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OLD CITY HALL, HOME OF BOCA RATON HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Jeanne Nixon Baur, Artist

A report to the membership of

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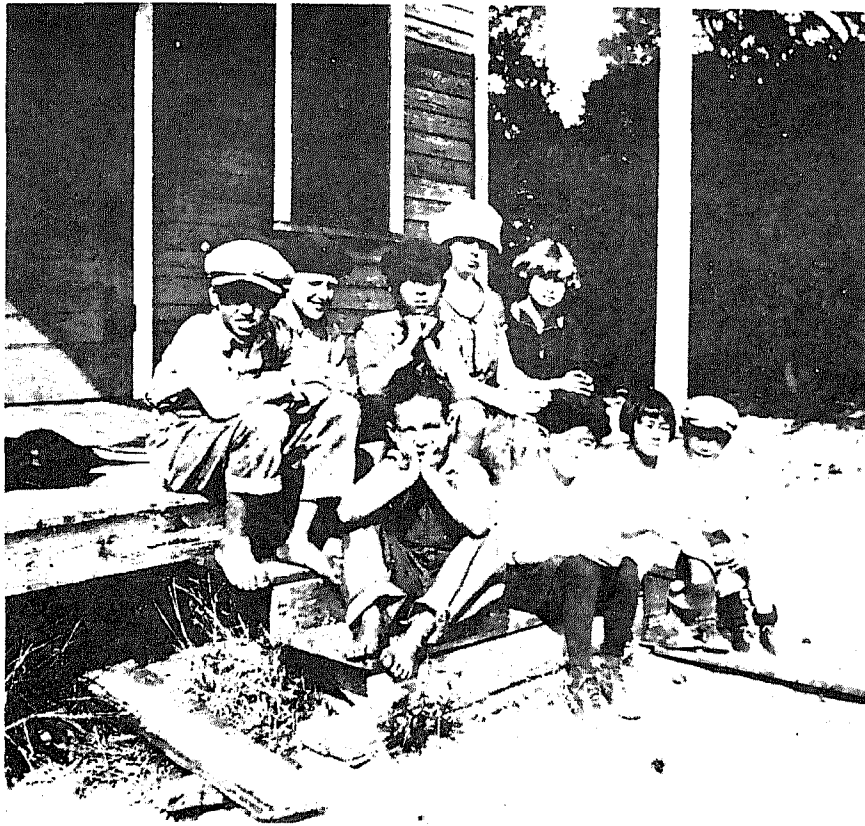
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Clementine Brown and her students at the Yamato School around 1918-1919. Back row: [left to right] Vernon Richardson, Walter Smith, Franklin Kamiya, Mrs. Brown, and Hazel Smith. Front row: Andy Montgomery, Yamauchi Kazu, Masuko Kamiya, and Kazuo Kamiya.

## REMEMBERING WHEN BOCA RATON WAS YOUNG: AN INTERVIEW WITH BETTY CRUICKSHANK

The major portion of this edition of the Spanish River Papers is devoted to another of Betty Cruickshank's continuing contributions to the oral history of Boca Raton. The participants, all childhood friends, gathered at the home of Eula Raulerson [ER] to visit with Franklin Kamiya, who had returned to Boca Raton for a short time. The interview was very quickly taken from M. Cruickshank's capable hands as friends began discussing and remembering Boca Raton yesterdays. The result is a marvelous mixture of local history, a bit of gossip, and the good humor of people enjoying their visit.

The final section on John and Clementine Brown (Mrs. Brown was Franklin Kamiya's teacher at Yamato School) includes information from Mrs. Cruickshank's interview with Betty Brown Devine, the Brown's daughter. The photograph of the school children at Yamato has been in the collection of the Boca Raton Historical Society for a number of years. Mishi Kamiya, Franklin's sister, identified the children.

Donald W. Curl  
Editor

The following interview took place on 18 November 1981 in Boca Raton. Betty Cruickshank interviewed Franklin KAMIYA, son of one of the earliest YAMATO Japanese families, who had returned to Boca Raton to visit with some of his old school chums. These included Carl Douglas, Grace Douglas Notaro, Dixie Sellers Hillegas and Pauline Aylward.

BC: Frank would you tell us your full name?  
FK: Franklin Kamiya

BC: Were you born here in Boca Raton?  
FK: St. Mary's Hospital, West Palm Beach.

BC: What was the date of your birth?  
FK: Oh, here we go [laughter] [It's alright Frank], Well, 1915.

BC: How long did you live in Yamato? Would you explain the pronunciation to us?  
FK: The only pronunciation I know is YA-mato.

BC: Whereas most of the local residents today say Ya-MA-to.  
FK: These people here don't. They all say YA-mato.

BC: Because they were here when it was pronounced correctly. Would you just tell us what life was like in Yamato at that time. Tell us for example what kind of a house you lived in.

FK: A two story house and it had 1, 2, 3....

PA: They had a nice big house.

GDN: It was up on a ridge, up on a hill. Yes, they had a nice big house.

FK: The second house was. That was my uncle's house we moved to after we moved from the original house. That was on Dixie Highway and it had 5 rooms down and 3 rooms upstairs.

BC: Where was it located in relation to the railroad track?

FK: The first house in blocks, I would say was about two and a half to three blocks east of the railroad tracks and a half mile north of what is now Yamato Road.

BC: How close were your neighbors there?

FK: Well, the post office was right across the street from us and the postmaster lived in there. And right across the street from them was another neighbor.

About four blocks south on the same side of the street as we there were two houses.

BC: Who lived in those two houses, do you remember?

FK: The only one I can remember was the Smith family. They had Lawrence, Hazel, Margery, Dan, Wilson, and Joe.

PA: The mother was Annie.

FK: The father was George. About a mile further South was another Smith who was the water tender for the trains. There was Harry, Walter, and Agnes.

PA: I was going to say there was one named Agnes. They lived by the railroad up there.

FK: Yes, they tended the water tower up there for the trains.

PA: Yessir, I'd forgotten about that.

FK: Then about five blocks south from us on the east side of the highway was a Phagen family. I forgot the parent's names, but they had a daughter Nina who died. She was about 5 or 6 years old. She died of pneumonia, I think it was. About six blocks north was an Owens family. They had a son Lawton. I used to remember about noon he'd be at our grocery store there [Kamiya family store] and didn't want to go home. His father would take a stick to him and run him about halfway home!

BC: Who was the postmaster up there at that time?

FK: Carroll.

BC: A Mr. Carroll?

FK: Yes, he had three children; Iris, Ruby, and Charley.

BC: Was he there for quite a while?

FK: Until the post office went out of business, which was about '24 I guess. Then we had to get our mail in Boca Raton.

PA: Frank, after you moved out across the railroad tracks you didn't have any close neighbors out there did you? KOBIAASHI was about the closest.

FK: Yes Kobiashi lived about a half mile from us. But there was another KOBIAASHI, Oscar Kobiashi.

PA: I don't remember him.

FK: They lived just north of us. At that time he had a girl but since then he moved to Chicago and after Chicago to Philadelphia. Before he died he had three children, two girls and a boy.

BC: How long did your family stay in Yamato?

FK: My brother stayed on until he died, practically. My dad left Yamato about '38, I guess. He went to California to be with my oldest sister and her family.

BC: Tell us the names of your parents and brothers and sisters.

FK: My youngest brother was Kauzo, Masuko (f), myself (m), Rokuo (m), Mishis (f), and Masa (f). My father was Henry T. I don't know what the T. stood for now. My mother, I don't know her name. We always called her just "Momma."  
PA: I don't think I ever heard her name either.

BC: Did your family come right to this area from Japan or had they been in other parts of this country before that?  
FK: I couldn't say for sure.

BC: When did you move away?  
FK: I went to the University of Florida and after I came back home I didn't stay long. I went to Miami.  
BC: What year was that?  
FK: '37, that was the year I graduated from the University of Florida.  
BC: What did you do in Miami?  
FK: I became a cook.  
BC: How long did you stay there?  
FK: Until '65.

Some general conversation led to a discussion of the old school bus and then to school days.

BC: The school was where Boca elementary is now? Is that the school you were bringing them to?  
FK: No, that was going to Delray.  
CD: We walked to school when we went to Boca elementary.  
BC: Was it still a two room school then?  
PA: When I went there the real old school had only two rooms. It was one big long building with dividing doors in the middle, with four grades in one end and four grades in the other. The 9th grade went to Delray. After that it was added onto.  
FK: I went to school in Yamato through the 4th grade.  
BC: Who taught school in Yamato?  
FK: They had, you know that guy that went on the Byrd Expedition, Lawrence Gould? He was the first teacher. Then Mollie Monroe was the second. Then, I forgot her first name, but Burley was her last name. Then Clementine Brown and then Bly Davis.

BC: How many children were there in the Yamato school?  
KF: All the families I named. My uncle's kids were there too. There were five of them and four of us because the other two were too young before the school closed. Then there were Dan and Margery and Hazel Smith and the other Smith family had all three of the kids going, and then Marie, Charley and Iris, and Joe Phagen were going to school then.

BC: So there were about fifteen. Who was your uncle?  
KF: Sakai.  
BC: He had five children?  
KF: Well, his first child was a son and he died when he was about two or three years old. Then all that was left was the five.  
BC: Was Sakai your father's or your mother's brother?  
KF: Father's brother. Only his name was Sakai and my Dad was Kamiya.  
CD: Why was that?  
KF: Back in Japan this family my Dad knew had no son to carry on his name so he took my Dad and my Dad took his name to carry on the name.  
GDN: Was that the Japanese culture over there, if you didn't have a son?  
KF: I don't know. You know as much about the Japanese culture as I do! Remember I'm a Florida Cracker!  
BC: You don't remember the family making much of an effort to carry on Japanese traditions or cultures?  
FK: No, my mother tried to teach my older sisters the language. She even had textbooks. Actually my mother was a teacher in Japan and she tried to teach them how to make those flowers, different animals and birds out of this paper stuff, but I guess they weren't interested in it.

PA: Frank, you had a nice Oriental garden in your yard because one of your sisters was married there. I remember Mom and Daddy went to the wedding and your Daddy gave us gold fish that came from Japan that we had in a fish pond over here in our yard.  
ER: You know those cartons they used to put milk in Pauline. Well, that's the way they came here from Japan. It was Masa's wedding. I went to your Mother's funeral too.  
BC: What year was your mother's funeral?  
FK: 1934. The service was in Delray, but the burial was in West Palm.  
PA: Was she buried in Woodlawn?  
FK: Yes, the services were at Cason Memorial Methodist Church.  
ER: That's where we went to see his mother.  
FK: That church was loaded with people.  
GDN: I must not have been here.  
FK: That was after I graduated from high school.

BC: Do you remember your sister's wedding?  
FK: Yes, I can see the whole picture in my mind.  
BC: What did she wear, do you remember?  
FK: That, no.  
BC: Did Japanese families dress in a different way?  
FK: No, it was Americanized way as far as that goes.  
BC: Did she marry someone from this area?

FK: At that time he was in Miami.  
GDN: He was Japanese though.  
FK: Yes.  
BC: How did she meet him?  
GDN: She probably met him in college.  
FK: No, she went to college, but she didn't meet him there.  
BC: Which sister was this?  
FK: My oldest, Masa.  
BC: Where did she go to College?  
FK: Florida State College for Women, which is now Florida State, in Tallahassee.  
PA: He has one sister in Washington right now, haven't you Frank?  
FK: Yes, she works for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in Washington. You remember the Moseleys who lived in Deerfield? One of the Moseley girls went to work in Washington or was living there and she got my sister Mishi interested in working up there. She started working up there about '36 or '37. She's been there ever since.  
PA: That's when the Moseleys lived in Deerfield in that big old house up there on the hill.  
ER: You mean Delray.  
FK: Jay Moseley was one of the boys. George Moseley, Louise Brenk, Jay, he was about two years ahead of us....Jay  
PA: Jay was in Boynton Beach. I guess he's still up there. He had a garage and a filling station there on a main street.  
BC: How long has it been since you've had a chance to talk to these people here, Frank?  
GDN: I haven't seen Frank since 1932.  
DSH: I haven't seen Frank since we graduated from high school.  
FK: That was in '32.  
PA: He was here about eight or nine years ago. Remember Frank, I was washing windows and you called from over at Carl's place. That's when Carl was in that little filling station and you called from over at Carl's to come over here and we had quite a chat that morning.  
GDN: Forty-nine years I haven't seen him. I wouldn't have know him.  
ER: He looks just like he used to when I'd take him to school.  
FK: She hasn't changed either.  
CD: [Coming back into the room], Is there anybody in Boca we haven't talked about yet?  
BC: Yes, we were waiting for you. We're glad you're back Carl.

DSH: We're finding out so many things about Yamato. I didn't realize there were so many families here.  
CD: Some of the main ones we knew were Kamiya, Kamikama, Yoshitas.  
GDN: What about the Yoshitas?  
FK: They're all dead now. The youngest boy was killed in the war and the next one, he was fishing or something. He slipped and fell and that was the end of him. The father and mother died some time ago.  
CD: Yes, I'm sure of that. They used to raise strawberries up there didn't they?  
FK: Yes.  
GDN: They had pineapples up there, somebody did. I don't remember who it was.  
FK: Yes, we had pineapples there too. In fact that was the original crop they were supposed to be working on when they homesteaded Yamato.  
CD: Theodore Kobiashi is in Lauderdale, isn't he?  
FK: Yes, the only one you can actually talk to about the old times is Tommy. Theodore and the youngest boy, they just don't want to talk about it.  
BC: Do you see them very often, Frank?  
FK: No, I don't see them. Mishi from Washington, D.C. goes down there every time she comes here.  
PA: Frank, you don't keep up with your kinfolks do you?  
GDN: Well, you're not related to Kobiashi are you?  
FK: No, Well, what the heck....  
GDN: You lose track, you really do.  
FK: No, I'm more interested in seeing the old friends around here, my classmates.  
GDN: I haven't seen Frank since '32. I wouldn't have known him...forty-nine years ago!  
FK: Sounds like a lifetime, huh?  
GDN: I don't know if they were the good old days or not.  
[Yes I think they were--Sure they were]  
FK: We had a lot of fun back then. Had a lot of fun and didn't have to spend any money.  
[CHORUS: Money! Who had any? Who had any to spend!]  
FK: If we wanted to have a party we'd just get together and all we'd have was a little bit of punch and maybe cookies or something. That was it. That was the whole thing.  
CD: Who was that killed on the motorcycle up there, Frank?  
FK: My oldest brother Roka.  
CD: I remember. Did he hit a Pierce Arrow or something?  
FK: No, he didn't hit anything. He was delivering milk and the only way anybody can figure it out is that the milk slipped and when he grabbed for it the motorcycle

jumped and hit a pile of limbs. That was the only way we could figure it. Nobody saw it.

BC: What year was that?

FK: About '27.

BC: Was he buried in Boca Raton?

FK: No, he was buried in West Palm with my youngest brother, my uncle Sakai, my mother and father. That's five of them buried there.

CD: Frank's youngest brother and I went to school together.

BC: Carl, you were asking about Frank's crooked arm before you left. Is that the result of an accident?

FK: I fell off the counter in the store.

BC: Your parents ran a general store in Yamato?

FK: Yes, we had anything from shoes to regular groceries. We had shoes, clothing, pots and pans, watches, candy, tobacco, all kinds of groceries.

BC: Where was the store?

FK: On Dixie Highway on the east side of the railroad about half a mile north of Yamato Road on the west side of the street.

CD: Montgomerys had a store there also. It was on the east side of old Dixie north of 51st Street. They had all the pine trees around tht store...on same old Dixie Highway. Then across the street next to the railroad was the old filling station that went away in '28 or so.

FK: The old pumps are still there.

CD: They are? I didn't know that. You know right above there Franklin, over in the bushes were the Nassaus. They had a village in there. There were quite a few of them in there.

BC: Were they farming also?

FK: They were sharecroppers.

CD: I went up there one night to the church, Holy Rollers. I forget who the policeman was that took me with him. It might have been Blackman or Gene Carter. OHHH, they carried on something awful. OHHH, I never saw anything like that before. They were rolling on the floor. I got scared.

GDN: You mean at Pearl City?

CD: No, I mean at Yamato, up at Yamato. They were rolling in the aisle, chanting. They'd go up to the front and they's roll all over and they'd slobber at the mouth and they had somebody with a mop and a bucket wiping up the floor. I got scared. Oh, boy.

[Laughter]

GDN: What were you scared of Carl?

CD: I had a policeman with me. I forget who it was, but I was scared! I'd never seen anything like that!

BC: How old were you at the time Carl?

CD: I don't remember, but I was a little fella! I never did go back!

BC: What was the church building like?

CD: Franklin can probably tell you more about that.

FK: It was just lumber that they picked up along the ocean or wherever they could pick it up.

DSH: I've never forgotten the old Purdom house. I was always going to have a home like that.

CD: With a porch all the way around.

DSH: And the kitchen that was detached with a breeze-way.

BC: That's the house where the City Hall is now?

ER: That's the house where I was married.

CD: Did they tear that old house down that was on the corner?

ER: Oh, yes, sure. There's a beautiful building right over there now Carl. You know that pretty building? It's been here a long time. [the Alan Bush Building at Palmetto Park Road and NW Second Avenue]

CD: Oh, yes, but I don't remember them tearing the old house down.

ER: It's right beside the old Burt Raulerson house.

GDN: Is Burt Raulerson's house still there?

ER: Yes, it's right back of the 7-11 Store.

GDN: I'm going to take a look at that, because I just remember it as such a big white house with two stories.

ER: It's the oldest house in Boca Raton. They say that one down there is. That wasn't the oldest. The Raulerson house is the oldest. But they didn't move it, because they said they couldn't.

CD: They say Singing Pines was built in '14.

BC: Well, didn't Burt Raulerson's family live in another little white house first, before they built that one?

ER: They sure did. The house was right where the 7-11 is now. It wasn't such a little house, it was a pretty good sized house, and then they built this one. Mr. Braley from West Palm Beach built that house.

GDN: But that house was built before I was born.

CD: Grace was born when we lived in the Braley house up on the hill. Grace was born in 1914.

ER: Well, Mr. Braley is the man who built Uncle Burt's house.

GDN: That house was there as long as I can remember.

PA: Well you know Grace, Braley, I guess that was a son of those people wasn't it, Mom?

ER: Yes, Blanche and Orley.

PA: Their daughter was in the hospital in West Palm Beach the same time I was and had a baby the same time I had Bill.

CD: I know Grace was born in 1914 up here on the hill. Were you born up there too, Pauline?

PA: No, I was born below the hill. [Laughter]

CD: Sam Williams used to live down there below me...old Sam Williams.

DSH: What was his wife's name? Viola?

PA: That is the second Sam Williams.

CD: Viola and Sam Williams lived at Pearl City, but this is a Sam Williams that lived at the foot of the hill.

ER: Carl, you saw Viola at my sister's funeral didn't you? She came to my sister's funeral. They came to the funeral and they came to the house.

CD: Sam died. He farmed a couple of acres up there.

ER: When Viola got married the second time I went to her wedding. She was married in the church in Pearl City, the little church that's there now. Then Alex Hughes funeral was in the church there. We went to the funeral Pauline was with me.

CD: You know Sam and Viola Williams had about six or seven kids and their house burned down when all those houses burned down. Trox was on the city commission, my partner, and he was the health inspector and he was trying to get Sam and them some help. Trox went up there and he was getting all the information. He had the county health inspector with him. He wanted to know how many children they had and Sam said six. Trox said, "and what were their names?" He named off a couple and when he got to four he said, "Viola, what'd we name them last two head of children?"

ER: After Sam died, Carl, she married another man named Sam Williams.

CD: Oh, I didn't know that.

PA: Grace, you remember Johnny Sherman?

GDN: You know I asked about him the other day...and Edith.

PA: Here about eight, nine, ten years ago this car drove up out front and I was sweeping the walk off and this fella stopped in a station wagon and this girl came up. I didn't know who she was, and wanted to know if Eula was home. I said she's gone but I'm her daughter. Can I help you? About this time the guy got out of the car and walked up here. He said, "You don't know me do you?" I said, "Am I supposed to. Are you one of my old boyfriends?" He laughed and said, "No, I'm John Sherman." So I invited him in and that was his daughter Joyce. But it's been so long I didn't know him. She came back in later years to live with his mother. She's a beautiful girl.

CD: It was Joyce? I saw Joyce the other night. You know that's not Johnny's name. His name is Rezo?? or something. He owned a house up in Winfield Park? Hernandez? No, it's Italian.

PA: Johnny Lazo? ...He lives over in Tampa. They live in Boca Grande. He had two, Richard and Joyce. Then

she married again and had a child that died.

CD: You remember Richard [Johns], he was older.

GDN: Where's he?

ER: He's in Fort Lauderdale. He works at the Post Office.

GDN: There was a girl, Edith. Where's she?

BC: Who's that, A family who used to live here in Boca?

CD: Yes, Richardsons. They used to live where Kohtz Plumbing building is. That house next door. That's the old Brenk house.

FK: That's about four blocks north of Palmetto Park Road. They used to take in laundry there. She just died in Fort Lauderdale. How old was Smissy? And the old man was Steve.

CD: Oh, she was 90 years old I think. We used to call her Smissy.

ER: I know all you young people did..

FK: I thought I heard something about Vernon died.

CD: No, not Vernon. He lives out in Okeechobee. He married the Deen girl, Bernice Deen and she died. They had a little girl named Geraldine. That's Vernon's daughter.

PA: She's in Reno.

GDN: I was trying to think who Vernon married and I'd forgotten.

CD: Bernice Deen. Boy, that was one beautiful girl! She was a pretty girl.

PA: All those Deen girls were pretty.

GDN: Everyone of them was pretty, I thought.

FK: Somebody told me the only reason she married Vernon was because, I heard, she loved me and I wouldn't pay any attention to her. I heard that. I didn't pay any attention to her...I didn't even know anything about it. [Laughter and joking]

CD: She was only sixteen when she married Vernon.

FK: She was young. Katie Mae was the oldest one of the Deen girls.

CD: Well, she was the oldest one here. They had two in Georgia: Hattie and Estell. There were seven boys and seven girls.

GDN: And Mrs. Deen lived to be almost one hundred didn't she?

CD: They say she was way up in years.

GDN: Mom Purdom lived a long time too.

CD: Mrs. Deen was 7/8s or 5/8s Indian. I don't remember just which.

BC: What kind of Indian?

CD: Probably Cherokee. They were from Georgia. Well, you can see some of it in Dottie and them, the high cheek bones in some of them. But they were all pretty girls.

GDN: Where is Dottie?

CD: Her husband just retired. You know he was a pro-golfer. He was on the tour for a while, then he had a club in Kansas City until five months ago. He just retired five months ago to Tequesta. He has a home up there, Hermie Scharlau. I introduced him...Hermie had just won the caddy championship in Chicago in '37 and he came here with Armour. I was caddying...Sammy and Tommy Armour...Sammy's up in Coca [sic] now. He owns a service station...They're not many of those Deens left. Albert died, the youngest boy. There's Dottie then Maggie [Margaret]. She lives in Boynton.

GDN: What's her name?

CD: Jordan, she married...Watt? Jordan. She still lives in Boynton. He's dead you know. Then there's Katie Mae Thomason. She lives down the street here. And then there's Hattie, Mattie, and Estelle in Georgia. Bo ...? one of the boys you never knew. Cory's dead. Lincoln's dead. Albert's dead. Cary's dead. Mr. and Mrs. Deen are dead and Bernice is dead. Lincoln and Cory were always in the restaurant business.

PA: They worked over at Blackman's in the restaurant. They were both cooks. That was a long time ago.

CD: That's way back! So did Katie Mae. She baked the pies over there.

BC: Where else did they cook, that you remember?

CD: When Cory left Boca he used to cook up in Boynton someplace. We used to fish with Lincoln and Corry all the time. In fact I was fishing with Lincoln when I got a fish hook stuck in my foot.

BC: Frank, tell me about your family. Did you marry?

FK: Me, nooo, don't I look happy?

BC: That's your secret to happiness, never having married?

FK: Hey, don't you know way back yonder I was real bashful?

GDN: I know. You're not bashful now though.

CD: Too much water's come under the damn now.

PA: Remember when we used to have the school plays and Frank was always the Papa and I was the Mamma? I remember I wore one of Mrs. Long's dresses one time. I was the old lady of course, and I had to make a hat. I took some card board and made one of those little old things to set on my head and I had that dress of Mrs. Long's. And, OH, I was warned! Mom was so worried. I was such a tomboy and she was scared I was going to tear that dress. So she put it on me and just as quick as the play was over, Mom grabbed me and took that dress back to Mrs. Long.

ER: She's got another old dress over there now. What's you get that one for?

PA: That white one? Oh, it's beautiful! That used to belong to one of the Dodges. It has all real hand made lace. It's really something. I wore it once, but I don't think I could get into it now.

BC: Did you wear it to a school play?

PA: No, I wore it to a masquerade ball one time.

BC: Here in Boca?

PA: No, in New Hampshire. It's a beautiful dress, all handmade lace, white.

GDN: Where did you get it?

PA: People we used to rent from gave it to me. I used to babysit for these people. I don't know how she got it, but she gave it to me to wear to a masquerade ball and she told me to keep it.

FK: It must be worth a fortune now.

GDN: Dixie's mother made all the clothes I had, my dresses, coats, everything. Everything I had, Effie made.

FK: You three must have been a trio.

PA: Yes, we'd fight and not speak to one another, you know.

GDN: We've got to get Ivy in there. Ivy's a little older, wasn't she?

CD: She's not much older is she? Myrtle Lee was older.

GDN: She was two or three years older...that's quite a bit when you're growing up.

CD: I remember you three were all the same age [Grace, Dixie, and Pauline].

PA: I remember one time we sent away to Des Moines, Iowa, when you all were living there in that house on....It was a bunch of rouge, lipstick and stuff and in the old barn we had a beauty shop. Big deal. It was in the paper and we went and got that stuff.

GDN: Where'd you get the money?

PA: It must have been a good buy. Then we'd get in a fight because one was using too much and I'd get mad and come home.

DSH: Carl, what about those beads, those rosary beads. We used to sit and string those for hours. They were supposed to be poisonous, those little red beads.

GDN: And Dixie and her cat!

CD: Tell me how old is Elsie Mae Eubank? She can't be but a couple years older than me.

FK: No, she's younger than we were.

CD: Yes, but I'd say a couple of years older than me. I'm sixty-two. And Billy was a little younger. So she's got to be right about my age.

ER: She lives out in the lake section, Franklin. They have a ranch out there.

CD: They have a lot of land out there. What's his name?

ER: Vernon went to school with him in Pompano.  
CD: I know him. Their little child got burnt something terrible in that fire, Elsie Mae's baby, when they lived in one of the Kester houses in Pompano. He had taken a cigarette lighter and struck a match to it or something and got burnt. I went down there and they had him laying on the ironing board and he was burnt all, all over!

GDN: Carl, what became of Clifton Harvel? Is ... still living?

CD: I don't think he's with us any more. He was head of the water works.

DSH: I thought he was a pilot.

CD: Well, he was. He's retired Colonel from the Marine Corp.

GDN: You know that plane we went up in? That thing was wired together with chicken wire. Yes it was!

DSH: That's the one you came down in Pearl City in?

GDN: That's the one. You know the wings spread out and before we went up he got wire, pieces of wire and twisted them under the plane! That thing wasn't put together right.

CD: Bob Fuerstenau is married to Earl Harvel's daughter.

GDN: I'd like to see Clifton now and ask him if he remembers that. It had a stick, you know that thing you pull back on? Because when we were coming down, my Dad was on the bridge watching us. He just kept saying, "Stay away from that stick." Stay away from the stick and I hadn't flown before. I said, land over here! That colored woman ran out of the house. Her eyes were as big as saucers and she said, "Lau! Grace is that you?"

CD: I came home on the schoolbus and when they let us off, the first thing I heard was, Grace fell in Pearl City in an airplane! This had to be in 1935 or '36.

PA: Don't you know when we had the Maypole winding over here at school and made all those paper dresses, I remember one time Momma made these paper dresses and I got mine torn off me before winding the Maypole.

GDN: You must have been rough.

PA: I was a tomboy.

GDN: I was playing football over there with some of the boys at elementary school. Frank with George Bender, Randy Kuntz??...myself, and Otis Tanner. I guess you were right in there too, Franklin.

CD: Tanners used to live here. Remember Tanner lived down there on the canal.

PA: Tanners had a house right over here where we are. That house burned. I remember the night that house burned. Then we bought that lot. [Lot is just west of

Pauline's house on West Royal Palm Road]

CD: They also lived up there on the hill. You remember where "Muck"? Smitty, Melvin Smitty and them lived down there. Tanners lived in that house. I remember when they lived there. They had an old stuffed cow or something in there.

PA: That was Gates' old house.

CD: Yes, that was the first one, but Tanners lived in there.

GDN: Oh, I remember Mrs. Gates too. Imogene used to love to play with me when she was a little thing and Mrs. Gates used to chase me home. I must have been ragged or something.

?: No, Mrs. Gates just thought her kids were better than anybody else's, to tell you the truth.

CD: So did Giles. Giles wouldn't let me play with Tommy. Mrs. Giles is still living. She's in Virginia.

ER: No, in North Carolina.

GDN: What about Mr. Giles?

ER: Oh, he's been dead a number of years, twenty or twenty-five years.

CD: Tommy is at Eglin Field in Panama City [Florida].

PA: He's still there?

CD: As far as I know. And the girl is married to Dennis Devoroux and I think he's retired.

ER: Well they were at Harold's and Ruby's' Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary and the daughter....

CD: Eleanor?

ER: Yes, she went to the party and so did Mrs. Giles. And I went.

PA: The girls over at the Club yesterday were telling me what a beautiful place it is. I said, yes I've been there in that place. They said, "You've been in that place?" I said I was in that place when it was first built. [referring to La Vieille Maison restaurant, formerly the Giles home] They couldn't get over that.

FK: What place is that?

BC: Where the French restaurant is now, La Vieille Maison.

GDN: Nettie and Max went there for their sixty-second anniversary, just a couple of weeks ago. Somebody treated them. Because she said the prices were terrible. She would never have paid them.

ER: They had a party for them a couple of years ago. That must have been their sixtieth.

GDN: This was their sixty-second. They took them out to dinner. It was quiet and she said everything on the menu was \$31 or \$34. The prices were bad enough but she couldn't read it. Everyone had to have an interpreter before they could eat.

CD: You know Mr. Giles wasn't like Mrs. Giles. He was friendly.

GDN: She was reserved, like the old Virginia plantation type.

DSH: A blueblood like they used to say.  
CD: There you go! She was like the old Plantation type from Virginia.  
GDN: She WAS a blue blood really, as far as the South was concerned.  
BC: Was that a pretty impressive house when it was first built?  
CD: Oh, YES, a showplace, yes! Well your Dad built it, Dixie.  
DSH: Yes he helped build it. He had stuff he picked up from all around to build it.  
PA: It was a nice place though.  
CD: Mr. Giles came here to build the Administration Building. That's why he came here. You know that house down at the corner, right across the bridge?  
PA: Gates'?? old house?  
CD: Well, or Jundt. Ol' Joe Mitchell made a living off of buying and selling that house. He'd sell it every other year.  
GDN: Did he build that from junk?  
CD: He sure did. He picked up every bit of it on the beach...not all of it, but most of it.  
BC: Which house is that?  
CD: It's a travel agency now. The one across the bridge on the south side. There's an apartment building, then there's a travel agency...where Cliff used to live in the apartment in back of it. It was Jundts' originally. Tom Giles built that Jundt house. He built that from stuff he picked up on the ocean, or most of it.  
PA: There used to be a lot of stuff laying on the beach.  
DSH: And there were a lot of old buildings that'd never been finished where you could pick stuff up.

CD: One thing I was thinking about the other day that you would know, back over here in back of Boogarts or back of Royal Palm there used to be some old houses abandoned out in there. I used to go out there, right on the fifth hole of the golf course. Some of the old caddies used to sleep in there and I never did find out what those houses were ever about.  
PA: They were put there during the boom.  
CD: Yes, they were put there during the boom and were never finished. But I never did know who put them there. Do you Eula?  
ER: No, I don't remember. [These were probably the Harris Hall houses, built 1925 and razed in March 1929, see Delray Beach News, 15 March 1929.]  
CD: There were two of them. I know I used to go out in there. Some of the old caddies and drifters used to sleep in them. It was on the fifth hole. You used to

tee-off on the fifth hole and they were off to the right. You knocked balls out in there sometimes and caddies could find balls there.  
PA: I don't know who they belonged to.  
CD: I wonder if old Mizner had anything to do with them?  
PA: I wouldn't be surprised.  
CD: Bet he did. Somebody should know about those things.  
GDN: Well, were they on Mizner's property?  
CD: Yes, right where the greenhouse is now. They were over in the bushes out in the woods. Nobody knew they were there, I guess.

GDN: Well, Carl, when did you come back from the Carolinas to stay with Daddy?  
CD: Mother died when I was four. Well, I was here in the '28 hurricane. I was here in the '26 hurricane.  
DSH: Weren't you living over with us in '28?  
CD: Yes, that was the '28 hurricane Dixie. They took us to City Hall. Hard [Mr. Sellers] stayed in that house all night. He wouldn't leave that house. The front porch was jumping up and down when we left. In '27 I was in South Carolina.

BC: Where were you during the hurricane, Franklin in '26 and '28? Were you at Yamato? What are your memories?  
FK: Yes, the Richardsons came to our house during the hurricane of '28. In fact, I guess most everybody thought our house was the most stable of any place, so they all came over to our place. Even the colored people came. We had about twenty colored people come over. I can remember all we had to eat then was blackeyed peas and rice.  
CD: Nothing wrong with that!  
FK: It was pretty good! My Dad used to get rice in 100 pound bags and the blackeyed peas were to be planted. Man, we really enjoyed that. We poured catsup on it.  
CD: Well, I've got to go.  
BC: Was any damage done to your house at all?  
FK: In the '26 hurricane there wasn't anything to speak of but a broken window was all. It's a wonder our water tank didn't go down. We had that five hundred gallon water tank to supply us with water. We didn't have city water or anything like that. Then we had our own electric plant.  
GDN: You didn't have lamps, Frank?  
FK: No, we had electric.  
BC: You had a small generator to power that?  
FK: Yes, we had a Delco motor to power that. We had about twenty batteries. They were about this size [6 inches by 12 inches].

BC: Were they those glass battery jars?  
FK: Yes. We had an old Model T to pump the water into the tank. We'd start the water plant about twice a week and the Delco plant about three times a week.  
BC: So you were really self sufficient with water and electricity, and during the storm your water and plant continued to work?  
FK: Yes.  
BC: Did the electricity in the town go off?  
ER: Oh, yes, for about two days.  
BC: What about the water, was it contaminated?  
ER: I don't think so. We had water.  
FK: You talk about contamination, we didn't know what contamination was!

[After an exchange of goodbyes, the tape ends]



The large two-story house in the middle of this photograph, which appeared in an early edition of Henry Morrison Flagler's publication "The Homeseeker," shows the house of Jo Sakai, leader of the Japanese settlement at Yamato. Franklin Kamiya, Sakai's nephew, grew up in this house.

In February 1982, Mrs. Cruickshank interviewed Mrs. Martha Elizabeth Brown Devine, the daughter of John Grover and Clementine Peterson Brown. Clementine Brown was the teacher at the Yamato school mentioned in the preceding interview. Mrs. Theola Muller contributed to the following report.

Betty's father, John Grover Brown, was born 28 December 1893 in Haines City, Florida. His daddy was in the cattle business there and as a boy John helped on the farm and in the groves.

An interview with John published some years ago in the Delray Beach newspaper states that he first came to south Florida in 1907 by mule and wagon. [A reprint of the interview follows] The trip took seven days from Kissimmee. He was accompanied by his brother Charlie who was nineteen years older. Another brother Frank was living in Delray Beach. John and Charlie probably stayed in Fort Lauderdale with their grandmother Bryan's first cousin, Philomen H. Bryan, who was one of the early settlers and founders of that city.

On a trip to visit his aunt in Altoona, Florida in 1915 John met a pretty young school teacher who was boarding there. Clementine Peterson born 5 April 1892 in Emporia, Florida [Volusia County] and John Brown were married in West Palm Beach 15 September 1915. In Boca Raton they first lived in a rented house with John's mother. His father had died in Kissimmee. This rental house was a red house on the hill at Palmetto and Northwest Fourth Avenue. But as living with her mother-in-law was not a very happy arrangement for a young bride Clementine and John soon moved into their own house located at what is now 234 East Palmetto Park Road. The site is now occupied by First Federal Savings and Loan of Delray. When the Browns first moved there the house was a typical one story frame "cracker" house. Over the years they improved it into a very attractive and comfortable home with all modern conveniences. There was also a smaller house on the back of the lot which served as a rental property. Their home was sold and the house torn down in 1970 in preparation for the new bank to be built. The small rental house burned down in 1930. During the war years with a tremendous shortage of housing the Browns rented rooms to service wives who wanted to be close to their husbands stationed at the Air Base. The room shortage was so great in Boca Raton that people would knock on their door wanting to sleep on their porch. After the war Clementine continued to rent rooms during the season to tourists.

John Brown and his brother Frank were in the road contracting business. Their crew built a lot of Dixie Highway. Betty's uncle, Kline Platt also worked for

them. He was married to Clementine's sister Irene. She was one of the early principals of the Boca Raton School. When the crash came after the boom, John and his brother Charles began truck farming. They each bought thirty acres of land where Paradise Palms is now. Their farm workers lived in Pearl City and Betty remembers they carried lunches to the fields with them in lard pails.

Dan Keniff who was married to Betty's aunt Kate [Brown] was in Boca Raton dredging canals to drain the land. Kate had been married previously to a Mr. Jernigan and had two children, Robert and Charles Jernigan. She and Dan separated early in their marriage and Kate married Kenneth Futrell who was much older. Some years later when he had died she and Dan Keniff remarried. She died of tuberculosis in the Lantana TB Hospital and is buried in Boca Raton.

John Brown's brother Charles who never married lived in a one story concrete block house on the Southeast corner of Boca Raton Road and Northeast Second Avenue with his mother until she died in 1932. Irene and Kline Platt then moved into that house and Charles moved into a tiny house near where Gulfstream Bank is now. During that time Kline Platt was on the Boca Raton Fire Department and sometimes stayed overnight in a small apartment on the first floor of the Old City Hall immediately in back of where the fire truck was kept. One of his duties was to blow the siren every day at noon. This was probably in the 1930s. The house on Northeast Second Avenue where the Platts lived was sold around 1940 by Charles to a Swiss couple named Brougies [?]. The front corner room, the dining room, had a high ceiling of pecky cypress which some later owner hid by putting a false ceiling. This property has in the mid-1970s been beautifully repaired and remodeled by the present owners including a small garage apartment building which was and still is on the rear of the land. Betty recently called the owners to ask if they had removed the false ceiling to expose the original pecky cypress. They did not know it was there.

Sam Jerkins who was Clementine's half brother was raised by Clementine's mother. His father had deserted the family when Sam was young, and she married Mr. Peterson.

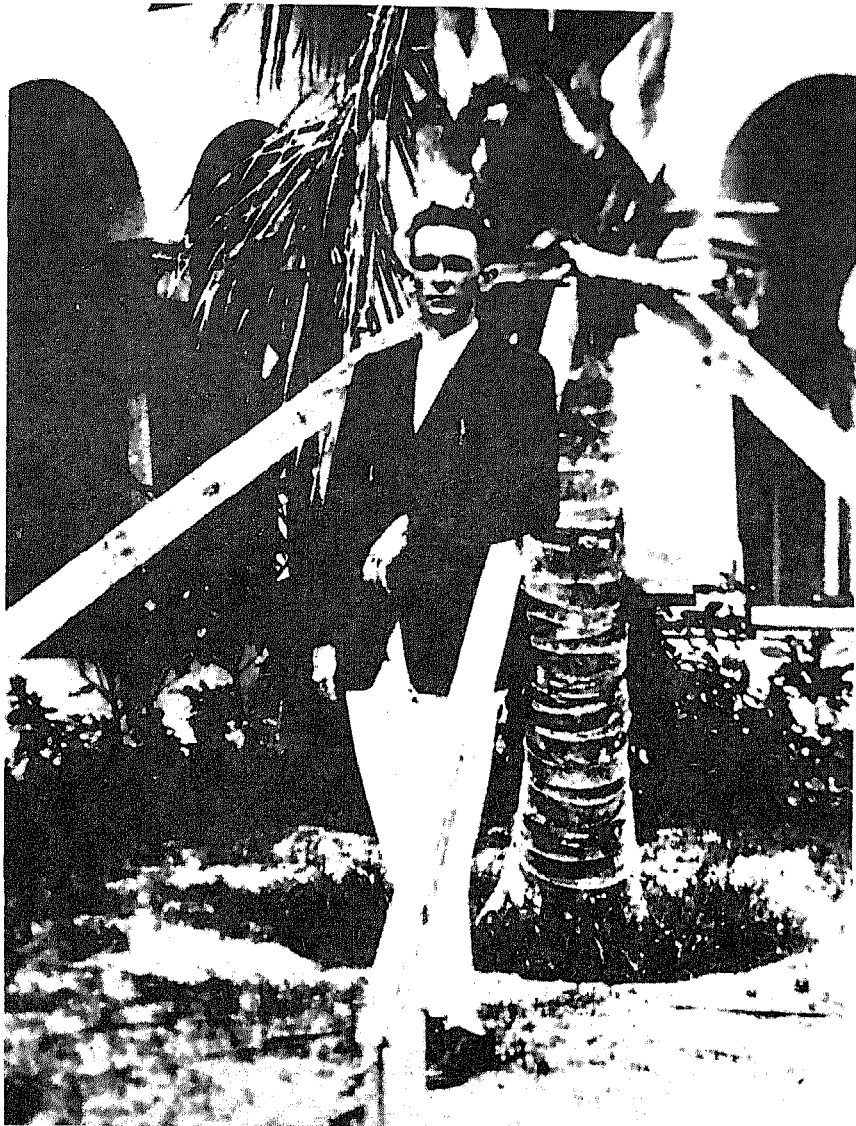
The Kline Platts had no children.

Clementine Brown taught school at Yamato around 1916 and at Boca Raton until 1927 when Betty was born. During the depression in 1933 she went back to teaching and continued to teach until her retirement in 1962. Times here in the early 1930s were very hard. There was no northern market for vegetables and the farmers' beans just sat in the packing houses and rotted. Mr.

Geist had been instrumental in ousting John Brown as Mayor during a rather bitter political campaign. Because of this Clementine did not wish to teach in the Boca School so she took a position at South Bay. Betty roomed there with her mother while attending third grade. The next year her mother taught at Loxahatchee where they rented a house. The following year they rented a house in West Palm Beach and she taught at Riviera Beach. Betty attended fifth grade in West Palm Beach. At age eleven Betty contracted tuberculosis and was hospitalized for two years in Lantana. Her aunt Irene brought eighth grade books for her to study and when released she skipped eighth and went into the ninth grade and graduated at sixteen. Her last year in High School was spent at Rosarian Academy as a boarding student, but they would not give her a certificate because of insufficient credits there. She enrolled at Florida State College for Women in Tallahassee, now FSU, and after one year of college work received a high school graduation certificate from Delray High School.



In a teaching career of almost half a century in Florida and Palm Beach County, Mrs. Clementine Brown won many awards. Among these were the Freedom Foundation Award in 1960, a Career Award by Palm Beach County superintendents for meritorius teaching, and a lifetime teaching certificate by the State of Florida. This photograph shows Mrs. Brown with Becky Wilson and Kathleen Kohtz in 1962 at the time she was named "Teacher of the Year."



John Brown, Mayor of Boca Raton during the period of the land boom and bust, 1925-1929. Under his leadership Boca Raton asked Addison Mizner to design its new Town Hall. Mayor Brown is shown here at Mizner's newly constructed Cloister Inn, today the Boca Raton Hotel and Club.

*The following article is taken from the Delray News of 11 May 1928. It is entitled, Family of John Brown Contributes to Hundred Years of Progress in Florida."*

A few hours in an automobile over hard surfaced roads, through prosperous cities and towns, past productive farms lands will bring one from Kissimmee to Boca Raton. But it has not always been so, as John Brown, Mayor of Boca Raton, will bear witness. In 1907 he made this trip driving a team of mules over dirt roads and it took him seven days.

It must have been an ancestral urge that led him to undertake the trip for it has been the history of his forebears that they have followed the frontier of Florida. On both sides of his family his people have been doing just that since before Florida was a state in the Union. In 1830 Philemon Bryan, who had married Nancy Hawthorne, came to Hamilton County from North Carolina. Here they lived until the time of their deaths in 1855 and 1856 respectively. Philemon Bryan and his sons farmed and fought the Indians in those days, one of his grandfather's brothers having spent fourteen years in the various campaigns led by Chief Billie Bowlegs.

William Brown, the father of John Brown, inherited the family taste for agriculture, and during the Civil War served through the duration of activities in the army of the Confederacy. Later finding that the Florida frontier had been extended he came in 1879 to Orange County. John was born in Haines City in 1893, and when six years old the family moved with the extending of the Florida frontier again down to Kissimmee. His father at this time was raising cattle, but died shortly after they had located there. At Kissimmee he spent his boyhood and went to school. In 1895 before the Florida East Coast Railroad had pushed its way down to Miami, his older brother, Charles, had come down the East Coast and it was again the frontiers of Florida appealed to the Brown family. The year of 1907 he started for the East Coast to what was then Dade County, making the trip by mule team. They settled near Deerfield until in 1912 they came to what is now Boca Raton. In 1915 he was married to Clementine Peterson of Volusia County.

Having settled on the East Coast, John Brown turned his attention to farming and has successfully grown vegetables here ever since then. Growing up with the country Mr. Brown saw opportunities in the contracting business and with characteristics [sic] initiative took hold of them. He built portions of the Ocean Boulevard in Broward County, the west road at Jupiter and several of the roads in and near Deerfield.

It has been characteristic of the family to engage actively in the affairs of the community in which they were located. One of his uncles served as a representative, state senator, and for many years on the state railroad commission. The family trait, together with



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