

Citrus County Early Black Families

Alexander

Beasley

Bellamy

Bostick

Brooks

Bunch

Carter

Collins

Copeland

Dabney

Edwards

Gibbs

Henry

Hopkins

Horton

King

James

Jefferson

Johnson

Jones

Joyner

Langely

Natteal

Norton

Richardson

Robinson

Scrivens

Simmons

Washington

Whaley

White

Williams

Wilson

Woods

CITRUS COUNTY BLACK PIONEER FAMILIES

Rev. Leroy Bellamy	Inverness
John Bostick	Dunnellon
Isaiah Brooks	Crystal River
Robert L. Collins	Inverness
Fred Copeland	Crystal River
Archie Dabney	<i>INVERNESS - ?</i>
A. G. Gibbs	Inverness
Mandy King	<i>INVERNESS - ?</i>
Anna Robinson	Inverness
"Tuna" Whaley	Crystal River
Ely White	Inverness
Arthur Norton	Inverness

Chronicle November 7, 1989 - Crystal River

"Tuna" Whaley - a member of one of the earliest families of Crystal River. Whaley is 80 years old. He spent his youth with his father, who worked out in the turpentine camps. Whaley worked for A. D. Williams transporting cedar for the mills. He, like Arthur Norton worked shucking oysters for L. C. Yeomans, who owned a fish house in Crystal River. He told of going out to Old Town as Homosassa was known then taking his oxen by barge to an island, then hauling logs to the waters' edge. He knew Johnnie Head, a fisherman and prominent Scotch storekeeper, MacRae. "Tuna" was raised with the Waddingtons and DuBusks and the Browns. Whaley and his wife, Sara had eleven children.

Whaley's knowledge of the waterways ^{was} ~~was~~ of great help in building U. S. 19 from Homosassa to Ozello. He was first bell boy at the Homosassa Springs Hotel in the 1900's. DaZzy Vance owned the hotel. Whaley was in charge of "clearing up" 22 acres of the Three Sisters Springs in 1961 so canals could be built. He was caretaker at the Holiday Inn. Mr. ^{W. Whaley} ~~Whaley~~ owns several prints from the old Magnolia Lodge located near Port Paradise.

CHRONICLE NOVEMBER 7, 1989 - CRYSTAL RIVER

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R.M. SPIRES 1960 CHRONICLE

Mrs. Freddie Lee Simmons and her son, Ronald Bernard Graham were in the same graduating class of 1960 from Booker T. Washington School. Mrs. Simmons was 37 years old, her son, 18.

Mrs. Simmons was the daughter of Mr. & Mrs. Mose Waters. She was born in Crystal River on September 24, 1924. The family later moved to Hernando. Freddie Lee started school in Hernando. The school was in a local church with no equipment except used text books and one teacher having an enrollment of 60 or more children. The children got on their knees to use the seats for desks when they had to write. The only blackboard was a window shade painted with lamp black. But the urge and desire to learn was extremely strong. One pupil who completed the eighth grade found work in Ocala and completed his high school grades and going on from there to A & M College in Tallahassee.. He now has a civil service position in the Post Office in Miami.

Freddie Lee went on to St. Petersburg to attend David Elementary and Gibbs High School. She left school in her sophomore year to marry Coy Simmons. They returned to Hernando when the phosphate business reopened.

But Freddie Lee still had the urge to complete her education. After the birth of her 6th child she returned to night classes at the Adult Education at Booker T. Washington High School in Inverness.

A quote from Ronald's mother, "I think one of the most thrilling experiences of my life was to march on the stage with my son to receive my diploma."

R. M. Spires - 1960 Chronicle

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Gilliam Washington. The Brown Mayo family, cousins of R.L. Collines and Phelan Harris. Raymond Roberts also lived in Pleasant Grove community. The Collins family has a photo of Harris and Roberts with Washington in their home.

Washington was the grandfather of Robert L. Collins. He was granted 40 acres and a mule by the U.S. Government following the freeing of the slaves after the Civil War. He settled in what is now Citrus County. Robert Collins father married Washington's daughter, Agnes. Land was left to Agnes's husband with the stipulation that Agnes' mother be cared for. Washington added three more sections for a total of 120 acres and he later purchased an additional 80 acres down on the prairie at 29¢ an acre. He lost this 80 acres because he was unable to pay the taxes during the Depression.

Gilliam Washington died May 1931 at age 76.

JOHN BOSTIC - DUNNELLON

First Black City Council member

First Black Mayor

First Black Police Officer

Chronicle, November 17, 1990 = Esther Duncan

ISIAH BROOKS

Born in Crystal River, 1913 in a house owned by Ronnie Willis. He lives on Rock Crusher Road. Brooks is a member of one of Citrus County's oldest families. The family moved to Rock Crusher Road in 1922 where members of the family still reside. His father was a Cherokee Indian from North Carolina. Brooks describes his father as seven feet tall and weighing 300 pounds. Brooks words, "I never seen a man as big as he." Isaiah and wife had ten children. He owned 80 acres with help from the Allen family who lived in Lecanto.

The County requested that a road be built through the Brooks land to haul rocks to build Road 490 at Homosassa. Brooks remembers the long ago history of moving the old Mannfield Courthouse in 1891. He knew and worked for Dazzy Vance when Vance built his H0mosassa Hotel.

St. Petersburg Times - 1966

CLAUDE BROOKS

Mr. Brooks - 47 years old, father of 3 children, a building contractor.
Elected to Crystal River Council, the first Black ever to be elected
in Citrus County history and one of a few in Florida history.

"Back Home" - Hampton Dunn - Page 72

The Black families in the community of Pleasant Grove during the early 1900's were Lib Deaver, his sons Dave and Babe; Gillam Washington, whose grandson was Robert L. Collins. The Brown Mayo family also lived in this area.

"Back Home" - Hampton Dunn - Page 376 -Citrus County 1953

Mandy King - born in Slavery in Virginia died in Newberry, Fla., January 15 at age 109. She had twelve children, 40 grandchildren, 66 great grands and 18 great,great grands.. Survivors who live in Inverness, two children, Ellen Williams and Johnny King and five grandchildren, Eli White, Irene Jones, Arthur White, Viola Green and Liddy Williams.

Chronicle September 9 & 20, 1990 - Inverness

A. G. Gibbs - born 1931, died September 19, 1990.

Gibbs, a life long resident of Citrus County. He and his wife, Chris had 5 children. Mr. Gibbs was a maintenance worker at the Pleasant Grove Elementary School for many years. He was a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, now Inverness Middle School. He served in World War 2 as a Medical Technican. He worked for DRs. Osterhour and Jenkins for twenty years. He was elected to the Inverness City Council in 1977. His priorities - complete recreation facilities at Whispering Pines Park. Gibbs was instrumental forming the youth leagues for football and baseball. He helped support and worked for the efforts in building affordable non-profit housing authority for Inverness residents. He was known as the "peacemaker" during controversial meetings of the Inverness City Council. Also known as a quiet and gentle man.

CHRONICLE JANUARY 16, 1985 FLORAL CITY

Arthur Norton - born March 4, 1877, Citrus County's oldest resident. Two daughters, Cora aged 60 lives in Paris, Kentucky and Ana Robinson, 73 who makes her home in Floral City.

CHRONICLE FEBRUARY 12, 1986

Arthur Norton was born the the son of former slaves in Jefferson County. Came to Floral City with his wife, Clementine more than 80 years ago. They cleared land and built their home next to a wagon trail that today U.S. 4241 runs through Floral City. The Nortons had 9 children. As a young man growing up in Floral City he hunted in the area and also on Pine Island in Hernando County. He knew Dr. Gail Osterhout as a baby. Norton was a patient of Dr. Osterhout. Arthur died February 9, 1986. He is remembered as a kind, generous and helpful person. His funeral services were held at the Citrus County Fairgrounds. He was a founding member of the Mt. Carmel Methodist Church. Norton was 109 years old when he died.

St. Petersburg Times - October 11, 1990 - Hernando

CLYDE ALEXANDER

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He and his wife, Joyce had 12 children. The Alexanders home is situated off North Railroad Way just west of U. S. 41 and north of County Road 486.

ARCHIE DABNEY - Pictures 1 & 2

Archie Dabney was an educator and teacher. He began his career as a teacher at Booker T. Washington School in Inverness (now Inverness Middle School). He then became the assistant principal at Crystal River High School, was the first principal of the Lecanto High School and then became principal of Citrus Springs Elementary School.

A former student, Gary H. Medley, remembers Archie Dabney with these words:

The late '60's and early '70's were turbulent times for black and white students in Citrus County trying to cope with forced integration.

Coach Dabney was like the calm in the eye of the storm.

We trusted him and knew that no matter what was happening in our lives, we could talk to Coach.

If ever a father figure walked the halls of Crystal River High, it was Archie Dabney.

This tall Black man was teacher, coach, counselor, and friend.

These words do not altogether describe what Coach Dabney was to those of us who have been privileged to share in the life of this tall black sage.

What he was to us transcended the relationship between teacher and student.

Dabney recalls, "Although a few fights broke out during desegregation, there weren't any disputes that the faculty and I could not handle".

He and former county Sheriff Dean would walk side by side through the school to prevent violence.

"They had us two big ogres," he fondly recalls, "patrolling the hallways, and so it worked out".

Dabney 2003

FREDEREICK W. COPELAND - Pictures 3 & 4

Frederick W. Copeland was born on July 2, 1917 in Crystal River, Florida. Frederick attended the local Citrus County School at Lincoln Elementary through the fifth grade. Grades 6 was completed in Suwannee County and grades 7 and 8 at Pine Mount where his mother taught.

There was no local high school in Crystal River so Frederick entered the Howard Academy High School in Ocala, Florida for the 9th grade, attended 10th grade at Lincoln High School in Bradenton and then completed secondary studies at Howard Academy. During this time Frederick lived with relatives in Ocala during the week and then walked back to Crystal River on the weekends to work at Allen's Barber Shop. He graduated from Howard Academy in 1938 as salutatorian

At his mother's urging, Frederick took the teacher's examination in 1938 and started teach. Frederick desired more education and began attending college during the summers in the following year. When he was a junior at Florida A & M College, he received a senatorial scholarship that aided him to the extent of \$200 annually while he completed his schooling.

He was teaching school in Trenton when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. He immediately resigned his position and enlisted in the military in 1942. He was assigned to active duty at Fort Eustis in Virginia where he was injured by the handle of a 40-millimeter gun and a 600-pound weapon. His injuries resulted in his being hospitalized for four months in Thomasville, Georgia. He was discharged as a result of his extensive injuries on July 22, 1944.

Frederick was given the job of principal at George Washington Carver Elementary in 1946. He took a leave in 1948 to attend Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University and he completed his studies for a bachelor of science on May 29, 1951. He was reappointed principal of George Washington Carver until 1961.

He continued teaching after he relocated to Baltimore, Maryland, but due to family obligations he returned to Crystal River. He applied for a miscellaneous license from the City of Crystal River. That was the beginning of Frederick W. Copeland and Associates, an accounting and anything else firm. He commenced business in 1966.

Copeland 2003

He began to purchase dilapidated properties with the intent to renovate them and improve the neighborhood. This hobby also allowed another conduit for personal pleasure. Because of his civic involvement and interested in the youth, the City of Crystal River recognized his efforts by dedicating the neighborhood park to him and christened it as the Frederick W. Copeland Park in 1983.

In his search for excellence, Frederick continues to be a role model to his family. He genuinely derives joy from seeing others happy, accomplishing goals and offering encouragement to those in his path. His motto is "let me live by the side of the road, and be a friend to man."

MARJORIE COPELAND - Pictures 5 & 6

Marjorie was born on July 10, 1932. She worked for Florida Power for 20 years as a customer service representative. In January 1985, she became the 2nd Black citizen elected to City Council. In January 1997, she became the 1st Black Citizen elected president of the City Council in Crystal River - Citrus County, Florida.

Copeland 2003

REVEREND LEROY BELLAMY - Picture 7

Reverend Bellamy began his ministries over 50 years ago. He has led the Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City for the past 40 years. He has never missed an Easter Sunrise Service in all those years.

His many awards include: Humanitarian Award, Citrus County Citizen of the Year, Citrus County Service to Mankind.

Reverend Bellamy Remembers How It Was:

The "hanging tree" on Ft. Cooper Road. Some 80 years ago when a black man killed a policeman in Floral City, he hid but soon was caught and he was hanged.

"It was tough back in them days," he said.

"When we would go to the theater, the blacks had to go upstairs. When we went to the market and white folks were inside, we had to wait until they were done before we went in".

"We had separate bathrooms and drinking fountains."

"I worked as a cook in a "whites only" restaurant. I could serve the food, but I wasn't allowed to eat it there."

"We didn't go to white churches - we couldn't go there".

Bellamy 2005

received his Bachelor of Science (B.S.) degree from the recently assigned university status of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University winning a Lewis State Scholarship. It was during this time that he met his wife-to-be, Euna Mable McKinnon, whom he married on July 29, 1956.

He subsequently pursued graduate studies at both FAMU and the University of Florida, receiving his Masters Degree in Administration and Supervision at FAMU during the summer of 1967. Retiring from the position of Director of Personnel for the Citrus County School System on June 30, 1995, W.L. has held numerous teaching and administrative positions in education throughout his career.

W.L. had a long history of service to the church and community. At Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, W.L. is a deacon, Church Coordinator, and Director of Christian Education. He has served as an Assistant Superintendent and as the Superintendent of the Sunday School. Additionally, he has served as the chairman of the Auxiliary Board to the Second Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Association in Ocala, FL.

His commitment to family and the strong influences of an agricultural and administrative background and Christian character, combined with his being the eldest of 10 children in a poor southern share-cropper's family, thrust W.L. into roles of family and community leadership throughout his career. He willingly and effectively filled those roles on numerous occasions.

He and his wife have been blessed with one daughter and one granddaughter and the family now resides in Crystal River, FL.

Roberson 2003

DREAM

Continued from Page 1A

of First United Methodist Church in Inverness and vice president of the CCCA.

"It's also fitting and appropriate to come together as a community to honor the elderly among us, such as Leroy Bellamy, a man who has been a monument of faithfulness."

Wilkins said the support of the entire county has been tremendous, especially First Baptist Church, First Presbyterian Church and First United Methodist Church, all in Inverness. He said as members of the clergy association were getting together to talk about how they could help their colleague and friend, members of the community had begun meeting for the same reason.

John Sullivan, Inverness city councilman and director of county courts, was one of that group. Sullivan said they had thought Bellamy was almost finished, but discovered he was still \$30,000 short.

As a group, they started spreading the word to others across Citrus County: "Help us help our friend." Sullivan said the money started pouring in. Even though they are currently about \$6,000 short, they told the builder, Rodney Wilburn, to go ahead and finish.

"Leroy Bellamy has done a lot for this

66 Leroy Bellamy has done a lot for this community, and he's an easy man to love. ... He epitomizes what we should all be like. "

John Sullivan
Inverness city councilman.

community, and he's an easy man to love," Sullivan said. "I've known him for many years, and he's always been a hero to me. He epitomizes what we should all be like. To him, there aren't black people and white people, but just people."

Those who know Bellamy know he's a man of faith. He said he has known all along this day would come — even when months went by and he didn't have any funds to pay construction costs. He has always operated on a pay-as-you-go basis. When he had the money, he would call the builder. When the money ran out, he would simply pray and ask God to send him some more.

"That's the way God works," he said. "He done it all, but he gets the people involved. God works through the people."

It's the people who give the money."

Right now, all that's needed is the finishing touches, some landscaping and a new front on the old church building so it looks like the new building.

The pews are on order.

Bellamy's eager to see it finished, although he has something else on his mind these days. He wants the people in the community to know that when he preaches his first sermon in his new church, there will be a new pastor's wife.

At 88, Bellamy's getting married.

"I'm getting old, and it's not good for a man to be alone," he said. "If I don't stay with her but a short time, I'll feel I've done what God wanted me to do."

When the church is finally finished, Bellamy plans on having a weeklong celebration for the entire community to come and see what God has done with their money. He wants the schools to bring the students over too — like a field trip, he said.

And he wants the churches in the area to use his building to conduct services for their own people. He said this is the people's church. Still, he's looking forward to that day when he takes the pulpit.

"I've been thinking about this for a long, long time," he said. "My kids are buying me a new robe; they want me to look good. I'm already getting ready — ready, ready, ready. I'm praying about that."

"You know, I'm no fancy preacher. I'm just Bellamy — and I got to obey God."

Dream come true

*Minister's faith in God,
community proves fruitful*

NANCY KENNEDY
nkennedy@chronicleonline.com
Chronicle

Three years ago, the Rev. Leroy Bellamy had a dream to build a church.

He likes to tell the story of the time he went to the bank to see about getting some money to build it. He figured \$75,000 ought to be enough.

After he laid out his plans, the banker agreed to lend him the money.

Bellamy said he looked at him and laughed. "I'm an old man!" he told him. "How am I goin' to pay it back?"

So, the octogenarian minister turned to the community for help, and the community came through

for him. Now, three years later, Leroy Bellamy is about to see his dream come true.

Through the combined effort of local clergy, civic leaders and people in Citrus County who consider Bellamy a community treasure, Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City is scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

"We had a service out at Lecanto the other night and raised

about \$1,600," Bellamy said, referring to the Thanksgiving Eve service at Curtis Peterson Auditorium sponsored by the Citrus Christian Clergy Association (CCCA). The offering that night was designated to go toward the completion of the church.

"We thought (that) to honor the man who had been in ministry the longest in Citrus County was fitting for Thanksgiving," said Max Wilkins, pastor

“ That’s
the way God
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gets the people
involved. ”

**The Rev. Leroy
Bellamy**
describing how his church
was completed.

St. Petersburg Times - October 11, 1990 = Hernando
Clyde Alexander - 72 years old - died October 7, 1990.

Mr. Alexander was well known throughout Citrus County.

He hauled ice before there were refrigerators. Local youths including Charles Dean, now Citrus County Sheriff, helped move ice. Alexander later hauled rock from mines in Brooksville and Dunnellon and in the past few years sold boiled peanuts and soda and collected aluminum cans to raise cash.

He and his wife, Joyce had 12 children. The Alexanders home is situated off North Railroad Way just west of U. S. 41 and north of Citrus County Road 486.

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Times photo — V. JANE WINDSOR

Clyde Alexander's son Douglas and daughter Travis stand outside the house where their father lived.

'He's going to be really missed'

■ Clyde Alexander, who was well known in Citrus, died Sunday. Friends and family gather at his house to honor his memory.

By JIM ROSS
Times Staff Writer

HERNANDO — The neighborhood where Clyde Alexander lived almost is invisible from the main roads. It's quiet, lined with trees and tucked beside the bed of an abandoned railroad.

But the remoteness of his home did not keep Alexander from becoming visible and well-liked by many throughout Citrus County during his 72 years.

Alexander, who died Sunday of a heart attack, delivered ice to many Citrus County homes in the days before electric refrigerators. Family members say local youths, in-

cluding Charles Dean, who later became the county sheriff, would run behind the ice truck and help move ice.

Alexander later hauled rock from mines in Brooksville and Dunnellon and, in the past few years, sold boiled peanuts and soda and collected aluminum cans to raise cash.

"Everybody knew him. If anybody wanted a good job done, they asked him to do it," Alexander's daughter, Linda Simmons, said.

Those who do not know Alexander may know at least one of his 12 children. Mrs. Simmons is a credit and collection manager at Citrus Memorial Hospital; sons Wyndell and Douglas work at the Citrus County Sheriff's Office; daughter Stephanie works in food service at Heritage Health Care Center; and the list goes on.

Family members and friends gathered this week to remember Alexander. They sat



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elcome to information, call

ndo

Civic Club will hold its monthly breakfast from 8 to 11 a.m. Saturday at the clubhouse on Parsons Point Road. The menu will include pancakes, eggs, sausage or ham, coffee and juice. Cost is \$2.50.

Auxiliary to Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4337 will offer games at 11 a.m. Saturday at the clubhouse on State Road 200. The auxiliary has a thrift shop open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. Used and large-size clothing and shoes are needed. Proceeds go to cancer research. The canteen will be open for coffee, tea and beverages.

Sassa
County 4-H will hold a jubilee at 7 p.m. at the Homosassa Elementary School. All are invited to learn what 4-H clubs are doing now and what the organization has planned for the future.

Methodist Church of Homosassa will hold a sale from 9 a.m. to noon Saturday. Available items include children's and adult clothing and appliances.

Sassa Springs

Elks Lodge 2693 will sponsor a luncheon at 5:30 p.m. Saturday to help pay for a liver transplant for Catherine Ann of Homosassa. Sandwiches, salads and coffee will be available. The public is invited. For information, call 628-1221.
Homosassa Springs recently elected new officers. They are Harry Powell, president; Paul Powell, first vice

Mark O'Connell, secretary and Don Gray, treasurer. The installing officer was Herb Foley, lieutenant governor of Division 7 of the Florida District. Paul Wohlsten, Harry Willson, Charles Cole, Okey Ryan, Herb Foley, Jerry Scher and Jancie Warren were presented with distinguished service awards.

Inglis

Citrus Cyclist's Bicycle Club will meet for a "Show and Go" ride at 9 a.m. Saturday at the Food Ranch Store on U.S. 19. All cyclists, regardless of age and the type of riding they enjoy, are welcome to join the recreational bicycling club. For information, call Mike at 795-7789.

Inverness

Ladies Auxiliary to Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 4337 will hold an old-fashioned boiled dinner for members who helped build the post at 6 p.m. Saturday at the post home on State Road 44 E. This will be a sit-down dinner with servers. Two new smoke-eaters have been installed at the post. Cost is \$3.50. For information, call 637-0882 or 637-2099.

Inverness Squares will hold a plus-level dance Saturday at the East Citrus Community Center on State Road 44. Reath Blickenderfer will call the squares, and Sunni and Jerry Thomas will cue the rounds beginning at 8 p.m. Early rounds are at 7:30. Members are asked to bring a pie for refreshments and also are reminded that the group is collecting canned goods for the needy.

Inverness Elks Lodge 2522 will serve a full dinner menu at 6 p.m. Saturday at its lodge in Hernando for members and their guests.

p.m. Wednesday at the library.

The first film examines the history of the western film and recognizes such western actors as Tom Mix, Roy Rogers, James Stewart, Henry Fonda and John Wayne.

The Black West details the experiences of African-American cowboys and settler families in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Coastal Region Library

CRYSTAL RIVER — Hospice of Citrus County will conduct a Bereavement Group meeting from 2 to 4 p.m. Friday at the Coastal Region Library. The group helps those who need to share experiences, talk to friends and learn to deal with their grief.

Consumer advocate Alfred Merz will speak about land selection for building a home at 7 p.m. Monday at the library.

He will explain how to select land, what to investigate, how to coordinate house and land and how to avoid buying worthless land. A question-and-answer session will follow his presentation.

Walter Huffman will speak about "Changing America" at his

Center
INVERNESS
 Behind Golden Coral
 In Walmart Plaza
726-7474

SAURDAY 10-5; SUNDAY 12-5

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1 WEEK ONLY!
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596-7698
 4576 Commercial Way
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 American Eye Center
 Just South of Guido's

HOURS:
 Mon.-Fri. 9:30-5:00
 Sat. 9:30-2:00
 *Not good w/any other offer



THURSDAY, OCTOBER 11, 1990

PEOPLE

Resident is remembered

HERNANDO — The neighborhood where Clyde Alexander lived is lined with trees and tucked beside the bed of an abandoned railroad.

But the remoteness of his home

did not keep him from becoming well-liked by many throughout Citrus County during his 72 years.

Alexander, who died Sunday of a heart attack, delivered ice to many Citrus homes in the days before electric refrigerators.

Family members say youths, including Charles Dean, who became the county sheriff, would help move ice.



ALEXANDER:
Was well-liked by many.

Alexander later hauled rock from mines in Brooksville and Dunnellon and, in the past few years, sold boiled peanuts and soda.

"If anybody wanted a good job done, they asked him to do it," his daughter, Linda Simmons, said.

Those who do not know Alexander may know at least one of his 12 children. Mrs. Simmons is a credit and collection manager at Citrus Memorial Hospital; sons Wyndell and Douglas work at the Citrus County Sheriff's Office and daughter Stephanie works in food service at Heritage Health Care Center.

Family members and friends gathered this week to remember Alexander. They sat in his home off N Railroad Way, just west of U.S. 41 and north of County Road 486, and talked to his widow, Joyce.

His children recalled an emphasis on education: All 12 graduated from high school; some attended college.

Alexander

from Page 1

in his home off N Railroad Way, just west of U.S. 41 and north of County Road 486, and talked to his widow, Joyce. Dean was among the visitors.

Larry Tribble, who lives down the block, said he enjoyed sitting under trees with Alexander cooling off and telling jokes.

Alexander's children remember their father's emphasis on education: All 12 children graduated from high school and some attended college.

"You couldn't live in my dad-

dy's house and not go to school," Mrs. Simmons said.

"After he came home for dinner, he didn't leave the house," Johnell Alexander said. In the past few years, when most of the children moved out of the house, Alexander wanted to see them as often as possible.

"It's like he was still raising his kids," Johnell Alexander said.

The Rev. David Houston, pastor of churches in Holder and Dunnellon, described Alexander as "a real kind man. He wasn't a trouble maker. He was a real busy man — a good provider for his family.

"He's going to be really missed."

ANDERSON, JIM

Dangerous dreamer

By Jack Hayes

OoN

the crowded wall of the Olde Mill House Gallery and Printing Museum in jungly Old Homosassa, Florida, right behind a fully functional, 150-year-old Ostrander hand letterpress, hangs a framed excerpt from T E Lawrence poem:

*All men dream, but not equally.
Those who dream by night
in the dusty recesses of their minds
wake in the day to find it was vanity.*

*The dreamers of the day are dangerous men.
They may act on their dreams
with open eyes to make it possible.*

Applying those standards, one would have to conclude that Jim Anderson — the museum's creator, curator, owner and tour guide — dreams 24 hours a day. He's a dangerous man for sure (or could be if he bent his body-builder's physique to activities more threatening than laying ink on paper), and he enjoys exploring the dusty recesses not just of his mind but of the many print shops he has seen and smelled and sweated in during his 35 years as a printer.

He's a man who professes and usually achieves an admirable degree of modesty, but his volubility testifies to a healthy level of vanity as well. Get him talking and he's as likely to tell you about the blues band for which he plays bass guitar and whose CD is for sale in the sunny museum café and art gallery as he is to explain the evolution of printing from Gutenberg's modified wine press to George Gordon's Franklin press.

Asked to explain why he started the museum, Anderson waxes on about thought patterns and dreams and ideas that get stuck in the heads of a certain kind of person. "Gutenberg, he had this idea in his head," Anderson says.

Couldn't get it out until he did something about it.

Seeing that the age of letterpress was on the wane, Anderson wracked his brain a few years ago for a way to preserve the spirit of the age, to keep alive the memories of people like his good friend Don Rogers, whose enthusiasm for printing stayed with him until his early death, and to share with non-printers the romance of letterpress printing trade.

The idea for the museum café came from the Castillo family in Tampa's now-trendy Latin quarter, who converted their ancient letterpress print shop into a successful restaurant when they realized their business would soon be outmoded.

Without Anderson and his fountain of dreams and his open, talkative, embracing nature, his museum would be, as retired third-generation Linotypist and Anderson friend John Bennett put it recently, "a collection of junk that most people would feel is valueless."

Bennett loves the museum, as does almost anyone who has ever toiled in the inkish trade and somehow managed to find his or her way to this wonderful little re-

pository of Jim Anderson's dusty dreams. Bennett loves that Anderson loves the printing trade, that a relatively young man appreciates the old machinery enough to keep it running and put it on display: the intricate clickety-clacking, heat-radiating Mergenthaler Linotype machines; the sturdy iron, treadle-powered Franklin letterpresses on which Anderson learned to print before moving on to a wheezing old Kluge automatic platen press of the sort that sits heavily on the floor of his museum next to a ponderous and well-stocked California job cabinet.

Yes, though he's only 47, Anderson once set type by hand from a job case. He can read backward and upside down as printers were required to do for a few centuries after Gutenberg invented moveable type, and he's more than happy to demonstrate his skill for visitors. Anderson began his career as a printer's devil in a black corner of a print shop in Tampa, picking type out of a hell box like the one on display in the museum and returning it to its rightful place in the case. He learned to mind his p's and q's as well as any before him, and he learned to love the trade, especially the memorable (human) characters he ran into: the bent-over old Cuban cigar rollers he met while working in a cigar box factory in Tampa's Latin quarter, the tramp printers who'd stumble out of boxcars and into his shop looking for work a few times a year, the lady Linotypist whose fingers danced across that strange keyboard like a concert pianist's.

Anderson collects personalities as avidly as he collects old printing stuff. For reasons he can't quite explain, he has always been particularly attracted to older people and things and times. In the recesses of his dream-ridden brain has flickered the thought that he was born in the wrong era, that he should have worked alongside Benjamin Franklin or at least had a chance, a century later, to help ex-slave and abolitionist Frederick Douglass publish his journal. Anderson keeps a 1924 Model T Ford in his garage and wears the same style of spit-shined, high-top shoes his dapper granddad Willie wore. He has packed his museum with enough cool, old printing stuff to please the most experienced letterpress craftsman.

Like his museum, Anderson is a throwback, a living, breathing tribute to a nearly lost age. His museum rests in the shadows of a forest of mossy old oak trees and sky high pines and across the street from the ruins of an historic antebellum sugar mill that once was the center of a sugar plantation, all of which gives the setting the same comfortably antiquated air as the contents of the museum itself. For Anderson and his print-wise visitors, it's a dangerous day-dream come true.

If you decide to drop by the museum, be sure to give Jim a call in advance if you can — 352-628-1081. Five bucks or a good story about your days in the trade will get you a personal tour of the museum by its curator. Anderson welcomes groups of all kinds.

Jack Hayes, the writer of this piece, is a dabber in the printing trade and a former writer for Life magazine and many other publications. He is now working with Anderson on a book about Anderson's life and craft.

Old Mill House & Printing Museum
10466 West Yulee Drive—Hwy 490
Old Homosassa, Florida

The art of printing

By Terry Connelly
Chronicle writer

IT SEEMS THERE couldn't be a more ideal location than Old Homosassa for the soon to be opened Olde Mill House Gallery and Printing Museum, which is just a hoe handle and a wink from the Yulee Sugar Mill historical site.

The giant meshed iron grinding gears of the mill fall right into place as a backdrop for the slap and rhythmic clacks of old, intricate and ponderous hand-cranked printing presses and the mechanical genius of Mergenthaler's Linotype legacy to the printed word.

The museum, scheduled to open the end of October, is a dream come true for 44-year-old Jim Anderson, a native Floridian, who harbored his concept since his early years as printer's apprentice in Tampa.

"My plan is also to show how the arts and printing

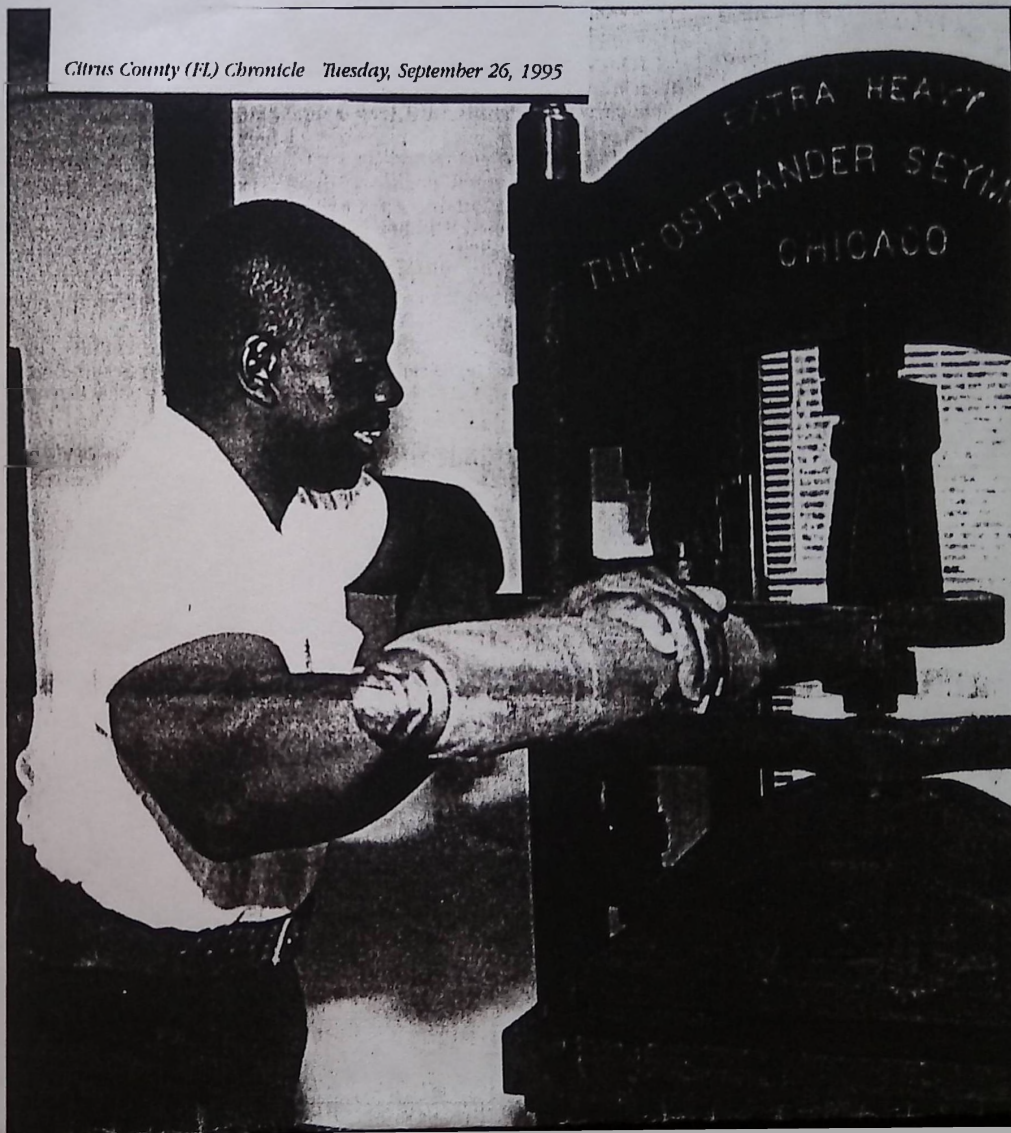
hangings, Anderson has created printer's "negative art" in old type galley trays, which are pieces of art in themselves, made of finely tooled copper and smooth time-worn oak.

He's made use of upside down and backwards type slugs to fashion free associations such as 1969 — love, war, Apollo space mission. Or another, inspired by his birth year, 1951, and his wife Jane's, 1954, joined with the word love.

He uses "love" a lot and it's most evident when he talks of the equipment he has gathered for the displays while his hands wander over their smooth surfaces and well-oiled worm gears. It seems his eyes get a far away look with the realization the mechanisms are now mostly replaced by computer machines that can be carried around by a child.

Anderson was born in Thonotosassa, a rural Hillsborough County community. He moved to Tampa

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle Tuesday, September 26, 1995



what my trade is based on," Anderson explained.

To that end he is melding the printing equipment displays with the works of local artists.

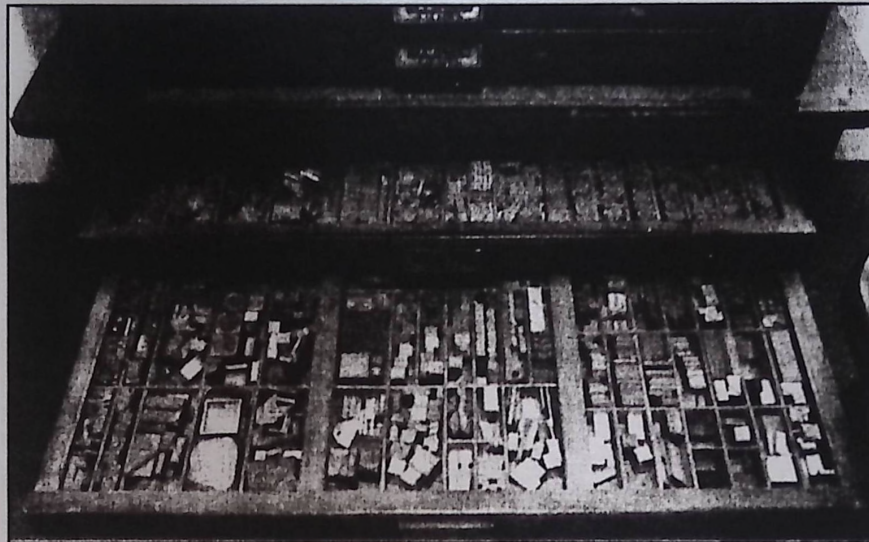
"I'm looking to discover what I call 'closet artists' in an alliance to exhibit and sell their paintings," he said. "The works will be original local art — no copies. Each is one of a kind."

When the gallery opens the renderings of Homosassa's Debbie Austin and Marilyn McComb (who is Anderson's neighbor in Sugarmill Woods), Ozello's Anne Welch and longtime Homosassa visitor Joy Caruso of Tampa will hang on the walls. The art works depict scenes of water birds, manatees, trees and various Citrus County flora and fauna. Included is an oil of a never to be seen again working mullet fisherman hauling in his nets.

As an adjunct to the art

when he was about 10 and went on to Brewster Vocational High School, which had a printer's program of high regard in the city.

Please see **ART**, Page 2A



Jana Thompson/The Chronicle

Above: Jim Anderson operates a platen letter press, one of the many pieces he has collected for years from the printing industry. Anderson is sharing his love of the printing profession by opening the Olde Mill House Gallery and Printing Museum across from the old sugar mill in Old Homosassa. **Right:** One of the many items on display is a hand set type cabinet with drawers filled with metal cast letters and symbols. Jim Anderson plans to offer educational tours for school children once the museum is in full swing.

ART

continued from Page 1A ²

"I knew I needed a trade or else I'd be washing dishes for the rest of my life," he recalled. "When I learned Brewster was all shop with only three regular classes I decided that was for me, but I never knew how much I would grow to love it.

He said after graduation he worked for "oodles of printers" always with the idea tucked away to some day open his own business, which he did 14 years ago with his wife, also a printer and a fine arts graduate of the University of South Florida.

They named the shop — which they still own — Gemini Graphics, choosing the name because he and several members of his and Jane's families were born in June.

Among the mechanical pieces of the past, which Anderson collected over the years from a defunct shop here, a warehouse there, is a turn of the century Addressograph which was in use until recently at the First Baptist Church in Bartow.

Then there's a Gargantuan beauty, 2,200 pounds of iron treadles, gears, planes, pads and wells. It's an Ostrader, Seymour photo engravers proof press from the early 1900s.

Anderson and a friend muscled, dragged, tugged and pushed the old press into the building and now it's again a working piece of history.

All the equipment on display — which includes also postcard printers, typewriters, intaglios, presses, perforators, book binders, planers and lead melting pots — are all in running order and will be functioning during the museum's working hours.

"We'll be an operating printing museum," Anderson said, and added that he expects to provide educational experiences for school children, nostalgia for others and an appreciation of the craftsmanship and ingenuity that went into bringing the printed word to the world.

IN HONOR OF OUR PASTOR
ELDER LEROY BELLAMY'S
25TH PASTORAL YEAR



Elder Leroy Bellamy and Missionary Priscilla Bellamy

Matt: I will be with you even unto the end of the world

CHURCH OF THE LIVING GOD

Floral City, Florida

Monday — Saturday

January 24 — 29, 1983

25TH ANNIVERSARY PROGRAM
Honoring Pastor Leroy Bellamy,

Church Of The Living God, Floral City

Monday Night
7:30 P.M.

Mt. Carmel Baptist Church
Elder Aaron
Hernando, Florida
Mt. Zion Methodist
Rev. Jackson

Tuesday Night
7:30 P.M.

Mt. Carmel Methodist
Rev. Demis Houston
Floral City, Florida
Pleasant Hill
Rev. Smith
Floral City, Florida

Wednesday Night
7:30 P.M.

St. James
Rev. Major Walker
Inverness, Florida
Mt. Carmel
Rev. Parker
Inverness, Florida

Thursday Night
7:30 P.M.

Church Of The Living God
Elder Brown
Brooksville, Florida
Church Of The Living God
Elder Brown
Hernando, Florida

Friday Night
7:30 P.M.

Church Of The Living God
Elder B. Jackson
Inverness, Florida
Church Of The Living God
Elder Watkins
Summerfield, Florida

PASTOR'S FRIENDSHIP LUNCHEON
Saturday, January 29, 1983
6:00 P.M.

Master of Ceremonies *Brother A. Dabney*
Musician *Missionary R. Lorenz*
Guest Choir. *Church Of The Living God*
Weirsdale, Florida
Prayer *Elder T. Brown*
Selection. *Guest Choir*
Welcome Address *Deacon Zarlle Williams*
Autobiography and Tribute. *Asst. Pastor Queen Thomas*
Solo. *Sister Ruby Lorenz*

CHIT CHAT CHEW

Selection.
Introduction of Speaker *Minister Larry Chester*
Speaker. *Minister Larry Powers,*
Church Of God,
Inverness, Florida
Selection. *Junior Choir,*
Floral City
Two Selections *Ovation, Hernando*
Presentations. *Sister Ella Mae Graves*
Remarks *Elder Leroy Bellamy*
Benediction.
Fashion Show Director *Sister Alida Langley*

Program subject to change.

MENU

Roast Beef Ham Turkey Salami

Potato Salad Macaroni Salad

Relish Dish

Rolls

DESSERT

Cake ~~Sherbert with Ginger Ale~~

Coffee Iced Tea

WORDS of APPRECIATION

The family of Elder Leroy Bellamy, Sr. would like to take this time to thank everyone who came from near and far to help make this a most memorable occasion. Please accept our most heartfelt gratitude. May God Bless You.

Coordinator Missionary Gladys Bellamy
Sister Myra Bellamy

USHERS

Sister Ruth Twiggs
Sister Ella Mae Graves

Sister Florence McElory
Deacon Howard Wilson

BELLAMY, Rev. Leroy

**LEROY BELLAMY- CITRUS COUNTY FLORIDA LEGEND AND LEADER
JULY 1999**

Leroy Bellamy was born on May 19, 1913 in Floral City, Florida and is the descendent of grandparents Abraham & Bella Sawycr (mixed Negro with French and Indian) and Leroy Anthony Bellamy. His parents were Lucy James and Cleve Bellamy. Leroy was educated in the Citrus County Public School System. Leroy went to work at a very young age.

In January 1936 he married his boyhood sweetheart, Priscilla Pender in Brooksville, Florida. She was a very young bride whose roots were from Ollie & Walter Pender from Northern Florida. Leroy and Priscilla had ten children: two daughters: Nina & Lucille, and eight sons: Leroy Jr., Randolph, Lonnie, James, Clarence, Curtis, Bruce and Gilbert.

Being a father, minister, laborer and friend in need, the 1930's, 40's, 50's and 60's were especially challenging for Leroy and Priscilla. They grew up during the early 1900's and 1920's without opportunities for formal education. Racial, social and economical depression characterized the times for over 5 decades of Leroy's early adulthood. Despite these overwhelming odds, Leroy and Priscilla not only provided loving and enriching parental support to their siblings, but to many other nieces, nephew, cousins and any other child in the community. They stressed and enforced discipline, education, self respect and respect for others, and faith in God as the basic for future generations.

In addition to his full-time job with the Railroad Company and part-time jobs with local supermarkets: he worked and retired from Goodings Food store after 30 years of service, some years later he went to work for Kash and Karry with John Sullivan as manager of that store. In 1960, Leroy began working part-time for the Florida Power Company and continuously provided office maintenance at the Inverness Office & Plant for over 22 years. Leroy also did yard work and other odd jobs. He also continued to grow as much food and raise as many chickens possible with limited resources.

According to Leroy, one of the smartest moves he ever made was to get into the hog farming business. Not only did this provide another source of food, but also more importantly this was a way to get money needed to send any child to college whom could and wanted to attend. Leroy showed his special talent for getting the most out of what he had, by the way he bred, raised, fed, nurtured, doctored and marketed his hogs. When health rules were tightened requiring all food (slop) be cooked prior to feeding, he built a simple cooking apparatus and developed efficient and environmentally safe ways of complying with the new standards.

Leroy's love for his pigs and hogs is legendary. Just about everyone has a favorite 'Roy's hogs' story. His favorite is about the time he and Priscilla were carrying a load of nicely grown Herefords to the Ocala Market when their old worn out Chevy truck begin to shimmy wildly, This continued all the way to the market and prompted Priscilla to ask "You know what I would do with this truck?" "What?", Roy asked. Meantime, Roy finally arrives at the market where he was paid much more than they had expected. On the way home to Inverness Roy couldn't resist

asking his wife, as she recounted the money, "Honey what is it you wanted to do with this truck when we get home?" She answered quickly "Load it up again"!

His spiritual leadership and dedication created opportunities for him to become the first Black minister to participate in city and county ecumenical community religious and social activities. For over 40 years he organized and served as head minister for the annual Easter Sunrise Services. He recalls that at first the attendance was just a few Blacks only. The annual service now fills up the stadium with mostly whites. During this 40 year period, he NEVER missed a sunrise service.

Bridging racial barriers was a natural way of life for Leroy. He strongly believes that working to bring people together is the right thing to do. Throughout his ministry he has always been well known and well received at prisons, jails, hospitals, senior citizens homes, schools, guest churches, marriages, funerals, parades, and just about any and every occasion where the work of the Lord was going on. Race, color, sex, religion, or social class was never an issue. He treated everyone with respect, greeted them with a smile, and prayed for them according to their need. Leroy began his ministries 50 years ago and has led the Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City for the past 40 years.

Leroy has been frequently recognized for his outstanding contributions to the community and churches. Priscilla and Leroy were named Citrus County Family of the year in 1992. In 1981 the street they lived on was renamed from Old Wildwood Road to Leroy Bellamy Road. Priscilla, his companion for over 60 years, passed in October 1998.

Leroy has been honored with such distinguished commendations as: **The Humanitarian Award, The Citrus County Service To Mankind Award and Citrus County's Citizen of the Year.**

Leroy Bellamy is a caring, loving, old fashion preacher, who has devoted his life to God and mankind. He applies his every effort to serve them both.

CCC 11/30/01



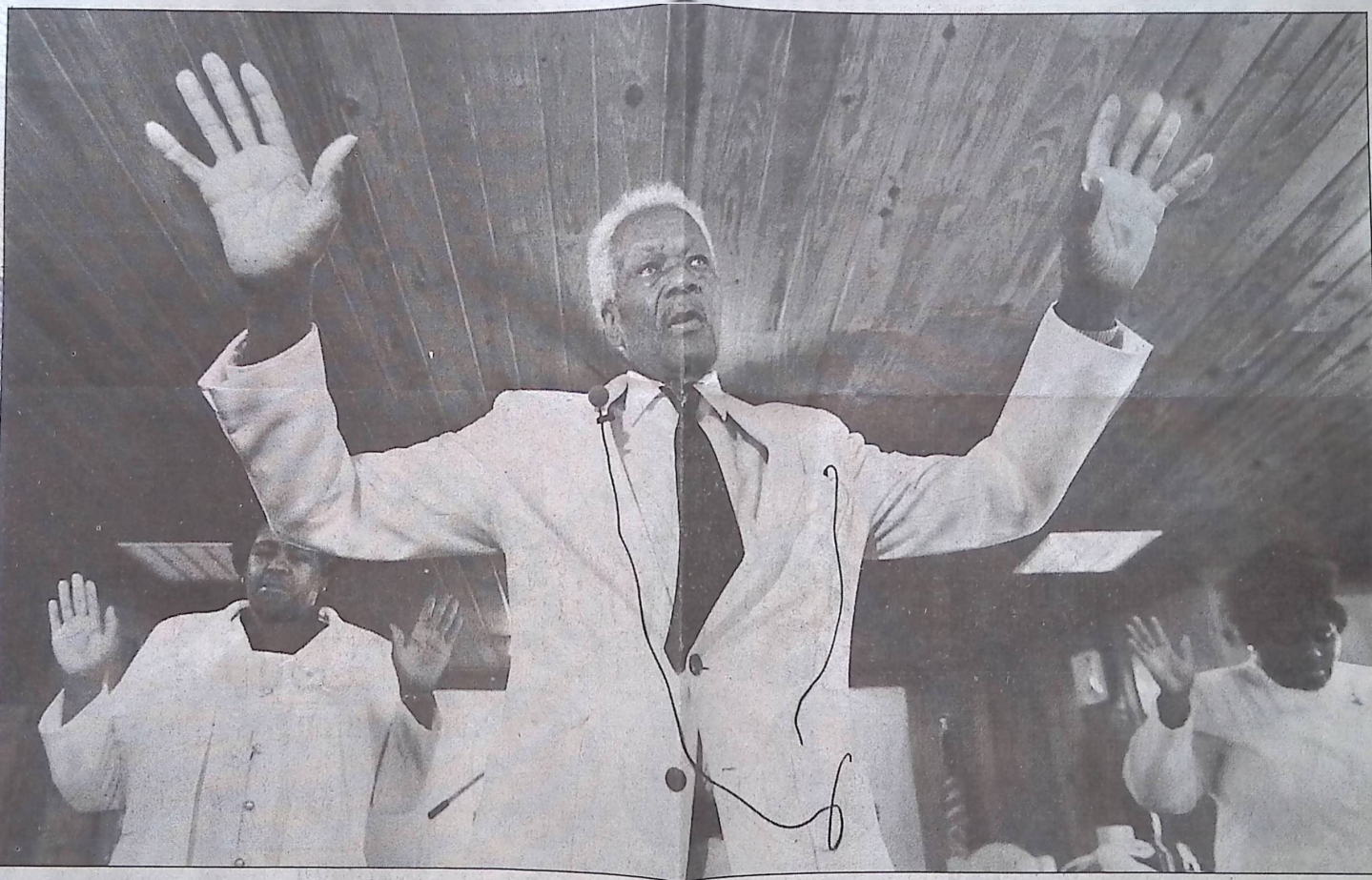
DAVE SIGLER/Chronicle

The Rev. Leroy Bellamy stands Wednesday morning in the new sanctuary of the Grace Temple Church of the Living God, believing the church will be finished before Christmas. Ministers and community leaders in Citrus County are determined to help Leroy Bellamy finish his church. An offering was taken at the community Thanksgiving Eve service that went to the church.

RELIGION

8 TIMES ■ SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2004 CIR

Seven pastors share memories of beloved peer



Times photos (1998)

The Rev. Leroy Bellamy led Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City for more than 50 years. In front of an audience or not, "Leroy was always Leroy," fellow pastor Larry Powers said. "He was a man you felt like you could trust. He was the kind of guy that made whoever was around him feel at home . . . and he enjoyed the presence of God."

■ The Rev. Leroy Bellamy was a genuine, giving, sweet, funny, faithful man, his fellow preachers say.



Community didn't wait till end to honor Bellamy

By GAIL HOLLENBECK
Times Correspondent

By GAIL HOLLENBECK

them, from the president, the governor, the sena-

INVERNESS — There was no one quite like the Rev. Leroy Bellamy. He was a man of character and vision, uncompromising principles and unwavering faith. A loyal servant to his Lord, he worked hard at whatever the task at hand, be it planting vegetables, welcoming newcomers to the county or building a church.

It was impossible not to smile when the Rev. Bellamy walked into the room. He always had a spring in his step, a twinkle in his eye and an infectious laugh. His death two weeks ago at the age of 91 saddened an entire community.

He will be sorely missed. Seven of the Rev. Bellamy's peers — pastors in the community — talked with the *Times* about their favorite memories of him.

Craig Davies First Presbyterian Church

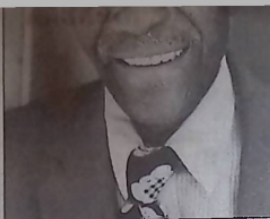
I met Leroy when I first became pastor at First Presbyterian Church back in September 1993. He made me feel so welcome to the community. That's the way he was. He welcomed everybody warmly, with a great smile and treated everybody the same.

I shared this favorite memory of Leroy at the funeral service:

In 1994 we built the building we are in now. Leroy has always been a good friend of First Presbyterian Church, even going back prior to my coming here. So after we took occupancy of this building in July, I called Leroy and told him I'd love to have him preach in this new church. He said he'd love to. What I recall about that day that was so neat was that he showed up and preached at our 8:30 service and I was so surprised because his sermon was so brief. I had expected it to be longer.

The next service was 11 o'clock and Leroy was about 10 minutes into his sermon, and he turned to me and said, "You don't mind if I go on for a while." And I said, "Of course not."

He realized that at 11 o'clock we were also on the radio because that service is broadcast live every Sunday. I think he sort of figured, I've got a little bit larger audience than just the congregation in this sanctuary. I've



At age 88, with his trademark smile. "My favorite memory of him is his excitement and how he would say, 'Oh, Glory!'" the Rev. Doug Alexander said.

got a radio-listening audience, too, so I'm going to maximize that opportunity.

All of which leads me to saying, his passion was to share the Gospel any time, anywhere, with anybody. It didn't matter if they were black, white, yellow, it didn't make any difference. He treated everybody the same and had a passion for the Lord and getting that message out.

Doug Alexander Church Without Walls

I've known him all my life. He was a pastor at one of the churches in Hernando when I was a child, and was my mother's pastor. So he's been well known to my family for many years.

He owned hogs and as a little boy we'd pick acorns and he would give us five or 10 cents for picking up acorns so he could feed them to his hogs.

My favorite memory of him is his excitement and how he would say, "Oh, Glory!"

When Tiger Woods became famous, he began to refer to himself as Tiger Bellamy. I loved his humor.

If he told you something, you could bank on it.

He helped a lot of people. I deal with a lot of people in need, and I know that he personally has helped many. He would especially help young couples that were having trouble finding somewhere to stay to have a place to get started on their way.

Times Correspondent

■ Editor's note: The Rev. Leroy Bellamy spoke with the *Times* in 2001 about being honored by the county.

Leroy Bellamy was born in Citrus County in 1913. As a young man he married Priscilla Pender and together they raised 10 children. He worked at several jobs through the years to support his family and sent eight of his children to college. He was the pastor of Grace Temple Church of the Living God for nearly five decades.

At his funeral last Sunday, the church was filled with those who knew and loved the preacher. Memories were shared and words of praise were said to honor the community leader.

It wasn't the first time that had happened.

On a hot day in July 1999 the county recognized the pastor's many contributions to the community by proclaiming it Leroy Bellamy Day. A proclamation was read from President Bill Clinton.

That was one of his favorite memories, the pastor told the *Times* in 2001.

"They give me a day here in the county, all over the county about two years ago, and I'm telling you, I got plaques that I ain't got a place to put

tors and everybody here," the Rev. Bellamy said. "The children said, 'Granddaddy, where they going to have your funeral at? I told them, 'I've already had it and I heard all the good things.'"

"They came up here and picked me up like I was a dead man. They had two of these cars like you haul the families to the cemeteries in. Mr. Hooper had one and then the black funeral home. And then they had two fellows on motorcycles that had two patrol cars and they came out here and carried me to the courthouse.

"That's the reason I got the heart attack," Bellamy said, giggling. "I never will forget that.

"I have a road named after me. One time a lady came here after my wife died and she said, 'Mr. Bellamy, I don't think you'll have a hard time getting another wife.' 'Why do you say that?' She said, 'I used to come down and see how you treated the one you had. They got a road named after you, they give you a day in the county, and now they're building you a church. What more can they do?'"

"Ain't too many churches I ain't been in to preach," he said. "I've had a wonderful life here in Citrus."

Babb Adams retired pastor First Baptist Church

I met him in 1982 at an Easter sunrise service. At that time it was in a shopping center parking lot with a semitruck bed pulled in as a platform. It was raining. Dairold Rushing was preaching that morning. When I got there it was dark.

Because of the rain, instead of having the service on the truck bed, everybody got on the sidewalk, and that's where I met Leroy. We became fast friends almost immediately. It was in his heart that the sunrise service was birthed, and he continued to have it.

I shared this story at the funeral:

I was sick and they had taken me to the hospital. I'd been having a lot of visitors and they cut down on visitors.

The nurse came into my room and said, "You've got a visitor. You shouldn't have visitors, but he says he's your brother."

I said, "For heaven's sakes, send him in."

She said, "You don't understand. He's a black man."

I said, "Is he about 5-6 and gray is getting into his dark, curly hair and does he have little blue rims

around his deep brown eyes?"

She said, "Yes, that describes him."

I said, "For heaven's sake, send him in. He is my brother."

Leroy came in and the nurse would come tiptoeing in the room and not asking anything, yet you could see this was puzzling her.

I said to her, "Ma'am, we had different mothers but the same father."

After a while I asked Leroy if we should let her in on the secret, and he kind of winked at me and said, "I think we should."

So I said to her, "Ma'am, we can tell you how you can become a part of the family and you can become our sister in the Lord if you know the Lord Jesus Christ."

And she said, "My goodness. You guys are preachers, aren't you?"

Bless his heart, Leroy thought that was a good story, as I did.

When I was pastor he'd stop by the office and we'd have coffee together and we'd talk and always pray together. He was just an incredible man, when you look back and realize he went through the worst of segregation and integration and all that went with it, and yet his spirit was always sweet.

William Trucano Hebron Baptist Church

I think the first time I met Leroy was at an Easter sunrise service not long after we moved here. He was very instrumental in getting the community service organized, which was then held at the Citrus High School football stadium.

My first impression was, here is a man who has the heart and love of a community and who has done so much for it. This was 18 years ago, and by the time I came he had long been an established part of this community. And I just remember noticing the love and respect that everybody had for him and how it grew over the years.

One of my favorite memories was at a Citrus Clergy Association meeting. We meet for prayer each month. He was there a couple of years ago, about the time they were completing their new church building, and I remember how the pastors gathered around him to hold him and the church up in prayer.

It was just such a sweet moment that all the pastors from so many different denominations were together surrounding him

Please see **MEMORIES** Page 10

How do you take your Times? on Thursdays for Wee

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle Sunday, August 1, 1999



Dave Sijer/Chronicle photo

The Rev. Leroy Bellamy got the crowd laughing during his closing remarks during Reverend Leroy Bellamy Day. Bellamy was honored Saturday on the steps of the Old Courthouse for his many years as a community spiritual leader. Politicians, family and friends gathered to honor the well-respected pastor.

Bellamy's cup runneth over with pride

Editor's note: Erin Rogers is one of many lifelong Citrus County residents who has witnessed the ongoing influence of the Rev. Leroy Bellamy on the area.

By Erin Rogers
Staff writer

It was a good place to be despite the heat, on a hot July Saturday celebrating Reverend Leroy Bellamy Day in front of the Old Courthouse.

I arrived early — early enough to see the Rev. Bellamy arrive with his family in a caravan of limousines.

Alida Langley, coordinator of the event, watched the limousines pull around the square, eyes glittering and a blue towel draped over her shoulder.

Someone near me muttered, "Look at Alida, how excited she is."

Someone else answered, "When you do good stuff, you have a right to be."

How was Langley feeling? "Way up there on cloud nine," she said.

Saturday was proclaimed Reverend

*“You have worked tirelessly
for the people of Citrus County.
Our best wishes for your
every success.”*

President Clinton

Leroy Bellamy Day by the county, as well as Inverness and Crystal River.

Good stuff it was — Langley knew it, and Bellamy knew it. "Lord, thank you for this day," he said, as I shook his hand and asked how he was feeling.

Then Patricia Thomas, Citrus County's circuit court judge, walked up to Bellamy admiring his sharp suit.

"Hey beautiful," she said. "You look gorgeous."

"You're the man," she said, giving Bellamy a cup of water.

People were milling about, smiling at

Bellamy, walking up to shake his hand and asking him to sign their cardboard fans, which Langley made with Bellamy's picture on them.

As I offered him my own fan, I knew he was beginning to feel overwhelmed.

"I can't believe this," said the man of the hour.

But he had to believe it, as the event got under way. Proof of it was thrust into his arms when each speaker finished talking, handing Bellamy plaques, certificates and even money.

"It's good to give honor to a man of God while he is here and alive," said the Rev. Ed Jones before giving the opening prayer.

To God, Jones said, "We thank you that we are able to follow in his footsteps as he follows after you."

"He has been a channel to your love," he said.

Inverness City Councilman John Sullivan read a letter to Bellamy from President

Please see **PRIDE**, Page 4A

This is your day, Rev. Bellamy

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle Saturday, July 31, 1999



Matthew Beck/Chronicle photo

Rev. Leroy Bellamy and his family and friends will celebrate together today. Rev. Bellamy is pictured above with his 5-month-old great-grandson, Caleb Fagan from Hinesville, Ga.

Friends to honor 'prayer man'

By Erin Rogers
Staff writer

Late one night, the Rev. Leroy Bellamy was sitting at home, and a boy came riding along on his bicycle.

Bellamy knew the youngster, knew his mother and knew he shouldn't be out riding so late.

Asking him what he was up to, Bellamy learned the boy had trouble on his mind and was looking to steal something.

It was the boy's mother's birthday, and he wanted to find her a gift. Bellamy asked the boy what he wanted to give her.

"If I could just have \$5 to give to her," the boy said.

Bellamy reached in his pocket, handed over a \$5 bill, and told the boy to get on home.

The boy is a man now, and "he loves me today," Bellamy said.

Stories like these can be told forever, and they all paint the same portrait of the Rev. Leroy Bellamy — father of 10,

father to all.

"If you need me, I'll be there," he says, and he means it — no matter who you are or what you've done.

That's the good Lord working through him, he said. "Jesus is a problem solver and he's using me to talk to people."

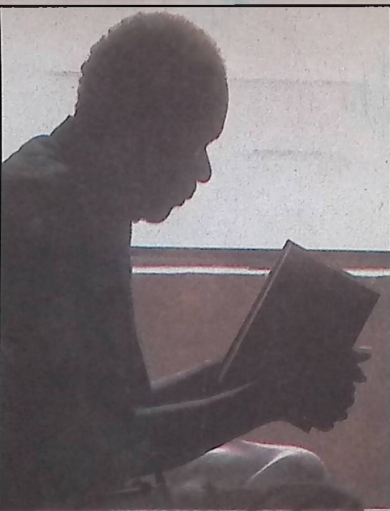
Today has been proclaimed "Reverend Leroy Bellamy Day" in Citrus County, by the county commission.

Bellamy glows with the honor of this recognition, saying over and over, "That's something, isn't it?"

Known as Citrus County's "tiger" and "prayer man," the Rev. Leroy Bellamy has been a presence in the community since his birth in Floral City on May 19, 1913.

Whether bagging groceries at supermarkets, doing janitorial work at Florida Power Corp. or working full-time maintaining railroad tracks, Bellamy has always been bringing people together.

Please see BELLAMY, Page 4A



Matthew Beck/Chronicle photo

Rev. Bellamy started preaching many years ago. The man of God is approaching 90, and as he puts it, "I'm still going strong."

PRIDE

continued from Page 1A

Clinton, celebrating Bellamy's many years of devotion to the community.

"You have worked tirelessly for the people of Citrus County," the letter read. "Our best wishes for your every success."

To make the event even more special, the audience was told that officials had purchased an air conditioner for Bellamy's house to be installed at no charge with electric bills paid to ensure cooled comfort.

Presentations were given by Jim Fowler, county commissioner;

Joyce Rogers, Inverness Mayor; Curtis Rich, Crystal River Mayor; Judge Thomas; Charles Blasband, chief executive officer of Citrus Memorial Hospital; Julian "Pete" Kelly, Superintendent; Dan Quick, vice president of the Citrus County Historical Society and Barbara Gurrola, circuit court judge.

Feelings were high as Dolores Scalloway from New Birth Gospel Tabernacle choir performed, and again when Bellamy's son-in-law James Nash sang "Precious Lord Take my Hand."

Wilhelmina Jones sang "Just Ordinary People," and people were calling out "all right" and "amen."

Bellamy's granddaughter Jennifer R. White told the makeshift congregation in her

reading, "Open your eyes to see this profound man of God, my grandfather Leroy Bellamy."

Former Citrus County Sheriff Charles Dean thanked Bellamy for being his friend when he was 5 years old.

Dick Locke, former House representative, remembered when he arrived in Citrus County in 1953, Bellamy worked on Locke's father's ranch. Bellamy's roots run deep in the community, Locke said.

Through Bellamy's nurturing, the local Church of the Living God blossomed, according to church representative Jarrod Campbell.

Campbell was called to the word of God 20 years ago, he said, at an old-fashioned revival led by Bellamy in Crystal River.

The Rev. Dr. Babb Adams told the audience about a time when he was in the hospital, and his nurse approached him with a bit of confusion.

There's a man here who wants to see you, and he says he's your brother, the nurse told Adams.

By all means, Adams told her, send the man in.

But it's a black man, the nurse said, and Adams knew immediately who he was — a man, about 5'8" with soft brown eyes.

He is my brother, ma'am, Adams said. Different mothers, same father.

"We're all brothers and sisters," said the woman sitting next to me.

And I knew she was right. Our cup runneth over; Reverend Bellamy.

BELLAMY

continued from Page 1A

More than 100 members of Bellamy's family have come to Citrus County from all over the country for a family reunion this weekend.

Learning of the plans for the reunion, Alida Langley decided this was her chance to do something for a man who has seen and helped the people of Citrus County grow, not to mention looked out for her as a child.

Langley has organized a special program for Bellamy today.

People whose lives have been touched by the prayer man's

dynamic, nurturing personality will converge in the Old Courthouse square today at noon, and again at 6 p.m. at the East Citrus Community Center.

The programs will include tributes and presentations from a selection of special people and officials.

Langley has kept the details of the programs a mystery, even from Bellamy and his family.

"She has everyone bubbling over with expectation," said Bellamy's daughter, Lucille White.

Langley likes to do things for people while they can appreciate it. "We could say all these things after the fact, but he (Bellamy) won't know that.

"It's been a joy for me to do it, and it is coming together real nice-

ly," she said.

The Rev. Bellamy has been the pastor of Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City for 41 years. Recently the church developed plans to expand, and needed help from the community.

The response was incredible. Bellamy asked for \$20,000 and received twice that much almost immediately, he said, from churches and people everywhere.

Some churches gave thousands of dollars, he said.

Bellamy is 86, but his eyesight is keen and his feet free of corns and bunions.

While visiting a nursing home recently, Bellamy heard an older woman whisper to her friend as he passed, "That's Reverend Bellamy."

Hearing his name, he asked if

they would mind if he joined them. He did, and the woman spoke up to him.

"We don't want you to ever die," she said. "We need you."

Bellamy knows he is needed, and that's why he's here, he said. "It makes me feel good that I'm here for a reason," he said.

As for human mortality, Bellamy said he knows his time will come eventually, but it certainly hasn't come yet.

"I know I have to go, but I have to do my job while I'm here," he said.

The Rev. Bellamy doesn't live through words, he lives through example, said daughter White.

"I never run for politics," Bellamy said. "I only run for Jesus."

Plans under way to honor the Rev. Leroy Bellamy

Plans are under way to honor the Rev. Leroy Bellamy on Saturday, July 31. The Rev. Bellamy, a lifelong resident of this county, has spent his life dedicated to raising a family of 10 children and serving his church and community.

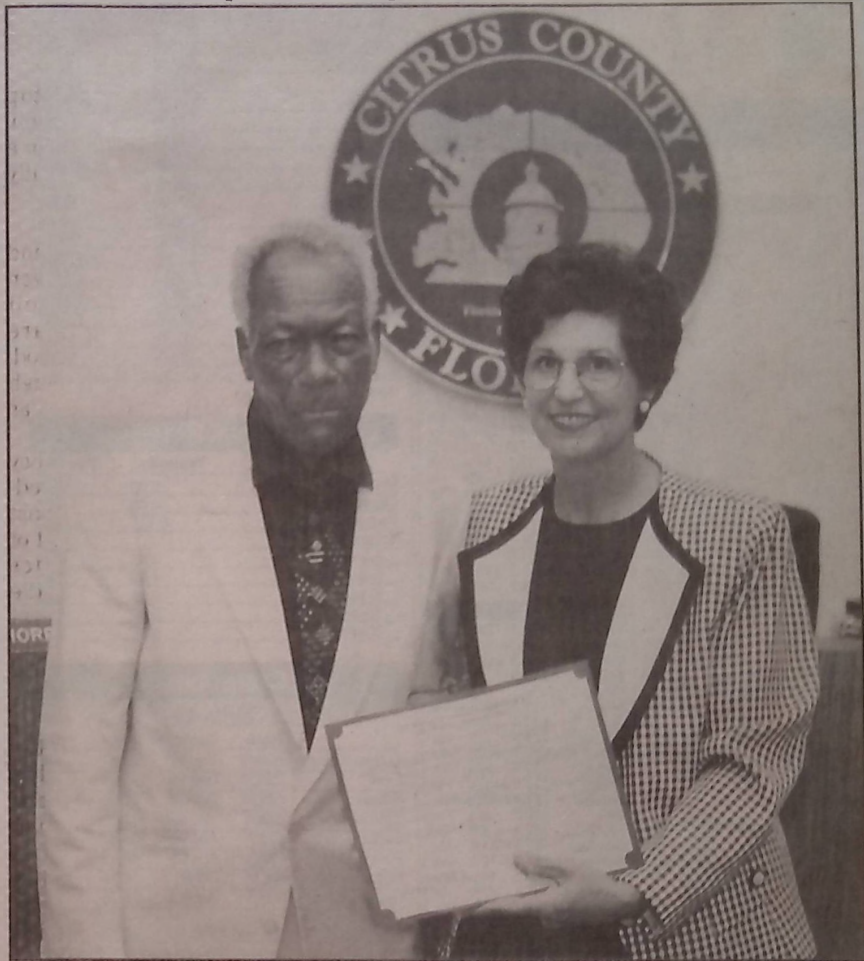
The celebration will be begin at noon at the Old Courthouse in Inverness and conclude at another ceremony at the East Citrus Community Center, which will begin at 6 p.m.

The center is located on State Road 44 in Inverness.

Contact person Alida Langley welcomes any organization, church groups or individuals who wish to donate, present or help with the programs. Her home phone is 726-1989 and her work phone is 637-9965.

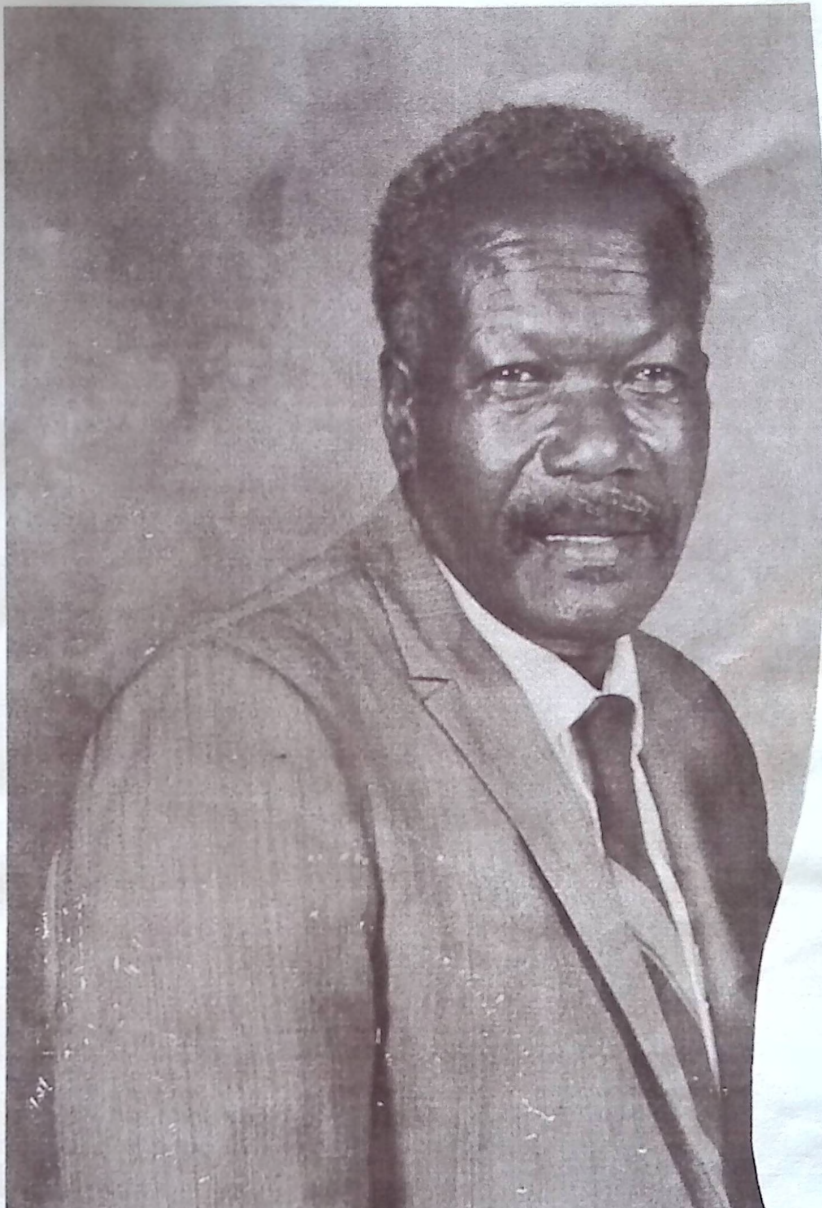
Citrus County (FL) Chronicle Friday, July 30, 1999

Minister's special day



Alyse Preston/Chronicle photo

The Citrus County Board of County Commissioners recently honored the Rev. Leroy Bellamy for his spiritual leadership and dedication to all in the community. The board proclaimed July 31, 1999, as "Reverend Leroy Bellamy Day" in Citrus County. Pictured are Bellamy and County Commission Chairwoman Vicki Phillips.



REVEREND LEROY BELLAMY DAY
JULY 31, 1999

**REVEREND LEROY BELLAMY
JULY 31, 1999 AT NOON
CITRUS COUNTY
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE**

SONG: NEW BIRTH GOSPEL
TABERNACLE CHOIR

PRAYER: REV. ED JONES

SCRIPTURE: DR. BABB ADAMS

MASTERS OF CEREMONY: HON. JIM FOWLER
HON. JOHN SULLIVAN

SONG: CHOIR

INTRODUCTION OF SPECIAL GUEST: HON. JIM FOWLER
HON. JOHN SULLIVAN

WELCOME AND OCCASION: ALIDA LANGLEY

SOLO: JAMES NASH

READING: JENNIFER R. WHITE
GRANDDAUGHTER

READING OF WHITE HOUSE LETTER: HON. JOHN SULLIVAN

SOLO: WILHELMINA JONES

PRESENTATIONS:

CITRUS COUNTY COMMISSION: HON. JIM FOWLER
CITY OF INVERNESS: MAYOR JOYCE ROGERS
CITY OF CRYSTAL RIVER: MAYOR CURTIS RICH

**REVEREND LEROY BELLAMY
JULY 31, 1999 AT NOON
CITRUS COUNTY
HISTORIC COURTHOUSE**

CITRUS COUNTY JUDICIARY: HON. PATRICIA THOMAS,
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

CITRUS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL: CHARLES BLASBAND,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

CITRUS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT: JULIAN "PETE" KELLY,
SUPERINTENDENT

CHURCHES: REVEREND ED JONES,
PASTOR, GREATER MT. CARMEL
BAPTIST CHURCH

HISTORICAL SOCIETY: DAN QUICK
HISTORICAL VICE PRESIDENT

REFLECTIONS:

CITRUS COUNTY JUDICIARY: HON. BARBARA GURROLA
CIRCUIT COURT JUDGE

CITRUS UNITED BASKET: NOLA GRAVIUS

OTHER SPEAKERS: CHARLES DEAN
DICK LOCKE
JARROD CAMPBELL

WORDS OF APPRECIATION: LEROY BELLAMY, JR

REVEREND

LEROY

BELLAMY

DAY

JULY 31, 1999

INVERNESS, FL

**MAY THE WORK
YOU HAVE DONE
SPEAK FOR YOU**

NOTICE TO ALL RESIDENTS OF CITRUS COUNTY

PLANS ARE BEING MADE TO HONOR REV. LEROY BELLAMY SATURDAY, JULY 31, 1999, REV. BELLAMY HAS SPENT HIS LIFE DEDICATED TO RAISING A FAMILY OF 10 CHILDREN AND BEING A FAITHFUL AND DEDICATED SERVANT TO THE LORD AND THE CITIZENS OF THIS ENTIRE COUNTY IN SOME WAY OR OTHER

LET'S SHOW HIM AND HIS FAMILY HOW MUCH WE APPRECIATE HIM PLAN TO ATTEND ONE OR BOTH OF THE PROGRAMS FOR HIM

JULY 31, 1999

THE FIRST PART OF THE CELEBRATION WILL BE HELD AT 12:00 NOON
THE OLD HISTORICAL COURTHOUSE SQUARE, INVERNESS

AND

AT 6:00P.M. THE EAST CITRUS COMMUNITY CENTER, HWY 44 EAST
INVERNESS

ANY ORGANIZATION, CHURCH GROUP OR INDIVIDUALS THAT WANT TO HELP IN ANY WAY AS DONATIONS, PRESENTATIONS, BEING ON PROGRAM OR HELPING WITH VARIOUS OTHER TASKS WILL BE GREATLY APPRECIATED

THIS CELEBRATION IS BEING SPONSORED BY FRIENDS OF REV. LEROY BELLAMY.
CONTACT PERSON IS ALIDA LANGLEY, PHONE NUMBER DAYTIME IS 637-9965
OR HOME IS 726-1989

Longtime minister is showered with praise



■ In two ceremonies Saturday, officials recount how much the Rev. Leroy Bellamy has meant to Citrus County.

By JORGE SANCHEZ
Times Staff Writer

The Rev. Leroy Bellamy, Citrus County's senior member of the clergy, was elevated to near-sainthood status Saturday as friends gathered to let him know just how much the community appreciated his decades of service.

On what was officially dubbed Leroy Bellamy Day, his many friends attended not one, but two ceremonies in his honor. Tributes from lifelong friends were presented lovingly and many politicians, from President Bill Clinton to Inverness Mayor Joyce Rogers, sent or personally handed the stately minister a proclamation.

At noon under the hot summer sky, Bellamy was honored with a ceremony on the steps of the Old Citrus County Courthouse. His large extended family, in town for a reunion, was joined by many local dignitaries and many of Bellamy's friends.

"Just like on St. Patrick's Day when everyone wants to be Irish, I think today, everyone wants to be a Bellamy," said John Sullivan, an Inverness City Council member and a host of the ceremony.

Bellamy arrived at the ceremony with the pomp befitting a head

Times photo — MICHAEL WEIMAR

Inverness Mayor Joyce Rogers shares a laugh Saturday with the Rev. Leroy Bellamy at a celebration of the minister's long commitment to community service. Many speakers shared jokes and stories of how Bellamy had affected their lives.

Please see **BELLAMY** Page 3

Bellamy from Page 1

of state, riding in a large white limousine with police escort. Wearing his trademark white Sunday suit, the Rev. Bellamy climbed the stone steps of the Old Courthouse and looked out at the crowd. His gaze wandered over four generations of family members and a crowd sprinkled with judges, mayors, a school superintendent, the former sheriff and many lifelong friends.

Bellamy is practically an institution in Citrus County.

He is one of the county's most beloved religious leaders. He has a street in Inverness named in his honor. He has a wall full of plaques from numerous organizations honoring his humanitarian work. When he visits other churches, he often receives a standing ovation and is invited to preach by other pastors.

He has served as the pastor at Grace Temple Church of the Living God near Floral City for 41 years.

On the steps of the Old Courthouse Saturday, and at the second ceremony Saturday night at the East Citrus Community Center, the recurring theme in the tributes was Bellamy's selfless devotion to humanity.

"Thank you for being my friend when I was 5 years old. Thank you for being my friend when I grew up with your children, and thank you for being my friend two weeks ago when we just visited with each other downtown," said former Citrus County Sheriff Charlie Dean, one of the speakers. "You are undoubtedly

one of the finest gentlemen I have ever known."

The tributes and proclamations seemed overwhelming; President Clinton sent a personal letter, and proclamations came from U.S. Rep. Karen Thurman, the Citrus County Commission, the city councils of Inverness and Crystal River, Citrus Memorial Hospital and the School Board. Crystal River Mayor Curtis Rich joined Rogers, Circuit Judge Patricia Thomas, school Superintendent Pete Kelly and Citrus Memorial Hospital director Charles Blasband in personally delivering the proclamations. Speakers included the Rev. Ed Jones of Greater Mt. Carmel Baptist Church of Inverness, family members Dick Locke, Nola Gravius, Jarrod Campbell, Circuit Judge Barbara Gurrola and Leroy Bellamy Jr.

Another speaker was the Rev. Babb Adams, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Inverness.

"Rev. Bellamy is my brother: different mothers, same Father," he joked. "Leroy is a friend and the truth is, I'm humbled in his presence."

Organizer Alida Langley said she wanted the event held while Bellamy, 86, was still living.

"Thank God he is alive, so he can see it and his family can know," she said.

As the Old Courthouse ceremony ended on Saturday, Bellamy, all but overcome with emotions, struggled out just a few words:

"I don't know what to say except that this is the greatest thing I've seen since I've been in Citrus County, especially as a black man."

REUNIONS

We're always happy to include information about your reunion. Simply send us the name of the organization, the dates for your reunion and either a phone number or an address where people can get additional information. Mail it to: Reunions/City Desk, St. Petersburg Times, P.O. Box 1121, St. Petersburg, FL 33731-1121.

August

Military

- **1st Infantry Division (Big Red One)** — Wednesday through Sunday. Call (888) 324-4733.
- **4th Marine Division Company B Engineers** — Aug. 27-29. Call (313) 382-0751.
- **5th Army Veterans (1943-45 Italian Campaign), 3rd, 34th, 36th, 45th, 85th, 88th, 91st, 92nd, 10th Mountain and 1st Armored Divisions (and support groups)** — Aug. 12-23. Call (516) 432-3022.
- **12th Defense Battalion USMC** — Aug. 25-29. Call (970) 874-4790.
- **32nd Division Veterans Association** — Aug. 12-15. Call (414) 671-6797.
- **80th Division Veterans Association (WWI) (WWII)** — Aug. 25-29. Call (336) 288-0983.
- **Asheville and Tacoma Class Patrol Gunboats, Tenders and Staffs** — Aug. 11-15. Call (757) 479-2261.
- **Persian Gulf Command Veterans Organization** — Aug. 18-22. Write: D. Burns, 566 Daffodil Lane, Hubbard, OH 44425

- **USS Montrose (APA 212)** — Aug. Call (727) 372-2721.
- **USS Philadelphia (CL-41)** — Aug. Sept. 5. Write: Harry Kelly, 1864 Bra wood St., Norfolk, VA 25318-3122.
- **USS Racine (PF-100) U.S. Coast Guard** — Aug. 26-29. Call (727) 535
- **USS Ralph Talbot** — Aug. 25-29. (541) 746-5269 or (206) 878-4607.
- **USS Springfield (CL66, CLG7, SSN761)** — Aug. 22-25. Call (603) 598-2806.

Schools

- **Clearwater Central Catholic High School (Class of 1989)** — Friday and urday. Call (727) 523-1884.
- **Clearwater High School (Class of 1989)** — Aug. 13-14. Call (727) 588-
- **Dixie Hollins High School (Class of 1969)** — Aug. 20-22. Call (727) 367- or (727) 541-1267 or (727) 544-2192
- **Gillespie-Selden Alumni Association** — Thursday through Sunday. Write Gillespie-Selden Alumni Association, Box 756, Cordele, GA 31010-0756.
- **Hudson High School (Class of 19 Friday through Saturday. Call (727) 856-5607.**
- **Kensington High School, Buffalo** — Aug. 20. Call (716) 692-8282.
- **Lakewood High School (Class of — Aug. 13-14. Call (727) 821-3040.**
- **Lakewood High School (Class of — Aug. 27-28. Call (800) 586-2586.**
- **Munhall High School, Pa. (Class 1949)** — Aug. 27-29. Call (352) 489



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Busy preacher enjoys his calling

Calendar of events. Page 5

By LISA PEEPLES
Times Correspondent

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

INVERNESS — The Rev. Leroy Bellamy fills diverse roles: preacher, father of 10, janitor, landscaper, civil rights activist.

But his main calling in life, he says, is to "preach the Word."

For more than 30 years, he and his wife of 54 years, Priscilla, have traveled throughout the United States preaching to thousands of churchgoers.

"The Lord called me to preach and I love it. I don't ever intend to quit, I am just going to keep at it as long as I can," Bellamy said.

He and his wife live in a modest wood-frame house on Leroy Bellamy Road in Inverness, named after Bellamy four years ago.

Although the reverend is 76 and his wife is 74, Bellamy said age has not slowed them down too much.

"We move a little slower than we did in our younger days, but that's about all," he said, laughing.

When he's not traveling, Bellamy spreads the Gospel in two area churches, Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City and Church of the Living God in Hernando.

He's busy in other ways, too, holding a job as a janitor at Florida Power Corp. in Crystal River, working part time as a landscaper, and promoting civil rights.

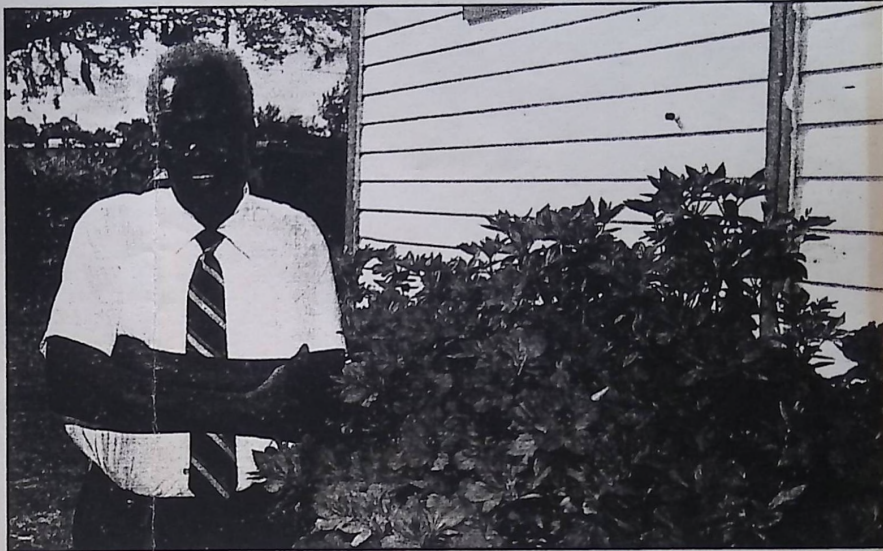
"I believe in staying busy. There isn't any sense in wasting time," Bellamy said, rubbing his calloused hands.

Bellamy and one of his sons, Bruce, recently helped organize Citrus County's first Martin Luther King Jr. March.

"I believe we have got to get rid of prejudices. We might not get rid of all of them, but we can sure get rid of some of them," he said.

Though the gray-haired preacher has seen a lot of changes in Citrus County during the past 70 years, he still has hopes that even more social and economic changes will benefit local minorities in the future.

"I would really love to see blacks here get jobs, have their own businesses and make money with no problems," he said.



Times photo — BOB MORELAND

The Rev. Leroy Bellamy of Inverness, posing outside his home with his azaleas, says, "Times have really changed in Citrus County and it sure is a nice place to live now."

Bellamy has found strength and joy in preaching and promoting the advancement of minorities, and he has found joy in his family.

Bellamy said he is thankful for his 24 or so church members, but joked that his immediate family is larger than both of his congregations combined.

"Priscilla and I had 10 children, 35 grandchildren and about 13 great-grandchildren. That is quite

a group."

The soft-spoken preacher said although he thinks of his large family as a blessing, "it sure was tough during those years when we were trying to get our children raised."

Rubbing his wrinkled forehead, Bellamy leaned back in his blue armchair and said, "Right before we got married I was working on a farm down near where Eden Drive

is today. I worked there from sun-up to sundown and only made 50 cents a day. Those were hard times."

Though money was scarce and the economy depressed, Bellamy and his wife managed to send five of their 10 children to college. "Times weren't easy, but we made it," he said.

Please see **PREACHER** Page 5

Preacher

from Page 1

Bellamy's children work as teachers, a bank vice president, mechanic and an Army lieutenant colonel.

"Oh Lord, we are so proud of our children," he said. "We've not done too badly when it comes to having a home."

After sharing his family's history, Bellamy reminisced about days gone by. Although he has fond

memories of the past, he also has a few memories he would like to forget.

"I remember when my wife and I used to go to the local theater. We had to sit upstairs, away from the whites who sat downstairs," he said. "I also remember when we only had black congregations, but now we have black and white."

"Times have really changed in Citrus County, and it sure is a nice place to live now."

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Rev. Leroy Bellamy

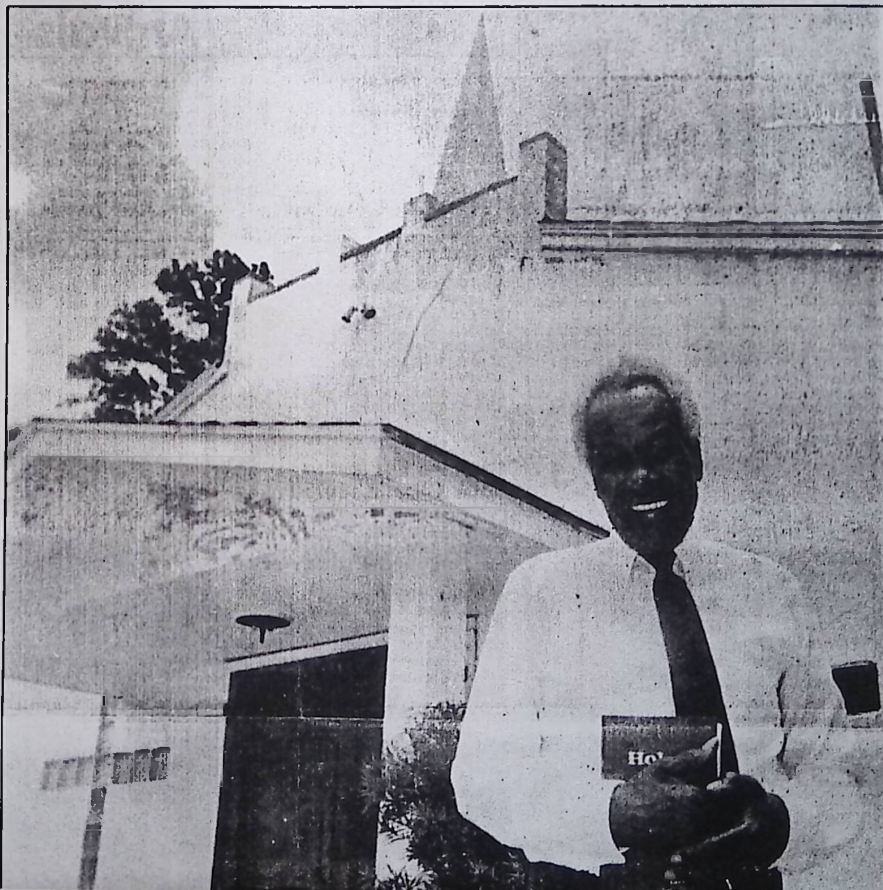
The 76 year-old began preaching as a teen-ager and he hasn't stopped since. Those who know the Rev. Bellamy think his message is worth listening to.

By ESTHER DUNCAN
Chronicle Writer

grew up wanting to be a preacher — even as a little boy." The Rev. Leroy Bellamy, Citrus County's highly regarded black minister, said when visited in his Inverness home located on a street named after him.

Now 76 years-old, the Rev. Bellamy's wish came true.

He gave his first sermon when he was just a teen-ager at a gathering in an old house in Inverness. And he's been preaching ever since — for many years at Grace Temple of the Living God in Floral City and also for several years at the Church of the



"I felt a real need to preach," he said, admitting that he never had the formal education expected of ministers today. "I sent away for some preaching material in the mail," he explained, "and went to a few seminars. Otherwise, I just said what I had to say."

Just saying what he has to say is what he's been doing all his life. And those who know the Rev. Bellamy think his message has been one worth listening to. They call him both deeply devout and dedicated.

"There isn't a minister in the county any more committed to his calling than Rev. Bellamy," retired Rev. Ralph Hoffman recently said of his fellow rector. "He preached to my congregation at the First Presbyterian Church here in Inverness a number of times."

"I've probably preached in more white churches in this county than any other black preacher," he said. "And I've presided at white funerals upon request."

The Rev. Bellamy said that he sometimes attends other churches so he can "listen to the preacher."

He spoke of a "fondness to hear Father Gill preach." He sometimes manages on a Sunday to attend one of his services. Father Desmond Gill is the priest at our Lady of Fatima Catholic Church in Inverness.

Mrs. Bellamy had her own opinion of her husband's preaching. "He gets his inspiration straight from the Lord, and studies the Bible a lot. He's never been to college — he's had to work to send his kids through school. I myself only got to the eighth grade."

His wife, the Rev. Bellamy explained, helps with youth meetings. "talking about right and wrong and things they ought to know about, such as drugs and AIDS."

"Years ago," he said, "there were more blacks in Floral City than in Inverness, but that was before my time. The population there is small now, so my membership is small."

In fact, he admitted that he doesn't have more than 10 or 12 adults in attendance at Floral City services, nor at Hernando.

"But we do have a pretty good attendance by young people," he said, "as well as children. And that's important."

Again and again over the years, the Floral City church and its people have needed help, he said. "My people are mostly poor folks, but the community always helped us out."

"One thing I discovered," he said, "is that if folks think you have a real need they'll help you, but you've got to be willing to work yourself."

When he started preaching in Floral City the church building was "maybe a hundred years old and almost rotted down," according to Bellamy.

"It had been a black Baptist church that had gone out of business, but we were glad to get it."

Twenty-eight years ago the congregation finally decided they had to build a new church. But how, with no money?

"We prayed about it," the Rev. Bellamy said, "deciding the answer was to carry the message to the community, so he visited the local newspaper — the Chronicle — and told his story.



HOLDING HIS BIBLE, the Rev. Leroy Bellamy stands proudly outside his church, Grace Temple of the Living God in Floral City. Now

76, he has been preaching since he was a teenager. (Photo by ew Beck)

"When people read that story, they sent us checks or handed me cash on the street," he said.

"We built our new church because of folks' generosity."

Ever since, he said, he's found that he can turn to people who will help out.

He recalled the time he wanted to add "a little corner where people could come to eat," and again he went to the newspaper and again the public responded. "Later, that little corner became part of the Sunday School."

The white minister of a Methodist Church asked his congregation to visit his church. "Then they paid us a visit," the Rev. Bellamy continued, "and the church was packed."

He told his visitors "he felt so bad" because it was such a hot day and the church wasn't air-conditioned, then joked, "In this church we always preach against Hell, then I invite 'em in and burn 'em up."

That visit, he said, resulted in funds coming in for the purchase of air-conditioning and heat.

There isn't a better county to live in than Citrus he insisted. There's no limit to what the churches will do for the poor.

Raised in Inverness, he and his wife, the former Priscilla Pender of Floral City, recalled their early days.

Mrs. Bellamy spoke of "toting groceries six miles — me, my brother and sister; and those groceries had to last Saturday to Saturday."

She recalled how moss was gathered from the trees and sold by

the bale. "We took it to moss gins. I think we only got a bale, but the dimes counted up. We could make \$1.50 a bale."

"Most of the time my sweetheart came by horse and I see me because he couldn't afford a car," Mrs. Bellamy

It took the couple a little time to figure it, but they finally announced they'd been married 53 years ago "when times were hard," the Rev. Bellamy added.

"I made \$6 a week at my first job as a married man," Bellamy admitted. "I believe I've held more jobs at one time than any man in the county."

His wife smiled.

"I don't care what the Joneses have, as some do. We're with what the Lord gives us," she said. "We've made do lives. See those nice blue chairs? A man gave them to us Christmas. Almost everything you see in this house some of us. My husband couldn't afford to buy much with 10 children raise on a minister's salary in a church with just a dozen folks."

"We've been churchin' all our lives," the Rev. Bellamy raised our children in the church too."

He told a tale about getting all the children ready for School, only to have them protest that they wanted to sit and play ball, saying, "If you make us go to Sunday School we're going to go to a white Sunday School."

The Rev. Bellamy said they surprised the children. "We

Please see Bellamy

CHRONICLE
MAY 11, 1983



MORE HELP NEEDED— The Rev. Bellamy of the Church of the Living God in Floral City would like to thank everyone for their generous donations of time and money in the construction of the Church's Fellowship Hall. The hall is a dream slowly becoming a reality for Rev. Bellamy and the church members, however more

assistance is still needed to complete the hall. Anyone interested in helping is invited to call the Reverend at 726-1715. Standing in front of the partially completed hall is Mrs. Bellamy, The Rev. Bellamy and his sister Georgianna Mosley.

TOGETHER

Chronicle



Rev. and Mrs. Leroy Bellamy

Bellamys plan 50th anniversary celebration

By NORM SWETMAN
Staff Writer

"It's a long time," the Rev. Leroy Bellamy nodded, "fifty years. And yet, it doesn't seem so long. Not if you love the woman you have been married to all that time. We had good times and we had lots of bad times but, the good thing was, we always had the family around us."

Priscilla Bellamy smiled in agreement searching her husband's face with the love that has grown over half a century showing in her soft eyes.

Leroy and Priscilla are going to observe those 50 years with a big celebration and a renewal of their wedding vows on Saturday, Feb. 1st at Ernie Glover's Jolly Fisherman Restaurant (formerly Ft. Cooper Station Restaurant) on South U.S. 41.

Both were born and have lived in the eastern part of Citrus County all their lives. Priscilla is a native of Floral City and Leroy's hometown is Inverness.

There were various jobs Leroy held down around the county for a number of years and then he worked for the Seaboard Railroad for over 11 years. "At that time we were living on North Apopka Avenue not far from the train station," Leroy said. "At that time the train used to back into the station. I remember folks used to come down to the station sometimes during the week but mostly on Sunday to see who was getting off the coaches."

He remembers the first traffic light installed in Citrus County on the corner of South Apopka and Main Street near the old courthouse. The light is still there. When it was first

installed the people would come down and watch it change. "We didn't have much entertainment in those days," he chuckled, "and a light that changed colors all by itself, that was something."

After his time with the railroad Leroy and Priscilla moved to Lincoln Park on the Wildwood Road 30 years ago and they still live there.

Twenty-eight years ago Leroy felt compelled to preach the Bible and he started as pastor of the Church of the Living God in Floral City in the old Baptist Church.

"We are trying to raise building funds. We need a thousand dollars bad, just to get the first things done," he said. He is also serving as pastor of the Hernando Church of the Living God.

Starting at 5 p.m. on Saturday,

Feb. 1st friends and supporters of Leroy and Priscilla Bellamy will start gathering at the Jolly Fisherman for dinner and observance of their 50th wedding anniversary. Priscilla's brother, the Reverend Lawrence Pender will officiate at the ceremony.

That's only part of it— there will be songs by the choir and quartet (You may remember the choir had a standing ovation with cheers at Holidays Around the World), a fashion show and a playlet.

Tickets are \$10 per adult and \$5 for children and they can be purchased at the Piggly Wiggly store, the B & W Drug Store in Citrus Plaza or by calling 726-1715.

"We need to know how many are coming as soon as possible so Mr. Glover can plan for the dinner and

dessert," Leroy said. "I would like to see all my friends and lots of new friends there. I know they will all have a good time."

The Bellamy's have eight living children, 35 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

Levin reunion attracts 80

The Levins family reunion was held on Dec. 29, 1985, at the home of Wayne and Hallie Levins, 9875 W. Pomegranate St., Crystal River.

There were 80 members present. Those attending from afar were the Evers from Sheridan, Ore., Dixons from Albany, Ga., Millers from Orlando, Overtons of Bradenton, Deens from Dade City, Reddings of Tampa, VanNess family, Louisville, Ky., and the Proctors from Houston, Texas.

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CCC 4-17-02

Fifty years of faith builds church

NANCY KENNEDY
nkennedy@chronicleonline.com
Chronicle

The Rev. Leroy Bellamy is dancing with delight these days.

Beginning Sunday, he and his church, Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City, will host a week-long celebration.

After 50 years in ministry, the church of he envisioned is finally built. For nearly half a decade, Bellamy has trusted God and the people of Citrus County to provide funds for its construction. Now it's time to give thanks, he said.

"Everything you see, the peo-

ple give it — the pews, everything," Bellamy said. "We want everyone to come and go through the building, sign the guest book. The people built this church and we want the people to see where their money went and how God can use the people."



The Rev.
Leroy
Bellamy
Grace Temple
Church of the
Living God.

Sunday's service begins at 3 p.m. with the Rev. Babb Adams, pastor of First Baptist Church in Inverness, officiating. Each night a different church will serve as guest host.

The church will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. during the week for those who cannot attend

Please see **CHURCH/Page 4A**

CHURCH

Continued from **Page 1A**

the evening services, but would like to stop by and meet Bellamy.

One month shy of his birthday, Bellamy said, "I don't know this for sure, but I believe I'm close to the end. I'm goin' on 89, and I'm so glad to see this coming to a close, so glad that I can see it.

"You know, this means so much to the county. This is something that ain't happened here before. I saw a lady at the (First) Presbyterian church (in Inverness) who said she can't wait. Everyone wants to come and be a part."

One thing Bellamy requests is refreshments to serve after each service. Pizza will be served Tuesday evening.

"Just tell everyone to bring some cookies with them to share and maybe some punch," he said.

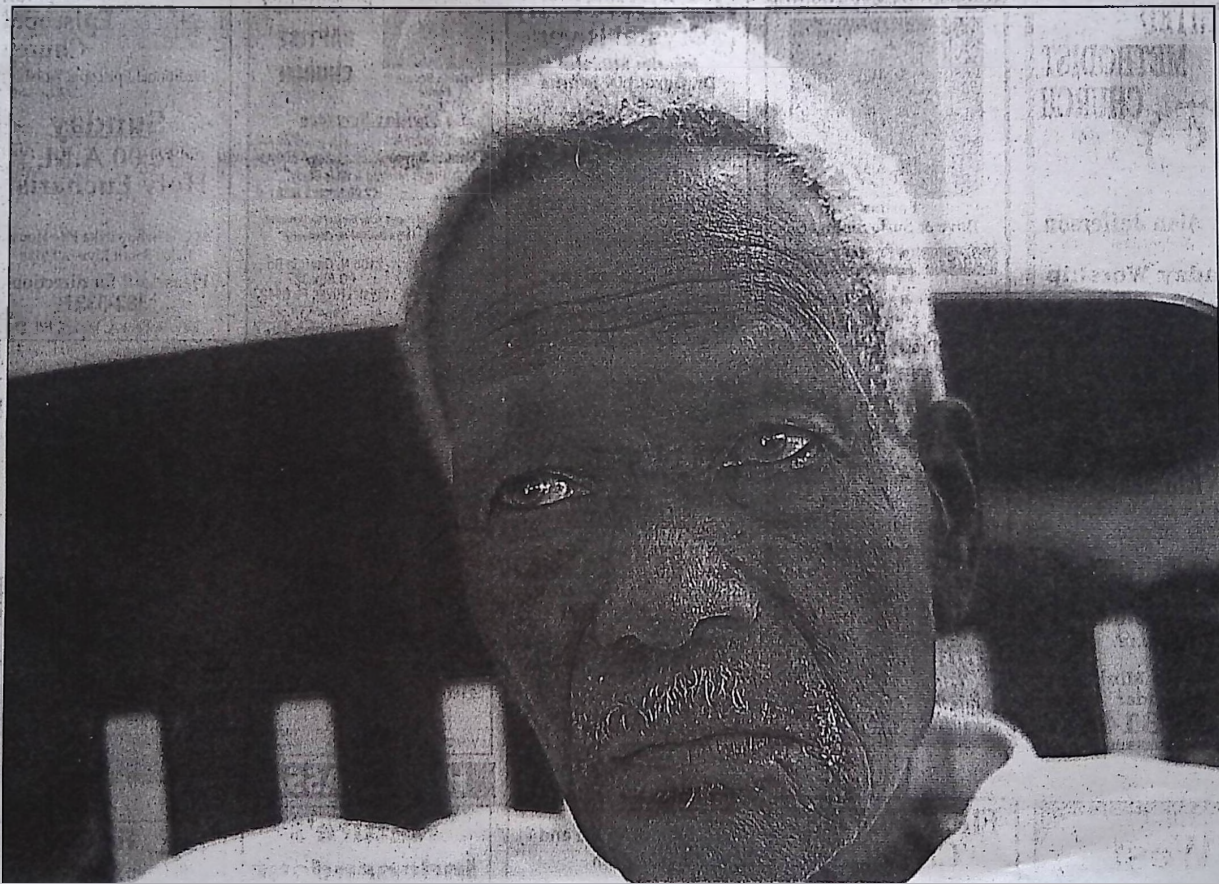
"It's goin' to be a big fun."

The Grace Temple Church of the Living God, 7435 S. Old Floral City Road, Floral City, is planning a week-long celebration that features a different minister each day. Here is the schedule:

- Sunday: 3 p.m., the Rev. Babb Adams, First Baptist Church of Inverness.
- Monday: 7 p.m., the Rev. Larry Powers, Inverness Church of God.
- Tuesday: 6 p.m., Bank of Inverness.
- Wednesday, April 24: 7 p.m., the Rev. Craig Davies, First Presbyterian Church of Inverness:
- Thursday, April 25: 7 p.m., the Rev. Dave Shirkey, Vineyard Christian Fellowship.
- Friday, April 26: 7 p.m., the Rev. Mike Thompson, First Baptist Church of Floral City.

11-8-03

Dearly beloved



BELOVED

Continued from Page 1C

Roberts had his son take over — I'd rather have kinfolk take over."

Spritual magnet

He said he has two or three members who preach, including his daughter-in-law, Gladys Bellamy.

"One thing I know, he is God, and if we lift him up, he will draw all (people) to himself," he said, "but we have to lift him up.

"We got some first-class preachers down at the church, and some of them are white!

"This hasn't been 'my' church, and it's not just a 'black' church, but it's the Lord's church, white or black."

He said he's pleased with the way things are going, except for his health.

Life perspective

"My doctor keeps telling me, 'Well, you ARE 90,'" he said. That made him laugh.

He said sometimes he thinks about the days of his youth, like when he was 80 and healthy and could get around.

He said he doesn't get out too much these days, but that gives him lots of time to pray.

"Did I tell you how I met my wife (Katie)?" he asked.

He and Katie will celebrate their second anniversary in December. She's an answer to his prayers.

"I asked the Lord from the heart, and he did just what I asked him," he said.

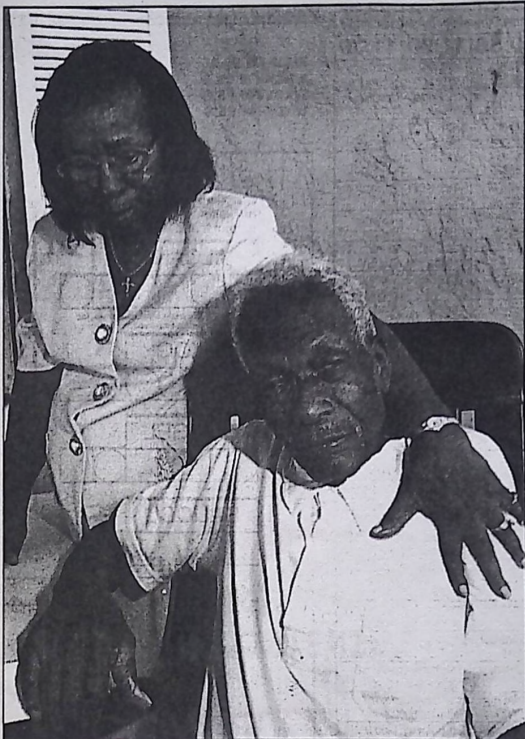
"I told him when I was going up to Washington for a family reunion, I said, 'Lord, when I come back home, I'm gonna be hunting me a 'biscuit burner.'"

Sure enough, I went to her house that first day and she burned the biscuits and I said, 'This is it.' We laugh about that a lot."

Vision for the future

He said his big prayer lately is for the Lord to "raise up great things."

He's praying for God to raise up people from his church who



DAVE SIGLER/Chronicle

In December, the Bellamys, Katie and the Rev. Leroy, will celebrate two years of marriage.

“My doctor keeps telling me, ‘Well, you ARE 90.’”

The Rev. Leroy Bellamy about getting older.

will "go for it" and "do great things for the Lord."

"In our church — I say 'our' not 'mine' — we take up money for people who are sick," he said.

"It doesn't matter what church you belong to.

"Some wanted to do that for me.

"Somebody sent me \$100 the other day, but I promised the Lord I wouldn't take people's money for myself, and I haven't. No sir.

"Everything's finished, ev-

erything's paid for and we got money in the bank.

"We're in good shape," he said. "God did us good there."

Bellamy went on to say that he believes one day people from all over will stand and stare, amazed at what God's going to do.

"I know one thing," he said, "whatever God intends, big or small, that's what's going to be. And it's going to happen through Grace Temple.

"I think it will."

10-17-04

The Rev. Bellamy leaves a legacy of leadership

People sometimes look to Washington, D.C., and get discouraged because it's hard to find a true American hero.

Heroes are scarce in Washington, but it's easy to find at least one in Citrus County, Fla.

The Rev. Leroy Bellamy was 91 when he died last weekend. The lifelong Citrus County resident was the pastor of the Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City for more than half a century. He was a true Citrus County leader and hero.

The Rev. Bellamy lived through a time of change in our community. He managed to become a leader of the civil rights effort without ever becoming confrontational or publicly angry.

He was a man of God who somehow became the spokesperson for an entire community.

Even bigots felt intimidated when they were in the presence of a man who was so good.

He was the father of 10 children and a man who earned the respect of many others.

He was a leader in the religious community who developed political influence far outside the confines of his small church.

If you were a senator, a sheriff or the chairman of the county commission, if you got a call from the Rev. Bellamy you would always get right back to him.

His honors in Citrus County were many. The chamber of commerce honored him with its Outstanding Community Service Award in 1974 and Sertoma recognized him in 1983 with its Service to Mankind Award. In 2000 he was honored with the Charles B. Fitzpatrick Heritage Award and in 2002 the Chronicle

named him its Citizen of the Year.

The Rev. Bellamy spent a lifetime seeking justice and helping those who needed help the most.

A brief story sheds light on the Rev. Bellamy's way of doing things. For many years Citrus County was just like the rest of the South where separate facilities existed for the races. There were black and white restrooms and black and white drinking fountains around town.

When the courts finally outlawed separate facilities, some in Inverness attempted to sidestep the intent of the decision. Once the drinking fountains were desegregated, some white

businessmen would go out each morning and place paper cups by the fountains so whites would not really have to use the same facilities as blacks.

Each morning, after the cups were placed at the fountains, the Rev.

Bellamy would walk around town and pick the cups back up. In his quiet way, he forced the entire community to get over the absurdness of separate-but-equal thinking.

The Rev. Bellamy used that same thoughtful approach to helping our community heal the wounds of racism at many levels. His leadership is one of the reasons that through the desegregation process we never encountered the violence that other Southern communities experienced.

The Rev. Bellamy leaves behind a large family, a legacy of peace, a thriving church, and a grateful community.

In the true sense of the word, the Rev. Leroy Bellamy was a hero for the ages.

THE ISSUE:

The death of Rev. Leroy Bellamy.

OUR OPINION:

A true hero.

10-18-04

Oh, glory! Celebrating a life



Ruby Burton leads the community choir Sunday as they sing praise during the funeral of the Rev. Leroy Bellamy at Vineyard Christian Fellowship Church in Inverness. Bellamy, a long-time community leader, died at the age of 91 last week.

BRIAN LAPETER/Chronicle

Friends and family of the Rev. Leroy Bellamy mark his passing with three days of solemnity and joy

NANCY KENNEDY
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Chronicle

What a send off! The funeral for the Rev. Leroy Bellamy, pastor of Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City and friend of many, was loud and boisterous, solemn and joyous.

Culminating three days of paying respect to the one who called himself "the people's pastor," it was standing room only Sunday at the Vineyard Christian Fellowship Church in Inverness.

As Bellamy would say, "Oh, glory!"

Bellamy died Oct. 9. He was 91. For an hour before the service began, politicians, fellow pastors, plain folks — and lots of children — filed past the coffin to bid farewell to their friend. Some paused to touch his white-gloved hand; others stopped to snap a picture.

Then, as the family entered into the church to the lively tune of "When the Saints Go Marching In," the celebration began with hand-clapping and foot-stomping.

Everyone there had a Leroy



**The Rev.
Leroy
Bellamy**

Bellamy story to tell. The Rev. Craig Davies, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Inverness, started it off, giving the invocation. He called Bellamy a "dear friend to our church family." He recalled the time he invited Bellamy to preach at his church. During the first service, he spoke a few minutes, then sat down. But the next service, the one that was broadcast on the radio, Bellamy asked for a "few more minutes," then went on

Please see **GLORY/Page 5A**

Pastor helped to turn around lives

NANCY KENNEDY
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Chronicle

Robert "Bubba" McKinnon had known the Rev. Leroy Bellamy almost all of his life.

Born and raised in Floral City, his

mother brought him to Bellamy's church weekly. But as young men often do, McKinnon decided church wasn't for him and stopped going.

"Pastor Bellamy would meet me on the street and say, "Bubba, I'm

Please see **PASTOR/Page 5A**

PASTOR

Continued from Page 1A

waitin' on you," McKinnon said. "I'd say, 'Pastor, when I get right, I'm goin' to come back.' A lot of times he'd talk to me, and he did it with such love, and it made you really want to come to church. The next Sunday, I'd be in church, but then it might be a month before you'd see me again."

McKinnon said Bellamy never pointed a finger at him or shamed him. He would simply say, "I'm waitin' on you, Bubba."

About nine years ago, McKinnon walked into Bellamy's church to stay. Eventually, Bellamy appointed McKinnon a deacon, which McKinnon considers to be a high honor.

"If he didn't think I was qualified, he wouldn't have done it," he said. "I thank God I was a part of his life. He always said he was 'blessed to be a blessing.' He was a man that, if you couldn't get along with him, then you can't get along with anyone. He was that type of person."

Robert Key is another man whose life had been changed by the influence of Leroy Bellamy.

The Bellamys had a tree in front of their Inverness house, and the pastor would often bring young men out under the tree to talk to them.

He would talk about honor and respect and doing the right thing with women. Key was one of those young men "under the tree."

"Regardless of what you'd be doing, he'd come over and say a word or two," Key said. "He'd say, 'I'm looking forward to you coming to see me (at church) on Sunday,' and we'd lie and say, 'All right, Rev.' He'd say, 'You know what you're doing is not right; you need to have more respect about yourself.'"

Key went on to say that Bellamy influenced people by his humility, his "attitude of gratitude" and the way he could take any situation and make it joyous.

"He was not a forceful man,

but he had a force of him," he said.

"He was truly an amazing man. He would say, 'You're born and you die, but it's what you do in between that counts.'"

He did the 'in betweens' very well. That's why he was so loved and respected, even now, even in death. I'm just glad he cared enough to tell me about Jesus."

GLORY

Continued from Page 1A

and on.

Davies said Bellamy was passionate about spreading the gospel in any way he could.

"The best tribute we can give our friend is to continue carrying the message of Christ," he said.

The Rev. Babb Adams, long time friend of Bellamy, remembered him as a man who never compromised his beliefs, who thought any work, no matter how humble, was noble and that he always kept a sweet spirit about him.

"He was one of my heroes," Adams said.

Another longtime friend of Bellamy, Inverness Councilman John Sullivan, said, "Everyone in this room thinks that Leroy Bellamy loved them best, and he did, if that's possible. He was close to my family; he was my friend. He preached lots and lots of sermons, but the most powerful sermon Leroy Bellamy ever preached was his life and the way he lived it."

Bellamy's son, Lonnie Bellamy, thanked the community on behalf of the Bellamy family and paid tribute to his father as a man of God and a man of prayer.

"He loved everybody, and he knew everybody loved him," he said. "He loved life and he

loved God. His message was simple: 'Trust in the Lord and love one another.' Simple and plain, it never changed."

He went on to say, of all his father's jobs — at Florida Power, with the railroad, working in local grocery stores — "his best work was done on his knees. He loved to pray for people," he said.

The afternoon service ended with a eulogy delivered by the Rev. Larry Chester, founding pastor of New Birth Gospel Tabernacle in Inverness. He said Bellamy always referred to himself as an uneducated man, but that was incorrect.

"With all his entrepreneurship, all the things he accomplished, he was not uneducated," Chester said.

"He was like a seed. You can count how many seeds there are in an apple, but you can't count all the apples in a seed. And when you look out at his fruit, just look out and see all the educated people he has in his family; well, where did they all come from? They were all wrapped up in and came from the seed that was Elder Bellamy."

"He was an educated man," Chester said. "He was a man of wisdom. Every piece of advice he ever gave me has come to pass. He was my mentor. Three days just is not enough time to celebrate this tremendous man."

Hall honors name of Bellamy

By **Stephanie Belden**
Pioneer Editor

"I am blessed to be a blessing," was the message with a photo of the late Pastor Leroy Bellamy on shirts in the congregation at Grace Temple Church of the Living God last Sunday.

The church dedicated its fellowship hall in memory of Pastor Bellamy and his wife,

Precilla. Family and friends reflected on life lessons they learned from Pastor Bellamy.

"We get our patience and grace from our preacher man," said his son, Bruce Bellamy. "I have always considered myself blessed to be a Bellamy and now that both of my parents are gone I don't have to consider, I am blessed."

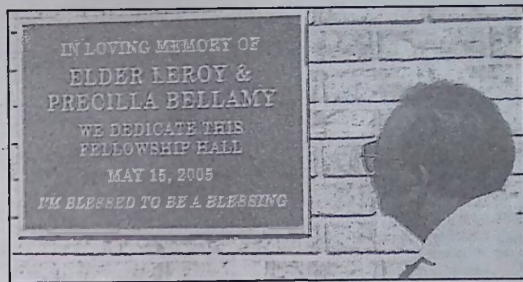
The Bellamy family presented the church with framed photos of

the late pastor and his wife to display in the church. The family also presented the church with a donation to the scholarship

see Bellamy Page 4

Randolph Bellamy looks up at the plaque at the fellowship hall at Grace Temple Church of the Living God. The church dedicated the hall to the late Pastor Leroy Bellamy and his wife, Precilla.

STEPHANIE BELDEN/Pioneer



May 19, 2005

(1) Rev. Leroy Bellamy

For well over half a century the Rev. Leroy Bellamy has been a source of strength and faith in the community. He grew up “wanting to be a preacher” and has been quoted as saying, “We’ve been churching all our lives”. The deeply devout and dedicated Rev. Bellamy gave his first sermon when he was a teenager and has been preaching ever since throughout the eastern part of the county.

Bellamy has always had a vision for improving the economic conditions for local minorities. Through his long life, Bellamy has seen many changes, and has found strength and joy in preaching and promoting the advancement of minorities. He turns to family and faith for strength. He has supported 10 children through many diverse roles including preacher, landscaper, janitor and civil rights activist. Bellamy sums it up by saying, “I believe in staying busy. There isn’t any sense in wasting time.”

Approaching 90 years old, Rev. Bellamy continues to provide community support through his leadership and vision.

BROOKS, Claude

St. Petersburg Times - 1966

CLAUDE BROOKS

Mr. Brooks - 47 years old, father of 3 children, a building contractor.
Elected to Crystal River Council, the first Black ever to be elected
in Citrus County history and one of a few in Florida history.

BROOKS, Isaiah



Isaiah Brooks, 77-years-old, holds his guitar which is one of favorite possessions. Brooks recalls areas and events in the county from times past.

Ether Duncan/The Chronicle

A glimpse of yesterday

By Esther Duncan
Chronicle writer

IF YOU WANT to turn back the clock and listen to the beauty of the soft, colorful speech of an earlier era in the south, drive out to Rock Crusher Road and introduce yourself to a member of one of Citrus county's oldest families — Isalah Brooks.

"I'm an ole man," Brooks has a habit of interjecting in his conversation, though he's so filled with good spirits that he seems much younger than his 77 years.

If ever a man overflowed with enthusiasm, love for his fellow man and contentment with his lot in life, it's this 6-foot-3 inch, still straight up and down man with his broad, winning smile.

"Ah was born an' raised right in Crystal River in a house owned by Bonnie Willis," he tells his visitors, including daughter Maxine and her husband, Lee Saunders, Jr., who all sit in a circle on old chairs and a couch under a gnarled tree. Brooks cradles a guitar as if it's one of his most prized possessions.

"Miz Willis was a government woman — a notary public — an' she done name me and bring me toys. My Daddy was haulin' logs with oxen to a saw mill then."

Brooks thinks a moment and states that he can't recall ever going out of Citrus County until he was drafted in World War II. "They sent me home cause ah's a fireman and they wasn't many around back then."

In 1922 the Brooks family moved to what is now Rock Crusher Road where many members of the family live today, including a brother, Richard, who was given an old house by a "former bossman" that recently was spruced up "by the county and grandchildren." Isalah and his clan live in a mobile home within whistling distance down the road.

"My Daddy bought 80 acres for little of nuthin'," he says. "The Allens helped him get the land,"

“There was nothin' out here then —
not even a road. They come an' ask
my Daddy if they could build a road
through his land so they can haul
some rocks to build 490 at

Homosassa.”

Isalah Brooks

Brooks remembers. "I was raised right over there on that hill with my seven brothers and five sisters."

Brooks remembers, "There was nothin' out here then — not even a road. They come an' ask my Daddy if they could build a road through his land so they can haul some rocks to build 490 at Homosassa."

His father was one of the crew that used picks and shovels on "that ol' mountain down the road a piece," as Brooks expressed it, when several of the local roads were being built.

"Daddy was a Cherokee Indian," Brooks states, "7 foot tall and weighed 300 pounds. I never seen a man as big as he. He come from North Carolina."

He described his mother as a Nassau woman. "I asks her, how come you met a Cherokee Indian — and she told me, 'I didn't meet him — he met me.'"

Brooks remembers the one room school house he attended for three years on Rock Crusher Road — his total education — and even the name of his first grade teacher, Mamie Alexander of Dunnelton. Later, the school house was torn down "because the railroad was comin' right through there." Some of the lumber was used by Brooks to build what he described as an eight room house where he raised his grand-children.

"It was located right over there where you see

that bed of lillies."

His son-in-law, Saunders, urges him to tell everyone about the plentiful game that used to be in the area when he was a boy.

Brooks nods, his eyes crinkling up in another delighted smile as his memory is jogged. "Mama would tell us to go out and see if we could find some quail, or a rabbit or maybe a turtle," he says. "Times was tough then in the Hoover days. Ah remember how the wild hogs ate our sweet potatoes and sometimes run us back to the house."

Many a morning there would be as many as 25 deer in the family corn field across the road. One of us would ask Papa if we could shoot 'em and he'd always give us the same answer: "No, they's too pretty, so just run over and chase 'em out of the corn, boy."

Brooks laughs heartily and finally is able to tell what it's about. "Mama would get so all-fired mad at the critturs that sneaked up at night and helped themselves to some of her white rabbits. Sometimes in the moonlight we'd see a bear tryin' to catch one of her hens. Or a coon or possum."

If a rattler appeared in the yard Brooks says that his mother called on one of the boys to shoot him. "We ate everything, even pole cat," he remembers.

Brooks is especially proud of knowing a little long-ago history and maybe being a part of it. He talks of the old Mannfield courthouse that was abandoned back in 1891 when its contents and even the clerk himself were forcefully moved by the sheriff to Inverness.

Brooks says he was one of the men that helped tear the court house down years later. "It was made of pine board and shingles. I could show you folks the spot where I stood on a ladder and tore off those shingles. My Daddy used some of that lumber right here on this property."

His thoughts turn to farming the land with a horse his father had promised and given him on

GLIMPSE

continued from Page 1C

his 14th birthday. "They was buildin' up Homosassa Springs in what had been nothin' but a swamp, and folks would stop and buy my Mama's greens she raised."

Brooks could hardly get the words out as he spread his hands wide apart. "My Mama had a bag full of money as high as that — she couldn't get another nickel in it."

He adds, "My favorite dish was gopher with rice just the way Mama fixed it with biscuits. How she could cook! Look like I can see her slew foot self right now."

Tenderly as he adds, "When you lose your mother, you lose your best friend. No one ever has a better friend than a mother."

Thinking of the loss of his parents reminds Brooks of burying his father. "He was so big they had to nail two caskets together," he says.

His thoughts turn back to his working days during Homosassa Springs brief boom. "Ah knew Dazy Vance, the famous baseball player — he was my boss when he was buildin' that fancy hotel and I was Dazy's mortar mixer. His daughter was the post mistress."

That got him to thinking of other jobs he'd had during his lifetime, such as working in the pine woods collecting turpentine. "My

Daddy did some of the chippin' of the trees; there was a cup at the bottom where I did some dumpin'."

Brooks added that he worked 10 hours a day at 10 cents an hour, saying cheerfully, "A man who made a dollar a day back then thought he made a pretty good wage."

Brooks also worked for L.C. Yeoman who ran a fish house in Crystal River. "He was the biggest bossman in the county," Brooks states admiringly. "Sometimes I'd go for oysters all day, then fish all night."

Today, he adds with a pleased smile, "I'm just a guitar man."

Brooks explains that his wife still works for a couple who owned a Homosassa restaurant where she was employed for years as a cook. "I told Mary that they was mighty good to her and now they's need you, so you go down there and take care of them folks. Daughter can take care of me, I tells her."

He adds, "We need the money, though we're livin' pretty good. I got gardens all over this place for a long time."

But Brooks has done more than raise garden produce. He raised a family almost as large as the one he grew up in — he and his wife Mary had a total of five sons and five daughters. "I've got 17 head of grand-children," he says, "and 37

head of great-grand."

He seems lost in deep, tranquil thought.

"I always had folks look out for me," he recalls. "If I needed \$50 I could go to someone — like one of the four Allen brothers who lived in Lecanto. All I say was I need to buy food for my family. Then I'd work to pay it back."

Brooks is smiling now more broadly than ever. "I can't recollect ever havin' a bad day. I bet I could name 50 different folks I worked for an' helped raise some of their kids, like the Allens who comes to see me today."

Hugging his guitar, he says, "I'm glad to be an old man — they all love me. Both white and black"

ISAIAH BROOKS

Born in Crystal River, 1913 in a house owned by Ronnie Willis. He lives on Rock Crusher Road. Brooks is a member of one of Citrus County's oldest families. The family moved to Rock Crusher Road in 1922 where members of the family still reside. His father was a Cherokee Indian from North Carolina. Brooks describes his father as seven feet tall and weighing 300 pounds. Brooks words, "I never seen a man as big as he." Isaiah and wife had ten children. He owned 80 acres with help from the Allen family who lived in Lecanto.

The County requested that a road be built through the Brooks land to haul rocks to build Road 490 at Homosassa. Brooks remembers the long ago history of moving the old Mannfield Courthouse in 1891. He knew and worked for Dazzy Vance when Vance built his Homosassa Hotel.

BOSTICK, John

JOHN BOSTIC - DUNNELLON

First Black City Council member

First Black Mayor

First Black Police Officer

Council member urges blacks to get involved

■ From Page 1

world, and that's not so anymore."

The 62-year-old, who retired as a shipping supervisor in November, knows firsthand that the world changes. In addition to being elected Dunnellon's first black council member, he also served as its first black mayor (an office filled by a council member based on council vote) and its first black police officer. Dunnellon, with a population of about 1,600, is 20 miles southwest of Ocala.

While blacks don't yet have the full opportunities as whites, Bostick says, Dunnellon's blacks are just as gully as the whites — perhaps more so — for their lack of progress in nabbing decent jobs and becoming more civically active.

His philosophy is classic Pogo: "We have met the enemy, and he is us."

"I feel we're very lazy, very lazy," he says. "They just think that a problem will go away if you don't bother with it. 'Well, they're all white, they're going to do what they want anyway' — those are the attitudes they take. The attitude is poor."

Bostick says he'd like to see blacks emulate the way whites handle complaints with the city.

"If they're dissatisfied about something on our streets or whatever, they hit that council chamber, and they let us know ... but blacks will not do this."

An example of the problem, he says, is Chatmire, a black community just outside Dunnellon long recognized as a Marion County hub for drug trafficking. Bostick says he believes whites would not have tolerated such activity in their community and would have forced the county to rid the area of the peddlers.

A change of attitude

In addition to changing their attitude toward government, blacks need a change of attitude about their place in the work force, Bostick says. Too many believe the good jobs will only go to whites, so they don't apply, he says.

Whereas blacks seeking decent jobs in Dunnellon a few decades ago "had about as much chance as a snowball in hell," he adds: "We've come a long way in many aspects. People have started looking at a person's ability and not the color of their skin."

Bostick's message to Dunnellon's

young blacks: "Opportunity is here; come and grab it."

Bostick has lived in Dunnellon his entire life, save for the two years in the military.

"I grew up right on this same street right here," he recently told visitors as he gestured from in front of his Bridge Street house. "Right down the street a little further, on the left-hand side."

He joined the service after graduating from high school. His interest in the community — and serving it — developed soon after his return.

"I used to attend the council meetings, and everywhere I looked around, well, there was no black representation or anything around the city," he says.

He became a police officer in 1962 and says there were very few racial incidents or signs of overt racism during his 14 years as an officer. "We didn't have a lot of problems with black-and-white situations in the city," he says.

He had to quit the force when he joined the council in 1976 because of conflict-of-interest rules. It took him three tries to win the office, but he's had little trouble retaining it.

"I haven't been in office all these years elected by black vote," he says. "The black vote doesn't keep me downtown. The white vote is the majority."

Another consideration

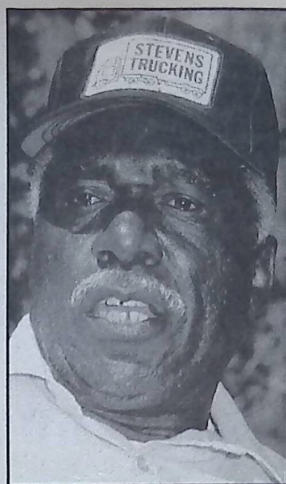
Bostick says he is considering running for a higher office, perhaps a seat on the Marion County Commission.

Despite his confidence that black residents can affect local government decisions, Bostick says it's still important that blacks have a representative on government boards to ensure their neighborhoods aren't shortchanged on city services — a problem he says has occurred in the past.

And, he says, there are always those few who would like things to revert back to earlier days. "I feel like we would lose ground if we didn't have black representation downtown," Bostick says.

State Sen. Karen Thurman, a Democrat from Dunnellon, says her long-time friend has served the entire Dunnellon community — whites and blacks alike — well during his tenure on the council.

"He tried to build those bridges between the communities," Thurman says, adding Bostick was "very



“I feel we're very lazy, very lazy. They just think that a problem will go away if you don't bother with it. 'Well, they're all white, they're going to do what they want anyway' — those are the attitudes they take. The attitude is poor.”

— John Bostick

effective at it.”

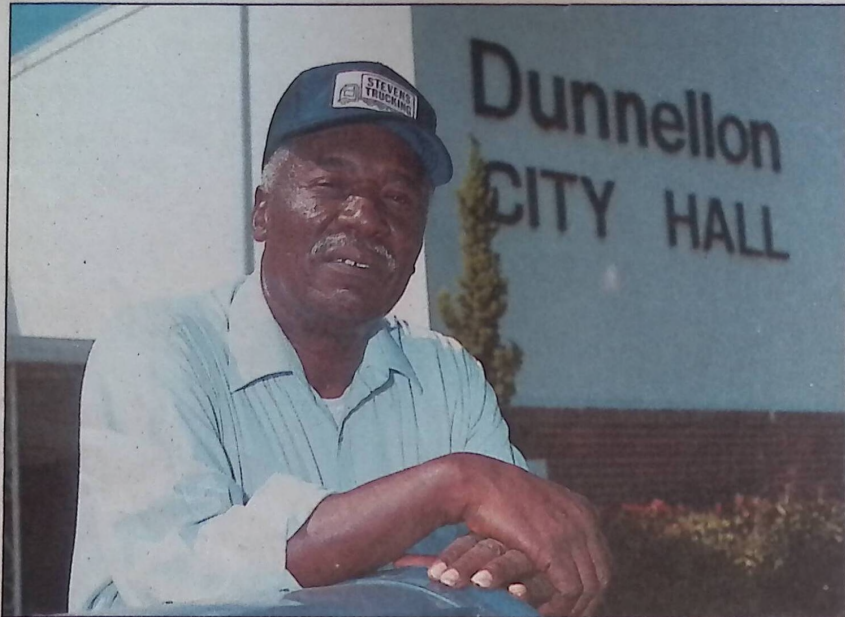
Thurman says Bostick also has been able to pull together leaders within the black community when there was a problem that needed to be addressed.

There haven't been serious racial problems in Dunnellon, "and I think some of that can be attributed to him," Thurman says.

Thurman first got to know Bostick well during the mid-1970s, when she began serving on the City Council. They worked together on the council for several years before she was elected to the Senate.

"He's always been very active in making sure his community was taken care of," Thurman says, "but I think more importantly, he's a figure that everybody knows. Whether you're black or white, John just is there, and he always has been."

Twenty-five years ago, the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. inspired a generation with his words, "I have a dream." The Tampa Tribune is publishing a series of profiles of prominent area black citizens, "A Piece of the Dream," to run each Monday in BayLife.



His message to blacks: 'Opportunity is here'

John Bostick, 62, wants young blacks to change their attitude toward the government.

By DEAN SOLOV
Tribune Staff Writer

DUNNELLON — After serving his country for two years during the Korean War, John Bostick returned to his small hometown of Dunnellon and found it much the way he had left it in 1950.

He and his friends weren't welcome in restaurants, they couldn't drink from the whites-only water fountains, and they were relegated to a small section in the balcony of the movie theater.

During the following years, the flames of the civil rights movement swept through the nation, sparking sit-ins and demonstrations in Dunnellon as

well, and Bostick was among the blacks who helped integrate the town's businesses and other public places.

Three decades later, Bostick no longer fights the establishment; he is the establishment.

Now in his eighth term on the City Council, Bostick says he'd like to see more blacks join up and become active members of the community.

A PIECE OF THE DREAM "Some of them grew up in the old, way-back ages, and they can't get away from it," Bostick says as he breaks into a refrain of what he says he hears all too often from blacks: 'Well, the whites are going to do what they want to do.'

"Well, that's not so. It's a changing

See COUNCIL, Page 6

4/29/91

John Bostick was Dunnellon's first black City Council member, first black

Tribune photograph by ANDY JONES
mayor and first black police officer. He has served eight terms on the council.

COLLINS, Robert L.

Chronicle - October 28, 1987

Robert L. Collins - died on October 22, 1987 at age 84 on the 120 acre farm south of the Withlacoochee State Farm. This acreage grew from a 40 acre land grant following the freeing of slaves in the 19th century.

Collins son, Raymond remembers having to "lug drinking water from the spring," a distance of about a mile, but water for hogs and chickens was carried from a nearby pond.

Collins children attended a one room school with one teacher - grade one through eighth. School sessions was four months.

Robert Collins worked wherever he was able to find it - from picking beans to cutting railroad ties. Later he farmed his acreage and sold the produce in Tampa. The orange and pear groves were lost to the freeze of 1883 - 1884.

R. L. was instrumental in getting a school built for black children, Booker T. Washington secondary - which served until segregation in education was ended.

In 1972 Mr. Collins founded the first branch of the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement for Colored People) in Citrus County. He served as president for three years and was a life member until his death in 1987.

Collins was an ordained minister with the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church all during its' existence. He later served at St. Lewis Baptist Church at Shady Rest.

The Citrus County Commissioners accepted a Food Stamp Program for the elderly because of the efforts of R. L.:

He found a way to overcome the prejudice and spite after mail delivery to his private property became a problem. Carriers from Brooksville would not deliver mail up the 2'1/2 mile private road to the Collins home. People started to fence the area to prevent delivery. He was to move his mail box down to the County road. An attorney told him that since his box had been there for forty years, he did not have to move it. He then contacted Washington, D. C. Delivery began again and the carriers had to bring the mail to the house.

Robert Collins built the six room house his family lived in for 30 years. A large three bedroom, two full bath home now sets on the property about a blocks' distance from the original home.

Robert and his wife, Beatrice known as "Big Mama" had five children. There are 17 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

Chronicle - October 28, 1987

Robert L. Collins - third generation member of a pioneering family in Citrus County. Resided on Daley Point in south central Citrus County. He was born in 1903 and died October 22, 1987 at the age of 84. He died on the family's 120 acre farm south of the Withlacoochee State Forest. That acreage was expanded an additional 40 acre grant following the freeing of the slaves in the 19th century. Gilliam Washington, Collins' grandfather was granted 40 acres and a mule. He chose what is now Citrus County to settle. Washington died in May, 1931 at age 76. Collins father married Washington's daughter, Agnes.

Collins remembered as pioneer

By DEJUANA HARRIS
Staff Writer

Family and friends gathered Sunday, Oct. 25 at the Collins home on Danley Point in the south central part of the county in tribute to the passing of a third-generation member of a pioneering Citrus County family.

Robert L. Collins, 84, died Oct. 22 on the 120-acre farm south of the Withlacoochee State Forest that was a 40-acre land grant following freeing of the slaves in the 19th century.

Gillum Washington, Collins' grandfather, was granted 40 acres and a mule. He chose what is now Citrus County in which to settle. Washington died in May 1931, at age 76.

Collins' father married Washington's daughter Agnes. The land was left to Washington's son-in-law, on condition that Agnes' mother be cared for.

Washington was one of the lucky, or ambitious, few who were granted land in the area. He not only managed to hold onto his original 40 acres, but added three more sec-



Robert Collins

tions, for a total of 160 acres. He also purchased an additional 80 acres down on the prairie, for 25 cents an acre, but lost that land because he couldn't pay the taxes on it during the Depression.

The family has a photograph of Washington, along with another former slave, Phelan Harris. Raymond Roberts, former slave owner, hired Washington to care for Harris after a stroke confined Harris to a wheelchair.

Raymond Collins, oldest son of R.L. Collins, remembers having to "lug drinking water from the spring," a distance of about a mile, but water for hogs and chickens was carried home from the nearby pond in two-gallon yellow syrup buckets, one in each hand. "Didn't take long for those syrup buckets to get heavy," Raymond said. He was a young boy at the time.

R.L. (as he was known) and Beatrice Collins' children attended a one-room school, with one teacher for first through eighth grade. Black children's school lasted four months. In order to attend, there was a couple of miles' walk through the woods.

A century or so ago, several black families lived in the area known then as Russell Hill. Most of them had settled there under the same grant-settlement agreement as Gillum Washington. One of the families in-

cluded were the Mayos, cousins of the Collins family.

The Collins children could walk to school or to church at the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church and never leave land belonging to father or their uncle.

Grandmother Washington, Frances, was 9 when slaves were freed. Raymond, oldest child of R.L. Collins, remembers she used to smoke a pipe and sectioned her hair off with string, not braids, as later became the fashion. "I remember that pipe rattling with the nicotine gone liquid." Different ones would tell her to clean the pipe.

At one time, a white man, his name long forgotten, moved into the area, lived with the black families and taught the black children. He is buried in the old black cemetery.

Most of the black families with holdings in the area lost their land because of not being able to pay taxes or not being able to make a living. Many simply walked away after giving up on farming the land.

R.L. Collins worked at whatever job he managed to get. He picked beans for about 10 cents a hamper and cut cross-ties for 50 cents a day. He worked for the railroad until he got too old for such hard work. After that he farmed full time.

Raymond remembers his father getting up early on a Saturday to

take his crops to the farmers' market in Tampa. "Papa cut his okra when it was still small and tender and he got top prices for it, around \$3 a bushel. He left early enough to get there about daylight." He grew sweet potatoes, corn, peanuts, peas, and watermelon, also. His corn and peas sold well, too, his wife remembers.

Until the hard freeze of '83 or '84, the Collins property contained an orange grove and a pear orchard. All the citrus plants were wiped out in the below-freezing cold snap. One pear tree remains of the pear orchard.

The citrus grove was over 100 years old, and the remaining pear tree was as old as Collins.

Collins taught his children things he had learned about staying out of trouble with "white folks" — walking on the opposite side of the road, stepping off the sidewalk, etc. He didn't want his children to be put in jail.

But when his daughter finished eighth grade, and wanted to continue her schooling, Collins went to the school board. When that did no good, he was advised by some of his white neighbors to contact the board of regents in Tallahassee. As a result, two or three small portable buildings were set up for the area black children.

Please see Collins, 9A.

Collins

Continued from front

"Papa was told by the education supervisor for Citrus County that the little buildings were just as good as the red brick building set up for white children," said Ruth C. Cannon, oldest daughter.

By preserving, Collins finally got a school built for black children — Booker T. Washington secondary — which served until segregation in education came to an end.

In 1972, Collins founded the first branch of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in Citrus County and served as president for three years. He remained a life member until his death.

About 40 years ago, Collins sold 40 acres of his holdings to a real estate developer, receiving about \$1,000. The sick-thinking agent took pictures of orange groves, took them up north and sold lots to people tired of the cold winters and intrigued with the idea of growing their own fruit.

"That man probably made a fortune," Raymond Collins said, "but my daddy didn't have anything to do with the deception. Papa was an ordained deacon with the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, as long as it existed, and later at St. Lewis Baptist at Shady Rest. Papa lived his faith every day, all his life."

Collins also played a part in getting the Citrus County commissioners to accept the Food Stamp Program for the elderly.

Collins always found a way to overcome the prejudice and spite that came his way, his family said.

After rural mail delivery began in the county, he put up a mailbox across the road from his home. Mail carriers rode horses out of Brooksville, and delivered mail to the homes on the road.

The two-and-one-half mile road that leads back from the county road

is on private property, Collins property. At one point, people began to fence in the road to prevent delivery of mail to the Collins home. Collins was told to move his mailbox down to the county road if he wanted his mail.

Collins talked to a lawyer and was told since his mailbox had been there for 40 years, he didn't have to move it. Some white friends of the Collins' told him to contact Washington D.C.

When delivery began again, the mail carrier had to bring the mail to the house. It wouldn't all fit in the box.

Collins built the six-room house his family lived in for 30 years. When electricity came to the county, it took a long time for the wires to be

A large three-bedroom, two full bath home sets on the property now about a block's distance from the home that R.L. built. It's exterior is a deeper gold than the Florida sand. The front porch looks out on Collins land as far as the eye can see, and farther. And enclosed porch allows for the beauty of the countryside to be viewed without exposure to the elements.

Beatrice Collins, or "Big Mama" as she is known to her children and close friends, has kept things going through her husband's illness.

"He was a proud, strong, hard-working man who provided for his family," his widow said. "I know it bothered him to have to depend on me, but we were always able to depend on him."

Other children born to R.L. and Beatrice Collins are three other sons, Robert, Edell and Howard Collins and daughter Mrs. Laytha Collins Danley. Seventeen grandchildren and four great-grandchildren also survive R.L. Collins.

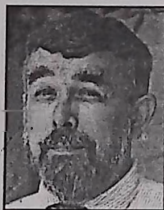
Recalling Russell Hill

Post-slavery era community slowly fades into history

WE WERE LOOKING through Beatrice Collins' photo albums.

She was speaking of how, many years ago, her husband R.L. Collins brought the possibility of a high school education to the black youth on the east side of Citrus County.

Mrs. Collins is a proud and gracious 84 years old, the last of her community to inhabit the



**Steve
Arthur**

the broad green pastures and woodlands which extend in a graceful panorama around her hilltop house in southern Citrus County.

Her homestead is off Old Jones Road, which follows the now-overgrown but once busy Seaboard railway which ran passengers and freight from Gainesville to St. Petersburg.

She lives in a modern house built on the same 120 acres her great-grandfather Guilam Washington received as a land grant after his emancipation as a slave. She said the family has the deed, signed by President Abraham Lincoln and Secretary of State Seward.

At one time some 300 African Americans lived around the community called Russell Hill.

"It never made it to the map though," she said.

"Black people owned all the land around here, 1,700 acres all around here," she said, pointing to the west, land which is now part of the Withlacoochee State Forest.

FABLES & FOIBLES

"They're all gone now. The slaves stayed. The children of the slaves stayed too, but their children left," she said. "They are all gone now."

Mrs. Collins said her husband, Robert, was a determined independent man who was not easily intimidated.

"He was told that schooling would not be available for black children after eighth grade. My husband thought that was unfair, and decided to go to Washington, D.C., to see if that couldn't be changed."

Their daughter Leytha, after attending classes through the sixth grade in Russell Hill, and the seventh and eighth in Floral City, had to leave the county to

Please see HILL, Page 2A

continue her schooling. She was first sent to an academy in Ocala, and then to a school in St. Petersburg before she went on to Florida A&M University, a predominantly black university in Tallahassee, where she met her husband-to-be, Dr. David Danley.

"My husband was advised before going to Washington, to seek help from the board of regents in Tallahassee, which he did. And, after a visit to Florida A&M, he brought an education professor to speak to the board of education. It was not a pleasant meeting, but they agreed to make a high school for our children," she said proudly.

Times were not easy before and during integration; she said her husband always carried a shotgun in his truck and were careful when he traveled across the county.

She said he was instrumental in the creation of the Booker T. Washington High School in Inverness, in integrating the tax assessor's office, and in arguing with the county commission for bringing food stamps to the needy of the county.

Yes, there had been troubles, once right in front of the house but the family also had white friends they could count on in times of need.

When county banks refused to loan R.L. Collins money for the coming year — loans farmers commonly seek — she said a neighbor, Mr. Jim Rooks, co-signed the loan in order to keep the farm solvent.

Mrs. Collins and her son-in-law Dr.

Danley brought me to the site of the Russell Hill community, about 2 miles as the crow flies from her home.

We walked around the cemetery, pulling back the grass to read the inscriptions. Hickman, Thompson, King, Rogers, Jones, Crellus, Clayton, McGhee and Langley were some of the names on those stones.

We stood in the afternoon stillness, birds chirping in the forest surrounding the country churchyard, before the grave of the patriarch, Guilam Washington, who died in 1931. It is believed he was born in 1855. Beside him lies his wife, Francis, who died at age 83 in 1938.

And there, behind those stones, off to the side, was a marble stone with the name Alphonso Collins, 1934-1939.

"That's my baby," Beatrice whispered.

Her second born son. She stood looking at the stone while her son-in-law and I went out to see where the church had once stood.

There were only the cement steps remaining, and a long hump of earth with pine trees growing up from that mound.

"Imagine," Dr. Danley said, "All those voices raised in prayer on those Sunday mornings so long ago, singing praise to the Lord."

"I always think of this place as hallowed ground."

When I left them that evening, she gave me a jar of pear preserves.

She told me the pears are from a tree behind the house planted over a century before, by her great-great-grandmother.

They are as sweet and delicious as any I have ever eaten.



Dave Siegel/The Chronicle

Beatrice Rogers Collins, seated, poses with her family, from left, Mary Watson, Laytha Danley and Dr. David Danley on the family's Citrus County property. Guilam Washington homesteaded the land after President Abraham Lincoln granted former slaves 40 acres and a mule.



Dave Siegel/The Chronicle

Left: Beatrice Collins, with home-made pear preserves, stands in front of a century-old pear tree that has bore fruit for as long as she can remember.

Above: Collins' ancestor Guilam Washington is shown in a photo with Phelan Harris. Washington was hired by former slave owner Raymond Roberts to take care of Harris after he had a stroke.

COLLINS Land grant

Reeples 757-2057



Sec 11 Twp 21 R 19
 Quarter _____
 Aerial No. 151
 MAP 541

10000

28/60

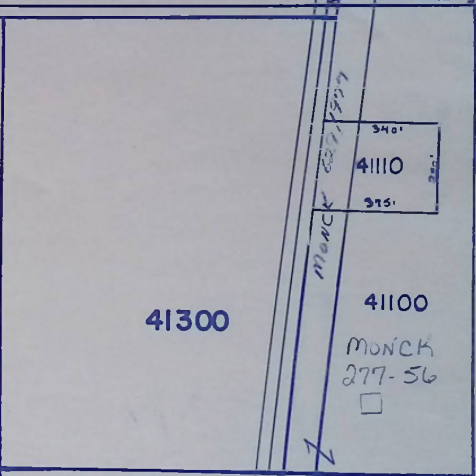
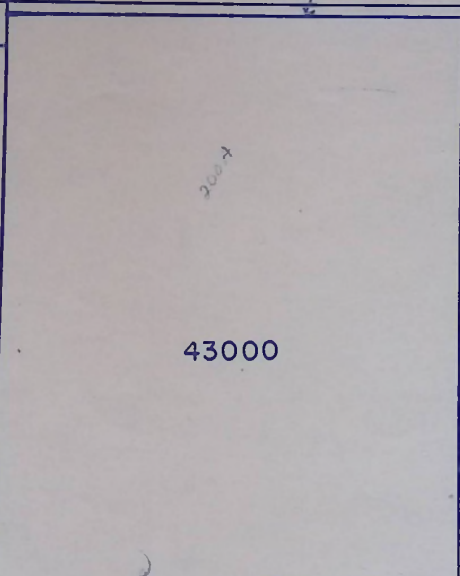
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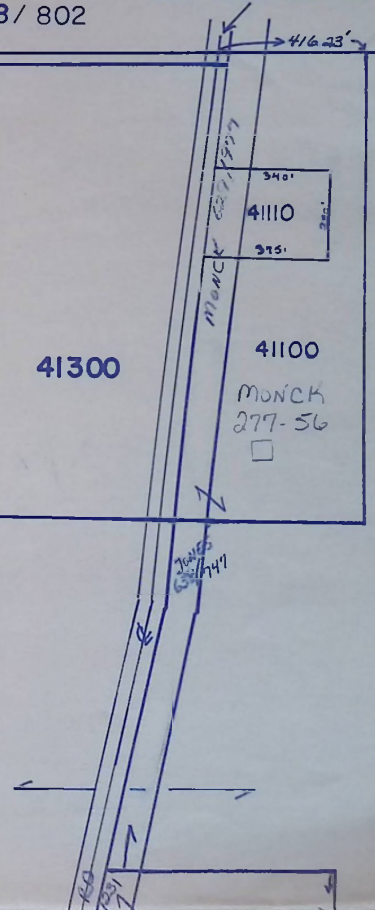
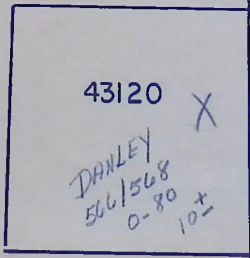
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COUNTY ROAD
OR 180/65-67

COUNTY ROAD 418/802



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215/1955*



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PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF
CHARLES H. ALLEN
CITRUS COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER <i>BS</i>

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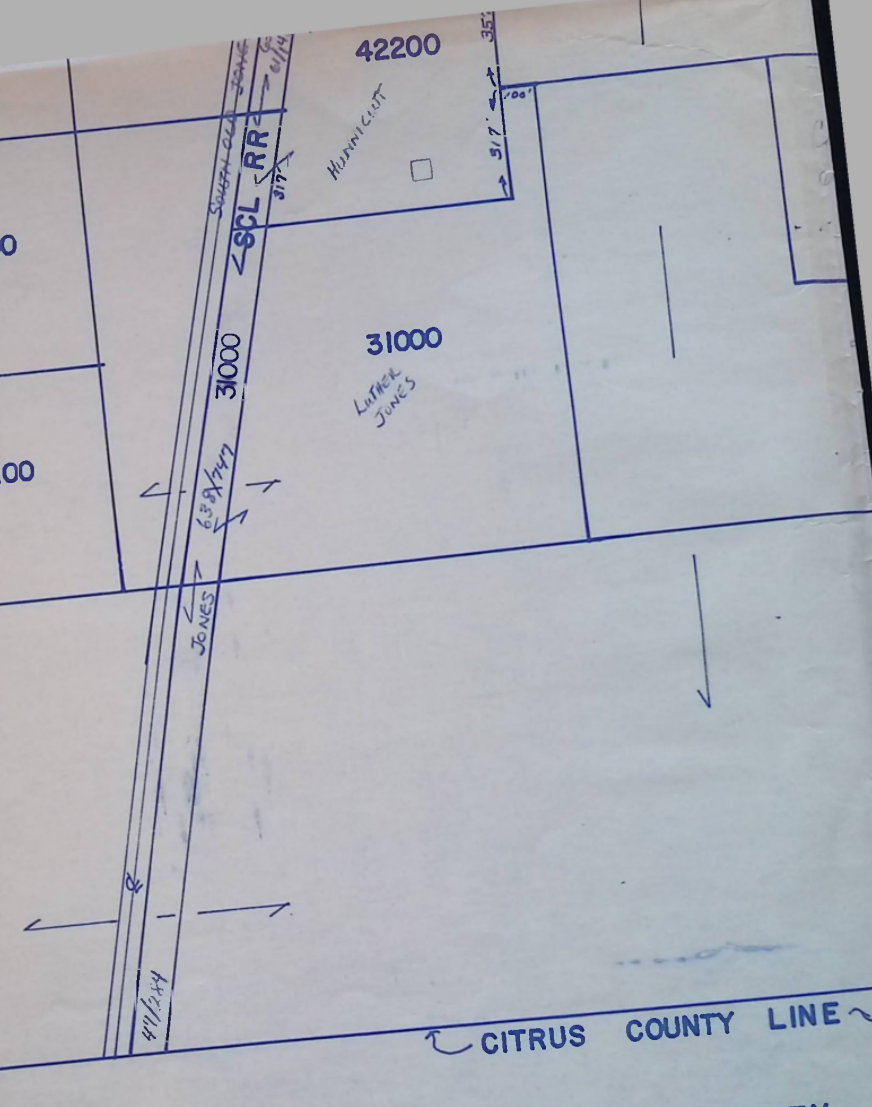
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CITRUS COUNTY LINE

HERNANDO COUNTY

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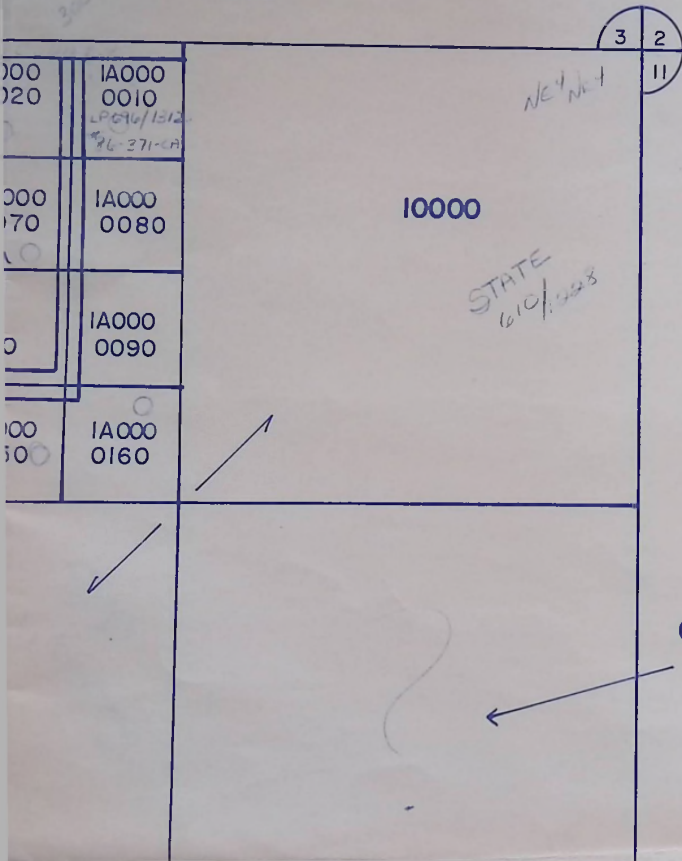
64



Collins Land Grant

MROD, INC.
SUB IA000

PLAT
IN
FILE



Sec 10 Twp 21 R 19
Quarter _____
Aerial No. 139
MAP540

ORANGE BLOSSOM PARK
PB 2, PG 43 & 43A

SCALE 1" = 400'
1/2" = 100'
1/4" = 50'
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PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF
CHARLES H ALLEN :
CITRUS COUNTY PROPERTY APPRAISER <i>BS</i>

7-10

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MATHIS
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630 / 303000 W0

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SW 4 NE 4 SW 4
S 86 / 144 (LETTER)
WILLIAMS - NTHY ST PETS
OR 623 / 1033 LETTER 4 PAPS
ALSO 625 / 1931 SAME LEGAL

SW 4 SW 4

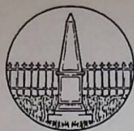


CITRUS COUNTY LINE

HERNANDO COUNTY

62

COLLINS FAMILY



HISTORICAL CEMETERY FORM

Site #8 ci 1235

- Original
- Update (give site # at right)

Florida Master Site File

Version 3.0: 8/98

Recorder # _____
 Field Date _____
 Form Date _____

*Consult Guide to the Historical Cemetery Form for detailed instructions

LOCATION & IDENTIFICATION

Cemetery Name(s) Collins family cemetery Multiple Listing [DHR only] _____
 Project Name _____ FMSF Survey # _____
 Address/Vicinity of/Route to 12900 Danley Pt., Floral City

Nearest City/Town (within three miles) Floral City In Current City Limits? yes no unknown
 County Citrus Tax Parcel #(s) (optional) 19-21-11-0000-43000-0000
 Ownership Type (check exactly one) private-profit private-nonprofit private-unspecified city county
 state federal foreign Native American unknown
 Public Tract Enclosing Cem., if any (e.g. park) _____

MAPPING

USGS 7.5' Map Name and Date Brooksville quad NW, 1988
 Township 21 Range 19 Section 11 1/4 section NW SW SE NE Irregular sec.-name: _____
 Township _____ Range _____ Section _____ 1/4 section NW SW SE NE Irregular sec.-name: _____
 Landgrant: _____ Plat or Other Map _____

HISTORY

Year Cemetery Established: 1987 Estimated Year _____ Ownership History (especially original owners) _____
 Year Burials Ceased, if applicable 2001 Reason(s) Burials Ceased Family is selling property for subdivision development
 Range of Death Dates Earliest 1987 Most Recent 2001 (O)bserved or (R)esearched? 0
 Acreage Expansions/Dates: N/A
 List People Important in Local, State, or National History Buried in Cemetery Raymond Lloyd Collins - locally important in founding the local NAACP + Booker T. Washington School (for blacks until desegregation).
 Previous Attempts at Repair, Cleaning, or Restoration? NONE

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CEMETERY

Type (Check all that apply) community company town epidemic family fraternal order
 memorial park military(not national) municipal national potter's field prison
 religious "Rural Movement" other (explain): _____
 Ethnic Group(s) Interred (Check all that apply) African American American Indian-tribe: _____
 White non-Hispanic Hispanic Asian Caribbean
 other (explain): _____
 Current Status: used for burials maintained but not used abandoned Size: 10 ft X 25 ft or _____ acres
 Total # Graves: 3 Does Total # Include Unmarked Graves?: yes no
 Evidence/# of Unmarked Graves? Unknown - possible earlier generations - no grave sites observed
 Condition: well maintained some areas maintained, others neglected poorly maintained
 not maintained, but can identify not maintained, hard to identify not identifiable but known to exist (explain): _____

Cemetery Boundary Type: fence wall hedge other (explain): NONE
 Describe Cem. Boundary (e.g. "cast iron fence", stone or brick wall, etc.) N/A

Historical Vegetation (trees, shrubs, flowers) Oak trees, grass
 Grave Groupings (Check all that apply) family fraternal order military religious ethnic heritage other (explain): N/A

Groupings Indicated By (Check all that apply) curbing fence hedge wall other (explain): N/A

Public Access Unlimited Restricted: How? Private property
 Surroundings [use (N)one, (S)ome, (M)ost, (A)ll or nearly (A)ll] _____ Commercial S Residential _____ Institutional S Undeveloped
 Threats (Check all that apply) abandonment agriculture desecration public development private development
 mining or timbering other (explain): _____

Associated Historical Properties/Archaeological (non-cemetery) Remains N/A

Check if Historical Structure Form completed Check if Archaeological Site Form completed

HISTORICAL CEMETERY FORM

Site # MC 1235

*Consult Guide to the Historical Cemetery Form for detailed instructions

GRAVES

If question requests N/S/M/A, estimate proportions by using a letter as follows: (N)one/Very Few, (S)ome, (M)ost, (A)ll/Nearly (A)ll.

Orientation (N/S/M/A) (complete all that apply) A East/West _____ North/South _____ Other: (explain): _____
Marked Graves (N/S/M/A) (complete all that apply) A Headstones _____ Marked with objects or plants (no headstone on grave)
_____ Graves mounded _____ Graves depressed

If Other Method(s) of Marking Graves Used, List and Give N/S/M/A _____

Marker Materials (Check all that apply) marble concrete/cement fieldstone granite wrought iron
 cast iron white bronze/zinc sandstone slate wood other (explain below): _____

Describe Grave Articles Found in Cemetery NONE

Marker Conditions (N/S/M/A) N Sunken or tilted N Chipped, cracked, weathered, but standing
N Broken or in fragments N Deliberately vandalized

Other Notable Conditions Observed and Proportions (N/S/M/A) _____

Inscriptions (N/S/M/A) A Legible inscriptions _____ Illegible inscriptions _____ No inscriptions

Distinctive Gravemarkers, Monuments, and/or Architectural Features NONE

Signatures of Stone Carvers (Specify name, town if available) NONE

RECORDER'S EVALUATION

Potentially Eligible for Local Designation? yes no insufficient information

Name of Local Register if Eligible _____

Individually Eligible for Nat. Register? yes no insufficient information

Potential Contributor to NR District? yes no insufficient information

Areas of Historical Significance (See *National Register Bulletin* 15, p. 8 for categories: e.g. "architecture", "ethnic heritage", etc.): _____

Explanation of Evaluation (required; limit to three lines; attach full statement on separate sheet):

No local designation program for cemeteries. I do not have sufficient training to make a determination. Information on R L Collins attached

DOCUMENTATION

Research Methods (Consult Guide to the Historical Cemetery Form for detailed instructions) site visit, review of FMS records

Bibliographic References (Author, date, title, publication information. If unpublished, give FSF Manuscript Number, or location where available): _____

Local Contact: Name/Address/Phone # /Administrative Office: Laytha Danley, 1371 Joliet Pl, Detroit MI 48207

Recorder (Name/Address/Phone/Affiliation): Sue Farnsworth, 3600 W Sovereign Blvd, Lecanto, FL 34461
#352/527-5259 Environmental Planner for Citrus County ROCC

Photographs: Required. Request the use of B&W prints no smaller than 3x5. Photographs would be useful to document main gate or entrance, representative general views, representative or unusual monuments or markers, and damage or neglect.

Describe and Give Location/File Nos. of Notes, Records, or Photos: photos, copies of historical aerial photos, plat survey with grave sites surveyed in: Citrus Co Clerk of the Circuit Court - Historical Resources one Courthouse Square, Inverness, FL 34450 #352/341-6428

DHR USE ONLY		OFFICIAL EVALUATIONS		DHR USE ONLY	
NR DATE	KEEPER-NR ELIGIBILITY*: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no			Date	/ /
/ /	SHPO-NR ELIGIBILITY*: <input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no <input type="checkbox"/> potentially elig. <input type="checkbox"/> insufficient info.			Date	/ /
DELIST DATE	LOCAL DESIGNATION*: _____			Date	/ /
/ /	Local office _____				
National Register Criteria for Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> a <input type="checkbox"/> b <input type="checkbox"/> c <input type="checkbox"/> d					

REQUIRED: Photocopy or Orig. 7.5' Map with Boundaries in Red



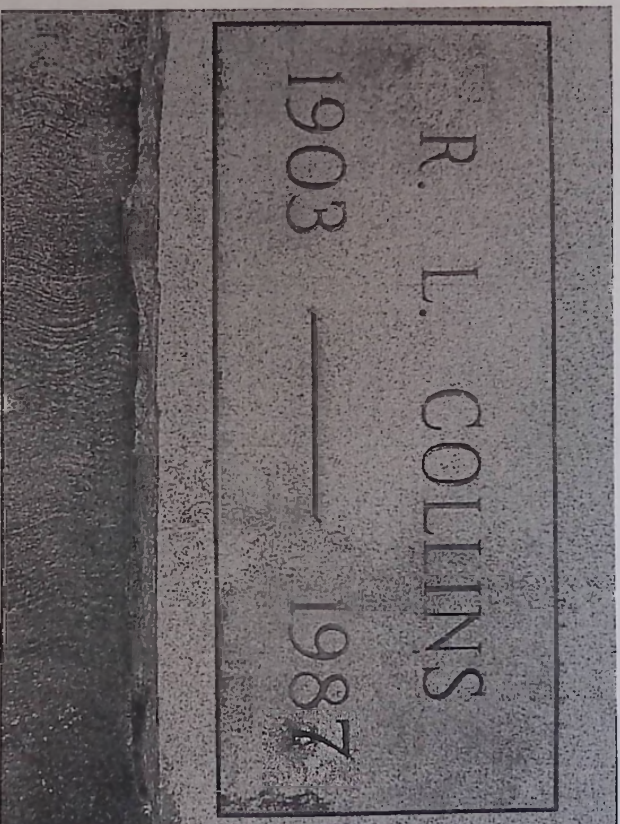
42°30"
3176
5.2 MI. TO U.S. 41
3175
T. 20 S.
T. 21 S.
3173
3172
40'
3171
3170000m N.

HERNANDO CO
CITRUS CO

CITRUS CO
HERNANDO CO

Brooksville NW, FLA
28088, F4-TF-024
28088, 1988

Collins family cemetery Ci 1235



R. L. COLLINS

1903

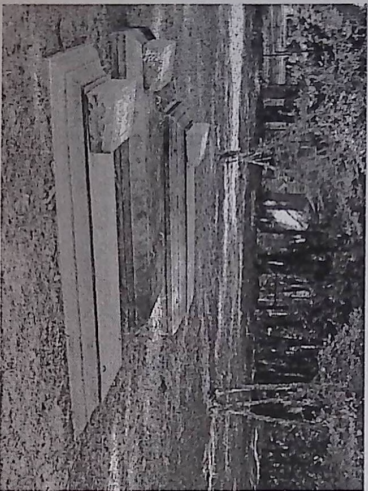
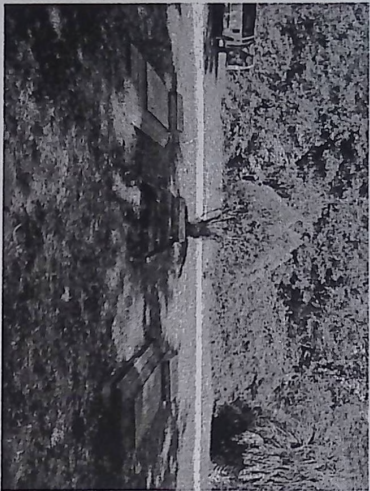
— 1987

Collins family cemetery Ci 1235

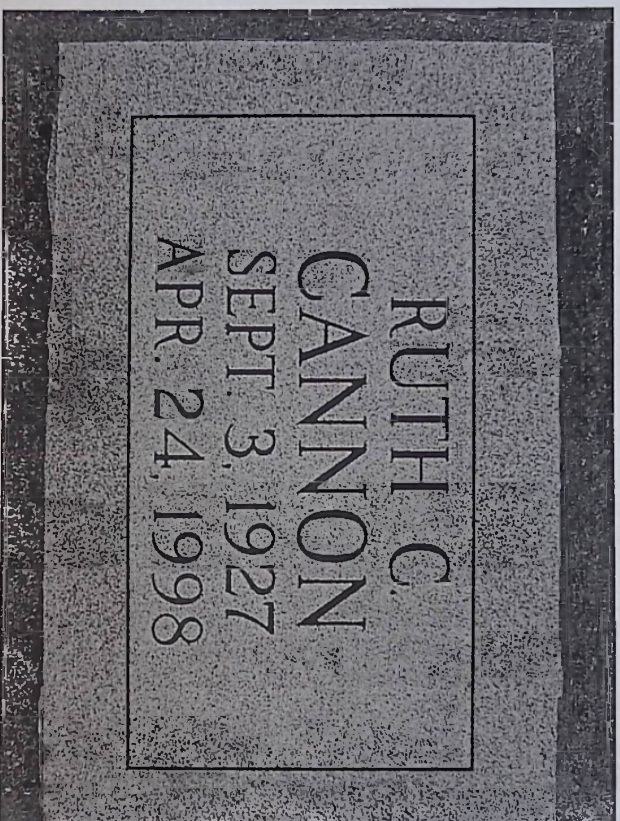


BEATRICE R.
COLLINS
FEB. 23, 1913
AUG. 2, 2001

Collins family cemetery Ci 12335



Collins family cemetery Ci 1235



RUTH C.
CANNON
SEPT. 3, 1927
APR. 24, 1998

From: "Varone, Linda" <lvarone@clerk.citrus.fl.us>
To: "Susan Farnsworth" <Susan.Farnsworth@bocc.citrus.fl.us>
Date: 5/19/2006 10:39:32 AM
Subject: RE: Collins family cemetery MFS #Ci-1235

Sue - I found a great history on R. L. and his wife. Here goes:
 Robert L Collins died on October 22, 1987 at age 84 on the 120 acre farm south of the Withlacoochee State Forest. This acreage grew from a 40 acre land grant following the freeing of slaves in the 19th century. R.L. was instrumental in getting a school built for black children, Booker T. Washington secondary - which served until segregation in education was ended.
 In 1972 Mr. Collins founded the first branch of the NAACP in Citrus County. He served as president for three years and was a life member until his death in 1987.
 Collins was an ordained minister with the Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church all during its' existence. He later served at St. Lewis Baptist Church at Shady Rest.
 Robert and his wife, Beatrice known as "Big Mama" had five children. There are 17 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren.

Linda A. Varone

-----Original Message-----

From: Susan Farnsworth [mailto: Susan.Farnsworth@bocc.citrus.fl.us]
Sent: Friday, May 19, 2006 9:47 AM
To: Varone, Linda
Subject: Collins family cemetery MFS #Ci-1235

Hi Linda,

I am in the process of registering the Collins family cemetery south of Old Jones Rd in Floral city. MFS has issued a number for it. I'll send over the originals from my investigation for your files as soon as copies are made.

Do you have any information on the occupants? Were they historically significant? I pulled the land records and looked at what is available on the internet. I have not researched the probate records or pre-1990 land records. I'm going to leave that to someone with a specific interest in this site.

Beatrice Elizabeth Collins was the landowner prior to 2004. R. L Collins was Raymond Lloyd Collins. I'm guessing her was her husband. His death certificate was recorded in 1997 - ten years after his passing. Beatrice R Collins appears to be the same person as Beatrice Elizabeth Collins. Their probates were filed the exact same day. I'm guessing one is a name correction. Laytha Danley (the next landowner) appears to be her daughter. Ruth C. Cannon is also buried in this cemetery. I'm not sure her relationship to the Collins. Here are their dates as shown on the headstones:

R.L. Collins 1903-1987 (Raymond Lloyd Collins DOD 10/10/1987)
 Beatrice R Collins 1913-2001 (Probably AKA Beatrice Elizabeth Collins DOD 8/2/2001)
 Ruth C. Cannon 1927-1998 (no Death Certificate located in public records)

Ci - 1235
 Collins family
 cemetery.

Information on
 people buried
 there.

R.L. Collins (1903-1987)
 B.R. Collins (1913-2001)
 R.C. Cannon (1927-1998)

BEATRICE R
COLLINS

FEB. 23, 1913

AUG. 2, 2001

RUTH C.
CANNON
SEPT. 3, 1927
APR. 24, 1998



R. L. COLLINS

1903



1987

"Raymond Lloyd Collins"

DoD 10/10/1987 Recorded BK 1189 PG 742.





Official Public Records

Search Results

Citrus County, Florida

Clerk of the Circuit Court



[Menu](#) · [New Search](#) · [Login](#) · [Prefs](#) · [Help](#)

Criteria: Grantor or Grantee Begins with COLLINS BEATRICE

Search Results - 10 matches

Displaying Records 1 to 10

Instrument Number	Book-Page	Date Filed	Document Type	Name Type	Indexed Name (+) = More Names	Name Type	Other Name (+) = More Names	Legal Description
561917	798 - 123	11/18/1988	AEFIDVT	R	COLLINS BEATRICE A	E	TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN	CONT MARR L115 UNREC 12- 19-20 507-798
561918	798 - 124	11/18/1988	DEED	R	COLLINS BEATRICE A	E	CHEW ENOS A (+)	L115 UNREC SEC 12 19S 20E ETC
<u>2004027398</u>	1712 - 1328	04/27/2004	DTH CTF	E	COLLINS BEATRICE ELIZABETH	R	STATE OF FLORIDA	08/02/2001 #2003-CP-895
<u>2004027354</u>	1712 - 1197	04/27/2004	PROBATE	E	COLLINS BEATRICE ELIZABETH ESTATE OF	R	DANLEY LAYTHA	W 1/2 OF NW 1/4 ETC #2003-CP-895
<u>2004027355</u>	1712 - 1200	04/27/2004	PROBATE	E	COLLINS BEATRICE ELIZABETH ESTATE OF	R	DANLEY LAYTHA	W 1/2 OF NW 1/4 ETC #2003-CP-895
<u>2004027356</u>	1712 - 1203	04/27/2004	PROBATE	R	COLLINS BEATRICE ELIZABETH ESTATE OF	E	DANLEY LAYTHA	W 1/2 OF NW 1/4 ETC #2003-CP-895
<u>2004027357</u>	1712 - 1205	04/27/2004	PROBATE	R	COLLINS BEATRICE ELIZABETH ESTATE OF	E	DANLEY LAYTHA	W 1/2 OF NW 1/4 ETC #2003-CP-895
<u>2004027366</u>	1712 - 1226	04/27/2004	PROBATE	E	COLLINS BEATRICE ELIZABETH ESTATE OF	R	DANLEY LAYTHA	W 1/2 OF NW 1/4 ETC #2003-CP-895
<u>2004027367</u>	1712 - 1229	04/27/2004	PROBATE	E	COLLINS BEATRICE ELIZABETH ESTATE OF	R	DANLEY LAYTHA	W 1/2 OF NW 1/4 ETC #2003-CP-895
<u>2004027353</u>	1712 - 1193	04/27/2004	PROBATE	R	COLLINS BEATRICE R	E	COLLINS VERNELL (+)	#2003-CP-895

For issues with this software, please check the [FAQ](#).

Internet Public Access Module Version 3.01
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From: Susan Farnsworth
To: lvarone@clerk.citrus.fl.us
Subject: Collins family cemetery MFS #Ci-1235

Hi Linda,

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Beatrice R Collins 1913-2001 (Probably AKA Beatrice Elizabeth Collins DOD 8/2/2001)
Ruth C. Cannon 1927-1998 (no Death Certificate located in public records for Citrus Co)

Let me know if any of these folks were historically prominent. I'll update the cemetery listing record.

Thanks,
Sue



Melanie J. Hensley C.F.A.
Citrus County Property Appraiser

2005 Certified Tax Roll



BK 2006 PG 1159 Sold to Nathan of Hernando

Owner & Property Information

Altkey	1704570	Download Section Map	<< Go
Owner Name	DANLEY LAYTHA	Interactive Section Map	<< Go
Mailing Address	1371 JOLIET PL	Property Record Card	<< Go
	DETROIT MI 482072833	Tax Payment Information	<< Go
Site Address	12950 S DANLEY PT FLORAL CITY	Tax Estimator	<< Go

Parcel Identification	Neighborhood Code	PC Code / Desc.	Millage Code / Desc.	Map Sec	Map Twp	Map Rng
19E21S11 43000	4510	(62) GRAZING LAND SOIL CLASS III	(0000) COASTAL RIVERS	11	21	19

Tax History

Year	Pc Code	Just Value	Assessed	Exemptions	Taxable	Land Value	Improvements	Cost
2005	62	\$247,500	\$247,500	\$242,060	\$5,440	\$247,500	\$0	\$247,500
2004	99	\$210,300	\$210,300	\$0	\$210,300	\$247,500	\$0	\$247,500
2003	62	\$115,500	\$115,500	\$110,060	\$5,440	\$115,500	\$0	\$115,500
2002	62	\$115,500	\$115,500	\$110,060	\$5,440	\$115,500	\$0	\$115,500
2001	62	\$115,500	\$115,500	\$110,060	\$5,440	\$115,500	\$0	\$115,500
2000	62	\$105,000	\$105,000	\$99,560	\$5,440	\$105,000	\$0	\$105,000

Sales and Transfer History

Book	Page	Month	Year	Instr. Code	Transfer Code	Vac. / Imp.	Sale Price
1712	1205	02	2004	MIN DOC STAMP (\$100)	NONE	V	\$100

Full Legal Description

W1/2 OF NW1/4 DESC IN OR BK 315 PG 755, OR BK 418 PG 738 & DC IN OR BK 773 PG 433 1981 LESS OUTS: THE S 1/2 OF THE NE 1/4 OF THE SW 1/4 OF THE NW 1/4 OF SEC 11 TWP 21S RNG 19E, AND THE N 1/2 OF THE SE 1/4 OF THE SW 1/4 OF THE NW 1/4 OF SEC 11 TWP 21S RNG 19E, TOGETHER WITH A NON-EXCLUSIVE EASEMENT FOR INGRESS AND EGRESS OVER AND ACROSS THE FOLLOWING DE SC LAND: THE E 20 FT OF THE NW 1/4 OF THE NW 1/4 LESS THE N 30 FT AND THE E 20 FT OF THE N 1/2 OF THE NE 1/4 OF THE S W 1/4 OF THE NW 1/4 OF SEC 11 TWP 21S RNG 19E DESCR IN O R BK 566 PG 568 (4-31-20)

Land Value Summary

Land Line	Land Use	Zoning	Front	Depth	Units	Value Estimate
001	SEMI IMPR PAST 7-9AU	(AGRM) UNDEFINED	0	0	40	\$135,000
002	NATIVE PAST 7-9AUM	(AGRM) UNDEFINED	0	0	30	\$112,500



Prior owner was Beatrice Elizabeth Collins
transferred to Laytha Danley as estate probate 1/2004
BK 1712 PG 1205

Collin family cemetery

CD-R
© 2001 Pioneer
DVD

MAY 15 2001
Collin family cemetery
MFT # 511

02645013274040

100% PAPER
RECYCLED
PRINTED

LEGEND/ABBREVIATIONS

- FOUND 2" IRON PIPE (UNIDENTIFIED)
- FOUND 4" x 4" CONCRETE MONUMENT (UNIDENTIFIED)
- SET 5/8" IRON ROD (LB 006478)
- FOUND 5/8" IRON ROD (LB 7008)
- ⊗ UTILITY SPLICE BOX
- ⊙ UTILITY POLE
- ⊙ LIGHT POLE
- //— OVERHEAD UTILITY LINES
- x— 4" HIGH WIRE FENCE
- SEC SECTION
- T TOWNSHIP
- R RANGE
- ORB OFFICIAL RECORDS BOOK
- P PAGE
- MOL MORE OR LESS
- SQ. FT. SQUARE FEET
- POB POINT OF BEGINNING
- L-I SEE LINE TABLE

NORTH LINE, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

MI. CORNER, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

N 89°37'28" E 1339.40'

POB, EASEMENT

N 89°37'28" E 619.70'

1/2-WAY LINE OF EAST NIMROD STREET

PARCEL 41300 (TRACT "A")

PARCEL 41300 (TRACT "B")

---20.00' WIDE NON-EXCLUSIVE INGRESS AND EGRESS EASEMENT (ORB 566, P 568)---

S 00°05'30" E 1643.81'

100.00' L-15

S 00°05'30" E 703.25'

N 00°05'30" W 1407.14'

S 00°05'30" E 703.89'

(VACANT)
TRACT "A"

10.00 ACRES, MOL (435604 SQ. FT., MOL)

(VACANT)
TRACT "D"

10.00 ACRES, MOL (435604 SQ. FT., MOL)

S 89°32'38" W 619.95'

S 89°32'38" W 619.20'

EAST LINE, W 1/2, NW 1/4

EET
(802)

EAST NIMROD ST

30.00' WIDE PUBLIC RIGHT-OF-WAY (ORB 418, R
22' WIDE LIMEROCK ROAD

N 89°37'20" E 1339.40'

S 89°37'20" W 619.70'

30.00'

POB, TRACT B

POINT OF COMMENCEMENT
NW CORNER, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

20.00' WIDE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS INGRESS, EGRESS AND UTILITY EASEMENT

N 00°09'10" W 703.47'

20.00' WIDE EXCLUSIVE ACCESS INGRESS, EGRESS AND UTILITY EASEMENT

(VACANT)

TRACT "B"

10.00 ACRES, MOL (435603 SQ. FT., MOL)

N 89°30'10" E 618.57'

POB, TRACT A + D

N 00°09'10" W 704.54'

(VACANT)

TRACT "C"

10.00 ACRES, MOL (435603 SQ. FT., MOL)

N 89°32'38" E 617.44'

P A R C E L

POB, TRACT C

S 00°14'41" E 703.68'

S 00°14'41" E 705.19'

PARCEL 10000

WEST LINE, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S

SHEET 2 OF 2 SHEETS

LARGE LOT RU

20.00' WIDE

SOUTH LN

EA

NORTH LN

S 00°10'08"E 334.95'

N 00°10'08"W 334.95'

L-8

L-9

(VACANT)

TRACT "E"

15.62 ACRES, MOL (680539 SQ. FT., MOL)

4 3 0 0 0

POB, TRACT E

N 00°14'41"W 572.25'

S 89°30'16"W 667.06'

WELL X2

(VACANT)

TRACT "F"

15.38 ACRES, MOL (669844 SQ. FT., MOL)

NORTH LINE, SW 1/4, SW 1/4, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

POB, TRACT F

S 00°14'41"E 670.37'

N 89°27'51"E 13'

PARCEL 34100

SOUTH LINE, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19

ORANGE BLOSSOM PARK (PLAT BOOK 2, PAGE 43)

PARCEL 21000

SW CORNER, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

RAL SUBDIVISION

JOB # 0-Z6217

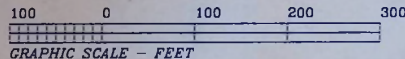
MAP # A-1830

Collins Family
Cemetery

Li-1235

EASEMENT LINE TABLE

COURSE	BEARING	DISTANCE
L-1	S 00°05'30" E	30.00'
L-2	S 89°37'28" W	50.64'
L-3	S 89°37'28" W	20.07'
L-4	S 05°17'54" E	192.72'
L-5	S 09°52'17" E	77.86'
L-6	S 00°05'30" E	1354.88'
L-7	S 89°31'28" W	647.53'
L-8	S 00°10'06" E	354.96'
L-9	N 89°30'16" E	20.00'
L-10	N 89°31'28" E	647.50'
L-11	N 00°05'30" W	1376.46'
L-12	N 09°52'17" W	78.77'
L-13	N 05°17'54" W	190.20'



SE CORNER, SW 1/4, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

PARCEL 42300

PARCEL 31300

EXCLUSIVE ACCESS INGRESS, EGRESS AND UTILITY EASEMENT

S 89°31'28"W 687.61'

1/2, NE 1/4, SW 1/4, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

LINE, W 1/2, SW 1/4, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

PARCEL 43120
(NOT INCLUDED)

S 00°05'30"E 669.45'

1/2, SE 1/4, SW 1/4, NW 1/4, SEC 11 - T 21 S - R 19 E

S 89°29'04"W 666.61'

N 00°05'30"W 334.72'

(3) TOMBS

COPELAND, Fred

Crystal River - The Battle of Shell Island - Civil War

One Negro captured - was shot and killed.

1800 - no Black population in Crystal River shown in census.

In 1884 a Black church was founded. The Methodists and Baptists shared a bulding - The Methodists held services every first and third Sundays, and the Baptists the second and fourth Sundays. Methods of baptism became a problem - sprinkling or submerging. Baptists split and founded the Mt. Olivet Baptist Church for the Black community.

The area where present day Road 44 leaves Crystal River was primarily a swamp. Some Black familirs lived on the outskirts towards the swamp. Most lived around the present day Crystal Lodge.

Fred Copeland, Henry Joyner, Claude Brooks and some others stayed in Crystal River from the early 1900's. They raised their families here and still live in the area.

Fred Copeland, Henry Joyner, Claude Brooks and some others stayed in Crystal River from the early 1900's. They raised their families here and still live in the area.

COPELAND

continued from Page 1A

igate. I was only thinking of what was right and judicious and of improving civil rights for everyone," Copeland said.

"It was to be conducted peacefully. There was no hesitancy in my mind about attending that march."

His lack of hesitancy earned him a rather privileged spot in the crowd about 15 feet away from King and about 10 feet away from Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"I think it had to be fate that I was positioned so close to two very historic figures," Copeland said.

After hearing King's inspiring words, Copeland knew that he must return to his home town.

"I didn't want to march. I just wanted to change the community, and I think I

have," Copeland said.

He had been dismissed from a principal's position at Crystal River Primary School prior to that trip for incompetency. The charge stemmed from a series of emotional outbursts, records said.

A thick file of clippings and court documents reveals that Copeland, who suffered a serious head injury during World War II, was administered drugs which caused an allergic reaction, resulting in the abnormal behavior.

To this day, he cannot take a single tranquilizer, anti-depressant nor consume alcohol.

Copeland was arrested and jailed when he had been deemed incompetent, court records show. But that was only inspiration for him to pursue other legal cases where discrimination may have occurred.

He filed complaints against discriminatory real estate practices and other civil rights matters that may have oc-

curred as the result of racial discrimination.

But the courts have improved in administering equal justice to blacks since those days, he thinks.

"They must have," Copeland said, adding that otherwise he's still be waging that battle.

Copeland believes that he has made a difference in the black community and in the general community simply with his presence.

His presence was felt when he took his five daughters to swim at Hunter Springs Park when blacks weren't allowed.

The next day all the school children in the black community plunged in the water. A few weeks later, the beach closed.

"But the next year they opened the beach to everyone and no one said a word," he said, with a broad smile.

Making a difference has meant a continual involvement in education of

youth, who are now beginning to return to Crystal River. His involvement is evident in the variety of plaques and gifts that line his walls from friends and admirers.

"They may leave at first, but they are beginning to come back because they care about their community and they are coming back as full-fledged citizens," he said.

Frederick W. Copeland Neighborhood Park was named after him, and Copeland makes an effort to visit the park almost on a daily basis. He also picks up trash along the side streets on walks.

"We sing 'America the beautiful, God shed his grace on thee,' but we don't live it," Copeland said.

"We can live it. We live in the greatest nation in the world, and we can be the right American citizens, if we simply believe in what we say and act on it. We can have America the beautiful. And I think in Citrus County, we do."

Intense pride in community drives Copeland

By Diana Johnson
Staff writer

When Frederick Copeland talks about his community, pride vibrates in his words.

Copeland understands what it means to build something from scratch.

Copeland, a 72-year-old Crystal River native, started his accounting firm in the corner of his home with one desk and an adding machine. Today he has a long-standing, successful business serving many different kinds of clients. And he tries to help black youngsters get a start by giving them an opportunity to learn bookkeeping.

As a black man in a county that was segregated until the early 1960s, he has had his own share of challenges to overcome.

While white students attended local high schools, Copeland could be found on State Road 200 on Sunday afternoons thumbing a ride to the school in Ocala he attended during the week. He stayed with relatives there. And if he didn't get a ride, he'd walk eight hours to get there.

On weekends, the young son of a teacher and minister set up a shoeshine operation in downtown Crystal River in order to earn money to go to school.

But the fact that the color of

“We can have

America the

beautiful. And I

think in Citrus

County, we do.”

Frederick Copeland

his skin forced him to put on his walking shoes made no difference in his decision to be educated.

“I felt it had to be a must,” Copeland said of his schooling, adding that he gave little thought to the forced separation from schools near his home. He eventually got his degrees from the University of Florida.

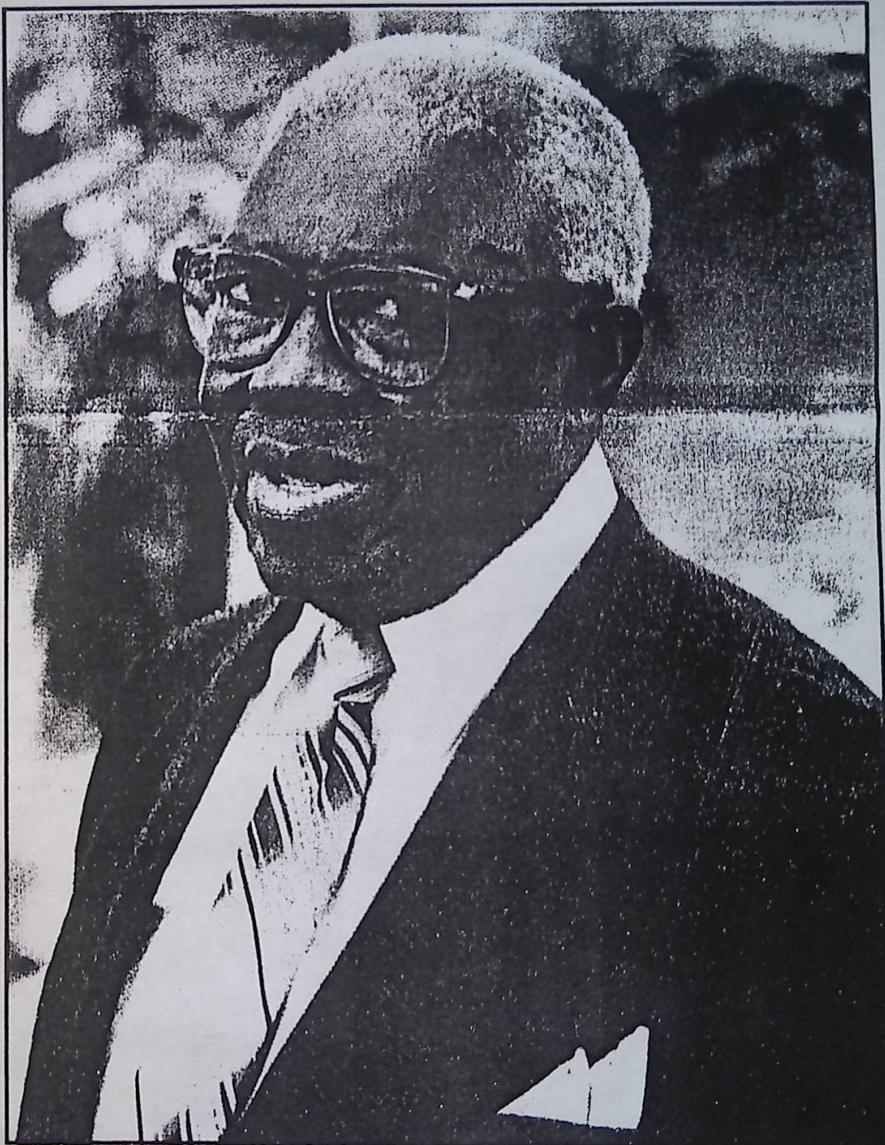
“I’ve tried to get resentment out of my life. I’ve never allowed resentment to be a part of my life.”

But that doesn’t mean that Copeland was complacent about racial discrimination.

In 1963, while living in Baltimore, Copeland learned that civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. would be speaking during a march at the Capitol.

“Whenever there was a march of some sort of rights, I thought it was my duty to invest

Please see **COPELAND**, Page 2A



Frederick Copeland has lived in Crystal River all his life and shares a fervent pride in the area with others in the community.

Staff photo

4/17/90
CHRONICLE

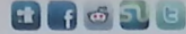


Frederick Copeland, with neighborhood children in the background, stands at the Cystral River park named in

his honor. Copeland has been a lifelong resident of Citrus County and a community leader for many years.

Tribune photograph by JEFFREY CAMP

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FREDERICK W. COPELAND v. FIRST FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION LAKE COUNTY (01/10/73)

DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL OF FLORIDA, SECOND DISTRICT.

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January 10, 1973

FREDERICK W. COPELAND, APPELLANT,
v.
FIRST FEDERAL SAVINGS AND LOAN ASSOCIATION OF LAKE COUNTY, A CORPORATION, APPELLEE.

Per Curiam.

The appellant, Frederick W. Copeland, has exhausted the judicial procedures in every court from the circuit court in and for Citrus County to the United States Supreme Court regarding this case. It started out to be and remains to this date a simple mortgage foreclosure.

We have for the second time read the briefs, the record and other instruments filed in this cause and rely for affirmance on Copeland v. First Federal Savings & Loan Association of Lake County, Fla.App.1967, 201 So.2d 847, our original decision in his first appeal.

Affirmed.

LILES, A.C.J., HOBSON, J., and PIERCE, J. (Ret.), concur.

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Mr. Frederick W. Copeland(1917-2009)



Frederick W. Copeland, 92, peacefully passed away on Monday, November 2, 2009, at his residence, surrounded by his loving family. Mr. Copeland, a lifelong resident of Crystal River, earned many accomplishments as an Army Veteran, educator, businessman and a community activist.

Mr. Copeland was born July 2, 1917. He enlisted in the Army in 1942, and was discharged due to extensive injuries sustained while on active duty. He became principal of George Washington Carver Elementary School, Crystal River, in 1946. In 1966, he founded Frederick W. Copeland & Associates, providing accounting and associated activities. Mr. Copeland purchased and renovated dilapidated homes to improve the community. In 1983, the City of Crystal River, recognizing his civic work and interest in youth, dedicated the neighborhood park as "Frederick W. Copeland Community Park."

Survivors include: wife of 57 years, Marjorie J. Copeland; daughters, Kaye Johnson (Jimmy), Gail Copeland, Fretela Copeland, Grace (Michael) Ashley, Eleanor Copeland, Marilynn (Leslie) Brown, George Ann (Matthew) Jackson and Norma Jean Henry; sons, Daniel Copeland, Ricky Feacher and Charles Henry; brother, Joseph Copeland; special niece, Flora Latham; sister-in-laws, Essie L. McKinnon, Gerleatha Green, Willio Pearl Williams; brother-in-laws, Eugene

Jenkins, Calvin Jenkins; thirty grandchildren; thirty-one great grandchildren; and a host of nieces, nephews, cousins and friends. Funeral services will be held on Saturday, November 7, 2009, at 11 am at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, 2105 N. Georgia Road, Crystal River, FL with the Rev. Ronald A. Sutton officiating. Public viewing will be from 9 AM until the time of service. Interment will follow at Fountains Memorial Park in Homosassa, FL. Wilder Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.





ISSUE 11/06/2009: Frederick Copeland.

OPINION: A man who made a difference.

By The Staff

Wednesday, November 11, 2009 at 8:00 pm

Some people, against all odds, are destined to make a difference in the community they call home.

Frederick Copeland of Crystal River was that kind of man.

Copeland, 92, a lifelong resident of Crystal River, passed away on Monday after a long illness. Frederick and his wife, Marjorie, have been a quiet force of progress in Crystal River for decades.

He grew up in Citrus County during a time when the opportunities for young black men were limited. His mother was a schoolteacher and he knew the value of an advanced education. When it was time to go to high school in the early 1930s, Fred Copeland's only choice in the segregated South was to go to an Ocala high school that accepted blacks. He was known to walk all the way to Ocala so he could attend class for the week and then walk back home to Crystal River on the weekend.

He later became the principal at the George Washington Carver School, only to resign that position after the Dec. 7, 1941, attack on Pearl Harbor, when he joined the Army. He was injured while in the service and returned to Citrus County to again serve as principal of the school.

After graduating from college, he began a long career as an accountant and business owner in Crystal River. The Copelands became leaders of the community and used their own success to help others in need.

They purchased and rehabilitated many older homes in the community and helped other families through tough times. Mrs. Copeland served on the city council and Fred volunteered his time to help improve the recreational facilities in the city. The city council named the Frederick Copeland Community Park in his honor after his many years of service on the city recreation board.

During the time that segregation was coming to an end, the Copelands became the first black family to swim and integrate Legionnaires' Beach (today known as Hunter Springs).

Frederick Copeland's leadership in Crystal River can mostly be measured in how he treated and helped other people. He made his town a better place through his calm and intelligent leadership.

Who could ask for a better legacy?

Grisham's shorts: Author releases story collect

WEDNESDAY

TODAY & Thursday morning
HIGH 80 Sunny N.E. winds
LOW 55 Tonight: mostly clear
 North winds around 10 mph

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NOVEMBER 4, 2009

CITRUS COUNTY

CHRONICLE

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VOLUME 118 ISSUE 89



1917 • **FREDERICK COPELAND** • 2009

Copeland Park's namesake dies



BRIAN LAPETER/Chronicle

Jenae Vickers looks over family photos Tuesday in her grandfather Frederick Copeland's former office in his Crystal River home. Copeland, a pillar of the Crystal River community, died on Monday. Copeland worked for many years doing accounting work in his home office, eschewing a computer and still using an old electric typewriter. Vickers now uses the office.

Lifelong Crystal River resident helped transform community he lived in, loved

NANCY KENNEDY
Chronicle

SO YOU KNOW

Funeral services for Frederick W. Copeland will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, 2105 N. Georgia Road, Crystal River.

Few people are called pillars of their communities.

For Crystal River, Fred Copeland was such a person. For him, that didn't mean being seen and being served by others, but serving them, often without being seen.

Taken from the poem, "The House by the Side of the Road," by Sam Walter Foss, he lived by the motto, "Let me live by the side of the road and be a friend to man."

"He was very helpful to everybody," said Raye Joyner "if you asked him to do something, he'd say, 'I'll do it now,' and he did it right away. He was concerned about people."

Frederick Raymond Copeland, born July 2, 1917, in Crystal River, died Monday, Nov. 2, at age 92 after a long illness.

On Tuesday, family and friends met in the Crystal River home he loved on Northeast Second Street and shared stories about the man they called "Fellow."

Granddaughter Jenae Vickers recalled how her granddaddy went out every morn-

ing looking for paper and trash to pick up. When he'd see kids walking to school, he'd stop and talk to them, telling them, "This is your neighborhood — you need to take care of it."

And he'd tell them about walking to Ocala to school when he was a teenager. In those days, Citrus County didn't have a high school that allowed black students.

"If he didn't catch a ride with the ice truck at 4:30 in the morning, he'd walk to Ocala," Vickers said. "Everybody knew that story. That was his motivation speech to kids in the neighborhood."

He'd say, "Education's important," and if he could do it, anybody could do it.

In 1983, the city of Crystal River recognized his civic work and interest in youths by dedicating a neighborhood park in his

Copeland attended "the school," back before the former all-black community school was named the George Washington Carver School. His father died when Copeland was young and he was raised by his mother, Annie Mae Copeland, a school teacher.

"He patterned his life after her," said his wife, Marjorie Copeland.

After finishing high school in Ocala — he stayed with an aunt during the week and spent weekends at home in Crystal River — Copeland taught school himself. At one time, he was principal of George Washington Carver School.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked, Copeland joined the Army. After being injured and medically discharged in a state-side accident involving a 600-pound military weapon, Copeland was reapointed principal at George Washington Carver upon his recovery.

In 1948, he took a leave of absence to attend Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (FAMU), where he met Marjorie. They married in 1952 and together had five daughters. Copeland also had a daughter from a previous marriage.

Board hears EDC update

Thorpe provides progress report

CHRIS VAN ORMER
Chronicle

In a joint meeting Monday, the county's two major business organizations wanted to form a plan to show county commissioners that businessmen want the commission's support.

"We've been accused of dragging our feet," said John Siefert, president of the Citrus County Economic Development Council. Siefert co-chaired the joint meeting with Diane Hallen, chairman of the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce. The meeting was attended by the executive boards of both groups and was open to the public.



Brad Thorpe gave the board an update on the group's progress.

Since late August, the EDC has had an uncertain future. Instead, the county commission decided to stop funding it, because of renewing its contract with the EDC.

County nixes outside counsel

Commission denies attorney's request

MIKE WRIGHT
Chronicle

Three attorneys are plenty to handle the county's routine legal

EDC

Continued from Page A1

commissioners urged the EDC and the chamber of commerce to submit a joint proposal for economic development.

All day week commission meeting, commissioners said they wanted County Administrator Brad Thorpe to have an alternate plan ready to ease business leaders do not come up with their own plan. The two groups of business people met Monday to start a plan to present to commissioners at their Tuesday meeting.

Thorpe attended Monday's meeting with the two groups, and on Tuesday, he provided commissioners with an update from the EDC-chamber meeting. Board members said they wanted to see a proposal at their Nov. 17 meeting with the idea of having a permanent structure in place by January.

On Monday, Thorpe said the two entities should "hold hands together as a team."

"We have more strength as a group," Thorpe said.

Joyce Brancato, chief executive officer of Seven Rivers Regional Medical Center and Thorpe, gave a description of what the commission wants.

Thorpe said the commission was comfortable with the model of its tourist development council (TDC). Maria Chaney, director of the TDC, is employed by the county, reports to Thorpe and answers to a nine-member board of stakeholders. "The model of the TDC is the model of the plan the commission would like to see," Thorpe said. "From there, you can build on that."

A county commissioner heads the TDC board, Thorpe said, which gives instant connectivity with the

commission.

With a joint participation of the EDC, chamber and TDC, Thorpe said, the process of bringing new business to the county could be streamlined.

The two groups discussed what it would mean to hold hands together.

"We're all trying to figure it out," said Gerry Mulligan, chamber board member and publisher of the Chronicle. "I think it's more than holding hands. I think it's getting married. If we don't change, we're just delaying the inevitable."

"Let's all swallow our pride and let's do what we can to get economic development moving again in this county," said Josh Wooten, president and chief executive officer of the chamber.

Hranaco started pulling the discussion together with formalizing some of the areas where the two sides agreed.

They would reduce the size of the EDC's board. Currently, 31 people sit on the board.

In a memorandum of understanding, the EDC and the chamber would share office location, marketing, clerical and administrative support, have a joint newsletter and make arrangements for joint membership.

Both groups would like to continue with the private/public funding arrangement.

Everything agreed by the executive directors of both groups would be subject to the full approval of both boards.

Wooten and Siefert agreed to meet to draft a model memorandum of understanding and a memorandum of understanding within the next two weeks to present to commissioners.

Contact Chronicle reporter Chris in Ormer at 564-2910 or chrism@chronicleonline.com.



Marjorie Copeland, left, laughs with her granddaughter Jenna Viskers, center, and daughter Eleanor Copeland on Tuesday afternoon as they remember her husband, Frederick Copeland, who died Monday.

COPELAND

Continued from Page A1

Copeland spent most of his career as an accountant, with his office in the house he grew up in and where he cared for his mother after her stroke until she died.

"He made the community what it is," said niece Norma Henry. "He took all the old, dilapidated houses, bought them and renovated them."

He rented them to people and often didn't collect the full rent. He ran his accounting business the same way, often not charging people for his services.

"I saw him lean up a check once," said daughter Grace Ashley. "I said, 'Dad, what about the money they owe you?'" He said, "They just couldn't afford it."

He was always picking up strangers, feeding hungry people, taking in stray animals.

He valued his family and placed

importance on family reunions. He didn't like trucks, preferring to drive a big car — and he drove badly.

Copeland hated traveling and never liked going far from Crystal River. He loved his home and his wife's home cooking. If she happened to be away, he'd go down to Golden Corral. They all knew him there. He was the one who took forever going down the line, checking his food.

They all knew him at the Home Depot, too. He'd take his time, going up and down the aisles with his cart, waving to people and talking to them.

"He knew everybody, and everybody respected him," Henry said. "As a younger man, he rode a purple bicycle all over town. He wore a suit and tie nearly all the time, loved collard greens. He'd put a spoonful of sugar in everything he drank, even strawberry milkshakes."

He had a system for everything, cut up his paper trash to make it flat

in the bin, recycled cans before it was fashionable. He hated surprises, loved the hymn, "One Day at a Time, Sweet Jesus." Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church was his family's home church.

"We were the first blacks in Interstate the beach," said daughter Eleanor Copeland.

One day her dad loaded up all the bids in his car, told the police what he was going to do and took them all to Hunter Springs, where they had a great time.

"All the whites left," Marjorie Copeland said.

"He didn't see black or white," said Betty McKinnon. "He saw people. He was a blessing to others, and if all the people that fellow helped during his lifetime came to the funeral service, there wouldn't be a building big enough in Citrus County to hold them all, and that's the truth."

Contact Chronicle reporter Nancy Kennedy at 564-2927 or nkennedy@chronicleonline.com.

COUNSEL

Continued from Page A1

said, "I think Mr. Battista and your staff can move that handle this."

The Orelio Water Association sued the county over its bulk water agreement and the amount of water the county supplies to Orelio. The case is set for trial at the end of March, Battista said.

Battista said his office is representing the county in 10 cases. One of those, involving the Cedar Key Fish House zoning case, includes a half-dozen separate lawsuits.

Assistant county attorneys Peter Aare and Greg Brennan also spend time representing county boards in code enforcement and utility cases, Battista said.

The county contracts with outside attorneys in specialized cases, Battista said.

Lieberman represents the county in two major zoning cases that have ended up in the Hills River Retreat and Riverside Resorts. Battista said Lieberman handled those cases when he worked for the county and

Thrumston said the county spent more than \$300,000 in outside counsel during the fiscal year that ended Sept. 1.

Battista disagreed. "I don't think it was anywhere near that," Battista said.

"Go back and look," Thrumston responded.

Later, Battista showed a reporter a book he had that indicated the county spent \$177,507 last year in legal fees.

The vote against contracting with Lieberman on the Orelio case was 4-1. Commissioners Dennis Damato backed Battista's request.

In other business Tuesday, the board:

- Agreed to contract with a consultant to help determine whether the county should privatize its utilities and maintenance operations. The initial cost for the consultant is \$24,800 but could go as high as \$70,000 with board approval.

- Set a 4:30 p.m. Dec. 1 public hearing on a new annual services ordinance.

- Had a lengthy discussion on the need to attract citizen volunteers for county boards. www.citruscountynv.org

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Focus on the dream

Speakers at Monday's holiday celebration said more work needs to be done to end racism and fulfill the dream of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

By ALEX LEARY

© St. Petersburg Times, published January 16, 2001

CRYSTAL RIVER -- The T-shirt he pulled over his head read "Redeem the Dream," and the Rev. Carl Gadson was going all out to do just that.

He sang and slapped his knee. He preached and he praised.

In doing this, Gadson made it abundantly clear that, while the vision espoused by Martin Luther King Jr. has led to significant advancement for all people, this nation has a way to go.

"Racism still exists in America but guess what, we cannot stop," Gadson said Monday as he stood before several hundred people assembled for the city's fifth annual celebration of the birth of the civil rights leader. King was killed by an assassin's bullet in 1968.

"My sisters and brothers, we can learn to walk together, we can talk together, we can even live in the same neighborhood," Gadson said.

"But we've got to lay down our prejudices, we've got to lay down our hatred. We've got to join together as one. Together we stand and divided we fall."

Gadson, who is pastor of Antioch Missionary Baptist Church in Sparr, which is north of Ocala, called on African-Americans to get involved in local politics and also to exercise their right to vote.

"There needs to be some elected brothers and sisters in the government of Citrus County," he said to a cheering crowd.

The celebration, sponsored by the Eveready Club, began at Mount Olive Missionary Baptist Church on NE Third Avenue. Several dozen people gathered there and sang We Shall Overcome on their way to Copeland Park, which is named after Frederick Copeland, who marched with King in Washington, D.C., in 1963.

Before they dined on fried mullet and hamburgers, the crowd listened attentively as several religious and community leaders reflected on King's legacy.

Speakers ranged from 87-year-old Leroy Bellamy, pastor of Grace Temple Church of the Living God in Floral City, to 8-year-old Alexandria Hampton, a student at Rock Crusher Elementary.

"I ask you today, what is your dream?" said Hampton, whose confidence and words belied her youth.

"Each one of us has a purpose in this life. Which one will you choose? The one that is easy or the one that may be difficult where you can make a difference? It's always easy to be a follower; I choose to lead and let my little light shine," she said.

Earlier, Hampton's mother, Tawana, sang Lift Every Voice and Sing: "Sing a song full of the faith that the dark past has taught us / Sing a song full of the hope that the present has brought us / Facing the rising sun of our new day begun / Let us march on till victory is won."

The event attracted local politicians, including Crystal River City Council member Mike Gudis, County Commissioner Josh Wooten and School Superintendent David Hickey.

As he sat on a park bench, Dominique Washington, a student at Inverness Middle School, reflected on King. "He made it easier on us," he said, adding that reading about King makes him feel "equal to everybody, not just out there by myself."

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Dabney, Archie

Citrus schools say goodbye and thanks

HE'S A TALL MAN, but never too tall to come down to a child's point of view. He has a soft, gentle voice, but one that speaks of confidence and offers assurance.

He has many friends, as depicted in the hundreds who turned out for his retirement party Friday at Citrus Springs Middle School. But more children than adults call him friend.

Archie Dabney is a one-in-a-million educator and one that Citrus County will not soon forget.

He began here in 1956 at the former Booker T. Washington High School and has touched the lives of students at Crystal River High School, Lecanto High School and finally as the first principal of Citrus Springs Elementary School. Affectionately known as "Coach" to hundreds of kids and adults alike, he has been a teacher, assistant principal, principal, guidance counselor and yes, a coach in almost every sport.

Friday night marked a time to say goodbye. Dabney was heralded by many in a variety of ways, including the setting aside of June 9 as Archie Dabney Day by state Sen. Karen Johnson; the month of June 1995 as Archie Dabney month by the City of Crystal River and the Citrus County Board of Commissioners; a petition circulated that requests the change of the name of the road that runs in front of Citrus Springs Elementary School to Archie Dabney Boulevard; a number of proclamations and an Honorable Medal of Service from the National Guard.

His staff has had the top corner star of the Big Dipper formally dedicated to him.

Carl Austin, retiring superintendent of schools, said, "No educator has had the impact on Citrus County children as Mr.

The issue:

Archie Dabney retirement

Our opinion:

He has changed many lives

Dabney has had." Incoming superintendent Jim Hughes shared a poem that expressed his respect for the man and his hugs.

Dabney is well known for his hugs. It's amazing how quickly he can double that tall frame to put his arms around a child. His kids run to be greeted by this special grandfather of a man who loves them all.

It seems kind of funny that a man first known for his determination in leading teen-agers to tough battles on the football field and basketball court would find himself at the beginning again, guiding the tender hearts of 5-year-olds, to understand the meaning to good citizenship.

His motto, which hangs in the kindergarten hallways, says, "This is a Kid's Zone, Enter with Care and Love." That motto has applied to all "his kids" from the pre-kindergarten 4-year-olds to those who leave his warmth to enter middle school life. And his concern follows far beyond.

Archie Dabney, you have helped us to remember that children respond to warmth and caring. You have reminded us that educating our kids is special and important. You leave behind a legacy of trust and respect.

For 39 years of dedication and love, guidance and shining example, it's difficult to find the words appropriate to express a community's feelings about a truly great educator. You will be remembered.

Thanks, Coach.

HOMETOWN

Retiring principal leaves legacy of love

SOME THINGS YOU never expect to see. Like professional athletes getting along with owners. Or the Internal Revenue Service forgiving the tax debt you owe.

Or Archie Dabney announcing his retirement.

It had to happen someday. After all, the man is 67.

He certainly deserves it. For 43 years he has worked as an educator, including the past 39 in Citrus County.

I would argue that no person in Citrus County history has affected as many young lives as Dabney.

But all that didn't make his news last week any easier to swallow.



**John
Bowman**

Dabney is retiring as principal of Citrus Springs Elementary School, but his impact reaches far behind the walls of one school.

His legacy began back in 1956, when he came to Citrus County as a teacher/coach at the former Booker T. Washington High School in Inverness. He planned to stay a year, waiting for a job to come open in another county. Instead, he fell in love with the

county and stayed.

We're all better off for it.

Dabney later became a

Please see HOME, Page 2A

HOME

continued from Page 1A

teacher/coach at Crystal River High, where every team he touched seemed to turn to gold. He was the greatest basketball coach in the school's history.

But it wasn't in the win-loss column where Dabney had his greatest successes. It was in molding young men and women.

Later came a stint as principal at Lecanto High School. Then when Citrus Springs Elementary opened almost 10 years ago, Dabney became its principal.

Failing health in recent years has taken its toll. His hair is gray, and as he walks his tall frame is bent just a bit.

But he remains "Coach Dabney" to hundreds of men and women in our county who love him.

I've never met a person who cares about children the way Dabney does. He can make any youth, no matter the race or eco-social background, feel important. In a few minutes, he can do more for a child's self-esteem than a team of psychologists could in years of treatment.

Often it has been as much what Dabney hasn't done as what he did that makes him such a great man in my mind.

Some people took his approach to his career as a sign of weakness. I took it as an indication of his strength and courage.

He was a key factor in the smooth transition of integrating schools in the county during the 1960s. His mere presence could calm any potentially unpleasant situation.

Yes, he was the victim of prejudice. He didn't always agree with decisions made, particularly when he was passed over for promotions several times earlier in his career. But he never bucked the system. His first thought was always the stu-

dents and how they might react.

He should have been the first black head football coach at Crystal River High but he wasn't. However, he later became the county's first black high school principal.

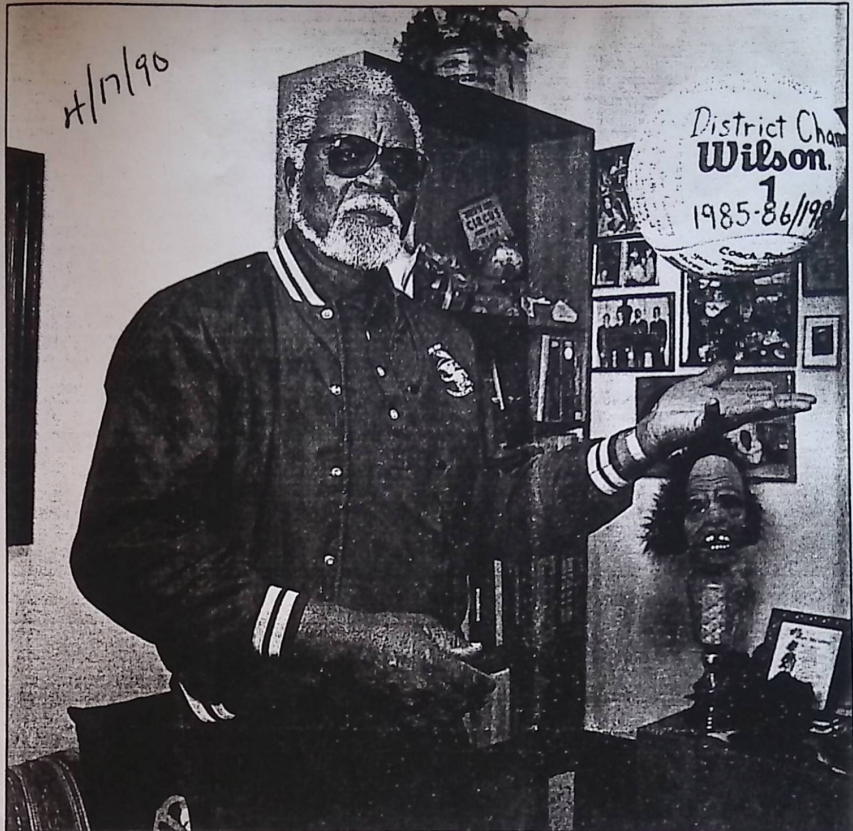
Some people took his approach to his career as a sign of weakness. I took it as an indication of his strength and courage.

Anyone who knows Dabney well recognizes how strong and passionate he is about life

— particularly "my kids," as he calls all young people he knows. And he could passionately carry arguments concerning children to any level.

I've known Archie Dabney for the greater part of my life. There's not a man on earth I respect more. I never had him for a teacher or coach in school, yet he taught me more about life than many of my teachers.

And I'm proud that he calls me one of his "kids."



Archie Dabney, principal of Citrus Springs Elementary, stands in his office with a few of the gifts he has received from students,

Tribune photograph by JEFFREY CAMP parents and faculty during his years in education. He tosses a large tennis ball given to him by a winning girls' tennis team.

Coach turned principal recalls smooth switch to integration

By LYLE McBRIDE
Tribune Staff Writer

INVERNESS — Desegregation was imminent in early 1968, and Archie Dabney was apprehensive about it.

As a teacher and successful head football coach at the all-black Booker T. Washington School in Inverness, he didn't know where he would be when the next school year started.

Black teachers, parents and students were approaching integration with caution, he said, waiting to see how things would go when "colored" schools were closed and blacks began integrating white schools.

Dabney was anxious because the opportunities open to him at white high schools didn't carry any real coaching responsibilities.

Now, he is principal of Citrus Springs Elementary School. He came there four years ago from Lantano High School, where he was principal for two

years.

Dabney points to his experience over the last 22 years as an example of what he saw as a smooth transition into integration.

After wondering where he would work, he got an offer to go to Crystal River High School.

"I told them I wasn't going to be somebody's trainer. They said that wasn't what they wanted. I started as assistant football coach, head basketball coach and assistant track coach," Dabney said.

"I was offensive coordinator, and I was included in all the decisions about the team, decisions that I didn't have to be included in. From the beginning, I was accepted by the other teachers, staff and administrators."

Citrus County began planning how to integrate schools in 1965, in reaction to the 1964 Civil Rights Bill. By 1968 that plan still only consisted of allowing parents to choose, with several restrictions,

Integration was smooth transition for principal

■ From Page 1

which school their children would attend.

When Roger Weaver was elected superintendent in 1968, however, plans were made to close what were called the "colored" schools. Crystal River High School was integrated in January 1969. Booker T. Washington school was closed in August 1969. That school is now Inverness Middle School.

Dabney said the students apparently had no problem adjusting to being taught by a black teacher, and may have done it faster than he adjusted to having white students.

"I remember one time I took the class out to a little marshy area behind the high school so I could show them some of the things we were talking about in science class.

"As we were walking along, two of them grabbed my hands and started swinging them. I kind of stiffened up and told them 'Don't do that.'"

Dabney said he explained to them someone might think it odd to see a black man walking hand-in-hand with white students.

"They just laughed. Then they really made a game of it. They all started grabbing my hands and dragging me around."

The black and white students were cautious of each other, Dabney said, but seemed to accept each other.

"We had some incidents. I remember a fist fight between a couple of boys — a black boy and a white boy — that kind of got blown up into a racial thing," he said.

"Some white students walked off campus. But we talked to them, and most of them came right back. And we had some blacks drive in from out of town — St. Petersburg — and try and get into it. I saw them driving onto campus and told them we could handle our own problems, we didn't need any outside help."

The key, he said, was probably that blacks and whites in Citrus County weren't strangers to each other. Besides contact at work, the races came together socially — at least during football season.

In the years just before integration, the Citrus High School team had more downs than ups, but the Booker T. Washington team was a winner. Hungry to watch a competitive game, many Citrus High fans religiously went on the black school's games.

"The white team schools played on Friday nights, and we played on Thursday nights. We had a lot of white fans, some of them even made our road trips. A lot of times there were more whites in the stands than there were blacks," Dabney said.

"And we had stands that sold barbecue and drinks, and that forced the people to mingle. The whole thing was, they knew each other."

Students by race in Citrus, Marion and Sumter counties

	Total	White	Black	Other
Citrus	11,023	10,263; 93.1%	500; 4.5%	260; 2.4%
Marion	28,041	21,034; 75%	5,968; 21.3%	1,039; 3.7%
Sumter	5,056	3,561; 70.4%	1,375; 27.2%	120; 2.4%

Source: State Department of Education, fall of 1989 enrollment figures

Tribune graphic

After 43 years, Dabney leaves education arena

By GARY SPROTT
Tribune Staff Writer

CITRUS SPRINGS — Archie Dabney planned to stay only a year in Citrus County when he began teaching at the old Booker T. Washington High School in Inverness in 1955.

Dabney, three years out of college, thought he would pick up some experience at the all-black school before moving on.

But at year's end, the Leesburg native began wondering how his students would do the following year. So, he stuck around another year to find out.

He's stuck around ever since. "I'd do it again in a heartbeat," said Dabney, who will retire Friday from Citrus Springs Elementary School, where he has been principal since the school opened in 1986.

"I don't think I could have had as much fun as I've had in this county. The people and the kids are what kept me here. I've had a great time. If the good Lord took me tomorrow I couldn't complain."

For 39 years — as teacher, coach, guidance counselor and principal — Dabney has been a fixture of the county's school system, building a reputation as one of the county's most respected educators.

He was the Citrus County Citizen of the Year in 1979; received the Citrus County Sertoma Club's Service to Mankind Award in 1986; the Crystal River Optimist Club's Citizen of the Year in 1991; and was nominated by the school board for the statewide Distinguished Black Education Recognition Award in 1991.

"There are so many rewards in this job," Dabney said. "When you teach a kid something and you see the light of understanding in their eyes it's an experience that's hard to describe."

Although Dabney is participating in the school district's early retirement program, he is not leaving by choice.

"There's no question if I was healthy I would stay," said the 67-year-old, who suffers from diabetes

and varicose ulcers. "This is pretty much an avocation rather than a vocation and I've been doing it so long it's pretty much become part of me."

Dabney taught at Booker T. Washington — now the site of Inverness Middle School — until 1968. He also coached basketball, football, baseball and track at the segregated school.

Indeed, to many he is still "Coach Dabney."

He attended North Carolina A&T University in Greensboro on a football scholarship, lettering also in basketball and track. In 1952, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in physical education/history and in 1967 he received a master's degree in education from the same institution.

In 1993 he was inducted into the North Carolina A&T University Sports Hall of Fame.

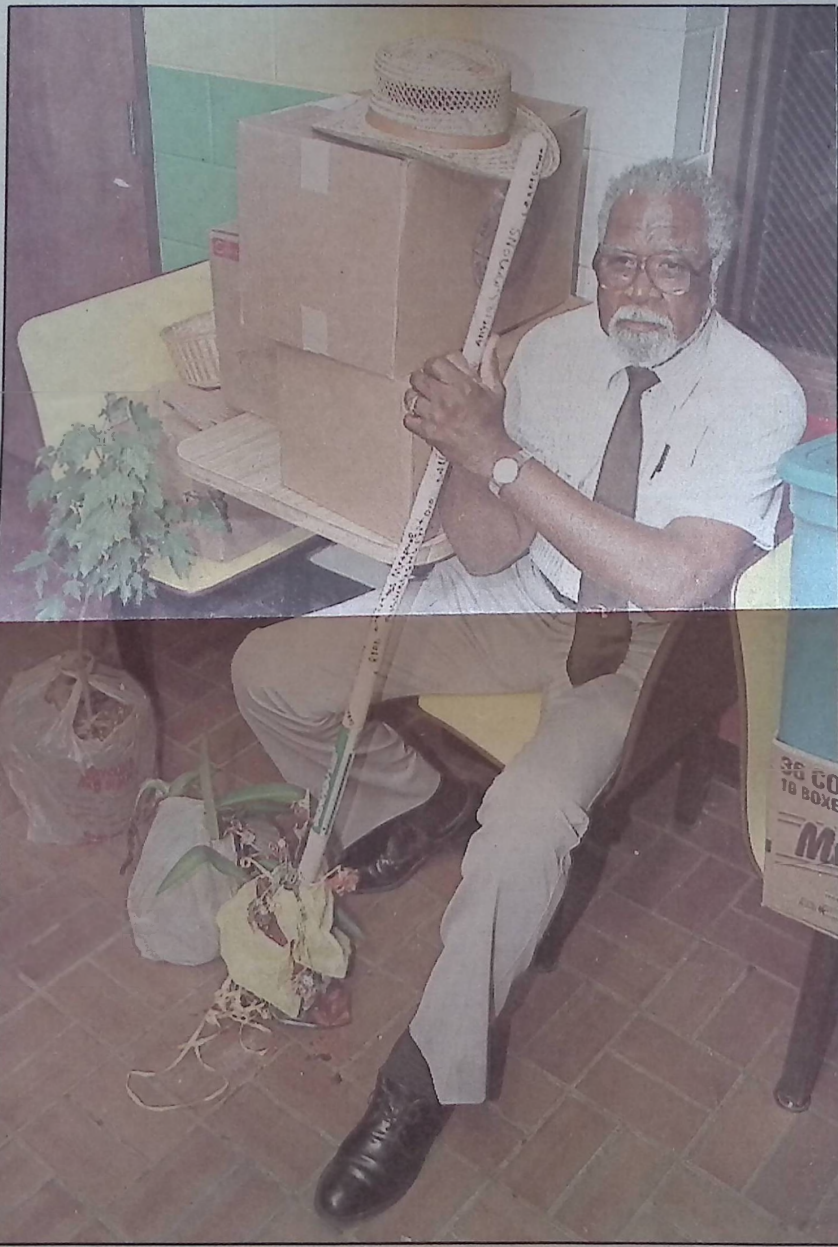
Dabney, who coached and taught at Crystal River High School from 1968 to 1984 and was principal of Lecanto High School from 1984 to 1986, is renowned for his relationships with students. Children want to be near him; to share some news or just a hug.

The secret, he says, is simple. "I'm honest with them, I tell them what my opinion is. I've always tried to be honest with them; always tried to be fair and tried to treat them like my own child. My grandfather said, 'You treat people how you'd like to be treated.' You respect a child and they'll respect you."

At Citrus Springs Elementary, a mural at the main entrance says much about Dabney's philosophy: Kids zone — enter with care and love.

"When you see kids happy and learning and smiling, it's probably one of the greatest experiences in the world," he said. "To me it is."

Packed boxes around his office, however, are his reminder that retirement is fast approaching. While he has plans to stay busy — visiting



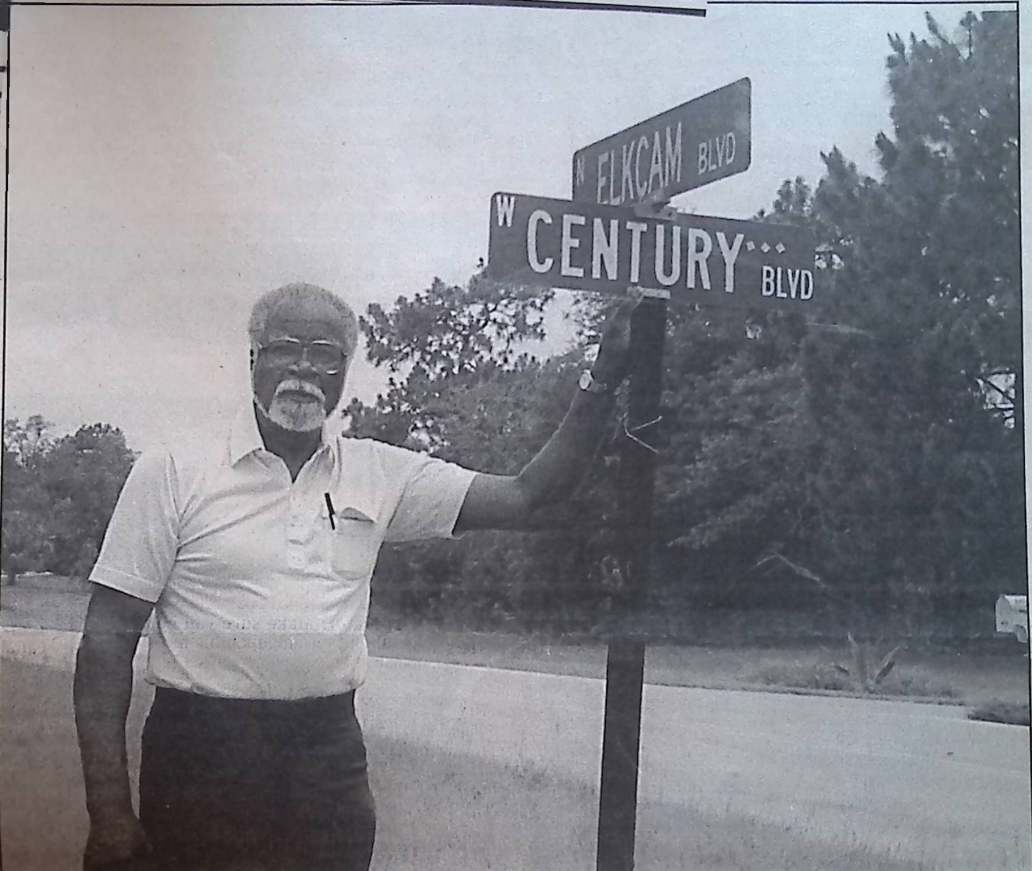
ANDY JONES/Tribune photo

Citrus Springs Elementary School Principal Archie Dabney with gifts from students — he — is retiring Friday from education field. Dabney

began teaching in Citrus County in 1955 and went on to serve as a coach and guidance counselor before becoming principal in 1986. He was county Citizen of the Year in 1979.

Proud time

Tuesday, June 13, 1995 Citrus County (FL) Chronicle



Retiring Citrus Springs Elementary School Principal Archie Dabney stands in front of the sign that may bear his name in the future if local residents achieve their goal to rename the street in his honor. The Citrus County Commission will consider waiving the street name application cost today.

Friends: Dedicate road to Dabney

By Will Henderson
Staff writer

Those who love and revere Citrus Springs Elementary School Principal Archie Dabney want to remind the community of his special touch by honoring him with a street.

Dabney, whose career as a teacher, counselor and principal in Citrus County spans nearly 40 years, is retiring in July.

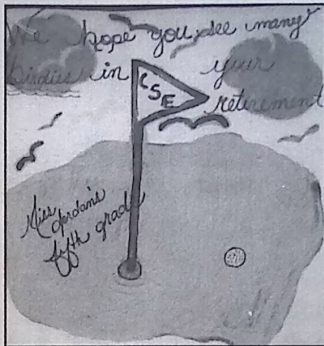
And now Dabney's mark on Citrus County education may be remembered by renaming a portion of West Century Boulevard across from his school, to West Dabney Boulevard.

His replacement as principal, Lane Vick, is approaching the Citrus County Commission about waiving the \$110 fee involved in the renaming. Vick takes her plan to the county commission at 2 p.m. today.

"We're going to try to get the sign renamed but there is some opposition who feel the renaming would be confusing," Vick said.

The county's planning division opposes the plan.

The change would cause the road to have three different names within a two-mile stretch — Century, Dunklin and Dabney. The multiple name situa-



Susanne Smith/The Chronicle

Citrus Springs Elementary School students presented retiring Principal Archie Dabney with a quilt containing a square from each class. The quilt was created in the Florida State Seminoles' colors, in recognition of Dabney's alma mater. Pictured above is the square from Miss Jordan's fifth-grade class.

tion would cause some problems for emergency response vehicles, planner Jeff Stevens said in a memo to County Administrator Tony Shoemaker.

Planners offered another possibility

— rename an entire street in honor of Dabney.

The traffic sign is just one avenue of support Dabney is receiving. Last Friday, he was honored at a four-hour retirement celebration.

The evening's events included:

- U.S. Rep. Karen Thurman, D-Dunnellon, presented a flag flown over the Capitol in Washington, D.C.
- State Rep. Helen Spivey, D-Crystal River, presented a state proclamation.

● Dave Stanton presented letters from President Clinton, Gov. Lawton Chiles, state Sen. Charles Williams, D-Tallahassee, and Doug Jamerson, former education commissioner and current secretary of labor.

● The Army National Guard presented a Special Service Medal signed by the governor.

● School officials Jim Hughes, Willie Eldridge, Carl Austin and Craig Marlett spoke of Dabney's life and achievements.

● Dabney received a rocking chair. Also Citrus Springs Elementary students made him a quilt.

"I was overwhelmed Friday night. There were so many people and it's gratifying to feel appreciated by so many friends," Dabney said.

'Tall Black Man' instills value of life in students

By Gary H. Medley
Special to the Chronicle

IN AUGUST OF 1969 I shuffled into my ninth-grade biology class. To my surprise standing at the head of the class was a Tall Black Man. His name was Archie Dabney. Everyone just called him coach.

It was my first year at Crystal River High. I had never been taught by a black person and, as a young son of the South, I am afraid my attitude toward this Tall Black Man was one of ... oh let's call it critical interest.

It did not take long, however, to realize that this was a teacher who held his students (or his children as he calls us) close to his heart.

I had no idea then how dear a bond would grow between me and this Tall

GUEST COLUMN

Black Man. He was my teacher, coach, counselor, mentor and friend. But these words do not altogether describe what Coach Dabney was to those of us who have been privileged to share in the life of this tall black sage. What he became to us transcended the relationship between teacher and student.

The late '60s and early '70s were turbulent times for black and white students trying to cope with forced integration. Coach Dabney was like the calm in the eye of the storm. He was as approachable as our closest friend. We trusted him and knew that no matter what was happening in our lives, we could talk to Coach.

His counsel, though not always what we wanted to hear, was so filled with discernment and wisdom that it was always — unarguably — what we needed to hear. He never allowed any of his children to say or believe that we were anything except young men and women of great value and potential. If ever a father figure walked the halls of Crystal River High, it was Archie Dabney.

In June 1972, I graduated from Crystal River High School and started my military career. Twenty-one years later, I retired from the United States Air Force with honors. Like many before me and many after I must attribute, in no small measure, any praiseworthy thing that I may have done to the advantage I had of four years of mentoring from a Tall Black Man.

On Nov. 19, 1987, I came home on leave to marry Charlotte Ann Myers, one of God's most precious gifts to me. My father nearly drove us crazy as he filmed everything that happened that day. Literally, he filmed the sunrise through the sunset of my wedding day.

At one point my brother, Lee, and I are standing in the foyer of the small church just before the blessed event. As I look up, there is my father — camera in hand. I remember that I was about to say something like, "Look Dad, enough with the camera already." But before I could speak I heard him say "look behind you." There, framed by the double doors of the small old church stood a Tall Black Man. His hair and beard were cloud white and

Please see **VALUE**, Page 4C

VALUE

continued from Page 1C

although he favored one leg as he walked toward me, he was unbowed by the 15 years that had passed since we last met.

As we spoke I nearly laughed out loud as he began to tell me how proud he was of me, but that he

had always known I had more talent and ability than I used getting through high school. The laughter in my heart came from the recognition that this Tall Black Man had not changed. He was still the exhorter, still the mentor, reminding me again that I was someone of great value and potential.

The day I said my wedding vows with Charlotte was the happiest day of my life. Having Coach there

to share it with me helped make it one of my proudest.

On Jan. 31, 1999, my brother Lee died. He was 41 years old. Until that moment I had no concept of the depth of pain that accompanies such a loss.

As I look back on my walk through that valley of the shadow there are many images still too difficult to ponder. But along with the painful memories are the memo-

ries that I will forever hold close to my spirit; the strong embrace of my father as we shared our love for a young man we now realize we hardly knew; the quiet courage of my mother, who like another Mary long ago, stood by her beloved son in silent travail as he took his last breath and gave up his spirit.

And there is the memory of a Tall Black Man. It was Feb. 3. The pain of mourning was unmistak-

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle Sunday, February 13, 2000

Citrus County blacks relive past history



Black history, like all real history, can become obfuscated in a jumble of words in books and musty historical records, the pale bloodless stuff of historiographical scholarship. **1C**

VALUE

able on his face as I watched him slowly climb the steps to Lee's memorial service. If possible, his hair seemed even whiter than I remembered.

The leg he had favored when last we met was obviously a source of even more discomfort.

His slightly bent posture spoke of his understanding that he had come to help us carry our burden of grief up a hill of sorrow.

My resolve to stay strong during

my little brother's memorial nearly vanished as it became more clear to me than ever that this Tall Black Man was more than a mentor, more than a friend, he is and always will be my brother.

It is now the year 2000. Thousands of Coach Dabney's children are marching into the new millennium.

We will do well. We will do well because somewhere deep inside each and every one of us ... Stands a Tall Black Man.

Former student sets up fire fund

By Christi Poole
Staff writer

Chris Nast remembers how his former Crystal River High School guidance counselor touched his life.

Now he's returning the favor.

Archie Dabney lost precious mementos from his years as a counselor, coach and principal.

Wednesday, December 1, 1999 Citrus County (FL) Chronicle

Nast has organized a fund to raise money for former educator and coach Archie Dabney, whose Harvest Street home in Inverness burned down on Nov. 19.

Officials said the fire has been ruled accidental.

Dabney, who was outside the house when the fire broke out, was not injured.

But he lost precious mementos from his years as a counselor, coach and principal. He retired several years ago from Citrus Springs Elementary, where he was the principal, Nast said.

"He's touched the lives of thousands of youths," Nast said. "He knows kids. He's gone out of his way to help so many people. He's just such a great guy."

Nast said he's kept in touch with Dabney over the years and plays golf with him every few months.

He said he read about the fire in the paper and felt like he should do something to help.

Although Dabney has another home in Citrus Springs, where his wife was living, Nast said Dabney told him he will have to rebuild the Inverness home, which was not insured.

"It isn't like he doesn't have a roof over his head, but it's still pretty traumatic. It just doesn't seem fair for someone who has done so much for others," Nast said.

On Tuesday, Nast set up a fund in Dabney's name at Region's Bank. Donations to the fund can be made at any Region's Bank location in Beverly Hills, Crystal River, Homosassa, Inverness or Dunnellon.

Nast said people can also contact him at 860-1002 to make donations or ask questions about the fund.

Christi Poole can be reached at 726-1441 or via e-mail at courtrep@citrus.infi.net.

Teaching stint stretches 4 decades

■ From Page 1

with friends, volunteering, working in his home and garden — Dabney said the start of the school year in August will be tough.

"You have mixed emotions because here's something you've been

doing for 43 years," he said. "Everything eventually comes back to thinking about the kids ... I know it's going to be difficult for me that first few weeks of school; it's going to be very difficult.

"Somebody said to me the other day, 'It hasn't sunk in yet, has it?' I said, 'What?'"

Fire destroys man's home, but not heart

By Cheri Harris
Staff writer

While many Inverness residents spent Saturday morning bargain-hunting at the big yard sale in the Withlacoochee Technical Institute parking lot, walking the paved path of Rails to Trails or finding other ways to enjoy the beautiful weather, Archie Dabney watched as the ruins of the concrete block house that had been his home for 42 years smoldered.

Along with the home that burned Friday night in a fire investigators believe to be accidental, most of the contents collected in a lifetime by the beloved educator and his wife, Doris, were lost.

"The house and everything in it is burned down. If that's God's will, it's God's will and there's nothing I can do about it," he said.

No one was inside the house when the fire started and no one was injured by the fire.

Dabney said he noticed smoke coming from his house Friday evening about 6 p.m. as he was feeding his horse. He said at first he thought the smoke might have been coming from outside the house — or perhaps an early fog was rolling in. But as he walked closer, he discovered the truth.

"I saw smoke billowing and heard crackling and I knew it was fire," he said.

Then he ran to a neighbor's house and called 911. He said the fire was already too strong to try to save anything inside.

Dabney said some of their belongings lost in the fire include a collection of vintage books, his rolltop desk and grandfather clock, clothing, and TV and stereo equipment along with a satellite dish receiver. He said that his wife, Doris, also had new sets of dishes, pots and pans, still in boxes, that were burned in the blaze.

"The house had a lot of stuff in it. I doubt that very much can be

salvaged," he said.

The Dabneys may have lost almost everything in the fire, but they haven't lost their special place in the hearts of the Citrus County residents who used to be their students. Mrs. Dabney still works at Citrus High School as a guidance counselor.

Mr. Dabney, who spent more than 40 years working in the schools of Citrus County, retired in 1995 as the principal of Citrus Springs Elementary School. Other positions during his long career in the county included assistant principal and principal of Lecanto High School, a coach and science teacher at the Booker T. Washington School and a coach at Crystal River High School.

William Bunch, owner of Oysters Restaurant in Crystal River, said he didn't have a class from Mr. Dabney, but he attended the Booker T. Washington School in 1969 as a ninth-grader when Dabney worked there.

Bunch said Dabney was very well-liked by the students.

"He was just a very helpful person. He was caring. He encouraged most everybody in the school," Bunch said.

Kathie Stewart also had good things to say about Dabney.

She said that when her youngest daughter, Tiffany, started Citrus Springs Elementary School in 1990, Dabney seemed to have a good relationship with all the students.

"Both our younger children spent all their elementary school years there," she said.

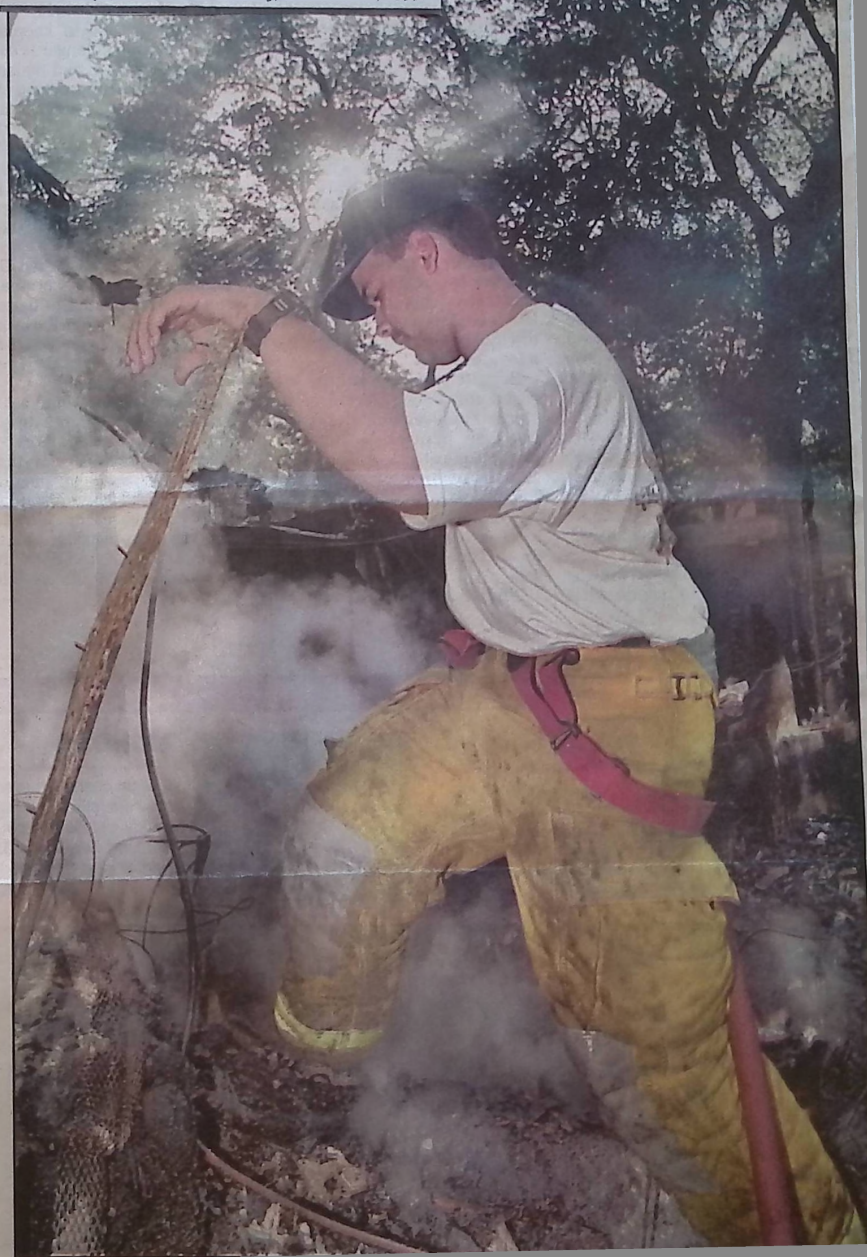
"I think the thing that made him so incredibly wonderful was that he knew every single child's name in that school. That just amazes me. He's really tall, and

Please see **FIRE**, Page 4A

Travis Long/Chronicle photo

Inverness firefighter Jose Fluxa stomps out smoldering debris at the home of Archie Dabney in Inverness Saturday afternoon.

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle Sunday, November 21, 1999



FIRE

continued from Page 1A

he would get down on his knees and hug the kids as they came to school.

"Any time I was at the school, if he was around, kids were around, holding onto his leg and talking to him. Children were attracted to him like a magnet and that was very special to me," she said.

Stewart said that in 1984, when her son, Tim, was attending Crystal River High School, where Dabney worked as a coach, he went out of his way to make a foreign exchange student from Japan who was staying with the Stewarts feel welcome.

Even after retirement, Dabney's efforts for young people continued.

Nate Madison, a 17-year-old Crystal River High School running back recently placed on sports probation for reportedly causing a disturbance at school, said that last week Dabney picked him up and took him to dinner.

According to Madison, Dabney told him he heard that he had been having some problems and Dabney wanted to help him.

"He was worried about my education," Madison said.

Dabney's advice, Madison said,

Crystal River High

School's Nate Madison

said meeting with Dabney

made him feel good

about himself.

was that school should come first and sports should come second.

Before Madison will be allowed by school administrators to play on the football team again, he said he has to prove to the principal that he can be a good student again.

Madison said meeting with Dabney made him feel good about himself.

"He's a good man and more people should be like him," he added.

When Dabney talked to the Chronicle late Saturday morning, he said he and his wife hadn't really talked about what they would do now, but he said they may look into rebuilding the home.

Stewart, whose husband, Rev. Stan Stewart, pastors the North Oak Baptist Church in Citrus Springs, where the Dabneys have another house, said he is also well-liked by the congregation.

"We'll need to found out what he needs and see how we can help him out," she said.

Archie Dabney Student Remembers

(by Gary H. Medley)

- “The late ‘60s and early ‘70s were turbulent times for black and white students (in Citrus County) trying to cope with forced integration.
- “Coach Dabney are like the calm in the eye of the storm....
- We trusted him and knew that no matter what what happening in our lives, we could talk to Coach.
- “If ever a father figure walked the hall of Crystal River High, it was Archie Dabney
- “This tall Black Man...was teacher, coach, counselor, and

Archie Dabney



- Educator - Teacher
- Began his career as teacher at Booker T. Washington School in Inverness, now Inverness Middle School
- Then Asst. Principal at C.R. High School
- Then principal at Lecanto High School
- Next principal of Citrus Springs Elementary School

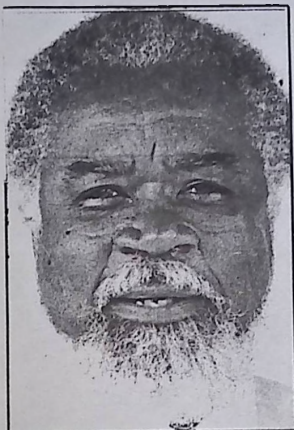
Dabney coninued

- Dabney recalls, although a few fightsd broke out during desegretation, there weren't any disputes that he and the faculty could not haandle
- He and former county Sheriff Dean would walk side by side through the school to prevent violence.
- “They had us two big ogres,” he fondly recalls, “patrolling the hallways, and so it worked out.”

Dabney Remembered by student

- friend.
- But these words do not altogether describe what Coach Dabney was to those of us who have been privileged to share in the life of this tall black sage.
- What he was to us transcended the relationship between teacher and student.

2/3/91



Archie Dabney

Black History Month highlighted by Dabney

Since the month of February has been designated as Black History Month, the Bahá'is of Citrus County are presenting a very interesting, and well known educator as speaker. On Feb. 10 at 2 p.m. at the Community Room of First Federal Savings and Loan Association of Citrus County, Inverness, Archie Dabney will tell of his experiences growing up, securing an education and establishing a career in education in this county.

Dabney is loved as a teacher by at least two generations of school children. He began his career as a teacher at the Booker T. Washington School in Inverness (later Inverness Middle School). He later became assistant principal at the Crystal River High School, then principal at Lecanto High School and is at present principal of Citrus Springs Elementary School.

Dabney's experiences are intensely interesting. The public is cordially invited to attend this talk and take part in the discussion with audience question and answer period following.

For further information please call 795-4482 or 746-2309.

CHRONICLE - 2/3/91

IN THE COUNTY

'A Day of Black History' to be celebrated Feb. 9

A "Day of Black History" will be celebrated in Copeland Park in Crystal River at 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 9. The event is being sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. For additional information call 563-6368 or 795-4872.

GIBBS, A. G.

The giving A.G. Gibbs will surely be missed

CITRUS COUNTY HAS mourned the loss of one of its more beloved citizens this week.

A.G. Gibbs, Inverness city councilman and lifelong county resident, died on Tuesday after being diagnosed with leukemia in August. He was 59.

As a councilman, Gibbs was held in high esteem by his peers. When discussions became heated among other members, Gibbs became known as a peace-maker whose abilities to intercede brought about sound, reasonable decisions.

He also happened to be black, and gave that segment of the community a voice in Inverness government.

He was employed as a maintenance worker at Pleasant Grove Elementary School and was extremely well-liked by students, parents and staff.

But Gibbs' contributions went far beyond the council chambers or the workplace. He was a citizen who was active

in the community, someone who really cared about the young and old alike.

Gibbs gave of himself to the community through such things as youth sports programs and a non-profit housing authority which gave affordable housing to some low-income Inverness residents.

His life meant something, for he gave more to the community than he took out. That is a rare quality, and one which should be cherished.

Funeral services are scheduled for 11 a.m., Saturday, Sept. 29, at St. James AME Church in Inverness.

On Monday, Sept. 24, the Inverness council will meet to set a date for a special election for Gibbs' unexpired term, which ends with the next regular election in February. We can only hope another candidate will come forward who can serve the city of Inverness and its residents the way A.G. Gibbs did.

He will be missed.

GIBBS

continued from Page 1A

Gibbs'. "A.G. was a gem — a true friend."

Dabney opened his comments by reciting the dictionary definition of friend. It's one attached to another by affection according to Webster's, he said.

"But the dictionary leaves out a lot of things. It left out humility. It left out

compassion," Dabney said.

All of those phrases and more, a tearful Dabney said, described his friend Augustus G. Gibbs II.

The service was held 11 days after the ailing councilman died from leukemia. Gibbs, 59, was diagnosed with the disease about a month prior to his death.

Aside from his respected service on the council, Gibbs was known for his involvement in area Little League, the Housing Assistance Foundation for the Elderly Inc., the Boy Scouts, the BTW

High School Alumni Finance Committee and the Masonic Crystal Lodge No. 156.

He was employed as a custodian at Pleasant Grove Elementary School for three years prior to his death.

"He was always in a hurry, and I often wondered about that," said William L. Robinson, another of Gibbs' longtime friends. "But now I know why. He had a lot to do in such a short time."

Though he said he'd only known Gibbs for a short time, the Rev. S. Carnes Lawson told the crowd the council-

man had said in the hospital that he was born again and therefore had no fears during his bout with the disease.

Serving as honorary pallbearers at the funeral were Gibbs' fellow council members Walter Cannon, Pete Kelly, Vince Scheer and Leonard Giordano, as well as City Manager Bruce Banning and Mark Brunner, principal of Pleasant Grove Elementary School.

City department heads and fellow custodians served as active pallbearers.

Survivors include his wife, Christine Gibbs, three sons and two daughters.

'He will surely be missed'

A.G. Gibbs remembered as peacemaker

By Dave Schlenker
Staff writer

The flag in front of Inverness City Hall rippled at half-staff Wednesday for the man who friends and colleagues referred to as "the peacemaker."

It was only the night before in the neighboring building that city council President Walter Cannon had to end the council's regular meeting with tragic news — the death of his friend and fellow councilman, A.G. Gibbs.

It was an uncomfortable moment for all council members, especially since they were greeted with the news during a recess. They had announced at the beginning of the meeting that Gibbs was in the hospital again and would be excused

from all meetings that he missed.

Gibbs, 59, died at Citrus Memorial Hospital (CMH) Tuesday evening, about a month after being diagnosed with leukemia.

Gibbs was employed as a maintenance worker at Pleasant Grove Elementary School. He was married to Chris and had five children. A lifelong resident of Citrus County, he was a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School in Inverness.

Gibbs served three years in United States armed forces, spending 1½ years in Korea as a medical technician. When he returned to Inverness he joined Drs. Osterhout and Jenkins and worked with them for 20 years.



A.G. Gibbs

Longtime Inverness councilman

Gibbs also was instrumental in youth league football and baseball. When he was first elected in 1977, Gibbs listed as a top priority completing the

recreation facilities at Whispering Pines Park.

Along with Councilman Pete Kelly, Gibbs supported and helped work with efforts to build affordable housing for Inverness residents through the creation of a non-profit housing authority.

The council called a special meeting for Monday, Sept. 24, to determine whether a special election is necessary. The next regular election is in February.

"He will surely be missed by this council," Cannon said Tuesday night. "Our deepest sympathy goes to his family."

After the meeting adjourned, council members gathered around the council table and sadly reminisced about their friend.

"A.G. tried to get people to-

Please see GIBBS, Page 2A

GIBBS

continued from Page 1A

gether; he never liked controversy," said Councilman Kelly, who Gibbs had helped in building low-income housing. "He always wanted to make things better for people."

"He was always the peacemaker," Cannon added. Then he smiled, looked at Kelly and said Gibbs was the council member who tried to mediate heated discussion between him and Kelly during meetings.

Kelly grinned for the first time since he'd heard the news.

City Manager Bruce Banning said the council was aware that Gibbs was not feeling well when they started the meeting, but no one anticipated the news at the end of the meeting.

After all, this was the same man who, while he was in the hospital, discussed serious plans to run for re-election. Gibbs had served from 1977 to 1981, and then from 1983 to the present.

Nurses said they couldn't keep him in bed during his

hospital stay in late August. He was always walking around and saying he felt fine, they said.

Gibbs had also joked with friends and reporters while he was in the hospital, saying he wanted to go back to the council and "straighten them out" about a dispute on the downtown redevelopment project.

"Yeah, that's what he told me," said City Parks and Recreation Director and longtime friend, Frank DiGiovanni. "I thought he looked great when I went to see him. I said, 'Gibbs, you look great. What the hell are you doing in here? Come on out with me.' Yeah, he was great guy — a very quiet guy."

Giordano said he had met Gibbs about 10 years ago, and the two worked closely with Little League baseball at Whispering Pines Park.

Councilman Leonard Giordano said Gibbs was always a gentleman with a cool head.

"One of the things that always impressed me about

him," Giordano said, "was during controversial issues and discussion that would be hot and heavy — he always had the ability not to be affected by that. He could express himself and have a calm effect on the council, even though he had very strong opinions on the issues.

"Another thing that always impressed me was that he was always a gentleman," Giordano said, adding that even when the two ran against each other for a council seat, they remained friends.

Councilman Vincent Scheer, who had asked that city hall and city businesses be closed for a day in honor of Gibbs, said that in the eight years he sat on the council with Gibbs, they never argued about anything.

"I thought he was a nice, easy-going guy," Scheer said. "I thought the world of him. He was a quiet, peaceful person."

Though the council politely denied Scheer's idea about

closing down the city for a day, Scheer also suggested that the city place a black bow on the administration building.

Giordano said, however, that he may ask the council again to close the city for a day at a special meeting Monday.

"He came on the council as I went out as mayor," said Jacob Blanton, former Inverness mayor. "I think he was a dedicated community leader. He was an honest hard-working man, who gave back more to the community than he took out."

Gibbs had been undergoing chemotherapy, a radiation-type therapy that often leaves the patient with a number of side effects.

Though Gibbs attended a recent public hearing for the proposed Inverness budget, the chemotherapy took place on Tuesday afternoons and prevented him from attending Tuesday night meetings because of exhaustion.

He was released from CMH late last month, but was readmitted Sunday, Sept. 16.

Funeral Arrangements are being made by East Dampier Street Funeral Home in Inverness.

"A.G. tried to get people together."

Inverness Councilman Pete Kelly

Chronicle September 9 & 20, 1990 - Inverness

A. G. Gibbs - born 1931, died September 19, 1990.

Gibbs, a life long resident of Citrus County. He and his wife, Chris had 5 children. Mr. Gibbs was a maintenance worker at the Pleasant Grove Elementary School for many years. He was a graduate of Booker T. Washington High School, now Inverness Middle School. He served in World War 2 as a Medical Technican. He worked for DRs. Osterhour and Jenkins for twenty years. He was elected to the Inverness City Council in 1977. His priorities - complete recreation facilities at Whispering Pines Park. Gibbs was instrumental forming the youth leagues for football and baseball. He helped support and worked for the efforts in building affordable non-profit housing authority for Inverness residents. He was known as the "peacemaker" during controversial meetings of the Inverness City Council. Also known as a quiet and gentle man.

GIBBS

continued from Page 1A

gether; he never liked controversy," said Councilman Kelly, who Gibbs had helped in building low-income housing. "He always wanted to make things better for people."

"He was always the peacemaker," Cannon added. Then he smiled, looked at Kelly and said Gibbs was the council member who tried to mediate heated discussion between him and Kelly during meetings.

Kelly grinned for the first time since he'd heard the news.

City Manager Bruce Banning said the council was aware that Gibbs was not feeling well when they started the meeting, but no one anticipated the news at the end of the meeting.

After all, this was the same man who, while he was in the hospital, discussed serious plans to run for re-election. Gibbs had served from 1977 to 1981, and then from 1983 to the present.

Nurses said they couldn't keep him in bed during his

"A.G. tried to get people together."

Inverness Councilman Pete Kelly

hospital stay in late August. He was always walking around and saying he felt fine, they said.

Gibbs had also joked with friends and reporters while he was in the hospital, saying he wanted to go back to the council and "straighten them out" about a dispute on the downtown redevelopment project.

"Yeah, that's what he told me," said City Parks and Recreation Director and longtime friend, Frank DiGiovanni. "I thought he looked great when I went to see him. I said, 'Gibbs, you look great. What the hell are you doing in here? Come on out with me.' Yeah, he was great guy — a very quiet guy."

Giordano said he had met Gibbs about 10 years ago, and the two worked closely with Little League baseball at Whispering Pines Park.

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Councilman remembered as 'precious'

By Dave Schlenker
Staff writer

Filling the pews, lining the walls and spilling out of the small church, about 250 friends and family members said good-bye to beloved Inverness Councilman A.G. Gibbs Saturday.

Family and close friends filled the designated south end of the St. James AME Church, while other mourning attendants filled the other side, stood along the walls or even watched from narrow entrance corridor at the front of the building.

"A true friend is like a diamond — precious and rare," said Citrus Springs Elementary School Principal Archie Dabney, a longtime friend of



Lora Gordon/The Chronicle

The Rev. Samuel C. Lawson comforts Christine Gibbs and her son, Romaro Roberts, before the funeral services for her husband, Augustus G. Gibbs Saturday morning in Inverness.

Please see **GIBBS**, Page 2A

9/30/96

HORTON, Willie

100-year-old home burns in Inverness

By Mike Wright

Staff writer

A wooden house in an old section of downtown Inverness was gutted Saturday night by a fire that could be seen for miles around.

Willie Horton, 48, said the house she owns at 208 E. Dampier St. was at least 100 years old and had once been a school that was attended by her 90-year-old mother.

"I was born in this house," Mrs. Horton said sadly as she stood with friends outside while firefighters battled the blaze. "My mama went to school in this house. It was a four-room schoolhouse. When my parents wanted to move here, they bought it and turned it into their home. They paid \$200 for it."

Mrs. Horton was grocery shopping when the fire broke out.

Her son, John Horton Jr. and a 4-year-old nephew were in the front living room when her husband John Sr. came into the house and told them that a fire had started in the rear of the home, said Lt. Ken Clamer of the Citrus County Fire Prevention Division.

They escaped unharmed, then tried to douse the flames with a garden hose, Clamer said.

The black wooden frame was still intact as the fire died out, but the inside of the house was gutted. Clamer said the house was insured but he couldn't give an estimate of its financial worth.

Mrs. Horton's daughter, Lorraine Horton, 19, said the inside of the house had recently been remodeled and the family had not finished paying for the work.

Lorraine Horton said she was next door visiting friends when she saw sparks coming from the rear of the house, near the fuse box.

Clamer said he doesn't know how the fire started. The investigation is continuing.

JOHNSON, REUBEN

SAMUEL JOYNER - Pictures 8, 9 & 10

Samuel Joyner was born on July 1, 1931. In 1957 he founded Joyner Masonry and Concrete Work, Inc. His business built condos and other income-producing properties in Crystal River.

He performed major masonry, concrete block and concrete work including new construction in Beverly Hills, Arbor Lakes, Belair subdivision, Crystal Oaks, Firehouses and many other new construction projects in Citrus County.

He built and owns the Pine View Plaza shopping center on Highway 44 east in Crystal River.

Joyner 2003

WILLIAM BUNCH - Pictures 11 & 12

William Bunch was born in Citrus County on June 29, 1954. He attended George Washington Carver Elementary School, Crystal River Middle School, and Crystal River High School.

He began working at the Plantation Inn and Golf Resort in Crystal River at age 13. He worked as a kitchen help and clean-up person. He advanced to prep cook and finally chef in 1973.

On April 15, 1997, he acquired and opened Oyster's Restaurant on Highway 19 in Crystal River, a very popular restaurant. He is the proprietor as well as the chef.

Bunch 2003

WILLIAM L. ROBINSON, JR. - Pictures 13 & 14

William L. Robinson, Jr. was born on March 4, 1933. He served with the Army from 1954 - 1956. He received a BS degree from Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University. He got his Masters Degree in Education Administration and Supervision at FAMU in 1967.

From 1958 - 1960 he served as Principal, Florida School for Boys, Okeechobee, FL.

From 1960 - 1964 he served as County Extension Agent, Jackson County, Marianna, FL.

From 1964 - 1969 he served as the Principal of the George Washington Carver Elementary School.

From 1969 - 1970 he was the County Extension Agent for Leon County, Tallahassee

From 1971 -1985 he was the Supervisor of Instruction for the Citrus County School Board.

From 1985 - 1995 Mr. Robinson was the Director of Personnel for the Citrus County School System.

BIOGRAPHY

The first child in a family of 10 born to the Union of William Levy Robinson and Mary Lee Howard Robinson, William Levy Robinson, Jr. - W.L. or Junior as he was affectionately called - was born on March 4, 1933 in Webster, Sumter County, Florida. W. L. attended the all-Black Mills High School in Webster, graduating in 1951 as salutatorian of his class.

After high school, W.L. left the family farm to study agriculture at the then all-Black Florida A & M College (FAMC) in Tallahassee.

His college education was interrupted by a two-year tour of duty in the U.S. Army. Upon his return from the armed services, W.I. continued his college education and