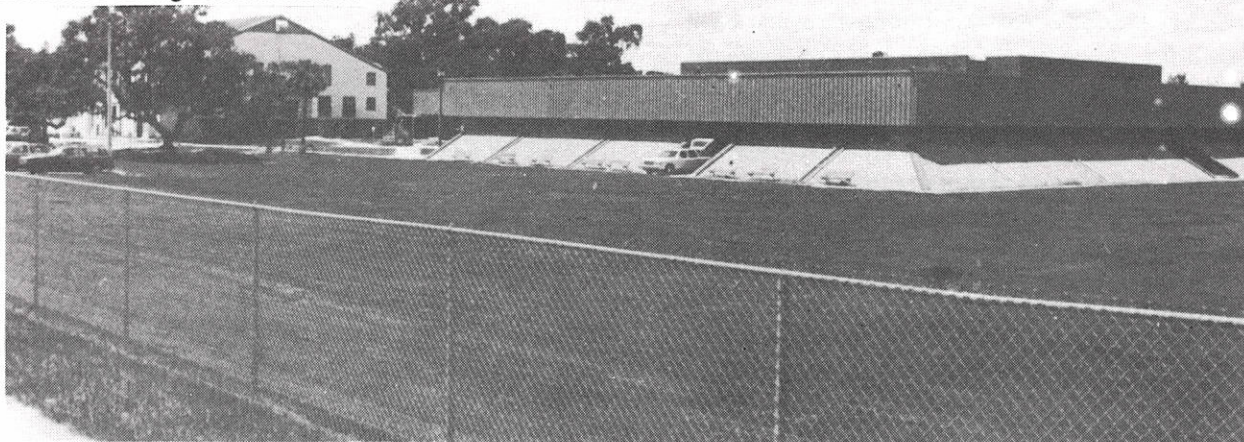
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"A NEW BOOK"

by Allen Altvater, Sr.

Work on the latest publication by the Sebring Historical Society has been completed and the soft-back edition of "A HALL OF FAME FOR SEBRING OFFICIALS" is ready for distribution. Library bound copies will be available in September.

This 220 page volume is not a subject of wide general interest but rather is a study of the political structure of the City of Sebring for its first 75 years and is designed to give basic information about the more than 200 elected officials and appointed department heads who served in that period. (Editor's Note: Allen is too modest. This is an excellent book with much information.)

The principal purpose for this publication has been to acknowledge the contributions that the involved persons have made toward the building of the attractive city and its enviable condition after its first 75 years and to document, briefly, such biographical sketches and basic facts as may perpetuate their names in the history of the community.

Efforts were made to include as many for which accurate information could be made available. In some cases, subjects would not provide such information so it was assumed that they did not want to be included and in other cases, no sources were available. It would



Sebring's First Street Department

be delightful if this publication would encourage anyone having knowledge about these subjects, to make it available for record and publication.

It was learned early, that some limitations would have to be made in the stories of the lives of these officials. It is natural to recognize that most of these men are persons of prominence and to give complete resumes of their lives would require more time and space than would be available. So, if more details are needed, much of it can be found in the files of the Sebring Historical Society where the Library Committee is building comprehensive files.

In more than a year that was required to put this hand-book together, several lessons were learned and, if suggestions are in order, history would be served if:

1. The biographical sketches of all successful candidates for office (both elected and appointed) were required and filed in the future.

2. Initiate programs to continue the HALL OF FAME for the City and start a parallel study for the County.

3. Initiate and document studies of programs of such separate bureaus as the Utilities Commission, Airport Authority, Library, Zoning Board, etc.


During the collection of data for this study, many interesting facts were uncovered which might make interesting reading in future articles but which do not lend value to this work. For instance, there were at least 29 cases where individual officials were related, 15 were father-and-son, or son-in-law, 10 were brothers or brothers-in-law, a wide assortment ranging from uncles and nephews to husband and wife.

It is almost impossible to describe the interest and pleasure one can have in developing studies of this nature.

◇ ◇ ◇

How far the little candle
throws his beams!
So shines a good deed in a
naughty world.

William Shakespeare



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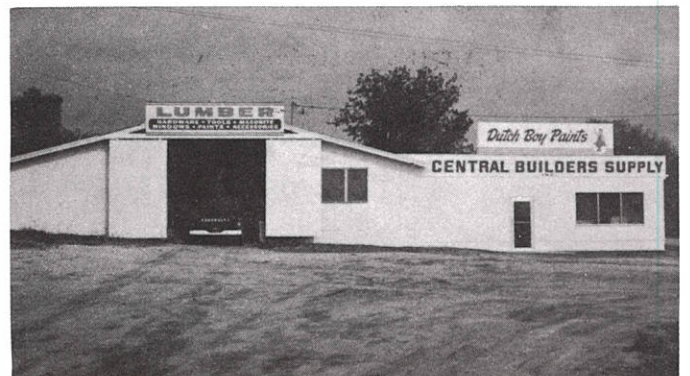
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*Happy 75th Birthday Sebring
1912 - 1987*

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Charles W. Taylor, Jr., Sec./Treas.



Ox Team Hauling Crates for Citrus Fruit at Sebring, Fla.





The Nan-Ces-O-Wee Players — from Left to Right, Jean Gose Mosier, Jack and Ann Ingle, Austie Heacock and Delbert Fann.

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RODEO TIME — Seminole Indian agent Fred Montsdeoca (far right on horseback) brought a group to perform a rodeo in the City of Sebring for the Newark Bears visit.

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Merits of Sebring Proclaimed in Music Published in 1916

“Daddy” Gage Was Sebring’s First Poet and Musician

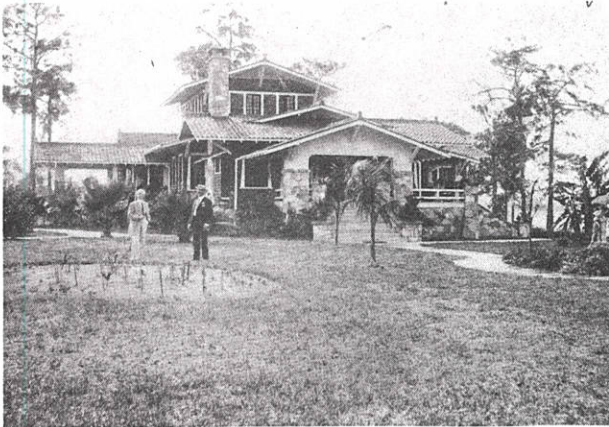
About 1913, shortly after the Arrowhead Hotel was built to the North of the present city civic center, a regular guest was George W. Gage. He was a writer of popular songs in the North.

“Daddy” Gage, as he became known, was a very good friend and favorite of George E. Sebring, the city’s founder. It was not long before he had written a song entitled “Sebring The Beautiful” which was dedicated to his friend, Mr. Sebring.

Daddy Gage was a very likeable, little fellow who was a very versatile musician and up through the thirties was usually selected as entertainment chairman for all the many celebrations and parties in the early days of Sebring.

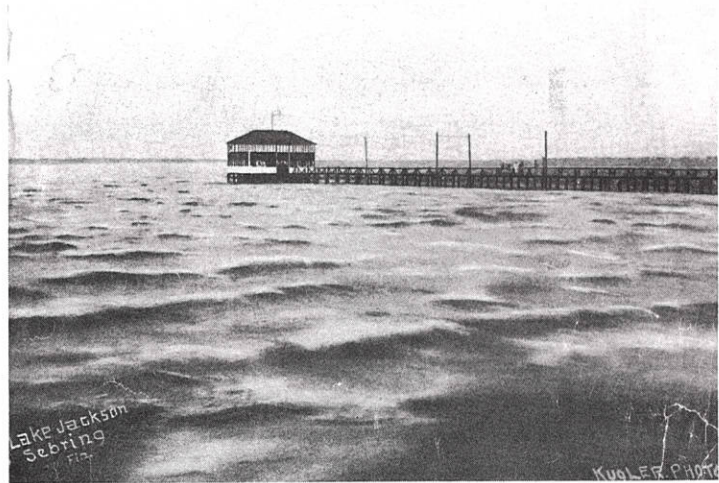
The proprietor of the Arrowhead Hotel was Bill Amy, who had one daughter named Ada Ruth (who later became Ruth Sebring). Daddy Gage actually wrote his song “in honor of” Ada Ruth, who as a very young teenager sang the song at all festivities, of which in the early days there were many. (The poem he wrote to her is reproduced at the bottom of this page.

*Note: Ruth Sebring is very active in many clubs and events in Sebring today, and still might be called upon to sing the song, which was written for her.



Pictured on rear of the sheet music was this shot of Geo. W. Gage (left) and Geo. E. Sebring, founder in front of his home, which was located where the library is now. The picture was taken in 1914 or 1915.

DEDICATED TO MR. GEORGE E. SEBRING **SEBRING** **THE BEAUTIFUL** A SONG OF PRAISE



This was the cover of the sheet music which was lithographed in full color, copyrighted in 1916, and shows the city pier which extended 700 feet out into the water and had a two story structure which was used for religious and social events.

Words to “SEBRING THE BEAUTIFUL”

There's a place in Florida State, It's a wonder, upto date.
Upto date, and some ways past, and its growing, coming fast.
Like a dream of paradise, see it once you'll see it twice.
See it twice and you'll belong, and with us you'll sing this song.

CHORUS

There are other places, true, in this great big state all through.
With skies and lakes, and atmosphere, but not one to our heart so dear.
Dream of beauty and you'll find, Sebring leaves it far behind.
A baby yet, and yet a king come and see and then you'll sing.

CHORUS

There are sunsets ev'ry where, but to Sebring's can't compare.
Colors of, most gorgeous hue, always changing, ever new.
Flowers vines and wondrous trees, If you want the best of these.
Sunshine, game and fish and view, Sebring is the place for you.

CHORUS — Sebring, we love you so, you're the winter place to go,
You define the words “to grow,” Sebring you beautiful,
Nestled on Lake Jackson's shore, you're the place we all adore
The more you grow, we love you more, Sebring.

AN ACROSTIC TO ADA RUTH AMY SEBRING, FLORIDA - FEBRUARY 27, 1916

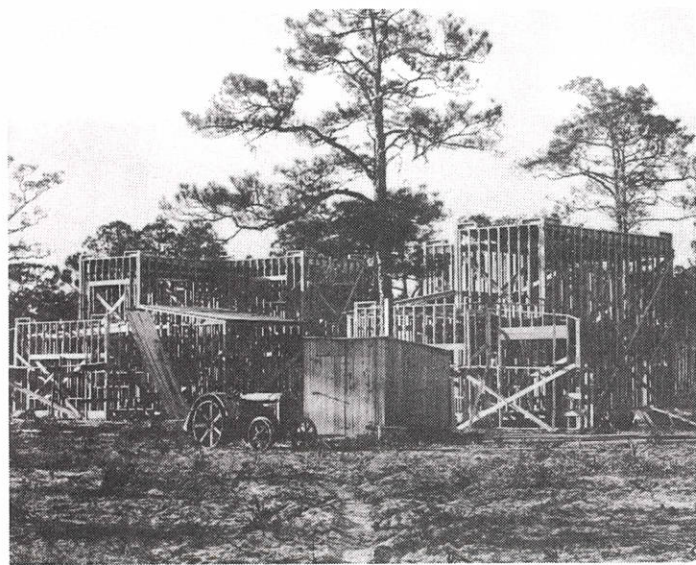
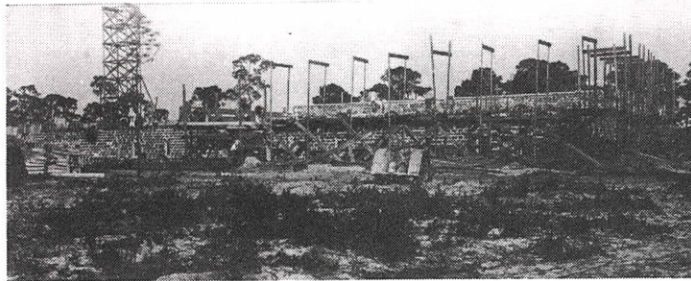
Are you aware, as you go along,
Dear girl I wrote for you this song?
And that, when this same Sebring town
Reaches a state of high renown,
Until success shines on her brow-
That she'll be lovelier far then now?
Have you some thought of the days to come,
And how your singing has helped her some?
Most lovely Sebring, and how we two,
You, Dear, and I, helped make her true.
George W. Gage
(Sebring's poet and musician)



Ruth (Amy) Sebring
Today

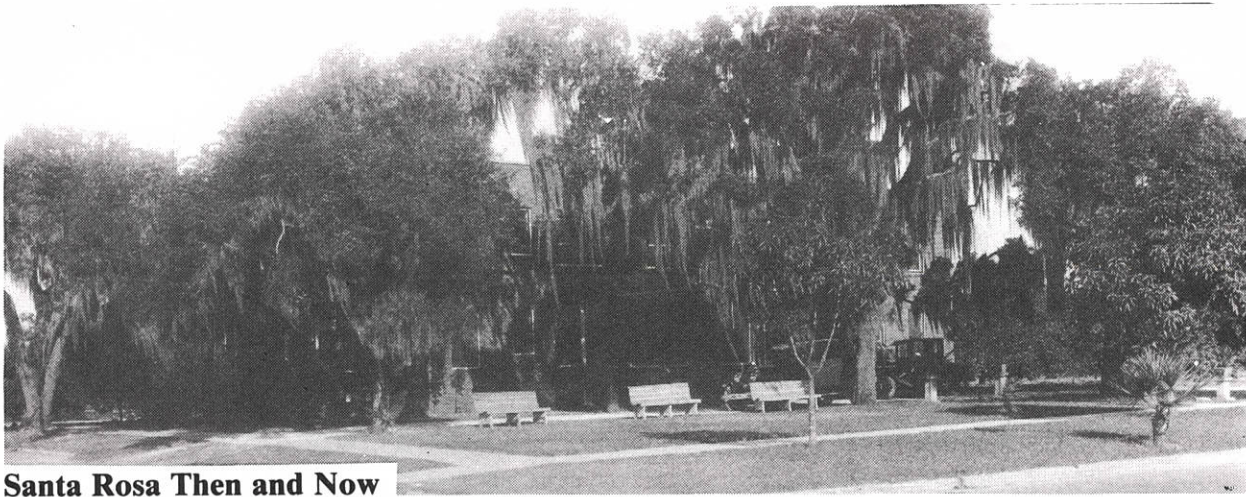
Harder Hall

...Then and Now



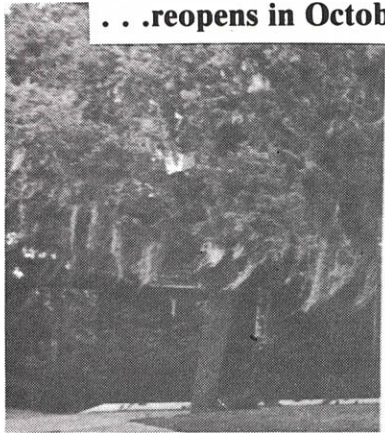
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TO

Fred Van Dyke
Louis H. Alsmeyer, Agricultural
Agent Highlands County 1926-1943
Maggie M. Leaphart
Mr. and Mrs. C.W. Witmer
The Leatherman Family,
Walter, Sadie and Ava
Mr. and Mrs. Guignard Maxcy
Mr. Leland E. Keck, Sr.
The W.T. Sessions Family
Stephen E. Vosburgh
Park DeVane
Pastor Leland E. Brooker
Lynn Crouch
Park DeVane
Robert Paul Butts
Mr. Tom Mitchell, Sr.

BY

Irene Van Dyke
Lottie Alsmeyer
Col. and Mrs. Rudolph Leaphart
Ken and Ruth Grubb
Lillian E. Depp
Miss Elizabeth Maxcy
Mrs. Blanche Keck
Mrs. W.T. Sessions
Mrs. Beulah M. Vosburgh
Mrs. Alma DeVane
L.E. Brooker, Jr.
Charles Crouch
Shirley Kitchings
The Butts Family
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Mitchell, Jr.

*The following are happy to cooperate with the
"Seventy Five Years of Sebring" Celebration as:*

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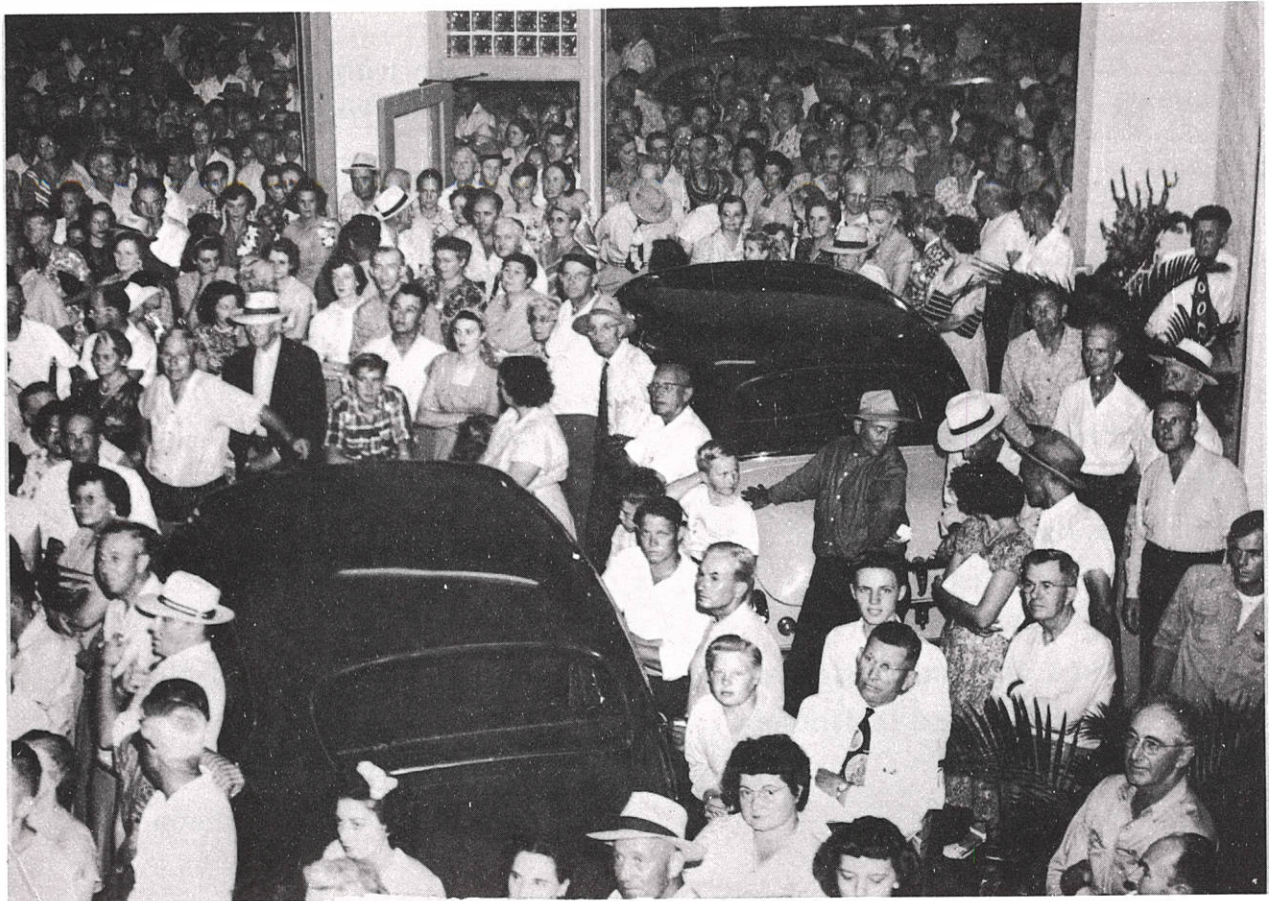
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The charter for the Town of Sebring had to designate our location for us to be established here. The Town Charter of 1911 predates our date of establishment by two years

1911 - 1913

We have been here welcoming most of you.

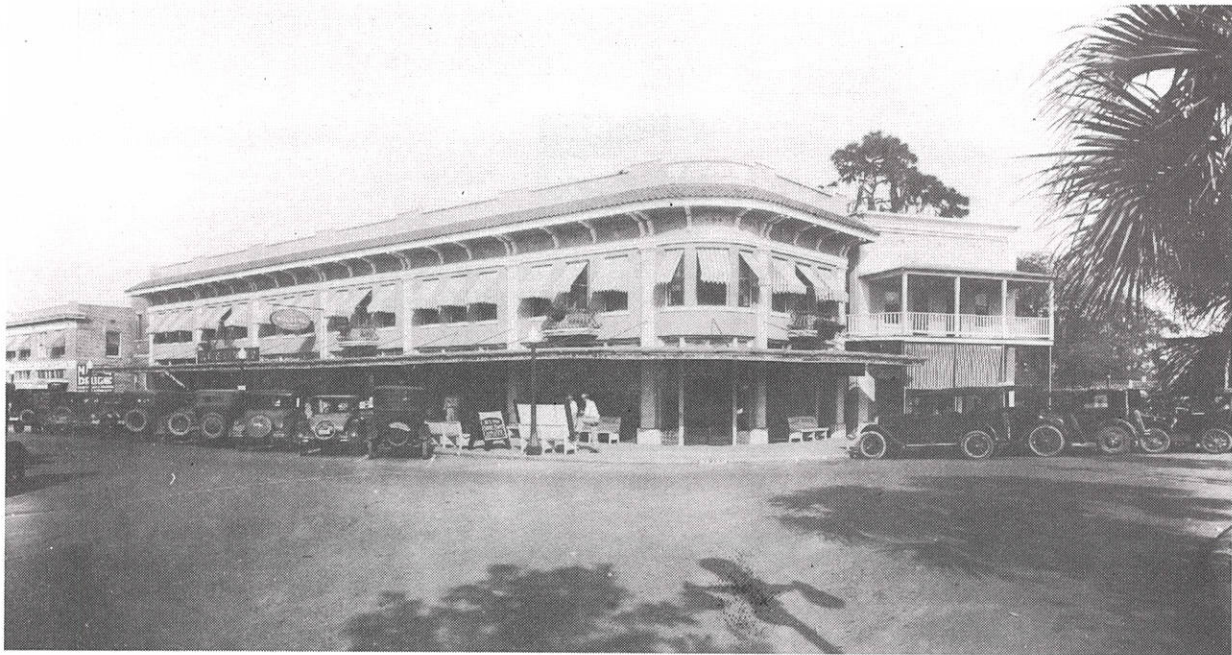
SEBRING HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Since its formation in 1964, the Sebring Historical Society has dedicated itself to the development and preservation of local history. From a small group of interested people, many of whom were among the earliest settlers in the area, it has grown to its present membership of 250. It now includes a goodly sprinkling of more recent residents who are also interested in the origins of the community.

The Society meets quarterly on the last Saturday in January, April, June and October. The meetings usually begin with a covered dish dinner and include a short business session and a program on some topic of local history.

The Society Archives are located presently in the basement of the Sebring Police Station on North Ridgewood Drive and are open on Thursdays from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. or by appointment. The collection is comprised of pictures, maps, editions of early newspapers and assorted memorabilia. The Society maintains files on local organizations, individuals and contributions to the collection are always welcome.

In addition, the Society publishes a quarterly bulletin featuring articles of local historical interest written by the members themselves. Other publications include several collections of pictures and articles of area interest.



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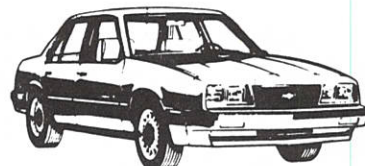
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