

The Spanish River Papers

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OLD CITY HALL, HOME OF BOCA RATON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jeanne Nixon Baur, Artist

A report to the membership of

Boca Raton Historical Society, Inc.

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BOCA RATON'S "OLD" FLORESTA

The settlement of twenty-nine houses off west Palmetto Park Road built by the Mizner Development Corporation in the middle twenties was Boca Raton's first true subdivision. This issue of the Spanish River Papers attempts to detail the early history of this section. Much of the material for this edition can be found in an abstract for an Old Floresta house originally owned by Fred Aiken. This abstract is currently in the archives of the Boca Raton Historical Society.

Donald W. Curl, Editor

* * * * *

The section of Boca Raton officially named "Floresta," though more commonly called "Old Floresta" today, was originally part of the large tract of land granted to the Florida Coast Line Canal and Transportation Company by the State of Florida on September 24, 1890.

Whereas by Section 4 of Chapter 3995 of the laws of Florida approved May 29, 1889, it is made the duty of the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Fund of the State of Florida and they are hereby required to convey to the Florida Coast Line Canal and Transportation Company from time to time as its work progresses, 3840 acres per mile, of the lands now held in reserve for the said Company, for each section of six miles of the canals and water ways between St. Augustine and Biscayne Bay, which shall be found by inspection of the Engineer of the said Board to be in conformity with the specifications prescribed in Section 3, of said act, said lands to be the even and odd numbered sections which lie nearest to the line of the route of its canals and water ways.

And Whereas the said Company has applied to the said Trustees for deeds of conveyance to it or its assigns of the lands to which it is now entitled for the said 17 Sections of its completed

canals and water ways; And whereas the lands hereinafter described selected by the salesman in accordance with the resolution of the Board of August 20, 1890, are the even and odd numbered Sections of the lands now held in reserve for the said Company, which lie nearest to the line of the route of its canals and water ways and which were granted to the State of Florida by act of Congress of September 28, 1850, to wit: All of Section 19, Township 47 South, Range 43 East; (Also other lands.) containing in the aggregate 345,971.80 acres lying in the County of Dade in the State of Florida.

On January 4, 1892, 100,000 acres which included the 634.80 acres of Section 19 was purchased by the Boston and Florida Atlantic Coast Land Company for \$100,000. The company held the land until June 16, 1924 when it sold part of it to the Lake Webster Land Company. This company had been organized by M. A. Hortt, W. B. Pierce, and R. E. Dye just three weeks earlier on May 24, 1924. The Boston and Florida Atlantic Coast Land Company accepted a mortgage for \$109,843 payable in the next three years. This mortgage was satisfied on January 25, 1926. On November 19, 1924 this land was purchased by the Miami-Palm Beach Land Company with the Lake Webster Land Company accepting a \$310,275 mortgage.

[For] Government Lot 3 and West Three-Quarters of Four, Section 19, Township 47 South Range 43 East, (also other lands) ...to secure the payment of the principal sum of \$310,275.00 evidenced by three certain promissory notes dated May 15, 1924 as follows: Note No. 1 for \$104,000.00 due on or before May 15, 1925; Note No. 2 for \$103,000.00 due on or before May 15, 1926; Note No. 3 for \$103,275.00 due on or before May 15, 1927, each note with interest from date, at the rate of 6% per annum, until paid.

A Satisfaction of Mortgage was filed August 5, 1925.

On January 15, 1925 John A. Verhoeven, Richard J. Cooney, Herman V. von Holst, Fred C. Aiken, and Max Biederman, in partnership, bought 255 acres from the Miami-Palm Beach Land Company which accepted a \$25,900 mortgage.

Given to secure the payment of the principle sum of \$25,900 evidenced by three certain promissory notes of even date herewith; No. 1 for the sum of \$5,900. due on or before November 1, 1925; No. 2 for the sum of \$10,000. due on or before November 1, 1926; No. 3 for the sum of \$10,000. due on or before November 1, 1927; all with interest thereon at the rate of 8% per annum from date, until fully paid. Interest payable quarterly.

Addison Mizner entered the picture on May 4, 1925 when his Mizner Development Corporation purchased the land from the five partners who accepted a \$37,849.95 mortgage.

Given to secure the payment of the principal sum of \$37,850. evidenced by 15 certain promissory notes of even date herewith, each in the sum of \$2,523.33, payable on or before 1, 2, and 3 years, 1, 2, and 3 years, 1, 2, and 3 years, 1, 2, and 3 years, 1, 2, and 3 years after date respectively, each with interest

thereon at the rate of 8% per annum from date until fully paid. Interest payable semi-annually.

By the Spring of 1926 twenty-nine houses had been constructed in the Old Floresta area by the Mizner Development Corporation for its directors and principal stockholders. At this point the sub-contractors, unable to secure payment from the failing corporation, began to file liens. The first, dated May 18, 1926 was filed by the Marsh and Truman Lumber Company for \$7,406.20. Further liens were filed by T. M. Lamb for \$15,580.57, Selden Cypress Door Co. for \$16,064.80, The Boys Roofing Co., Inc. for \$14,444.78, Artistic Fixture Co., Inc. for \$1,749.00, John Kringle for \$6,822.50, Edward C. Hilker for \$12,084.89 (for plumbing), Ocean City Lumber for \$10,000.00, Dwight P. Robinson and Co., Inc. for \$4,000.00, and finally, on September 17, 1926 a notice of Lis Pendens was filed by von Holst, Verhoeven, Aiken, Biederman, and Cooney for foreclosure of the mortgage against the Mizner Corporation.

BILL OF COMPLAINT was filed...on September 17, 1926, which seeks the foreclosure of that certain mortgage executed by Mizner Development Corporation to Herman V. von Holst, John A. Verhoeven, Fred C. Aiken, Max Biederman and Richard J. Cooney, said mortgage was filed for record May 22, 1925...to secure payment of the sum of \$37,850.00 evidenced by 15 promissory notes dated May 4, 1925, all of said notes being in the amount of \$2,523.33 each.... THEREFORE COMPLAINANTS PRAY that an account may be taken as to what is due complainants as to principal and interest on said mortgage and notes, and costs, charges, and expenses of this suit, including a reasonable solicitor's fee and abstract fee and costs therein....

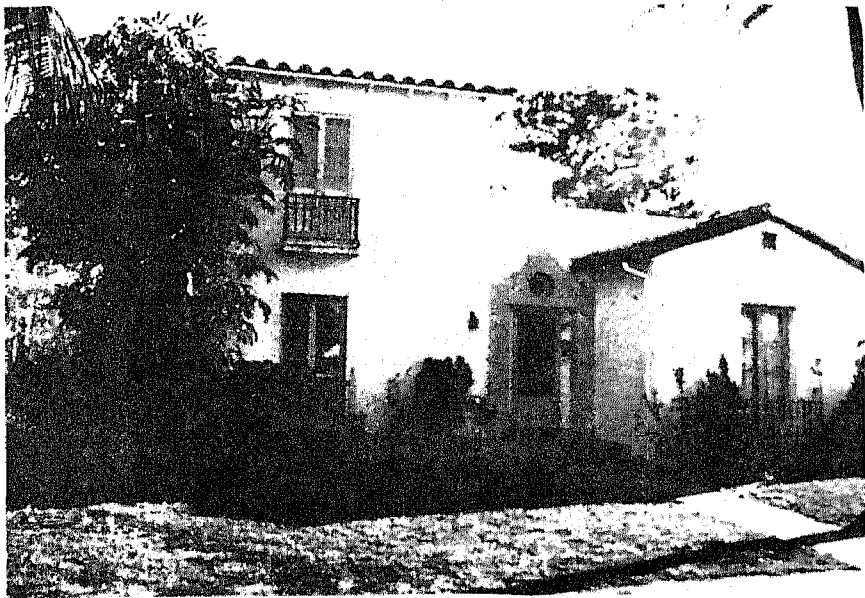
Judge C. E. Chillingworth handed down his final decree on March 26, 1927.

The Court...finds from the evidence as follows: The allegations of the Complainants Bill ...are true and have been proven as alleged; that the equities in this cause are with the complainants and that they are entitled to the relief prayed for in their bill of Complainant as amended.

The Court further finds from the evidence in the case, that on May 4th, 1925, the Defendant Mizner Development Corporation, purchased from the Complainants the land described in Complainants Bill...at which time the title and fee to the same was held by Complainants, and as part payment of the purchase price for said land the said Mizner Development Corporation made, executed and delivered to the Complainants its certain promissory notes in the total amount of \$37,850.00; that said notes were in series of 3, each series consisting of five notes of the sum of \$2,523.33, each note; that each of these notes bear interest at the rate of 8% per annum, interest payable semi-annually; that the first series of said notes of 5 in the sum of \$2,523.33 each, making a total of \$12,616.65 fell due April 5th, 1926, and were payable April 4th, 1926, but that to date the said sum of money has been unpaid by said Defendant:

The Court further finds from the evidence that on November 4th, 1926, there was accrued interest due Complainants on said indebtedness in the sum of \$3,028.00, which to date remains unpaid. The Court further finds from the evidence that the State and County Taxes on said property for 1925 and 1926 have not been paid by said Defendant, Mizner Development Corporation...

The Court further finds from the evidence that the Defendant, Mizner Development Corporation is justly and truly indebted to the Complainants upon the promissory notes and mortgage that were introduced in evidence in this cause, and described and referred to in the Complainants Bill of Complaint...in the principal sum of \$37,850.00 together with the further sum of \$3,196.22, as accrued interest thereon from the 4th day of March, 1926 to the date of this decree, or a total of \$41,046.22 together with the further sum of \$1,561.82 for State and County taxes and assessments for the years 1925 and 1926, accrued and unpaid by said Defendant, and that the Defendant, Mizner Development Corporation, is further indebted to the Complainants by reason of said notes and mortgages and the foreclosure of this mortgage in the sum of \$3,500.00 as for their solicitors fee, and which amount is found and decreed by the Court to be a reasonable solicitors fee to be allowed Complainants herein with which to compensate their solicitors for their



888 Oleander Street, Old Floresta (1965 photograph by Jeff Turnau)
This house was built for Addison Mizner's brother Henry, an Episcopal priest. It is mentioned in Boca Raton's first newspaper, *The Boca Raton Record* on March 1, 1927: "The Rev. Henry Mizner has constructed a new sidewalk in front of his house and has also planted a number of rare tropical plants and trees...The Rev. Mr. Mizner has given a real Old World appearance to his property by placing antique busts and urns." When von Holst took over this house it was named "Oleander."

services herein, and that to secure the payment of said sum of money the Complainants have and hold under said mortgage a mortgage lien upon the land described in said Bill of Complaint as amended, and hereinafter described, superior in dignity and effect to all the right, title and interest of all of the Defendants in this cause, and are entitled to enforce the same and have said mortgage lien foreclosed for the purpose of paying, satisfying and discharging the several sums of money so due and owing the Complainants by said Defendant....

The Court also awarded T. M. Lamb \$15,580.57 for work, labor and services, Marsh and Truman Lumber Company \$5,722.66 for lumber and material and \$570.00 for solicitors fees, The Boys Roofing Company \$3,069.42 for labor and materials and \$300.00 for solicitors fees, John Kringel \$6,882.50 for labor and \$650.00 for solicitors fees, and Ocean City Lumber Company \$10,000.00 for materials and \$1,000.00 for solicitors fees.

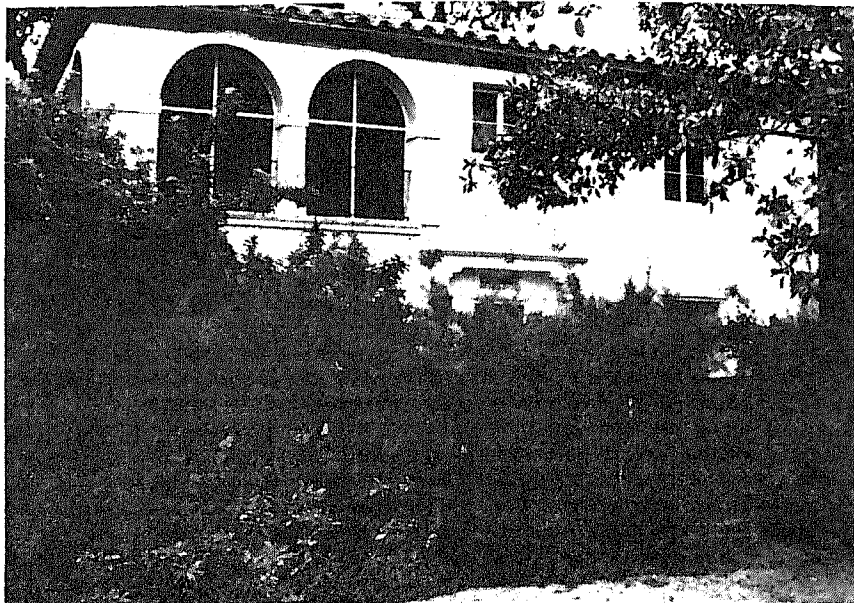
Before the final decree in Herman V. von Holst, et. al. vs. Mizner Development Corporation, et. al. was handed-down the Miami-Palm Beach Land Company filed a lien to collect the unpaid balance of the mortgage it had given the five partners. This amounted to \$22,141.81 and included interest. Once again the court found for the complainant and ordered a public sale.

IT IS THEREFORE, ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED by the Court that the Defendant, Mizner Development Corporation, upon the entry of this decree, pay over to the Complainants the said several sums of money to-wit: the total sum of Forty Thousand, Three Hundred Seventy-three and 66/100 (\$40,373.66), together with the solicitors fee for Complainants and their costs of this suit; that it also pay Marsh and Truman Lumber Company, John Kringel, Ocean City Lumber Company, T. M. Lamb and Boys Roofing Company, the amounts herein found due said defendants respectively, together with their solicitors fees and court costs, and that in default thereof, the land described in the Bill of Complaint as amended herein, to-wit: the land situate, lying and being in Palm Beach County, Florida, and described as;

NW $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{2}$; W $\frac{1}{2}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$; W $\frac{1}{2}$ of E $\frac{1}{2}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$; (and other lands) Section 19, Township 47 South, Range 43 East containing 255 acres, more or less;

be advertised for sale and sold by the Special Master in Chancery herein, appointed, to make said sale, at the front door of the Court House in Palm Beach County, on a legal sales day and during the legal hours of sale on such day, to the highest and best bidder therefore for cash, at public outcry, for the purpose of paying and satisfying the amount of money hereinbefore found to be due the Complainants.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that John Ziegler, Esq., an Attorney at Law, residing in the City of West Palm Beach, Florida, and practicing before this Court, be, and he is hereby appointed Special Master herein, and as such, is hereby ordered and directed to make and conduct the sale of such property as herein provided...and that upon the making of said sale, said Special Master shall collect and receive the sum paid for said property at said sale and make written report thereof...that said Special Master do, out of the sum paid for said property;



875 Alameda Street (contemporary photograph by Charles Vicinus) Originally the von Holst home and known as "Lavender." The homes owned by the von Holsts were given names so that their gardner, Denver Brittain, could identify them in the days before street addresses were utilized.

1. Pay the costs and expenses of said sale, including his fee.
2. That he next pay the costs of this suit to be taxed by the Clerk of this Court and pay all unpaid taxes.
3. That the balance of the sum paid for said property be then paid over by said Special Master to the Complainants, or so much thereof as shall be necessary to pay and satisfy the amount found to be due them, the said Complainants, in this decree.
4. That in the event the said property shall sell for a price and sum in excess of the several sums of money aforesaid and that there shall be a surplus in said Special Masters hands after paying the aforesaid sums, that said Special Master shall pay to the said Defendants, T. M. Lamb, Boys Roofing Company, Inc., and Marsh and Truman Lumber Company, John Kringel and Ocean City Lumber Company, the respective amounts of money herein found due the said last mentioned respective defendants if the said surplus in the Master's hands shall be sufficient to meet all the said several amounts herein found due and owing said defendants, together with their costs and solicitors fees allowed them by the Court.
5. If after making the first distributions as set forth in the

preceding paragraphs one, two and three, the Special Master shall not have a sufficient surplus with which to pay the whole amount herein found due to the said Defendants, T. M. Lamb, Boys Roofing Company, Inc., and Marsh and Truman Lumber Company, John Kringel and Ocean City Lumber Company the Special Master is ordered to report in writing to this Court the amount of such excess he has in his hands after making distributions provided in the preceding paragraphs one, two and three, for such further orders as this court shall see fit to enter herein, and also testimony as to the fair value of the land...

The Complainants herein are hereby authorized, if they all see fit, to become a bidder for said property at said sale, and to apply the amount decreed them on their bid over and above costs.

Notice is hereby given, that the undersigned Special Master in Chancery...will sell at public outcry in front of the West Door of the Court House at West Palm Beach, Florida, on Monday, the 2nd day of May A. D. 1927, the same being a Rule Day of Court and a legal sales day, between the legal hours of sale, to-wit: between the hours of eleven o'clock A.M. and two o'clock P.M., to the highest bidder or bidders for cash, that certain piece, parcel and tract of real estate [above described.]

REPORT OF SALE OF SPECIAL MASTER was filed May 23, 1927 wherein he reports that he published notice of Special Master's sale for 4 consecutive weeks immediately preceding the sale date; and on May 2, 1927 he held the sale of the premises described in the final decree and sold the same to HERMAN V. VON HOLST, JOHN A. VERHOEVEN, FRED C. AIKEN, MAX BIEDERMAN AND RICHARD J. COONEY, for the sum of \$45,000.00, subject to a first mortgage and costs on this same land of approximately \$20,000.00 accrued interest and costs, that he has made no disbursements of any sums of money....

FINAL REPORT OF SPECIAL MASTER SHOWING DISBURSEMENTS was filed July 11, 1927...wherein he reports that he has paid all of the costs of said suit, taxes, solicitors fees, master's fees, publication costs, clerk's costs and sheriff's fees, as ordered in final decree, and attaches hereto the vouchers therefore. That after the application of the amount bid for said property upon the payment of the amounts decreed to be paid, as set forth in the said Final Decree, there remains due to Complainants from Defendant Mizner Development Corporation, unpaid, a balance of \$7,367.80....

FINAL DECREE DISCHARGING SPECIAL MASTER was filed July 11, 1927...wherein it is Ordered that said Special Master in Chancery has done all things required of him to be done; that his acts and doings in the making of said disbursements and the delivery of deed to Herman V. Von Holst, John A. Verhoeven, Fred C. Aiken, Max Biederman and Richard J. Cooney, be, and they are hereby ratified in every respect and the said Special Master in Chancery be, and he is hereby discharged from the further performance of his duties in this cause.

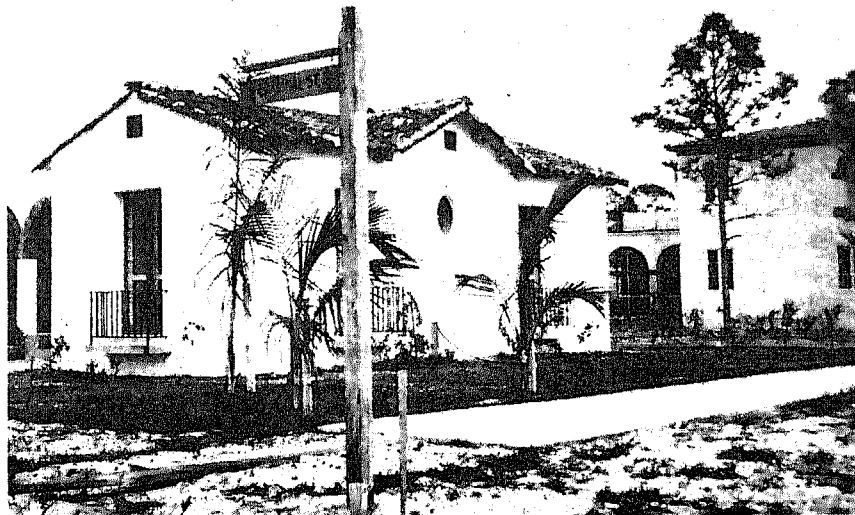
The situation was further complicated by the mortgage held by the Miami-Palm Beach Land Company. Before the Court House door sale of Floresta this company also entered a suit.

MIAMI-PALM BEACH LAND COMPANY vs JOHN A. VERHOEVEN, *et. al.*
 ...Complainant prays that an accounting be taken in his matter under and by direction of this Court relative to the matters set forth in this Bill of Complaint; that there be a judicial determination of the amount of money due Complainant, as principal, interest, attorneys fees and cost; that Defendants John A. Verhoeven, *et. al.*, be required and directed to pay said sums within a short day to be fixed by this court, and that, in default of said payments, the mortgaged premises described be sold as this Court may direct, etc...

FINAL DECREE...the allegations contained in said Bill, are true and that there is due from defendants John A. Verhoeven, *et. al.*, to complainant, the following sums:

Principal and interest to June 14, A.D. 1927	\$22,093.81
Preparation of abstract	48.00
	\$22,141.81

together with a reasonable attorneys fees to be paid to complainant's attorneys and solicitors....



130 N. W. 9th [Cardinal] Street in 1928. The von Holst house is to the right.

The findings in this case were actually of no importance as the von Holsts had paid the outstanding mortgage and Lucy von Holst's name had been substituted as complainant in the case.

This cause coming on this day to be heard upon the application of Complainant and also of Lucy Von Holst for the entry of

an order herein substituting the said Lucy von Holst as party Complainant in this cause in place and stead of Complainant, Miami-Palm Beach Land Company, and it appearing to this Court that since the commencement of this suit and after Final Decree had been rendered herein, the said Miami-Palm Beach Land Company has sold transferred and assigned unto the said Lucy Von Holst the said Final Decree rendered herein and that, therefore, the said Lucy Von Holst should be substituted as party Complainant in this cause, and the Court having duly considered the same and being fully advised in the premises,

IT IS THEREUPON ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that Lucy von Holst be and she is hereby substituted as party Complainant in this cause, for and in stead of Miami-Palm Beach Land Company, and further that this cause now proceed to final determination with said Lucy Von Holst as party Complainant, as though she were the original party Complainant.

On April 12, 1928 the von Holsts filed a "Satisfaction of Mortgage" with the Clerk of the Circuit Court of Palm Beach County.

...That Lucy von Holst, joined by Herman V. von Holst, her husband...the owner and holder of a certain mortgage have received full payment of said indebtedness, and do hereby acknowledge satisfaction of said mortgage....

In July 1927 the Biedermans' one-fifth interest was given to the von Holsts and in December of the same year Richard J. Cooney also gave up his interest in the partnership. From the abstract it would appear that this was done in consideration for their interest in the mortgage, now held by Lucy von Holst.

In November 1927, 39.7 acres of the 255 acre tract was officially replatted and named "Floresta."

Know all men by these present, that the undersigned, owners in fee of the lands described and contained in the plat hereto have and do hereby ordain and establish the same as the map or plat of "Floresta," an addition to the town of Boca Raton, and do hereby give and grant to the public the right of use and enjoyment of all streets or other lands designated on said plat where according to the context of the description thereof, it appears that the same is intended for public use and enjoyment accordingly. Witness our hand and seal this the 12th day of November, A.D. 1927.

[signed]

Lucy von Holst
 H. von Holst
 John A. Verhoeven
 Fred C. Aiken
 Richard J. Cooney

In the Fall of 1927 the wives of the remaining three owners prepared the houses so they could be rented to winter visitors.

FLORESTA
AT
BOCA RATON, FLORIDA

This delightful community of homes deserves its Spanish name and meaning: nestling among the tall Caribbean pines, tropical trees and palmettos: Floresta is "A Beautiful Forest."
It is a short distance west of the Federal Highway, removed from noise and traffic:
Floresta is "A Delightful Rural Place."

Spend a winter, or your vacation here. Boca Raton is twenty-seven miles south of Palm Beach, forty-two miles north of Miami. Have the pleasure of awakening each day to the song of birds; drive quickly to the glorious ocean; give your family the privilege of living out-of-doors in the clean, sweet air and in the beneficent sunshine.

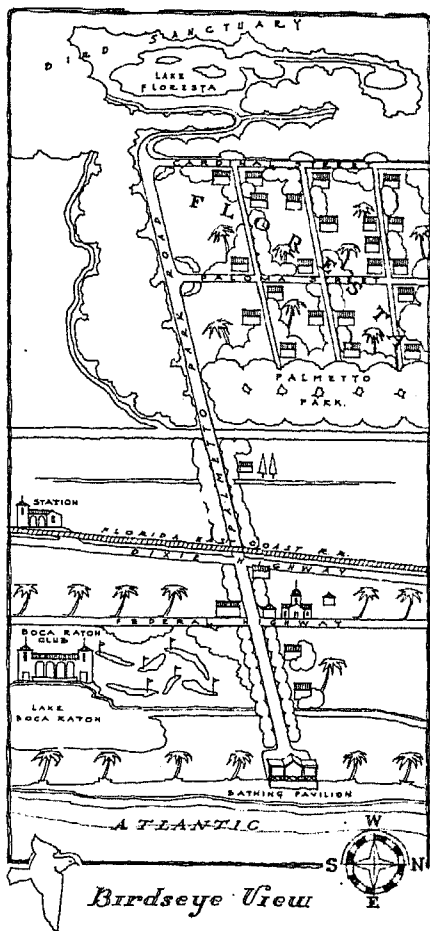
Boca Raton has the highest elevation of any place along the Florida coast. It owns a marvelous water plant where the water is filtered, purified and softened.

The Boca Raton Club is one of the finest and most exclusive clubs in the world, with an eight million dollar investment.

Floresta is a colony of well-built, attractive homes, large and small, for sale, or for rent at reasonable prices. For further information, write to
H. V. von Holst Boca Raton, Florida



TYPICAL HOUSE



Birdseye View

Brochure prepared by the remaining partners to advertise their property, Floresta, "A Garden Home Community." On the reverse side is stamped "H. D. Gates, rental agent, Delray Beach, Fla."

Herman von Holst accepted a mortgage of \$2,621.14 from the Verhoevens on March 31, 1928. On October 25, 1928 von Holst and his wife Lucy filed a notice of Lis Pendens against the Verhoevens and the Aikens for the purpose of partitioning their holdings. In the Bill for Partition the von Holsts claimed:

...that since the acquisition of said lands by said tenants in common that they expended from their own funds for the payment of taxes against said lands, the amount of \$2,036.21; that they have also paid out of their own funds for other necessary expenses in connection with said lands, the sum of \$3,085.06; that likewise defendants JOHN A. VERHOEVEN and MARY VERHOEVEN, his wife, have contributed towards the payment of said taxes \$00.00 and towards the payment of other necessary expenses in connection with said lands, the sum of \$244.50; that likewise defendants FRED C. AIKEN and LOTTIE AIKEN, his wife, have contributed towards the payment of said taxes \$629.69; and towards the payment of other necessary expenses in connection with said lands, the sum of \$808.09; that by reason of the recent storm on September 16th 1928, considerable damage was done to the buildings located upon the above described lands; that in order to preserve and save the buildings, it has been necessary and will continue to be necessary to expend moneys in the repair of buildings located upon said lands; that an accounting should be taken of the moneys so contributed by Complainants and Defendants and the amount ascertained and fixed by this court, and provision should be made in the final decree herein for the sharing of these said proper expenditures by the parties to this suit in proportion to their respective interest in said property....

The Court ordered, Adjudged, and Decreed:

...that a division and partition of said premises be made. That THOMAS E. SWANSON, D. A. KRAUSE and J. D. BUTLER three suitable disinterested persons, be and they are hereby appointed to act as commissioners in making the said partition decree....That this Court finds that the Defendant, FRED C. AIKEN, has contributed his full share of the necessary moneys expended for taxes and other necessary purposes...that the Defendant, JOHN A. VERHOEVEN, has contributed only \$244.50 towards the necessary moneys expended for taxes and other necessary purposes...that Complainant, HERMAN V. VON HOLST, has contributed for the account of the said Defendant...the sum of \$1,193.28; that such further orders will be entered in his cause as shall be necessary to secure to the said HERMAN V. VON HOLST the repayment to him of the said money so advanced by him....

All through this period Herman von Holst, as the principal owner, carried on a continued correspondence with the Town of Boca Raton, urging consideration of tax and water bills and improvements to Palmetto Park Road so that Floresta would be more accessible and thus more desirable to winter visitors.

Herman von Holst to Board of Commissioners, January 21, 1928

In reference to the taxes on that portion of "Floresta" which is divided into blocks and lots we would respectfully petition that these taxes be based on the plat approved by your honorable board on December 27, 1927, showing an acreage of 39.7 acres. In figuring out the taxes for 1926 an acreage of approximately 50 acres was assumed for the subdivided property. We would greatly appreciate it if you would figure the 1927 taxes on the basis of the plat as accepted, in view of the fact that the 1926 basis was based on an assumption and on a plat which really was not a plat as it had no dedicated streets, and in view of the further fact that it will ease the burden for us of carrying this property over the slack period.

Herman von Holst to Board of Commissioners, April 27, 1928

Enclosed herewith is our check for \$2,412.98. This check is sent for the purpose of paying the 1927 town taxes....We trust that the payment of the taxes at this time will bring about the following:

First, that the water pipes will be put in Blocks 7, 8, 9, and 10 this summer; second, that Palmetto Park Road will be put in good condition by early Fall of this year. As to the water pipes, you will remember that at a meeting of your Honorable Body on December 28, 1927, it was agreed that you would put in the pipes so that all the houses in the Subdivision, except the ones in Blocks 11, 12, 1 and 2 would have water....

As to the road, we were assured last December that it would be fixed up as soon as the trucking for the Golf Course was completed. At that time the impression was that this trucking would be finished in a short time. Instead of this, the trucking



755 Azalea Street in 1928. This house, owned by the von Holsts was called "Ilex."

is livelier than ever and we have been seriously damaged in our development plans this last season by not having a decent road to reach our Subdivision. There have been several cases where people have refused to consider settling in the Community on account of the condition of the road....

We feel that our taxes are considerably higher than they should be, especially under existing conditions. We wish to do our share in developing the Community, but the Community should see to it that we get our due share of improvements to warrant the payment by us of our taxes. We also feel sure that you appreciate this position of ours and will see to it that the improvements are put in at or before the time promised.

Mrs. T. A. Butler to von Holst, October 12, 1928

Received checks this morning for water service, but am returning one of them, and will ask you to correct it, so that no error will be made thru any of the exchanges, in charging you the Two hundred and twenty five dollars instead of the \$2.25.

Things are going on almost normal now. As you might have known, Mr. Geist closed all operations at the Cloister and intended to open just the Inn, as it stands now, but he has changed his mind and the \$2,000,000 addition is to be erected, as planned, which surely looks fine to all of us.

Herman von Holst to Mrs. Butler, February 8, 1929

...I trust that the town has completed the installation of the water lines, and also that Azalea Avenue has been cleared of brushwood, etc.; also Paloma Street to the north of the same. It is most important that this work is done, inasmuch as I cannot do anything with the development of my houses at the north end of Floresta unless I get the cooperation of the City. I am sure that the City authorities will agree with me that I am entitled to have water and roads to my houses in order to be able to do any business with them.

Herman von Holst to Mrs. Butler, March 11, 1929

I am enclosing my check for \$7.87, being water for the fountain for the month of February. I am indeed surprised that so much water was used and I cannot understand it. Somebody must have tried to flood that particular section of Floresta. I expect that after this we will be able to keep down the consumption to a minimum, otherwise I shall have to discontinue the water service at the fountain.

Herman von Holst to Mayor and Commissioners, May 9, 1929

As a large property owner of the Town of Boca Raton, I wish to again call your attention to the condition of the road leading to Floresta, and the roads in the subdivision.

As stated to you repeatedly, it is impossible for the owners of this property to develop it in a way in which it should be developed without having passable roads leading to this important section of the Town of Boca Raton.

We are spending thousands of dollars to develop this property. We are paying our taxes, and we are entitled to cooperation on the part of the Town.

We have been promised that the stone roads in Floresta would be scarified, rolled and oiled, but nothing has been done. I herewith request that this matter be brought up at the next Board meeting on Tuesday, May 14, 1929 and definite action taken passing the necessary resolution authorizing the work on the roads and setting the date for the completion of the work.



In Old Floresta after the 1948 hurricane. Exact location unknown.

Of the three owners, only the Aikens and the von Holsts actually moved to Floresta and became involved in the life of the town. Fred C. Aiken was a native of La Crosse, Wisconsin and started in business there as a partner in the Aiken-Gleason Camera Company which was purchased by Sears-Roebuck. Aiken moved to Chicago and with Roebuck established the Amusement Supply Company in 1901 which furnished travelling exhibitors stereoptican views, lectures, and films. As Nickolodeons and film theatres opened around the country Aiken and Roebuck rented films to them. They established the Film Service Company which they later sold to the General Film Company. Aiken became Midwest Division manager for this Company and in 1928 when he moved to Boca Raton he was manager of Pathe's branch offices from Buffalo and Pittsburgh in the East to Kansas City and Oklahoma City in the West. In Boca Raton he served as mayor for ten years and an additional ten years as city clerk.

Herman V. von Holst was born in Freiburg, Germany, in 1874. He came to Chicago in 1891 when his father, Herman E. von Holst, was appointed professor of history at the newly established University of Chicago. The younger von Holst studied architecture



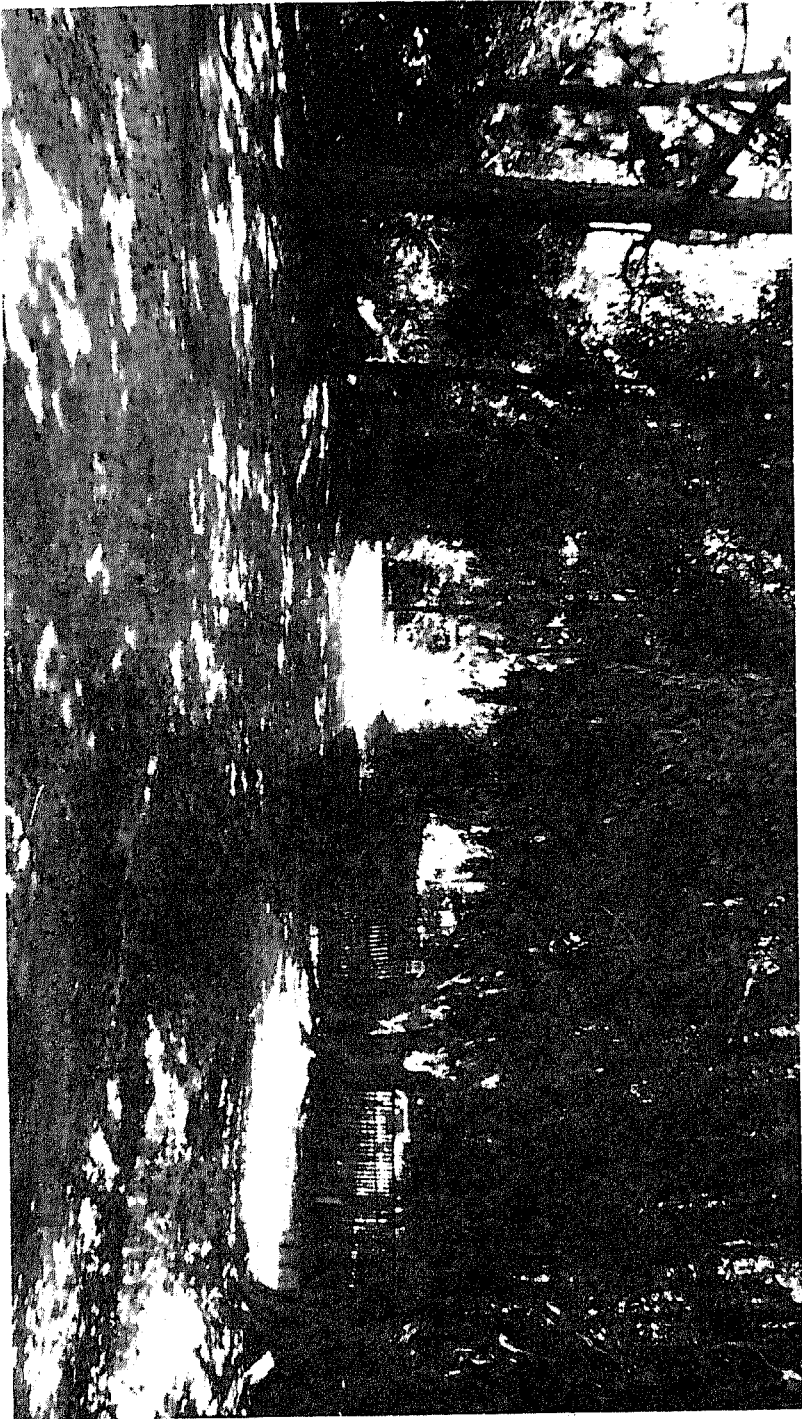
801 Hibiscus Street, taken about 1935 from Paloma Avenue looking west. Originally the Aiken home, Fred Aiken is standing in the road.

and received degrees from both the University of Chicago and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1904 he opened an office in Chicago and became professor of architectural design in the Chicago School of Architecture at the Art Institute. As an architect he specialized in the construction of power plants, designing for the Public Service Company of Northern Illinois and the Commonwealth Edison Company of Chicago. He retired from architecture in 1932 and moved to Boca Raton where he served as town councilman from 1934 to 1947 and from 1948 to 1949. He was appointed chairman of the Town Planning Board in 1940. "In recognition of his faithful, loyal, and unselfish services for so many years," he was given Honorary Life Membership on the board in 1953.



Herman V. von Holst

9th Avenue (formerly Cardinal), Old Floresta, looking south from Aurelia Street (Contemporary photography, Boca Raton News).



The Board of Trustees would like to remind all members who have not paid their dues for 1976-1977 that they may send their checks, payable to The Boca Raton Historical Society, Inc., to:

MRS. STEPHEN SNYDER
1339 ROYAL PALM WAY
BOCA RATON, FL 33432

For new members wishing to join the Society, dues are in the following categories: Life - \$500 or more, Benefactor - \$250, Patron - \$100, Donor \$50, Annual - \$10.