

THE FIRST SHERIFFS OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA: 1915-1933

SHERIFF ADEN W. TURNER
SHERIFF PAUL C. BRYAN

By William P. Cahill

Today, the Broward Sheriff's Office is widely recognized as an efficient, well-managed law enforcement agency with a cadre of professionally-trained deputies and other personnel providing needed services to the people of the county. With more than 5,400 employees, it is the largest nationally accredited sheriff's office in the United States. For the first 18 years of its existence, however, it was a small semi-rural department, the county's first two sheriffs having at most a handful of deputies to assist them. During this early period – and for many years afterward – the Broward Sheriff's Office was plagued by corruption and mismanagement, and many of its deputies would have been more at home in the Wild West than they would in any modern law enforcement agency.

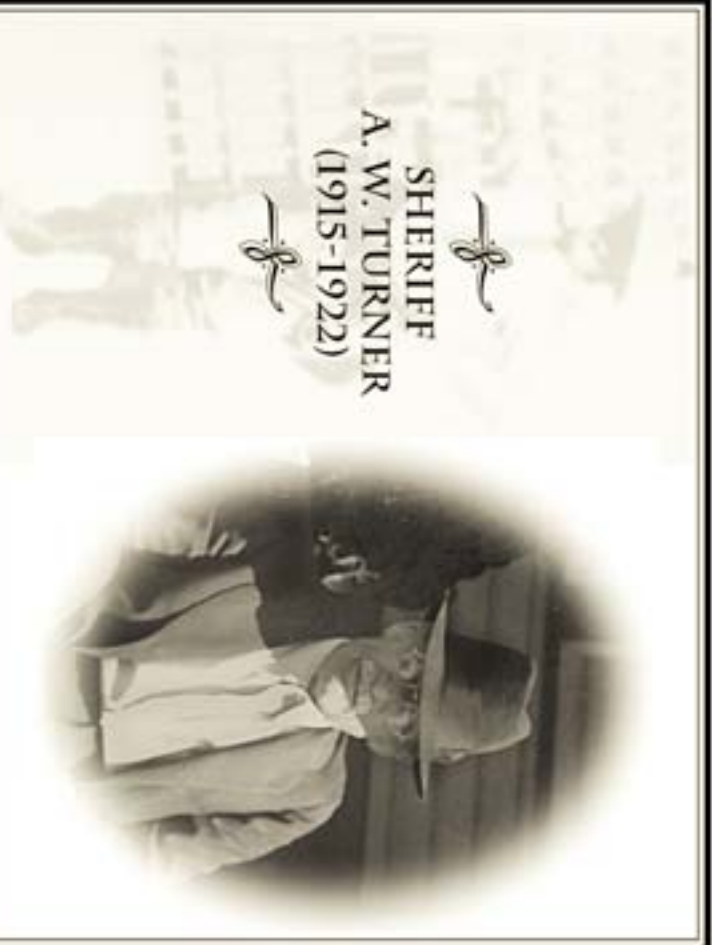
William P. Cahill teaches at Florida Atlantic University, and is currently in the process of writing a complete history of the Broward Sheriff's Office, from its earliest years up through the present. Dr. Cahill would like to gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the staff of the Broward County Historical Commission, who over the past several years have provided much needed help in accessing the archival records which have shed so much light on the activities of the county's first sheriffs. Thanks are also due to BSO Deputy Sheriff Joe Williams, whose help was invaluable in getting this project off the ground.

THE NEW COUNTY

The population of Broward County grew rapidly in the years following its creation in 1915, more than quadrupling during the first decade and a half of its existence – increasing from less than 5,000 in 1915, to over 20,000 when the 1930 Census was taken.¹ Although 1920 saw the start of the Great Florida Land Boom, by 1926 it was over, and the value of land in South Florida had dropped precipitously. For residents of Broward, the Depression would arrive three years before the stock market crash of 1929 brought it to the rest of the country. In September 1926, a calamity occurred which contributed significantly to the economic decline of the region. This was a catastrophic hurricane that left 400 people dead in Florida. The monster storm did massive damage in Miami, causing about 100 people in that city to lose their lives. Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood and Dania were also devastated by this hurricane – at least 15 people were killed in Fort Lauderdale, 25 in Hollywood and nine in Dania.²

The major legislative change that affected law enforcement during this period was the enactment of “Prohibition” laws. First through local election, then by state law, and a few years later through an amendment to the United States Constitution, Prohibition was in effect in Broward during virtually the entire period in which the county’s first two sheriffs served. However, enforced abstinence from alcoholic beverages was resisted by many Broward residents, and it was during the Prohibition era that their county seat first earned the nickname “Fort Liquorable.”³ This was due not only to widespread liquor law violations in the local area, but also because the county’s coastline was ideal for smuggling alcoholic beverages into the United States from the island of Bimini in the Bahamas. Destroying stills and catching “rum-runners” would take up much of the time of law enforcement officials in Broward, particularly the county’s first two sheriffs.

SHERIFF A. W. TURNER (1915-1922)



Soon after the creation of Broward County in 1915, a primary election was held to select officers for the new county. This was, in effect, the official election because the Governor of Florida had promised to appoint to office the men selected in the primary. In that contest, the winner of the race for Sheriff was a local businessman, A.W. Turner, who soon began a long and colorful career as Broward’s first Sheriff. In a four-way contest, Mr. Turner received 295 votes, more than the combined total of all three of his opponents. Following his election to the office of Sheriff, the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* said of Turner: “We named one of the best men for the

place. He does not drink, is a man of the very best habits.”⁴ The Sheriff-elect made a somewhat more modest assessment, saying that “you have put the wrong man up this time, but I will promise you that I will do my full duty so far as I see it.”⁵ Best man for the job or wrong man for the job – two discrepant views, these would each eventually be held by many Broward County residents, sometimes simultaneously.⁶

In October 1915, Aden Wäerman Turner was sworn in as the Sheriff of Broward County, Florida. Turner was a native Floridian, born in Nassau County, near Jacksonville, in 1865. He had come to the Broward area in 1905,



Broward County Courthouse, circa 1915

at which time he was supplying lumber to the Florida East Coast Railway. He was reportedly so impressed with the fertility of the soil in this region that in 1907 he settled in Pompano as a farmer and road contractor. Turner was very popular in the community, and thus it was not surprising that he won election as Broward's Sheriff, the first of his four electoral victories for that office.⁶

When Turner took office, the County Commission had already negotiated the purchase of the old schoolhouse in Fort Lauderdale for conversion to the county's courthouse, and arrangements had been made to begin construction of a jail.⁷ At the Commission meeting on November 5, 1915, it was decided that there were already enough prisoners in custody to justify creating a "convict camp." To oversee the work of the "road gang," R. R. Priest was appointed Superintendent of Public Roads at a salary of \$60 per month, and the Sheriff was authorized to deliver prisoners to Priest for work upon the roads of the county.⁸

Turner was in office less than two months when, on November 13, 1915, the first murder in Broward County took place. Although they had been the best of friends, Jim Reed shot and killed William Smith in an argument over a cat. The *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, blaming this crime on alcohol, used it to promote the cause of Prohibition: "Another question of too much whiskey; there should be none in the world. We stand for State-wide prohibition. This is the first murder we have had in the new county of Broward; but unless whiskey is done away with, it will not be the last!"⁹

Prohibitionist sentiment was strong in Broward, and as a result, when a "wet or dry election" was held in August 1916, the countywide vote was 421 to 170 in favor of Prohibition. The "dry" votes were in the majority in all six of the county's precincts, ranging from Hallandale, which registered only a single "wet" vote, to Pompano, where Prohibition barely

squeaked by, 32-30. The biggest surprise, apparently, was Fort Lauderdale, where the anti-Prohibition forces had expected a majority of about 50 votes. Instead, the "wets" were defeated in that precinct as well, by a vote of 212 to 108.¹⁰ However, as Sheriff Turner and other law enforcement officials in Broward would quickly learn, this election defeat only seemed to make the "wets" thirstier than ever.

The Governor's appointment of Broward County officials in 1915 was only effective until the following year, when regular elections were to be held. Therefore, if he wanted to remain Sheriff, A. W. Turner would have to run in the 1916 Democratic primary. This he did, after paying the required \$36 filing fee.¹¹ The incumbent Sheriff secured the Democratic nomination when he easily defeated his opponent, C. L. Harper, 440 votes to 181 votes, and in the November 1916 general election, Turner ran unopposed.¹² In those days, Broward was such a heavily Democratic county that winning the nomination in the Democratic Party primary was tantamount to election, and the Republicans often didn't even bother to field a candidate for many local offices. Sheriff Turner began his second term on January 2, 1917, 15 months after he first took office.

During Turner's first years in office, the local newspapers carried an ever increasing number of stories about the Sheriff arresting bootleggers, destroying stills, intercepting "booze boats," and conducting liquor raids. Under the heading "BOOTLEGGER GETS SIX MONTHS AND \$100," the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* reported in May 1917 that "Sheriff Turner has cut another bootlegger nick in his gun stock."¹³ An August 1919 heading reported "SHERIFF CAPTURED THREE MORE STILL," with the item which followed concluding that Sheriff Turner seemed "determined to break up the booze business in this county."¹⁴ Still another article in August 1920 – "MOONSHINE LIQUOR USER IN TROUBLE" –

reported that "the search for a moonshine still or two, located somewhere in the Everglades west of Davie, is the almost daily occupation of Sheriff A.W. Turner now."¹⁵

Although destroying stills occupied much of the Sheriff's time, enforcement of Prohibition laws also involved efforts to capture boats smuggling alcoholic beverages into Florida. Sometimes these seizures required cooperation between the Broward Sheriff's Office and one or more other law enforcement agencies. For example, when the *Carrie May* was captured in January 1920, halfway between Fort Lauderdale and Pompano, this operation was carried out by Sheriff Turner's deputy and three federal officers.¹⁶ Another seizure involved a boat that traveled up the New River in order to land above the city of Fort Lauderdale. The boat had 31 cases of liquor aboard and was captured by a party of officers consisting of the Sheriff, his regular deputy and one special deputy, and two Fort Lauderdale police officers.¹⁷

Of course, the Sheriff's role was a multi-faceted one, and while his enforcement of Prohibition laws received a lot of public attention, this was only a part of Turner's job. Traffic enforcement was one of the other tasks for the Sheriff's Office, and this included making sure vehicles were properly registered. It also meant the Sheriff had to occasionally mediate between the public and an overzealous deputy. Such a situation arose late in 1916. Although the required county automobile license in Broward ran from October 1 of one year through October 1 of the following year, virtually all of the tourists visiting Broward had tags running from January 1 to January 1. It seems that even though a Michigan tourist's plates read that they were valid "until January 1, 1917," one of Sheriff Turner's deputies decided that the plates had nonetheless expired in Broward county on October 1, 1916! Therefore the deputy insisted that the tourist pay the five dollar county license fee, and the

ensuing protests were brought to public attention by the local press. Sheriff Turner settled this matter in a common sense fashion, recognizing the legitimacy of the dates clearly indicated on out-of-state plates. However, he certainly did not want it to appear that his office had backed down on this issue or gone soft on enforcement, so he also issued a dire warning that anyone whose plates were due to expire the first of January better have them renewed on time, or else!¹⁸

There was one type of violent crime involving certain activities carried out by vigilantes that the Sheriff's Office seemed to ignore, and sometimes maybe even to encourage – and that was mob action against anyone who dared to speak “unpatriotically.” In April 1917, shortly after Sheriff Turner began his first full term in office, the United States entered World War I, and anti-German sentiment ran high in this country. In Broward during this time, neither freedom of speech nor freedom of religion apparently meant very much if someone was perceived to be anything less than 100 percent in his

Americanism! One poor fellow by the name of R. G. Laycock learned this the hard way in April 1918. It seems that this young man had religious objections to war, and his Davie neighbors were upset by this. Young Laycock had the habit of quoting scripture to support his anti-war views and he adamantly refused to express hatred for the German Kaiser, saying that God had made all things and that He therefore must have made the Kaiser too. This “blasphemous” assertion that God didn't hate the Germans was just too much for some of the town's other residents, who decided to end the theological impasse through collective action. A mob – whom a local paper referred to as “patriotic citizens of Davie,” and who referred to themselves as a “vigilance committee” – went to his home around midnight one evening and seized Laycock. Then, according to a newspaper report, “he was reminded Monday night that God made tar and feathers, therefore they are good clothes for a slacker!” The same newspaper report also suggested that no one from the Sheriff's Office was

making any attempt to find out who the vigilantes were.¹⁹

Apparently fearing that idle hands were indeed the devil's workshop, some of the good citizens of Davie once again carried out their self-appointed patriotic mission two weeks later. Or, as a local newspaper editor put it, “Davie has again made herself a record for loyalty and successfully closed another German sewer.” It seems that Ed Rink, a farmer visiting Davie, had made several unpopular remarks. He supposedly stated that he did not believe news reports of a major British advance along the Western front, that most of what was published in the newspapers were “damn lies,” that the Germans were no fools, that America had no business getting into the war, and that Uncle Sam would never get him in the Army. The newspaper report of the incident noted that, after he was “politely told to keep his mouth shut,” and reminded that someone else had recently been tarred and feathered for unpatriotic utterances, Rink was told to get out of town. Before that could happen, however, “when patience ceased to be a virtue, his jaw



Photos from arrest records showing prisoners in the courtyard of the first county jail, where broken glass can be seen on top of wall.

was made a target for Uncle Sam's fist; some missed it, however, and landed on his mouth, nose and eyes with good effect. The next time he opens his mouth, it won't be in Davie!" After getting his face "badly smashed," the 44-year-old farmer had to walk all the way to Fort Lauderdale – he had tried to get passage on a boat, but his assailants decided that it would "disgrace" the boat "to haul such a gink."²⁰

This time the Sheriff's Office took prompt action! As soon as the beaten man staggered into town, he was immediately arrested by Turner's deputy and locked up in the county jail. There he was interrogated by the Sheriff. Rink claimed to be a Swedish immigrant who had become a naturalized citizen several decades earlier. The Sheriff, however, summoned a U.S. Secret Service agent, and the editor of a local newspaper speculated that the German sympathizer had "good prospects of landing in a detention camp for the rest of the war if he don't have to face the firing squad!"²¹

In a few other cases too, Sheriff Turner seemed to exhibit a surprisingly laissez-faire attitude toward law-breakers. In one instance, he merely adopted the "get out of town by sundown" strategy familiar to viewers

of Western movies. In May 1917, a resident of Dania, N. C. Pike, was arrested for highway robbery, gambling, assault and bootlegging. He was convicted only of the last charge, with the other charges being held in abeyance on the condition that he leave the county right away. It was reported in a local paper that Pike "was accompanied to the depot by Sheriff Turner, who bid him good-bye, wishing him God speed." The report went on to say that the man's freedom would depend on his staying out of Broward County and all the surrounding counties.²²

In addition to law enforcement, the upkeep of the county jail was another important responsibility for Broward's first Sheriff, as it would be for all of his successors. Construction of the jail building had been completed in 1916, at which time it was insured for \$5000. This was Broward's first county lockup and it was located on Brickell Avenue, directly behind the county courthouse. The bottom floor of the three-story concrete structure was occupied by the deputy sheriff in charge of the jail. The actual cells for confinement of prisoners were on the second floor, which had three distinct compartments, each entirely separated from the others. One of the compartments contained six cells and

the others had two cells in each. Each cell had a pair of cots, a toilet and sink, and other furniture as needed. The third floor of the building contained two very large rooms, one used for the prisoners' laundry and the other for recreation. The yard outside the jail was surrounded by a high concrete wall, which was topped with broken glass.²³

In 1918, the State Jail Inspector visited the Broward County jail for the first time, and according to a contemporary account of this event, he "pronounced it to be in as good condition as any in the state." The jail was viewed as being sufficiently large to meet all anticipated requirements, and the optimistic speculation was offered that if crime kept decreasing, the third floor might never have to be equipped with cells.²⁴

Two years later, a local newspaper reported that because law enforcement efforts were being directed toward preventing crime rather than punishing it after the fact, the Broward County jail was completely empty. When Sheriff Turner was asked to what he attributed this remarkable state of affairs, he replied that the credit should go to Prohibition – as the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* reported, "No booze, no men in jail!"²⁵ Of course, what was entirely left out of this equation was the number of men who at that very moment might have been doing "hard labor" at Broward's convict camp or elsewhere. Given the number of arrests that were regularly reported in the newspapers, it is hard to imagine that the "chain gangs" were also devoid of prisoners! And prison labor was a significant element in the county's fiscal structure; it was how the county roads got built without having to raise taxes and upset voters.²⁶ One example of the budgetary impact of prisoner labor can be seen in an action taken by the Broward County Commissioners during the summer of 1918. At that time these officials decided to save money by laying off J. K. Gordon, the courthouse janitor – their reasoning was that the Sheriff could do the work with county convicts.²⁷



"Chain Gang" working in front of Oakland Park Post Office, T. C. Moore Store, 1920's.

A year after the State Jail Inspector had issued his glowing report, several prisoners complained of mistreatment during their stay in the Broward County jail. Two men who had been arrested for "beating their way on the train" filed affidavits alleging abuses while they were in custody, and the *Fort Lauderdale Herald* published these. The men alleged that they had been given foul water to drink, that their food was inadequate, and that they had been denied needed medical attention. In fact, the two men claimed that while incarcerated they had to sell their clothes in order to buy good drinking water! [Note: in those days, the Sheriff was paid a per diem rate by the county for feeding prisoners – in 1919 it was probably 50 cents or less per day, because it was only 65 cents per day ten years later – and if the Sheriff was able to make a profit on services such as this, it was his to keep.] Turner handled this potential scandal by inviting an investigation of his office, and by asking the local newspapers to publish two further affidavits. In one, a veteran of the 138th Aero Squadron, who had not long before served in France during World War I, countered the claims that had been made regarding food and water. He stated that he had been held in the jail, for a minor offense, at the same time that the other two men were there, and that the food and water had been more than adequate. Moreover, he went on to say that "while he has been in jail he has always been treated justly and that he has never seen the prisoners mistreated." The other affidavit supporting the Sheriff was from Dr. T. S. Kennedy, who stated that he himself had provided the medical services which the men claimed they were denied.²⁸

This was the first time, apparently, that any complaint about the treatment of prisoners at the Broward County jail reached the public, and it appears to have been put to rest rather easily. It was also the first time that the issue of medical care for inmates was discussed in the newspapers, again not causing any significant problem for

Sheriff Turner. However, future sheriffs in Broward County would find themselves having to deal with these two issues over and over again, sometimes facing some very serious criticisms over the way they handled them.

In addition to enforcing the law, running the county jail, and providing a steady supply of labor to the convict camp, there were many tedious administrative chores for which Sheriff Turner was responsible. The Sheriff's Office in those days worked on a fee for service basis, and the more money that was collected for services, the more the Sheriff would earn. There were, even in those days, many subpoenas to be served. There were arrest warrants from other jurisdictions to be executed, as well as arrest warrants to be forwarded to other departments for action. There were fees to be paid and fees to be collected, and rewards to be offered and rewards to be collected. Occasionally, the Sheriff had to do some traveling in order to bring back a prisoner being held in another county or another state. For example, in October 1920, Sheriff Turner had to take a two-day journey to pick up a prisoner in Valdosta, Georgia. The man had allegedly stolen a car in Broward and was apprehended by the local sheriff in Valdosta after that lawman received a telegram from Sheriff Turner. In years to come, such travel would usually be delegated to a deputy, but in the early days of the Broward Sheriff's Office, the county's chief law enforcement officer often had to go himself.²⁹ It would seem that sometimes Turner also had to personally attend to traffic duties as well! In one such instance, on a Saturday night in October of 1920, some half a dozen or so motorists were picked up by Sheriff Turner for displaying only one license plate or for having no tail light visible.³⁰

Along with all of his official duties, the Sheriff occasionally took upon himself other responsibilities related to the welfare of the community. For example, at a Broward County Commission meeting in 1916, Turner

described the plight of a young black boy who had come to his attention. It seems that this child was paralyzed and had no relatives to care for him. In response to the Sheriff's report of this situation, the Commissioners authorized him to arrange care for the boy at county expense.³¹

It is difficult to determine with any certainty the personnel roster of the Broward County Sheriff's Department in its early years. Not long after he first took office, Sheriff Turner apparently hired one "regular" deputy, Alonzo "Lon" Gore. Many reports of moonshine raids and other enforcement activities, going back to at least 1917, indicate that "Lon" Gore was quite active in carrying out these duties, and his name was frequently mentioned along with that of Sheriff Turner. By 1918, Deputy Gore was living in the jail, so it is possible that this was part of his responsibilities as "chief deputy," whether or not that title was ever used.³² After the early months of 1920, no newspaper reports mentioned Gore. His place was apparently taken by another deputy, A.H. Walker, whose name began to appear regularly along with that of the Sheriff in reports of law enforcement activities.³³

A 1916 newspaper report mentioned a "Deputy Sheriff Priest" involved in traffic duties.³⁴ In January 1920, he and Lon Gore accompanied the Sheriff on a raid. Although one newspaper report of this incident referred to both men as "deputies,"³⁵ another paper listed Gore as "Deputy Gore," but referred to Priest as "Mr. Priest."³⁶ A year later, in April 1921, after Priest took part in a raid with Sheriff Turner and Deputy Sheriff Walker, he was referred to as "Special Deputy Priest."³⁷ And in May 1921, there is a reference to a "Jailor Priest."³⁸ In all probability this deputy was the same Raiford R. Priest who had been hired by the County Commission in 1915 to supervise county convicts working on the roads.

Regardless of what titles were used, Sheriff Turner had a very large jurisdiction and few deputies to assist

him. He was therefore probably heartened by a headline that appeared in May 1921, although present day lawmen would undoubtedly have a different reaction: "MAILMEN NOW HEAVILY ARMED." It seems that the U.S. Postmaster General had ordered that postal workers be armed as a precautionary measure against mail robberies. As a result, South Florida post offices were provided with guns from the federal arsenal in Augusta, Georgia. The majority of post office employees were issued Colt .45 revolvers, which they were expected to wear in the holsters which had also been provided to them.³⁹

Although most of Sheriff Turner's law enforcement responsibilities involved routine matters, there were several crimes that attracted significant public attention during his early years in office. In September 1919, a newspaper headline announced "POMPAÑO SCHOOL TEACHER IN TROUBLE!" It would seem that teachers being arrested on moral charges is not an occurrence limited to modern times. Indeed, the newspaper story went on to say that "L. B. Winslow, principal of the Pompano schools," was arrested by Sheriff Turner and charged with adultery. The woman he was living with was also arrested – both pleaded guilty to the charge of "fornication" and were fined \$30. This, the newspaper concluded, "leaves the Pompano school without a principal!"⁴⁰

Only a week later a less scandalous, but far more serious crime occurred. It would seem that, as one newspaper report noted, "a little of the old time 'Wild West' crept into South Florida!" The midnight White Star bus was held up on Dixie Highway by two masked highwaymen, about midway between Fort Lauderdale and Dania. The robbers made the driver and four passengers line up outside the bus and searched them for valuables. Altogether, the two criminals made a net haul of about \$200. Sheriff Turner was called and he formed a posse to hunt for the bandits, but they were not apprehended. What made this robbery



White Star Bus Line

particularly embarrassing for the Sheriff's Office was that there had been an attempt earlier that evening to rob a motorist at the same spot, and this had been reported. As a result, Deputy Gore had gone to the scene of the attempted robbery and had actually spotted the culprits at the side of the road as he drove by. However, according to one newspaper report concerning the robbery, "by the time the [deputy's car] was turned around and started back, the bandits had stopped the bus, relieved the passengers of their money and made their escape into the brush just as the officers came up to the place."⁴¹

One of the most dramatic newspaper stories during this period appeared on January 16, 1920. "SHERIFF TURNER ATTACKED BY A NEGRO DESPERADO" was the headline that greeted Broward citizens who read the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*.⁴² If they were avid readers of the *Fort Lauderdale Herald* instead, they would have read that "SHERIFF TURNER NARROWLY ESCAPES DEATH AT HANDS OF DESPERATE NEGRO!" Although the headlines were similar, what followed were two very different stories.⁴³

The *Sentinel* reported that "Sheriff A. W. Turner was badly butchered up last Sunday night by a negro, Jim

Taylor, whom he attempted to arrest." Then, in what has to be a classic case of understatement, the next line noted that "Taylor is evidently a bad man." This account went on to suggest that it was difficult to understand why the attack had occurred, since the charge which brought the Sheriff to Taylor's door was relatively minor: "On this occasion he was not accused of any serious offense, at least, not considered a grave offense among the negroes, so the sheriff was not expecting any resistance and was caught off his guard." The complaint against Taylor, according to this tale, was that he had run away with another man's wife. The *Sentinel* report also indicated that Sheriff Turner had brought deputies Gore and Priest with him, and stationed them around the house while he entered. Then, "Whack! came a large knife or machete across his hands, breaking his left wrist and severely injuring his right hand. This caused the sheriff to drop his gun and light, and the next blow struck him across the head, almost paralyzing him." The report went on to say that "it took all [of the deputies'] efforts for some time to stop the flow of blood and get the sheriff into the doctor's care." In the meantime, the assailant escaped.⁴⁴

The *Herald* report was in agreement with the *Sentinel* on two things: Turner had been hurt, and the

Sheriff had brought Gore and Priest with him when he went to make the arrest. However, on other points it differed markedly from the *Sentinel* report. For one thing, the *Herald* story claimed that Taylor was being sought not because he was charged with a minor crime, but because he was wanted for murder! It also stated that after striking the Sheriff, the assailant picked up Turner's gun and "shot at the prostrate figure of the sheriff but missed." Moreover, the *Herald* reported that "as he went through the yard [Taylor] shot at Mr. Priest, the ball going through his coat and through his shirt, but not touching the body."⁴⁵ Whichever version one chooses to believe, it was not a good day for Sheriff Turner!

The year would end well for the county's top lawman; however, for it was an election year, and Turner's popularity remained undiminished. Indeed, the Republicans didn't even bother to run a candidate against him. Nonetheless, he did have to face a general election in November, because the Socialist Party had decided to nominate Q. M. Gornto as a candidate for Sheriff. When the election results came in, it was 661 votes for Democrat Turner, 116 votes for Socialist Gornto.⁴⁶

It was a sweeping victory for Aden

W. Turner and January 4, 1921, saw the start of what promised to be a very successful new term for this popular Sheriff. His first term, of course, had been a truncated one, lasting only from the end of 1915 when he was appointed, to the end of the next year. During this time the county's first true elections had been held and Turner had begun his second term – his first *full* term – in 1917. Now, as he embarked upon his third term, there seemed to be few clouds on the horizon. It would have been difficult at that time to predict that Sheriff Turner's third term would be as short as his first.

In May 1921, the Sheriff's Office was embarrassed by a well-publicized escape from the county jail. "PRISONERS ESCAPE FROM COUNTY JAIL BUT ARE CAPTURED" screamed the headline of the *Fort Lauderdale Herald*. In block print immediately below that headline, a subheading told the rest of the story: "Jailer Left Doors Unlocked And Prisoners Took Advantage of Opportunity." It seems that after feeding his prisoners, Deputy Priest simply forgot to lock the jail doors. Three men escaped and then stole a car, some money and a Colt revolver. Fortunately, the escapees were captured by the city marshal at Eustis, Florida. Sheriff Turner told Deputy

Walker to go and retrieve the prisoners, and they were back in the Broward County jail the next day. No one knows, however, exactly what Sheriff Turner told his jailer.⁴⁷

As embarrassing as the jail escape undoubtedly was, it was soon forgotten as events unfolded that would ultimately result in the Sheriff's removal from office. What led to Turner's downfall was the biggest criminal case – and certainly, from the county administration's point of view, the most lucrative one – that had occurred to date in Broward County. Starting at least as early as the 1917-1918 tourist season, a new type of scam had been introduced to Florida, one which was referred to as "wiretapping." It was an elaborate ruse not unlike the one that was later portrayed in the movie *The Sting*. It required a large gang to make it work and, like many "cons," it depended upon the avarice of the victim. The "wiretappers" would begin by renting a nice home in a respectable neighborhood, in some area frequented by winter tourists. Without the knowledge of any of their neighbors, these well dressed and seemingly respectable scammers would set up a phony bookmaking operation inside their new home. A tourist would be selected as the "mark" and then he



The first hospital in Broward County was located in the Wallace Apartment building in 1922.

would be lured to this scene, usually from another tourist city in the area, having been enticed by the prospect of gambling and a little easy money. Once at the supposed bookmaking establishment, the victim-to-be would see people busily engaged with blackboards, charts, telegraph instruments, multiple phones, packages of money, etc. He would then be let in on a little secret, that this was no ordinary bookmaking operation – these “wire-tappers,” he was told, could tap into the wires that carried the earliest reports of racetrack results, thus enabling them to learn which horses had won before anyone else knew. Then, it was claimed, they could very quickly place bets with other bookies just before the betting was “closed.” This, their intended victim was assured, was foolproof – they couldn’t lose on these bets because they already knew the winners! All it took, supposedly, was technology and split-second timing. The technology they obviously possessed, or so it would seem, given all of the paraphernalia that was so carefully displayed in the bogus operation. And to show how well the timing worked, the guest was allowed to place a small bet, receiving his “winnings” a short time later.

Thus was the hook set. Having seen how easy it was to make money this way, the victim would readily go along with the suggestion that he put up the money for a large bet, one that would net him a significant return on a “sure thing.” Often the tourist would have to wire back home for the needed money, in order to get enough cash to ensure a truly magnificent payoff. Once the “bet” was made and the money was in the hands of the scammers, the victim only had to wait a short time before being assured that a small fortune awaited him. It was, he was told, just a matter of a little travel to pick up the payoff, which was supposedly being held for him by the bookies who had been duped by the tourist and his newfound friends. Somewhere along the way, the travel arrangements always went awry, and the tourist would become separated

from the gang member who was taking him to collect the money. Once the truth finally hit him, the victim frequently had no desire to report the crime to the authorities. It was not just the embarrassment at being “taken,” but also the fact that gambling with bookies was illegal in the first place. And besides, the victim might anticipate little sympathy for his loss, as he had obviously been more than willing to cheat others out of their money!⁴⁸

“Wiretappers” had been operating in South Florida for several years when Sheriff Turner began his third term. In May 1921, the *Miami Herald* exposed the workings of this scam, which had come to light largely as a result of several murders, including that of the notorious con artist known as the “Waco Kid.” Detectives indicated that the wiretappers found many of their victims in Miami, and then brought them to Fort Lauderdale and elsewhere for the “fleecing.” The swindles carried out in Florida resorts by these criminals reportedly brought them more than \$2 million each winter season. These con artists avoided prosecution largely through bribery and corruption, with 25 percent of their take being allocated to “protection.” Their activities resulted not only in murders – with at least five homicides being attributed to a single band of wiretappers operating out of Miami – but in suicides as well. Although most tourists who were victimized would quietly endure the swindle, for some the financial losses were so devastating that they took their own lives. One such unfortunate was the son of a Louisiana governor.⁴⁹

In Broward County, the first trial of an individual involved in a “wiretapping” scam had taken place in early 1919, the result of a winter visitor from Philadelphia complaining that he had been defrauded of \$25,000.⁵⁰ However, the gang who would bring grief to Sheriff Turner did not arrive in Broward until a few years later. In January 1922, they began their operations in Fort Lauderdale, setting themselves up in the Frank Oliver House, facing the river on North River

Drive. Despite the reluctance of victims to report their losses, it was not very long before the gang’s activities became known to residents in the area, and a number of prominent people in the community appealed to Sheriff Turner and other local authorities to do something about this criminal enterprise. When no action was taken, a few citizens took their appeal to the state capital, where they found a willing listener in Governor Cary A. Hardee.⁵¹

The result was seen in the headline of the *Fort Lauderdale Herald* for February 3, 1922: “THIRTEEN WIRETAPPERS CAUGHT HERE – Raid Made By Governor’s Agent Assisted By Local Sheriff.” It was, according to the report that followed, “the biggest raid on wiretappers that has ever been pulled off in the State of Florida.”⁵² Governor Hardee had sent Robert H. Shackelford, a deputy sheriff from Duval County, down to Fort Lauderdale as the Governor’s “special representative.” Within a short time, Shackelford had gathered sufficient evidence from Fort Lauderdale, Miami, and West Palm Beach to warrant a raid on the Oliver House.⁵³

Sheriff Turner had received no notice of Deputy Shackelford’s arrival in Fort Lauderdale, and apparently he knew little of the activities of the Governor’s agent until a short time before the raid actually took place.⁵⁴ On Friday, February 3, Shackelford selected 10 local businessmen and brought them to Sheriff Turner’s office where they were sworn in as deputies. Then he, Sheriff Turner, and the 10 newly deputized men conducted the 2 p.m. raid. [Note: there was no mention of Deputy Walker or any other “regular” Broward deputy sheriff taking part in this action.] The raid was successful, 13 arrests were made and the wiretappers were jailed over the weekend.⁵⁵ On Monday morning, they were brought before the county judge, and the hearing went on for two days. At its conclusion, the judge held that there was sufficient evidence to bring the 12 wiretappers to trial (the 13th man was being held as a witness). The

defendants were placed under bonds totaling \$110,000 – at the time this was reported to be the largest bond ever required in the state of Florida. It was noted in the local press that “when the amount of the bonds was announced there was great applause. This peeved the attorneys for the defense, but the Judge was powerless to stop the cheering.”⁵⁶

Six of the men were bonded out, but the other six sat in the county jail for another seven weeks. When the defendants appeared in Circuit Court, it was reported that they “made strong endeavors to be agreeable to the court and handshaking and cheerful greetings was the order of the day.”⁵⁷ This was certainly something that might be expected from accomplished “con artists,” but it apparently did have some effect nonetheless. On March 27, 1922, all 12 members of the gang pleaded guilty and threw themselves on the mercy of the court. The judge, to the surprise of many, fined them but did not give a single one of them, not even their leader, any prison time. Instead the judge announced that “penitentiary sentences would be suspended pending the good behavior of the men in this county.” Good behavior while they remained in Broward was certainly not an unreasonable expectation, and it was quite an easy one for even the most dishonest among them to live up to, considering that the men all left the county that very day.⁵⁸

But before they left, of course, they paid their fine. And what a fine it

was – a total of \$20,000!⁵⁹ There were many who believed that the con men had bought their freedom with that money. Indeed, one Florida historian has indicated that although no official records can be found to substantiate the claim, the talk in Fort Lauderdale at the time was that the deal was struck because the county was in need of the money. Specifically, it was said that an agreement was reached to set the fine at the exact amount it would cost to construct the county’s badly needed first hospital.⁶⁰ Whatever the case may be, this fine – which amounted to almost twice as much as the county had paid for the courthouse in which the case was heard – was clearly a windfall for local officials!

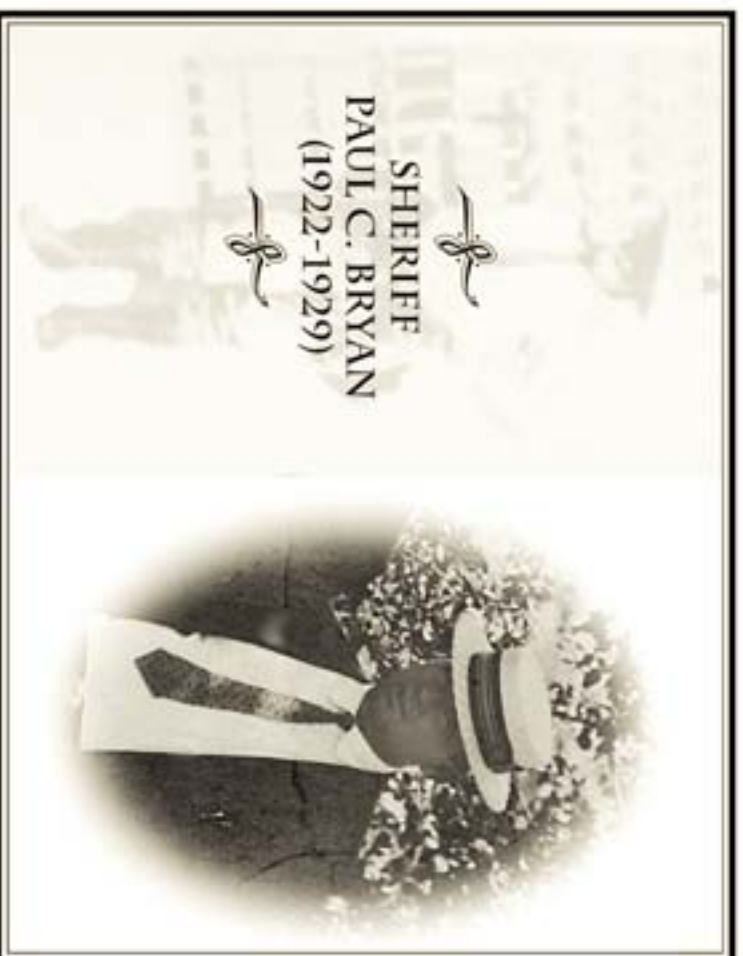
The citizens of Broward were certainly very pleased with this outcome, as it did indeed seem likely that in the future scam artists would be inclined to think twice before taking up residence in their county. As one local newspaper editor wrote when the court proceedings had been concluded, “the result of the trial is felt to be a vindication of the citizens who took the matter into their own hands and helped to secure the arrest and conviction of the wiretappers after the failure of the authorities to take any steps in the matter.”⁶¹

So the County Commissioners were happy, the wiretappers were happy, the citizens were happy. Who wasn’t happy? Probably Sheriff Turner, or as he was called by the time the wiretappers went to trial, “*ex-Sheriff* Turner.” On Saturday, February 25,

1922, just three weeks after the raid that had put the wiretappers out of business, and a month before they would go to trial, Governor Hardee removed A. W. Turner from his post as Sheriff, charging him with “nonfeasance in office.” Specifically, the Governor cited Turner’s failure to oust the alleged wiretappers from his jurisdiction. The first Sheriff of Broward County had been suspended!⁶²

Throughout the county there was great sympathy for Turner’s position, and apparently no one really believed that he was in any way connected with the wiretappers, or that he had accepted graft. There was, in fact, an immediate effort by some leading citizens to convince the Governor to reinstate the suspended Sheriff. However, Hardee was adamant and made clear his determination to take whatever means might be necessary to put an end to wiretapping in Florida. Moreover, the Governor said, he would remove *every* sheriff who failed to act when these criminals were known to be operating in his community.⁶³ Legally, the removal of any sheriff by the Governor was contingent on the approval of the Florida Senate, and therein lay Turner’s only chance for reinstatement. However, because the State Legislature only met every two years, it would not be until the following year that the suspended Broward Sheriff would have the opportunity to take his case to the senators. ★

SHERIFF
PAUL C. BRYAN
(1922-1929)



When Governor Hardee removed A. W. Turner as Broward County Sheriff, he named as a replacement “a young man of splendid qualifications for the office,” according to the editor of the *Fort Lauderdale Herald*.⁶⁴ Ironically, the administration of the man being written about, Paul C. Bryan, was destined to be plagued by two of the most incredible scandals ever to occur in Broward County. One of these involved the mass arrest of every officer in the Sheriff’s Department, including the Sheriff, on charges of corruption. The other scandal arose from the later arrest of Bryan’s longtime Chief Deputy, on a charge of murder.

Paul C. Bryan was born in Glencoe, Florida on January 13, 1891, and he moved to the Fort Lauderdale area in 1900. His sister, Mrs. Susie M. Craig, had come to Broward County two years previously, and she became the postmaster of Fort Lauderdale. She served in that capacity for 15 years, and for 11 of those years her brother Paul served as her assistant postmaster. He left this position to serve in the military during World War I, returning to Fort Lauderdale in 1921.⁶⁵ At the time of

his appointment as Sheriff, one local newspaper reported him to be a graduate of Stetson University.⁶⁶

Sheriff Bryan took over as Broward’s chief law enforcement officer on Monday, March 6, 1922. He appointed Fred M. Powell, formerly a deputy in Palm Beach, as his Chief Deputy and jailer. Powell, who had recently moved to Fort Lauderdale from Hobe Sound, took up residence in the jail.⁶⁷ Although the new Sheriff had no prior law enforcement experience, before he had completed his first year in office, he would find himself making arrests for several murders and other serious crimes. Moreover, Bryan would also become quite familiar with the petty crimes and “vice” arrests that kept the Sheriff’s Office busy during the “Roaring Twenties.”

Among the first arrests made by the new Sheriff personally was one that certainly brought a lot of attention to his office. One Sunday afternoon in June 1922, a baseball game was being played at Stranahan Park in Fort Lauderdale, with the local team competing against a team from Miami. At the end of the second inning, Sheriff Bryan stepped out onto the

playing field and arrested the entire Fort Lauderdale team – they were charged with playing baseball on Sunday! For some reason, though, the Miami team wasn’t arrested. When the case went to court later that week, the lawyers for the defense asked for a jury trial. Assisting the defense lawyers was Judge Price of Miami, who was a member of the Miami team and who had been present when the opposing team was arrested. The jury heard both sides and retired to give careful consideration to the very weighty legal issues involved, returning with a “not guilty” verdict in less than ten minutes.⁶⁸

In December 1922, when he had been in office less than a year, Sheriff Bryan was faced with the most serious jail break that had ever occurred at the Broward County jail. The two men who escaped were members of the Ashley gang, probably the most notorious band of outlaws in Florida history. The “Wild West” had the James brothers and their gang; Florida had the Ashley brothers and their gang. From early 1915 through late 1924, the Ashley bunch brought terror to the Gold Coast. Their activities included bank robberies, rumrunning, train



Fort Lauderdale Town Baseball Team, circa 1921

robberies, hijacking and, of course, murder. In May 1922, the Ashley gang had robbed the Bank of Stuart – for the second time – and the two men who would later escape from the Broward County jail had been arrested for participation in that crime. They had originally been locked up in the

Palm Beach County jail, but when repairs had to be made to that facility, they were transferred to Broward. The prisoners, who were occupying a cell on the top floor of Broward's county lockup, escaped through a trap door in the ceiling and then lowered themselves down from the roof using

blankets and sheets tied together. The break was discovered a short time after it occurred, and a quickly organized posse set off in pursuit of the escaped prisoners. In addition, telegrams were sent to authorities up and down the Florida coast, although it was believed that the two men most likely had fled into the Everglades, which was where the Ashley gang hid out.

One of the two escapees was Hanford Mobley, the teenage nephew of John Ashley and a new member of the gang – in addition to the bank robbery charge, federal charges were also pending against the young man for smuggling and piracy. Mobley reportedly idolized his uncle, who had robbed the same bank a few years earlier. Despite Sheriff Turner's efforts, the two jail escapees avoided recapture.⁶⁹

It was also during Bryan's first year in office that County Commissioner Dan Johnson, who represented the Deerfield district, was shot to death on Dixie Highway one Saturday morning. His assailant was W. L. Bracknell, the Postmaster at Deerfield and a former county commissioner himself. The two men had been close friends, but they

Hanford Mobley and the other man who escaped with him from the Broward County jail, Roy Matthews.



had recently had a disagreement. At the time this incident occurred, both men were wearing revolvers in their belts, and shortly after they met, the shooting began. The killer, it was reported, "made no effort to escape, but left word for Sheriff Bryan to call at his home for him when he arrived."⁷⁰ Two months later, when Bracknell was brought to trial, there was a large crowd in attendance, with people from all over the county coming to hear the testimony. After all the evidence had been presented, the pioneer resident of Broward County was acquitted by the jury, after deliberations that lasted only 30 minutes.⁷¹



W. L. Bracknell

During the same period of time, Bryan also had to deal with a very similar incident, although it is doubtful that many people at the time would view it so. It was another tragedy involving two men who had a quarrel, who also met on Dixie Highway, and who were also both armed. In this second case, though, the headline read "NEGRO IS KILLED – Two Negro Farm Hands Meet And Shoot It Out Sunday Night." When Sheriff Bryan arrived, he found M. E. Poole dead and the other combatant, Sam Neeley, very seriously wounded.⁷²

Other cases in which the new Sheriff had to become directly involved might today be handled by a vice squad or sex crimes unit. One of the first arrests that Bryan had to make after his appointment as Sheriff was that of a Miami man who was charged with "transporting a woman for

immoral purposes." The warrant had been filed by the woman's husband. Not surprisingly, it appeared that the car which the accused was driving had also been stolen.⁷³

Two other crimes that Bryan had to investigate during his first year in office involved sexual assaults on young girls. In the first case, a man had taken his wife and a young girl – one report indicated that she was a 12-year-old, another listed her as 14 years of age – for a ride in his car. Then he induced them to drink some liquor with him, after which he left his wife in the car and took the girl for a walk in the woods, where he allegedly assaulted her. His wife came running when she heard the girl's screams, but she was knocked unconscious by her husband.⁷⁴ The accused rapist was indicted by the Broward Grand Jury, but after two trials, he was acquitted.⁷⁵

Less than a month after that incident had taken place, the Sheriff was presented with another sexual assault case, and this time the rape victim was an Indian girl.⁷⁶ Despite a great deal of evidence presented at the ensuing three-day trial, the outcome was summarized in a newspaper headline that read: "JURY ACQUITS MAN OF CHARGE OF ASSAULTING YOUNG LOCAL SEMINOLE INDIAN WOMAN."⁷⁷ It is interesting to note that one of the local papers blamed this crime on idleness. The proposed solution? "Enforce the vagrancy law, we say!"⁷⁸

For the most part, though, the arrest reports filed by the Sheriff's Office during Bryan's tenure were as routine as they had been during his predecessor's time in office. Some of the charges that were lodged against defendants with great frequency in the 1920s would still be quite familiar today, and they include:

- "Reckless driving"
- "Carrying a concealed weapon"
- "Driving without a license"
- "Issuing a worthless check"
- "Assault and battery"

- "Driving under the influence of intoxicating liquors"
- "Petit larceny"

Other charges, such as "gambling," are still occasionally seen today, although certainly with nowhere near the frequency that they appeared back then. For some minor crimes, the wording has changed, and today we don't expect to see such quaintly worded charges as:

- "Beating a board bill"
- "Riding a train without a ticket"

Of course, many of the charges back then had to do with the fact that Prohibition was in operation in Broward County all through this period. "Intoxication" was the charge which appeared most regularly, but other charges were interesting for their wording, clearly a product of the Prohibition Era:

- "Possession of moonshine"
- "Operating a still"
- "Possession of home brew"
- "Unlawful possession of liquor: 3 coca cola bottles of shine whiskey"
- "Possessing 2 bottles of beer"

However, the most dramatic indication that times have changed is seen in some of the other charges that appeared often in the records of the Broward Sheriff's Office during the 1920s. One of the most popular seemed to be "Fornication" (for which the usual fine was \$5.00), but others included:

- "Operating a tent show without a license"
- "Bastardy"
- "Profanity"
- "Allowing cattle to roam at large"

Many of these charges resulted in fines from \$5 to \$100, with the alternative being five, 10 or up to 60 days at hard labor. However, a sizeable number of these charges did not include the option of paying a fine in

lieu of incarceration, and the majority of these resulted in sentences of either 30 or 60 days at hard labor.⁷⁹

Indeed, some of the crimes with which people were charged during the "Roaring Twenties" were not just quaint or unusual, but today might be considered downright reactionary. One of these was "breaking a labor contract," and one man convicted of this was sentenced to 60 days of hard labor.⁸⁰ To understand why such a "crime" could be prosecuted, it is necessary to remember the social and economic context in which this occurred. To begin with, throughout the first half of the 20th century, segregation was the order of the day in Florida, as it was in many Southern states. The rights of minorities were few, and bigotry was widespread. Moreover, in its first several decades, the Broward Sheriff's Office operated largely to protect the interests of the white farmers and businessmen of the county, the people who put the Sheriff in office. Finally, the early 1920s were boom years for Florida, and labor was scarce. People expected the Sheriff's Office to help relieve the labor shortage.

Two letters received by Sheriff Bryan may shed some further light on this. The first, dated May 24, 1923, was from the Governor of Florida, the man who had appointed Bryan to the office of Sheriff. In this letter, Governor Hardee told Bryan that he had recently become aware of efforts to recruit Florida labor to work in other states. He went on to say that Florida had a strong statute to prevent that, as the industries of Florida were sorely in need of workers. The Governor closed with the remark that he was sure Bryan "will be glad to arrest any violators of this law."⁸¹

The other letter, also on the subject of local labor, was sent to the Sheriff by the head of the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce. Dated May 5, 1925, it informed Bryan that a committee of citizens had called attention to "the scarcity and the prevailing high wages of common negro labor." Going on in true *Jim Crow* fashion, the writer stated that "it is evident that high wages encourage laziness." So what was the proposed solution, and what had the Sheriff to do with it? Well, it seems that the Chamber of Commerce wanted the

Sheriff "to compel idle negroes to engage in some sort of work or to leave the city!"⁸²

In addition to some of his unreconstructed constituents' expectations regarding the labor shortage, Sheriff Bryan had to deal with other social problems as well. One of these has received a great deal of attention in recent years, but it was also quite familiar to South Florida sheriffs in the 1920s – the smuggling of illegal immigrants into the United States. In 1927, for example, the Sheriff of Lee County stated that during a four-year period, he had apprehended over 500 smuggled aliens.⁸³ In a very tragic case reported in the same year, smugglers were found to have murdered a group of 17 Chinese and thrown their bodies into the sea somewhere off the Florida coast.⁸⁴

One particular case involving illegal aliens must have been long remembered by Sheriff Bryan and some other residents of Broward County. In April 1923, a group of 23 illegal immigrants landed on the beach in Deerfield. They were subsequently arrested by Sheriff Bryan and one of his deputies, and then locked up in the



Laborers at work in the fields.

county jail. Most of these men came from Czechoslovakia, and a few from Italy. They had gotten as far as Cuba, and then paid from \$140 to \$200 each to be smuggled into the United States. They were brought over in an open boat and were on the water seven days, being given only food that was virtually inedible. As a result, it was reported that "the men were all ravenously hungry when given an opportunity to eat at the county jail."⁸⁵

What was most interesting about this case was that on a Friday evening a few days after they were captured, these refugees put on a concert for their captors. This entertainment was attended by courthouse officials and a few invited guests. It involved a musical play, followed by several of the aliens singing folk songs from their native lands. A local paper reported on the play, noting that the performance of one of the Italian singers in particular elicited a great deal of applause from the audience. The play was a tragedy, and the musical piece which brought the most applause was the Italian soloist's song "of lamentation."⁸⁶ This was indeed quite fitting, because several days after their performance most of the aliens were deported.⁸⁷

During Sheriff Bryan's third year in office, the infamous Ashley gang held up a bank in Broward County. Their September 1924 robbery of the Pompano Bank netted these outlaws over \$20,000. That crime, however, would turn out to be their last "job." The gang's end, less than two months later, came about as a result of a relentless pursuit by the Sheriff of Palm Beach County, Bob Baker. However, when the long-anticipated showdown finally came – on November 1, 1924 – Baker wasn't present. Instead, he sent three of his deputies to take part in this confrontation with the outlaws, claiming that he was too "busy" to go himself! Needless to say, this action – or more appropriately, *inaction* – on Sheriff Baker's part fueled a great deal of local speculation as to the reason for his absence.

Bob Baker's deputies joined J. R.

Merritt, the Sheriff of St. Lucie County, and together these lawmen set up a roadblock on Dixie Highway, at the bridge over Sebastian Creek, about 20 miles north of Fort Pierce. When John Ashley's automobile was forced to stop, the outlaw leader and the three members of his gang who accompanied him found themselves surrounded and outgunned, and they surrendered. What happened next is unclear, but the result was not. When the smoke cleared, the four gang members lay dead, cut down by salvos from the shotguns carried by the lawmen. The official version of the story was that the outlaws went for their guns, but many people believed that they were simply executed. Apparently they were already handcuffed when they were shot. One of the four dead outlaws was the teenager Hanford Mobley, who two years earlier escaped from the Broward County jail.⁸⁸

What does the demise of the Ashley gang have to do with the Broward County Sheriff's Office? Actually, nothing! And that is very curious indeed, for several reasons. For one thing, shortly before these criminals met their fate, the Governor of Florida had made it quite clear to Paul Bryan that he expected the Broward Sheriff to take action against the outlaw gang. "The time has come," Governor Hardee wrote, "when these desperadoes must be captured!" The Governor went on to suggest strongly that Bryan meet with Sheriff Baker of Palm Beach County and devise some joint plan.⁸⁹ Eight days later, apparently growing even more irritated by the Broward Sheriff's continued inaction, Hardee wrote once again, pointing out to Bryan that he hadn't yet heard from him. The Governor specifically asked what plans, if any, were being made to put a stop to the Ashleys.⁹⁰ There is no record that any such plans were ever made by the Broward Sheriff's Office, and in a very short time, it became a moot point.

What makes Bryan's apparent lack of interest in pursuing the Ashley gang even more curious is the fact that the

Sheriff had in his department an officer with superb credentials for tracking down these outlaws. Bryan's right-hand man, his Chief Deputy, knew John Ashley as well as, or perhaps better than, any other lawman in South Florida.

When Bryan had been in office for eight months, he appointed William A. Hicks as his Chief Deputy.⁹¹ For four years, "Big Bill" Hicks would live in the jail and virtually run the Sheriff's Office for Bryan. With Broward County's growth, the work of the department had greatly increased. There were now several deputies and a tremendous amount of paperwork. Almost all of the correspondence from the Sheriff's Office at this time was signed "Sheriff Bryan (by William A. Hicks, D.S.)" – or simply signed by Bryan with Hicks' initials indicating the real author.⁹²



William A. "Big Bill" Hicks

It is probable that none of Paul Bryan's endeavors would have gone as smoothly as they did had it not been for his right-hand man, Bill Hicks. When the Sheriff had to face his first test at the polls, after two years as an appointed officeholder, "Big Bill's" assistance was undoubtedly of great value in assuring Bryan's victory. To be sure, the Chief Deputy was a very able "politician" himself. He had helped to organize the local lodge of the Elks, and he had served as its first Exalted Ruler. Hicks was also quite active in

several civic organizations, and he managed to acquire significant real estate holdings in Broward County. He would have had good reason to use his many "connections" to help Bryan politically, because the Chief Deputy very definitely liked his job and wanted to keep it. He was equally helpful to the Sheriff in the sphere of law enforcement, because while Bryan had come into office with no experience in this area, Hicks was a seasoned lawman.⁹³

It was on account of his law enforcement experience that the Chief Deputy was personally acquainted with the notorious John Ashley! Hicks' first job as a lawman had been in Dade County, where he served as a deputy under Sheriff Dan Hardie. In 1915, John Ashley had been held in the Dade County jail awaiting trial for murder. On June 2 of that year, his brother Bob Ashley tried to break him out. During this unsuccessful attempt, Deputy Hendrickson, the jailer, was killed. Sheriff Hardie hired Bill Hicks to replace the slain deputy, and that is how Hicks first met John Ashley. The new jailer and his prisoner got along very well, and it was in one of their frequent discussions that Hicks suggested to Ashley that the outlaw dictate the story of his life to another prisoner. The plan was that this narrative would then be edited by Hicks and published. According to a newspaper report written at the time, "Deputy Hicks declares the story, as far as the writers have proceeded with it, makes intensely interesting reading, and some of its chapters read like a tale of the Wild West in its wildest days."⁹⁴

It would appear that Hicks had a certain degree of admiration for Ashley, the stone cold killer to whom he related so well. It is interesting to speculate as to whether this might have been a factor in the Broward Sheriff's seeming reluctance to become actively involved in putting an end to the outlaw. If Bryan had wanted to send anyone after Ashley, the logical choice would, of course, have been Hicks. In fact, Governor Hardee had suggested to Bryan that the Ashleys might never

be captured unless "some man is put on the job in the way of detective service."⁹⁵ Right in Bryan's office was just such a man, someone who had experience working for the William J. Burns Detective Agency, a detective good enough at his work to be made chief of the Burns Agency office in Memphis. Indeed, that was the position "Big Bill" Hicks held just before becoming Sheriff Bryan's deputy. Yet when the showdown with the Ashley gang took place, no one from the Broward Sheriff's Office was there.

There was one other interesting connection between Hicks and the Ashley gang. Years later, when Hicks, the professional lawman, was himself facing criminal charges, it was an outlaw who would step forward and try to provide "Big Bill" with an alibi. This man, a prisoner in the state penitentiary, was Joe Tracey – who had been a member of the Ashley gang!⁹⁶

With his Chief Deputy's help, Paul Bryan was returned to office in the 1924 elections. The real challenge hadn't been prevailing in that year's general election, but rather the task of gaining the *nomination* for Sheriff in the Democratic primary. At that time in Broward's history, the Democratic nomination for a county office continued to be tantamount to election. So all Bryan really had to do was to get nominated, and as the incumbent he certainly should have had the inside track. However, there was another contender who was, in a way, *also* the incumbent!

When Sheriff A. W. Turner was suspended from office in 1922, he had to wait a year before he could try to get his suspension overturned, because the Florida legislature only met every two years. But in 1923, the Florida Senate upheld Turner's removal, leaving him only one option for regaining the office of Sheriff, to seek re-election the following year. Turner was optimistic about his chances of success – after all, he had been elected three times and Bryan hadn't even been elected once! The former Sheriff had been very popular with the people of Broward County, and he still had many

supporters in the community. Turner made every effort to ensure his victory in the 1924 Democratic primary, and he represented a very real threat to Sheriff Bryan's bid to remain in office.⁹⁷

However, Paul Bryan hadn't been idle in the political realm either, and ultimately it was he who emerged victorious from the primary, thus winning four more years in office. In January 1925, two months after John Ashley and his companions met their bloody end, Paul Bryan was sworn in once again as the Sheriff of Broward County.

Things were looking good for the Sheriff's Office, some might even say "prosperous." The department's law enforcement responsibilities would steadily increase as the population of the county grew, but this would be matched by an increase in the number of deputies, and soon there would be five, then six, then seven. The amount of paperwork would mount also, but "Big Bill" was on top of it. And this increased paperwork was not at all a bad thing for Sheriff Bryan, since his income was dependent on the fees his office generated.

The following year, however, things began to change. The economic downturn was beginning to be felt and the political climate seemed to be undergoing some changes as well. In August 1926, Chief Deputy Hicks would write to a friend up North who had asked about the situation in Broward: "Now about local conditions here, they are rotten." He went on to add that "the City is raising all kind (*sic*) of hell with the Chief of Police and Police officers, threatening to dismiss them etc., if the town was not immediately cleaned up, and also casting insinuations against the Sheriff's office. It seems so ridiculous because there is not a cleaner little town. . . ."⁹⁸

Things would get even worse when, on September 18, 1926, a disastrous hurricane hit the southeast coast of Florida. There were many deaths, and several areas of Broward – including Fort Lauderdale, Dania,



Hallandale Garage, showing some of the damage from the hurricane of September 18, 1926.

and Hollywood – were devastated. Coming on top of the financial decline in Florida, this storm strained community resources almost to the breaking point. It was a very bad year for Broward County residents.

The worst of the year was still not over for “Big Bill” Hicks, however. Although a high profile public official often makes many friends, he frequently makes enemies as well, and the Chief Deputy was no exception. He had indeed made enemies – perhaps too many, as subsequent events would bear out. “Big Bill” had, for example, in the wake of the September 18 hurricane, thwarted the efforts of Fort Lauderdale’s Mayor, Jack Tidball to declare martial law.⁹⁹ This would be neither forgotten nor forgiven, and it only added to the animosity toward Hicks already harbored by several influential Broward politicians. Whatever the case might be, for reasons not entirely clear, on October 3, 1926, Sheriff Bryan fired his Chief Deputy.¹⁰⁰

The loss of his deputy sheriff’s salary caused Hicks no great financial stress, but for the first time since he had moved to Fort Lauderdale, “Big Bill” was without the status of an official position. So he decided to seek elected office himself. There was one major problem, to be sure – the Democratic primary, which was the key

to being elected to office in Broward, had already been held! However, Hicks got around this obstacle by running as a “write-in” candidate for a position most people weren’t even aware existed, and for which no one had even bothered to file. When the election results were printed in the local papers, their readers were quite surprised to learn that William A. Hicks had been elected Justice of the Peace for the Third District. Hicks expressed his gratitude to the 18 friends who had written in his name on their ballots, claiming that their decision to do so had been “unsolicited and without my having been consulted.”¹⁰¹ It is doubtful that very many Broward County residents believed this.

Despite Hicks’ election, the County Commission absolutely refused to recognize him as a Justice of the Peace, contending that this office did not exist in Broward County. Nonetheless, Hicks did make some headway. First, he received his official commission from the Governor of Florida, and then he opened an office and proceeded to function as a Justice of the Peace. He conducted Justice Court regularly, held at least one coroner’s inquest, and on a number of occasions signed orders remanding prisoners to the care of his old boss. Hicks had no problem carrying out the duties of a Justice of the Peace – his

problem was getting paid for doing so. He submitted his bills to the County Commission on a regular basis, but they refused to pay, saying his office was non-existent. In an attempt to force the County Commissioners to pay him, Hicks took them to court, but he lost. It was his intention to take this matter to the Florida Supreme Court on appeal, but before that could happen, he would find himself faced with far more significant problems.¹⁰²

The former Chief Deputy wasn’t the only one with troubles, however. Only two months after Hicks’ election as Justice of the Peace, some of his former Sheriff’s Office colleagues would find themselves immersed in significant legal difficulties. As a matter of fact, *all* of Broward’s regular deputies, as well as the Sheriff, would soon be facing problems much greater than those (yet) confronting “Big Bill.”

In an interesting prelude to what was to come, on April 15, 1926, P. F. Hambsch, Federal Prohibition Administrator for Florida, wrote a letter to Sheriff Bryan. It started off with the statement that “the general impression throughout the United States outside of Florida is that the State and City authorities in Florida are doing little or nothing towards enforcement of the National Prohibition Laws or the State Prohibition Laws.” The federal official went on to ask the Sheriff for a monthly report on the arrests and seizures in his jurisdiction, so that Hambsch would “be in a position to tell the truth about Florida in regard to enforcement of the liquor laws.”¹⁰³

In his April 17, 1926 response to the Prohibition Administrator’s letter, Sheriff Bryan was quite solicitous, saying “I am ready to cooperate with you and your forces at all times, and nothing would please me any better than to have the prohibition laws enforced one hundred percent.” However, Bryan went on to complain that in the past, federal Prohibition officers had come into his jurisdiction without advance warning and made minor arrests, blowing major investigations being conducted by the

Sheriff's Office. Nonetheless, the Sheriff hastened to assure the federal official of his good intentions: "I do not expect you to give me advance information and I do not want you to labor under such impression, but I do feel that if your agents would get acquainted with us and get a little closer together in a friendly way, that it would help to bring on better cooperation when the necessity arose."¹⁰⁴

Apparently the federal Prohibition officials took Bryan at his word and chose not to provide him with any advance information on raids they planned. They certainly did, however, arrange for their agents to become better acquainted with the Sheriff and his deputies, although perhaps not in the "friendly way" that the Sheriff had anticipated. Moreover, Hambusch clearly intended to keep his earlier promise to Bryan "to broadcast through the press the truth in regard to the work that you are doing."¹⁰⁵

The result was at 7 a.m. on January 27, 1927, federal agents swooped down on Broward County in an attack on what they claimed was one of the biggest liquor conspiracies and illicit supply operations in the United States. According to one newspaper report, this massive effort involved "every prohibition enforcement agency of the United States government."¹⁰⁶ A number of raids were carried out

simultaneously by 18 federal Prohibition agents and 12 Coast Guardsmen, and one surprising result of these raids was that much of Broward County was left without local law enforcement. The first actions taken by the raiders included the arrests of Sheriff Bryan and seven of his deputies — *the entire Broward County Sheriff's Office* — as well as six Fort Lauderdale police officers including the city's Assistant Chief of Police Bert Croft. At the same time, a number of other people were also arrested. The arrest warrants for the Sheriff and his men specifically alleged conspiracy to violate the Prohibition law. In addition to Sheriff Bryan, those from his department reported to have been arrested were Chief Deputy Robert Kendall and Deputies Jot Shiver, Byrne B. Baker, J. P. Martin, Glen Maugans, E.G. Grimes, and Nathan Shiver.¹⁰⁷

According to published reports, the prisoners were all brought to the local Coast Guard station and searched for weapons. The members of the Sheriff's Department and the city police officers were all armed when arrested. They were disarmed by the federal officers, according to newspaper accounts, but "they were not deprived of their badges of office."¹⁰⁸ At a preliminary hearing, bail for the Sheriff and the Assistant Police Chief was set at \$5,000 each, and \$2,000 each

for everyone else. Bryan then made a statement to the press, denying any wrongdoing. "I have in no way violated my oath of office, nor have I been guilty of any conspiracy to violate the law," the Sheriff claimed. "I have no fear of the outcome of any investigation. . ."¹⁰⁹

Despite the fact that he was facing serious criminal charges, and that his entire department had been labeled corrupt by the Federal Government, Sheriff Bryan was not removed from office by Florida Governor John W. Martin. This is particularly noteworthy because his predecessor, Sheriff Turner, had been removed for far less cause, which was the occasion for Bryan becoming Sheriff in the first place. However, although Bryan wasn't suspended, and was ultimately allowed to finish the remaining two years of his term, the charges of corruption in the Sheriff's Office would ultimately end any chances he might have had for re-election.

Strangely enough, a few months after his arrest, Sheriff Bryan found himself in very real danger of suspension from office by Governor Martin, but this was for something completely unconnected to bootlegging. The new threat to his position came not from the criminal charges he faced, but from his failure to take decisive action quickly enough when the Governor demanded an end to gambling at the Pompano Racetrack. The Florida Supreme Court had ruled that the betting scheme employed at that track was illegal, and this certainly put Sheriff Bryan in a very difficult position. He didn't want to upset the investors who built the racetrack and had so much at stake, nor did he have any desire to go counter to the wishes of the many local people who backed its operation. Nonetheless, the Sheriff ultimately decided that it was probably best to err in the direction of caution, and he sent deputies to arrest four of the track's operators on gambling charges. However, the Broward County judge who heard the case, Fred B. Shippey, ruled that these men had *not* broken any laws — a local judge was, in



Broward County Moonshine Still, circa 1930



Pompano Race Track, circa 1926

effect, attempting to overrule the Florida Supreme Court!¹¹⁰

When word of this reached Governor Martin, he was furious. He immediately sent a telegram to Sheriff Bryan, which read in part: "I shall expect you to break up the gambling at the Pompano racetrack this afternoon. If gambling continues there this afternoon, as much as I regret it, I am going to appoint a new sheriff for your county." The Governor had made it clear to Bryan that if any further gambling were to take place at the Pompano track, it would mean the lawman's job. The Sheriff knew that the only way he could be absolutely certain that no gambling occurred there would be to close the racetrack down, and that is exactly what he did.¹¹¹

When the owners of the Pompano Racetrack later made one last effort to revive horse racing at that site, the Governor quickly wired Sheriff Bryan, asking if he was able and willing to put a stop to this new attempt to violate the state's gambling laws. Were the Sheriff unable to uphold these laws, the Governor wrote, "if necessary, I will send state troops to Pompano to enforce them." Bryan certainly did not want the National Guard policing his county, and he therefore wasted no time in assuring the Governor that he

was both willing and able to carry out his law enforcement responsibilities. Apparently this was enough to convince the state's chief executive that Broward's Sheriff had learned his lesson.¹¹²

Although Sheriff Bryan's most pressing problems were under control, at least temporarily, the tribulations of his former Chief Deputy, William A. Hicks, were just beginning. On July 7, 1927, Hicks was arrested on a charge of first degree murder! What began to unfold was the most sensational murder trial in Broward County history. To this day no one is really sure whether Hicks was guilty or whether he was framed – and some even questioned whether the man he was accused of murdering was even dead!

All of this had begun two years previously when a mutilated, gunshot-riddled body was found floating in a canal. Chief Deputy Hicks, then still in the good graces of Sheriff Bryan, was placed in charge of the investigation. The coroner's inquest initially concluded only that the unknown victim had been murdered by someone who was also unknown. The body was buried, and then later exhumed, but again could not be identified. After a second exhumation, the victim was identified as Robert Reese Barber, a local carpenter who

had been missing since about the time that the body had been found. The body was then buried for a third time, and the case file gathered dust for two years until Hicks was accused of the crime.

When Hicks was arrested for Barber's murder, shock waves went through the community, and the story which would ultimately unfold was stranger and more convoluted than anyone could have possibly foreseen. It must be remembered that this was not a community that was easy to shock – the people of Broward in the previous six months had seen the entire Sheriff's Department arrested, along with a sizable portion of the police department of their county seat. They had also seen a local judge attempt to overrule the Florida Supreme Court, and the state's Governor threaten to send in troops to enforce state law in their county. Nonetheless, the arrest of Hicks did indeed shock the people of Broward.¹¹³

The case against Hicks appeared simple, at least on the surface. About eight months before he disappeared, the murder victim – or presumed victim, for his identity would later be questioned – had been sentenced to do time in the Broward County jail for a minor offense. Deputy Hicks was then the warden of the jail, and apparently it was his practice to have inmates do work on his own personal properties. While serving his jail sentence, Barber, a skilled carpenter, worked on some homes being constructed by Hicks. Problems arose when Hicks allegedly refused to pay Barber for his work, and upon his release the carpenter filed a complaint with his union. Barber was subsequently arrested a few more times, including once, the month before he disappeared, when he was charged with assault and battery upon Hicks. The most damning evidence against Hicks was the testimony of two supposed eyewitnesses to the murder who claimed to have been with Hicks when he murdered Barber.

"Big Bill" Hicks was represented by very able attorneys and there would be many legal maneuvers employed

before this case finally came to a conclusion. However, the essence of the former Chief Deputy's defense was quite simple – he claimed that he had been framed! This certainly was not an original defense, but as the legal proceedings continued, many people found Hicks' claim to be more believable than most of the prosecution witnesses. Hicks' lawyers argued that the local authorities had conspired to have their client convicted on a trumped-up charge, and there were many circumstances that seemed to lend credence to this allegation. Certainly Hicks had made many influential enemies in Broward County. His conflict with the Mayor of Fort Lauderdale during the aftermath of the previous year's hurricane had created a powerful enemy. The County Commissioners so disliked him that they had waged a court battle to avoid paying his fees as Justice of the Peace. Even the Circuit Court judge for Broward County, the jurist who should have heard the case, had disqualified himself because he was personally prejudiced against Hicks. And in a change of venue motion, Hicks claimed that his jealous enforcement of Prohibition laws made so many enemies for him that he could never get a fair trial in Broward County. But all of this was secondary.

At the heart of Hick's defense was the contention that Sheriff Bryan and his deputies were out to get the former Chief Deputy in any way that they could, because they believed that *it was Hicks who had tipped off the Feds!* The arrests of the Sheriff and his deputies, as well as Fort Lauderdale's Assistant Chief of Police and five of his officers, apparently all resulted from information supplied to a federal Prohibition Administrator by William A. Hicks. The newspaper headlines, the embarrassment of being jailed while still in uniform, the public censure, all of these indignities had infuriated the indicted lawmen. The way they saw it, all of their problems stemmed from a vindictive former colleague's "pay-back" for his being fired. Now, according to Hicks' attorneys, the

Sheriff and his deputies were out for their own revenge!

The attorneys for the defense were able to present substantial evidence to support the contention that Hicks was framed. One of the seven deputies arrested earlier that year testified that he and others had indeed conspired "to get" the former Chief Deputy in retaliation for the raid by federal agents. Other testimony indicated that another of the arrested deputies had revealed plans to kill Hicks. And the two alleged eyewitnesses to the murder? Well, it turned out that they were a couple of confessed bootleggers, who were testifying under grants of immunity from prosecution. Interestingly enough, these two criminals had also been deputized by Sheriff Bryan on several occasions, once during the 1926 hurricane and again just several months prior to Hicks' arrest, during the Pompano Racetrack fiasco.

The state's case was clearly flawed, but it was convincing to many. The prosecuting attorneys countered Hicks' claim of being a vigorous enforcer of the Prohibition laws by presenting depositions in which witnesses stated that Hicks associated with bootleggers and took kickbacks from speakeasies. And, of course, the prosecutors also presented their two supposed eyewitnesses to the killing. But perhaps the most sensational testimony was that of Deputy Sheriff Jot Shiver, who testified about a conversation he claimed to have had with Hicks about six months after the discovery of Barber's body. It was the contention of this witness that during their office conversation Hicks had casually confessed to murdering Barber!

During cross examination, when Shiver – who was the deputy alleged to have planned to kill Hicks – was asked whether he had immediately reported this "murder confession" to the Sheriff. He answered that he hadn't. (This confession, if it occurred, would have taken place almost a year before Hicks lost his job as Chief Deputy.) When asked why he had held back this important information, Deputy Shiver responded, in effect, that he was afraid

of Hicks. One historian later made the following comment relative to this testimony: "Sheriff Bryan had a reputation for hiring the toughest men in the county as his deputies, and one of them had testified under oath that he was afraid of another. If not for the stern warning from Judge Parks at the beginning of the trial, no doubt Shiver's statement that he was afraid of Hicks would have caused an outburst of laughter!"¹⁴

Whatever the relative merits of the opposing arguments, on September 11, 1927, the jury returned their verdict: Guilty of murder in the first degree! The defense asked for a new trial, citing 67 reasons why it should be granted. Included among these was a letter from the warden at Raiford State Penitentiary, stating that a convict (and former member of the Ashley gang) who had previously been reluctant, was now willing to come forward to prove Hicks' innocence. The judge turned down the request for a new trial and sentenced Hicks to life at hard labor.

Hicks spent almost a year and a half in state prison, during which time he received a serious injury from which he never fully recovered. But on February 13, 1929, Hicks' 44th birthday, the Florida Supreme Court reversed his murder conviction. A second trial was held, with arguments being made similar to those at the first trial. However, this time the results were different – on November 23, 1929, a deadlocked jury reported to the judge an even split, six for conviction, six for acquittal. The judge declared a mistrial.

The state charged Hicks with murder once again, and his third trial was held in April 1930. At this trial, evidence was presented by the defense which cast doubt as to whether a positive identification of the the victim's body had ever really been made. In addition, new evidence was introduced that strongly supported Hicks' contention that he had been framed. A bootlegger testified that he had offered to put up money for a fund to "get" Hicks, this offer being made public at a meeting of law enforcement

officers. Among those present at this meeting, which took place right after the federal raids that were so central to this whole case, were Sheriff Bryan, three of his deputies, and the Fort Lauderdale Assistant Chief of Police (all of whom had been arrested during those raids). And one of the deputies who had been present was Jot Shiver, who later claimed that Hicks had confessed murdering Barber. Other testimony was given by a liquor dealer who said that threats had kept him from testifying earlier. This man reported being told that if he testified at Hicks' first trial and provided evidence to support Hicks' claim of innocence, he would "be taken for a ride." This witness also said that he had been "shaken down" by Chief Deputy Robert Kendall for a contribution to pay for Hicks' prosecution.¹⁵

On April 20, 1930, William A. Hicks was acquitted of the charge of murder. After almost three years, the former Chief Deputy was a free man. The following day he went to pick up some of his personal belongings that had been held by the Sheriff's Office since his arrest three years earlier. At this time, "Big Bill" indicated that he planned to renew some old friendships, and that he intended to spend as much time as possible in the open air and sunshine.¹⁶ In August of 1930, Hicks reportedly registered as a voter and paid his poll taxes, at the same time claiming to still be a Justice of the Peace in Broward.¹⁷ However, it appears that he left Fort Lauderdale soon after that, eventually moving to Uuca, New York.

During the three years that Hicks had been bogged down in a legal quagmire, his nemesis, Sheriff Bryan, had been having problems of his own. While Hicks was incarcerated in the state prison, the 1928 Democratic primary had been held in Broward. Four years previously, incumbent Sheriff Paul C. Bryan had beaten off the challenge of Broward's first Sheriff, A. W. Turner – however, in that electoral contest Bryan didn't have federal charges hanging over his head. This time, when Broward's first two

sheriffs faced each other again, it was Turner who would emerge victorious.

Bryan's defeat in this five-way primary election spelled the end of his political career, but his legal difficulties were far from over. In December 1928, Bryan and 17 codefendants went on trial in U.S. District Court for conspiracy to violate the National Prohibition Enforcement Act. One of the witnesses at this trial was "Big Bill" Hicks, who was brought to Miami from the state prison farm at Raiford in order to testify against Bryan. Hicks told how the Sheriff and some of his deputies received weekly payoffs from bootleggers, and he also testified that they distributed confiscated liquor stored in the county jail building. Hicks further alleged that during the Christmas holidays in 1925, one bootlegger gave Sheriff Bryan \$12,000 in "protection money," and that the Sheriff ordered his Chief Deputy to stay away from some areas and to leave certain stills alone.¹⁸

Although Bryan wasn't convicted, as this court proceeding ended in a mistrial, the Sheriff's legal problems would continue. He had to go through a second trial on the same charges. However, this too ended in a mistrial, at which point the federal government simply decided to drop the charges against Bryan. Although not convicted in either trial, Bryan and his deputies were never exonerated either. This inconclusive ending of Bryan's three-year legal battle came in 1930 – the same year in which his former Chief Deputy, "Big Bill" Hicks, was acquitted in his third murder trial.

After he left office, Paul Bryan remained in Broward, operating Bryan's Café in Dania. He died on July 16, 1942, at the age of 51. The newspaper obituaries took note of the fact that his death occurred only 36 hours after that of his sister, the former postmaster at Fort Lauderdale with whom he had worked before becoming Broward County's second sheriff.¹⁹

Bryan's legacy? He had been the first sheriff to bring national attention to the Broward County Sheriff's

Office. Regrettably, he did so by sullyng his reputation. Years later, a Fort Lauderdale attorney who knew both Bryan and Hicks personally was asked if he thought Bryan was responsible for the scandals that occurred during his administration. His reply is probably the best key we'll ever have to understanding what happened back then. Of Bryan's responsibility for the problems, the lawyer said simply: "He asked for it. He hired a bunch of thugs as deputies."²⁰

Even after Bryan had been indicted, there were many people in Broward County who continued to believe in him. For example, in an anonymous letter, "a few better citizens of Floranada" (which was how the letter was signed) complained about a local bootlegger's operations, and they asked the Sheriff to investigate. They claimed that no effective action was being taken by city officials, which was their reason for contacting Bryan, who was obviously viewed as more trustworthy. However, this confidence apparently did not extend to all of his deputies, because the letter also specified that the investigation should only be conducted by "a trustworthy [sic] deputy that don't fall for a little graft."²¹

As for Bill Hicks, his guilt or innocence would be debated by long-term Broward residents for decades. After his many battles with the Fort Lauderdale power structure, it did not surprise most people when Hicks left the area, presumably taking his wife with him. However, documents from this period suggest that Hicks' problems with the Broward Sheriff's Office were not yet over, and that his marital affairs may have fueled these.

Gerrude W. Hicks, "Big Bill's" wife, made the newspapers several times during this period. One story concerning Mrs. Hicks appeared in the *Miami Herald* in June 1928, when her husband was just completing his ninth month in the state prison at Raiford. The headline read: "LIFE ENDED AS MIAMI POLICE FAIL TO ACT," and the report that followed was quite

critical of the Miami police. It seems that one evening, shortly after midnight, a woman reported to the police that a man planned to commit suicide in his hotel room. It was raining at the time, the *Herald* reported, and the police chose not to follow up on the woman's warning, telling her that they had investigated similar reports in the past and none turned out to be factual. At about 3:30 a.m., the man she had been concerned about killed himself.

The woman in this story was Mrs. William A. Hicks, who was living in Miami at the time. The suicide victim was a 65-year-old man who had recently deserted his wife and family in Jacksonville, Florida. After he and Gertrude Hicks had dinner together, she had driven this man to his hotel room at about midnight, after which she sought help from the police. It turned out that the dead man had made Mrs. Hicks his chief beneficiary, only leaving his wife the sum of one dollar!¹²²

When "Big Bill" Hicks got out of prison, things may not have been going all that well between his wife and him. Although some reports have Hicks taking Gertrude with him when he left Fort Lauderdale, a series of messages

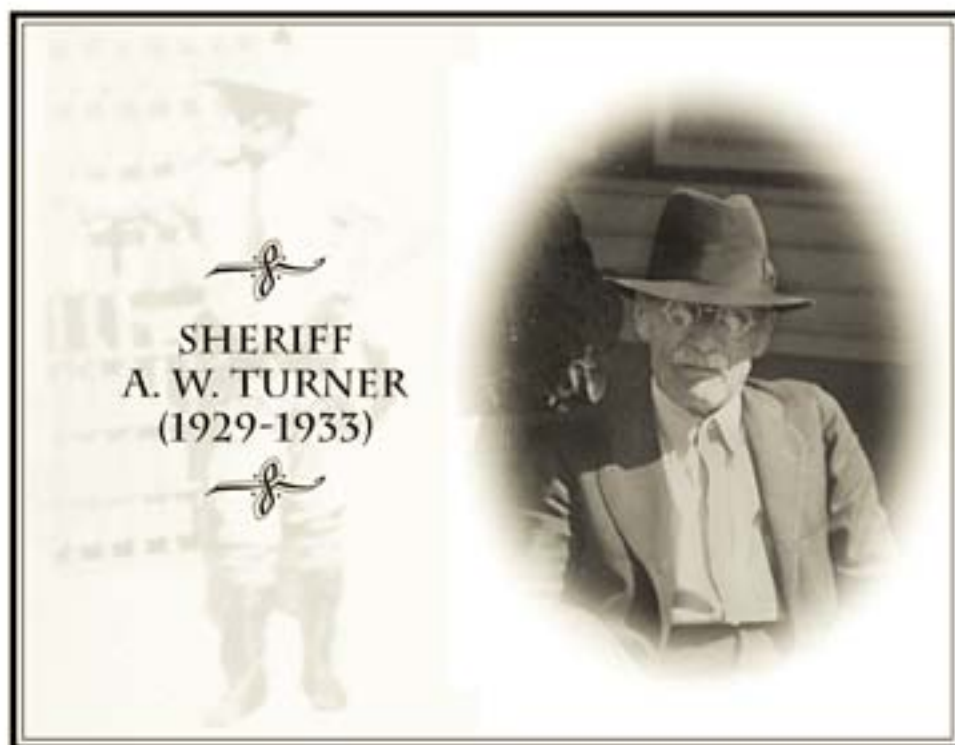
sent by the Broward Sheriff to various other law enforcement officials suggests that the former Chief Deputy might have actually left his wife behind when he traveled north. During the first two years after Hick's acquittal, a number of letters and telegrams were sent from the Broward Sheriff's Office, requesting the arrest of William A. Hicks for desertion and non-support of his wife. In December 1930, the sheriff in Jacksonville received such a request.¹²³ Two weeks later, a letter was sent to the Sheriff of Putnam County, Florida, asking him to "be on the lookout" for Hicks.¹²⁴ At the same time, another letter was sent to the sheriff in Bartow, Florida, this message included the details that Hicks "is interested in and pays quite a bit of attention to a Miss Bailey at Lakeland. This lady is [a] librarian."¹²⁵ Shortly after this, the sheriff in Orlando was contacted. This message also included personal details: "It is reported he is living in Orlando with one Dolly Morgans, a decided blonde. He is supposed to be running liquor, drives a Cadillac sedan."¹²⁶ In March of 1931, the sheriff in Utica, New York was given a week-end address for Hicks in that city, and asked to arrest him.¹²⁷ And on Christmas Eve, 1931, a

telegram was sent to the same sheriff providing an address in Utica where Hicks was expected to be spending Christmas Day along with a request that he be arrested there on charges of desertion and non-support.¹²⁸

Apparently these charges were eventually resolved, because Hicks was reported to have resumed his law enforcement career in Utica, New York. According to one account, he became the Chief of Police in that city¹²⁹ and another report indicated that he became a "city marshal" there.¹³⁰ Many years later, however, the Chief of Police in Utica, after an extensive review of his department's personnel records, reported there was no indication that Hicks had ever worked as a lawman in that city.¹³¹ Whatever might be the actual case regarding "Big Bill's" employment after leaving Florida, his two years in prison and the ordeal of three trials had eventually taken their toll on this once hearty and robust man. In 1940, he died of a heart attack at age 55.¹³² Not long after Hicks died in Utica, Gertrude W. Hicks, his widow, was married in the Broward County courthouse to a man from Miami.¹³³ ❖



Voting in Hallandale



For A. W. Turner, defeating Paul Bryan in the 1928 primary must have been a sweet victory indeed. Broward's first Sheriff felt that he had been unfairly suspended in 1922, and when he had tried to regain his old office at the polls in 1924, it was Bryan who had prevented that. However, after Turner's own primary victory four years later, there was still one further obstacle to be overcome before Turner could once again take over as Broward's chief law enforcement officer. In 1928, the Republicans had nominated a candidate who actually had a chance to win the general election, so ex-Sheriff Turner had to run a major campaign for the second time that year. However, when the November election was over, the winner was A. W. Turner, Democrat, with some 2,400 votes, over Fred M. Wertz, Republican, who had received only 400 votes less. On January 8, 1929, A. W. Turner was once again sworn in as the Sheriff of Broward County, beginning his fourth term in office (although only his second full term).¹³⁴

At the start of Sheriff Turner's new term, he hired a bookkeeper and three full-time deputies – not

surprisingly, none of Paul Bryan's men were retained. Each deputy received a salary of \$150 per month, which was an improvement over the \$125 per month offered by the previous sheriff in a 1926 letter to a job applicant.¹³⁵ The salary of the bookkeeper, Sarah H. Freeman, was the same as that of a deputy sheriff. The six-month financial reports filed by Sheriff Turner for the next four years suggest that these base salaries remained steady through the end of 1931, although things changed in 1932 when the Sheriff's Office faced a disastrous financial crisis.¹³⁶

One of the three new deputies that Turner hired was W. H. "Hobb" Campbell, who resigned as chief of the Dania Fire Department to take the position of deputy sheriff. Campbell would remain with the Sheriff for all four years of Turner's new term in office (although not without controversy). At the end of 1929, Deputy A. D. Marshall was hired as Warden to replace W. J. "Dad" Howell, who had been one of the original three deputies. The new jailer would remain throughout the rest of the Sheriff's term (and for many years afterward). Over the next two years, the number

of deputies increased by one a year. Although there were a few deputies who only stayed a short while, by and large Sheriff Turner had a fairly steady work force, and each of the five deputies in the department in 1932 had been with the Sheriff for two years or longer. In addition to Campbell and Marshall, they were Deputies R. B. McDonald, Virgil Wright, and C. J. Turner – the last named deputy was listed on a payroll roster as "Fingerprint Department," but he was also directly involved in law enforcement activities, as shown when he and another deputy captured a suspected bank robber from Texas. In addition, even though he wasn't listed as such in the department's official reports, C. Joseph Turner was also the Sheriff's son – this was the first bit of nepotism to appear in the history of the Broward Sheriff's Office, although it certainly wouldn't be the last.¹³⁷

Although most of the early deputy sheriffs in Broward County were reputed to be "tough" (read "brutal" in many cases), especially with minorities, it was rare that a complaint of "police brutality" would receive public attention. However, such a case

did occur in 1929. It seems that Deputy "Hobb" Campbell had gone to a chicken farm run by Emil M. Gertz, and he and Gertz had gotten into an argument after the farmer refused to sell Campbell any chickens on credit. It was alleged that the deputy then attacked Gertz and beat him up. After this, Campbell left with the chickens, and Gertz was brought for medical attention. Such an incident probably never would have come to anyone's attention, except for the fact that Gertz was a disabled war veteran, and reports of his being beaten by a deputy sheriff had Hollywood residents up in arms. Following the alleged assault, Campbell turned in his resignation to the Sheriff.¹³⁸

The next day the former deputy claimed that Gertz had called him a liar and other names, and he denied that he had hit the chicken farmer more than twice.¹³⁹ Two days later, Sheriff Turner reinstated Campbell as a deputy, stating that he felt that Campbell was justified in acting as he did.¹⁴⁰ The day after the Sheriff made this statement, officials of the Hollywood American Legion Post announced that their organization would back Gertz in his case against Campbell, whom they accused of committing assault and battery upon a disabled veteran. A resolution adopted by the Legionnaires relative to this matter stated that "When the sheriff of the county contends that one of his deputies was justified in beating up a helpless, gassed, mentally sick war veteran, irrespective of provocation, who had already given his all for his country, and our investigating committee finds that the brutal attack was unwarranted, we wish to let the Sheriff know that the matter is not yet ended."¹⁴¹

Several days later, a warrant was issued by the county judge charging Deputy Campbell with assault and battery.¹⁴² At a preliminary hearing, Gertz, whose lungs had been severely damaged during World War I, testified that when he had refused to sell the deputy any chickens, Campbell had knocked him down into a pile of

washubs. At that point, the farmer said, he ran into the swamp to avoid being struck in the chest again. It was then, he went on, that the deputy placed his hand on his gun, and called for Gertz to come out of the swamp. Afraid of being shot, he did so, Gertz claimed, and was struck again, and then had his shirt and undershirt torn from his back. Following this, the chicken farmer said, Campbell told him to go into the house and lie down, and threw some money at him in payment for the torn shirt.¹⁴³

When it was Campbell's turn to testify, he admitted that he had in fact struck the disabled veteran twice, but he claimed that because Gertz had called him vile names, he had every right to hit the man. Not surprisingly, Campbell was bound over for trial. Nevertheless, Sheriff Turner announced that the deputy would not be suspended from his duties, pending the outcome of the trial.¹⁴⁴ A few days later, however, Deputy Campbell resigned for a second time, giving as his reason that he had received several attractive offers to enter into business enterprises. Concerning his deputy, Turner stated that "Hobb" Campbell was one of the most efficient and fearless deputies that he had ever had on his staff and the Sheriff went on to say that "records will show that convictions have been found in nearly every case of arrest he has made."¹⁴⁵

Following his resignation, the former deputy wrote a letter to the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, in which he denied the rumor that he had been forced to resign. He admitted once more that he had hit Gertz, but emphasized that this was only after the veteran had called him names. It was also, he now claimed – apparently for the first time – after the disabled man had struck him first. The names he was called, Campbell assured the reader, "would make any man do, no doubt, the same thing, or even worse, in the defense of his honor."¹⁴⁶

When Campbell resigned for a second time, Deputy J. A. "Gus" Roberts was hired to fill the resultant vacancy. Roberts had formerly served

as a deputy sheriff in Columbia County, Florida, and had also been the Chief of Police in Lake City.¹⁴⁷

On November 7, 1929, Campbell's case went to trial. Coincidentally, the court had just accepted a "no contest" plea from Fort Lauderdale's Chief of Police, who had been charged with assault and battery upon two local youths.¹⁴⁸ Campbell's court appearance, however, had a happier outcome for the accused – after 15 minutes, the jury acquitted the former deputy. A short time later, Sheriff Turner reinstated "Hobb" Campbell as a deputy.¹⁴⁹

Only eight months after Sheriff Turner returned to his old office, an event occurred in Broward County which drew national attention. This was the hanging of James Horace Alderman, the only legal execution ever to take place in Broward. The circumstances surrounding Alderman's crime – ultimately judged as Piracy – and also his punishment, were somewhat bizarre.

On August 7, 1927, a Coast Guard cutter had captured a "rum boat" in the waters between Florida and the Bahamas. The two smugglers who were aboard the vessel – James Horace Alderman and Robert E. Weech – were searched for weapons and taken into custody, but not bound or confined. A short time later, while the Coast Guard crew members were occupied with their duties, Alderman produced a Colt automatic which he had concealed and shot the vessel's commander through the back of the head. Shooting the motor machinist's mate immediately afterward, Alderman took control of the cutter. At first, the killer planned to literally make his captives "walk the plank" in true piratical fashion, but he subsequently decided to set them adrift in a burning boat instead. Before he could carry out his plans, however, several of his captives charged him. Alderman shot and killed one of his attackers, a secret service agent, and seriously wounded another before being subdued.¹⁵⁰

The two rumrunners were subsequently brought back to the



Coast Guard Base, Fort Lauderdale, 1930's.

Coast Guard base in Fort Lauderdale. On January 27, 1928, a federal court in Miami sentenced Alderman, dubbed the "Gulf Stream Pirate," to death by hanging.¹⁵¹ Maritime law required that a pirate must be executed in the port where he was first brought after his arrest, and for Alderman that was Fort Lauderdale.¹⁵² Therefore the federal judge who presided over his trial sentenced Alderman to be hanged at the jail in Broward County. This execution was originally scheduled for May 11, 1928, but the appeals process would delay it for over a year.¹⁵³ From the time he was captured, Alderman spent two years in jail, in Miami and Jacksonville, while a legal battle was waged for his life. Ultimately, his appeals were exhausted when the United States Supreme Court upheld his conviction, and he was sentenced to die on August 17, 1929. Two weeks prior to this date, President Hoover rejected Alderman's application for commutation to a life sentence.¹⁵⁴

Interest in the upcoming execution was very high, and the newspapers were anxious to accommodate the public's thirst for details. However, the federal judge involved in this case was determined to keep the affair as quiet as possible. To this end, on July 19, 1929, Judge Halsted L. Ritter wrote to Sheriff Turner that just as he had ordered the U.S. Marshal, he was now

requesting that the Sheriff withhold from the press all information regarding preparations for Alderman's hanging. The judge concluded by saying that he was going to do everything in his power to prevent any details concerning the execution from being leaked to the public.¹⁵⁵

A month before the scheduled hanging, the Deputy U. S. Marshal from Miami came to Fort Lauderdale to inspect the two possible sites for the execution, the new county jail and the old county jail. Sheriff Turner assisted the federal officer in this inspection, and the Broward lawman suggested the old jail as a more suitable location. His opinion was based on the fact that the old jail had a courtyard, which would allow the hanging to be carried out in greater privacy, in keeping with the judge's order. The new jail, which occupied several floors in the recently constructed county courthouse, had no similar outdoor space. However, the decision was made that Alderman would be hanged at the new county jail, up on the courthouse roof. A wall was to be built around the scaffold to ensure that only the appointed legal witnesses would view the hanging.¹⁵⁶

The selection of the courthouse roof created a problem for the Broward County Commissioners, who were very concerned about damage being done to the roof of their brand

new courthouse. The main difficulty, they felt, was that repairs for the roof were covered by a bonding arrangement that the county had with the roofing contractor, but that agreement would be nullified by the building of a scaffold on the new roof. Therefore, the Commissioners decided, before preparations for the execution could begin the federal government would have to post a bond sufficient to cover any damages that might occur to the courthouse roof.¹⁵⁷

This request for a bond, in addition to a petition being circulated by Fort Lauderdale residents to have the location of the execution changed, was apparently too much for Judge Ritter. Five days before Alderman's scheduled execution, he changed the location to the Fort Lauderdale Coast Guard base.¹⁵⁸ A gallows was erected in a giant metal seaplane hangar at the base, and three U. S. deputy marshals drew straws to see which one would spring the trap in the gallows.¹⁵⁹

On the evening before his execution, Alderman was moved from Miami to the Broward County jail. Upon the prisoner's arrival at that facility, a reporter from the *Miami Herald* attempted to take a picture of the "Gulfstream Pirate." Two Deputy U.S. Marshals and a Border Patrol officer prevented this, roughing up the photographer, David H. Crooks, and

damaging his camera. Then the federal officers brought the newspaperman into Sheriff Turner's office and only released him after he promised not to write an account of the incident for his paper. After his release, however, Crooks told his story to the editor of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* and to the *Associated Press*. When an account of this incident was published, the actions of the three federal officers caused a great deal of public indignation, because Crooks was a veteran and belonged to the ROTC, as well as being a respected member of the local American Legion. Ultimately, warrants were issued for the arrest of all three federal officers on assault and other charges.⁶⁰

According to one newspaper report, shortly after Alderman arrived at Sheriff Turner's office in the courthouse, "a touching scene took place." The prisoner had been taken into a back room to await the arrival of the county jailer. Deputy Sheriff "Dad" Howell, who was to escort Alderman to a cell especially prepared for him, "Upon the arrival of 'Dad' Howells [sic] from the jail quarters on the top floor of the courthouse, the condemned man jumped up from the table in the back room where he was being guarded and advanced toward his new jailer with his hand extended in greeting and a smile upon his face. 'Hello, this is 'Dad' Howells [sic], isn't it?' he said as he shook hands with the genial jailer. 'I am Horace Alderman, your new prisoner. I have seen your picture in newspapers several times and that is how I know you,' Alderman said. 'I have also heard many pleasant things about you and the kindness you show to prisoners under your care,' the condemned man added." The newspaper account indicated that the deputy promised that he would take good care of his new charge.⁶¹

The next day, August 17, 1929, Alderman arose early. Calling Deputy Howell, the prisoner ordered his breakfast and ate heartily. Shortly after, Alderman was handcuffed and brought down the three flights of stairs to a waiting Lincoln patrol wagon

furnished by the Fort Lauderdale Police Department. On the 10 minute journey to the Coast Guard base, the condemned man was surrounded by five guards in the wagon, and the vehicle was escorted by six automobiles filled with federal officers and deputies from Dade, Palm Beach, and Broward counties. At the base, Coast Guardsmen carrying service rifles did picket duty around the hangar where the execution was to take place, while others patrolled the perimeter of the base. When the motorcade reached its destination, Alderman was rushed inside the hangar. In less than 20 minutes, he had prayed with his spiritual advisor and the trap-door of the scaffold had been tested. At 6:03 a.m. the "Gulf Stream Pirate" met the fate that had always awaited those who committed murder on the high seas.⁶²

During Sheriff Turner's second stretch in office, from 1929 to 1933, illegal alcohol and gambling operations continued to flourish in Broward. Occasionally, there would be a push to curtail them, but such efforts were generally short-lived and relatively ineffective. To be sure, when the availability of liquor in the county caused problems for the Sheriff, he would sometimes be forced to take action. One time that this happened was after a gas station owner and his wife were shot by two men under the influence of alcohol. The Sheriff subsequently announced a major campaign against the sale of liquor in Broward County. However, this was only after the Governor of Florida, Doyle E. Carlton, had become involved, putting pressure on Turner.⁶³ Gambling was another problem that persisted, despite the well-publicized crackdown on racetrack betting a few years previously. Sheriff Turner's men would sometimes conduct gambling raids – for example, when two deputies, Albert Jones and J. A. "Gus" Roberts, arrested nine men in a raid on a gambling establishment outside of Hollywood.⁶⁴ But for the most part, gambling enterprises continued unabated in Broward County.

By March of 1930, violations of the vice laws had become so open in Broward that the Fort Lauderdale Woman's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU) publicly denounced the lawlessness which seemed to prevail locally – in particular, they complained bitterly about "the prevalence of slot machines, gambling and bootlegging."⁶⁵ Several months later, upset by this situation, Governor Carlton went so far as to send Sheriff Turner a list of names and addresses of people in Broward County who were known to be selling liquor, engaged in bookmaking and other gambling activities. The Sheriff's Department, of course, promised to take immediate action.⁶⁶



Charlie Rodde, Jr. playing a slot machine in Rodde's Hotel, circa 1935.

Aside from sporadic enforcement of the anti-gambling and Prohibition laws, the duties of Turner's deputies mostly involved the routine maintenance of law and order throughout the county. Indeed, some of their enforcement efforts reflected community concerns with crimes that today would be considered to be the responsibility of other law enforcement agencies. The financial problems faced by Florida during the Depression caused the state to cut back on personnel in these other agencies, leaving the sheriffs to take up the slack. One result was sheriffs and their deputies were made responsible for various routine fish and game arrests during this period. In one instance, a "harbor raid" by a Broward deputy sheriff received a great deal of public

attention and widespread support. Deputy Virgil Wright commandeered a boat, and arrested eight fisherman for illegally netting fish within a mile of the Port Everglades inlet. Their four boats and nets were seized, along with about 2,000 pounds of mackerel and other fish. It was reported that many prominent individuals connected with sport fishing showed up in court when the eight lawbreakers were arraigned. This was clearly a situation in which public sentiment had pressured the Broward Sheriff's Office to take action to protect the county's tourism trade.⁶⁷

Although alcohol was the mind-altering substance most likely to appear in Sheriff's Department reports of this period, "drugs" had also begun to show up occasionally. For example, in one telegram sent by Sheriff Turner, he referred to a female prisoner as a "dope fiend."⁶⁸ And from a 1929 newspaper report of a hold-up by "highwaymen" on Dixie Highway, it was clear that this crime was related to drugs. It seems that a doctor from Alabama was driving to a medical conference in Miami when his car was forced to the side of the road. There, he was robbed at gunpoint by three young men who addressed him as "Doctor" and demanded that he give them "dope."⁶⁹

An unusual crime, one which caused a great deal of controversy in Broward County, occurred in October 1929, when nine unknown men used dynamite to blow a 40-foot gap in West Dixie Highway. This blast, heard for several miles, released a large volume of floodwater that had backed up west of the highway.⁷⁰ Two hours later, six masked and heavily armed men held at gunpoint the special deputy assigned to guard a Middle River Drainage District dike, while they cut a hole in the dam to release the waters it was holding back.⁷¹

It was suspected that the culprits were farmers who owned land west of the highway, men whose farms had been flooded for two weeks when the normal flow of floodwater to the New River was blocked. Earlier threats to blow up the road and several dikes had

led Sheriff Turner to assign special deputies to protect the Drainage District's dams, but he had specifically ordered the special deputies not to use their firearms.⁷²

The destruction of the dike and part of West Dixie Highway afforded some relief to the farmers in the west, but it also released flood waters onto the lands of farmers to the east (who were wealthier and had more political clout than their counterparts further inland). At first, county officials seemed inclined to take no action. Sheriff Turner had risen from a sick bed to take charge of the situation, but his main focus was on preventing any further violence. The Sheriff had made no arrests, and it didn't appear that he would be making any. At the same time, the County Commissioners announced that they had no immediate plans to repair the gap in the road, and they even refused permission for the Drainage District to further block the release of floodwaters.⁷³

Under these circumstances, the eastern farmers felt it necessary to make an appeal directly to the Governor, complaining that the Sheriff was not enforcing the law. In a telegram sent to Governor Carlton, they claimed that "wanton mob destruction" had released flood waters onto land they had planted, and although the drainage district had finally repaired the dike, threats against it were again being made openly. The telegram stated, in part, that an "appeal has been made to the sheriff for adequate protection, to investigate and apprehend participants in this lawless mob. He refuses to perform his duty and take necessary steps. We therefore appeal to you, as our governor, to take all immediate measures to protect us and compel law enforcement in Broward County." At the same time, according to a newspaper report, officials at the Drainage District "made official demand upon Turner, as high sheriff of Broward County, to investigate these crimes" and to apprehend the guilty parties. Unless he did so, the officials threatened, they would "seek redress to higher

powers."⁷⁴

Immediately after the complaints about Turner's failure to act had reached the Governor, Broward's top lawman announced that he and his deputies had actually been quite busy investigating the destruction of the dike and the damage done to the road. His department had, the Sheriff insisted, been quietly working to gather evidence against the guilty parties, and as a result, there would soon be several arrests made.⁷⁵ Not long after six farmers, all of whose farms lay west of West Dixie Highway, were arrested.⁷⁶ They were charged with dynamiting the highway and damaging the drainage dike. Their trial took place on January 24, 1930. The six men were acquitted by the jury, a verdict ordered by the judge, who cited the state's failure to connect any of the men with the crime.⁷⁷

It was during Sheriff Turner's last term in office that, for the first time, newspapers mentioned "detective" work in conjunction with investigations being conducted by his department. Under the headline, "SHERIFF WARS ON ROBBERS," a local paper described how a "band of Negro robbers" was broken up. "Special detectives and deputies from the office of the sheriff" investigated recent robberies in Broward, and trailed the criminals to Miami, where they were arrested.⁷⁸

There were a number of other cases handled by the Broward Sheriff's Office that also caught the public's attention during Turner's 1929-1933 term in office. In several instances, however, the attention was occasioned by incidents that were a bit embarrassing for the department. Certainly there was widespread amusement when the infamous "pants burglar," who had been pilfering pants throughout Fort Lauderdale, broke into the home of Deputy Sheriff R. B. McDonald and made off with his trousers. The deputy reported that when he awoke, his pants were gone, but in an apparent attempt to save face, McDonald also claimed that the only things in his pockets were a nickel and

a slot-machine slug. The reason for his possession of the latter, however, apparently went unquestioned.¹⁷⁹

Another embarrassing incident was reported by the local press in this manner: "Sheriff A.W. Turner had eighty sacks of choice liquor stored in the courthouse here. 'Had' is right. He doesn't have it now!" The newspaper article went on to explain that the "booze burglars" broke into the building in which the Sheriff's office was located and made off with 480 quarts of the finest spirits. And making matters even worse, the thieves then drove their car across the courthouse lawn and destroyed the flower beds! Although there was a considerable amount of liquor left behind, the thieves apparently got away with two automobile-loads of booze.¹⁸⁰

The theft of confiscated liquor right from under his own nose had to be particularly galling for Sheriff Turner, who had always condemned the consumption of alcoholic beverages as a terrible social evil. There were, of course, some very real political benefits to be gained by the Sheriff in portraying himself as a supporter of the anti-alcohol laws. Indeed, Turner had first been elected Sheriff at a time when the "dry" spirit was very strong in Broward. This was the same election in which Sidney Johnston Catts, a Baptist minister, was chosen as Governor in Florida, the state's only chief executive ever elected on the Prohibitionist Party ticket. Nonetheless, in spite of what might appear to be somewhat lackadaisical enforcement efforts during his last years in office, it is quite possible that Turner's support of Prohibition actually reflected his own personal beliefs. For whatever reason, Sheriff Turner always expressed strong anti-alcohol sentiments. Thus, it was frustrating to him when accusations were made that it was lax security that had allowed the "booze burglars" to raid the Sheriff's own office. And it was certainly embarrassing when a federal prisoner in the Broward County jail somehow managed to get drunk. This incident resulted in a complaint being

lodged by the Director of the Bureau of Prisons in Washington. The Sheriff angrily responded that if the prisoner had received any liquor, it must have been given to him by either his lawyer or by the federal guard who had transported him to the jail. He added, somewhat sarcastically, "I have always treated Federal prisoners the same as our own County prisoners and that is not by serving them with liquor!"¹⁸¹

In order to publicize the Prohibition enforcement activities of his department, Sheriff Turner would sometimes hold "teasing parties" (a tradition started by Paul Bryan in 1922). At these events, Turner would make a public display of pouring out onto the ground some of the choicest of confiscated alcoholic beverages, thus teasing the unreformed "wets" in the crowd who undoubtedly had much better things in mind for such elixirs. However, one such "teasing party" turned out to be more uncomfortable for the Sheriff than for those it was intended to upset. In the yard of the Broward County courthouse, Turner and several of his deputies had just finished pouring out numerous bottles of the best imported beverages, and the area was awash in fine liquor. During this activity, the Sheriff had been smoking a pipe and when a few ashes fell to the alcohol-saturated ground, this started a fire that rapidly spread into the drainage trap in the courthouse garage. According to a local newspaper report, it was only the quick use of a fire extinguisher by Deputy Campbell – the former fireman – that saved the day, and avoided the further embarrassment of having to call the Fort Lauderdale Fire Department.¹⁸²

Sometimes the affairs of the Sheriff's Office gained publicity in the form of what we might today refer to as a "human interest" story. For example, Turner's staff was closely involved in Broward's first county courthouse marriage of a Native American couple. Of course, participation in this ceremony wasn't entirely voluntary on the part of the groom. As one newspaper reported,

"Lonnie Buck, 25-year-old Creek Indian who has been in the county jail since Thursday because of his aversion to marriage, this morning decided the bonds of matrimony were less confining than the bonds of the law. . . . Lonnie Buck had been jailed at the request of the local Indian agent, who discovered that he had been living with an Indian woman on the reservation without benefit of marriage. However, when they both agreed to marry as a condition for Buck's release, the courthouse ceremony was arranged. The couple was married by the county judge before a large crowd, and they had as official witnesses to their union, one of Sheriff Turner's deputies, as well as Sara Freeman, the Sheriff's bookkeeper. The only discordant notes were the less-than-flattering description of the bride, Lena Huff, as "neat but gaudy, in a wedding gown of approximately 75 yards of calico of various colors, predominantly bright red," and the reported observation that the groom did not seem to greatly enjoy the whole affair."¹⁸³

Another unhappy occupant of the Broward County jail during this time was "Doc" St. Clair, a self-proclaimed practitioner of magic and voodooism. His incarceration stemmed from the sale of certain "magic powders" that failed to live up to the promises that he made concerning their efficacy. According to a newspaper report of St. Clair's arrest, a local resident had paid the voodoo man "12 hard-earned United States dollars" for a magic potion, and it just hadn't produced the expected results. One can imagine the disillusionment of the poor victim when he found out that he wasn't able to "kill anybody he wanted to without fear of detection," or even to "manufacture and sell all the liquor he desired without any interference from the sheriff." But the final straw was when the would-be Romeo discovered that the powder didn't enable him "to win any woman he wanted by merely throwing some of the magic powder over his left shoulder with his right hand and repeating the name of the girl he desired."¹⁸⁴

During this period, Florida law enforcement officials became involved in what can only be called a "vendetta" against a well-known Chicago gangster, attempting to force him to leave the state. When Al "Scarface" Capone got out of prison in 1930, he headed for the Sunshine State. But Governor Carlton decided that he didn't want Capone anywhere in Florida. He sent telegrams to Sheriff Turner and the other sheriffs throughout the state, ordering the gangster's immediate arrest if he showed up in their jurisdictions. The Governor's message was quite clear: "It is reported that Al Capone is on his way to Florida. Arrest promptly if he comes your way and escort him to state border with instructions not to return. He cannot remain in Florida."¹⁸⁵ Three days later, however, a federal judge issued an injunction forbidding Florida sheriffs from carrying out the Governor's order.¹⁸⁶

Capone quietly moved into a newly purchased home in Miami on Easter Sunday, 1930, saying that he was there "for a rest which I think I deserve."¹⁸⁷ The reaction in Miami was quick and furious, and city officials obviously didn't agree that Capone deserved any respite, threatening him with arrest on sight. The Dade County Grand Jury also jumped into the fray, denouncing Capone and saying that "we endorse, command and urge all legitimate efforts to exterminate from this community what clearly appears to be a cancerous growth of organized crime."¹⁸⁸ As a result of pressure from local officials, Al Capone was arrested several times on spurious charges, although his attorney was able to dispose of these quite easily.

It was clear to Al Capone that he was unwelcome in Miami, but Broward appeared to be a bit more hospitable. The chief official in Oakland Park, for example, made it known that the Chicago gangster would be more than welcome in his city. Mayor J. D. Hawkins made a public announcement that "if Al Capone desires to live in Florida, he can come to Oakland Park. . . Our city offers many attractions to

prospective residents. . . While I do not approve of Capone's actions as reported in newspapers and magazines, his past does not concern me. I have known hundreds of so-called 'undesirables' who later became useful citizens. Oakland Park is a city of opportunity."¹⁸⁹



*J. Dewey Hawkins
Mayor of Oakland Park.*

As tempting as this invitation might have been, Capone apparently decided to build a mansion for himself a little further north, on a quiet and isolated finger of land extending out from Boca Raton into the Hillsboro Canal. Although he had taken an option on 50 acres of this land, the resistance of Boca Raton officials caused him to change his mind and his planned home was never built. In 1952 a canal was cut through this peninsula, creating an island (in Broward County) and this came to be known as "Capone Island."¹⁹⁰ More recently, this piece of land was officially renamed "Deerfield Island."

While their boss was busy shopping for real estate, members of Al Capone's mob had been creating serious problems for Broward County's Sheriff. A series of burglaries in Dania had baffled the local police, and Sheriff Turner assigned Deputy Sheriff "Hobb" Campbell to the case. With night patrolman Horace Mathews of the Dania Police Department, Campbell maintained long night vigils, and this tactic eventually paid off. One

morning, at about dawn, they noticed a car driving around the business district in Dania, finally stopping at a fruit store on Dixie Highway. When the store was broken into, Campbell and Mathews drove up to the scene. The burglars attempted to escape in their car, which had been left with its motor running, but they were apprehended. Three men and a woman were arrested. At their hearing, charges against the woman were dropped and one man bonded out. However, two of the men – Dan Collins (a/k/a "Dapper Dan" Collins, Blowser Walsh, John Leeger, the "Kincaid Kid," etc.) and A. Pond (a/k/a Roy Rogers), both of Chicago – were unable to make bond, and were held for trial in the Broward County jail.¹⁹¹ During their stay at this facility, Jailer A. D. Marshall decided to move the prisoners to the third floor of the jail, in order that they might be guarded more closely. It was during this move that six hacksaw blades were discovered in Pond's possession. Needless to say, from that point on, a very strict watch over the two men was maintained in order to thwart any escape attempt.¹⁹²

However, this was not the end of the story. Three days later Sheriff Turner received a threatening letter. This anonymous note, on stationery from a hotel in Miami, read as follows: "Sheriff Turner – Fort Lauderdale, Fla. – Spring Dan Collins and A. Pond before Saturday night or take the consequences." The Sheriff, in reporting the arrival of this threat, announced publicly that, "Let there be no doubts – when Saturday night has passed, Dan Collins, Blowser Walsh or whatever his name is, and Pond will still be in my custody up there in jail."¹⁹³ The next day, another anonymous message reached Turner, and the Sheriff claimed that although he really didn't mind the foolish threats, he was annoyed that they were sent *collect*, because this cost him money! "Why don't they come up here and do something instead of bombarding me with all these letters and telegrams?" asked the Sheriff. "Why not a little more action and less talk?"¹⁹⁴

Just to be on the safe side, however, in case any gangsters might actually decide to take him up on his invitation, Sheriff Turner ordered immediate machine gun and pistol practice for his deputies. "We have one of the latest things in machine guns," the Sheriff claimed, "a Thompson submachine gun capable of firing 250 shots per minute, and what is more, we have an expert machine gun wielder and plenty of ammunition to go along with it." (The expert to whom Turner referred was Deputy Albert Jones, who had been trained in the use of machine guns while a law enforcement officer in Illinois.)¹⁹⁵ This precaution turned out to be unnecessary, however, and Collins and Pond remained in jail until their trial two months later, when they were acquitted.¹⁹⁶

But aside from these occasional moments of high drama, the work of the Sheriff's Office was usually quite routine. In fact, an examination of his correspondence during this period would indicate that Turner himself was often bogged down in minutiae. Dealing with other agencies on minor matters was one task that consumed much of the Sheriff's time. For example, in April 1929, Turner had to write to the Chief of the U.S. Immigration Department complaining about an Immigration agent's failure to comply with Florida's vehicle registration law. The Sheriff wrote that "it is very embarrassing to me to have your man driving [all] over the county with an old license tag as I have instructions from the Governor to enforce this law in every case." Turner also inquired of that federal official whether any distinction should be made between agents in his department who might violate the law in Broward and ordinary citizens of the county who might do the same.¹⁹⁷

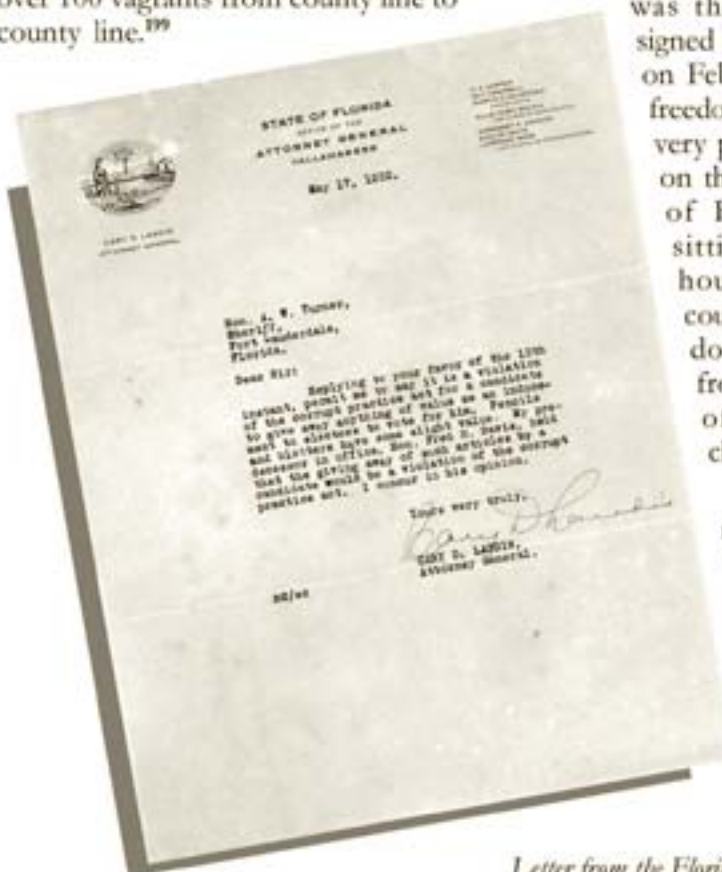
Even touchier was having to deal with the ire of the St. Lucie County Commissioners, who sent Sheriff Turner a protest resolution that they passed in October 1931. Their complaint was made quite clear in the words of the resolution: "Authorities in certain counties on the East Coast

of Florida, South of St. Lucie County, have announced that it is their intention to transport or dump alleged undesirable parties or vagrants from such county or counties in a Northerly direction, . . . bringing into St. Lucie County the parties so transported."¹⁹⁸ Such an accusation would be a difficult one for the Sheriff to deny, because it was absolutely true. In fact, for at least two years prior, the Broward Sheriff's Department had played an active role in doing just what the St. Lucie Commissioners found so objectionable. The "Hobo Special" was a nickname given to the coordinated movement of "undesirables" from Miami to points north, carried out by the police departments and sheriff's offices along the way. Police in Miami would round up vagrants and other petty offenders and transport them to the Dade County line. There Broward sheriff's deputies would pick them up and deliver them to the northern boundary of their county, where Palm Beach deputies would take over, moving them further north. In one two-week period alone, it was reported, the Broward Sheriff's Office moved over 100 vagrants from county line to county line.¹⁹⁹

For Sheriff Turner, it must have sometimes seemed that there was no end to the petty problems and disputes that he had to handle. For example, a letter signed by the Chief of the Criminal Department for the Hillsborough Sheriff's Office alleged that the Broward Sheriff's Office had overcharged that department, billing them for a service they didn't want. In arresting a man on behalf of the Hillsborough department, Broward officers had his car towed. Referring back to the letter requesting that the arrest be made, the Hillsborough officer insisted that nothing was mentioned about the car. Therefore, Sheriff Turner was requested to resolve this obvious injustice and send a refund check – for \$2.50!²⁰⁰

Other equally weighty correspondence included a letter from the Florida Attorney General, telling Sheriff Turner that in any upcoming elections, he would have to refrain from giving away pencils and blotters with his political message on them – giving a voter a pencil would, in the Attorney General's opinion, constitute an attempt to buy his vote.²⁰¹ Then there was the Release Order signed by Sheriff Turner on February 13, 1930 – freedom is, of course, a very precious thing and on that day, the Sheriff of Broward County, sitting in his courthouse office in the county seat, signed a document releasing from custody all 21 of Mrs. Mears' chickens.²⁰²

It is clear that much of Sheriff Turner's time was taken up with some less than monumental affairs of his



Letter from the Florida Attorney General

office. However, some of these relatively minor matters seem to reflect the basic decency of the man who was Broward's first Sheriff. In July 1929, for example, Turner took the time to write to a sheriff in Georgia on behalf of a man being held in the Broward County jail. Apparently the prisoner had "a little money" owed to him when he was arrested, and Turner asked his Georgia counterpart to visit the prisoner's old boss in order to "get the little bit that is due him and send it to me." The amount, the Broward Sheriff said, was about \$4.50 or so.²⁰¹

Whether handling matters large or small, momentous or inconsequential, one central concern of Sheriff Turner during this period was the fiscal well-being of the Broward County Sheriff's Office. Those were financially troubled times and budgets were lean. And over the course of Turner's four years in office following his election in 1928, things got progressively worse. Police departments across the state were forced to reduce their personnel rosters as an economic move, and in some cases the cuts were quite drastic. The Broward Sheriff's Department would also be affected, but sheriffs in Florida had a little more control over their budgets than did most local police agencies.

Under Florida law in effect at that time, sheriffs did not receive a salary *per se*, but instead worked on the "fee system." Each sheriff in the state was responsible for the expenses of his office, with income coming in primarily from fees charged to the county for various services, with some small additional amounts coming from attorney fees for serving papers, from the fees paid by other sheriffs for making arrests on their behalf, and so forth. (For example, when Sheriff Turner first took office in 1915, he was paid one dollar for every arrest he made.)²⁰² After expenses were deducted from the total income of his office, whatever "net" remained was the Sheriff's "salary" for the year.²⁰³

Of the last four years Sheriff Turner was to be in office, from 1929 to 1932 inclusive, the first year, in

which he netted \$5,374 for himself, was to be his best year. For the years 1929 to 1931, the Sheriff's Office had an average annual net of \$3,300 – almost all of which was attributable to a relatively large "profit" on feeding prisoners.²⁰⁴

In the fourth year of Turner's final term, the financial situation for the Broward County Sheriff's Office became desperate. The Sheriff was highly dependent upon county fees for income, but many residents didn't have money enough to pay their taxes, and the county was going broke! When Broward County's delinquent tax sale was held in August 1932, almost two-thirds of the property in the county was put up for sale for unpaid taxes. According to a local newspaper report, despite every effort on the part of county officials to collect the previous year's taxes, only about one-third had been paid, and as a result the remaining 65 percent of Broward County real estate was to "go under the auctioneer's hammer on Monday at noon."²⁰⁵

In early 1932, Turner appealed to the Florida Attorney General, stating that the county at that time owed him over \$3000 and asking for advice as to how he might collect the funds that were due him. The Sheriff wrote, "It is impossible for me to run my office and furnish the people the protection they need without money, and the only way I can get the money is from the county. I have tried every way possible to get the commissioners to raise enough money to pay me."²⁰⁶

In spite of the difficulties which the county's financial condition was causing him, Broward County's first Sheriff wanted to retain his position and thus he ran for the nomination in the Democratic primary in June 1932. Although he had been one of the two favorites in a field of eight, A. W. Turner lost out in the first round of voting, coming in third. When the runoff primary was held, his name didn't even appear on the ballot. Turner thus served his last six months in office as a "lame duck" sheriff.²⁰⁷

By this time the county commission was \$4,000 in arrears to

the Sheriff and he was angry. In early July, Fort Lauderdale residents were shocked to pick up their daily papers and see the result of the Sheriff's ire reflected in this headline: "SHERIFF THREATENS TO SHUT DOWN COUNTY JAIL." In the article that followed, it was reported that Sheriff Turner had notified the Broward County Commissioners that unless arrangements were made to pay the money owed him by August 1, 1932, he would close the county jail on that date and set the prisoners free.²⁰⁸ He also informed Governor Carlton of his intention to release the prisoners on the date specified. "Feeling that I have exhausted my credit to carry the county and spending money out of my own pocket to feed prisoners and run the office," he wrote, "I feel that I am justified in taking this action."²⁰⁹

One immediate consequence of Sheriff Turner's threat was that the Broward County court system began to dispense some very rapid – and perhaps very questionable – "justice." The Grand Jury was hastily reconvened to deal with charges pending against prisoners. The following week, a special session of the Broward Circuit Court was held for the trials of those the Grand Jury had charged. At the end of one week of frenzied activity in the courthouse, the July 30 headlines in a local paper told this story of what had happened: "CIRCUIT COURT JURIES GO ON 'GUILTY' SPREE" – 12 defendants were tried and there was a 100 percent conviction rate. Sentences of nine months to 20 years were handed down by the judge. And all of the defendants were sentenced to penal servitude in state prison, so that if the Sheriff were to shut down the county jail, none of those convicted would be set free.²¹⁰

Then, on August 1, 1932, a federal judge also got into the act. Judge Halsted L. Ritter of the United States District Court in Miami made a public announcement that if the Broward Sheriff closed his jail, he would send the U. S. Marshal to Broward County to arrest the Sheriff.²¹¹ This would not, unfortunately, be the last time that a

federal judge would threaten to jail a Broward County Sheriff.

The County Commissioners finally did release a small amount of money to Sheriff Turner, and he never carried out his threat to close the jail. However, he was forced to cut back on the services provided by his office, and in late August 1932, a newspaper report indicated that "no expense fees, no arrests—is Sheriff A.W. Turner's policy from now on!"²¹⁴ This policy was announced when the County Commissioners were about \$4,000 in arrears on the Sheriff's fees, but before the year ended, they would owe Turner almost \$7,000.²¹⁵

Sheriff Turner had been told that the reason the County Commissioners were unable to pay him was because there was no money left in the Fine and Forfeiture Fund.²¹⁶ But that fund had been quite robust for years after the "wiretappers" case pumped \$20,000 into it in 1922! How could all of that money possibly be spent so quickly? And on what? The answer was given in a *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* editorial published in November 1931.

There it was pointed out that the three murder trials of William A. Hicks and related investigations had cost the county more than \$30,000. Expenditures for the Hicks case, described at that time as the most expensive single case in South Florida history, had completely wiped out the Fine and Forfeiture Fund!²¹⁷ Thus the financial hardships that Sheriff Turner and his department had to endure were largely the result of what many viewed as a vendetta against "Big Bill" Hicks, one that had been conducted by the Broward Sheriff's Office in concert with the County Commissioners and other officials. Ironically, one of the fees that Sheriff Turner had been able to collect from the County Commission was \$39.58 for "Carrying Bill Hicks to Dade County for trial."²¹⁸

When he left office, Aden W. Turner had spent a total of 10 and a half years as Sheriff of Broward County. He had been the first to hold that position and he established many guidelines for that office which would continue into subsequent administra-

tions. His suspension by Governor Hardee was quite possibly unfair, for there were no charges ever made that suggested Turner was in any way corrupt—in sharp contrast to the sheriff who succeeded him in 1922, and also the one who succeeded him after his last term in office. Turner was also unfortunate in that his second full term as Broward County Sheriff came at a time when the county was approaching near financial ruin.

During his time in office, Sheriff Turner apparently supplemented his income by maintaining a used car dealership.²¹⁹ Although the name he assigned to this business might not conjure up an image of high quality vehicles, it certainly would be easy enough to remember—an occupational license application mailed in 1929 was addressed to Turner at the "Auto Boneyard" in Fort Lauderdale.²²⁰ After leaving office, he is reported to have returned to farming, becoming inactive after a serious illness in 1937. Aden Waterman Turner died at age 75 in his Fort Lauderdale home on December 13, 1940.²²¹ ❖



*Broward County Sheriff
Walter Clark*

In 1932, Broward County's first Sheriff had been beaten at the polls by a political newcomer. The man who would replace Aden W. Turner as the county's chief law enforcement officer was a local butcher who had gained a reputation for honesty. Voters apparently wanted a change and were hoping to escape the problems and scandals that had plagued the administrations of Broward's first two sheriffs. Walter R. Clark, the popular young man who would now be the county's top lawman, would hold office

longer than any other Broward sheriff before or after him. Unfortunately, his lengthy tenure in office would also bring to the Sheriff's Office some of the worst scandals in its history. In January 1933, when Turner turned over the Sheriff's Office to Clark, the county's residents could not have anticipated that they would have to wait another three and a half decades before the Broward Sheriff's Office would finally begin to shake off the corruption which had first come to light during the "Roaring Twenties." ❖

NOTES

1. The population figure of 4,763 for 1915 was taken from "The Creation of Broward County: Victory in Tallahassee," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 11, nos. 3-4 (Summer/Fall 1988).
2. Stuart McIver, "1926 - Miami: The Blow That Broke the Boom," *Fort Lauderdale Sunday News (Sunshine Magazine)*, September 19, 1993.
3. Stuart McIver, "One Hundred Years: The Long View," *Fort Lauderdale Sunday News (Sunshine Magazine)*, October 24, 1999.
4. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, June 18, 1915.
5. *Ibid.*, October 8, 1915.
6. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, December 13, 1940; *Fort Lauderdale Times*, December 14, 1940.
7. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, October 8, 1915.
8. *Ibid.*, December 10, 1915.
9. *Ibid.*, November 19, 1915.
10. *Ibid.*, August 25, 1916.
11. *Ibid.*, May 19, 1916.
12. *Ibid.*, June 9, 1916.
13. *Ibid.*, May 25, 1917.
14. *Ibid.*, August 29, 1919.
15. *Ibid.*, August 6, 1920.
16. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, February 3, 1920; *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, February 6, 1920.
17. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, April 1, 1921; *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, April 1, 1921.
18. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, December 15, 1916.
19. *Ibid.*, April 26, 1918.
20. *Ibid.*, May 10, 1918.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*, May 18, 1917.
23. *Ibid.*, August 25, 1916; September 15, 1916; April 5, 1918; *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, October 29, 1949.
24. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, April 5, 1918.
25. *Ibid.*, May 7, 1920.
26. In Florida at this time, in addition to using convicts for road work, both the state and the counties were also allowed to lease convict labor to private enterprise. The state stopped this practice in 1919, and county leasing of convicts ended in 1923, following a scandalous incident in which a young Leon County convict was literally whipped to death by an overseer in a turpentine factory. After this, most counties continued to use convict labor to build and maintain roads, although some leased their convicts to other counties. For a description of how the convict lease system began and why it ended, see William Warren Rogers and James M. Denham, *Florida Sheriffs: A History 1821-1945* (Tallahassee: Sentry Press, 2001).
27. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, July 12, 1918.
28. *Ibid.*, December 5, 1919; *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, December 5, 1919.
29. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, October 12, 1920.
30. *Ibid.*, October 19, 1920.
31. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, October 6, 1916.
32. *Ibid.*, April 5, 1918.
33. *Ibid.*, December 24, 1920.
34. *Ibid.*, December 15, 1916.
35. *Ibid.*, January 16, 1920.
36. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, January 16, 1920.
37. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, April 1, 1921.
38. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, May 20, 1921.
39. *Miami Herald*, May 25, 1921.
40. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, September 26, 1919.
41. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, October 3, 1919; *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, October 3, 1919.
42. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, January 16, 1920.
43. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, January 16, 1920.
44. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, January 16, 1920.
45. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, January 16, 1920.
46. *Ibid.*, November 9, 1920.
47. *Ibid.*, May 20, 1921.
48. *Ibid.*, February 10, 1922; Stuart McIver, "The Scam on the New River," in *Glimpses of South Florida History* (Miami: Florida Flair Books, 1988).
49. *Miami Herald*, May 22, 1921.
50. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, March 28, 1919.
51. *Ibid.*, February 3, 1922; McIver, "The Scam on the New River."
52. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, February 3, 1922.
53. *Ibid.*, March 31, 1922.
54. *Ibid.*, March 3, 1922.
55. *Ibid.*, February 3, 1922.
56. *Ibid.*, February 10, 1922.
57. *Ibid.*, March 17, 1922.
58. *Ibid.*, March 31, 1922.
59. *Ibid.*
60. McIver, "The Scam on the New River."
61. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, March 31, 1922.
62. *Ibid.*, March 3, 1922.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*
65. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 16, 1942.
66. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, March 3, 1922.
67. *Ibid.*, March 10, 1922.
68. *Ibid.*, June 30, 1922.
69. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, December 15, 1922; *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, December 15, 1922; Stuart McIver, "The Life and Crimes of John Ashley," *Fort Lauderdale Sunday News (Sunshine Magazine)*, April 30, 1989.
70. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, February 16, 1923.
71. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, April 6, 1923; *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, April 6, 1923.
72. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, August 4, 1922.
73. *Ibid.*, April 14, 1922.
74. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, November 3, 1922.
75. *Ibid.*, March 30, 1923.
76. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, December 22, 1922; *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, December 22, 1922.
77. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, January 12, 1923.
78. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, December 22, 1922.
79. Broward Sheriff's Office records in the archives of the Broward County Historical Commission, Fort Lauderdale.
80. *Ibid.*
81. Letter of Governor Cary A. Hardee to Paul C. Bryan, May 24, 1923.
82. Letter of J. W. Tidball to Paul C. Bryan, May 5, 1925.
83. *Miami Metropolis*, December 11, 1927.
84. *Ibid.*, January 20, 1927.
85. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, April 20, 1923.
86. *Ibid.*, April 27, 1923.
87. *Ibid.*, May 11, 1923.
88. McIver, "The Life and Crimes of John Ashley."
89. Letter of Governor Cary A. Hardee to Paul C. Bryan, September 16, 1924.
90. Letter of Governor Cary A. Hardee to Paul C. Bryan, September 24, 1924.
91. *Miami Herald*, December 6, 1928.
92. Broward Sheriff's Office records in the archives of the Broward County Historical Commission.
93. Donald G. Lester, "Justice of the Peace W. A. Hicks," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 15, nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 1992).
94. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, June 18, 1915.
95. Letter of Governor Cary A. Hardee to Paul C. Bryan, September 16, 1924.
96. Lester, "Justice of the Peace W. A. Hicks."
97. *Ibid.*
98. Letter of William A. Hicks to Charles DuPuy, August 23, 1926.
99. Marilyn Kemper, "On Trial: William A. (Bill) Hicks," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 1, no. 2 (January, 1977).
100. *Miami Herald*, December 6, 1928.
101. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, November 11, 1926.
102. Broward Sheriff's Office records in the archives of the Broward County Historical Commission; Lester, "Justice of the Peace W. A. Hicks."
103. Letter of P. F. Hamsch to Paul C. Bryan, April 15, 1926.

104. Letter of Paul C. Bryan to P. F. Hambach, April 17, 1926.
105. Letter of P. F. Hambach to Paul C. Bryan, April 15, 1926.
106. *St. Petersburg Evening Independent*, January 27, 1927.
107. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, January 27, 1927; June 13, 1930.
108. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, January 27, 1927.
109. *Ibid.*
110. Donald G. Lester, "The Pompano Race Track Confronts the Martin Administration," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 17, nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 1994).
111. *Miami Herald*, March 13, 1927.
112. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, January 6, 1928.
113. Much of the information which follows, concerning the trials and tribulations of "Big Bill" Hicks, was drawn from two very important articles by noted Broward County historians. The first was "On Trial; William A. (Bill) Hicks," by Marilyn Kemper, and the second was "Justice of the Peace W. A. Hicks" by Donald G. Lester—both of these were published in the *Broward Legacy* and cited above. These two articles together give a very comprehensive picture of the role that Hicks played in Broward County's history.
114. Lester, "Justice of the Peace W. A. Hicks." [Note: Less than a year after Jot Shiver testified in the first murder trial of "Big Bill" Hicks, the former deputy sheriff was charged with assault and battery, on a complaint sworn out by his wife—*Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, June 8, 1928.]
115. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 17, 1930.
116. *Ibid.*, April 21, 1930.
117. *Ibid.*, August 22, 1930.
118. *Miami Herald*, December 6, 1928.
119. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 16, 1942; *Fort Lauderdale Times*, July 16, 1942.
120. Lester, "Justice of the Peace W. A. Hicks."
121. Letter of anonymous writer to Paul C. Bryan, February 11, 1928.
122. *Miami Herald*, June 23, 1928.
123. Letter of A. W. Turner to W. B. Cahoon, December 26, 1930.
124. Letter of A. W. Turner to the Sheriff of Putnam County (Florida), January 13, 1931.
125. Letter of A. W. Turner to J. A. Johnson, January 13, 1931.
126. Letter of A. W. Turner to Frank Karel, January 21, 1931.
127. Letter of A. W. Turner to Richard W. Thomas, March 5, 1931.
128. Telegram of A. W. Turner to Richard W. Thomas, December 24, 1931.
129. Lester, "Justice of the Peace W. A. Hicks."
130. Kemper, "On Trial; William A. (Bill) Hicks."
131. Personal communication from Utica (N.Y.) Police Chief C. Allen Pylman, June 21, 2002. [Note: It is clear that "Big Bill" Hicks never served as a police officer or sheriff's deputy after returning to New York. In 1931 and for the following five years, his occupation was listed as "lecturer" in the Utica City Directory. From 1937 until his death in 1940, he was listed as a "marshal of the city court." This description would imply that Hicks might possibly have attained "court peace officer" status for the last few years of his life, but he never again served as a police officer. The term "city marshal" varies in meaning, depending upon time period and locale. As a general rule, before a town or city was sufficiently large to support a police force, the first law enforcement officer hired would be the "town marshal" or "city marshal," and this function usually evolved into the city's police department. For example, in the early 1900s, the three Broward towns incorporated before the county came into existence in 1915—Davie, which had been incorporated in 1904; Pompano, incorporated in 1908; and Fort Lauderdale, incorporated in 1911—each had its own marshal. G. D. Tenbrook, who became Fort Lauderdale's Marshal in 1920, was the first to be given the title "Chief of Police." Later in the developmental history of a city, when there is already a well-established police force in place, the term "city marshal"—or "city court marshal"—is generally used in reference to a non-police role, not unlike that played by a "civil deputy" in a sheriff's department. In New York State, city marshals are authorized to execute all of the processes and mandates of a city court, but they generally do not carry weapons. Moreover, in addition to not being police officers, they are not always accorded even the status of "peace officers."]
132. Lester, "Justice of the Peace W. A. Hicks."
133. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, October 15, 1940.
134. *Ibid.*, November 7, 1928.
135. Paul C. Bryan letter to W. O. Bryant, March 26, 1926.
136. Financial reports submitted to State Comptroller by the Broward Sheriff's Office.
137. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, September 14, 1929; March 23, 1932; Financial reports submitted to State Comptroller by the Broward Sheriff's Office.
138. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, August 5, 1929.
139. *Ibid.*, August 6, 1929.
140. *Ibid.*, August 8, 1929.
141. *Ibid.*, August 9, 1929.
142. *Ibid.*, August 12, 1929.
143. *Ibid.*, September 11, 1929.
144. *Ibid.*
145. *Ibid.*, September 14, 1929.
146. *Ibid.*, September 19, 1929.
147. *Ibid.*, September 20, 1929.
148. *Ibid.*, November 7, 1929.
149. *Ibid.*, November 8, 1929. [Note: On occasion, Sheriff Aden W. Turner undoubtedly wished that his deputies would keep their tempers under better control, thereby causing fewer problems for him. A month before Deputy "Hobb" Campbell's case was finally settled, however, an item in a local Fort Lauderdale newspaper may have made the Broward Sheriff realize that things really could be a lot worse. It seems that another "Sheriff Turner," this one in Texas, also had a personnel problem. One of Sheriff Eugene Turner's deputies heard that a former deputy, who had become a federal Prohibition officer, had made some nasty remarks about him. One day, the two men happened to meet in the Sheriff's office—they both reached for their guns, and in the ensuing shootout, both men were killed. Fortunately, it never got quite that bad for Broward's Sheriff Turner—*Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, October 7, 1929]
150. *Ibid.*, August 17, 1929.
151. *Ibid.*, January 27, 1928.
152. Stuart McIver, "Broward's Only Legal Execution," in *Glimpses of South Florida History*.
153. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, January 27, 1928.
154. *Ibid.*, August 3, 1929.
155. Letter of Halsted L. Ritter to A. W. Turner, July 19, 1929.
156. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 18, 1929.
157. *Ibid.*, August 6, 1929.
158. *Ibid.*, August 12, 1929.
159. *Ibid.*, August 16, 1929.
160. *Ibid.*, August 16, 1929, and August 17, 1929.
161. *Ibid.*, August 16, 1929.
162. *Ibid.*, August 17, 1929.
163. *Ibid.*, October 9, 1929.
164. *Ibid.*, November 11, 1929.
165. *Ibid.*, March 19, 1930.
166. Letter of A. W. Turner to Governor Doyle E. Carlton, August 6, 1930.
167. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, March 21, 1932.
168. Telegram of A. W. Turner to Chief of Police, Atlanta, Georgia (date unknown).
169. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, November 20, 1929.
170. *Ibid.*, October 21, 1929.
171. *Ibid.*, October 22, 1929.
172. *Ibid.*, October 21, 1929.

173. *Ibid.*, October 22, 1929.
174. *Ibid.*, October 25, 1929.
175. *Ibid.*, October 26, 1929.
176. *Ibid.*, January 24, 1930.
177. *Ibid.*, January 25, 1930.
178. *Ibid.*, July 26, 1932.
179. *Ibid.*, October 2, 1930.
180. *Ibid.*, June 6, 1930.
181. Letter of A. W. Turner to Sanford Bates, November 5, 1931.
182. *Fort Lauderdale Herald*, October 3, 1922; *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, June 30, 1931.
183. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 29, 1929.
184. *Ibid.*, March 27, 1930.
185. *Ibid.*, March 19, 1930.
186. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1930.
187. *Ibid.*, April 21, 1930.
188. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1930.
189. *Miami Herald*, March 21, 1930.
190. Stuart Melver, "Scarface: The Man Florida Didn't Want," in *Glimpses of South Florida History*.
191. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 9, 1930.
192. *Ibid.*, March 18, 1930.
193. *Ibid.*, March 20, 1930.
194. *Ibid.*, March 21, 1930.
195. *Ibid.*, March 20, 1930.
196. *Ibid.*, May 26, 1930.
197. Letter of A. W. Turner to J. C. Sheffield, April 4, 1929.
198. Resolution passed by the Board of County Commissioners, St. Lucie County, Florida, on October 6, 1931, and sent to Sheriff A. W. Turner on October 16, 1931.
199. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, November 5, 1930.
200. Letter of L. M. Hatton, Jr. to A. W. Turner, February 1, 1929.
201. Letter of Cary D. Landis to A. W. Turner, May 17, 1932.
202. Release Order signed by A. W. Turner, February 13, 1930.
203. Letter of A. W. Turner to P. K. Ridley, July 31, 1929.
204. *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel*, November 10, 1916.
205. The Broward Sheriff did not necessarily receive the entire "net" of the Sheriff's Office. The basis for his compensation might be best understood by examining Turner's own explanation. For the year 1929, the Sheriff reported total net receipts of \$5,623.46 – in regard to this, Turner stated: "As the statutes show a sheriff is entitled to a net income of \$5,000.00 and sixty per cent of the next \$3000.00 or any fraction thereof, I have given the county commissioners a check for \$249.38." (From A. W. Turner letter of January 15, 1930 addressed to the Florida State Comptroller, Ernest Amos.)
206. Financial reports submitted to State Comptroller by the Broward Sheriff's Office.
207. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 30, 1932.
208. Letter of A. W. Turner to Cary D. Landis, February 3, 1932.
209. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, June 8, 1932.
210. *Ibid.*, July 11, 1932.
211. *Miami Herald*, July 10, 1932.
212. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 30, 1932.
213. *Miami Herald*, August 2, 1932.
214. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, August 27, 1932.
215. Financial reports submitted to State Comptroller by the Broward Sheriff's Office.
216. Letter of A. W. Turner to Cary D. Landis, February 3, 1932.
217. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, November 12, 1931.
218. Financial report submitted to State Comptroller by the Broward Sheriff's Office, for the period ending June 30, 1930.
219. Letter from the Office of the Commissioner of Motor Vehicles, State of Florida, to A. W. Turner, March 15, 1929.
220. Letter from the Tax Collector's Office, City of Fort Lauderdale, to A. W. Turner, September 30, 1929.
221. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, December 13, 1940.

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