

The Spanish River Paper

1986-87

# The Spanish River Papers

1986-87

VOL. XV



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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The Oral History of Pearl City began in 1985 after many years of discussions by the Historical Society and the City of Boca Raton, about the significance of Pearl City as a stable community in the midst of rapid transition. The development of Pearl City began about 1914-15, before the City of Boca Raton was incorporated. It has remained a stable community since then, maintaining its residential characteristics amidst rapid commercialization adjacent to it. Many of the residents were born there or are direct descendants of the original settlers, yet no written history of the area exists. Many of these early residents have passed away and it became evident that a rare opportunity to record the history of this community was being missed. A plan was made to undertake this significant project by interviewing many of the residents who still remembered the early days.

Funding for the project came from several sources. First of all, we would like to thank Sandra McGinn, who as Director of the City of Boca Raton's Community Improvement Department generously donated \$5,000 towards the project. She has been responsible for the overall development of Pearl City and its improvements since 1979. Secondly, we wish to thank George Percy from the Department of State, Division of Archives, History and Records for the State's contribution of \$3,500 which created the initial seed money for the project. Third, we would like to thank Dr. Arthur Evans, Associate Professor of Sociology at Florida Atlantic University (FAU), who not only donated his time to oversee the project, but interviewed the residents and prepared the final study. In addition, he was able to acquire an additional \$1,500 from FAU's Joint Center for Environmental and Urban Problems. We would like to thank Dr. James Nicholas, who as Acting Director of the Center made these funds available.

In addition, we would like to thank Jesse Moore, Director of Community Development for the City of Boca Raton, who donated staff time; Ella Pottier and Susan Berman from the City's Word Processing Department for donating their time to transcribe the tapes and Annette Evans, from the Community Improvement Department, who provided many hours helping to oversee this project.

We would also like to thank the following people for their help in providing photographs for the Spanish River Papers:

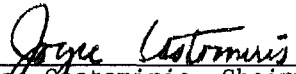
Irene Demery Carswell  
Myrtle Butts Fleming  
Lee and George Spain  
Lois Martin

We specifically wish to recognize Flo Roghaar, who as the photographer, provided the photographs of the people interviewed for this project. In addition we would like

to thank Flo O'Brien who, as President of the Boca Raton Historical Society in 1984, encouraged the pursuit of funding for this project; Katherine Dickenson, who was extremely helpful in our receiving State funding for this project; Eunice Canty who has helped review and administer the project; Dr. Donald Curl, who has been instrumental in reviewing and editing the history and Peggy McCall who as Archivist for the Boca Raton Historical Society has spent more hours researching, assembling and discussing the Oral History than any of us.

Finally, we want to thank Sharon Wells who is the author of this edition. Sharon who is the Historian of the Historic Florida Keys Preservation Board is the author of many books about Florida and its history including, Portraits: Wooden Houses of Key West; Forgotten Legacy: Blacks in 19th Century Key West and Solares Hill's Walking Guide to Old Town Key West.

We consider this edition of the Spanish River Papers as just a beginning. The original tapes and lengthy typed interviews are on file in the Archives for research. This is an ongoing project which will require many more interviews and much more research. We are especially interested in receiving information and photographs of families and events relating to Pearl City and urge people to contact Peggy McCall at 395-6766 with this information.

  
Joyce Costomiris, Chairman Oral History  
Boca Raton Historical Society, Inc.

THE SPANISH RIVER PAPERS

1986-87

VOL. XV

PEARL CITY  
An Analysis of the Folk History

by

SHARON WELLS

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PURPOSE

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This study seeks to illuminate the past experiences and heritage of black residents in Pearl City, a small community that comprises only a three-block area in southern Florida. The subjects of this analysis, southerners who are black of Bahamian and African descent, migrated further south from their point of origin in the early decades of the twentieth century. Collectively, they formed a tiny community within the city limits of present-day Boca Raton, in Palm Beach County, Florida.

The purpose of this inquiry is to focus upon a neglected culture of the black race in an isolated geographical setting and to help unveil the thoughts and memories of those inhabitants. These particular remembrances and oral histories recall a generation of living which is a significant chapter in an immigrant group's past--a past which is important in defining the pioneer history of south Florida.

Oral histories often contain passages of pure eloquence that can offer unique and personal testimony to the way it once was. Frequently, the annals of a society may leave few written traces of its history. In such cases, oral records can serve as documentation as to the genealogical roots, the childhood pastimes, family life, social patterns, educational achievements, occupational and economic practices, and societal mores of a people. This study is directed towards contributing a fuller understanding of both the times and the culture of Pearl City townspeople based upon their own voices.

There is a distinction between formal history and the traditions as derived from oral sources. "The use of oral sources as original historical information, weighed carefully, is potentially the most valuable and yet, up to now, the least exploited in local history research,"<sup>1</sup> writes Barbara Allen in From Memory to History. Further, she notes:

Two cardinal points about the nature of oral tradition need to be restated: first of all, people remember a vast amount of information and a wealth of detail that is never committed to writing; second, what all oral sources have in common is the special perspective they provide on the past. Written records speak to the point of what happened, while oral sources almost invariably provide insights into how people felt about what happened.<sup>2</sup>

Thus, the reconstruction of lifestyles based upon oral sources is both useful and valuable: useful in informing a later generation about details of a material culture which may well have nearly vanished and valuable in illustrating how everyday customs of a community can achieve a significance. "In reconstructing a folk history, the researcher defines a community's geographical and/or cultural boundaries in accordance with the concepts held by the people who live there, since their statements and feelings about their community may differ sharply from those of outsiders."<sup>3</sup>

In the context of such material from memories, the author was asked to review the content of specific oral history interviews and to offer an historical commentary. Through this documentary the author hopes to provide an analysis of the strands of black history as recorded in the oral history interviews which were collected in 1984-85 by Dr. Arthur S. Evans of Florida Atlantic University. Dr. Evans's efforts were sparked by the Boca Raton Historical Society's original concept to document the heritage of several generations of blacks in Pearl City. The thrust here is to provide an historical overview and summary conclusions based upon the recorded evidence regarding the cultural patterns and way of life of Pearl City residents.

The intent herein is to utilize the typed transcriptions of the oral histories spoken by informants of varying ages and sexes who either live in or have resided in Pearl City, to organize the information into topical subjects and to interpret what the people say in accordance with their own concepts of what is historically significant. In the words of historian Charles Hudson, "In a folk history we attempt to find what people in another society believe 'really happened,' as judged by their sense of credibility and relevance."

It is indeed important to direct attention toward the study of specific black communities. The search for understanding the Afro-American experience can contribute valuable insights into an ethnic identity. Hopefully, this study will serve as a catalyst for further explorations and new perspectives into the black heritage of the town. In a fuller context, research into local history can glean much from the oral histories of an earlier generation. Such studies can provide useful data for regional and state chronologies. A portrait of a single community's past helps permit an understanding of the broader national legacy.

Local history is "naturally and inescapably linked with the study of folklore." asserted the preeminent folklorist Richard Dorson in American Folklore and the Historian. The study of specific, local communities affords us the "opportunity to record folk traditions and employ them for the enrichment of the historical narrative."<sup>4</sup> This indepth look at Pearl City hopefully will provide an intimate look at the early twentieth century culture of the community's first generation of settlers.

The following persons, the great majority of whom are present or former residents of Pearl City in Boca Raton, Florida, were the subjects of oral interviews conducted by Florida Atlantic University associate professor Dr. Arthur S. Evans, Jr. All the respondents, except where noted, are black. The interviews were presented in a transcribed form in "Pearl City: Black Perspectives of a Black Community in Southeast Florida," a manuscript completed in June 1985:

Lois Martin  
 Bud Jackson  
 Archie Carswell  
 Henry James  
 Amos Jackson  
 Ulysses Brown  
 Emma Riggins  
 Homer Goddard  
 Louis and Louise Williams  
 Mary Jenkins  
 George Spain  
 Archie and Irene (Demery) Carswell  
 Lillie B. Evans  
 Alice and Malchester Brown  
 Alvia Fountain, Willie Mae Jackson, Almetta Broyles  
 Idella Glades  
 Molly Rich  
 Alan Alford (white; not a resident of Pearl City)  
 Walter Dolphus  
 Tom Wright  
 Carl Douglas (white; not a Pearl City resident)

Jacqueline Harvey

The collection of interviews provided the data base for this historical analysis by the author. The memories of participants, who are eyewitnesses to events past, offer an opportunity to draw composite sketches of the anonymous folks who have through the years played important, but unheralded and so are unrecorded, parts in their communities, institutions, and families.



*Lois (Dolphus) Martin*



*O.J. "Bud" Jackson*



*Ulysses Brown*



*Emma Riggins*



*Henry James*



*Amos Jackson*



*Homer Goddard*



*Mary Lee Jenkins*



*Louise Williams*



*Louis Williams*



*Archie Carswell*



*Irene (Demery) Carswell*



*George Spain*



*Lillie B. Evans*



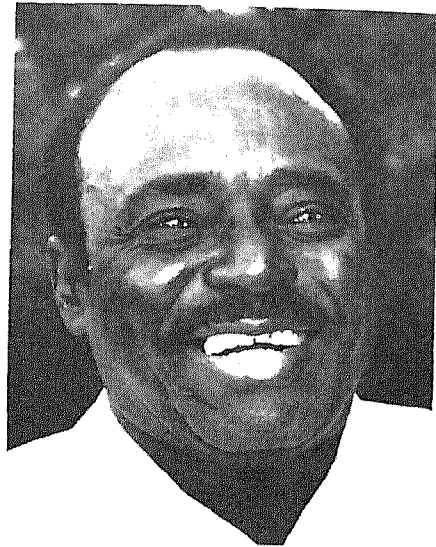
*Alice Brown*



*Malchester Brown*



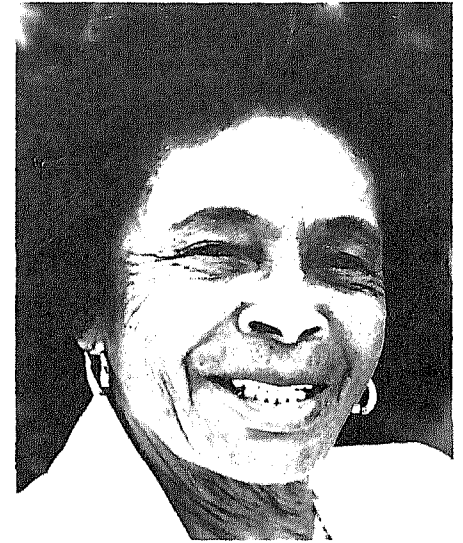
*Molly Rich*



*Walter Dolphus*



*Alvia Fountain*



*Willie Mae (Fountain) Jackson*



*Tom Wright*



*Jacqueline Harvey*



*Almetta (Fountain) Broyles*

## AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

A brief historical chronicle of the pioneer development of south Florida and Boca Raton through territorial and early statehood days will help to set the founding of Pearl City within its historical context and provide a century of perspective. Ownership of Florida was transferred in 1821 by the Adams-Onis Treaty from Spain to the United States. In 1836 Dade County was formed and nine years later Florida became a state. In mid-century the habitable portion of the southeast coast of Florida was cut by inland rivers that flowed from the Everglades with adjacent banks of dense oak and mahogany hammocks. Prairies were vast, and the land was covered by pine barrens, palmettos, and sandy trails.

The enactment of the Armed Occupation Act of 1842 following the end of the Second Seminole War conflict foreshadowed the advent of homesteading. The latter decades of the nineteenth century witnessed the arrival of thousands of homesteaders who responded to the lure of owning 160-acre plots in exchange for farming and cultivating the land. By the 1870s, settlement had proceeded southward to the Lake Worth area. Travel was solely by boat along the rivers and bays; only sand or rock roads existed across the isolated, wooded terrain.

Farming became the basis of the old pioneer culture. Everyday life was simple and dependent upon a largely subsistence agrarian economy. Small farm settlements dotted the interior and coastal lands as the east coast of Florida remained very sparsely populated in the 1880s. In her book Childhood Memories, Diane Benedetto remembers the early Boca Raton: "It was wild and beautiful then, like some foreign tropical land. . . ."

"Over the next thirteen years, 1880 to 1893, the isolated and primitive life of the earliest settlers gave way to relative convenience: scheduled transportation by boats, stagecoach, and even railroad, an organized school and church, and comfortable hotels for tourists seeking the magic of summer during the winter."<sup>5</sup> Yet, Thomas M. Rickards, an early traveler who was the first settler in Boca Raton, wrote in an 1892 letter: "The seven-mile trip by rail from Jupiter (where the lighthouse looms majestically over the inlet) to Juno [at the northern tip of Lake Worth] was through what appeared to me a rather barren waste."<sup>6</sup>



Thomas M. Rickards



George A. Long



Frank H. Chesebro



Joe Sakai

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In 1889 construction began on the first railroad, a narrow gauge line from Jupiter to Juno. This "Celestial Railroad" linked the Indian River and Lake Worth, providing more convenient transportation for travelers to south Florida. In the 1890s Henry M. Flagler marched his railroad empire southward, reaching West Palm Beach in 1894. Finally, in 1895 the oil magnate's corporate transportation links officially became known as the Florida East Coast Railway. Luxury resorts and hotels that served as winter playgrounds for the wealthy were the inevitable accompaniment of the influx of rails.

In 1903 at the dawn of the twentieth century, south Florida was still largely made up of towns and villages with mule-drawn carts and horses. There were few automobiles. As various towns such as Boynton, Delray, and Boca Raton were mapped, Palm Beach County was established as a county separate from Dade in 1909.

Several individuals and two distinct immigrant groups profoundly influenced the formation of Boca Raton. The town's first permanent settler was Thomas M. Rickards, a Missouri native who originally migrated to Florida in 1876 and settled in north Florida ten years later. A surveyor and civil engineer, Rickards purchased land in Boca Raton in 1884. In 1895 he moved to Boca Raton where he worked as the agent for the Florida East Coast Railway. In 1897 Rickards surveyed several hundred acres of land, subdivided it into ten-acre tracts for pineapple planting, and truck farming. He also set out several citrus groves for Henry M. Flagler and Frank Lewis.

In December 1903 Frank H. Chesebro moved from Michigan with the hope of successfully transplanting his fruitgrowing business.<sup>7</sup> Chesebro, an early homesteader who actively shaped the community, was an important force in the local truck farming industry.

George A. Long, who had begun an association with Captain Rickards through engineering projects for the Florida Southern Railway Company in Marion County, moved permanently to Boca Raton where he rented Rickards's first residence on the canal in 1902.<sup>8</sup> Long, who owned a large packinghouse, served as the settlement's first postmaster in 1908, the first appointed mayor of Boca Raton after its incorporation in 1924, and was twice elected to terms as county commissioners.

In 1904 Joseph Sakai, an educated Japanese, ended his search for a place to begin an agricultural station where pineapples could be cultivated when he founded a Japanese colony at Boca Raton. Encouraged by Henry M. Flagler, who provided free train passage as an inducement for potential laborers, Sakai led sixteen new Japanese emigres to settle a 140-acre tract near present-day Northwest 51st Street in Boca Raton. The Asian pioneers, who numbered forty by

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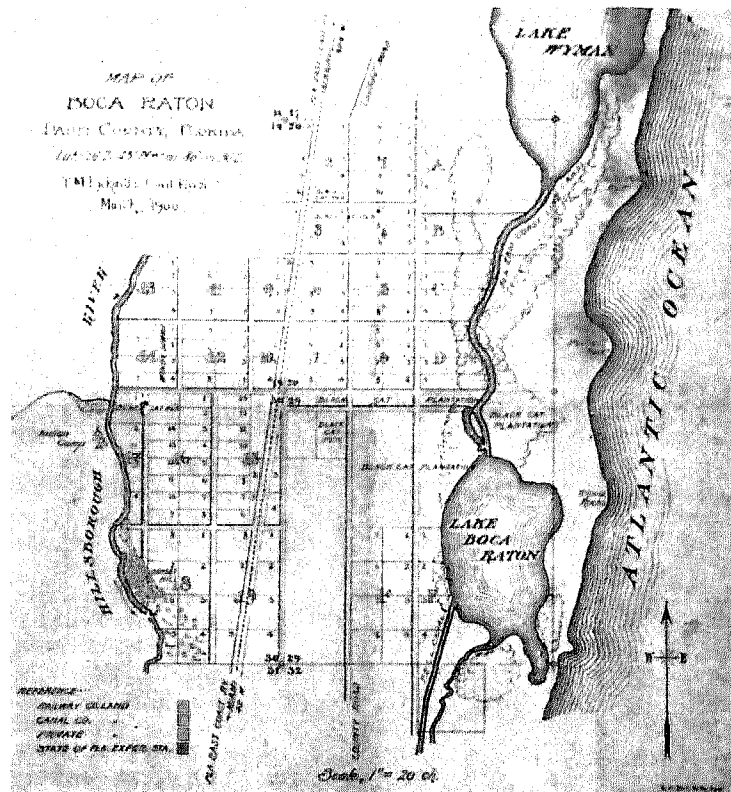
1908, established their colony in 1905, calling it Yamato (an ancient name for Japan itself), which literally translates as "large, peaceful country."<sup>9</sup> Sakai and his followers labored successfully for a number of years. Their cultural impact upon Boca Raton still persists.

Prior to 1911 a small number of black individuals and families undertook an exodus southward to explore burgeoning economic opportunities in the Boca Raton area. Deerfield Beach, immediately south of Boca Raton, already had a large black community. When Rickards, Chesebro, and Long first came to Boca Raton, they employed black laborers who walked from Deerfield and Delray Beach to the newly homesteaded farms in Boca Raton. Slowly a number of blacks took up residence there as agriculture took hold as the economic mainstay. In the ensuing decades the interdependence of the local railroad, the homesteading farmers, and the productive lands inescapably shaped the way of life for the black pioneers.

Although a scheduled stop on the Florida East Coast Railway, Boca Raton persisted as a small farming town until 1925. It was a place relatively untouched by modernity, where change came slowly. Living conditions were quite primitive in the barren vicinity of what was to become Pearl City. Louise Williams remembers the area in 1934: ". . . where 12th Street is now and Glades Road, [it was] all bushes and wilderness. It was a sand road, deep sand, and in the summertime you got stuck if you didn't know how to drive through the sand. . . . You didn't have no running water and we didn't have no lights. We had outdoor bathrooms, toilets and we had to take a bath in tin tubs."

There were but a few black families living in Pearl City in the 1920s. According to George Spain's memory: "The majority of blacks lived right here in what we call Pearl City; those three blocks. All of this was woods. There were only the homes right there where Tom's place is [Glades Road and Dixie Highway], that was our family's place; and only about three or four families east of there. The rest was nothing but woods. The rest of the people lived south of us. It started at 12th and went down to 10th and from there in between Federal Highway and Dixie Highway." Boca Raton remained the secluded, wooded hamlet where truck farmers, tenant farmers, and sharecroppers predominated until the Florida land boom of 1925 opened up south Florida to land speculators involved in grand real estate schemes.

The Twenties were a time marked by tremendous change and the beginning of the modern era of growth and construction. Addison Mizner, who became the area's most famous architect during this epoch, dreamed of designing a resort city. Through the Mizner Development Corporation, he put forth a proposal to develop a 6,000-acre tract of

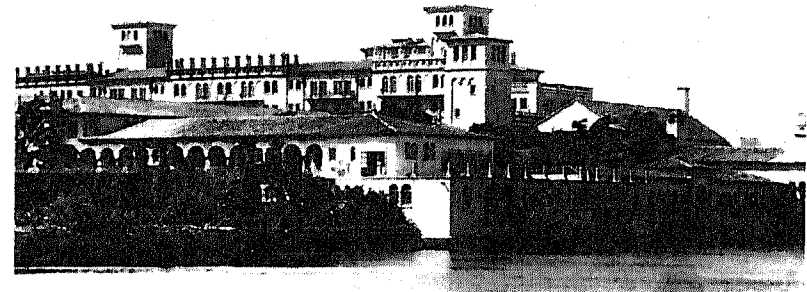


1900 Map. Pearl City would be section 20 parts of blocks 2, 3 and 4.

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Mediterranean-inspired structures. Though the corporation failed and declared bankruptcy within two years, the opening of the Cloister Inn as a winter resort mecca sparked a promotional buildup which ultimately turned Boca Raton from a sleepy town into an exclusive resort area. The Inn was transformed by entrepreneur Clarence Geist into a swank private club by 1928. Just as the arrival of a seasonal, elite, northern gentry had a significant effect upon the black residents, so too did the start of World War II. In 1942 the federal government acquired thousands of acres of land to establish the Boca Raton Army Air Corps school for radar training. The wartime influx of the military had a major impact upon the indigenous black population.

These are the various historical, economic, and political factors which have affected the blacks who settled in the Pearl City section of Boca Raton.



Boca Raton Club 1933.



Mizner Development Corporation Road Construction Crew 1925.

## EMIGRATION, ROOTS, AND WORK

According to the voices of those Pearl City residents who recorded their reflections orally, the majority of blacks who migrated to south Florida took one of two routes, travelling either from the nearby Bahama archipelago or from the southern part of the United States. The greatest majority moved from other southern states; most predominantly, from Georgia, near Macon or Dublin or Albany. A few claimed the states of South Carolina and Alabama or other Florida towns, such as Jacksonville, Marianna, or Pahokee as previous home sites.

The life of the Negro in the Bahamas in the late nineteenth century had become increasingly grim. In the early part of the century two dominant migrations had originally propelled the movement of blacks into the Bahamas. Both the African slave trade and the Loyalists' exodus from the southern United States following the American Revolution had served as catalysts. Throughout those early decades of the nineteenth century a subsistence agriculture and the sea provided the main economic trade for Bahamians. Yet the exportation of cotton, sisal, and pineapples had furnished the islanders with incomes that provided for only a very meager survival. The plantation agriculture was depressed, and the outlook for better economic conditions became bleak.

At the opening of the twentieth century, a reverse migration among the black population in the Bahama Islands, back to the United States, took place. While many blacks who migrated from the Bahamas chose to relocate in Key West as fishermen, laborers, or carpenters, a few journeyed north to Boca Raton in search of new economic opportunities.

Blacks from the Bahamas migrated to the Boca Raton area early in the twentieth century. They were known locally as "Nassaus." According to one inhabitant, the Nassaus lived and worked as laborers and farmhands at Yamato, the Japanese agrarian colony. Alex Hughes, who had lived in Deerfield and worked for Frank Chesebro since 1903, recalled in 1972, "The white people lived in south Boca and the Japanese and Bahamians lived in Yamato [ten to twelve blocks north of Pearl City]. Here in Pearl City that was only palmettoes, spruce pine, and mosquitoes until I built my house [in 1915]." Hughes, the first black to reside in what was to become known as Pearl City, a small sector approximately ten blocks north of Boca Raton's center, moved there in 1914. The 1915 State of Florida census recorded 615 blacks in Palm Beach County. Few, however, lived in Pearl City.<sup>12</sup>

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One Pearl City resident, recalled that Florida was slightly better than Georgia for blacks and remembered that his parents had first stopped at Yamato as homesteaders. "What was in there was Bahamian people; you know, Nassau descent. But it was more blacks up there than it is here in Pearl City," Homer Goddard commented.<sup>13</sup> All of the blacks in residence there were farm laborers; some worked in fields owned by the Japanese colonists. Yamato supported farmers who were homesteaders, but not land owners in the formal sense. "The people who lived there, at Yamato, owned their houses, but . . . it was sort of way back like. They were homesteading . . . It wasn't a purchase thing."<sup>14</sup>

In 1906 an article in the Tropical Sun described Sakai's experiment: "Yamato is a colony made up wholly of Japanese, located about 21 miles below Palm Beach. The Florida East Coast Railway Company . . . established a regular station there and all trains, save the express trains, stop there. The chief industry of the colony is pineapple and fruit-raising and in this line all have been universally successful."<sup>15</sup>

The Japanese and black Bahamian workers managed to sustain their economy until 1909-10. The breakdown of their economic structure can be traced to two significant factors: a pineapple blight that destroyed the major crop and serious competition from Cuba's exportation of cheaper pineapples which had become available in great quantities. The Yamato communal experiment was disbanded shortly afterwards, though many of the Japanese settlers continued to live in the area.

The reasoning among the blacks from the American South who fled an oppressing economy was generally straightforward. For instance, Ulysses Brown left Georgia

because I has tired of plowing a mule all day for thirty cents a day. I came to Florida to better my condition. I started to work on the farm for a dollar a day. I was digging ditches for irrigation, digging stumps and trees for clearing land for farming. That's the kind of work I did. That and driving tractors.

Mr. Brown's response typifies the majority of responses among the black farmers who sought a new home in moving to Boca Raton. New residents were often motivated through contacts with family members or friends who had a prior personal acquaintance with the community or locale. Brown himself joined friends who had moved earlier; Mary Lee Jenkins and her husband met her brother who was living in the vicinity of Boca Raton; Walter Dolphus's uncle was a resident; and Tom Wright's mother moved to Florida to join her sister in 1951. Emma Riggins commented:

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Now I came to Florida because I had a sister that was coming down here and she wanted me to come. She was named Elizabeth Johnson. . . She said if I went down in the winter I could have some work. We used to pick a lot of beans out on Butts Farm. I didn't come by myself; I came by a truck coming down. There was this lady that stayed up there; her family and some more were coming down in the season. People used to come down here in the season and she would bring workers down here who liked farming work.<sup>16</sup>

Just as the oral histories revealed that the two major sources of the new migrant populations rarely varied, the responses underlined the fact that the motivating factor in nearly all of the personal decisions to move to Boca Raton was economics. A better chance for higher wages was the driving force in their relocation for many of the poorly paid blacks. Without exception they sought new hope and advancement within society in a new environment. Among members of the black populace, who were the respondents, a widespread perception of economic opportunity in south Florida existed. The rich lands in Florida offered an attraction to laborers and farmers, who eagerly embraced the notion that a better life was possible. As Lois Martin stated, "Here in Boca Raton, my parents could practically live off the land." Nearly all of the Pearl City residents or their parents spoke of the possibility of home ownership as a boon, while many noted the appeal of life in a rural setting. The high quality of life in a small town was often mentioned as a determining factor in the decision to move to Boca Raton.

The discussions contained in the oral histories clearly illustrate that there were few economic options in the lives of Pearl City residents. Farming was the mainstay. As George Spain underlined: "The biggest thing around here was farming really." Only after the Mizner hotel was erected did other jobs become available for the black residents. For a long time everyone worked either on farms or in the hotel, according to one source.<sup>17</sup>

In the 1930s the Boca Raton Club employed blacks for certain jobs, generally of a menial nature. At the club blacks worked in the kitchen, or as maids, or in the maintenance department. Blacks simply were not employed in managerial level jobs. According to Henry James, for instance, blacks could be employed only as bus boys; the waiters and waitresses were whites imported from the North. James also emphatically noted that the club's owner in the late thirties, Clarence Geist, was a racist. He said, "Bet you've never seen a segregationist like this kind of person." Mr. James's view was also held by others in Pearl

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City. Other jobs available for blacks at the time included: working in the club barbershop or locker room, or caddying for the white golfers on the club's course. Sometimes caddies earned from ten to twelve dollars a day, which was considered good money. The club did provide living quarters, described as "small rooms," for some of their black employees.

In the 1940s the army base provided additional opportunities for black men in the region. Archie Carswell remembers, "You had farmers out there, you had some out there that helped cook and some worked in the officers' mess and some with the Boca Raton Hotel and Club, taken over by the Army." In George Spain's opinion, the installation and construction of the military base had a significant effect upon the lives of the townspeople. He said "The base had 150,000 soldiers out there and the base could hire a lot of people." The construction crews were composed of young black men and "people began to make a little bit more money then. They started making money quite a bit by the hour," Spain recalled.<sup>18</sup>

Farming the rich, productive soils in south Florida was the principal way of life for blacks in Pearl City, despite employment at the club or air base. The oral history accounts offer a concise picture of the black laborer's daily life working on white-owned farms. For the most part, blacks worked as day laborers on extensive truck farms such as Chesebro Homestead, or later in the 1930s on the Butts Farm, which supplied fresh vegetables throughout much of the eastern United States. A turn-of-the-century periodical published by the Florida East Coast Railway, The Homeseeker, advertised the area's wealth: "Tomatoes at all stages, snap beans being picked and sent North, eggplants, peas, Irish potatoes, strawberries, celery, cabbage, lettuce, onions, turnips, beets; in fact, everything, and all looking thrifty and good enough to eat.

The Chesebro Homestead, encompassing a large tract of land near the Hillsboro Canal to a line north of Camino Real, bounded by Old Dixie on the west and the intracoastal on the east, was owned by Frank H. Chesebro. He also had land north and west of this area--nearer Pearl City--that he farmed. Beginning in the 1930s August H. Butts maintained extensive fields planted almost exclusively with string beans, and hired hundreds of black laborers for picking, sorting, and harvesting the crops at Butts Farm west of Boca Raton.

At first, workers on Butts Farm walked to the fields and walked home along unpaved, rocky roads at night. In later years the management at Butts Farm would send a truck to pick up the farm hands who gathered at Willie Wright's corner grocery store. Amos Jackson remembers:

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As many people as could pack on that truck could get on. Everybody would get on; men, women, and children. At Butts Farm they grew string beans. That was the big market in south Florida, string beans. . . . They were paying ten cents a basket. Some people would pick a basket of beans in ten minutes.

According to Ulysses Brown, there were thousands of field workers at harvest time on Butts Farm. Some lived in the long wooden quarters provided, others travelled from Boca Raton, Delray Beach, Deerfield Beach, Belle Glade, or Pearl City. No rent was charged for housing, and wages averaged a dollar a day with no overtime. The workers' day would begin at seven o'clock in the morning and last until five in the afternoon. Some respondents remembered two black foremen who over saw the field work. Work was year round; the height of the bean season was in the winter months. In the summer, the men would dig ditches to provide the irrigation system for the farms. Those who planted the fields worked by the "task," so many acres per day. Field hands were either planters, pickers, walkers, or graders, those who picked out the bad beans from the hampers.

Many of the black immigrant workers remained sharecroppers, rather than landowners themselves. Lois Martin best defined sharecropping, the most common practice for the earliest Pearl City farmers:

That's when a person plows up the land, buys all the seeds and fertilizer and then you produce a crop and get a share of the money that is made off the crop.

One of the earliest notices of sharecropping was recorded at the time when lots were originally platted:

C.W. Blaine, six acres in tomatoes, one half acre in beans. Blaine is a darkey and a good one. He is working on shares. Land and fertilizers are furnished him against his labor. He has no capital but his two hands and a little credit. He has shipped over two hundred crates of beans, selling for \$3, and for his six acres of tomatoes he will clear a good thing.

Generally, the whole family went to the farms; mothers picked beans while children, even at five years of age, played in the fields. Beans were the staple crop. Bud Jackson's mother, like all of the women, picked beans during the season. She recalled, "That was every day, all day, because you planted beans every day, all day and so you had beans coming up, beans growing, beans with small beans on it, beans with larger beans and beans ready to pick at all times.



*Farm workers at Chesebro Pineapple fields. Sheds were wood frame, covered with palmetto fronds. Names of men are unknown.*



*Frank Chesebro built this house in 1903, south of the present Camino Real just east of the FEC RR tracks.*

## PEARL CITY

Through the voices of both the first and second generations of Pearl City inhabitants, the basic economic conditions and actual daily patterns of life have become more fully documented as significant aspects to the cultural history of the black migrant worker.



*Bean fields at Butts Farm.*



*Whole families picked beans west of Boca Raton. Mr. Butts insisted young children attend school half-day before going to the bean fields.*

## EDUCATIONAL, RELIGIOUS, AND CULTURAL PATTERNS

During the formative early years of Pearl City's history, between 1915 to 1920, the demands of settlement and economic adjustment precluded any formal structure for education within the local sector. Indeed, the tradition of schooling hardly embraced children of the black race in the South at this time--nearly half a century since the end of the Civil War. Compared to other minorities, black citizens had few opportunities for educational advancement and the quality of learning was a secondary nature. The oral accounts have provided details that describe the educational system that did exist for Pearl City children and address some of the attitudes that prevailed among the residents. These recollections are almost the only authentic sources that provide a record which documents the educational lives of Pearl City's people.

The first school in Boca Raton was in Long's packinghouse in 1908 which was located several blocks south of Palmetto Park Road. But only white children attended. During those earliest years in Pearl City the children toiled in the fields alongside their parents. The heritage of most of the migrants contained little in the way of support for the notion of education. Schooling was of secondary importance. There was more concern for earning wages and working daily in the fields to help maintain a bare subsistence. Ulysses Brown recalled that in later years the children who worked in the fields were trucked from Butts Field to Roadman Elementary and back to the fields after school to pick three or four hampers of beans until sundown.

Alex Hughes, one of the co-founders and builders of the first school house for black students in Pearl City, recognized the need for a school in Pearl City. Speaking to a newspaper writer, he recalled, "I decided to try to do something about this. I went to the Board of Public Instruction in West Palm Beach. They told me that if I could find eight children, they would provide a teacher. I came right back and mustered up eight children, and they sent a teacher down, Miss Robinson. They gave us a school, too--moved an old white school over here. That was in 1923."<sup>19</sup> That first school was situated on the south side of Eleventh Street just off Dixie Highway. Later an addition was constructed to the school which was then called Roadman Elementary on Dixie Highway and Twelfth Street.

In the first schoolhouse there was one teacher who taught grades one through eight in the wood frame one-room

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building. The toilets and water pumps were outside. Classes were organized by rows and there were black boards at both ends of the classroom. Most of the former students recalled the classrooms as disciplined and orderly. Describing her elementary school teacher Mary Jenkins said, "She didn't spare the palmetto road and she kept order." There was also a discernible spirit of cooperation between teacher and parents.

Nearly all of the interviewees spoke well of Roadman Elementary, which became the main school in the thirties. The school had three classrooms, a small library, a kitchen, and bathrooms. Mrs. Ashley was the first teacher, and others included Annie Mae Walker and Ann Collier. There was no high school in Pearl City for black students. Carver High School in Delray was the only all-black high school in the vicinity which was available to Pearl City teenagers. One of the respondents remembered having to ride by bicycle to Delray Beach when the white school children travelled by bus. "The school bus would zoom by you. Memories like that have stayed with me all these years."

The quality of teaching, however, generally was not at a high level. Black teachers themselves were often not as well educated as their white counterparts. In his interview, Amos Jackson said that school books were passed down from whites. "We were always behind white schools, of course." Schools were segregated and the separate facilities offered only a limited quality of education to blacks. Segregation was the major determining factor which defined the schooling system and available opportunities for blacks. As one respondent noted, "Some of our black teachers at that time were only high school graduates. . . There was deep segregation at the time."

The educational possibilities in Pearl City were unlike those that existed for the immigrants in Tampa in the early twentieth century. Historians Gary R. Mormino and George E. Possetta wrote in The Immigrant World of Ybor City, "The public school provided Latinos with a socially approved context for athletic competition and at the same time accelerated upward mobility and the integration of Ybor City into mainstream Tampa."<sup>20</sup> Unfortunately, the educational opportunities for blacks in Pearl City reflected the poverty in the Deep South, rather than the mobility evident in Ybor City.

The opportunities for recreation among the black youth of Pearl City in the 1930s and 1940s were limited to activities such as playing ball, fishing, swimming, turning a turtle on the beach, dancing in a local nightspot, or going to the next town of Delray Beach. The closest movie house was in Delray Beach. Some of the recollections of the Pearl City oral interviewees provide insights into the various activities which prevailed at the time.

Sports and fishing were two passions that prevailed in the memories of the respondents. Pearl City had a baseball team which played against other all-black teams and most of the males recalled playing sandlot softball and baseball as teenagers or youngsters. Fishing at Lake Ida in Delray Beach, in fresh water canals, or in the ocean was a popular pastime among the young. Archie Carswell confirmed, "Our recreation was fishing, salt water and fresh water both. . . . I fished in the ocean with a king pole and we used steel line." For all the children swimming was a regular sport, but the beach was segregated. There was a beach, recalled Henry James, which had a certain area reserved for blacks. "To get on the beach here in Boca, we had a little path north of the Pavilion. One little spot, you could go there, but if you were caught in other places, they'd put you in jail. . . They'd put you in jail for swimming on the wrong part of the beach," he remembered. Jacqueline Harvey agreed; "there was a little place on the beach just for Negroes. Back then before '65, life growing up in Boca Raton for blacks was basically a little sad."



Black baptism in the Hillsboro River in the early 1900's.

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But George Spain did not recall that segregation was ever a problem at the beach. He said, "I remember just a couple of cases wherein we had an influx of alot of people from out of town would come into the beaches, and people got a little upset about it. But other than that, I've been walking that beach since I was nine or ten years old. I went to the beach anytime I got ready." He did say, however, that "we didn't go into the Pavilion." Apparently there was a section of the beach traditionally reserved for the blacks of Pearl City.

Amos Jackson spoke of the good times as a youngster in Pearl City in this recollection:

The 20th of May was a big day to us. We'd have big baseball games, picnics on the beach, and Collins Spain used to carry his juke box or piccolo, as we used to call it, on the beach he had a generator. They called it the "dynamo." That would provide the electrical service for the box. . . . There was discrimination on the beach, however. We had our colored beach and they had their white beach.

Turning a turtle was a popular pastime which provided food as well as recreation for the families Spain described the ritual:

To turn a turtle we used to wait until they come out. They come out to lay their eggs and you get'm. You just turn them over and then you get you a truck and you walk back from over on the beach and . . . get a man that's in the community who got a truck and go over and get it. You put it on the truck and bring it back home. Then all the neighbors and everybody gather around; so when you butcher the turtle everybody has their pan and everybody gets some. So we'd eat turtle and fish. It was good, too.

Louise Williams remembered clearly the good times when her aunt would have a picnic on the beach and Jimmy Goddard would connect his piccolo [jukebox] to a generator, and there would be music, a fish fry, and a keg of punch for the young people. And Mary Lee Jenkins recalled "lots of picnics on the beach. . . Between here and Delray, we could go anywhere and cook your food and carry it with you and play in the water. Oh, that was lots of fun."

Alvia Fountain remembered a recreation hall by the church where socials were held, and Walter Dolphus mentioned the marble range in the center of Dixie Highway between 11th and 12th Streets in the early days before there was much traffic on the road.

Homer Goddard's memories included these: We would strive to get into the little joints they had around us here. . . . In these places we would drink and dance. We



A man "Turning" a sea turtle. Today it is illegal to disturb turtle or her nest.



Present Macedonia A.M.E. Church.

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used to go to a dance club called Capenili. Had a place up in Boynton, Club Capenili. We used to see all the latest bands up there. I saw Louis Jones, Buddy Johnson, Sweetheart of Rhythm, Lonnie Hampton."

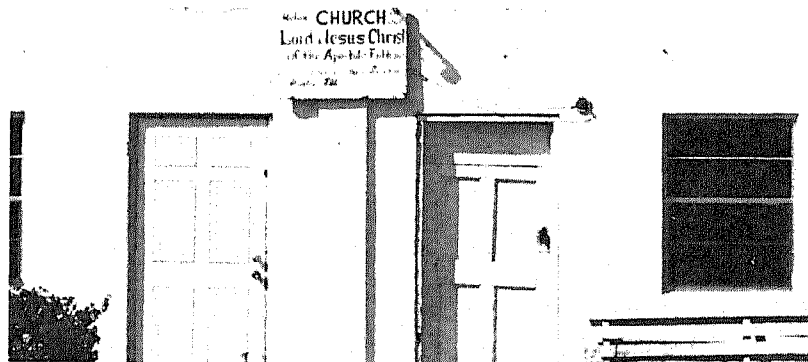
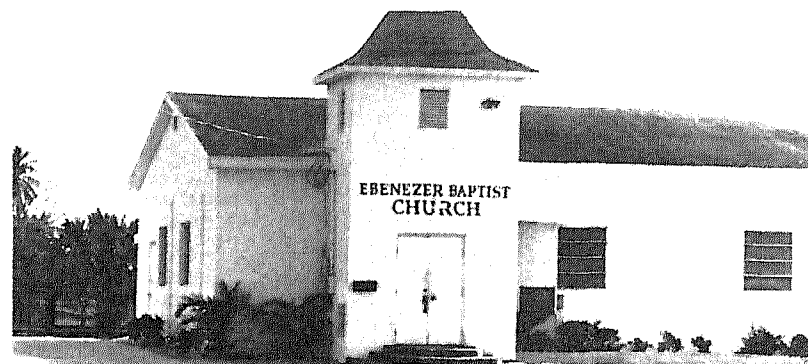
For the adults, there seems to have been no organized recreation; social gatherings among friends and neighbors in each other's homes and in the churches were the norm. As Lois Martin recalled, "When Joe Louis would fight or Wayne Louis Jordan would sing the spirituals, that's when we would congregate to hear the fight or hear the singing at one of those three houses who had them [radios]."

Traditionally and historically, the church has served as the focal point for social as well a religious associations among the black communities of America. In Pearl City two black churches arose with their own small congregations, each one distinct from the black congregations in nearby Delray Beach and Deerfield Beach. The first church to be organized was the Macedonia African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, which was completed in 1920. Hand-built by the field workers, the frame structure, now stuccoed, stands on a lot at 128 Northeast Eleventh Street donated by George Long. After the Methodist church was organized, plans for the erection of the Baptist Ebenezer Church began to crystallize. Reverend J. H. Dolphus, Will Demery, and others were instrumental in starting the Ebenezer Church in 1918. Their building (completed in 1921) also was erected on a lot donated by George Long. Later in 1950 the Friendship Church was organized as an offshoot of Ebenezer. Several interviewees, including Lillie B. Evans, recalled a church on Butts Farm called New Hope. "And after they sold the farm, they moved New Hope to Deerfield."

According to the interviewed residents, the church was the most significant institution in Pearl City. Church members attended Sunday School, the worship services, and afterwards sang spirituals and visited with one another. Most often the parents instilled a real love of the church within their children. Some members went to both churches. Bud Jackson recalled, "The first and third Sunday we went to Ebenezer, the second and fourth we went to Macedonia and that's how we operated for years and years." Generally, one worship service was held each week with the minister alternating between them. At Ebenezer the congregation would take Sunday lunches and all share after the services. Many respondents reminisced about the numerous social events that revolved around box parties, where the women would decorate picnic boxes and men would bid for the particular boxes. Then the two would share the box dinner. Homer Goddard remembered the Methodist Youth Days, the church picnics, and the fish fries on the beach. In actual fact, there was little to do socially except go to church.

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That institution represented all of the social aspects of life at the time in Pearl City.



Present day Churches.

## MEDICINE AND BURIAL PRACTICES

According to the interviews, the respondents were generally in agreement concerning both the practice of medicine in Pearl City in the early decade of the twentieth century and the subjects of death and burial among members of the locale's black population.

In Pearl City there were no hospitals, no doctors, and no cemeteries for the interment of blacks until mid-century. Many Pearl City residents used home remedies as cures for ills because proper medical attention was very difficult to obtain. An herb called "black draw" was popularly used, and asafetida was a home remedy for headaches and colds. George Spain's mother was an integral member of the community. "My mother was a doctor herself. She didn't have no degree, but she could pretty much do anything for a person. The whole neighborhood came to her. . she had all kinds of remedies. . . . Her name was Annie Hughes."

In the early days of Pearl City's history, as recalled by Henry James, there were county nurses that would attend to black patients and a Dr. Kaysem, a white doctor in Delray Beach, who would also treat blacks who were ill or suffering. The few doctors in the vicinity included Dr. Windsor in Pompano, a dentist named Dr. Bass in Fort Lauderdale, and Dr. Mizell in Fort Lauderdale. Later the closest doctors who maintained offices were located in Pompano Beach, Delray Beach, or West Palm Beach. Mary Lee Jenkins, an interviewee who studied to become a midwife at Butts Farm and later worked at a local hospital, recalled that a county doctor was available at St. Mary's Hospital in West Palm Beach where patients, white or black, did not have to pay. Willie Mae Jackson remembered the Bethesda Hospital in Boynton Beach. Pine Ridge Hospital in West Palm Beach was the only one which served blacks; its staff of doctors and nurses were all black. Lois Martin felt "it was so hard to see one [doctor] and plenty of times you had to stay on the outside, you didn't have any waiting rooms. By the time you got in, you are already well."

One local resident remembered: "But if your were real sick, we had an old German doctor down in Pompano called Windsor, and there was one in Deerfield--McClendon. . . . They didn't come to your house. . . . It was fortunate enough in the community that there was always somebody in the community that had a car to go. Everybody was working together."

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In the 1920s only Coleman's Funeral home in West Palm Beach would embalm black bodies. It was the oldest, black-owned funeral home in southern Florida and survives today. According to Lois Martin, "The bodies were embalmed back then in the twenties, but they were only embalmed up in West Palm Beach, then brought down for the funeral and then the procession went into the cemetery in Delray for burial." Burial practices following a person's death have not changed over the years in Pearl City. "Coleman had been handling the dead, you know, the black dead ever since I've been in Florida. Coleman had a place in Delray and three places in West Palm Beach. When you died you called them and they come out and get the body and carry them up to Palm Beach and done what they had to do and brought them back out to the funeral, just like they do now."

According to Emma Riggins, the black community would coalesce to assist a family when a member died. She commented, "When a person died, the people in the community would get together and take up a collection for the family, and would come together and fix food. I think they still do it now. I fix some when people pass away. Once we had a club here, a prayer band club, and if the people would cooperate with us here, we could have helped many a sick persons. . . but our race won't cooperate with nothing that's going to help them."

No graveyard for blacks existed in Boca Raton, although there was a cemetery for whites. It was situated near the railroad tracks near where the City Barn (equipment storage) is presently located. No blacks from Pearl City were buried in Boca Raton; all the dead were taken to the Delray Beach cemetery, located near Eighth Avenue and Germantown Road until 1960. There burials were at first segregated, but later integrated. Henry James noted, "Even in death, we were still segregated and to a certain degree, its still that way."



Mrs. Emma Scott walking south on Dixie Highway.

## LEGAL STATUS OF PEARL CITY RESIDENTS

Although the "peculiar institution" of slavery, which for so long was perpetuated throughout the American South, had ceased legally to exist, the roots of racism remained firmly implanted in America and particularly in the southern states. Certainly the major factors which contributed to its continuance, the economic exploitation of a minority group and a class system in which ethnicity was a defining feature, permeated the area of Boca Raton in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Major agricultural production and the white hegemony so inherent to the South's plantation system carried over to describe the racial division in the Boca Raton area.

Legal records reflect the formal documentation of the creation of the Pearl City subdivision. In a letter dated March 3, 1911, to Thomas M. Rickards, George A. Long discussed a fifteen-acre parcel belonging to Rickards (between Tenth and Twelfth streets today) which could be platted for residential use by the black workers. In response, Rickards wrote: "I understand that we have some 15 acres and if the darks start in there it may well be to keep on selling to them and thus have them segregated." Long answered in another letter, "Now is a good time to start the colored addition to Bocaratone."<sup>20</sup> On April 26, 1915, an auction was held to sell the lots which had been allotted to be sold to blacks. Thirty lots were sold for prices ranging from twenty-five to fifty dollars a lot. On April 28, 1915 Long wrote to Rickards describing the auction: "The people who bought wish to build and live there and they are all good pay. . . . Colored Boca Ratone which is the most talked of town down there and everyone who visited or bought it pleased."<sup>21</sup> Monthly payment plans were accepted and despite slow work seasons which brought cash delays and thus often jeopardized land payments, the new black landowners were able to retain their lands.

Segregation was a fact of life with regard to the racial relationships, yet most of the informants were reluctant to describe a totally negative view of the legal/racial parameters that existed in Pearl City. The communities were in fact segregated and all persons, both blacks and whites, remained in their separate communities. There seems to have existed over the years a relationship of non-contact between the races. There were comparatively few racial problems in Boca Raton during the wartime era



*Squadron F Boca Raton Army Airbase — World War II.*



*W. Hugh Brown came to Boca Raton in 1936 to join the two man police force. He became Chief of Police in 1937 and served for 34 years. He was both feared and respected and never carried a gun.*



*Left to right: Ethel Richardson and her mother Lua Williams. The store is on 11th Street and was operated by a Japanese named Tobias and later by Sam Dolphus.*



*Vernell Fountain and unknown friend. Dixie Manor in background.*

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and during the soldiers' encampment at Boca Raton in the 1940s. Nearly all of the respondents mentioned Chief Hugh Brown, called "Brownie," for over thirty years the chief law enforcement official with jurisdiction over Pearl City. Opinions on the chief varied. Emma Riggins noted, "there was a police chief named Brownie. I know him good because I worked for him, day work. . . . He was a mean man, they say, but there wasn't no trouble here either." Others found him to be a typical white man, who demanded that blacks remove their hats when speaking to him.

A process for addressing grievances existed within the community government which apparently helped lessen any racial tensions that arose. George Spain noted:

Its been rather quiet really, as far as blacks and whites. They've always had a pretty good relationship and we have tried over the years to keep it that way. We keep troubles from coming up. I worked on a housing board for a couple of years--the Human Relationship Board--and the ad hoc committee I worked on. What we tried to do is to make sure that we nipped most of that stuff in the bud right away. . . . We didn't have any really big outbreaks here in Boca.

For Louise Williams, the two communities were indeed separate; "everybody lived in their own community." Individuals, black and white, were friendly. She recalled, "No problems to speak of, like fighting among themselves, because you stayed in your community and did your thing, and they stayed in their community and did their things." "Mr. Brownie was a tough guy," said Lois Williams. "Tough on the colored people, especially the colored men. He'd beat them up. . . . He was really mean, but eventually he turned to be a pretty good person. After the Army came here and he had some incidences with the soldiers, he turned out to be very nice."

The former city manager Alan Alford, a white man, recalled "You were either a supporter or non-supporter of Chief Brown, but during some troubled periods he kept harmony in the city of Boca Raton when Delray was having problems." Generally, Chief Brown was credited with maintaining a calm atmosphere where racial conflict did not arise.

## EPILOGUE

This retrospective glance into the lives and attitudes of Pearl City residents indicates that the societies of the black man and the white man were indeed separate--educationally, residentially, and culturally; that racism was a thread that ran through the fabric of the Boca Raton community as a whole. But Pearl City was no different than any other southern city in Florida during the early decades of the twentieth century. Pearl City remained a cohesive all-black community whose inhabitants struggled collectively and individually to secure an economic foothold.

Local conditions, economic, geographic, and social, were instrumental in defining the societal place of the black people of Pearl City. The existing demand for farm labor and the concomitant opportunities for employment anchored the Negro immigrants to the lower echelon of the economic ladder in southern Florida during the first half of this century. Historically, the sole avenue for economic viability among the residents was to toil in the fields as laborers, the backbone of south Florida's agricultural and farming system. Struggling as tenants and sharecroppers on lands owned by white farmers was at first the only means for making a living. Land was cheap, however, and as the years passed, many of the Pearl City residents who were interviewed, were able to purchase small lots or own their own homes. Slowly, training opportunities for skilled and semi-skilled jobs began to open up. The Second World War era was a watershed--it ushered in new opportunities for advancement. The Pearl City work force during the period of the 1920s was filled predominantly with unskilled laborers, who farmed the expansive white-owned lands, planting thousands of acres and producing the vegetable crops that provided the economic underpinning of American society.

Although some blacks were employed by the local hotel trade or the federal air base by the 1940s, only a handful among those interviewed held jobs in later years as city employees or in any other professional category. By the 1950s and 1960s, however, a few of the minority immigrants owned small shops, grocery stores, or neighborhood businesses. In that time frame it becomes evident that the primary goal of most black locals during the early years of Pearl City's history was, according to those interviewed, owning a parcel of land on which to build a home.

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Most Pearl City blacks possessed a strong will which sparked a productive work ethic, and a desire to take advantage of available educational opportunities. Most individuals seemed to have an appreciation for learning as well as an awareness that schools could provide a route for new and varied jobs. They realized for the most part that education represented a climb up the rungs of the socio-economic ladder.

On a social level, a closeness and familiarity among the residents had persisted from the earliest days and continues to permeate the community. Many spokesmen commented with great feeling about the strong sense of neighborhood that historically existed in Pearl City. Geographically only a three or four square block area, Pearl City was never a "city" per se. It was always a cohesive community and each generation's members felt strong roots with the place.

Two constants are clearly evident in the oral history transcriptions: that a general consensus of responses among the interviewees existed and that the local cultural institutions were very strong. The reality of segregation and discrimination during the times prior to the enactment of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, and even years thereafter, did not escape the minds and hearts of the Pearl City residents. Attitudes communicated through the oral histories reflected little real anger or bitterness. Some individuals, however, did speak resentfully against the predominance of whites both economically and educationally, and decried the poor quality of schools, roads, and housing. In spite of the strength of local cultural institutions in Pearl City, it must not be forgotten that government power rested in the hands of whites, and that white injustices were perpetrated against those blacks who ventured outside the physical boundaries of Pearl City. This small community of minority Americans has for half a century existed as a fairly stable group with strong cultural institutions. Pearl City was a result of the racism that ran so deeply in the Deep South and which was founded upon the twin pillars of discrimination and segregation. Despite the inherent existence of a separate and unequal society, Pearl City citizens, many of them, were able to surmount the travails of economics and a forced social position to create powerful, stable cultural institutions that provided effective socializing links among the inhabitants. It seems apparent that the world of the Pearl City residents was a circumscribed one. Yet, gradually, the yoke of poverty lifted, and with the passage of time, the black migrants and their families began to witness a gradual assimilation, economically and socially, into American society.



*A religious revival meeting in Deerfield — 1911.*



*Chesebro Pepper farm at lunchtime.*



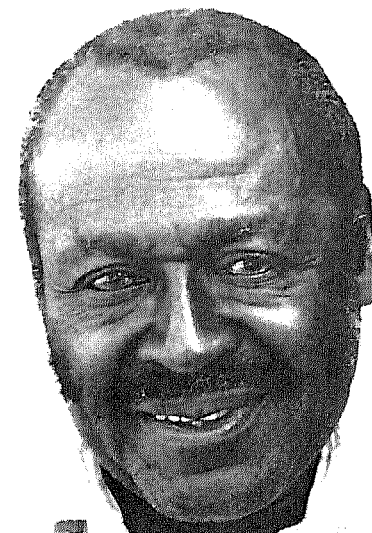
*Mrs. Swanson and her dog "Jack" — Circa early 1920's.*



*Who is this pretty lady? Does anyone know?*



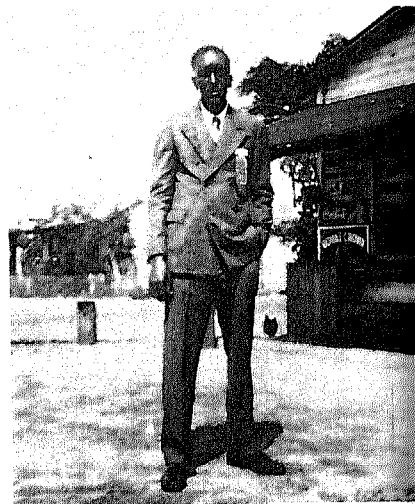
*Sallie (Mrs. Jasper) Dolphus*



*James Goddard*



*Ambro George. One of Boca Raton's earliest black settlers. His son O.D. George lives in Miami — Circa 1912-13.*



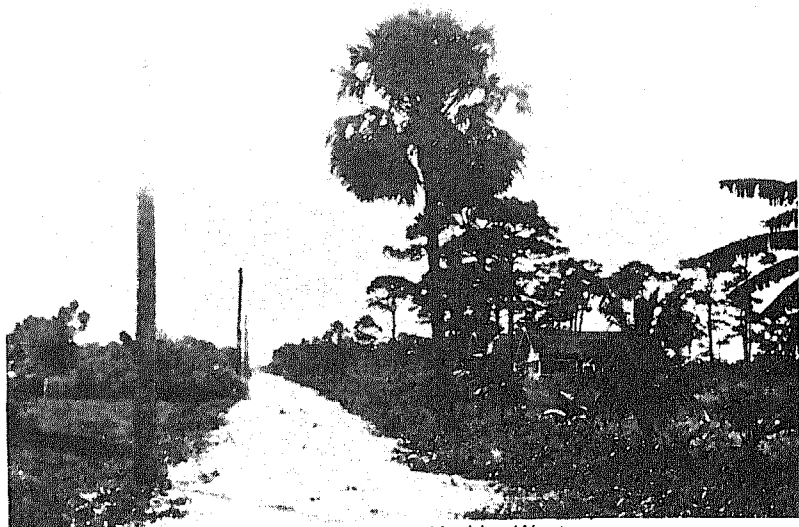
*Randolph Johnson standing in front of Willie Wright's store. His daughter Trudy lives in Pearl City.*



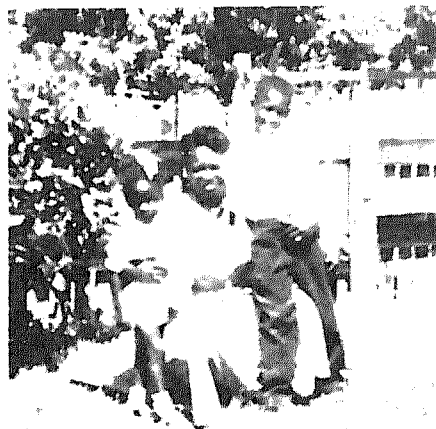
*Josephine Clark. Her husband was one of the early preachers at Ebenezer Baptist Church. She has a daughter, Dorothy Overstreet and a son, Dr. James Clark of North Carolina.*



*Annie Mae Bussey Johnson. Born in 1906 in Georgia. Her sister Regina was Alex Hughes first wife. She has a son Theodore.*



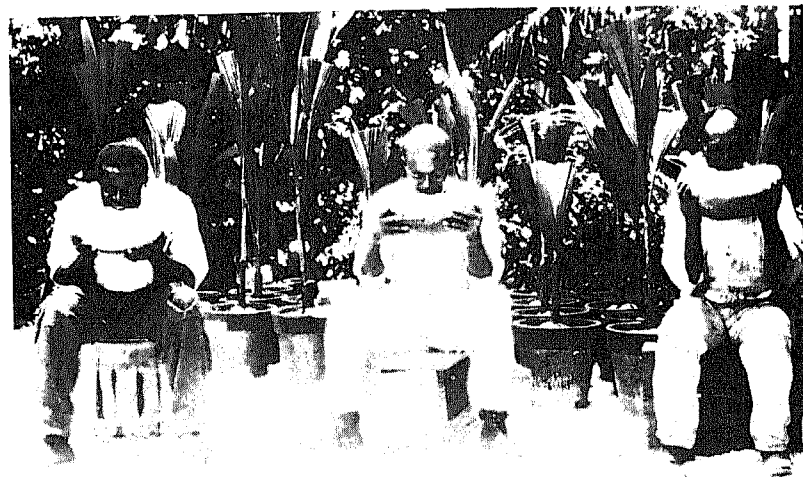
*Palmetto Park Road looking West.*



*Lila Mae Goddard, wife of James with Ella Mae and Marvin Goddard — late 1940's.*



*Albert Stevens*



*Chesebro Nursery — Time for a "Watermelon break." Left to right: Homer Goddard, Sr.; man identified only as Lee; and Will Demery who died in 1937.*



*Belle Demery with Pat and Barbara Demery and Marie and Agnes Garner — Circa late 1940's.*



*This man has been identified as Joe Butler, a fishing guide. He lived in Deerfield but "camped-out" in Boca Raton.*



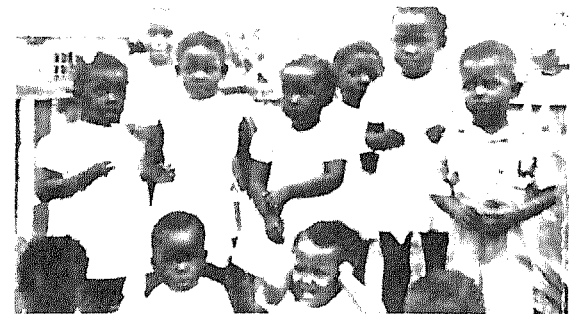
*This group of pretty girls belonged to a club at Roadman School in 1938-40. Left to right front row — Dorothy Clark; Virginia Clark & Altamese Cooper. Teacher/sponsor; Lillian Bryant. Back row — Estella Glades; Elle Goddard & Lois Dolphus.*



*Belle Demery and her daughter Sarah (Demery) Colden, the first black child born in Pearl City. Mrs. Demery died in 1957.*



*Minnie and Ambro George. Mr. George was one of the first black settlers.*



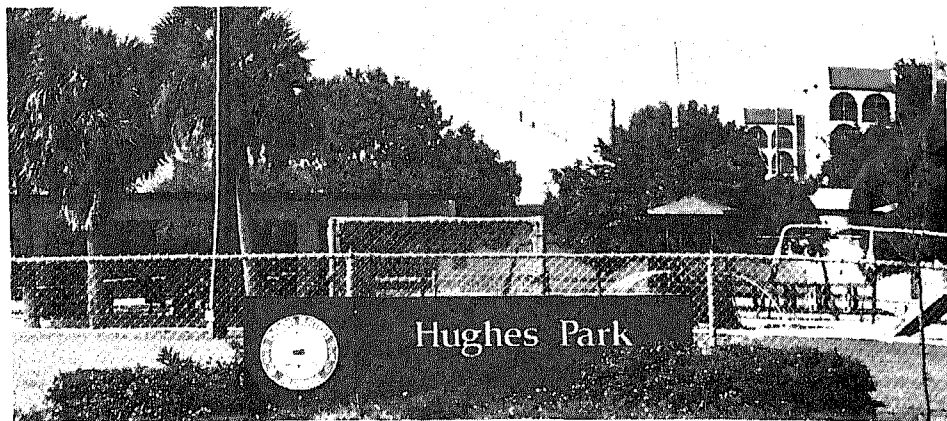
*The third generation. Bottom row: unidentified except third from left, Walter Garner, Jr. Second row: Rosetta Anderson; unknown; Birthday girl Carolyn Brown, daughter of A. Broyles. Others unknown. Third row: Jasper Bryant and Mattie Albury — Circa 1949.*



*Little girl in front is Barbara Demery, granddaughter of Will Demery. Her mother Dorothy is behind her. Girl in center is Carolyn Brown; Linda Fountain and L. Chapman are to her right.*



*Estelle Glades is the daughter of Idella Glades and the granddaughter of Sallie and Jasper Dolphus.*



*The City named this recreational Park in Pearl City in honor of Alex Hughes who moved to Boca Raton in 1914 from Deerfield.*



*Alex and Annie (Dolphus) Spain Hughes.*

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5. Diane Benedetto, "Childhood Memories," Spanish River Papers, n.p.
6. Spanish River Papers (May 1976).
7. Ibid. (February 1975).
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11. Boca Raton News (February 7, 1972).
12. Florida State Census, 1915.
13. Homer Goddard interview, quoted in Arthur Evans, "Pearl City: Black Perspectives of a Black Community in Southeast Florida."
14. Ibid.
15. Spanish River Papers (October 1977).
16. Emma Riggins interview, quoted in Evans, "Black Perspectives".
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19. Joseph Schwert, note in T. M. Rickards's personal file, 1984, Archives of the Boca Raton Historical Society.
20. Boca Raton News (February 7, 1972).
21. Mary Jenkins interview, quoted in Evans, "Black Perspectives".
22. Gary R. Mormino and George E. Pozzetta, The Immigrant World of Ybor City: Italians and Their Latin Neighbors in Tampa, 1885-1985, p. 291.
23. Wells, Forgotten Legacy, pp. 7-10.
24. George Long to T. M. Rickards, March 3, 1915. Archives of the Boca Raton Historical Society.
25. Ibid.

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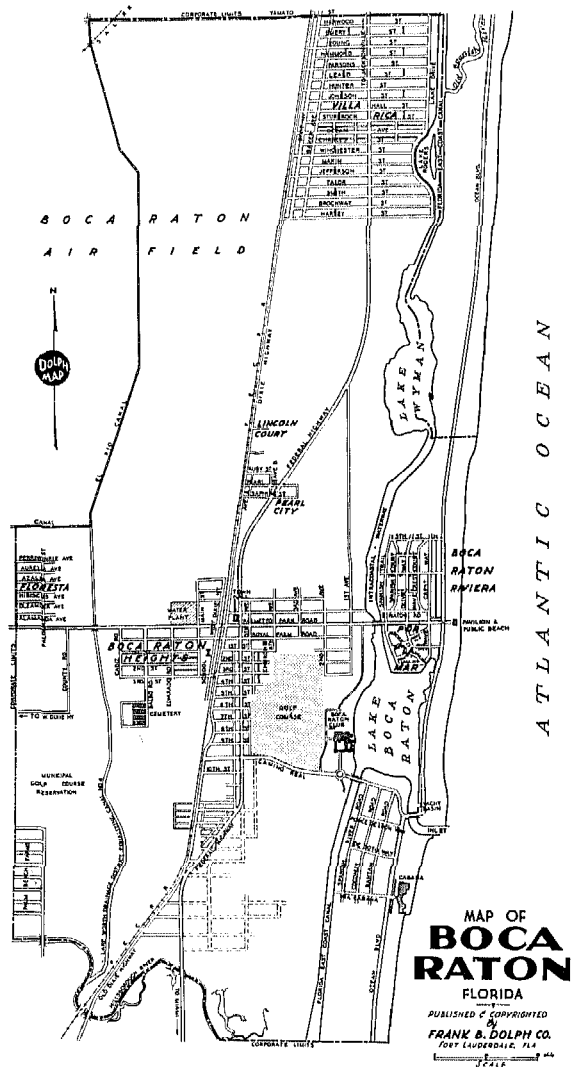
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*August H. Butts*



Back Cover:  
1946 Map of Boca Raton

Front Cover:  
Alex Hughes photograph taken in 1964,  
age 80 years