

KING, Mandy

"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, Elizabeth Grace
Jones
Johnnie King Jr, Mary Grace

King family gathers together

NANCY KENNEDY
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Chronicle

Earlier this month, a regal contingent of Kings came to Citrus County. More than 100 of the 200-plus King family came to Inverness for their 25th silver anniversary family reunion.

Although the family is scattered throughout Florida and the U.S., the ancestors of Simon and Mandy King consider Inverness their home base.

Cassandra Wims served as this year's reunion hostess.

"This is something we look forward to," Wims said. "To be able to sit around and reminisce and tell stories. My generation, 40 and on, we're trying to keep the younger ones connected, that's why every year

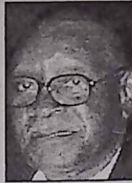
we do history and we recognize those members who are deceased. We don't ever want to forget them."

According to family history, Simon King was born in Columbia County, Fla. As a teenager he came to Alachua County to "work for a white family."

Grandmother Mandy Miles was born in South Carolina and was raised by her grandfather after her mother had died.

"Grandmother Mandy loved to tell the story of her life," as is written in the family history. "She never worked in the field as a slave, but she was one of the select few that were chosen to work in the 'Big House.'

"When she was a 'Missy Gal,' she and brother Ike came to Florida on a boat with their grandparents. They landed in Fernadina, Florida...



Lydia and David Williams
oldest blood relatives attending the King Family Reunion.

"Grandmother and Grandfather met at church meetings, and later they were married. They homesteaded in a community in Alachua County called 'Half-Moon.' He became a prosperous farmer, a preacher and a pastor of a community."

The Kings had 12 children. Simon died before he was 50; Mandy died in 1955 at age 108. Notable Kings include Eli White, the first African-

7-26-03 for reunion in Inverness

American Inverness City Council member and the owner of Cason (formerly Dampier) Funeral Home, on Dampier Street; Arthur White, Sr., the first black Inverness police officer and Cassandra Wims, the first black homecoming queen at Citrus High School.

The King family reunion began in 1978 when several of family members from New York and Pennsylvania returned to Inverness to visit relatives. They started talking about all the relatives they had never met. The first reunion was set for July 1979.

Over the years, the annual family get-together has evolved into a three-day extravaganza with a Friday night reception and a Saturday picnic; on Sunday, they all go to church.

This year, their silver anniversary, they met Saturday

night for a gala dinner at the Citrus Springs Community Center, catered by Oysters Restaurant in Crystal River.

The evening included a fashion show and a candlelight memorial to the members who had died during the year. "We don't ever want to forget them," Wims said.

They also honored the oldest members and welcomed new members by marriage and birth.

"With my family, my husband and my children, this has always been our vacation, our hoopla," Wims said, "especially when we have a chance to go out of state."

Past reunions have been in Baltimore, Atlanta, Philadelphia, Durham, N.C. and South Bend. In Florida, they've met in St. Petersburg, Lakeland, Tampa, Gainesville and Inverness.

Next year, they're planning a cruise.

Family members pay yearly dues to cover costs; they also have fund-raising events throughout the year.

Wims said in their 25 years, even with all the traveling involved, there has never been an accident. She said their reunions have become not only a time to celebrate family, but also to give thanks to God. "Every year, we are overwhelmed with thanksgiving to the Lord and are so grateful for his protection," she said.

"So much changes so fast," Wims said, "and you can lose it so quickly. I would rather come together for this occasion instead of a funeral. So, we put an importance on the coming together for a good reason instead of having to for something sad."

LANGLEY



CITRUS
Chronicle
COUNTY

"You may differ with my choice, but not my right to choose."

David S. Arthurs, Publisher Emeritus

GARRY MANNING, *Publisher*

GERRY MULLIGAN, *Executive Editor*

DAVID ERNEST, *Advertising Director*

RICHARD COOK, *Circulation Director*

BUILDING A BETTER FAMILY

Strong Langley family can be model for us all

FAMILIES MAY BE added to, subtracted from, multiplied or divided — but they can still survive even in this day and age.

Some, however, may have their act together a little more than others. The Langleys of Citrus County were honored as one of those this past weekend.

In today's crazy world, one group of kin may appear to have every necessary ingredient, all the basic necessities, and even some additional bonuses, and still find it a struggle to act like a family.

On the other hand, some families can be tugged at, faced with tragedies, suffer through financial difficulties, and seem to be endlessly juggling problems and yet remain a family.

It doesn't always mean a traditional mom, dad, brother and sister. It seems modern families now come in all shapes and sizes with no set of rules and regulations.

And if we feel like the definition of family has been altered in this generation, we must prepare ourselves with even broader definitions of what family

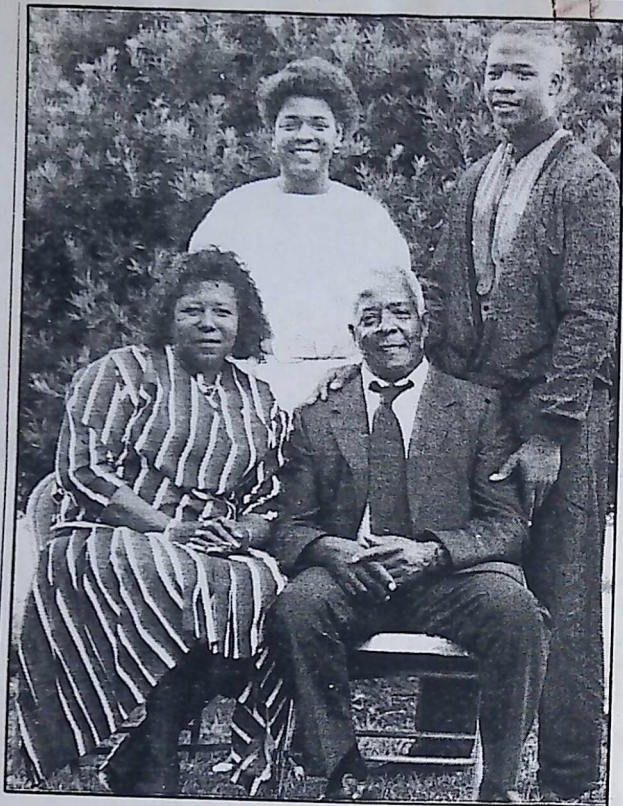
They not only accomplish the expected things families should do — meals on the table, roofs over their heads, etc. — but also reach out to show how families can contribute to the community.

This weekend the Citrus United Basket honored such a family at its annual Family Appreciation Day. The Langley family — Clarence, Alida, Florence, Dora and Clarence III — were chosen as the Family of the Year in Citrus County.

The key word to their success, the family said, is respect. Working together and working with others becomes not a chore but a tight-knit relationship when each member remembers to respect the other.

It seems simple, but then, oftentimes the most difficult problems have the easiest solutions.

This family, which has been involved in everything from Hospice, the Cancer Society, Girls Scouts, and Sunday School, has shown that through special concern for each other, its members can extend that concern to others. And strong fam-



Matthew Beck/ The Chronicle

The Langley family has been named Citrus United Basket's Family of the Year. They are, above (standing) Florence and brother Clarence III, and (seated) Alida and Clarence II. The CUB honored the Langley family Saturday.

Langleys honored as Family of Year

By Marta Sallj
Staff writer

Alida Langley didn't even see it coming.

Not that she'd been given a good clue.

When a young friend of hers called to ask for help with a college paper, Mrs. Langley was glad to be interviewed for a class.

It turns out the little interview — and the list of family accomplishments her college friend coaxed out of Mrs. Langley — was just what the Citrus United Basket (CUB) needed to cement its choice.

Saturday, CUB honored Mrs. Langley, her husband, Clarence Jr., their three children and three grandchildren as the Citrus County Family of the Year.

It's a good thing CUB adopted a policy of warning the Family of the Year before the presentation. Even when CUB president Leanne Hadsell stopped by at Alida's workplace — she's been executive secretary for state Rep. Dick Locke for nearly three years — Mrs. Langley still had no clue.

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**CUB president Leanne
Hadsell**

“And Leanne says, ‘We’ve been talking about you, we’ve been talking about you,’ ” Mrs. Langley recalled. “And I sit there and start crying.”

Saturday, Mrs. Langley and her family were all smiles, receiving congratulations and posing for pictures.

“They're real special people to this community,” Ms. Hadsell said as she presented a bouquet of red roses to Mrs. Langley. “We'd be lost without them.”

The short list of Langley vol-

FAMILY

continued from Page 1A

unteer projects touches all parts of Citrus County. Mrs. Langley is a member of the Citrus County Fair Association and was a board member for six years of the Marion/Citrus Mental Health Center. The Langleys have volunteered for the American Cancer Society, for Hospice of Citrus County and for CUB.

They have worked with the Girl Scouts of America, have

taught Sunday school and are active in the Mount Carmel Methodist Church in Floral City.

That was the short list.

Alida and Clarence have also raised three children. One daughter, Florence, served five years in the Air Force and is now a loan processing officer for First Federal Savings and Loan Association in Inverness.

A second daughter, Dora, is now stationed with the Army in Germany. Their son, Clarence III, is a senior at Citrus High

School, is active in football, basketball and weightlifting, and hopes one day to study law or business.

Clarence Langley Jr., who moved to Citrus County from Brooksville 30 years ago and has worked for Florida Rock Industry 26 of those years, had a more personal explanation for why his family's been a success.

"We've been married 30 years and we've never really had a hard argument," Langley said. "We try to get along. We respect each other's feelings."

Clarence Langley Jr., 62, of Floral City

Clarence Langley Jr., 62, of Floral City died Sunday, Oct. 8, 1995, at Citrus Memorial Hospital. Born in Brooksville, Fla., he came to Floral City 36 years ago from there. He was a retired foreman in the mining industry; U.S. Army veteran; member of Mount Carmel Methodist Church and Dunnellon Masonic Lodge No. 114.

He is survived by his wife, Alida Langley of Floral City; one son, Clarence E. Langley, III, Fort



OBITUARIES

Bragg, N.C.; two daughters, Florence E. Langley of Floral City and Dora Williams of Inverness; mother, Ella Louise Langley of Brooksville, Fla.; six brothers, Walter Langley of Lynnwood, Wash., Theodore Langley of Foxville, Tenn., Raymond Langley of Floral City, Allen Langley, Calvin Langley and Rudolph Langley, all of Brooksville; five sisters, Birthena Riggins, Mary Thompson, Margaret Clark, Betty Walker, and Barbara White, all of Brooksville, Fla.; and four grandchildren.

Cason Funeral Chapel,
Inverness.

Noted Floral City resident Langley dead at age 62

By Stefanie Hoglund
Staff writer

Longtime Floral City resident Clarence Langley Jr., 62, died suddenly Sunday after suffering what family believe was a heart attack which caused him to crash his vehicle.

Langley's wife Alida said her husband went to the park to take his daily walk and was on his way home when he crashed in the woods along Highway 41 in Floral City.

"He usually gets up at six, six-thirty," she said. "He got up this morning, made coffee."

"Somebody heard the crash," she continued. "They had to bust the windows to get him out."

Langley's daughter Florence found her father's car this morning along the side of the road. "We had an appointment this morning and my father's never late for anything. I went looking for him and I found the car. I just knew that was him."

When Florence told her mother they would have to go to the hospital, Mrs. Langley thought "he had just got sick and he would be okay."

When she arrived at the hospital, she was greeted with the news her husband of 36 years died. The death came just 38 days after Langley's retirement from the Florida Rock Company in Brooksville and a few years after he had open heart surgery in 1991. "He went back to work in two months" after the surgery, Mrs. Langley said.

A retirement party recently held in Langley's honor hosted the likes of U.S. Rep. Karen Thurman and state Sen. Karen Johnson and state Rep. Helen

Spivey.

Mrs. Langley said since her husband retired, "he was having a ball. He wanted to fish. His brother came down from Washington state and they fished the whole week."

The news of Langley's death traveled fast in the small Floral City community. It was not long before dozens of friends and families gathered at the Langley home to offer support for the family of a man who never hesitated to help his neighbors.

"He's known as the handy man here," said daughter Dora Williams. She said her father would help almost anybody that needed something fixed.

"Everybody's been really nice," Mrs. Langley said. "Everybody's been great."

"I will miss him," Florence said. "I know he's in heaven. His suffering and his pain is over. I'm rejoicing because I know that."

She remembered the family dinner shared at the Golden Corral the night before her father died. "He was fine," she said.

Langley's other daughter Dora Williams said the last time she saw her father she was telling him about her new job as a corrections officer at the new Florida Corrections Complex in Coleman.

"Everybody was pretty happy," she said. She added she knows her father's in a better place and "he's up there rejoicing. He's walking the streets of gold."

The Langleys have a son, Clarence III, who is stationed in the Army at Fort Bragg. Langley is also survived by his mother, Ella Louise Langley.



Retirement party

Anne Smith/The Chronicle

The family of Clarence Langley Jr. had a big surprise party for him to commemorate his retirement from Florida Rock Co. in Brooksville after more than 33 years. The party took place at the East Citrus Community Center on State Road 44 just east of Inverness. Mr. Langley and wife Alida arrived to the cheers of family and several hundred friends. His mother, Ella Louise Langley, greeted her son and is shown above sitting at left with him and Alida. Also pictured are their three children, Florence Langley, Clarence Langley III and Dora Williams. Many local dignitaries including U.S. Rep. Karen Thurman and state Rep. Karen Johnson paid tribute to him. Rep. Helen Spivey, Judge Patricia Thomas, Commissioner Jim Fowler and Dick Locke were also present. At right, Mrs. Langley holds a doll dressed in a uniform similar to the one he wore for 33 years on his job. This was given to him after the dinner at the retirement party.



SPIRIT

Continued from Page 1A

one cemetery, but it's divided by a sinkhole and has two names."

She strode down the gentle slope to the grave of the Rev. Boston Vickers, who was born in 1912 and died last April.

"Now that man could tell stories," she said. He was, among other things, a practiced dowser, a finder of water for wells.

Mrs. Langley, who grew up in Floral City, said that old-timers like the Rev. Vickers recalled stories of parents and grandparents about those days when phosphate mining swelled the population of Floral City to the point that it had more residents than the village of Miami, a matter of 300 souls to 150.

"His father is right over there," she said, pointing to a stone. Pinky Vickers, 1880-1951. "His mother is right beside him." Bertie Vickers, 1874-1957.

"The stories they could tell, if only somebody had recorded them," she said.

"They were working here in the early 1900s; like most everybody else, they came here because of the phosphate," she

said. "They could tell us a thing or two about what it was like back then."

She approached another group of weathered stones.

"There's the grave of Mr. Norton. He really knew the stories, too. He was 109 when he died, a fine man."

The Rev. Arthur Norton died Feb. 9, 1996, the oldest county resident for many years.

"And here's the grave of his wife Clemmie," she said.

Earlier *Chronicle* stories reported that Arthur Norton came down to Floral City from his home in Tallahassee in 1900. He and Clemmie Norton raised nine children in the house they built by themselves on land they cleared. For many years he, like so many other Floral City residents, worked in the mines.

The Rev. Norton's life revolved around work, his family and the town's black churches, the Mount Carmel Methodist and Pleasant Hill Baptist. He, also, served as a healer, and as the community's undertaker.

"Lots of the black folk weren't buried here though," Langley said. "Lots of the older people were buried out at Russell Hill. There was a church there, and a graveyard

too. There are still burials out there," she said. "I remember as a child riding out to Russell Hill on an old road that cut over that way."

Russell Hill was a community of black families who worked the land in what is now part of the Withlacoochee State Forest in south central Citrus County. Part of that land was originally settled by Gilliam Washington, a freed slave who was granted 40 acres of forest following the Civil War.

Most of the mine workers left Citrus County, and the mines to find work elsewhere when the outbreak of World War I closed the European markets which were the mainstay of the suddenly collapsed industry.

Some families, she said, stayed on to work in orange groves and to open small businesses.

Many of Mrs. Langley's family are buried in the southernmost portion of the cemetery, known as the Williams Cemetery. Williams was her maiden name.

She pointed to the graves of her grandmother and namesake Alida Williams, 1888-1966, and her grandfather, A. W. Williams, 1864-1935.

Mrs. Langley has a copy of the front page of a short-lived newspaper called the Citrus County Journal dated June, 1912 which has an advertisement which reads "A.W. Williams, colored, Groceries-Hot Lunches."

Nearby is the grave of her father Elija, 1915-1998.

"My father was a citrus man. He knew everything there was to know about growing citrus. He worked for Dolly Allen, a grove owner, and later Dora Noles, for most of his life," she said.

He was also responsible for the cemetery, seeing to it that a burial permit be signed and filed with the local registrar in the Citrus County Health Department for all burials in the cemetery.

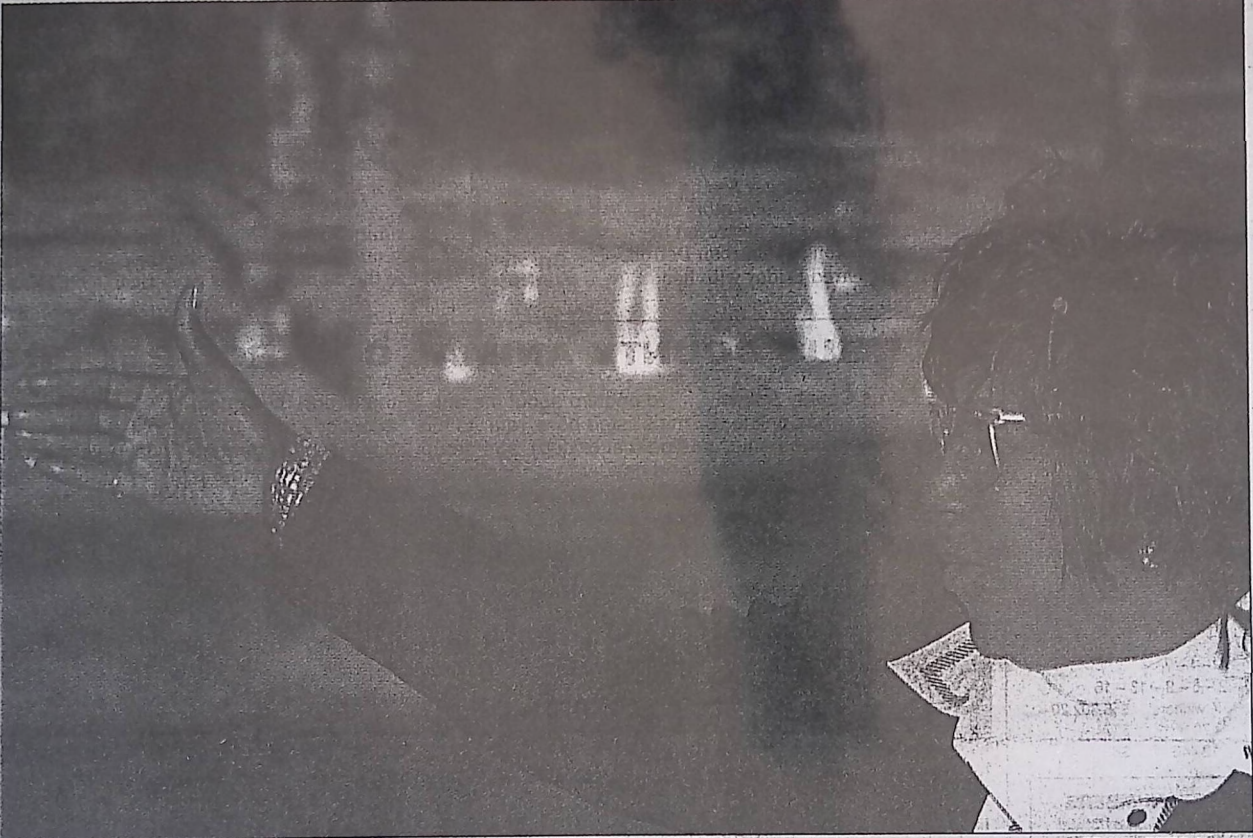
"My mother, Florence Williams (1915-2000), besides cooking for rich white women, had a fish market for awhile; she started a teen place for children to give them a place to socialize, and she ran a restaurant on (U.S.) 41 called the Cozy Corner. I remember it was called that because it was me who named it.

"It was famous," she said with a warm smile, "for its delicious biscuits."

It closed in 1979.

Black History: The spirit lives on

2-16-03



BRIAN LaPETER/Chronicle

Alida Langley, who grew up in Floral City, looks over the graves of her ancestors Tuesday at Frazier Cemetery.

A Floral City cemetery has more to tell than epitaphs on gravestones

STEVE ARTHUR
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Chronicle

“The stories they could tell, if only somebody had recorded them.”

Alida Langley

talking about black residents who are buried at a cemetery near Floral City.

Pausing on her way to her job (as the domestic violence coordinator) in the county courthouse in Inverness, Alida Langley

offered a reporter a glimpse into the history of the black community in which her family has deep roots, in and around Floral City.

Much has changed in the area of race relations in this county since the turn of the century but she said many who could have shared memories of the early days are no longer among the living.

“This part of the cemetery” she said, “is known as the Frazier Cemetery. It’s really

Expert: Culture affects bias.
PAGE 3A

Please see **SPiRiT/Page 4A**

Arms folded, shivering in the crisp February morning air, a woman stood under a nearly leafless oak tree in a country graveyard on Great Oaks Drive south of Floral City.

She was regarding the white and gray tombstones that represent to her the weathered faces, soft voices, laughter, memories of sorrow and joy she once shared with the souls who are now in the realm of her memories.

Chamber showers kudos on leaders

CHERI HARRIS
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Chronicle

Alida Langley doesn't like to be the center of attention.

But the county's domestic violence coordinator earned a moment in the spotlight and a standing ovation Friday when she received the Charles B. Fitzpatrick Heritage Award from Fitzpatrick's son, Spike.

Langley was one of several individuals recognized during the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards Luncheon at Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club.

Fitzpatrick said the Heritage Award is "for that person who has left their mark in Citrus County by a lifetime of service in Citrus County."

Langley has left her mark



BRIAN LAPETER/Chronicle

Alida Langley becomes emotional Friday after she wins the Charles B. Fitzpatrick Heritage Award during the Citrus County Chamber of Commerce Annual Awards lunch at Citrus Hills Golf & Country Club.

through serving on the boards of Citrus Memorial Hospital, the Citrus County Fair Association and the Citrus County Abuse Shelter Association (CASA), as well as other volunteer work, such as delivering homebound meals and serving as a church secretary.

Langley said she was shocked to receive the award.

"I just do things, that's all,"

she said. "I love to be behind the scenes."

Brown Dumas, president of Crystal River Bank, received the Rick B. Quinn Distinguished Citizen Award for working for the same bank for 50 years and serving on the Crystal River Volunteer Fire Department for more than 50 years.

Dumas seemed pleased to receive the award.

"It's an honor, kind of a surprise to me, and I guess it is unusual to be working for the same place for 50 years," Dumas said.

John Barnes presented the J.L. Hassell Community Service Award to Mike Duncan of Withlacoochee Electric Cooperative. Barnes said Hassell was an attorney who

Please see **CHAMBER/Page 4A**

Langleys honored as Family of Year

By Marta Sallj
Staff writer

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Please see FAMILY, Page 2A



Matthew Beck/ The Chronicle

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11/13/89

Longtime resident finds rich life in Citrus County

Editor's note: This portrait of one of Citrus County's citizens is part of a series of stories in honor of Black History Month, sharing who some of the county's black residents are, what they think, and what they do for a living.

By Kim Allen
Staff writer

Alida Langley has lived in Citrus County all her life and loves it. "You couldn't pay me enough money to move from here," she says.

Mrs. Langley, who is a legislative secretary to state Rep. Dick Locke, was raised in Floral City, where she still resides.

She said Citrus has seen

much change over the years but has remained a slower-paced place where people can stop and enjoy their surroundings.

"I can remember when we came to Inverness to shop and it only took 30 minutes," Mrs. Langley recalled. "Now it takes 30 minutes to just drive down Main Street."

She said she first noticed a dramatic increase in the number of residents when she taught arts and crafts to the elderly through the outreach program at Central Florida Community College.

"I had no idea where all these people were coming from," she

Please see **RICH**, Page 2A



Alida Langley

Citrus County native

RICH

continued from Page 1A

said. "There were people in my class from other countries such as China, Korea and Germany, as well as those people coming to Florida during the winter months from up North."

Mrs. Langley said she wouldn't change jobs with anyone.

"How many people get to truly help others daily?" she asked. "I enjoy helping others and it makes me feel great inside to see the joy in their faces when their problems are finally solved.

"One case I especially remember is a family that moved down here from Indiana because someone had painted such a wonderful picture of our county," she said. "The man was unable to find work and the family was evicted from their home. I stayed on the phone for hours, but I finally got that family on a bus home. It felt great to be able to help them," she said.

Mrs. Langley would only change a few things in her native county if she could, she said.

"I really feel sorry for the young people. "They just don't

have anything to do," she said.

"When I was a teen-ager, my parents ran a teen-age place so the kids had a place to go. All the parents knew each other and knew the kids so we always had a place to go where our parents knew we were safe and staying out of trouble. We knew if we did something bad, we weren't just going to get it from the family we were staying with, they would call our parents and then we would get it again when we got home," she said. "I think that kept us straight."

Mrs. Langley said she tried to instill in her three children the lessons taught by her parents.

"My parents both worked and I couldn't believe one time that they didn't buy me what I wanted," she said. "I remember wanting a pair of chuck boots so bad because everyone else had a pair. My parents told me that we don't always get everything we want in this life. Looking back, it was one of the most important lessons I ever learned."

Mrs. Langley said if given the choice of living anywhere in the world, she would still choose to live in Citrus.

"I just love it here," she said. "In the city, you have to live at a high-speed city pace, but here you can live at your own pace and enjoy life around you.

MATCHETT, BENJAMIN

WILLIAM L. ROBINSON, JR.

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 salutatorian of his class.

After high school, W. L. left the family farm to study agriculture at the then all-black Florida A and M College (FAMC) in Tallahassee.

His college education interrupted by a two-year tour of duty in the U. S. Army (January 1954-January 1956). Upon his return from the armed service, W. L. continued his college education and received his Bachelor of Science (B. S.) degree from the recently assigned university status of Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University (now FAMU) in 1956. He majored in Vocational Agriculture and was aided by his 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 Master of Education 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 June 30, 1995, W. L. has held numerous teaching and administrative positions in education throughout his career. He was principal of the Florida School for Boys, Okeechobee, FL, from 1958-1960; County Extension Agent for Jackson County, Marianna, FL, 1960-1964; Principal of George Washington Carver Junior High School, Crystal River, FL, 1964-1969; County Extension Agent for Leon County, Tallahassee, FL, 1969-1970; teacher of science and Vocational Agriculture at Citrus High School, Inverness, FL, 1970-1971; Supervisor of Instruction for Citrus County School Board, Inverness, FL, 1971-1985, and Director of Personnel for the Citrus County School Board, 1985-1995. He retired on June 30, 1995.

W. L. has 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 Assistant Superintendent and Superintendent of the Sunday School. Additionally, he has served as the chairman of the Auxiliary Board to the Second Bethlehem Missionary Baptist Association, 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.

W. L. and Euna have been blessed with one daughter, Preshus LaFara, who was born June 21, 1981, and one grand daughter, Trivonna Shikira, born January 26, 1998. Preshus Graduated from Crystal River High School, Crystal River, FL, May 26, 1999. The family resides in Crystal River, FL.

Robinson 2003

Citrus County Chronicle

A quest for Black History Month to learn something of Ben Matchett uncovers a portion of the rich heritage of this county's black community



The Rev. Christopher Satchell is pastor of the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth Inc., in Crystal River. He is the great-grandchild of Benjamin Matchett.

Stepping back in time

By Steve Arthur
Chronicle columnist

Dixon mill

OUT THE WINDOW

Thoughts from around town

A LEAKING ROOF can be a tremendous inconvenience, but it's not really enough for county government to abandon Inverness.

The county commission temporarily abandoned its headquarters last week because the roof was leaking and they couldn't get the landlord to fix the problem. The county's inability to get the landlord at the Masonic building to respond to its complaints is unbelievable. It should give cheer to all those poor tenants who have had trouble in their lives getting their landlords to respond to similar complaints.



Gerry Mulligan

You would think that county government would have a little more pull in Citrus County.

It could just be that some of our hired help — most especially County Attorney Larry H. Inverness on the first stagecoach going west.

Haag wants one of those fancy offices Lecanto at the new county building. He did threaten to take any legal action against the landlord until after the commissioners were forced out of the building. Now with that done he wants to hang the landlord on the courthouse square and get the county out of the remaining years on the Masonic building lease.

The county needs to force the landlord to get the Masonic building and then put government back in the county seat of Inverness. Admittedly, the Masonic building leaves a lot to be desired. Repairs must be completed and the rumored rodents must be run off.

When the first new building is constructed in Inverness as part of the government complex, new room will exist for the county commission.

● My own daughter, a college student in Washington, D.C., had to abandon her apartment last winter because it got so cold that the heat went out that the refrigerator was shut from the outside.

by Steve Arthur
Chronicle columnist

WE WERE IN THE courtroom of the
County Courthouse, going through pictures
of the old Joseph Dixon Crucible Company
cedar mill, when we came upon his image.
We gazed at the photograph together, wondering
aloud about this African-American man who stood on
the porch of a building, face half in light and half in
shadow. A black man living a humble existence in the
Deep South, a janitor in a sawmill. That's all we
knew of him. Not even a date.

We weren't even sure about his name, but even
more important than his name, more important than
any of our names, is this question which can be asked
of any of us: In what way was this person's life signifi-
cant?

I was going to find out and I was going to be
amazed at the threads I was about to pick up and fol-
low through the generations.

"His name," Kathy Thompson said, "is Benjamin
Marchett, though it might be Matchett."

Kathy is our county historical resources officer and
she is pretty good about matching the jigsaw puzzle
pieces of the past together.

She showed me where the man's last name was
written. If that 'r' was a 't,' it was a 't' without a line
across it, making it look suspiciously like an 'r.'

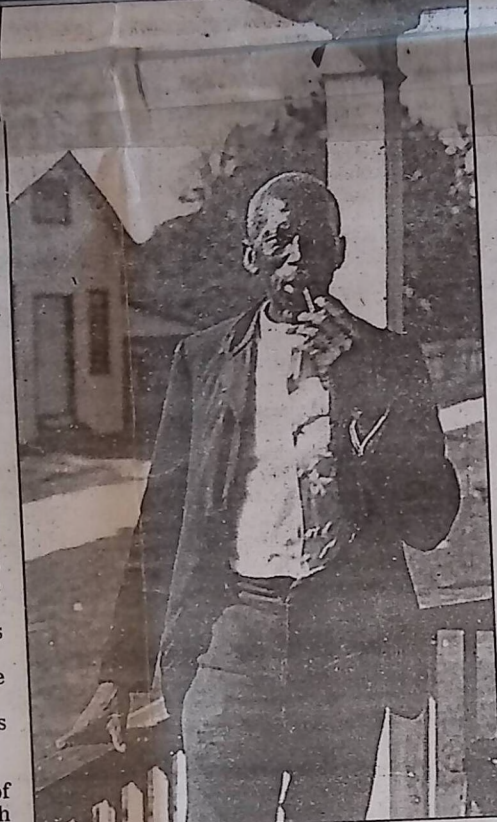
The word 'janitor' was scrawled beside the man's
photograph.

"I think he still has relatives in Crystal River. The
Satchell family?"

"Satchell?" I asked. "Do you mean Pastor Chris
Satchell. And Felicia Satchell, his wife?"

Kathy smiled.
Christopher is pastor of Crystal River's Church of
the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth
Inc., 557 N.E. Second Ave., and Felicia, well, she
works for the Chronicle.

Please see **TIME**, Page 4C



The life and times of Benjamin Matchett remain an enigma, but his legacy continues through the generations.

Dixon mill employed many

The Dixon plant where Benjamin Matchett worked was by far the biggest employer in the county, employing more than 100 people in its heyday.

According to historical records at the Citrus County Historical Association archives in Inverness, the Dixon company bought the mill from the Williams family, who had cut and shipped cedar out to pencil makers in Germany.

By the time the Jersey City, N.J., pencil makers acquired the property, the choice cedar along this coast had already been picked over.

Nonetheless, those chunks of wood provided work for our forebearers, including Benjamin Matchett.

A March, 1903, Florida Magazine article described the operation: "Among the cedar swamps of Florida ... one may suddenly come upon a scene of life and industry that makes one forget that it is perhaps 50 miles to the nearest village and as many miles to a city, or as some would say, to civilization ... In such a camp are perhaps one hundred men, black and white, and these stay the year 'round, excepting during the months of July and August."

The wood cut in those swamps was shipped or rafted down to the mill in Crystal River where it was cut into blanks which were then shipped to the plant in New Jersey.

To condense the story considerably, the mill burnt to the ground on Dec. 24, 1909, but it was rebuilt and came back on line in July of 1911, but finally closed in the early 1950s.

Memories of grandma and buckrah

Editors note: The following, reprinted with the author's permission, is a short story written by Helen Matchett Rushing, a 70-year-old woman with rich memories of her early childhood years in Crystal River.

She is the daughter of Benjamin Matchett Jr.
Her story is entitled: "An Independent Business Woman" and is part of a copyrighted book of stories, folklore and recipes in manuscript form called "Crystal River."

By Helen Matchett Rushing
Special to the Chronicle

"Grandma, What's a buckrah?"

I clutched the handle of the great wicker basket while racing to keep step with Grandma. Inside the basket lay the freshly laundered gleaming white smoothly-starched and ironed clothing we were delivering to the "buckrah."

"Aintee, here's my clothes," a buckrah voice called out as a large pillow-case stuffed with dirty laundry was lifted over the old gray picket fence.

"Yassuh, Mr. Piney. I'll git 'em. Jes chunk 'em over the fence." Grandma said this as she slowly straightened up from the old round washtub and the worn tin washboard.
"O-OO-OO-EE-EE!" she said. "This old back sho do hurt."

I looked up briefly from my play, and back again. Grandma always wore a long apron tied around her waist and periodically she'd dry her hands, stretch and arch her back—then it was back to the washboard—then it was back to the motion of the the up-and-down motion of the

Please see **GRANDMA**, Page 4C



Helen Rosa Matchett Rushing was the only child to live from the marriage of Benjamin Matchett Jr. and Helen Matchett (Lewis). She spent her first few years in Crystal River and now, after a long career in nursing, is retired in Chicago. She has written a book of short stories and recipes entitled "Crystal River."

fridge.
I called the landlord and told him to get
right out to repair the heat.

"No speak English," he replied in a very foreign accent.

"O Street apartment," I said in a much louder voice. "It's got no heat."

"No speak English," he replied.
"How can you rent an apartment in Washington, D.C., and not speak English?" I asked.

"No speak English," he replied again.
I hung up frustrated and amazed. How could this happen in America?

I had a hunch and in five minutes I called the number back.

"Did you order the pepperoni pizza with extra cheese," I asked.

"No, we didn't order any pizza. You have the wrong number," he replied in what appeared to be pretty good English.

"Ha!" I barked back. "I'm the guy with the apartment on O Street and we don't have any heat. Get over there and fix it or I'll never pay the rent again."

He apologized and said it was his brother who answered the phone before and he didn't speak English. What a remarkable coincidence that they sounded exactly the same.

"I promise to fix it right away," he said.

After my daughter spent several evenings in the Sheraton, the heat still had not been fixed.

I called the landlord again and demanded action.

"No speak English," he told me.

"I'm not falling for that again," I told him.
"I'm going to call Mayor Barry's office and demand that they send over a housing inspector to close you down if you don't fix the heat!"

The landlord began to laugh uncontrollably.

While he didn't speak English, he did have a pretty good understanding of how effective Mayor Barry's administration is in Washington.

When I called the mayor's office, I could never get by the voice mail. They must have been vacationing during the cold weather.

The heat never did get fixed but Spring eventually came. My daughter found a new apartment.

● We are all saddened by the death of former Citrus County Property Appraiser Charles Allen. Allen, who was born and raised in Citrus, served as property appraiser for 14 years.

As many have said, he was a true southern gentleman who cared greatly for his community.

● It was with sadness that we reported this week that Charles Visalli, the administrator at Heritage Hills Hospital in Beverly Hills, was being replaced. Heritage Hills is a psychiatric hospital owned by Heritage Health Care.

Please see **WINDOW** Page 4C

Gerry Mulligan is the publisher of the Chronicle. His email address is Mulligan@X31.infi.net.

TIME

continued from Page 1C

Back at the paper, I asked Felicia if the name Benjamin Marchett or possibly Matchett rang a familiar note. "Yes," she said, "it certainly does. Benjamin Matchett is Chris' grandfather."

When I told her I was curious to find out more about Benjamin Matchett, she said she would talk to Chris and get back to me.

When Felicia got back to me, she had a new discovery to share.

"We were surprised to find out there is a Benjamin Matchett Foundation in Chicago. The foundation helps young people in all sorts of ways." She gave me Helen Rosa Matchett Rushing's number in Chicago. "Call her, she'll tell you about Benjamin Matchett." So I did.

Graciously, Helen Matchett Rushing, who is a retired nurse, mother of five grown children and an accomplished writer, told me what she could remember of her father, Benjamin Matchett Jr., who was known to many as "Son."

He was, she said, a graduate of Moorehouse University in Atlanta, Ga., and was an accomplished musician and a well-respected hunting and fishing guide in Crystal River; it took me a few moments to realize that the man in the picture was in fact the father of the man she was describing for me.

Once that misunderstanding was clarified, there was a pause. Of the man in the photo, Benjamin Matchett Sr., her grandfather, she knew very little.

She has a single memory of him, a photo of the elder Benjamin on the wall of their Fifth Street home in Crystal River.

"He looked very dignified and wore a high starched collar. I remember the frame it was set in better than the picture itself. It was oval and was surrounded in beautiful delicate filigree."

She established the Benjamin

Matchett Foundation in memory of the father she holds as a hero and example to other African-Americans.

The foundation has helped poets see their works get into print and scholars to pursue their research. The foundation assisted a man in Joliet, Ill., to start a business, helped two music students pay for violin lessons, helped another become an auto mechanic, and continues to encourage and assist as needed.

Her father, Benjamin "Son" Matchett, she said proudly, helped train other young African-American men in a skill that would provide them with a decent living in a time when most black men held menial jobs. He died when she was only 3 years old.

Besides being proud of her father, she takes a great deal of pride in the accomplishments of her children and grandchildren who have graduated from prestigious universities and taken positions of responsibility around the nation. One granddaughter is about to graduate from Harvard, and another from Northwestern University in Evanston, Ill.

But what about my original subject, Benjamin Matchett Sr.?

His wife, I learned, still lives so I called Bishop Helen M. Lewis in West Palm Beach and asked her about her first husband.

She was among the founders of the Church of the Living God, The Pillar and Ground of the Truth in Crystal River; the mother church for about 75 other such Pentecostal churches throughout the U.S.

"I'm 92 years old," she said, "I was 18 when I married my husband and he was in his 30s; I don't know much about his earlier life or about his father. The family was from around Inverness and Crystal River, but that's all I can recall about them. My husband of course was a famous guide. We had one daughter, Helen Rosa."

She said her husband died of heart attack at age 36 and after his death, mother and daughter eventually moved to Nashville.

Finally, I called a former dean of the Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Ala., Meharry Lewis, (Helen Rosa's half-brother) who said he is working on a history of the black community in Crystal River.

He confirmed all the accomplishments of Benjamin Matchett the younger, but was even more curious than I was to learn about his father.

Finally, in terms of factual history, we still know very little about the life of that man who posed for a photograph one sunny day long ago in Florida.

But in another way, through the accomplishments and the heritage of that man and his wife, through his son and grandchildren, and great-grandchildren and through the generations, we know that the seed of something wonderful and significant was there.

Something in which we can all take pride, and hope.

WINDOW

continued from Page 1C

Visalli will apparently stay with the company in another position.

The parent company laid off more than 25 percent of its work force last week.

Visalli has been a high-profile community activist since he moved to Citrus County. Most recently, he chaired the campaign committee for the United Way and was extremely successful. He previously helped organize the Heart Association's Heart Ball.

Heritage Hills is suffering from dramatic changes in the way Medicare and private insurance companies pay for psychiatric care.

We hope that Visalli will be able to remain in the community and continue to play his part in civic affairs. He'd be a hard one to replace.

LETTER

Price difference cause for concern

In October 1996, Southern States Water (now Florida Water) asked for easements to service Laguna Palms wastewater treatment plant at a cost of \$52,000. Southern States would carry those dollars as a capital expenditure and the current residents would not have to pay back on the \$52,000. The price quoted did not include meters and installation of meters.

In late summer or early fall of 1997 in an article from a newspaper: "A memo from West Region engineer for Florida Water to County Administrator, Gary Kuhl estimated that design and construction of the lines needed to hook up Laguna

Palms can be done for \$16,500."

In December 1997 the same engineer has signed a letter showing: "I would not be comfortable with less than \$96,300 at this point and time." The price just quoted does not include meter hook-up for 44 units.

We need a set of plans for our engineer to review and we would like more than one bid on the project, because of the sizable difference in the prices quoted, we feel it would be to our best interest to have a second bid.

I also think the county commissioners, county attorney and county administrator should watch our backs as we are the people paying the bill.

Robert E. Simmons
Laguna Palms

1998 Events

JANUARY

- ArtSmart
- Winterfest Arts & Craft Show
- CFCC Performing Arts Series
- Lion's Health Fair
- Crystal River High Golf Classic
- Hom. Sp. Gospel Sing
- Grand 'Ole Opry

FEBRUARY

- CFCC Performing Arts Series
- Celebrity Baggers
- Up With People
- Support Person Luncheon
- Army Band Concert
- Seeking Moral & Spiritual Solutions to Racism
- United Way Awards
- Florida Manatee Festival
- Cracker Quilter Guild
- County Tennis Tournament
- Bev. Hills International Fest.
- Civil War Reenactment
- Bridal Extravaganza
- Dunnellon High 5K Run
- Homosassa Springs
- Antique & Classic Car Show
- ArtSmart

MARCH

- Strawberry Festival
- Parade of Homes
- CFCC Performing Arts Series
- Hospice Hoedown
- L.I. Blackbirds Baseball Clinic
- Boys & Girls Club Dinner
- 2nd CCFCA Annual Firematics
- Sugar Babes Doll Show
- Central Florida Symphony

CITRUS
Chronicle
COUNTY

Calendar OF EVENTS

It's Their Special Day

Plan to make it perfect.

Bridal Extravaganza



GRANDMA

continued from Page 1C

clothes washing making a smooth, rhythmic sound.

On Sundays, Grandma always went to church. On Saturday night she and Grandpa went downtown for Sat'day night grocery shopping. Those were the times she took off the old long apron. "Got a nice shape, Ellen," Ms. Posey would say.

The only other time the old apron came off was when grandma went to visit her friend, Grace Mobley. Ms. Mobley lived way out past the colored school. She had a front yard full of roses. Grace (as Grandma called her) was the Principal of the three-room schoolhouse. Ms. Polly was the other teacher. One room was for school gatherings and morning devotionals that were held each day before regular classes began.

I liked to see the children march in and sing "America, the Beautiful," then pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America. Afterwards, Ms. Mobley would read the Scriptures. Then she would solemnly announce "Let us bow our heads and say the Lord's Prayer. Oh, how beautiful! The sound of forty voices, rising and falling in perfect rhythm.

"Next year, my Grandbaby will be in school. She'll be one of them!" Grandma looked down at the sandy-haired brown-eyed girl standing next to her.

Grandma walked fast with the basket. I looked up at her. "Grandma, what's a buckrah?" I asked.

"Miz McBride, the lady what's run a bak'ry. She a buckrah, baby." Grandma's voice came, warm and soft as the southern breeze.

"Oh," I said. "Then is Mr. Mills, the postmaster, is he a buckrah, Grandma?"

"Yes, baby, he a buckrah, too."

"What about Dr. Hudson, Grandma, is he a buckrah?" I looked up inquisitively. Grandma answered wearily, "Yes, baby, Dr. Hudson is a buckrah too."

"But he's a doctor, Grandma!"

"I know, baby, but he a sho-nuff buckrah! It didn't make no nevah-mind if you a man, a woman, a doctor or whatever, you still a buckrah! But not you, baby. You ain't no buckrah. You my grandchild!"

A lovely smile crossed the smooth chocolate colored face of the old grandmother.

"Why Grandma, why ain't you and me buckrahs too?"

Grandma set her side of the basket down on the walkway. "Come here to Grandma," she said lovingly. She lifted me into her arms, right there on Main Street and laughed gently into my ear. "We ain't buckrah, baby, because we ain't WHITE!"

A buckrah passed and we two

stepped politely off the sidewalk into the grass.

"Howdy, Mr. Fletcher," Grandma spoke.

"Hello, Aintee," Mr. Fletcher answered as he passed the aged black woman and the little black girl who were toting his neighbors's clothes home.

Grandma always washed and boiled those clothes in a big iron pot with sturdy legs. This she did in her back yard near the washshed. She made her own soap, too, and cut it into big bars. The part of the wash days that I like best was handing the clothes pins to Grandma as she hung the bright wash on the clothesline where they sun-dried and sun-bleached until they were dazzling white. Even the colors brightened like new 'cause Grandma used something she called blu-ing to make them extra bright.

Just before dark, Grandm'd call "Come baby, hold the clothes pin basket while Grandma take the clothes down."

Next day was Ironing Day. A charcoal bucket with grill covering three heavy cast iron smoothing irons set on top of the grill atop the blazing coals.

Those buckrah women's dresses could stand up on the floor of Grandma's back porch without a prop. They were stiff with home-cooked starch. They were so sleek that grandpa said even a fly would sip up and fall long those buckrah men's shirt collars! That's how smooth they were! And Grandma didn't believe in making any "cat-faces" on her laundry. No sir. 'Cause she was a business woman and doing the buckrah's clothes was her business. "No slaving in some white 'oman's kitchen for this old lady," she'd say. "I'm an independent business woman! And I do my work right.

Grandma and me went to deliver some clothes to Miz Frazier.

"Here, baby, here's a nickel for you. Buy you some candy. Ms. Frazier gave you that. Say thank you to Miz Frazier." Looking at me and then looking up at the old buckrah woman, Grandma said, "Ain't she a beauty, Miz Frazier?"

"She is that, Aintee Ellen. She sure is that," came Miz Frazier's answer.

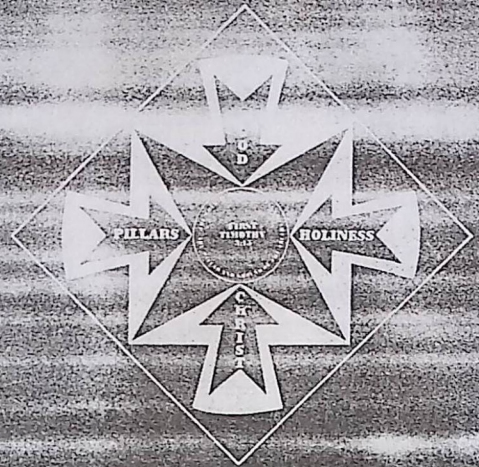
Homeward bound. "Count this for Grandma, baby. This here's a fifty-cent piece?" Grandma said, fingering the larger of the two coins. "And this here ... what do it say, baby?"

"That's a quarter!" I answered brightly.

"So let's add it all up. Fifty-cents plus a quarter makes — seventy-five cents!" Grandma gently patted her earnings and put the coins in the big pocket of her apron, smiling.

When Grandma smiled, the wrinkles in her milk chocolate face were the little "cat faces" at the corners of her tired eyes.

75th ANNIVERSARY
YEARBOOK

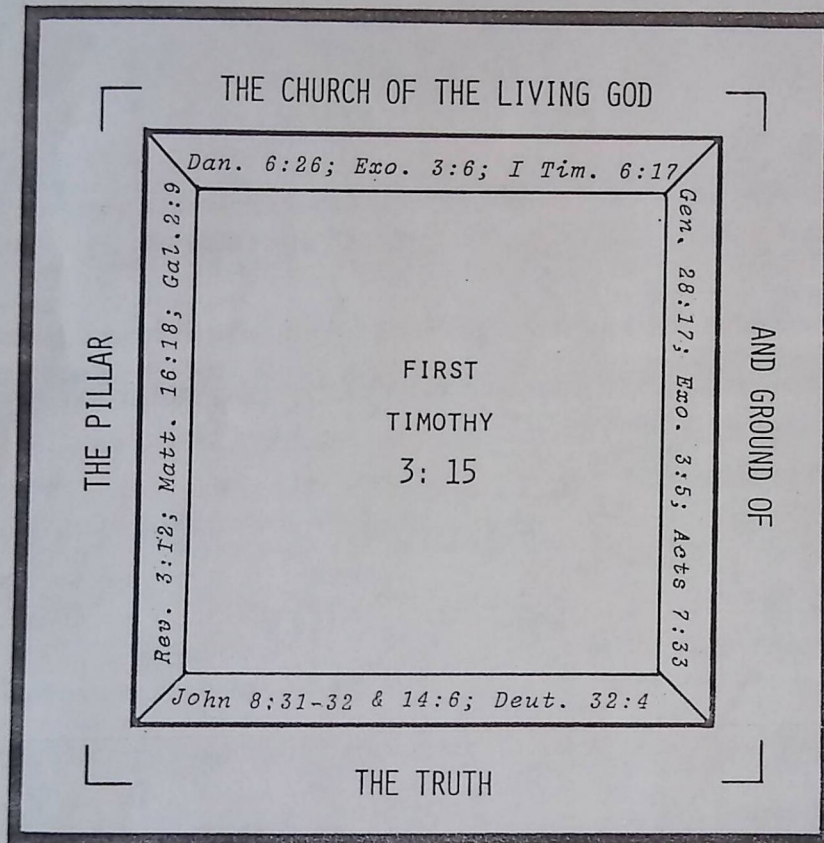


THE CHURCH
OF THE LIVING GOD,
THE PILLAR AND GROUND
OF THE TRUTH, INC.

M.L. TATE, FOUNDER

1903-1978

75th ANNIVERSARY YEARBOOK



Helen M. Lewis
Meharry H. Lewis
Editors

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SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY
YEARBOOK
of

THE CHURCH OF THE LIVING
GOD,
THE PILLAR AND GROUND
OF THE TRUTH, INC.

1903-1978

MARY MAGDALENA TATE
Revivor and First Chief Overseer

FELIX EARLY LEWIS
Co-Revivor and Second Chief Overseer

WALTER CURTIS LEWIS
Co-Revivor and Bishop

GENERAL HEADQUARTERS
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

THE BEGINNING

THE CHURCH AT CRYSTAL RIVER: 1924



The New Church Temple Under Construction

The Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth was started at Crystal River, Florida in 1924 by Elders L.L. Franklin and M.E. Williams (later to become Bishops) who were appointed to come to Crystal River by Bishop F.E. Lewis, at that time the State Bishop of the Florida Diocese, in a State Assembly held at Ocala, Florida. These obedient pioneers came to Crystal River and began seeking out souls who would be converted to True Holiness. Sister Helen Middleton Matchell (later to become Bishop H.M. Lewis) was one of such souls who, early in her life (at the age of 14 years in 1919) had already received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and had been exposed to True Holiness in Waycross, Georgia. She was the only person in Crystal River at that time who

knew anything about True Holiness and, upon the arrival of the pioneers of this Church, was ready to join in with them in establishing the local Church at Crystal River. Sister Helen Matchett had done a good job of converting many of her relatives to the religious tenets held by the Holiness faith. This she had done through her own personal example and the example she insisted upon in her little brothers (Van Roy and Luke) and sister (Lucille) who had been her charges since the death of her mother, Rosa Hunter Middleton, in June, 1918. Her oldest brother, Raleigh, was to join them later. When the Church was established in 1924, these converts came into True Holiness and the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth with

readiness and determination. Elder Sister Franklin served perhaps as the first pastor.

The early Church held its services in a one-room frame structure in what was called the Ballard's Addition section of Crystal River. At a later date, Elder W.L. Nelson was sent to further organize and pastor the fledging little band. Several years subsequent to the Church's establishment in Crystal River, an old school house was purchased from the School Board of Citrus County, Florida where the Church continued holding its services. More souls were saved and added to the band.

As the Church grew, the Chief Overseer, Mother M.L. Tate and the State Bishop, Bishop F.E. Lewis, encouraged the local Church band to build a more suitable structure. Under the state leadership of Elders W.L. Nelson, J.R. Lockley and Lewis Edwards; and the local leadership of R.W. McCoy, Julia Jacobs, J.H. Brooks and Helen Matchett, the old school house was razed and a new temple constructed in . . . This structure served as the Church temple until it was sold in



Bishop Lewis and Elder Milton at the new temple annex.

THE FIRST TWENTY-FIVE YEARS



Bishop W.F. Key, Pastor, Crystal River

Elder Mildred E. Milton, who joined the Church in 1928 and who was later called into the ministry, pastored this church for many years. She shall always be remembered for the fact that she stood, during the dark "Years of Turmoil" of the Church as a pillar of steadfastness and faith. During the late 1930s and the 1940s, when much of the local Church wavered, she stood—at times alone—to hold the Mother Church together at Crystal River.

As a result of highway improvements and the need for additional space and facilities became evident, a new location was sought. Deacons Raleigh and Luke Milton (brothers to



Elder M.E. Milton

Bishop H.M. Lewis) donated two acres of land to the Church in 1973 and commenced construction of a new church building. By the Grace of God, the labor of their own hands, and the leadership of the present Chief Overseer, Bishop H.M. Lewis, the local Church band is glad to report that, in 1978, the new building is almost completed.

Presently, Bishop W.F. Key is Pastor; Elder M.E. Milton is the Assistant Pastor; Bishop H.M. Lewis is the District Bishop. Sister Betty Richardson is the local Church Secretary.



Sis. Richardson and members

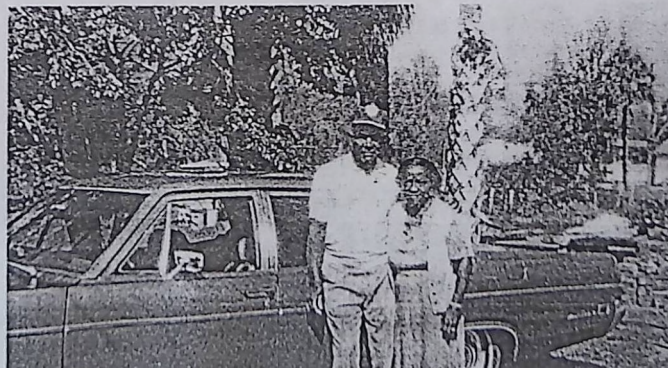


Deacon Luke D. Milton



The stone facade of the front of the new temple. Deacons in foreground.

Deacon Raleigh and Elder Mildred Milton



THE RENASCENCE CHURCH

ANNIVERSARY YEAR BAND! ARCOLA, MISSISSIPPI: 1978

Praise God for the new band in Arcola, Mississippi! This year, 1978, we had our first meeting in this city and God truly blessed! This is an historic occasion in this the 75th Anniversary Year of the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth. God opened this work in a place where a Holiness Church has never before been established.

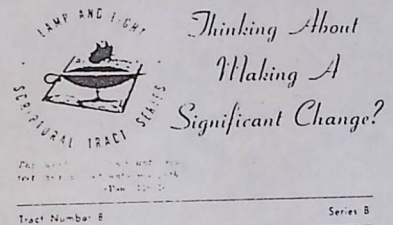
The band was started because I prayed for God to send somebody in holiness to my home town. Praise God, He sent us, Bishop Daniel Smith, and myself! We started by going from house to house teaching,

reading and giving the Word of God. My husband's former teacher rented a place to have services temporarily to us. She is doing all that she can to help the Church get started. Praise God for Mr. Moses Reed who stood up for the light of true Holiness in this city! We are encouraged to continue on until the Lord blesses us with a temple and a membership in Arcola, Mississippi.

—Evangelist Josiephine Smith, Reporter



Bishop Daniel and Elder Josiephine Smith, Pioneers in Arcola, Ms.



THE CHIEF OVERSEER

Bishop Helen M. Lewis was born in Crystal River, Florida, April 25, 1905. She received the baptism of the Holy Ghost in November 1919 at Waycross, Georgia under the pastorship of Reverend Echols, (now Bishop Echols of the First Born Church). She was water baptized by Bishop Echols in the Spring of 1920.

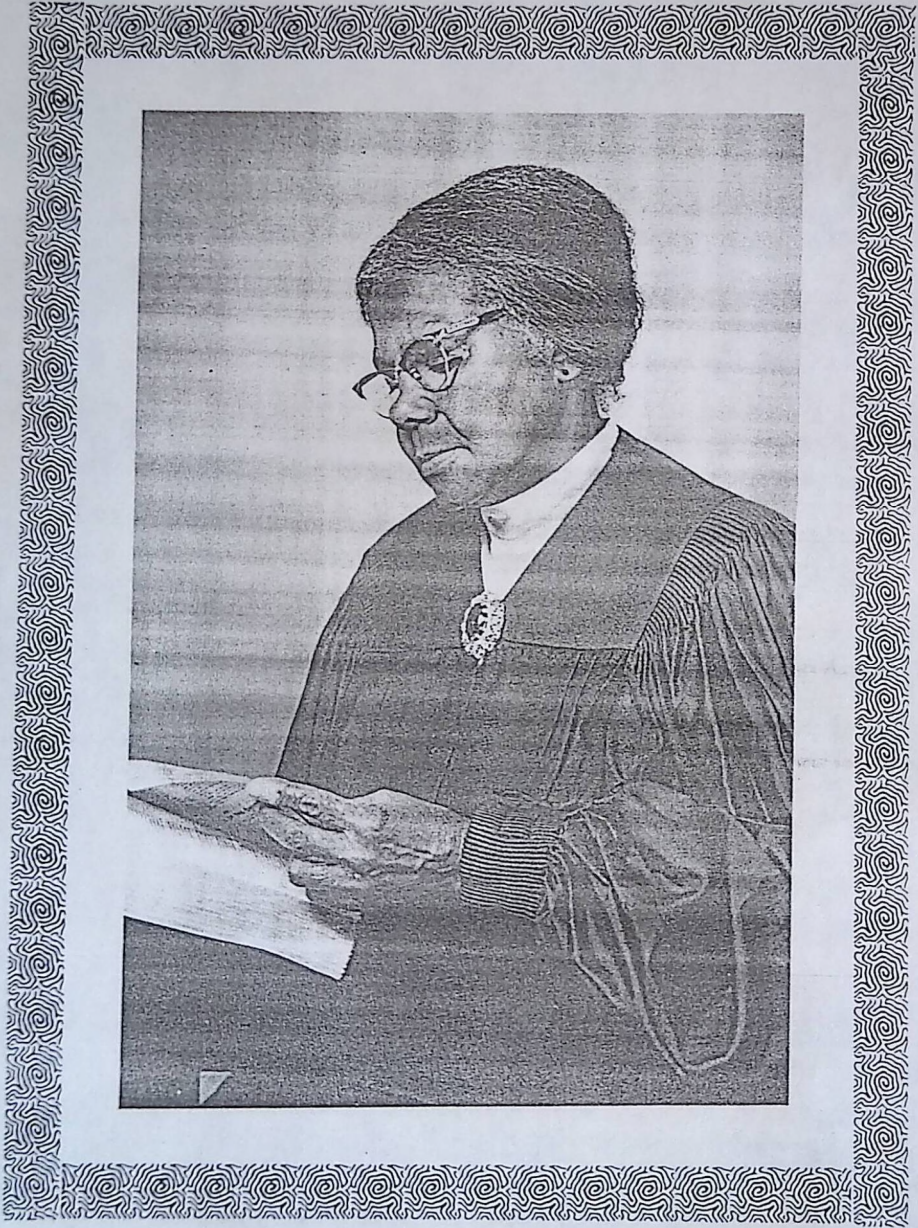
Bishop H.M. Lewis' mother, Rosa Hunter Middleton, passed away in June of 1918 at Waycross, Georgia leaving five children of which Bishop Lewis was the oldest. This placed the responsibility of rearing the smaller siblings on the elder child since their father, Luke Middleton, had to move from location to location in his line of work. Helen moved back to her mother's hometown of Crystal River, Florida in 1923 where she married her first husband,

Benjamin Matchett. They had one child to survive, Helen Rosa Matchett (now Ambassador Helen M. Rushing, Chicago, Illinois).

Bishop H.M. Lewis was instrumental in helping the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth to become established in Crystal River, Florida, where, prior to her coming to that city, It had not been known. When she returned to Crystal River, there was no Holiness Church at all located there. Soon after returning there in 1923, she learned that Bishop F.E. Lewis had held an Assembly in Ocala, Florida in which he appointed Elder L.L. Franklin and Elder M.E. Williams to come to Crystal River and set up the Church. When these two pioneers came to the city, they found Sister Matchett who was

the only Holiness person in the area. Upon meeting the saints on the first night, Sis. Matchett joined in with them and together they sought out a place to hold service which was an old frame house.

Bishop Lewis had already taught holiness to her aunt, Sister Marie McCoy, her grandfather, Isaac Hunter, and many others of her relatives who lived in Crystal River. But more, they believed in true Holiness by the example God demonstrated through her life. By the time the two pioneer ministers came to Crystal River to set up the first Holiness Church in the area, these relatives of Sister Matchett were fully ready to, and did, receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Many others were also saved and baptised
(Continued on page 58)



BISHOP H.M. LEWIS, CHIEF OVERSEER

PEOPLE'S AUXILIARY

from the Various States

THE THIRD TWENTY-FIVE YEARS



Jennifer Redding,
FL



Dorothy Ruth, IL



Christopher
Satchell, AL



James Satchell, AL



Rosemarie Satchell,
AL



Gary Scates, IL



Aaron Sherrod, IL



Andrew Sherrod, IL



Daphne Sherrod, IL



Latrease Sherrod,
IL



Marian Sherrod, IL



Nehemiah Sherrod,
IL



Raymond Sherrod,
IL



Rena Sherrod, IL



Tony Sherrod, IL



Oscar Sinclair, AL



Constance Smith,
IL



Corey Smith, IL



Dan Smith, Jr., IL



Nicole Smith, IL



Mark Smith, IL



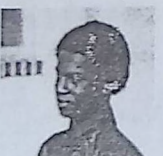
Phillip Smith, IL



Timothy Smith, IL



Torrence Smith, IL



Larry Snipe, AL



Easton Stanley, NJ



Cecelia Summers,
IL



Karen Taylor, FL



Carol Thompson, IL



Corliss Ward, IL



Beverly Ware, IL



Carla Warren, FL



Trieste Warren, FL



Kathy White, FL



Bernadette
Williams, FL



Dale Williams, FL



James Wilson, TN



Mary Wilson, TN



Nelson Winchester,
AL

THE RENASCENCE CHURCH

THE CHIEF OVERSEER

(Continued from page 54)

with the Holy Ghost during the great pentecostal revival held by Elders Franklin and Williams along with Sister Helen Matchett. Some time after the revival, Bishop W.L. Nelson was appointed to come to Crystal River to organize the Church and he also baptised the newly saved saints. Later, the new little band was able to purchase an old school house where services were continued for a number of years during which time the Church grew mightily and many souls were saved and added to the Church in Crystal River, Florida.

Bishop H.M. Lewis worked in many local positions in the Church. In February, 1928, she was called to the ministry and served as assistant pastor in Crystal River. She was later ordained and appointed to the pastorship at Daytona Beach, Florida where she served a very short term. During this time her husband passed. She was later appointed as presiding Elder of the West Coast district in Florida.

In 1930, she married Bishop F.E. Lewis. After serving in various other capacities, she was appointed to the bishopric. In 1932, she was ordained in Sanford, Florida by Bishop F.E. Lewis and Bishop B.L. McLeod. Later, she was appointed District Bishop in the States of Kentucky and Indiana.

After serving many years and through many hardships in the Church and by the side of Bishop F.E. Lewis, the Chief Overseer, in 1937, the General Assembly chose her to become the Assistant Chief Overseer to

Bishop F.E. Lewis. She was also appointed General Secretary-Treasurer to the Church in the Lewis Dominion.

Bishop Lewis and his wife moved to Nashville, Tennessee in 1931 where they lived until 1950. Bishop H.M. Lewis served as pastor of the Church in Nashville during this time. Growing out of the Church controversy in Nashville, Tennessee, the Lewis' moved to Ocala, Florida where, again, Bishop H.M. Lewis served as pastor for only a short while. After moving back to Nashville for a short while, the Lewis family then moved to West Palm Beach, Florida in 1952. In 1952, Bishop H.M. Lewis was appointed as pastor in West Palm Beach, Florida for a while and also as Presiding Bishop of a portion of the East Coast District.

Eight children which survived were born to Bishops F.E. and H.M. Lewis. Of a total of nine children (including Ambassador Rushing), five (Bishop Meharry Lewis; Elders Luke Lewis and Kiwanis Lewis-Satchell; and Ambassador-Reverends Helen Rushing and Gloria Lewis-Lockhart) are presently ministers in the Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.

Bishop H.M. Lewis was blessed to have lived in the home with the First Chief Overseer and Founder both in Nashville and in Dickson, Tennessee where she was taught many things concerning the Church by Mother Tate. After the death of the Founder, Bishop F.E. Lewis, her son, was ordained as one of three Dominion Overseers in 1931. For thirty-eight years, he

continued to drill his wife in the manner of the Church's faith and doctrine and the teachings which he had received from the Founder. Bishop H.M. Lewis was both fortunate and blessed to have been able to serve faithfully under these two Chief Overseers.

After the death of Bishop F.E. Lewis in 1968, the Supreme Executive Council of five Bishops and seven Elders, through the divine guidance of the Holy Ghost, selected and ordained Bishop H.M. Lewis as the Third Chief Overseer of the Church (second of the Lewis Dominion) in April 1969.

Bishop H.M. Lewis is currently doing many great works in the house of God, both spiritually and temporarily through her experiences with the deceased overseers and the direction of God through the guidance of the Holy Ghost. She is ever mindful to teach and to hold to the faith that was first delivered to the saints from the Bible and the deceased Revivors of this great Church. God continues to accomplish great works under her leadership as Chief Overseer. Souls have been added to the Church, old temples remodeled and new ones built, and organizational structures made sound and systematic. She does not fail to give full acknowledgement and due credit to the precious ground work laid by the Founders (Revivors) and other pioneers in the Church. And above all, she recognizes that God, through His Son Jesus, is the true Source of all blessings and successes of the Church. Without the loving prayers, obedience and willing cooperation of
(Continued on page 64)

D 293

mason, and steam boiler operator (canning industry); and in his spiritual profession in the vineyard of the Lord, seeking lost souls, evangelizing, and teaching the doctrine of *True Holiness and Sanctification* as espoused by his beloved Chief Overseer, Mary Lena Lewis Tate. "Mother Tate often came to Isabella, Pennsylvania and stayed in our home. The last time was in 1929," recalled Alice (Guilford, Parker) Jones, his daughter in 1988.¹⁰ Hezekiah Guilford moved to Pomona, New Jersey in 1930 where he resided on Lewisville Avenue. In New Jersey, he worked for the Pembroke Company.

A Snuggle that Worked!—Alice Guilford was just a bit of a girl during one of Mother Tate's several visits to Pennsylvania. During one of those visits Alice remembered having been assigned to a seat in the back of the car—right next to Mother Tate. She was excited about it, but her head was aching terribly. She knew better than to bother adults while they were talking, but the bothersome headache would not let her relax. She had heard of how Mother Tate would heal with just a touch of the hand. She reasoned within herself, "If I could just get close enough to her to lay my head against her arm or shoulder, maybe, just maybe..." As quietly as she could, Alice snuggled up close to the Founder until her head rested against Mother Tate. Miraculously, she recalled, the headache went away! Oh, what faith!¹¹

Early Church at Crystal River, Florida and the Ministry of Helen (Middleton, Matchett) Lewis, 1924.—In 1923, Helen Middleton moved from Waycross, Georgia back to Crystal River, Florida, her birthplace. There, she met and married Benjamin Matchett in 1923 and they became the parents of a daughter, Helen Rosa, in 1924. In 1924, Bishop F.E. Lewis (at that time the state bishop of the Florida diocese) in a State Assembly held at Ocala, Florida, appointed Elders L.L. Franklin and M.E. Williams (later to become bishops) to go to Crystal River. These obedient pioneers went to Crystal River and began seeking out souls who would be converted to the doctrine of *True Holiness and Sanctification*. Sister Helen (Middleton) Matchett was one of such souls who, early in her life (at the age of 14 years in 1919), had already received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and had been exposed to *True Holiness* in Waycross, Georgia. She was the only person in Crystal River at that time who knew anything about *True Holiness* and, upon the arrival of the pioneers of this church, was ready to join in with them in establishing a local church at Crystal River. Sister Helen Matchett had done a good job of converting many of her relatives to the religious tenets held by the Holiness faith. These included her grandparents Ellen and Isaac Hunter. This she had done through her own personal example and the example she insisted upon in her brothers (Raleigh, Van Roy, and Luke) and sister

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Mary Lena Lewis Tate: *VISION!*

(Lucille) who had been her charges since the death of her mother, Rosa Hunter Middleton, in June 1918. When the church planters arrived in 1924, these converts came into *True Holiness and Sanctification* and the *Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth* with readiness and determination. Helen Matchett was instrumental in helping to set up and to build the local church at Crystal River, Florida. Elder Sister Franklin served perhaps as the first pastor. The early Church held its services in a one-room frame structure in what was called the Ballard's Addition section of Crystal River. At a later date, Elder W.L. Nelson was sent to further organize and pastor the fledging little band. Several years subsequent to the church's establishment in Crystal River, an old school house was purchased from the School Board of Citrus County, Florida where the church continued holding its services. More souls were saved and added to the band. In 1928, Helen was called into the preaching ministry. Her husband, Ben Matchett died March 15, 1928. As the church grew, Mother M.L. Tate and the state bishop, Bishop F.E. Lewis, encouraged the local church band to build a more suitable structure. Under the state leadership of Elders W.L. Nelson, J.R. Lockley and Lewis Edwards; and the local leadership of R.W. McCoy, Julia Jacobs, J.H. Brooks, and Helen Matchett, the old school house was razed and a new temple constructed.¹²

1929 In 1930, Helen Matchett married Bishop Felix E. Lewis, the younger son of the Founder. Under the leadership of Bishop F.E. Lewis, Reverend Helen M. Lewis was ordained and appointed assistant pastor at Crystal River, and went on to serve as pastor at Crystal River, Daytona Beach, and West Palm Beach, Florida; and Nashville, Tennessee. Later, she held the office of presiding elder of the West and East coasts of Florida. She was appointed to membership on the momentous 1931 *Supreme Executive Council* of the church. After service in various other capacities, she was elevated to the bishopric at Sanford, Florida in 1932. Subsequent to her ordination, she was appointed district bishop in the States of Kentucky and Indiana. In 1937, she was appointed assistant chief overseer under Bishop F.E. Lewis, and served as general secretary, and treasurer of the church.

Death of Queen Esther (Street, Ware, Hopson) Edwards, July 1, 1924.—Bishop Edwards' life was a comparatively short, but tumultuous one. She and her family were intricately involved and instrumental in the early growth and development of the *Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth*. She was married to Blake Ware, William Hopson, and Emmett Edwards. During the *Period of Rapid Growth and Expansion* of the early church, Esther was responsible for establishing the church at Paducah and her influence expanded to include other geographic areas in the

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state including Orangeburg, Beaver Dam, and Bowling Green. Queen Esther was appointed by the church to preside in several states subsequent to her elevation to the eldership. All four of her sons would bear the yoke of the ministry as would sons of their generations to come. Born in Vanleer, Tennessee in 1877, the youngest of the Street-Hall offspring, Esther died in Paducah, Kentucky in 1924 just prior to her forty-seventh birthday.¹³ During her illustrious career, she attained to the bishopric and was appointed as prelate over the states of Kentucky and Mississippi. Bishop B.L. McLeod, one of the outstanding leaders in the church who succeeded her as bishop in the state of Mississippi (and who became one of the Triumvirs in 1931), preached her eulogy.

Mattie L. McLeod in Kentucky, 1924.—In 1924, the Founder appointed Elder Mattie Lou McLeod to do church work in the state of Kentucky. She, along with and through the staff of ministers and elders under Bishop B.L. McLeod, labored in the cities of Murray, Paducah, Beaver Dam, Morgan Town, and Owensboro to establish and solidify the church in these locations. Bishop McLeod's faithful and devoted wife, Elder Mattie Lou McLeod, worked right by her husband's side, both in the Gospel and in rearing their three children. Their works continued in Mississippi at Tupelo, Corinth, and Amory.

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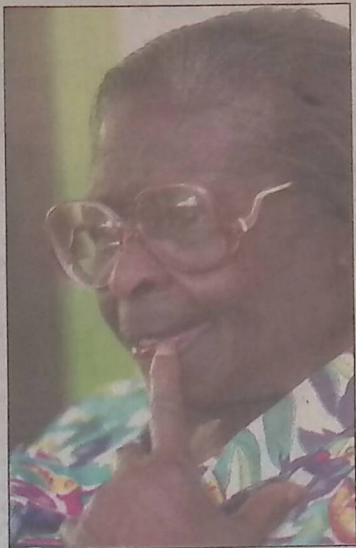
Property Acquisition in Calhoun County, Georgia, 1925.—The church acquired from Lillie Skipper, a ½ interest plot of land in Leary, Georgia. The land for a church was deeded to M.L. Tate, F.E. Lewis, and A.H. White, General Trustees for the *Church of the Living God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth.*¹⁴

Church Chartered in New York, 1926.—On October 27, 1926 petitioners George F. Giles and Mary F. Lewis, met in Albany New York (Albany County) in a meeting to seek status as a Domestic Not-for-Profit Corporation in the State of New York under the corporate name of *The House of God which Is the Church of the Living God the Pillar [sic] and Ground of the Truth.*¹⁵

MCCRAY, ANNIE

ccc 4-15-02

Woman a part of history



MATTHEW BECK/Chronicle

Annie McCray, a Crystal River native, reflects on decades of teaching in Citrus County.

Longtime teacher savors her retirement and memories

STEVE ARTHUR

sarthur@chronicleonline.com

Chronicle

Annie McCray sits on her covered porch on a lovely, sun-dappled April day among her luxuriant green plants, her languid multi-colored cats and several large cartons and boxes of books.

"I expect I have just about every magazine and book I ever read stored away; I'm a packrat. I can't throw anything away," she says.

She chuckles. "When I pass, they are going to have fun going through some of those old things."

Besides her cats, her indoor and outdoor plants, her books and her faith in the Lord, she savors and shares her memories; recollections that reach back to the early 1920s, a lifetime spent mostly in Crystal River.

Please see **HISTORY/Page 5A**

NORTON



Carmelite Society Of Prayer

This certifies that

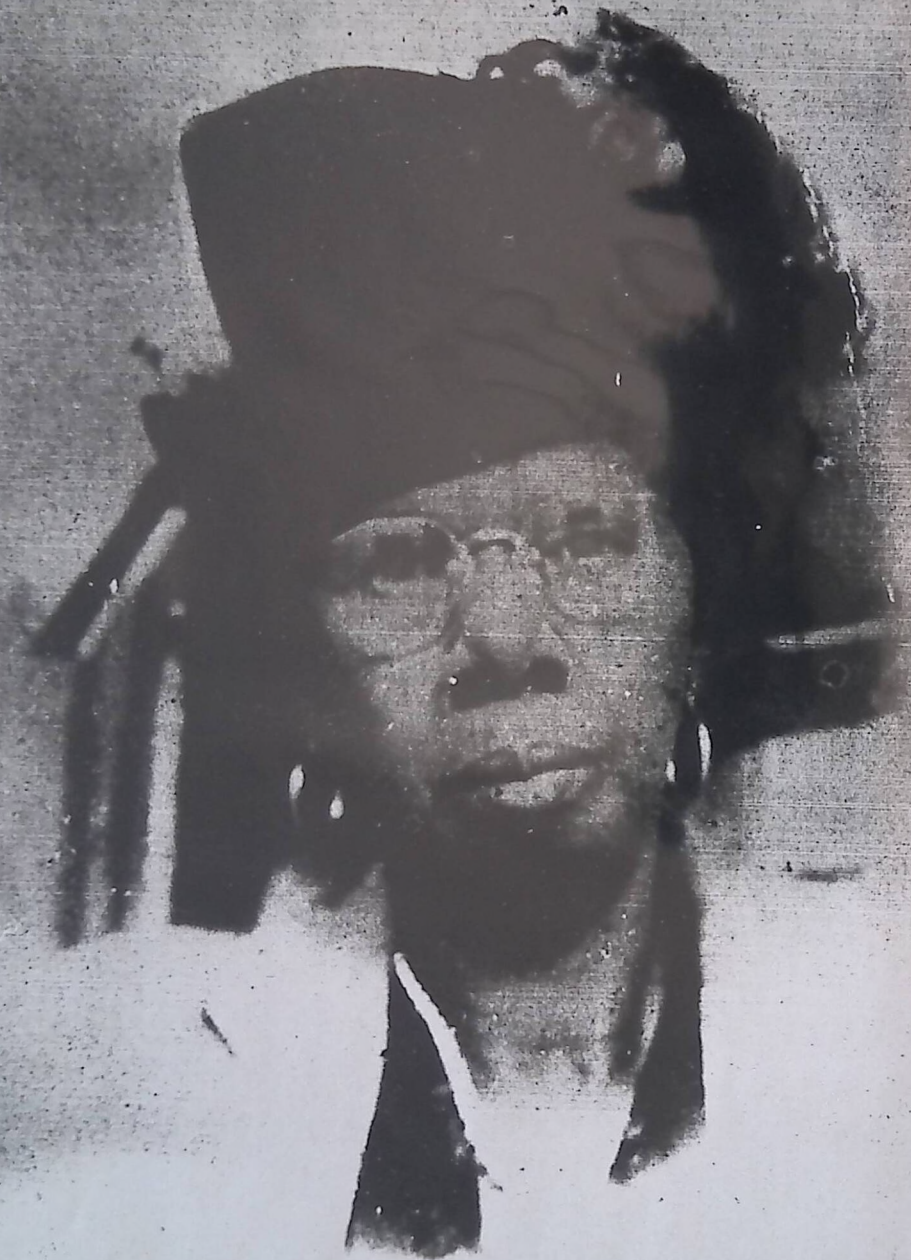
ARTHUR NORTON.

has been enrolled as a perpetual member in the
Carmelite Society of Prayer and as such will
share in the Prayers, Sacrifices and Good Works
of the Order throughout the world.

Requested by Mrs. Mrs. Frank Yueling Sr.

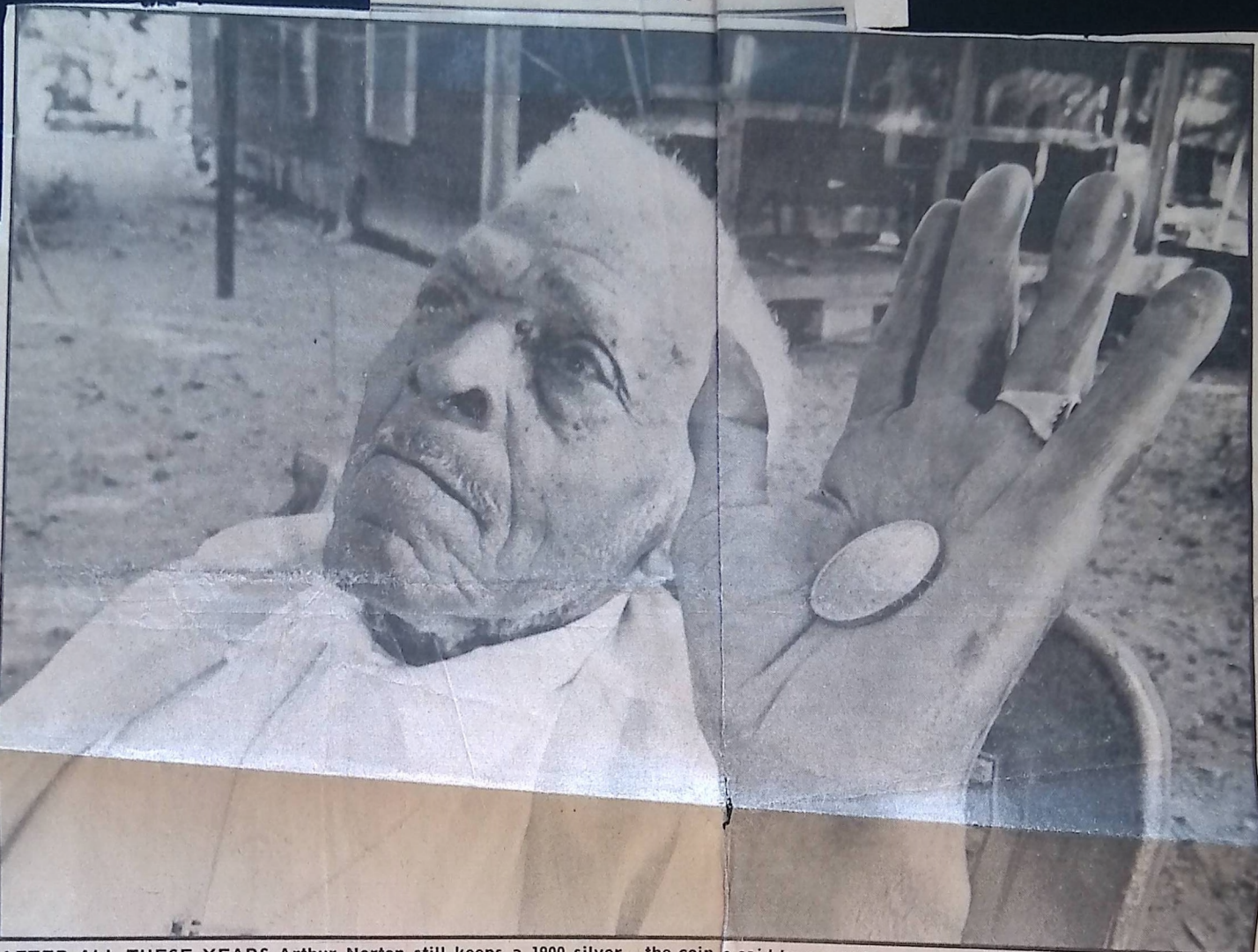
Date 3/28/66 Rev. Father Christopher





November 24, 1982

25 Cents



AFTER ALL THESE YEARS Arthur Norton still keeps a 1900 silver dollar in his wallet, one of the original two that he was paid with that year after working five days in a sawmill in Tallahassee. When he received

the coin he said he would keep it for the rest of his life. (Photo by Tim Hess)

OLD MAN NORTON

At 105 Floral City man is thankful for plenty

By NORM SWETMAN
Staff Writer

We found Arthur Norton dozing in a chair in his front yard under a live oak tree. We brought him pipe tobacco and his face lit up when he saw it.

He said he remembered us, (Tim Hess and me) from last year when we took his picture with the turkey he raised and was going to share with his family on Thanksgiving.

"You know I see the oldest livin' person in Citrus County? Let's see, I see a hundred-and-five years old this year.

Right now I see a hundred-five-and-a-half," he grinned scratching his pure white hair. Arthur's birthday is March 10th and he was born in 1874 near Tallahassee.

Arthur remembers all this — his mind is clear and sharp as he recites days, and dates, and times and calls up names and places out of the past.

"I remembers alright," he says. "Do you know, I left Tallahassee in 1900 and went to Live Oak and worked in Mr.

Tom, and Mr. R.L. Dowling's sawmill. I made me forty-cents a day for hauling slab away from the saws to the burnin' pile. I worked there a week and then I decided to come down here.

"Do you know how I got paid? Mr. Tom Dowling give me two silver dollars when I left. I said to myself, now that's the prettiest thing I ever did see and I'm gonna keep one of them."

Pulling out his wallet, he fished around in a compartment and came out with a bit of cloth. Unwrapping it he held it up triumphantly in his care worn fingers, a gleaming silver dollar, one of the first he ever earned.

"Hold it up," Tim said. "We've got to have a picture of that. Let me see the date...by golly, it says 1900."

Arthur smiled happily and posed with the coin. "That was two-and-a-half days work," he nodded. "I seen some mighty rough days but, I didn't spend that dollar. I said I was gonna keep it all my days.

"My wife said many times, 'Arthur

we need the dollar' but, I said we don't need it but enough yet." I told her, 'Honey, I love you, but don't touch my dollar.'"

Arthur shook his head saying he didn't raise any turkeys this year. "I don't know whose comin' this year. I know my oldest daughter, Anna Robertson comin'. Now, maybe my favorite daughter, Nellie Coleman is comin' down from Columbus, Georgia. Nellie is 71-year-old this year."

He paused for a moment while a huge diesel bus rumbled by on the highway. "You know, I got a sister livin' older'n me? Her name is Mary Laurels and she lives down in Melvin, Florida. She's one-hundred-and-seventeen-year-old. No, she ain't be comin', she don't travel much these days."

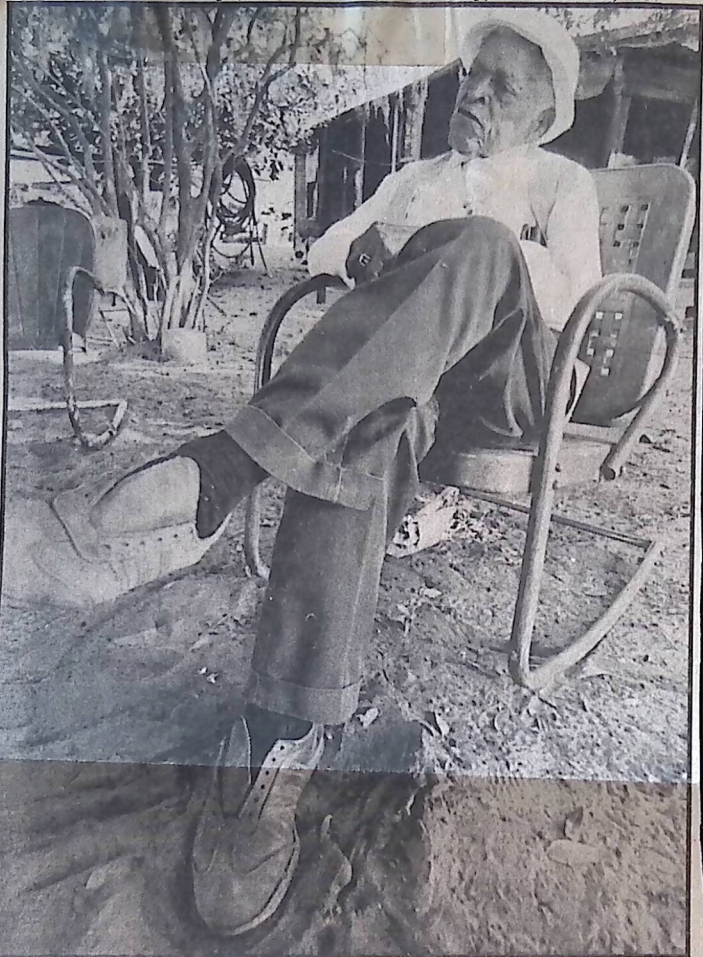
He said he passed the Mt. Carmel church on our right just before we got to his place. "I been there yest to the service and last night to the service," he said proudly. "I goes all the time. You know I helped

start that church, and I helped build that church ninety-years ago. All the folks what was with me then is all dead and gone. In all these years I'm not ashamed of the way I have lived. I helped folks — white, and black. When they was sick they said, 'send for Arthur' and I came. I bathed them and shaved them and gave them medicine and cleaned their beds and I prayed with them. The Lord sent me here for a purpose, you know."

Leading us around the house he got a container full of corn to take to his white rock chickens. "I got no turkeys but I got over a hundred head of these chickens," he threw out a handful of corn and they scrambled with squawks and flapping wings.

"I made me a dollar a day when I first came here, workin' in the phosphate mine. I come home at night and my wife held the lamp while I pounded nails in the boards to build us a house."

Please see Norton, back page



HIS FAVORITE SNOOZIN' CHAIR— For many years Arthur Norton has sat outside his house on U.S. 41 in Floral City. Any passerby in the afternoon could find him there almost any day, relaxing. And there he will remain for as many years as he lives. With a man like Arthur Norton, that may be quite a few. (Photo by Tim Hess)

Norton

Continued from page one

Withered and old, silvered by summers' heat and winters' cold of 80 seasons the house still contains many of the original boards and nails that Arthur pounded there by lamplight. He is proud of it — proud he will have something to leave to his children.

"What have I got to be thankful for this year?", he looked at his chickens, his house, the two playful puppies at his feet and thought about it.

"I give thanks for the life I have lived. Nobody can give me bad names. God put me here for a purpose.

"My prayer is this — Thank you, Lord for sending that angel to watch over me while I slumbered and slept last night. Thank you, Lord for that angel that came this morning to watch over me this day whilst I travel this tedious journey. Thank you, Lord for all my blessings."

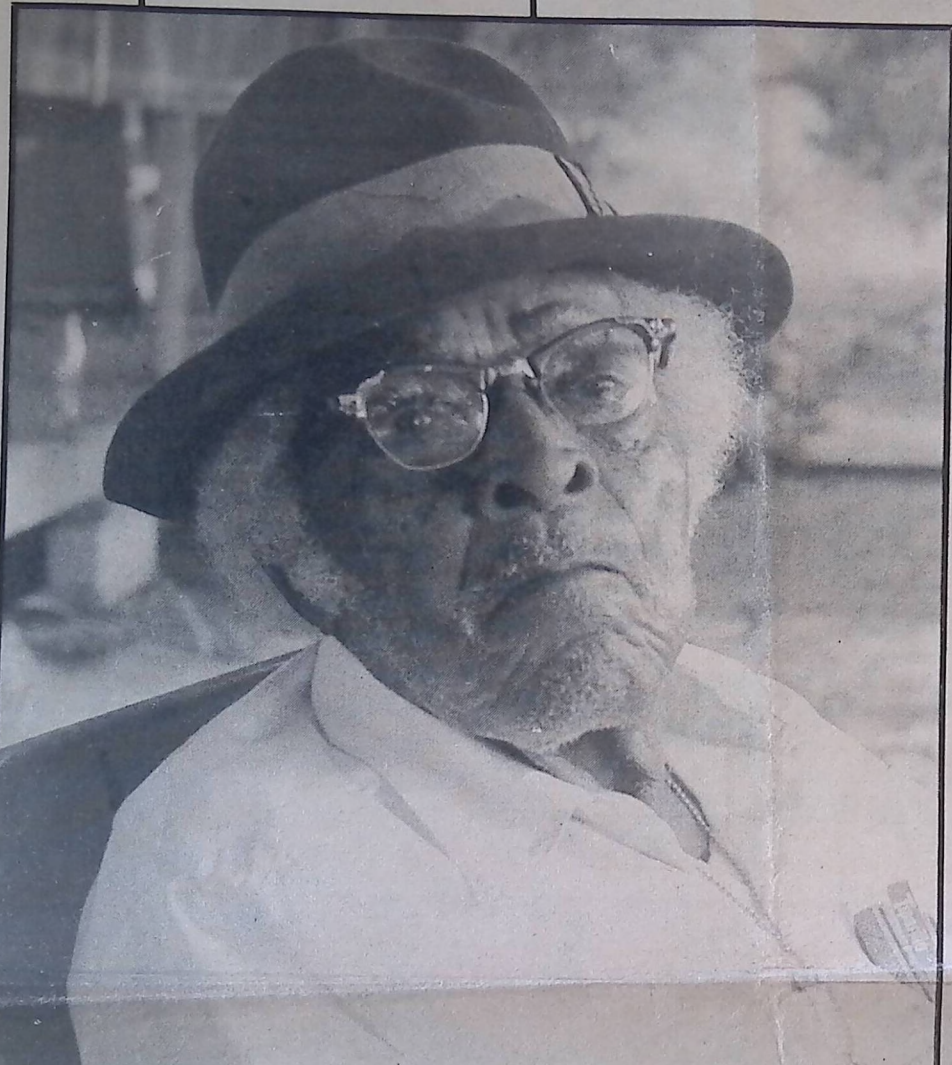
He came to the yard, waved us off and made his way back to the chair under the oak tree where he watches traffic hurrying by. He will doze sometimes, calling up scenes and places from the past, remembering — this oldest and beloved citizen of Citrus County who owes no man.

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 Anna Robinson, 73 who makes her home in Floral City.

Chronicle February 12, 1986

Arthur Norton was born 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. 42 runs through Floral City. The Nortons had nine 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 is presently Dr. Osterhout's patient. 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.



killed.

John Henry Williams' brother, Buddy, Beatrice Lennon's brother, Willy Lee, and James Campbell. It was bad times then.

Dying in the pits was not the only danger.

Another was in rural Floral City where you couldn't walk the roads because of the panthers, bears and wolves. Packs of wolves, sometimes 10 to 15 strong, roamed the woods. Norton remembered, "I killed panthers nine feet long. I had seven hounds in my pack. My dogs would run a panther all night. This was wild country."

Many of the mines were locally owned except for the Mutual Mine out of Savannah.

In 1917, the United States entered World War I. Never again did phosphate reign as the major industry in Citrus County. Germany and France had been good customers for phosphate.

Most of the mines were west of State Road 41. The Old Ten Cent Mine was behind the Pleasant Grove Baptist Church. The Bradley Mine was on the Rooks settlement. The Camp people's graveyard is in the Zan Mar Development, though nothing is left but memories now.

Most of those present for the reunion were born in the days after the phosphate boom. They remember Floral City a little larger than today, nestled in anonymity. During the pre-World War II era there were 7,000 people in Floral City. Eighty percent were black. Most graduated from Booker T. High School, now known as Floral City Primary School. Graduating classes consisted of about 15 or 20 students. Parents were strict. Parties were supervised. The stories of the mines had started to float into the mists of the past. Very little is remembered by the third generation except the hard work and low pay.

"They were hard times but also good times. Families were close," spoke Beatrice Lennon wistfully as she remembered her girlhood.

But that was yesterday, and yesterday is gone. Like the mines.

See related story, page 22

Arthur Norton Dies; Citrus' oldest at 109

By NORM SWETMAN
Staff Writer

Death took Arthur Norton in the early hours of Monday morning.

Born March 4, 1877 the son of former slaves nearly 109 years ago in Jefferson County, Arthur made his way to Floral City more than 80 years ago. He and his late wife, Clementine, cleared land and built their house next to a wagon trail that would one day become U.S. 41 through Floral City.

In the last several years Arthur had become one of the treasures of Citrus County. With deep, abiding faith he offered up a blessing for every Thanksgiving table in the county each November.

"I am thankful the good Lord has let me live so long," he said, "I thank Him for the good life I've had and the chance to serve my neighbors, I am thankful for them and ask them to share in the hundreds and hundreds of blessings that I've had."

As part of his blessings Arthur counted the times he had served his neighbors by taking care of them— nursing them when they were sick. "It didn't make any difference whether they were white or black, I took care of them."

He cooked for them, bathed them, gave them their medicine if he could find a doctor to come to the house. Several times he journeyed to Ocala or Brooksville in search of medical help if he felt his neighbors were seriously ill.

He grew his own vegetables and hunted deer, quail and squirrel and fished so his and Clemmy's nine children would have plenty of food on the table.

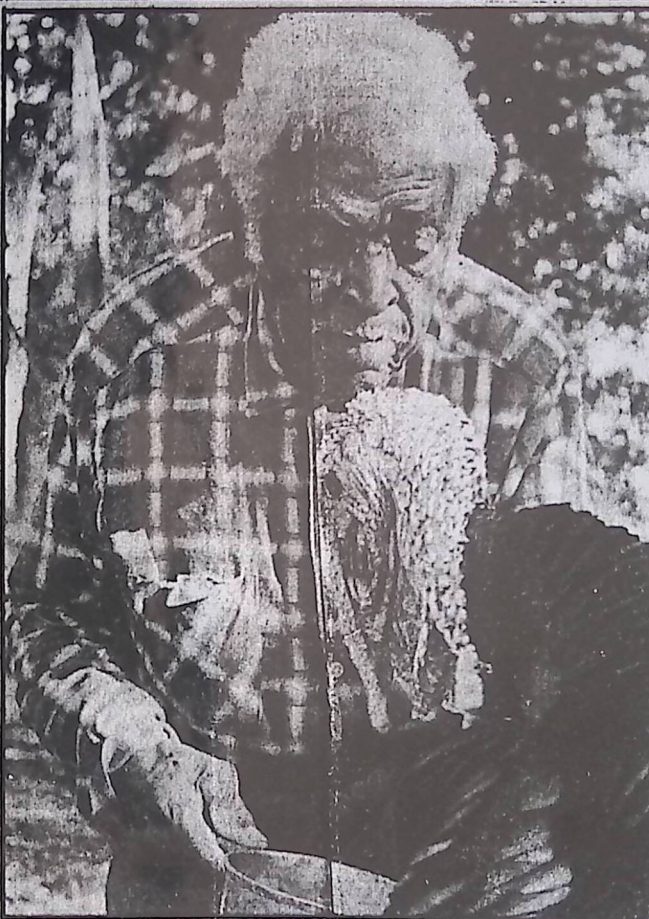
Several years ago if you stopped by to visit you would find Arthur in back of his house working in his garden and where he raised chickens, pigs, ducks and sometimes turkeys. In the last two years he got rid of his livestock and fowl, became philosophical and wore his Sunday clothes around his house.

"I wear them every day now," he said solemnly. "My life is like the Bible. It started with Genesis and I lived all my years through the Books and now I've come to Revelations. Do you understand what I'm saying?"

He reminisced as he stroked a yellow and white kitten in his lap. "They are all gone now. All gone—all my friends and playmates. All gone."

Last year Arthur was saddened by the passing of his sister, Mary Lawrence, 110 years old, in Melbourne, Florida. On top of that the doctors had to take off part of his leg and he was confined for most of his days in a wheelchair.

Sitting in his daughter's yard next to his own place last Thanksgiving he ignored the passing, rumbling traffic as he told the Chronicle, "I was made from the dust of the earth and I Please see Norton, back page



ARTHUR NORTON, 1877-1986, beloved centeharian of Citrus County passed away late Sunday night. He would have celebrated his 109th birthday on March 4. Arthur was a resident of Citrus County for more than 80 years.

Norton

Continued from page one

prayed and God told me, 'You are God's glory— take nothing for your journey you will find your blessings in heaven.'

God-speed, Arthur, may you never be lonely for old playmates and friends again— may you find all your blessings in heaven. We, who have known you, will miss you.

Anna Robinson, Arthur Norton's daughter, announced Tuesday that funeral services will be held at the Citrus County Fairgrounds at 2

p.m. on Sunday. All friends and acquaintances are invited to attend. Arthur Norton was a founding

member of the Mt. Carmel Methodist Church and he will be buried in Floral City.

Citrus County (FL) Chronicle, Wednesday, February 12, 1986

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF CITRUS COUNTY, FLORIDA, RECOGNIZING THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF ARTHUR NORTON AS A COMMUNITY LEADER IN CITRUS COUNTY.

WHEREAS, Arthur Norton was born in Tallahassee, Florida, on March 10, 1877 and moved to Floral City in Citrus County, Florida, in the year 1900, and

WHEREAS, Arthur Norton married his wife, Clemmie, in Gainesville, Florida, in 1906 and the two, over the years, had nine children - four girls and five boys - of which two are still living; 21 grandchildren and 45 great grandchildren, and

WHEREAS, Arthur Norton joined Mt. Carmel Methodist Church in Floral City in the year 1900, and has served as Class Leader, Steward and Trustee of said Church since that day, and

WHEREAS, Arthur Norton has earned a living throughout his many years by working in phosphate mines, and

WHEREAS, Arthur Norton has two living sisters; Nellie age 93 and Mary age 121, and

WHEREAS, Arthur Norton has been active in the Floral City Community all of his adult life, and has aided the Community by visiting the sick and helping others in any possible way, and

WHEREAS, Arthur Norton has been a member of the Heriones, Masons and Knights of Columbus, and

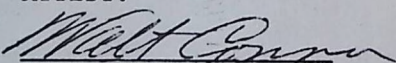
WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners wishes to recognize Arthur Norton for his many years of Community leadership;

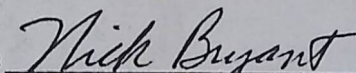
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of County Commissioners of Citrus County, Florida, in regular meeting this 12th day of March, 1985, as follows:

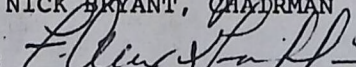
1. The Board does hereby proclaim March 12th, 1985 as Arthur Norton Day in Citrus County, Florida, and urges all of the citizens of Citrus County to join with the Board in recognizing the accomplishments of Arthur Norton as a leader in our Community.

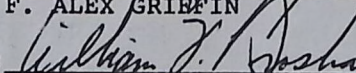
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF CITRUS COUNTY, FLORIDA

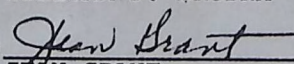
ATTEST:

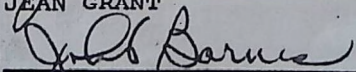

WALT CONNORS, CLERK

BY: 
NICK BRYANT, CHAIRMAN

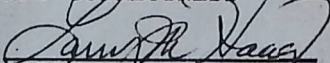
BY: 
F. ALEX GRIFFIN

BY: 
WILLIAM F. BROSKA

BY: 
JEAN GRANT

BY: 
JOHN T. BARNES

APPROVED AS TO FORM
AND CORRECTNESS


LARRY M. HAAG
COUNTY ATTORNEY

Friends, family recall Norton's special qualities

Chronicle Staff Report

A loud commotion among the hens in the backyard woke Anna Norton early on Monday morning. As she went outside to find out what was causing the noise, she suddenly knew that her father, Arthur Norton, had passed away.

"That rooster was up on top of the roof just crowing away," she said as she looked out the window of her mobile home late Monday morning. "I went outside to see what was the matter. Then I remembered that Daddy told me never to go out and see what was stirring up the chickens when it was real early. He said: 'You might see something you don't want to see. It's spirits that

stir them up.' Right then I knew that it was Daddy's spirit out there, and that he'd passed away. I turned around and went right back inside."

Almost as soon as she got inside, the phone rang. It was a doctor at Citrus Memorial Hospital calling to tell her that her father had died just after midnight.

On March 4, Arthur Norton would have been 109 years old. He was much-celebrated as Citrus County's oldest resident — but the family and friends who gathered at Anna's home on Monday remembered him much more for all of the kindness and love he'd shared with people over

the years.

"He just loved the children," Anna remembered. "He loved to go to church. He'd walk from here all the way to Hernando or Dunnellon, almost anywhere, to go to church.

"From the time I got big enough," Anna continued, "he'd carry me to church with him. Momma would stay at home early and cook, and then go to church later. And anytime somebody took sick, he'd go see them and sit up with them all night. And if they died, he'd be right there to close their eyes."

Sundays and holidays were big days for Arthur,
Please see friends, back page

Friends

Continued from page one

and for all of his friends in Floral City. Anna recalled many times when her father slaughtered and butchered some of his livestock for church cook-outs and holiday feasts.

"He'd get hogs and chickens and cows and Daddy would cook all night," she said. "Then everybody would sit outside the church on a Sunday and eat. We'd mix up a big barrel of lemonade. There were cakes and pies and all kinds of good eating.

"Christmas was always real nice," Anna remembered. "We always had plenty. Not plenty of money, but plenty to eat. All the children used to come to our house

'cause we had plenty."

Ruben Randolph, like many longtime Floral City residents, had a lot of fond memories of Arthur.

"Arthur raised me up from when I was boy," Ruben said. "He lived out by the mine back then, and I lived in town, but I'd go out every day to see him. There used to be nothing but woods all around here, and he'd take me hunting with him. We'd come back with all sorts of 'coon and 'possum."

Arthur's passing came as no real surprise to Anna. He had been in and out of the hospital for over a year, and when Anna took him to Citrus Memorial last week, she suspected that it might be his last trip.

"He'd been real sick," she stated.

"Since Momma died in 1952 I'd been taking care of him, and that was the sickest I'd ever seen him. But ever since he lost his leg he'd just been real tired and waiting to leave here. He wouldn't eat anything and he just kept getting weaker and weaker. He knew his time here was over."

Demus Houston, pastor of the Mount Carmel Methodist Church, where Norton attended, said he was saddened by the loss.

"We really lost a good friend," Houston said. "I've known him over 30 years, and his life was an inspiration to me.

"He was a faithful man, who was always willing to help others," Houston said.

Citrus County Commissioner Jean Grant, who represents the Floral

City area, said that Norton's life was an inspiration for all who are striving to achieve.

"He kept the attitude that you can achieve what you desire if you don't give up. He inspired people to try when they may have otherwise decided to give up," Grant said.

"He had a marvellous sense of humor and he retained the wonderful ability to laugh at himself."

"You know," Grant added, "he was a deeply religious man who lived out the strength of his convictions."

"He's going to be missed, by white people as well as black people," she said.

"I think that if he had ever touched your life, you would have known his presence, what a wonderful man he was!"

CHRONICLE 2/12/86

"All the growth here has been outside of the actual city," said Zellner "The actual town has not changed much at all. In fact it probably doesn't look much more different today than it did 50 years ago," he added.

Zellner's great uncle, H.W. Zellner, Sr., settled in Floral City after the Civil War around 1888.

History books show that H.W. Zellner was commended in the early years for his service to the church and for his efforts in helping religion establish itself in the area.

"I guess the biggest change that the area has seen over the years is the amount of people living around Floral City. The outlining areas of the town have grown substantially," Zellner said.

Many of the historically rich tales of Citrus' past are chronicled in "Back Home", a historical retrospective by Hampton Dunn. The author, born and raised in Citrus County, is currently an executive with the Peninsula Motor Club (AAA) in Tampa.

The phosphate industry, according to "Back Home," was booming at the turn of the century in Floral City and throughout Citrus County. Shortly after Citrus established itself in 1887, rich phosphate deposits were discovered throughout the region and gave birth to a thriving industry.

Floral City's suitability for citrus growth was also realized during this period. Some of the orange trees planted in the area immediately following the end of the Civil War are still bearing fruit today.

As Citrus County and Floral City broke into the 1900s, the area's natural appeal and domain for hunting and outdoor sports caught the public's eye.

Today, many of the county's oldtimers burst with stories about panthers, wild hogs and bobcats freely roaming the countryside as recently as 10 years ago.

"I still hear stories today from farmers about bobcats still living around here," said Marge Simmer.

Arthur Norton, Floral City's 106-year-old resident, said panthers paraded the backwoods freely in the early 1900s. Norton lives on U.S. 41, just south of the junction of 41 and C.R. 48. He said phosphate was the main activity at the turn of the century.

With hunting dogs and turkeys around him, Norton is a stunning visual reminder of Floral City's past, holding firm to his religious beliefs and a respect for the environment he knows so well.

As recently as 1980, some of that respect for the environment was evident when developers proposed high density development of a northeast section of the area.

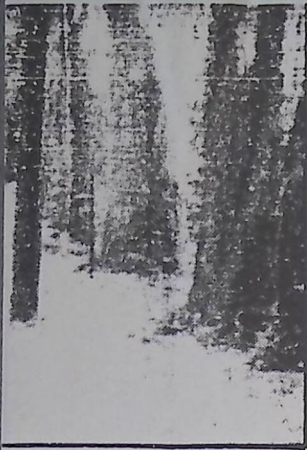
A majority of the residents were appalled by the proposal, fearing that the "country feel" that has characterized Floral City over the years might be endangered by the threat of the proposal.

Beyond the legal complexities of the battle to keep growth at controlled levels, many of the principle opponents of the proposed high density development said they were solely interested in protecting the environment they have come to accept as home.

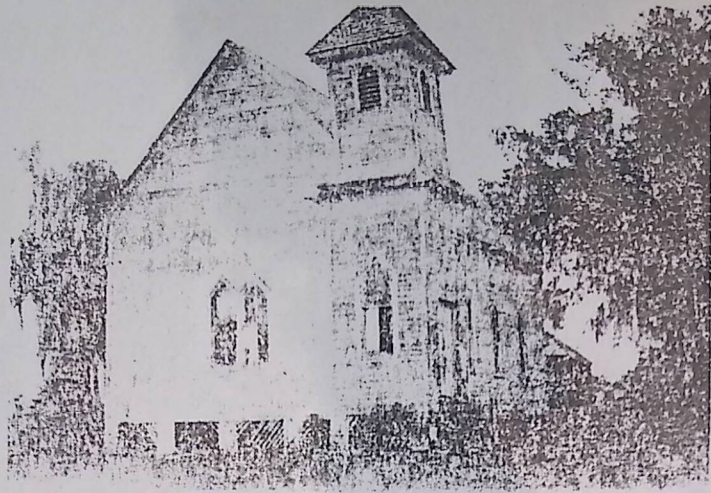
"As a place to live, it's tough to beat the area," said Zellner in confirmation of the belief that Floral City dwellers want to retain the country feeling their community affords.

Paul Henlic, a new resident to Floral City, agrees.

"I think it's terrific that Floral City can look back on 100 years of existence and still say that many of the things that made it a great community in the past are still around today," he said.



**Text by Derek Osenenko
Photos by Tim Hess**



The Old And The New

Above is the old Mt. Carmel Methodist Church in Floral City recently demolished to make way for the new structure below. The original church was built in 1903 when Floral City was a prospering phosphate mining community. The new structure was made possible by donations from many local residents.

-Staff Photos by Jim Twitty

Trail

Arthur Norton

Black History Month

Pages of his life as told by his friend H.L. "Eddie" Ed

Working

Continued from page 1D
 can't go up. I raised nine head of children and I never slept once in a jail house. I took the teachin' my mother give me over ninety years ago. That's what I'm living by today. She told me, "You do like mama tells you. When you get mad with a man, don't run to get a gun to kill him. Give him one side of the road and you take the other. When my bones are bleaching in the grave you'll be a man who can talk with people."

People who have spit in my face when I have done them good have come to be my footstool. I can go to the graveyard and walk upon their graves.

I want you to be particular how you live, and thank your God to be here.

My God has moved his hand

FORWARD: Those who knew Arthur Norton need no introduction. Those who did not missed a rare privilege. He told me his father was an Indian and his mother the daughter of a slave. He lived to be almost 107. The following stories were taped by me and transcribed with no changes except to title them. Following are a few words you may need explained: beasties - animals, fell out - faint, locker - stable, bowed to - nooded to, push himself with a stick - walk with a cane. Arthur Norton's philosophy on life seems to be best summed up by his statement, "When I wants to find out anything about something, I always sees Jesus about it."

MY GOD HAS MOVED HIS HAND

I want to remind you of something I seen in 1886, when the world went into darkness. On April 4 there was an earthquake in this country. It reached from Charleston, South Carolina to Georgia and Florida.

That evening about six o'clock my father was comin' out the fields, leading his mule; and when he got to the well to water his mule, his mule fell down on his knees, and started to bellow. All the cows in the pen was on their knees bellowing, and the world was shaking. The water in the well was flashing, just like you flash water in a bucket, from side to side. It got dark. Chickens went on the roost. Three days, and never got off the roost. Not a rooster would crow, and the cows, the sheeps, the goats, the mules and all the beasties, was on their knees, askin' God for mercy.

My mother and my father was living



Inverness and its sheriffs

I just want to give you a reckoning of Inverness, many long years ago. I can say I got somethin' to thank God for today. What I have seen in Inverness, when I came here seventy-seven years ago.

There was two little stores in Inverness and four here at Floral City. There has been many a high sheriff in Inverness since I came here. Old man Priest, old man Coleman, Allen, and there was a lot of old men in that office; and they didn't have no thoughts about a man. Didn't care no more about a man's life than a dog's.

I seen old man Allen walk right in the colored quarters down there and shoot a man down, just like he would a dog; then tell the people to, "Watch him, Don't let the hogs eat him, I'll bring someone around to move the son-of-a-bitch." Didn't care nothin' about a man.

Old Will Coleman came right here to Floral City, right here in this county, to arrest a man I knew good. Joe Thompson. Called him to the door. Say, "Joe." Joe say, "Yes, Suh?" When he came to the door Will Coleman shot him right down. I had to get a man to help me lay him out. Didn't know what Joe done. Just an innocent man.

We have got now the best high sheriff ever been in the county. I'm tellin' you what I know and I'm tellin' you what I seen. I never heard about him shootin' a man since he been in office. I worked for his pappa before he was born. Quinn. I must tell you this about him. Quinn is the best high sheriff ever been in the county.

clothes hanging on the old joists, and she had some and they was waving, and she went to the door and called my father and asked him "What's the matter?" He said, "The world's going into darkness, my mule's on his knees bellowing, and the cows in the pen on their knees bellowing, and I don't know what's the matter. MY GOD HAS MOVED HIS HAND."

Oh, it was a sight, and the creeks, and the rivers, all goin' west, turned around and went back east. Three days. No man was able to build no fire to cook nothin'. All the old people was on their knees praying, asking God for mercy. Wonderful sight. And when the light come, the people got up off their knees thanking God that He had spared them another day. Wonderful sight. Three days. No light at all. Wonderful.

I tell the people what I have seen that they'll never see. You know how long that been? Ninety-three years. Ninety-three years ago. That was the sight I saw in this world.



ARTHUR NORTON for many years was Citrus County's oldest resident. He lived on U.S. 41 in Floral City for many years and passers-by would often stop to hear his stories. This photograph of him fattening up a turkey for Thanksgiving was taken in 1981. (Photo by Tim Hess)

Old man Priest was high sheriff many long years ago. Didn't mind shootin' a man more than a dog. Old man Allen, old man Carter, had no sympathy for a man. Will Coleman, no sympathy for a man. I ain't talkin' 'bout these late ones. I'm talkin' 'bout them way back there years ago. I knowed them. Had no sympathy at all.

I thank God today that I'm still yet alive. I've walked through Inverness scared that I was goin' to be shot down for doin' nothin', just like a dog, like a beast; but I thank God to have spared me to have seen it all.

I have seen some nasty things in Inverness, some nasty things.

I want to tell you I'm hopin' that the high sheriff we got in there today will stay in that office 'til he has to push himself with a stick. I don't know nothin' about him but a good man. I hope he'll stay there long as God keeps being in him.

Yes, I have seen some nasty things in Inverness, some nasty things.

In 1902, when I was a young man, I was working in High Springs in the railroad shop. After I worked there a couple months I quit the shop and got a job where they was puttin' down a piece of hard road from the depot up town in High Springs, one mile; and in those days they was hauling rock with wagons and dumping it on the road.

There was two men who had pestles to beat down the rock, and a man was boss man by the name of Bill Lynn.

Bill Lynn was a big stout man, a white man, and he had killed one of the Richards, who stayed in a place east of High Springs called the Oakwoods. The Richards were a family of people who if anyone bothered any of them they would kill him, and old man Bill Lynn had killed one of the brothers.

Bill Lynn came out that morning, where we was working on the road, and he had a handful of 38 cartridges, throwing them from hand to hand. He had his 38 pistol in his pocket and he say to us, "Them old Richards are so bad I killed one of them, and I'll kill me another one." He was the only white man out

The killing of Bill Lynn

there; but there was a lot of us colored men, 'about 18 of us, beating down the rock in the road.

That evening about three o'clock we looked up and saw two colored women with bonnets on. They had a big black horse hitched to a buggy; comin' down the road, the horse just barely trottin', comin' slowly. They both had homespun aprons on; and the one on the right hand side, nearest old Bill Lynn, had a double barreled shotgun under that apron, and the other one was driving the horse.

They drove the horse slow, just coming along. When they got even with old man Bill Lynn, the one drivin' the horse just tightened up on the reins and the horse stopped. Just as the horse stopped, the other one lifted her apron, throwed that dou-

ble barreled gun in old man Bill Lynn's face and said, "God damn you, stand to the music. We're going to play for you, so you can dance."

She shot him from his belt to his eyes, 32 buckshot she put in him, both barrels. When that gun fired that horse acted like it had never been hitched up.

All us colored men run to High Springs, and went to the stores. Old man Shehee and old man Grady wanted to know what was wrong. We told them some people come and killed old man Bill Lynn, and we didn't know who they were.

Then the white people all gathered up, and set out to catch them. When they got to a spot we called the old Vaun place they were met by about fifty or sixty colored men with guns telling them don't come no further; and they drove them back into High Springs shootin' so it sounded like a war.

This happened in 1902. It was a terrible evening. There was old Bill Lynn, makin' his brags about killin' one and would kill another; and then the women came. It was all over.

The man in the blue serge suit

I went huntin' one night about 65 years ago. I had seven dogs, Frolic, Bell, Queen, Spot, Rena; what my other dogs' names? Anyhow, every night when I get on that range to hunt, a certain place I would go, an old house, and my dogs would jump sumpin' before I get to that old house, and they would run that thing. I would think it was a fox or a coon, and I would just listen to my hounds run it.

They was a great large oak tree was there, when I got there, and my dogs treed. There was a magnolia tree about seven or eight feet from the oak tree, and the magnolia tree was on the south side of the oak, and my dogs treed that thing. I hunted and I hunted with my flashlight. I couldn't find it. I started to climb the tree to see if I could see the thing, when my mind told me, "Don't climb it." I called my dogs off. Said "Let's

go." Carried my dogs on off. Went on a huntin' another place. Caught some coon and possum. Went home.

Two or three nights after that I went huntin' again, out on the same range. My lead dog jumped something and runned it and I said, "Oh, that must be a fox or a deer one. They runned it and they runned it, and the whole pack was together. They treed the same place and I went there and I said, "Well, my dogs treed here, this makes now the second time. I'm going to see what it is tonight."

I went and I gathered me up some wood and I built me up a fire, right there to the tree and I say, "I'm goin' to stay here until the morning and if that's a coon, and he's gone in a hole, I'll get him." I built my fire and I set there and it was cold. Big frost.

Please see *Treasure*, page 6D

18-years-old, working for Henry Walker

I'm going to tell you about some hard days I seen, many long years ago; when I was a boy about 18 years old.

I worked for a man whose name was Henry Walker. He was a depot agent on the Seaboard Road. Worked for him from the first day of January until the last day of June. Six long months. Six dollars a month. I want to tell you I'm glad to be here today, to tell you about it.

This man had two mules, Heda and Lula. I go out in the morning and hitch Lula to the plow and plow until twelve o'clock. When he blow his horn I go to the house. His wife would give me some corn bread and some syrup and bacon for my dinner. I go back and hitch Heda to the plow and plow until dark.

This man give me six dollars a month. Didn't want me so much as come to his

front door. I'm tellin' you about the dark days I've seen. Didn't want me to come to his front door. From the kitchen door back to the lot with the horses, the dogs, and the chickens. When night come I had to lay down to sleep in the cotton house with weevils and rats. A dogs life.

I can say thank God today I'm still yet here. I had high hills to climb, deep water to wade; but putting God in front of me I'm here today.

That man was living in Mann County, Tal-lahassee. He's been gone many long years; him, wife, and children. I've went back to ask about them. Oh, that family been dead many long years; but I'm still here yet.

I want to tell you to be particular how you live. You never get so high until you can't come down. You never get so low where you

Please see *Working*, page 6D



ARTHUR AND ANNA, father and daughter, comfort each other after Arthur's leg amputation. Arthur Norton, 107-years-old come March 10th, is convalescing at the Inverness Health Center. "I look forward to hearing from all my friends," he said. Anna Robinson, 73, one of two living

daughters who lives near his home in Floral City, reports she has been getting a lot of phone calls at home as people hear of her father's operation and inquire about his health. "I'm doing just fine—just fine," Arthur smiles, "I'm wantin' to go home as soon as I can." (Photo by Jim Stem)

Norton

Continued from page one

Tillie's house and the court gave so much money each month to raise that child. I used to stop by sometimes and when she got bigger she would come runnin' across the yard to hug me.

"She grew up and married and she's got a family of her own now. A fine lady. Who could be that mean to put her in that log and leave her for wild animals to kill? That dream told me to go there. It was the Lord talkin' to me."

Carefully unwrapping a piece of chocolate he slips it into his mouth and tastes it with great enjoyment. His face grows thoughtful again. "I saw many mean things to cry about. I once saw a black man standin' on the banks of the Suwannee tryin' to catch a fish. A white man come by and hit him hard on the head and

pushed him in the water. He drowned. I cried about that."

His face brightens again. "Do you know Dr. Osterhout? I remember when he was born. I used to pick him up and play with him and make him laugh. He's my doctor now."

There's a lot of memories that can crowd the corridors of your mind down 107 years. In the endless hours in bed Arthur calls them up— some come unbidden, the happy ones and the sad ones.

The fact is, Arthur is lonely. If you could stop by for a moment and say, "Hi!" or send him a card to wish him well it would brighten the long hours of his day.

Send the cards to, Arthur Norton, c/o Inverness Health Care Center, 304 South Citrus Ave., Inverness, Fla., 32650.



Photo by JEFF CAMP

107 years old

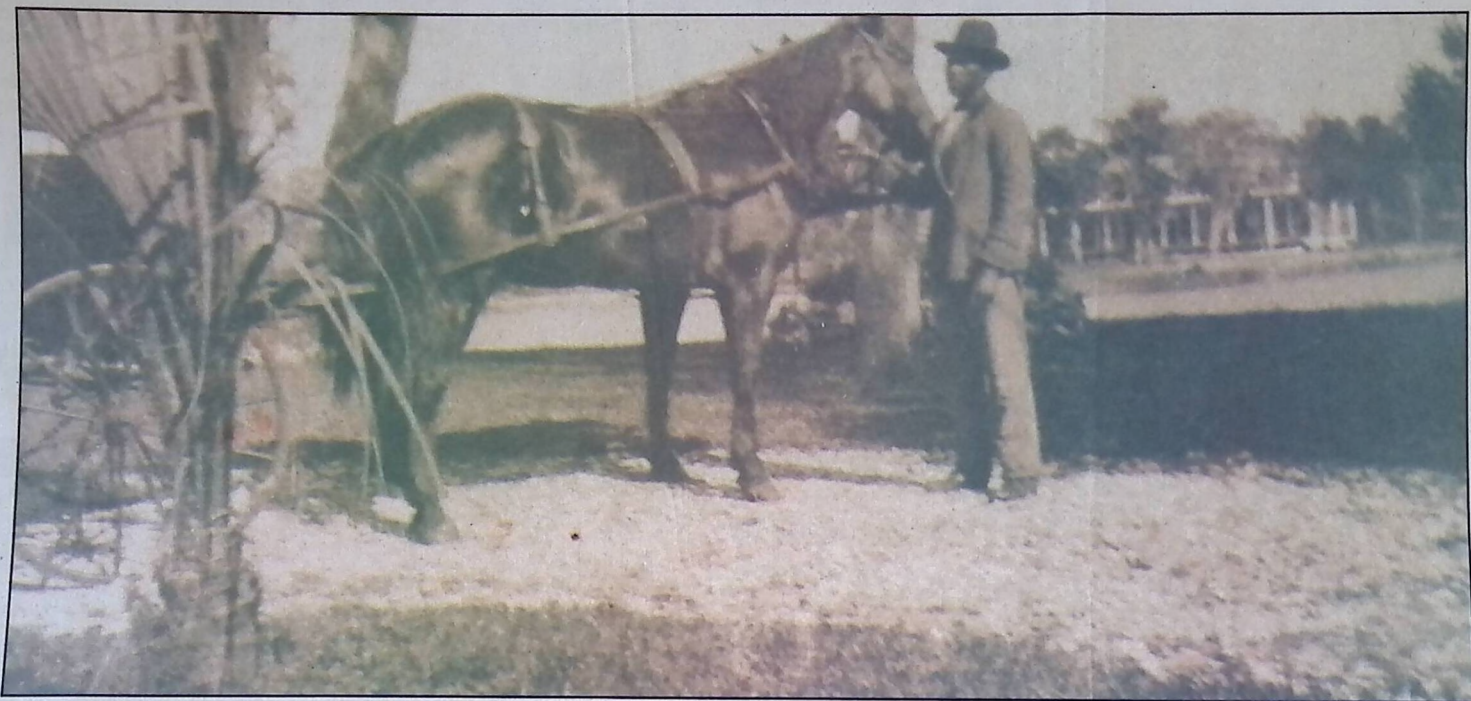
Arthur Norton, accompanied by Anna N. Roberts, received a plaque from the Citrus County Commission today for being the oldest known resident at age 107.

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As the nation celebrates Black History Month during February, it is imperative that citizens of all colors acknowledge the challenges, triumphs and continued struggles of African-Americans



Arthur Norton, besides being a mine worker and deacon in his church, also took on the varied duties of an undertaker, including leading a horse-drawn hearse to the final resting place.

Rising to the challenge

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.

Only by firsthand experience can we really approach the reality of the black experience revealed so thinly in print and cracked photos.

If, for example, we could sit on a stool in a traditional black kitchen, inhaling the full rich pungent smells of stewing okra and cut greens bubbling in a black pot over a wood fire and contemplate the mouth-watering temptations of sizzling hogback and smoking ribs, these sensations could take the seeker closer to the truth of the matter.

The lingering emotional feel of the black experience might be recreated too during a Sunday spent in any of the black churches scattered around the county, listening to the elaborate oratory and the emphatic preaching, getting caught up in the singing and praising and testifying because these too haven't changed much over the years, and are as real as a thumb-worn Bible.

These, and time spent listening to the spoken cadences of memories held fast as faith: memories of folks who lived and labored all their lives in the phosphate pits from Dunnellon down on to Istachatta; of days spent in the piney scrub forests collecting the blood of trees for turpentine and gathering up the lighter knots for sale along the sandy roads; of long summers spent behind mules and picking watermelons and working in the sweet-smelling cedar mills and in nose-curling turpentine stills — these personal recollections offer us still closer hints of what it must have been like to be an African American in Citrus County, Fla.

A search of the county's historical records reveals only paper shards, fragments found in old newspapers, a few books, and scrawled notations written on the backs of photos.

The context and the details you have to supply yourself.

According to historical records covering the 1860s, for example, one black man (whose name was not recorded) was captured, shot and killed during the skirmish known as the Battle of Shell Island during the Civil War.

Who he was and what his life was like up until his death remain a mystery.

In the area where State Road 44 leaves Crystal River toward Inverness was a swamp, and out



Arthur Norton, a Floral City resident, spent most of his 109 years in service to his family and community.

there around the Copeland Park of today, there on the outskirts of the town of Crystal River, old families like the Copeland, Joyner, Brooks and several other families too, have existed since the early 1900s.

The stories they have to tell are inspirational. For example, to get his training to become an accountant, Fred Copeland sometimes had to walk to Ocala to take his classes, and then walk back to Crystal River when it was time to come home.

Going back to the beginning, as much as one can, one of the first African-American settlers on record in the region was Gilliam Washington, who was granted 40 acres and a mule by the U.S. government following the freeing of the slaves after the Civil War.

Washington settled on beautiful rolling pasture land southeast of Inverness near what is now the Hernando County line, down Old Jones Road, which is off Old Stage Coach Road.

There in that corner of the county were other black families that came to farm, families like the Mayos. They had a church of their own, and some-

HISTORY

continued from Page 1C

thing of a settlement, but now the church and the small community of Russell Hill are gone, with only a small fenced cemetery remaining in the woods.

Through hard work and perseverance, his ancestors tell us, Washington added three more sections to his holdings, for a total of 120 acres.

He later bought another 80 acres at 25 cents an acre but lost that land during the Depression, because he was unable to pay the taxes.

He died May 1931, at age 76 and his land came into the possession of his grandson, Robert L. Collins. R.L. Collins died at the age of 84 on Oct. 24, 1987.

After the funeral, his son Raymond remembered for Chronicle reporter Dejuana Harris having to lug drinking water a mile from a spring, and how his father grew sweet potatoes, corn, peanuts, peas and watermelon and okra.

Raymond remembered his father getting up early on Saturdays 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."

Collins taught his children the skills of staying out of trouble with "white folks" — like stepping off

the sidewalk and walking on the opposite side of the street if a white person approached. These were precautions to take in order to prevent causing offense, getting a whipping or being put in jail.

When his daughter finished eighth grade and wanted to continue her education, there were no schools that would take a black child further, but after Collins made a journey up to Tallahassee to speak to the state Board of Regents, a few portable buildings were erected for the further education of black children in the area.

Collins' widow still lives out there on land that has changed little with the passing years.

Another important Citrus County resident was Arthur Norton who, until his death on Feb. 9, 1986, at the age of 109, was the county's oldest resident for several years.

He came to Floral City in 1900 from his birthplace in Tallahassee in order to work in the phosphate mines; his avocation was to tend to the sick and help the needy.

He and his wife, Clemmie, raised nine children in the house they built by themselves on land they cleared for themselves, in the time when he wasn't working for the old Ten Cent Mine where he dug phosphate from the great pits there.

His life revolved around his family and the town's black churches, the Mt. Carmel Methodist and Pleasant Hill Baptist. He became a church trustee, a Sunday school teacher

and a class leader.

Because there was neither a doctor nor an undertaker in the early days of Floral City, when only two houses existed between Floral City and Inverness with a narrow dirt road connecting from Hernando to Brooksville, Norton would often hitch his mule to a wagon and go out to heal or bury, as the situation required.

He would, as reporter Deborah Bacon wrote of him several years ago, "bring his herbal teas and healing hands to any family in trouble.

"I'd sit up all night with sick people, white and colored, throughout the county," he said. "I'd take a man out of bed, hold him like a baby, shave him, bathe him and bring him the fever grass. When he got better, I'd carry him outside and put him in a rocking chair and sit him in the sun."

When a person who he was caring for died, he was there to lay them out. "I'd go to the store and buy two yards of white cloth, two yards of black for a dime, three pounds of half-penny nails and two boxes of brass tacks."

He said he fashioned the coffin from wood at hand, and line the box with white and cover it with black and decorate the outside with brass tacks.

"I'd haul the old coffin to the graveyard. Even if they died at 3 or 4 a.m., they had to be in the ground. You couldn't keep anyone in them days," he said.

Then there was "Grannie Marie," who was for many years a beloved midwife to white and

black families from Red Level down to Chassahowitzka in the days when there weren't any local hospitals and not enough doctors to go around in the county.

Born in the late 1880s, she was called upon by "Doc" Hudson and Dr. Moon, two pioneer doctors in the region, for her expertise in home deliveries.

Eli White, the first black to serve on the Inverness City Council, was 89 when he died Dec. 18, 1991.

He was the grandson of Mandy King, a remarkable woman who was born into slavery in Virginia in 1844 and died at age 109 in Newberry, Fla., in 1953.

Mrs. King had 12 children and 40 grandchildren, 66 great-grandchildren and 18 great-great-grandchildren.

In 1945, Eli White established the White Funeral Home which became the East Dampier Street Funeral Home in the early 1970s. He ran that funeral home for 43 years and also maintained Pine Ridge Cemetery; a plot for black people located in the northeast corner of the Inverness-owned Oak Ridge Cemetery.

He made his first bid for the city council in 1965 but was unsuccessful. He was elected to the council in February 1969, and resigned from the seat during his second term in January 1976, after suffering a stroke. His position was filled for 60 days by his wife, Willie White.

In a special election held two months after his resignation, his seat was filled by A.G. Gibbs who

died of leukemia in 1990 while serving on the council.

Gibbs, a gentle man by all accounts, made a mark in Inverness by working hard to see that Whispering Pines Park had plenty of room for teams to practice and play, and he was also instrumental in having low cost housing built for low income residents.

"Tuna" Whaley, a member of one of the earliest families in Crystal River, spent his youth with his father who worked in the turpentine camps.

Whaley worked for A.D. Williams transporting cedar for the mills. Like Arthur Norton, he also worked shucking oysters for L.C. Yeomans, who owned a fish house in Crystal River and who employed many people in the county.

Whaley recalled for the Chronicle how he helped build U.S. 19 and how his knowledge of the waterways out from Crystal River was used to help lay out Ozello Trail.

He was also first bellboy for the fancy Homosassa Springs Hotel owned by baseball great Dazzy Vance during the 1920s; some 40 years later he helped clear 22-acres at the Three Sisters Springs in 1961 to make way for canals to be dredged in the area.

Whaley recalled for former Chronicle writer Esther Duncan (a remarkable woman in her own right) how he and his brother used to ride free on the train from Wilcox Junction near Suwannee River to Crystal River, then on to

Homosassa.

"Me and Henry'd supply a rack of wood to the fireman," he recalled.

He said he went to work at an early age and never spent a day in school. He became the head of his family at age 12, after the death of his father.

"I broke oxen for A.D. Williams and I drove 'em gettin' out cedar for the mill here in Crystal River," he said.

Isaiah Brooks was the son of a Cherokee Indian from North Carolina. He was born in Crystal River in 1913 in a house owned by Bonnie Willis, who he described as a government woman, who held the lofty post of notary public.

He said at the time of his birth "My daddy was haulin' logs with oxen to a saw mill then."

His father was a giant of a man, 7 feet tall and weighing 300 pounds. He told an interviewer: "I never seen a man as big as he."

When his father died and was about to be buried, he said they had to nail two coffins together to hold his mortal remains.

The family moved out to Rock Crusher Road in 1922 and like "Tuna" Whaley, he knew and worked for Dazzy Vance when Vance built his Homosassa Hotel.

These then are some of the people whose lives and times we have to celebrate Black History Month, people for whom the entire community regardless of color or persuasion feels pride.

Watching Life

'People Never Will See What I Have Seen'

FLORAL CITY — Along U.S. 41 North, about one-half mile south of Floral City, a small wooden house sits sheltered in the trees east of the highway.

In the warm afternoon, an old man may be seen sitting in the shade of those trees, watching the cars as they whiz along the road.

Arthur Norton says he has watched life along that road for 82 years. On Wednesday, he will celebrate his 105th birthday.

He still reads and plows his field every day at 9 a.m. On Tuesday, he will walk into the courthouse to be honored by the Citrus County Commission.

Wednesday, county leaders will turn out for a birthday celebration in his honor, to be held at Floral City Elementary School at 7 p.m.

"I've got something to thank Jesus for, sure as you're born to die, I've got something to thank him for," Norton said as he sat in the small wooden house he built himself more than 70 years ago.

He came to Floral City in 1900 from his birthplace in Tallahassee to work in the phosphate mines. From the outset, he tended the sick and needy throughout the community.

And that's why he's lived so long, he said.

"Lord, what I done for the poor and needy, God's paying it for me today," he said.

"People say, 'Why don't you move to a big nice house?' But I built this old house myself, my wife held the lamp while I pounded the nails. It don't rain on me here and it's paid for," he said, a smile creasing his face.

There he and his wife Clemmie raised their nine children. There he left every morning before sunrise, headed for the old Ten Cent Mine where he dug phosphate from the ground.

"I'd leave before sunup and come home after sundown. I never saw my children waking except on Sunday," he recalled.

His life revolved around the town's black churches, Mount Car-



Hernando-Citrus Heritage

Deborah Bacon

mel Methodist and Pleasant Hill Baptist.

As a young man, he walked into Mount Carmel Methodist Church and, as he tells it, old Henry Frazier took him aside and said, "You didn't come here by yourself. The Holy Ghost brought you, and you're going to stay until all these people in these churches are almost gone."

Norton stayed and became a class leader, a church trustee and Sunday school teacher.

In 1900, people came from all over the South to work in the mines. There was neither doctor nor undertaker in the boom town. Only two houses existed between Floral City and Inverness. A small dirt road snaked south to Hernando County and north to Inverness.

At night, when a "blowing horn" would sound across the hills, Norton would hitch his mule and wagon and follow the call.

He'd bring his herbal teas and healing hands to any family in trouble.

"I'd sit up all night with sick people, white and colored, throughout the county," he said. "I'd take a man out of bed, hold him like a baby, shave him, bathe him and bring him the fever grass. When he got better, I'd carry him outside and put him in a rocking chair and sit him in the sun."

When they died, Norton would lay them out.

"I'd go to the store and buy two yards of white cloth, two yards of black for a dime, three pounds of half-penny nails and two boxes of brass tacks.

Fashioning the coffin from any lumber he could find, he'd line it with white and cover it with black,

using brass tacks to "make it pretty, you know."

"I'd haul the old coffin to the graveyard. Even if they died at 3 or 4 a.m., they had to be in the ground. You couldn't keep anyone in those days," he said.

Norton said he never asked a child to pay him for burying his father or mother.

"I'm gonna get my pay from Jesus," he said.

When World War I broke out and the phosphate mines closed, the miners left Floral City. But Norton stayed. He continued to teach in the church and to tend the sick, through the great influenza epidemic of 1919 and other outbreaks.

During the years, he saw the construction of U.S. 41, the advent of the automobile, the airplane, the space ship, the nuclear bomb.

"People never will see what I have seen. Lord, they'll never see it," he said.

He remembers poverty, barefoot children whose parents bound their feet in rags during winter to make the trek to school.

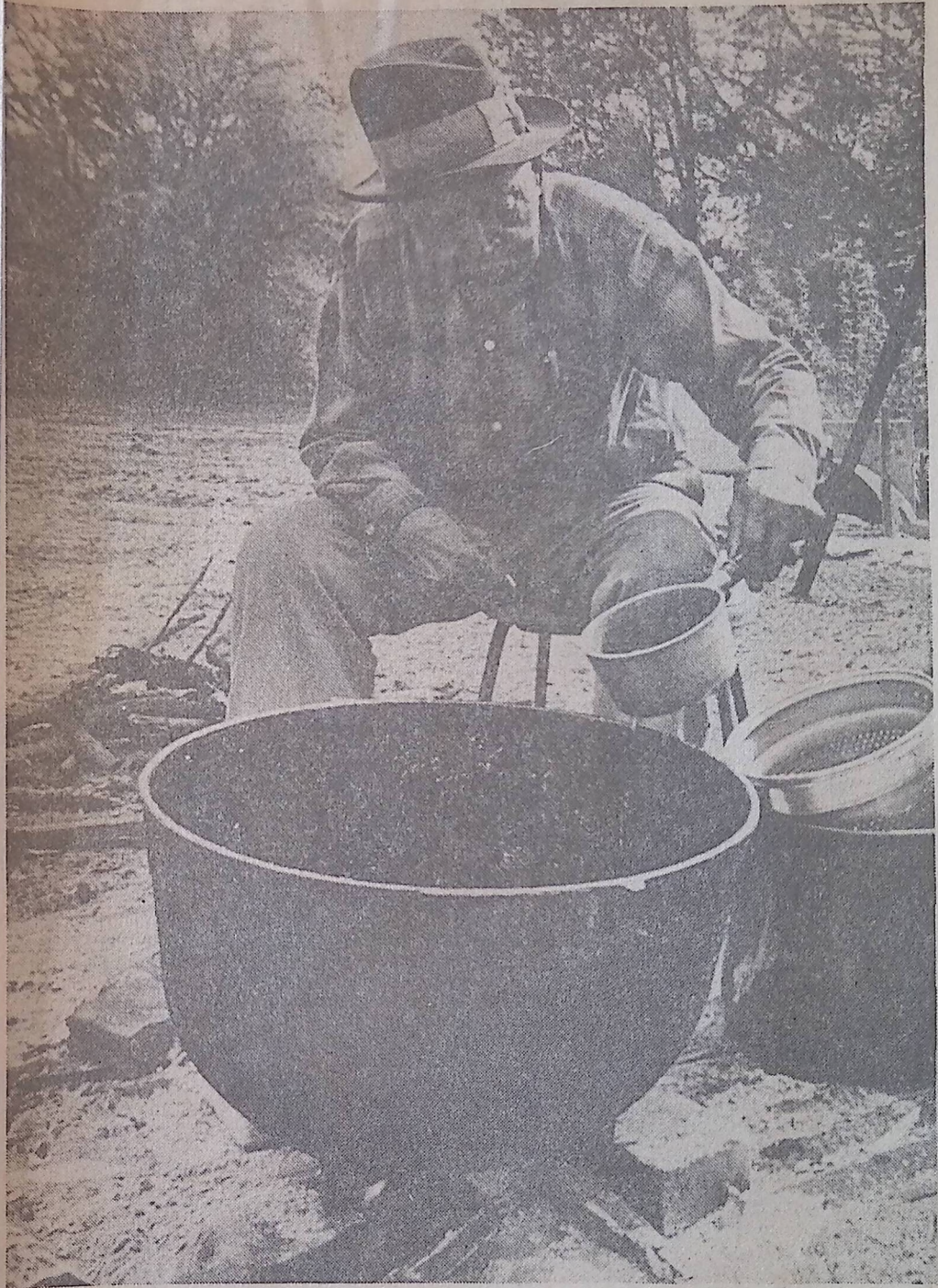
His years as a church leader and teacher have brought him happiness, he said. Throughout all his years, he said, he's never touched whiskey, nor cursed, nor spent time "in the jailhouse."

Norton said his parents were both slaves. He claims he comes from a long-lived family and said family records show some of his sisters and brothers have lived to be 118 years old.

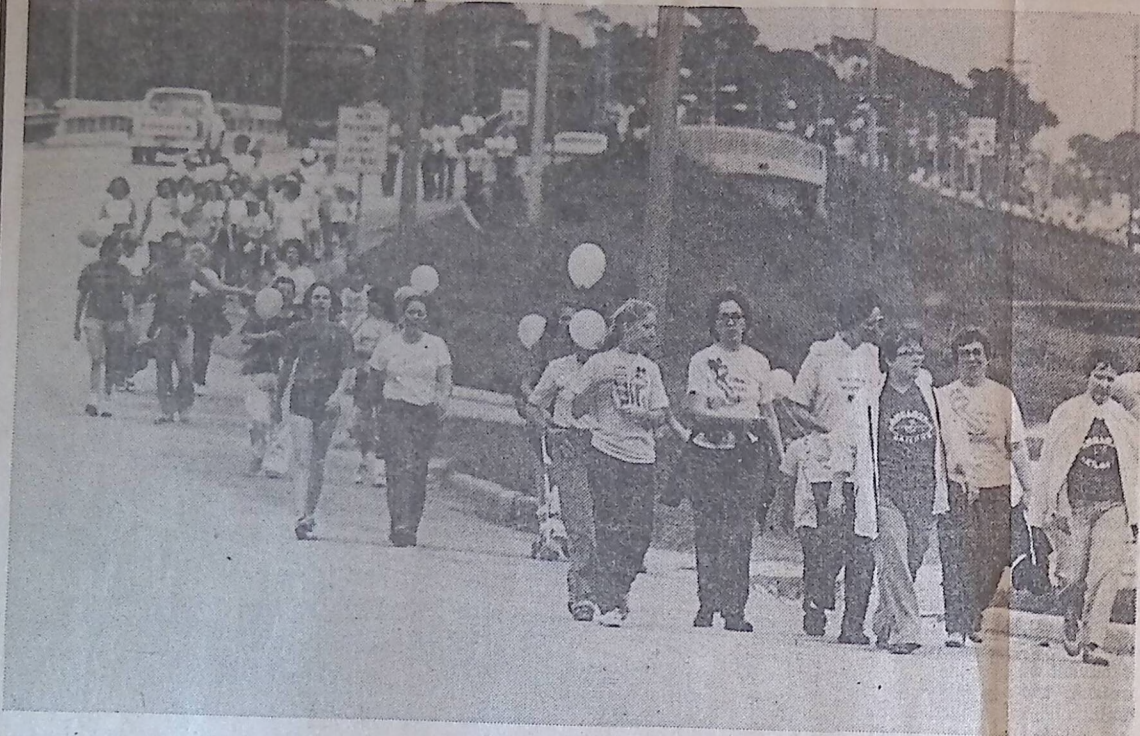
According to Alida Langley, a member of the Mount Carmel Methodist Church that's organizing Wednesday's celebration, no birth certificate exists to pinpoint the date of Norton's birth.

Documentation from Norton's family Bible in Tallahassee places his birth on March 10, 1877, she said.

Three of Norton's nine children are still living, and his eldest daughter, 68-year-old Anna Robinson, lives next door to him. The aged man also has 21 grandchildren, 40 great-grandchildren and two great-great-grandchildren, Langley said.



Floral City resident Arthur Norton makes lard in a cast-iron kettle he says he's been using for 70 years. — Tribune Photo by Robbie Bedell



1982 Superwalk Hikes Proceeds

By **TONY BRIGGS**
Tribune Staff Writer

NEW PORT RICHEY — The Superwalk was a super success this year for the Suncoast Chapter of the March of Dimes.

The annual event, held Saturday, is expected to bring in almost \$25,000, said chapter Chairman Roger Michels. That's nearly twice as much as was generated by last year's Superwalk.

The organization won't know for sure until all pledges are collected, but Michels said he was pleased with the way things went.

Most of the credit goes to the nearly 600 men, women and children who ignored gray skies and the threat of rain Saturday to take part in the Superwalk.

They gathered at the crack of dawn to begin the 15-mile course that would take them north to Port Richey, south to Holiday and then back north again to the finish line at Sims Park.

For every mile covered, each of the participants earned money based on

pledges they had garnered from sponsors during the weeks prior to the event, Michels said.

Pledges ranged from as low as 5 cents to as high as 50 cents per mile, depending on the sponsor.

But since each participant usually has dozens of sponsors, the total amount earned by a single person could easily exceed \$100, he said.

"Some of the people out here have gotten enough sponsors to collect \$400 to \$500," said Michels.

Awards will be handed out in May to the individuals and organizations who collect the most for the March of Dimes and its fight against birth defects, he said.

The Superwalk is not a race, and Michels said there are no awards for the best time.

But that didn't stop some participants from making a race out of it. One teen-ager crossed the finish line less than two hours after the start.

Others seemed content to take their time and made a leisurely walk of the

entire route. Those were the ones who ambled across the finish line late in the afternoon.

Most of the others, like 16-year-old Robert Burleigh of Tarpon Springs, fell in between.

He arrived at the finish line at about noon and immediately doffed his shoes and socks to cool his overheated feet.

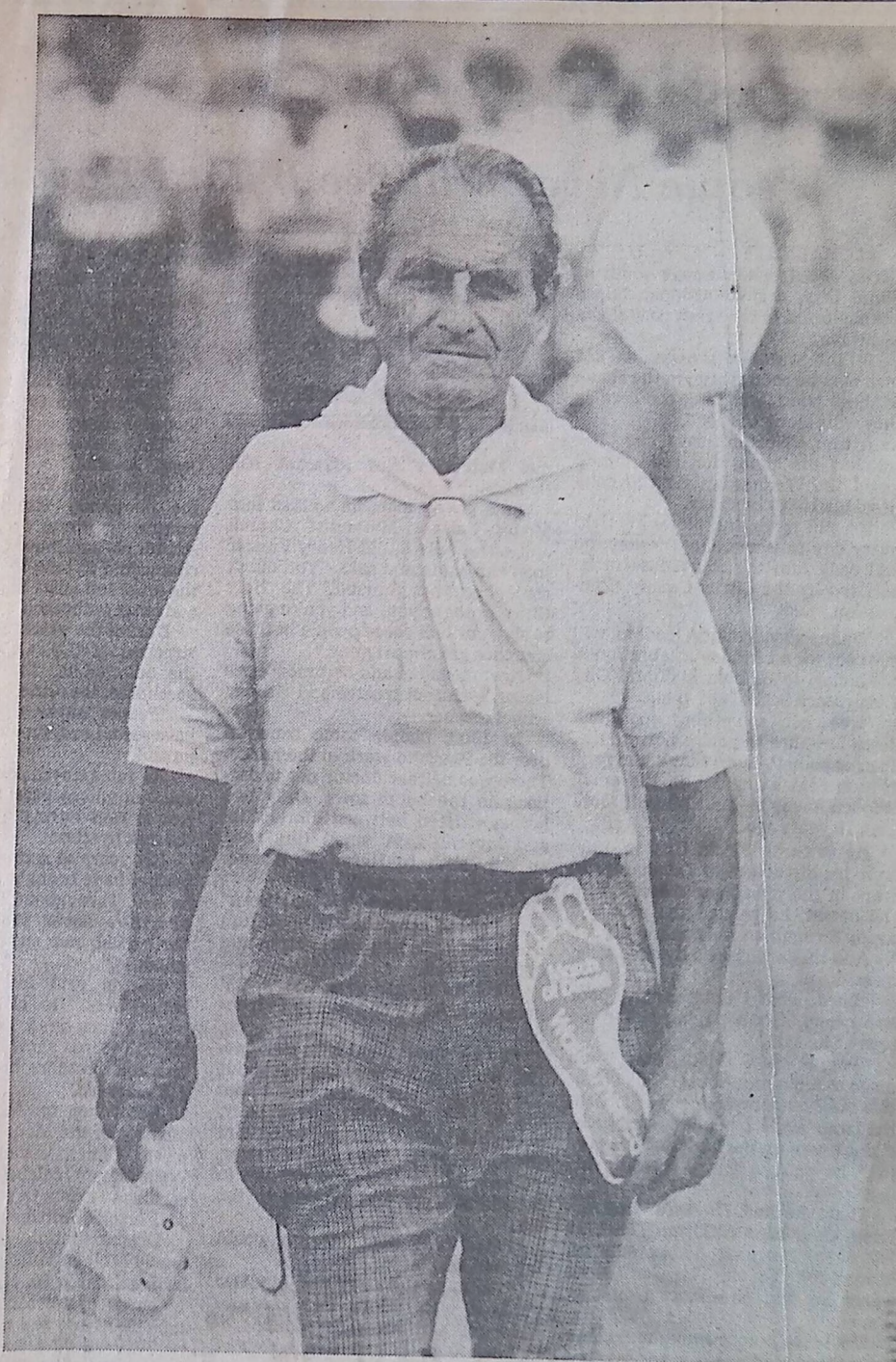
Why did he participate?

"I thought it would be fun, and it's for a worthwhile cause," he said.

Those who finished the race were rewarded with free soft drinks and hot dogs provided by Great Bay Distributors.

The Superwalk is the single largest fund-raising event for the March of Dimes in the area. It is held in communities throughout Pasco, Hernando and Citrus counties at this time of year, Michels said.

Superwalks are scheduled for Dade City on Saturday, in Inverness March 27 and in Brooksville on April 3, he said.



Peter Ohan, 83, was one of the oldest participants in Saturday's Superwalk, which trailed over the Pithlachascotee River on U.S. 19, above. — Photos by Mark Turnau

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, Kentuck 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. 42 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.

ROBINSON, Anna Norton

Agencies on the trail of African-American history

By Brad Bennett
Staff writer

After many years of omitting black history from textbooks and brochures, Florida will soon recognize African-Americans' many historical contributions statewide.

Various agencies across the state are now working in conjunction to produce a tourist guidebook and trail that highlights significant sites in black history. "The Black Heritage

Trail" is expected to be complete by the spring of 1992.

The project was spearheaded by the Study Commission on African-American History, established in 1990 by the Legislature.

The commission's job was to come up with ways to fill in the historical gaps in the state's textbooks, celebrations and facilities — which now overlook many of African-Americans' contributions to early America.

In Citrus, the Pleasant Hill

Baptist Church and Frasier Cemetery in Floral City are among the sites that will be included in the guidebook.

Gary Goodwin, staff assistant to the commission, said the information in the guidebook could help ease hostilities between all ethnic groups. "It serves as a means of enhancement of race relations," he said.

State Rep. William Clark, an African-American, said that it is up to the residents of Florida to decide how race relations will proceed. He went on to describe how historians until now have passed over the cultural contributions blacks have made in society.

"We were here long before the history books give us credit for," he said. He noted that when these books talk about escaping slaves, they always point to a white Quaker who helped them to get away on the underground railroad.

"They never include the work we did on our own," he said.

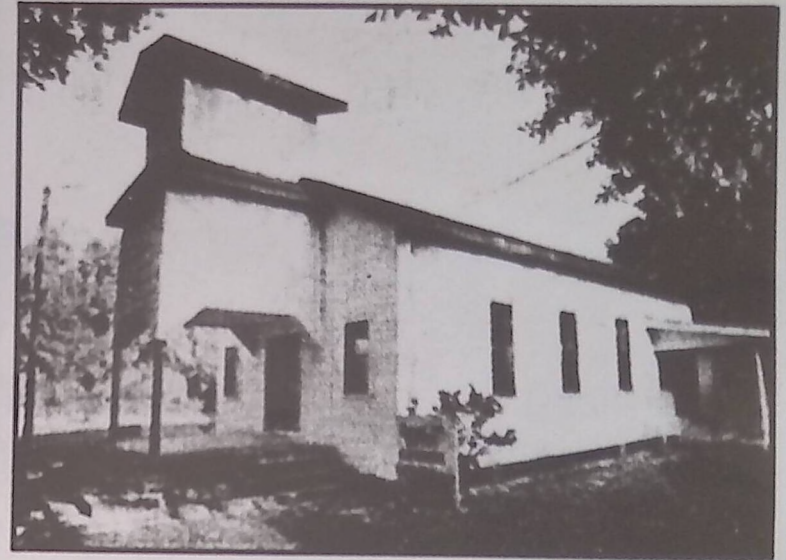
But soon that will change.

The commission, which spawned from legislation sponsored by Clark and co-sponsored by state Reps. James C. Burke and T.K. Wetherell, was charged with four responsibilities:

- First, study ways to establish the Black Heritage Trail in Florida.

- Second, recommend ways to include African-Americans in textbooks used by the state.

- Third, recommend ways to include African-Americans



Matthew Beck/The Chronicle

The Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Floral City, which was built between 1895 and 1910 is the oldest religious building for African-Americans in the town.

in the state's Quincentennial Celebration.

- And fourth, determine ways to best preserve African-American history in Florida.

The guidebook is being de-

veloped through a joint effort by the Division of Historical Resources, the Department of Commerce, the Division of Tourism, the state's Chambers of Commerce, and Visitors and Convention Bureaus.

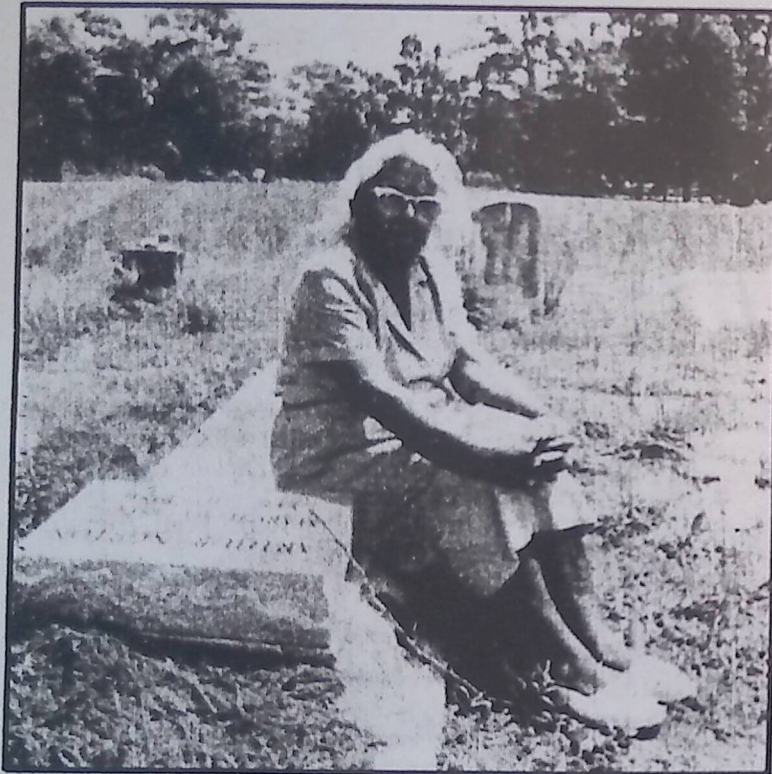
The Bureau of Historic Preservation plans to excavate and restore the buried Fort Mose, an archaeological site near St. Augustine. The bureau plans to set up walking tours there.

The fort was the first underground railroad site in the country, Clark said. Francisco Hernandez, an African-American, served as the captain of the militia there for 36 years. The Spanish government ap-

FLORAL CITY FINDS

Significant contributions:

Debra Scott of the county's historical office said more than 10,000 settlers came to Floral City in 1890 to excavate phosphate — 96 percent of whom were African-Americans. They contributed a variety of churches and commercial ventures to the community.



Lora Gordon/The Chronicle

Anna Robinson sits on her father Arthur Norton's grave at the Frasier Cemetery in Floral City. Norton was one of the city's first black settlers. He moved to the area from Tallahassee to work for the railroads. He lived to be 108.

SUNDAY
AUGUST 18, 1991

TRIBUNE

Please see TRAIL, Page 2A

TRAIL

continued from Page 1A

pointed him.

Black slaves from English Carolina migrated there in 1738 to escape from bondage. They got their freedom in Spanish St. Augustine. Slaves could be free there as long as they converted to Catholicism, he said.

Also included on the trail are the Florida Black Archives at Florida A&M University in Tallahassee and the Black Archives Historical and Research Foundation of Southern Florida Inc. in Miami. These two institutions contributed much to the Black Heritage Trail brochure.

In Citrus County, Floral City stands out as an area where many blacks made significant contributions. Debra Scott, the manager of the county Office of Historical Resources, said that Citrus will send in to the Bureau of Historic Preservation the locations and significance of several sites in Floral City.

The office at a later time will survey other areas around the county for black history, she said.

In 1890, she said, more than 10,000 settlers came to Floral City to excavate phosphate — 96 percent of whom were African-Americans. They contributed a variety of churches and commercial ventures to the community.

At least two of those sites will be included in the brochure:

- The Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Floral City, which was built between 1895 and 1910, is the oldest religious building for African-Americans in the town.

- H.C. Frasier donated the land for Frasier Cemetery in 1908 so that he could bury his son. The grounds later became a cemetery for African-Americans there.

“It makes me feel

good to know that

they respect the

black people enough

to run it in the

paper. We've been in

the dark so long.”

Anna Robinson

Among those buried in the cemetery is Arthur Norton, one of the first black settlers in the town. He came from Tallahassee to work on the railroads, the salt mills and in the armed services while he was alive, according to his daughter, Floral City resident Anna Robinson.

Mrs. Robinson, 77, said she is happy to see the state and the media working to make black history known.

“It makes me feel good to know that they respect the black people enough to run it in the paper,” she said. “We’ve been in the dark so long.”

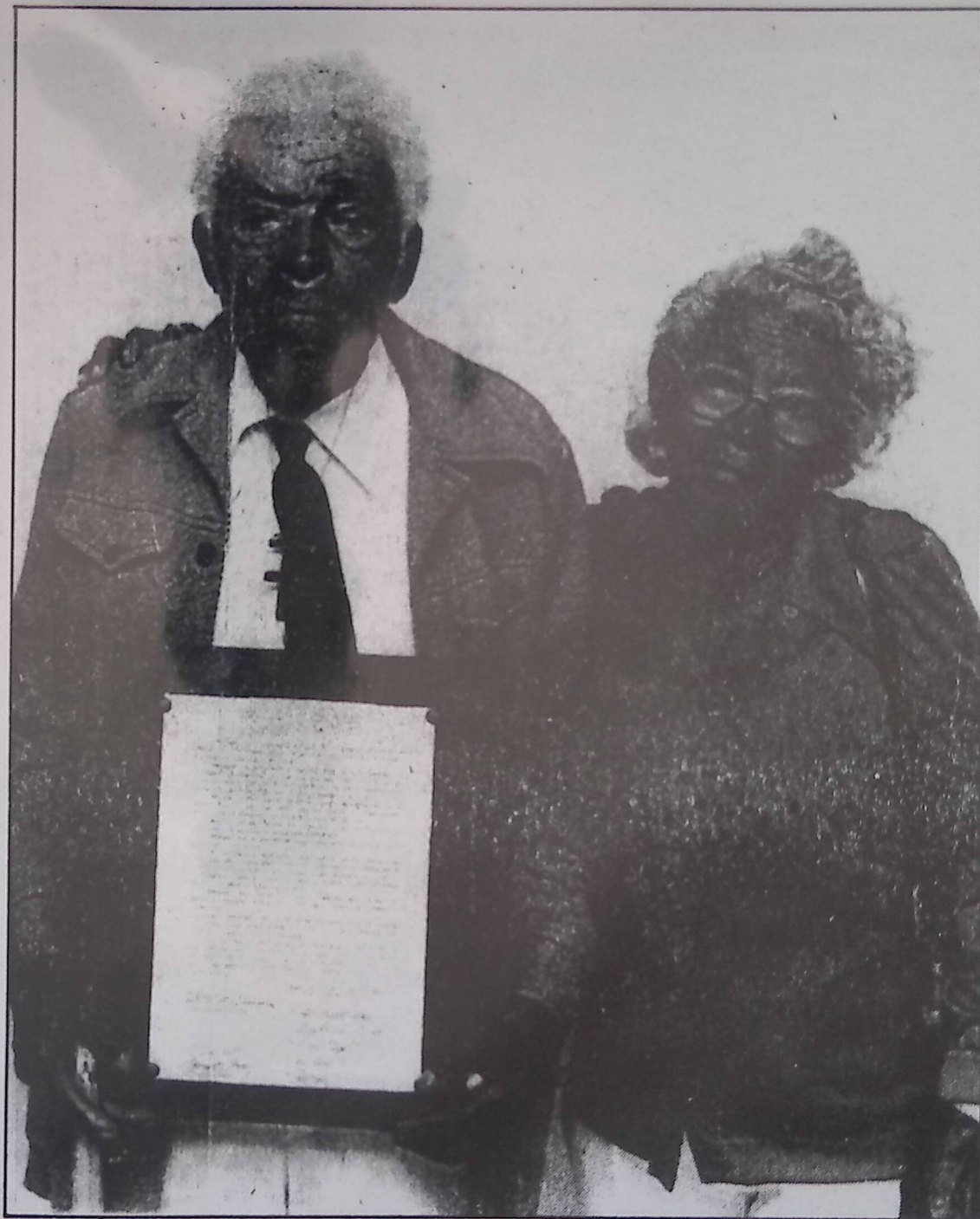
Of the heritage trail, she said, “I think it’s right on time.”

Deborah Murphy, a study commission member, agrees. “People for years had been trying to get something like this going,” she said. “It’s very important that we do it now since it’s been neglected for so long.”

Bill Thurston is the supervisor of both the historic sites survey and the registration section of the Bureau of Historic Preservation.

“Basically,” he said, “the intent here is to provide a guidebook for tourists and Florida citizens. It’s primarily a tourist type of thing based on the historic heritage of blacks in the state.”

Other committees in the state will look into the remaining three responsibilities laid out by the study commission.



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Photo by JEFF CAMP

107 years old

Arthur Norton, accompanied by Anna N. Roberts, received a plaque from the Citrus County Commission today for being the oldest known resident at age 107.

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CITRUS

COUNTY

SENIORS

TUESDAY
DECEMBER 6, 1994

Anna Robinson remembers what it was like back when people had to work hard to tend to their needs



Anna Robinson, 82, of Floral City continues to make lye soap by hand today, just as she learned to do it as a small child.

Dave Siger/The Chronicle

Some things don't wash

By Paulette Lash Ritchie

Chronicle writer

IN MODERN TIMES it has become vastly easier to buy things than to make things. Technology has been put to work to produce needed products with a minimum of human labor.

This was, of course, not the case in the early 1900s. At that time people made what they needed. At that time, Anna Robinson was a little girl.

The 82-year-old Floral City resident remembers what it was like back when people had to work hard to tend to their needs. She also remembers how Floral City was.

"I was born in High Springs, Fla., but my mama brought me here when I was between three and four years old. It (Floral City) had quite a bit of people in here then and it kept growing, 'cause they had the saw mills and the rock mines here then and they had two stores," she said.

One particular product that she and her mother made for personal use at that time was soap.

"When I was a little girl my mama made it to wash clothes with. We took a bath and everything with it ... scrubbed. At that time they weren't selling no other soap. That Octagon soap, we'd buy that, too. It was about the only soap we could get at the time."

The ingredients for homemade soap are simple, water, lye, and grease, and Mrs. Robinson uses these when she still makes soap today. She did comment, however, that lye is not the bargain it



Dave Sigler/The Chronicle

Anna Robinson divides the lye soap into chunks that she then dries in the sun.

once was.

"It high, used to be 10 cents a can. Now it's a dollar and something," she said.

Grease is no problem cost-wise, however. "We just save grease. Like if we have a picnic and have a lot of grease, we save it." Mrs. Robinson added that the grease could be "any kind, lard, anything, meat"

She said that as far as proportions of these ingredients go, she just guesses. She has made soap so often, she just knows.

All the ingredients, however, go into a big pot. "I got a wash pot." The pot is set up on bricks over a fire and the mixture cooks to a boil.

"You can let it boil," she said, but cautioned that

once it starts to boil "you don't keep a hot fire under it or it'll boil over."

She stirs the cooking soap occasionally and can tell when it's done by its consistency. She explained that when the stirring stick is pulled out, the soap drips off the end of it. If it is thick and the drip doesn't fall off completely, then the soap is done.

The next step is to take the pot off the fire and allow it to cool. It is then cut out of the pot in chunks. "Put it (a chunk) out on a piece of tin and the sun'll dry it out," she said.

"It'll clean your clothes better than that soap you buy," she said. To wash clothes with the soap, she melts a chunk in a pot with a little water and then puts it in the clothes washer with the laundry.

Besides making their own soap, Mrs. Robinson's family handled most of their own food needs, too.

"My daddy mostly raised what we had to eat. We had greens and beans. You see the Lord just took care of people in those days," she said.

Mrs. Robinson and her brothers and sisters tended to the meat in the smokehouse while their father was working. She explained that the meat was hung over a smoldering oakwood fire. Their job was to watch it, so that it didn't flare up. She and her siblings set up their playhouse nearby so that they could watch the smoldering embers.

Mrs. Robinson's thoughts also went back to her days at Floral City School, which has long since

Please see WASH, Page 2C

WASH

continued from Page 1C

burned down, and was located at

that time near the present day water tower.

Her family went to Mt. Carmel Church each week. "Every Sunday we went to church. If you didn't have no shoes, you had to go," she said.

She carries that faith into the present. Even with the bad heart that she says she has, "I'm not giving up. I'm goin' to keep on prayin' and puttin' my trust in the Lord."

SCRIVENS

River women were sitting in the pleasant living room of Ernestine Scriven in her Crystal River home that they share, fondly recalling memories of "Grannie Marie," the midwife, and the role she played in early Citrus County days.

The women were Mrs. Scriven herself, the other, her mother, Erma, now Mrs. Faison, in her 80s. Both had lived with the midwife and her family at various times. Mrs. Faison had been the midwife's daughter-in-law; Mrs. Scriven was one of her granddaughters.

"My mother-in-law was a remarkable woman," Mrs. Faison said. "I'll never forget the first time I met her. My husband had brought me home to her and I was a little timid about becoming a member of the household."

She needn't have been, she said. The generous welcome she received overwhelmed her.

Mrs. McCoy ("Grannie Marie") called all her younger children together. "From now on your brother's wife, Erma, is in charge. This goes whether I'm here or not. I'm letting her run this household. It's hers."

Mrs. McCoy's daughter-in-law said she was overcome at the generous treatment. Her mother-in-law knew that, as a midwife, she was away a great deal and that if the household was not to be disrupted the children must recognize their older brother's wife as the woman with authority.

"She was truly a wonderful woman," Grannie Marie's daughter-in-law said. "I never knew anyone who had so much love and



ERNESTINE SCRIVEN, "Grannie Marie's" granddaughter, and daughter-in-law Erma Faison proudly display a picture of Marie McCoy who was a midwife in Citrus County for many years in the first part of this century. (Photo by Esther Duncan)

kindness for all.

"She kept her word — I ran the household," she added, her voice rich with affection. "There wasn't anything I couldn't have if I asked for it."

As a daughter-in-law Mrs. Faison found that her own children, once they began arriving, were welcomed into the household with as much love as if they'd been her mother-in-law's.

Grannie Marie's granddaughter, Mrs. Scriven, 61, said that she too has vivid memories of her grandmother. She had spent a lot of time in her home as a child.

The little house she remembers so fondly, originally belonging to the Hunters — Grannie Marie's parents — is long gone. It was

located about where the Crystal River airport is now, beside the former railroad tracks which ended in Old Homosassa.

"All the grandchildren were crazy about their grandmother," Mrs. Scriven said. "She was so good to us. I remember how she would leave with her big black bag. We never knew when she would be back."

Folks from everywhere came to the door for the popular midwife, she recalled.

"She was considered an expert and was highly regarded throughout the county. Most of the babies she delivered are gone now," she said, "but a lot of their children and grandchildren must be around."

Mrs. McCoy learned the art of

midwifery from her own mother, Mrs. Scriven related.

"She was good. Real good," Mrs. Scriven said. "I remember that both Dr. Moon and Dr. Hudson often said that she was the best."

She smiled, remembering with pride the praise her grandmother had received.

"If the doctors had a delivery, especially one that might be a problem, they often called for her to catch the baby," she said.

But Mrs. McCoy did more than just "catch babies."

"I remember how she used to go to Homosassa to work for the Lockleys and Showers and also the Dr. Newells who lived there during the winter months," she added. "She cooked at some of

up.
From then on she sometimes was the first to "dress 'em," she said.

"Grannie Marie" had five children. Mrs. Scriven named them: "Oprie, who just moved back to Crystal River from Ohio, her Daddy, Isaac, Buddy Wilbur, Juanita and Thelma." Only Oprie and Juanita of Crystal River are alive.

"Grannie Marie" died up in Ohio while visiting Aunt Oprie, she said.

"I guess no one will ever be able to count how many babies she delivered, or helped deliver," Mrs. Scriven said. "They were from Red Level, Lecanto, Rock Crusher, Homosassa, as far as Chassahowitzka. Folks would come for my grandmother day and night."

There'd be a knock on the door. "We children would hear our grandmother getting dressed," she recalled. "She'd go out in the night."

And after she returned home, later Mrs. McCoy would insist on making a trip back to make sure the baby was doing OK, according to her granddaughter, Mrs. Scriven.

Both women spoke of how "Grannie Marie" always "dressed nice."

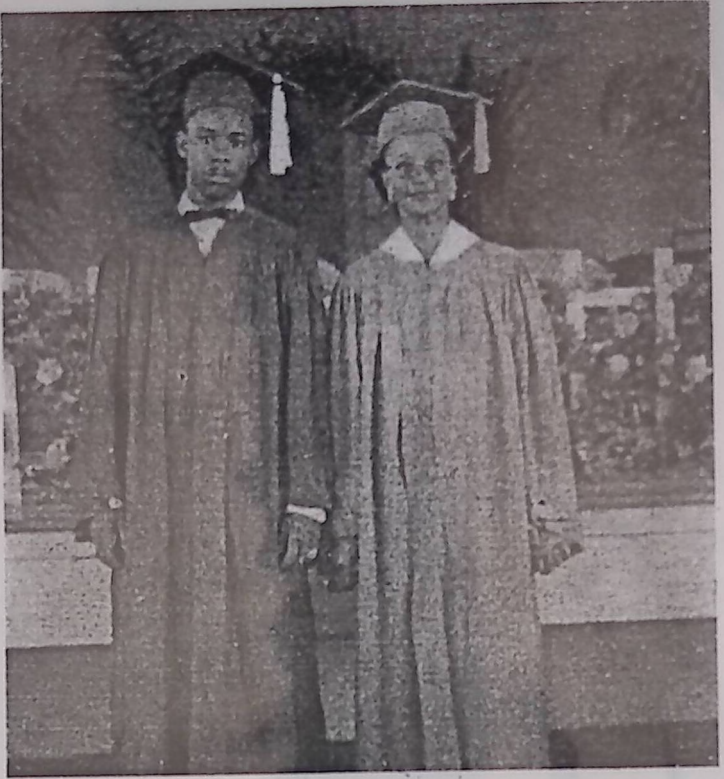
"When she went out to deliver those babies," her granddaughter said, "she always put on a white uniform starched to an inch of its life and covered it with a big white apron."

"I was always so glad to see her come home," she said. "I wish she might be coming back now."

SIMMONS, Freddie Lee (Mrs.)

MAY
1960

MOTHER AND SON GRADUATE FROM BTW HI!



Mrs. Freddie Lee Simmons and her son Ronald Graham both will be graduated from Booker T. Washington High School on May 31st.

Mrs. Simmons is the mother of six children. Ronald, the oldest, is an outstanding athlete in Booker T. participating in football, basketball and baseball.

By Mrs. R. M. Spires

A rather unusual occasion is that of a thirty-six year old mother and her eighteen year old son being in the same graduating class on the roster of the Booker T. Washington class of 1960 are the names of Freddie Lee Simmons and her son Ronald Bernard Graham.

Mrs. Simmons was born to Mr. and Mrs. Mose Waters in Crystal River Sept. 24, 1924. They later moved to Hernando and Freddie Lee started to school in Hernando in the churches on alternate years with no equipment except used text books, one teacher having an enrollment of sixty or more children.

The children got on their knees to use the seats for desks when they needed to write. Their only blackboard was a window shade which some ingenious teacher bought and painted with

lamp black. The urge to learn more was strong though, one pupil who completed the eighth grade under this handicap worked in Ocala and completed his high school grades going from there to A. and M. College in Tallahassee. He now has a Civil Service position in the post office in Miami.

Freddie Lee went to St. Petersburg to attend Davis elementary and Gibbs High School. She left school in her Sophomore year to marry Coy Simmons coming back to Hernando when the phosphate business reopened.

The urge to get more education still was a strong force and after the birth of her sixth child the opportunity came through the night classes of Adult Education at Booker T. Washington High School Inverness.

The son, Ronald Bernard Graham is one of the class of 1960. To quote the 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."

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."

WASHINGTON, Gilliam

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.

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WHALEY, "Tuna"



"Tuna" Whaley sits outside his Crystal River home watching the world go by and enjoying his leisure years. Whaley worked for the county clearing most of the major roadways of trees as the county grew in the last few decades.

Steve Eaton/The Chronicle

A pioneer talks about early Citrus

By Esther Duncan
Chronicle writer

One of Citrus County's most unusual seniors has to be Tuna Whaley, an 80-year-old native with a head of curly, white hair above an open face beaming with good will.

"Everybody's always called me 'Tuna,' he explains. "A man give me this name a long time ago and it stuck. Nobody's ever called me nothin' else."

A descendant of one of the early families of Crystal River, Irene Buntz Sutton, recently spoke of Whaley's longstanding reputation as a man with a heart of gold. "I've known him a long time and he's

always been generous. When times were hard and folks short of cash, he did me many a favor and wouldn't take any pay."

The picture of contentment, Whaley sits on the front porch of his little Crystal River house, watching the world go by.

"I'm not hard to find," he says, grinning his welcome. "I tell everyone just look for two deer statues out front. That's me."

Whaley is proud of those figures of two deer on his lawn — one standing, one lying down on the edge of a flower bed. In fact, Whaley is proud of a lot of things.

A widower for the past year, he leaps up, moving like a man half his age as he leads the way to his small, ever-so-neat living room. Once his guests are seated, he digs in a small box on an end table.

"I had some old photos, but I think one of my daughters got into 'em," he says cheerfully. "My wife, Sarah, and I raised 11 children — one drowned — and saw to it they all got a 12th grade education."

Whaley adds matter-of-factly, "I never went to school a day in my life, being mostly raised out in the

"I helped build U.S. 19. And when the road to Ozello was put in, I and another guy mostly laid it out 'cause we knew the waterways so well."

Tuna Whaley

turpentine camps where my Daddy worked, though he did a little farming too."

"Young folks today don't have no idea what it was like in this county back in the early 1900s," Whaley says. "I followed my Daddy

Hams' son. "And also for Mr. Dumas," he adds proudly. "Tuna Dumas, he'd call me."

At times, Whaley shucked oysters for L.C. Yoemans who owned a fish house in Crystal River.

A lot of folks knew Whaley, both black and white, it seems. Whaley pauses, then describes how he used to go out to Old Town, as old Homosassa was known, taking his oxen by barge to an island, then hauling logs to the water's edge days at a time.

Whaley was proud that locals like the fisherman, Johnnie Head, and the prominent Immigrant Scotch storekeeper, MacRae, would come out to his camp to see if he needed anything. "They'd bring me fishin' stuff mostly."

"I knew all those early families," Whaley says. "I was raised with the Waddingtons and the DeBusks and Browns and such folks."

"If they didn't think much of you, white folks would say, 'He's not so good.' But I was a choicery," he repeats with much satisfaction.

"Back in the early days," Whaley explains, "a lot of folks weren't to be trusted, black or white. Folks had to prove themselves, specially blacks."

Many who worked in the turpentine camps were fresh from jail, according to Whaley. They were told that they'd be kept out of jail if they'd agree to work in the camps where they were housed and fed. "It was a rough life," Whaley observes.

But Whaley's thoughts turned to humorous events. Chuckling, he recalled a Halloween joke. "I remember Ralph Rooks and his friends pushed a blind horse and an old cow up a stairs between Hood's Grocery and Barco's Hardware Store and tied 'em to the balcony for all to wonder at the next mornin'. It'd been done before."

around boxin' the trees and bringin' up the turpentine. He liked to play the guitar and folks would sing and dance." Whaley chuckles, "The girls would get to lookin' at Daddy and my mother didn't like that."

Whaley recalls how he and his brother used to ride free on the train from Wilcox Junction near Suwannee River to Crystal River then on to Homosassa. "Me and Henry'd supply a rack of wood to the fireman," he recalled.

Whaley went to work at an early age, settling into being the head of the family at 12 following his father's death.

"I broke oxen for A.D. Williams," he says. "And I drove 'em gettin' out cedar for the mill here in Crystal River."

It was Whaley's job to teach the young, bulls to pull on command. To "gee" and "haw" — turn left or right. After the animal had a wood collar slipped over its neck, the bull was hitched to a log or stump.

"At first he didn't understand

Please see TUNA, Page 3C

His reminiscing turns to early county roads. U.S. Highway 19 was just a narrow limestone road for years. According to him, anyone can still see small stretches of it by looking behind the Oldsmobile and Chevrolet dealerships, or behind the bowling alley in Homosassa Springs.

"I helped build U.S. 19," he says. "And when the road to Ozello was put in, I and another guy mostly laid it out 'cause we knew the waterways so well."

One of Whaley's jobs that he's most proud of is being the first bell boy at the fancy Homosassa Springs Hotel in the 1920s. "That was when Dazy Vance owned it," he explains.

Another West Citrus job he's proud of being in charge of was "clearing up" 22 acres of Three Sisters Spring. "That was in 1961 so they could build the canals out there," Whaley says.

He brings out a photograph of himself standing erectly between two men obviously celebrating a special event. "That's me in the middle," Whaley says. "That was when Holiday Inn was bought by a Hungarian. I did a lot of caretaker work around there those days," he says. "They thought of me as their gardener."

Among Whaley's treasured memorabilia are several outstanding floral prints grouped over the davenport. His voice filled with pride, Whaley identifies them. "They're all from the former Magnolia Lodge located near Port Paradise. Folks is beginning to forget about that lodge."

"It's the truth," he nods. "Our young folks don't know much about our early history."

continued from Page 1C

what he was supposed to do," Whaley admits, "but I carried a bottle of ammonia with me and I'd stick it under his nose. Boy, would he move."

And if the ox tried to run away, Whaley had his own way of stopping him. "I carried a long, heavy chain fastened to his neck, and all I had to do was wrap it around a tree, jerking the ox to a halt. He learned fast."

Whaley says he had some mighty nice animals. He can't remember all their names, but Broady, who was black and white, was a favorite. And he got along just fine with Dan, "kinda off-white."

One of the dangers when working in the wilderness, Whaley admits, was looking out for countless rattlers, as many of them made their homes around the big stumps his oxen pulled out for cedar oil.

"You can smell a rattlesnake, you know," Whaley explains. "It's kind of like the smell of a goat. I always knew when one was close by and if you're careful to give him space to get free, he'll leave you alone. I never had no trouble with any of 'em."

Whaley talks of the long period he worked for Williams.

"Williams was good to us," Whaley says. "I still remember the birthday party he gave for me."

"I was a 'choicery,' Whaley asserts. "I worked for Williams 18 years and wasn't allowed to come in the back door."

Williams himself made that plain, according to Whaley.

"Tuna," Mr. Williams says to me, "you're never to come in the back door. Not in my place. Ever."

Later, Whaley worked for Wil-

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 11 children.

Whaley's knowledge of the waterways 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. Whaley owns several prints from the old Magnolia Lodge located near Port Paradise.

Richard Whaley

A highly respected black family. I think we still have a large portrait of him. For several years we didn't know who it was.

Beth Helms

Richard Whaley, 82, retired gardener

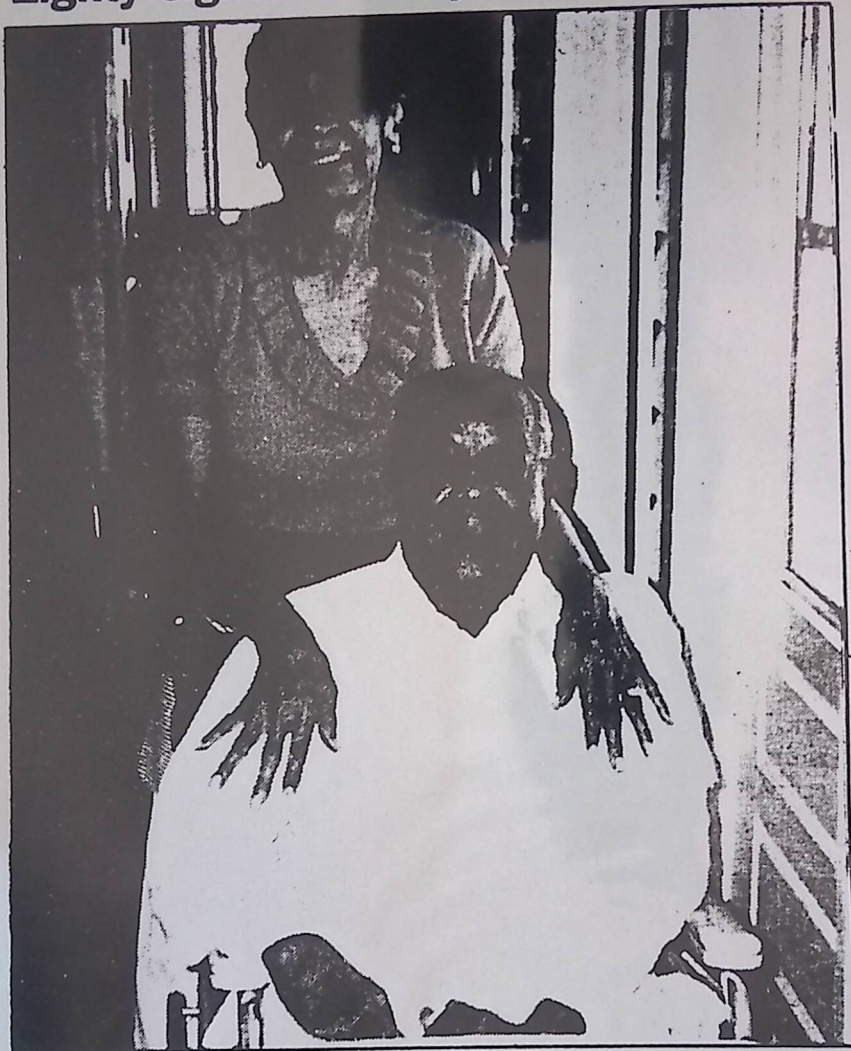
Richard "Tuna" Whaley, 82, of Crystal River died Monday, Jan. 28, 1991. He was born in Ocala, Fla., and came here 70 years ago from there. He was a retired gardener and a member of Mount Olive Baptist Church, Crystal River.

Survivors include six sons, Harold Whaley, Ocala, Herbert Whaley, Pompano Beach, Wardell and Willard, both of Crystal River, Marvin, Fort Lauderdale, and Phillester, Inverness; five daughters, Idella Lockley and Ola B. Harris, both of Crystal River, Katherine Mobley, Ocala, Gussie Saffor, Bradenton, and Elouise Brown, Minneapolis, Minn.; one brother, William Skylark, Crystal River; 58 grandchildren; and 74 great-grandchildren.

Dampier Street Funeral Home, Inverness.

WHITE, Eli

Eighty-eighth birthday



By Alida Langley/Special to Lake Life

Eil White recently celebrated his 88th birthday. His wife, Mrs. Willie White, fixed dinner for a few relatives and friends at their home to celebrate. Mr. White is a former city councilman and was the operator/owner of East Dampier Street Funeral Home for many years. The Whites have been involved with various community clubs, and organizations and helped wherever needed. They are members of the Greater Mt. Carmel Baptist Church of Inverness (Pastor Dr. E. Smith).

VARIATIONS ON A BRIDAL THEME...

A dazzling collection of Diamond Bridal sets
in 14K yellow or white gold.

Civic leader dies

By Caren Burmeister
Staff writer

Ely "Son" White, a community leader and Inverness's first black council member, died Thursday at 89 at Citrus Memorial Hospital.

White moved to Inverness 79 years ago from Newberry, Fla., and was a retired owner and manager of White Funeral Home and East Dampier Street Funeral Home in Inverness.

White was elected to the Inverness City Council in 1969 and resigned in 1976 after suffering a stroke.

His wife, Willie, filled his seat until voters elected A.G. Gibbs to the position. Gibbs held the position until he died of leukemia last year.

Friends described White Friday as a strong, yet likable councilman who spoke his mind.

Inverness Public Works Director Daniel Sawyer said White was a good listener and said that before Inverness hired a city manager, employees would go to him with their problems.

"He always looked out for the interest of the employees," Sawyer said.

White also enjoyed carpentry, and generously donated his time helping neighbors, Sawyer said.

"He was somebody you could rely on," he said. "He was well liked and did a lot of favors for a lot of people."

Inverness City Clerk Marilyn Jordan too admired White's service on the city council.

"He was a good councilman and I had a lot of respect for him," she said.

White was a member of the Greater Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Grand Union Pallbearers and Citrus County Pallbearers, and Masonic Crystal Lodge No. 153.

CHRONICLE
12/21/91

OBITUARIES

Eli White, 89, former councilman

Eli "Son" White, 89, of Inverness died Thursday, Dec. 19, 1991, at Citrus Memorial Hospital. He moved to Inverness 78 years ago from his native Newberry, Fla. He was retired owner and manager of White Funeral Home and East Dampier Street Funeral Home, Inverness. He was a member of Greater Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, Grand Union Pallbearers, Citrus County Pallbearers and Masonic Crystal Lodge #156. He was the first black city councilman of Inverness.

Survivors include his wife, Willie P. White of Inverness; two God-daughters, Gloria Jean

Johnson of Inverness and Sandra Williams of Gainesville; two brothers, Arthur White of Inverness and David Williams of Tampa; four sisters, Ruth Bethea of Danville, Ill., Viola Green of South Bend, Ind., Irene James and Lydia Williams, both of Inverness.

East Dampier Street Funeral Home, Inverness.

1st black councilman dies at 89

White went to bat for Inverness crews

By STEVE ORLANDO
Tribune Staff Writer

INVERNESS — **Eli White**, the first black to serve on the Inverness City Council, died Thursday. He was 89.

White, whose nickname was "Son," was elected to the council in February 1969. He resigned from the seat in January 1976 after suffering a stroke, and his position was filled for 60 days by his wife, Willie White.

She said her husband of 56 years had been at Citrus Memorial Hospital for more than two weeks with complications stemming from the partial paralysis brought on by his earlier stroke.

A native of Newberry, White moved to Inverness 78 years ago. In 1945, he established the White Funeral Home, which became the East Dampier Street Funeral Home in the early 1970s.

He made his first bid for the city council in 1965, but was unsuccessful.

"They just weren't ready for a black person to be on the city council yet," Willie White said Friday. "They were ready for him the next time. The white people put him in because there weren't that many black voters."

During his time on the council, White helped oversee the city utilities department.

"I think he had the city of Inverness at heart because he was raised here," said Daniel Sawyer, the city's public works director. "I think he was one to lean toward the city employees."

Sawyer recalled an occasion when the council was considering cutting costs by taking back the uniforms it gave city employees. "Eli stepped right in there and told them how backward that was. It never came to pass."

White was in the midst of his second term when he suffered the stroke that left him in a wheelchair, his wife said.

In a special election held two months after his resignation, his seat was filled by A.G. Gibbs, who died last year of leukemia while serving on the council.

White was a member of the Greater Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Inverness, the Grand Union Pallbearers, the Citrus County Pallbearers and the Masonic Crystal Lodge 156.

Besides his wife, White is survived by two brothers, Arthur of Inverness and David Williams of Tampa; four sisters, Ruth Bethea of Danville, Ill., Viola Green of South Bend, Ind., and Irene James and Lydia Williams, both of Inverness.

Funeral services are scheduled for 1 p.m. Friday at the Greater Mount Carmel Baptist Church on Park Avenue.

MR. ELI WHITE
209 East Dampier Street (209)
Inverness, Florida 32650

Eli White is the grandson of Mandy King, who was born into slavery in Virginia in 1844 and died at the age of 109 in Newberry, Florida in 1953. She had 12 children, 40 grandchildren, 66 great grandchildren and 18 great, great grandchildren. Inverness, Florida survivors in 1953 included 2 children, Ellen Williams and Johnny King, five grandchildren, Eli White, Irene James, Arthur White, Viola Green and Liddy Williams.

Eli White ran the East Dampier Street Funeral Home for 43 years and also maintained 'Pine Ridge Cemetery'; a plot for black people that is located in the NE corner of a section of the City owned 'Oak Ridge' Cemetery

Referenced: Hampton Dunn's "Back Home - page 376
Eli White and Mandy King

" 'Citrus Times' section of the St. Petersburg Times newspaper- article by Karen Dukess - dated June 2, 1988.

Eli White and Pine Ridge Cemetery

Current listings in the 1991 Inverness Telephone Directory include the names of:

Eli White - 209 E. Dampier St.	726-2931
Arthur White - 3666 S. Apopka	726-1120
Irene James - 204 E. Dampier St.	726-1976
Lydia Williams (Liddy) ? -	726-1661

Chronicle July 10, 1990 - Inverness

Eli White - 86 years old. White is a former Inverness City

Councilman and operator/owner of the East Dampier Street Funeral Home.

WILLIAMS, Geraldine



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