

THE FORT LAUDERDALE DAILY NEWS AND THE BROWARD SHERIFF'S OFFICE 1948-1951

by Donald G. Lester

Robert H. Gore, during his long career as publisher of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, thrived in an era of personal journalism. Today, the reader confronted with a maze of faceless corporations and editorial boards often finds it next to impossible to fix the individual responsibility for editorial opinions which appear in the daily press. But during the period from 1929 to 1963, every knowledgeable person in Fort Lauderdale knew who was responsible for the opinions expressed in the *Daily News*. That person was Robert H. Gore, the publisher of the paper. As a result, Gore, like many newspapermen of his era, became a maker as well as a reporter of the news, injecting his strong personality and opinions on the political scene at all levels. Nowhere was this more evident than in the paper's treatment of the Broward County Sheriff's Of-

For the past nine years, articles in Broward Legacy by Donald G. Lester have chronicled the county's twentieth century political history. Several of these studies have focused on the influence of publisher Robert H. Gore and the Fort Lauderdale Daily News.

Mr. Lester was uniquely qualified to write on these subjects. A resident of Broward County since 1925, he was a graduate of Fort Lauderdale High School and the University of Miami. He served as Professor Emeritus of History and Political Science at Middle Georgia College, where he was honored as the 1993 Distinguished Lecturer. His work also earned him the Cooper C. Kirk Memorial Award in 1992 and the Robert C. Leckwood Award in 1994.

The Historical Commission is privileged to publish "The Fort Lauderdale Daily News and the Broward Sheriff's Office, 1948-1951," which Mr. Lester completed shortly before his death on April 8, 1996. This article details the battle between publisher Gore and controversial Sheriff Walter Clark and analyzes the part the Daily News played in Clark's downfall. It has been an honor to know and work with Donald Lester and to have shared in the benefits of his vast knowledge and research skills.

Immediately following this article is a selection of photos taken by the late Steve Cresse, chief photographer for the Fort Lauderdale Daily News from 1945-1957. These photos, dating from the same period as Mr. Lester's article, are part of a large collection donated to the Broward County Historical Commission by Mr. Cresse's daughter, Jacqueline Boring.



Fort Lauderdale Daily News publisher Robert H. Gore (left) and Broward County Sheriff Walter R. Clark.

office, and the county's longtime, powerful, and controversial sheriff, Walter R. Clark, during the late 1940s and the opening years of the 1950s.

Robert H. Gore was born in Knottsville, Kentucky, on May 24, 1886. After graduation from St. Mary's College in St. Mary's, Kentucky, he worked for a number of newspapers and also became involved in the insurance business before he came to Fort Lauderdale at the age of forty-four and purchased the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* from the Stilwell brothers for \$75,000.

Although Gore bought the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* in 1929, he waited for six years to establish his permanent residence in Fort Lauderdale. In the meantime, Gore had become an early backer of Franklin D. Roosevelt and was very active in Roosevelt's successful 1932 Democratic presidential campaign. Following the election, Gore stood in line with other "Deserving Democrats" to wait for the spoils of office. He re-

ceived his reward in the form of his appointment as the first New Deal Governor of Puerto Rico. Arriving in San Juan, Gore faced an impossible task. Puerto Ricans were bitterly divided over a number of issues, the most notable being the future status of the island in relation to the United States. One faction favored complete independence, while another favored Puerto Rican statehood. Still another faction was willing to settle for commonwealth status. None of the groups seemed satisfied with the current situation. This dissension led to much violence, including attempts on the governor's life. In addition to dealing with this no-win situation, Gore had a feeling that he was losing the support of the Roosevelt administration. His relationship with James A. Farley, chairman of the Democratic National Committee and now postmaster general, had become estranged as the result of an ill-advised speech that Gore had delivered in Havana. Facing this combination of obstacles, Gore resigned as governor of Puerto Rico. Though he had

held the office for only six months, he cherished the title of Governor for the rest of his life.

Robert H. Gore became a permanent resident of Fort Lauderdale in 1935. Soon after settling in the city, he also became a principal property owner. At the urging of Fort Lauderdale attorney George W. English, Jr., Gore purchased the unfinished Wil Mar Hotel, a casualty of the collapse of the Florida real estate boom which had remained an eyesore for many years. Gore completed the unsightly skeleton structure as the Governors' Club Hotel, which opened for business in the fall of 1937. The hotel became Gore's greatest property acquisition and remained Fort Lauderdale's most famous and prestigious hotel for the next forty years.¹

In 1936, Gore began his political feuds with national, state, and local public officials in earnest. Although in 1932 he had emerged as an early backer and ardent supporter of the presidential aspirations of Franklin D. Roosevelt, by 1937 Gore had started moving into the anti-

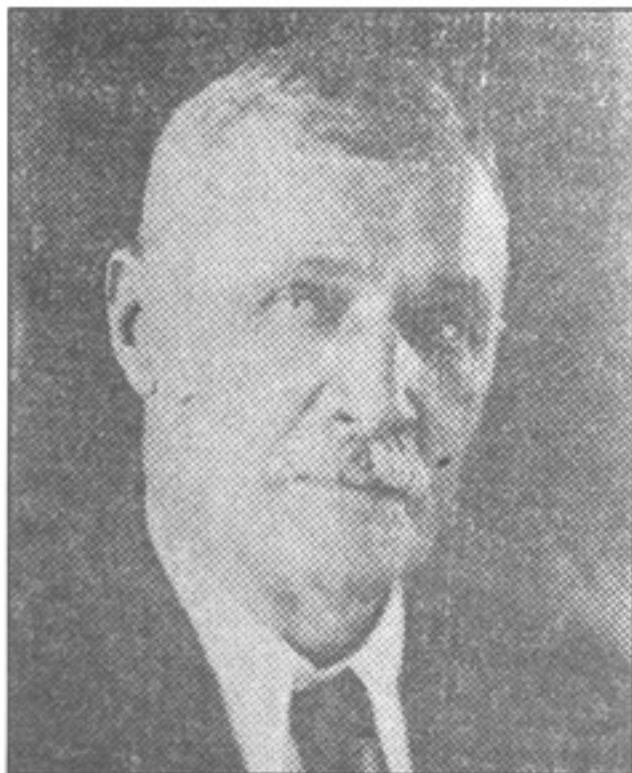
Roosevelt camp. Eventually, he became a bitter critic of the Roosevelt administration. Beginning in 1936 and in the years that followed, Gore used the pages of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* to launch verbal assaults on Roosevelt and the New Deal, local congressman J. Mark Wilcox of West Palm Beach, Florida Governor Dave Sholtz, and many others.² However, the Gore feud that probably had the greatest impact locally was the publisher's eight-year attack on Broward County's legendary sheriff, Walter R. Clark.

Walter Reid Clark was born in Fort Lauderdale on December 11, 1904, the eldest of four sons of James C. and Annie Clark. James Clark died in 1917 as the result of a snake bite, forcing Walter to quit school in the seventh grade in order to help support his family. Eventually, Walter began working as a butcher in a small meat market. He also became active in the Croissant Park

Christian Church, where he assumed a leadership position when he began teaching a Sunday school class. In 1931, he received a good deal of publicity when he was selected "King" of the River Revelry pageant celebrating Fort Lauderdale's twentieth anniversary of incorporation, an honor bestowed upon him for reputedly being the first white male child born in the community. In spite of his humble origins, Walter Clark soon developed political ambitions. In 1932, he entered the Democratic primary in an attempt to win the nomination for sheriff.³

That year Sheriff A. W. Turner, in and out of office since the creation of Broward County in 1915, faced a serious challenge for reelection. Turner's leading opponent was County Commissioner J. R. Barnes of Hollywood, who was supported by the powerful Rogers and Morris law firm. There were a total of eight candidates in the contest for sheriff. The

challengers included Fort Lauderdale's police chief, Lucien Craig, who resigned his post in order to make the race. Craig was a pioneer resident and brother-in-law of former sheriff Paul Bryan. Also in the contest were two prominent members of the local American Legion post—B. (Brack) Cantrell, who had an automobile agency in Fort Lauderdale, and William Budd, who had received considerable attention as the drum major of the post's highly regarded drum and bugle corps. As noted above, also in the race was native-born Walter R. Clark, who was certainly a dark horse and the "longest of the longshots." The young challenger was only twenty-seven years old at the time of the June 1932 primary. He had no law enforcement experience, military background, or athletic reputation. He was not supported by any political organization, and he lacked powerful or wealthy family connections. Walter Clark's



Walter Clark won the sheriff's office in 1932 by defeating incumbent Sheriff A. W. Turner (above), and frontrunner J. R. Barnes (right) in the Democratic primary.

J. R. BARNES FOR SHERIFF



J. R. BARNES

Now, if ever, a man with experience; a man who has a known public record; a man who can and will serve all of Broward county is needed.

The south end of Broward county has never had a county-at-large official. J. R. Barnes, of Hollywood, asks your vote because he is an experienced man; because he will represent all of the county; because there are no strings or promises tied to his going into office. Pay no attention to street rumors which may indicate such a condition.

An able, independent candidate.

Vote For
J. R. BARNES

AT THE POLLS TOMORROW

Published and Sold by the Florida Press at Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

chief claims to fame were as a pioneer resident and as a good-natured butcher at a small meat market next to the A&P grocery on Southwest Second Street in Fort Lauderdale.⁴

Since there were eight candidates involved, it was obvious that no candidate would obtain a majority of votes in the first primary, and that a run-off election would be required. The general assumption was that the run-off would be between Turner and Barnes.

Thus the primary results came as a complete surprise. Barnes finished first, as many had expected, but Sheriff Turner finished third, barely ahead of Brack Cantrell. William Budd and Lucien Craig finished sixth and seventh respectively. The second place finisher was none other than native son Walter R. Clark. Turner received only about fifteen percent of the vote, while Barnes received approximately twenty-five percent and Clark twenty percent. The run-off completed this startling upset, when Clark defeated Barnes. The young butcher's surprise victory can be attributed partly to the support thrown to him by incumbent Sheriff Turner after the first primary. Not surprisingly, Clark trounced his Republican opponent, Joseph P. Moe of Fort Lauderdale, in the general election, and in January 1933 began his lengthy career as overlord of the sheriff's office. He served until July 1950, a total of seventeen and one-half years, by far the longest tenure of any sheriff in Broward County history.⁵

During the young sheriff's first term in office his handling of two high-profile cases received criticism in some circles. The first of these was the Darsey case. In May 1933, Robert Darsey, a sixty-four-year-old Pompano fish merchant, was attacked by a club-wielding assailant and robbed of about seventy-five dollars while walking home with the day's receipts. Darsey managed to stagger or crawl home, but soon died of his wounds.

Darsey's murder sent the entire town of Pompano into an uproar, and spurred local law enforcement agencies into action. In short order, twenty Negroes were brought in for questioning, and eventually the num-

ber of suspects was reduced to four: Walter Woodward, Charley Davis, Jack Williamson, and Izell Chambers. After intensive questioning, sheriff's deputies obtained confessions from all of these except Chambers. Judge George W. Tedder, Sr., appointed Fort Lauderdale attorney Elbert B. Griffis to represent Chambers and Davis, and Hollywood attorney W. C. Mather to represent Woodward and Williamson. Since he had not confessed, Chambers was the only one to receive a trial. All four defendants were convicted and received the death sentence, the first time a capital sentence was issued in a Broward County court.⁶

After the sentences were issued, Judge Tedder publicly congratulated Sheriff Clark and his deputies for the professionalism they displayed in handling the case. The Darsey case appeared to be over until prominent black Jacksonville attorney S.P. McGill suddenly entered the picture and began to pursue appeals.⁷ McGill charged that the confessions were obtained by torture, which involved constant, relentless questioning as well as physical abuse. The Florida Supreme Court sent the case back to the Broward Circuit Court, and it continued to bounce back and forth from court to court for almost nine years. Before it was over, the Darsey case came before the Broward Circuit Court three times, the Palm Beach County Circuit Court twice, the Florida Supreme Court five times, and the United States Supreme Court once, becoming the first Broward case to reach the nation's highest tribunal.

The Darsey case was dubbed the "Little Scottsboro" case after the more famous Alabama case which was also noted for its great duration and racial overtones. In 1940 the United States Supreme Court reversed the Florida courts, stating that undue force had been used to obtain the confessions. The justices withheld the claims of physical torture, focusing instead on the long duration of the intense questioning. Their landmark decision set a precedent against reliance on confessions as evidence. The case ended in 1942, when Circuit Judge C. E. Chillingworth of West

Palm Beach, taking a broad interpretation of the Supreme Court decision, acquitted the defendants by means of a directed verdict. Significantly, during this lengthy process, not one word of criticism of Walter Clark's handling of the case appeared in the pages of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*. In 1935, while the Darsey case was still in its early stages, feelings of disgust toward the legal and judicial process spun out of control, resulting in the second major crisis to face Walter Clark's administration—the only lynching in Broward County history.

In July 1935, Reuben Stacy, a thirty-seven-year-old black man, was accused of the attempted rape of Marion Jones, a white woman who lived west of Fort Lauderdale. Eyewitnesses positively identified the suspect, and the case seemed "open and shut." Public excitement concerning the case grew to noticeable proportions, and a large number of people began gathering in Fort Lauderdale. The tone of the crowd, which included a noticeable number of Pompano residents, grew uglier in the hours following Stacy's arrest, and whispers spread that something violent was about to happen. Walter Clark feared that the county jail might be attacked by a large mob, and that he with his small band of deputies would be unable to handle the situation. After consulting Circuit Judge George Tedder and State Attorney Louis Maire, to obtain their support in this volatile situation, the sheriff decided to move the prisoner to the Dade County jail. The Dade jail, which served as the maximum security prison for all south Florida, was located in the upper floors of that county's twenty-seven story courthouse, at the time the tallest building in the state.

The sheriff assigned his brother Bob, who served as chief deputy, deputy Virgil Wright, and three special deputies—I. G. Shuman, W. D. McDougald, and Ben Turner—the task of escorting the prisoner to the safer facility. A car containing the five deputies and the prisoner started the ill-fated venture, but the mob had anticipated the endeavor, and blocked the roads leading south. The depu-

ties' car was forced off the road and into a ditch on the West Dixie Highway (now U.S. 441), and the crowd seized the unfortunate prisoner, hanged him from a pine tree, and riddled his body with bullets. The coroner's inquest which followed ruled that Reuben Stacy met his death at the hands of person or persons unknown. At a grand jury's investigation of the official handling of the case, many witnesses testified, including John Darsey, son of the 1933 murder victim, and several members of the coroner's jury. The grand jury cleared the sheriff and his deputies of any wrongdoing.⁸ A front page editorial in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* stated:

The Law is mighty and the Law must prevail.

A county Grand Jury has been ordered to assemble Tuesday to investigate the lynching here yesterday of a negro who was the Law's ward.

He was accused of a foul crime and had been identified definitely and positively. There is no question but that the avengers "got the right man."

The crime he attempted, though his attempt was futile, was one that has ever stirred men to personal vengeance and probably always will.

The Law moves slowly and ponderously. That is admitted. Evidence of the fact that too frequently is the course of justice obstructed by technicalities of the Law and subterfuges of those who live by its manipulation exists in Broward County today. The example is the quartet of killers sentenced to die for a brutal crime, yet who have evaded the penalty society has decreed to expiate their murderous deed.

But two wrongs have never made a right, and disregard of the Law has never served to strengthen it.

A crime was committed here. Now there have been two crimes. It is for the Law to determine facts, to itself uphold its majesty. It is not for the individual or a newspaper to assume authority in

fixing blame, in determining the responsibility. That is the Law's job.

The execution here yesterday wiped out a menace to society. That is pretty certain. But it accomplished that achievement at the expense of law and order.

The Law has been violated, and its majesty belittled. It is for the Law to have the final word.⁹

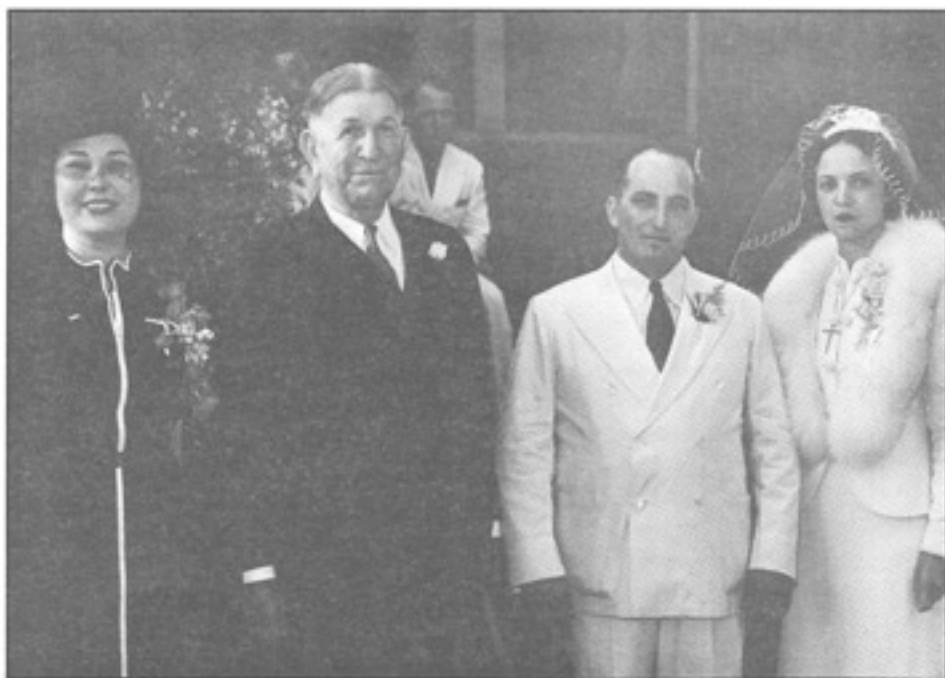
The editorial noted the link between the lynching and the Darsey case. Significantly, it did not contain one word of criticism of Walter Clark and his deputies.

Nevertheless, the lynching put Clark "on the spot." A sheriff's primary responsibility is to protect his own jail, and the failure to do so puts him in a certain amount of jeopardy. The danger that Clark faced came not so much from the voters as from Governor Dave Sholtz, who had the power to suspend local officials even if indictments or formal charges had not been lodged. The Florida Senate had to sustain before permanent removal could be effective, but since the legislature met in regular session only every other year, an official could be suspended for up to two years before the senate considered his plight.

Furthermore, as a matter of senatorial courtesy, the senate generally followed the wishes of the senator who represented the district where the suspended official resided.

Sheriffs seemed particularly vulnerable to the whims of Florida governors. The 1922 removal of Broward Sheriff A. W. Turner and the 1933 removal of Dade Sheriff Dan Hardie, both of which were subsequently sustained by the senate, were relatively recent local events which must have weighed on Clark's mind during the furor surrounding the lynching, but the Broward sheriff survived that episode and went on to win four more elections. During this time he established important connections which made it possible for him to become one of the most powerful politicians in Florida.¹⁰

Nineteen thirty-six was a banner year for Walter R. Clark. First he trounced his sole Democratic party challenger, B. (Brack) Cantrell, by a more than two to one margin. Second, he was an early backer of Fred P. Cone in the 1936 gubernatorial primary. Cone squeezed in second place in the fourteen candidate field and then won the run-off against Judge Raleigh W. Pettaway of Tampa



Governor and Mrs. Fred P. Cone with Sheriff and Mrs. Walter Clark at the Clarks' wedding in Jacksonville, July 1937.

ELECT



B. (BRACK)

CANTRELL SHERIFF

AND ASSURE BROWARD
COUNTY A CLEAN, WHOLE-
SOME AND ECONOMICAL AD-
MINISTRATION.

Child in to Friends of Brack Cantrell

Fort Lauderdale auto dealer B. (Brack) Cantrell ran for sheriff in 1932, 1936 and 1940. This newspaper ad is from the 1940 campaign.

by receiving close to sixty percent of the vote. Fred P. Cone soon developed a reputation as a spoilsman. An old fashioned Jacksonian Democrat, Cone believed that jobs should be handed out for political work done. Cone has been quoted as saying that "The men who supported me in the first primary will sit at the first table." So Walter R. Clark and Fort Lauderdale attorney John D. Kennedy, another early Cone backer, "sat at the first table" and became the Broward patronage chiefs during the Cone administration. Robert H. Gore also supported Cone and received his share of the spoils by receiving an appointment to the state Board of Control. The Cone connection insured amicable relations between Sheriff Clark and publisher Gore for the time being.¹¹

In 1940, Walter R. Clark faced

two challengers—B. (Brack) Cantrell, making his third try for the office, and former Fort Lauderdale police chief R. B. McDonald, who had resigned his position in order to enter the contest. Once again Clark scored an overwhelming victory. He carried every precinct in the county and registered a large majority over the combined votes for his two opponents.¹²

During the Depression decade, gambling became a major law enforcement problem just as liquor had been in the preceding decade. Slot machines were actually legalized by the Florida Legislature, at the insistence of Governor Sholtz, in 1933, but there was an uproar throughout Broward County over the existence of the "one arm bandits." The 1935 session of the legislature passed a law allowing each county in the state to hold a referendum on the 1936 general election ballot to determine if slot machines were to remain legal in the county. In Broward County voters rejected the slot machines by a majority of 1,200 votes.¹³ Nevertheless, gaming establishments continued to operate, primarily in the southern part of the county, and the Broward Sheriff's Office did not enforce the state's anti-gambling laws. The rationalization for official tolerance of this illicit activity was that gambling helped the county's depressed economy by aiding the tourist trade and furnishing jobs for Broward residents. At first Clark's tolerant policy toward illegal gambling encountered few objections from Robert H. Gore, publisher of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*.¹⁴

Walter Clark's laissez-faire attitude toward gambling operations in Broward County did attract unfavorable attention from Tallahassee, particularly after the sheriff's ally, Governor Cone, left office in 1941. The subsequent outbreak of World War II and federal plans to place major military training bases in the county apparently helped draw the attention of state officials to the gambling situation there. In July 1942 Governor Spessard L. Holland suspended Clark for nonfeasance in office, and appointed Eddie Lee, a former minor league baseball player, as acting sheriff. Outwardly, Walter Clark took his

ouster with good grace. He pledged his cooperation with the new sheriff and stated that he did not hold any ill will toward Holland. Privately, however, Clark was furious. He could not see why he had been singled out, since other sheriffs had handled the gambling situation in their counties in a similar manner. Furthermore, Clark had supported Spessard Holland in the May 1940 Democratic primary, so Holland's action appeared to make little political sense.¹⁵ The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, in a front page editorial, commented as follows:

PASS IN REVIEW

The appointment of Eddie Lee as Broward County's new sheriff may bring a decided change in the conduct of that office preliminary reports indicate. If present plans progress a force of skilled investigators will be taken on as deputies and the courthouse office developed into this area's law enforcement focal point.

It seems to be the burly new sheriff's idea that his office should function as an efficient police agency with his aides selected on the basis of previous meritorious law enforcement records—and not from the ranks of the political faithful. It is said that he accepted the post only after a clear understanding was reached that there was to be no political pressure put on him, and no interference on behalf of certain favored gentlemen long known for their operations in illegal fields.

After the preliminary surprise at his appointment passed yesterday, and discussion of Lee had quieted down, the opinion of the "man on the street" seemed to be that "if Eddie is even only half as good as his friends say he is, he is still the best man for the job."

Certainly Lee's friends think the world of him. His ambition, sincerity, and honesty have never been questioned. Apparently he has a great reputation for doing his own thinking and making his own decisions. The only draw-

HOLLAND PROBES BROWARD GAMING; SHERIFF SUMMONED TO TALLAHASSEE

Title
 Published at 10:00 A.M. and 5:00 P.M.
 Telephone 444-1111
 100 N. Holladay

FORT LAUDERDALE DAILY NEWS

Weather
 Forecast for Wednesday, July 15, 1942:
 Partly cloudy with showers
 and showers in the afternoon
 and evening. Temperature
 75 to 85.

The Year: No. 306

FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA, WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 1942

PRICE SEVEN CENTS

**Pass
 In
 REVIEW**

**Governor's Wire
 Names "It Club"
 And "Pony Club"**

**Senate Passage
 Of Barge Canal
 Bill Predicted**

**Voronezh Defense Lines
 Turn German Troops Back**

Germans March To The East Peruvian Coasts Soviets Report

back to his record—lack of police experience—seems about to be corrected by the appointment of a set of able deputies.

It is a fact that Lee owes no one anything. His career to date—especially his rise from lineman to chief district dispatcher with the power company [Florida Power and Light] is based on merit alone. He is a hard worker.

Here, then, seems to be a man who will bring to the Broward County sheriff's office the type of

administration which Governor Holland believes should be in effect during the war—the type of administration which will bring complete law enforcement with favors towards none.¹⁶

J.K.V. Jr.

While this editorial was signed by Joseph K. Van Denburg, Jr., the paper's editor, it was common knowledge that every opinion expressed by staff writers in print reflected the opinions of Robert Gore. Although the paper indirectly censured the

Clark administration by drawing unfavorable comparisons to the improvements Eddie Lee was expected to bring to the sheriff's office, no direct criticism of Walter Clark was included in the editorial.

Thus for ten years from 1933 to 1943 relations between Robert H. Gore and Walter R. Clark remained reasonably correct. When it first became obvious that illegal gambling operations were taking place in Broward, Gore took no notice. Only after Clark had been suspended from office by the governor, did Gore's pa-



Governor Spessard L. Holland (courtesy of the Florida Photographic Archives).



Acting Sheriff Eddie Lee, former baseball player for the U.S. Coast Guard and Fort Lauderdale Tarpons baseball teams.

per step up its editorial criticism of Clark's administration. In the coming months, however, as the 1943 Florida Legislature convened, this situation would change drastically.

The 1943 legislative session would have to deal with the question of Clark's suspension—either upholding Governor Holland's action or reinstating the deposed sheriff. At this point Robert H. Gore turned against Walter Clark with all of the journalistic furor at his command. Editorials in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* strongly opposed Clark's reinstatement, charging that the "mob" was fully operational in Broward County and was determined at all cost to have the deposed sheriff returned to office.¹⁷ To prevent this, Gore attempted to put local state senator John R. Beacham of West Palm Beach "on the spot" by shaming him into upholding Governor Holland's suspension of the former sheriff. Beacham was a longtime supporter of Clark; therefore his recommendation on the matter would be crucial. On May 3, a front page editorial bluntly stated:

**'BRING BACK CLARK'
THE 'MOB' WAILS**

The "mob" wants Walter Clark exonerated of the charges by which he was removed from



State Senator John R. Beacham

the office of sheriff of Broward County 10 months ago by Governor Spessard Holland.

The "mob" is so sure its influence and money can bring about this whitewashing of Clark it has offered odds of 5 to 1 the State Senate committee, headed by Senator John Beacham of West Palm Beach, will rescind the governor's removal and reinstate Clark.

You know the "mob." You have read of its operations and have heard of—if you haven't actually seen—its gambling establishments.

The "mob" is headed by a former Chicagoan who is the acknowledged Broward County, and Dade, czar of gambling operations as well as slot machine king. His first lieutenant is a dog track owner, in business with the gambling czar's brother and together they possess two tracks in two widely separated states.

Comprising the remainder of the main cogs...are a killer punk—who would murder at the drop of a hat, a mutuel manager and two muscle men—the boys who do the dirty work and intimidate people when the boss wants his way in illegal matters wherein normal citizens interfere or refuse to yield.

The "mob" does most of its operating in the southern part of Broward County and wants very much to make that section a Mecca for gambling operations. That is why it wants Walter Clark to be reinstated as sheriff for it knows that with him in the saddle it can run wide open. Sheriff Eddie Lee, appointed by Governor Holland to replace Clark, cannot be approached by these men and they are mad because they cannot fleece the public and soldiers and sailors while he is in office.

When the "mob" bets 5 to 1 on anything it is certain it has a "sure thing." But this time the "mob" has reckoned without one very important factor. It is no longer just a county and state matter. Now the old man with

the whiskers—Uncle Sam—is interested in what the "mob" is trying to do. Through his very efficient nephews—Army and Navy officials—the "mob" will and can be defeated....

The very fact that the "mob" offers 5 to 1 Walter Clark will be reinstated is a slap in the face for Senator Beacham, for they are intimating that he can or has been reached via the "pay off" route. That is an insult to Senator Beacham and we doubt he will be very pleased with their inferences. His reproach to their lies and intimations rests in adamant refusal to go against Governor Holland's ouster of Clark.

Broward does not want the type of government administered by the Clarks over a long period. Governor Holland kicked Walter Clark out of office. He must be kept out. Nor must Bob Clark, Walter's brother, be permitted to run for office next year, as he has told friends he will.

The Clark reign has ended. The Army and Navy officials want it to remain that way. And every honest citizen holds the same opinion. The "mob"—and its coterie of gunmen, killers, prostitutes, thieves and drug addicts—must not be permitted to run Broward County through intimidation, bribery, murder and a reign of terror.¹⁸

The following day, another front page editorial followed with the headline, "INTIMIDATION!"

Last night the managing editor of The Daily News received a telephone call. It came about 10:20 p.m., and the voice on the other end of the line claimed after making inquiries relative to our identity and writing authorship to be Bob Clark, brother of the deposed sheriff of Broward County.

The managing editor was called a liar — old music to a newspaperman's ears — but preceding that remark was a string of expletives that would cause the lowest street prostitute to blush. This was repeated several times



**Chief Deputy Robert L. Clark (center)
at the sheriff's office in the courthouse, 1948.**

when ultimately the managing editor was asked how long he had been in Ft. Lauderdale and when he replied "long enough" he was informed he would not "be here much longer."

This does not mean that Bob Clark was actually on the other end of the phone. It may have been someone playing a practical joke, it may have been one of the "mob," or someone trying to create a wider rift. The truth of the matter rests solely with Bob Clark. If someone impersonated him he should find out and settle the matter.

However, an attempt at intimidation will not serve its purpose. The managing editor refuses to become frightened by threats and is now more intent than ever to press his drive in the matter. Repeated once again are the words that ended yesterday's page one editorial . . . "The 'mob' must not be permitted to run Broward County through intimidation, bribery, murder and a reign of terror."

And, brother, we mean that

more than ever so intimidation won't work!¹⁹

The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, in editorials and news articles, continued its fulminations against Walter Clark. The paper continued to accuse the deposed sheriff of being in league with mobsters, racketeers, and murderers, and to imply that a "reign of terror" was in store for Broward County if the Florida Senate would reinstate the former sheriff. At the same time, the local paper praised Eddie Lee "to the skies," in one instance pairing an editorial critical of Clark with a news article and photo reporting Lee's raid on a Hollywood house in which gambling equipment was seized. The paper also continued to try to shame Senator Beacham into supporting Clark's suspension, implying that such action was the only way Beacham could prove that he was not in league with the criminal element.²⁰

These fierce attacks on Clark and his supporters certainly suggested a much deeper rift between the sheriff and the publisher than warranted by the very real concerns of the military and state officials over the gambling

situation in Broward County. By the mid-1940s, Clark and Gore, through their respective positions and connections, were probably the two most influential individuals in the county. It seems only natural that Gore, who had aimed his editorial wrath at a number of leading political figures on the local, state and national levels, would now see fit to take on the powerful and popular Walter Clark.

But the emerging battle involved far more than a conflict of personalities or a struggle for personal power. In the changing political atmosphere of the 1940s, Gore and Clark had come to represent two very different and antagonistic factions. Although they had not been particularly close allies during the preceding decade, they did share many common connections—mostly centered around the populist south Florida labor-north Florida "cracker" coalition which strongly supported the New Deal and dominated Florida politics during the Great Depression. Clark's and Gore's strong support of Governor Fred Cone and the rewards it brought both men, have already been noted, as was Gore's early association with the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Both Broward Countians also supported Claude Pepper in his successful 1938 campaign for the United States Senate.²¹

By the early years of the 1940s, however, Gore's deepening rift with the Roosevelt administration, his accompanying attacks on New Deal legislation and Senator Pepper, and his general drift toward a more conservative position placed him increasingly at odds with Walter Clark. These factors no doubt contributed to the intensity of the attacks on Clark which appeared in the pages of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*.

In the long run, the decision on Walter Clark's fate would not rest with Governor Holland or publisher Gore. The long-standing tradition of senatorial courtesy was still "alive and well." Despite the pressure put on him by the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* and damaging testimony presented to a senate hearing committee, local senator Beacham supported Clark's reinstatement, and the senate concurred by a unanimous vote.



The autographed photo of President Harry Truman above and the letter at right are among Sheriff Clark's papers.

Governor Holland strongly objected to the senate's action, but there was nothing he could do about it.²²

Walter R. Clark was reinstated as sheriff of Broward County in May 1943, replacing Eddie Lee, who soon afterwards moved to Miami.²³ The following year Clark was the beneficiary of a "free ride" in his quest for a fourth term.²⁴ He was unopposed in the Democratic primary and had no Republican opponent in the November general election. The incumbent sheriff seemed to be at the height of his personal popularity.

In the years immediately following his reinstatement, Clark also continued to build his influential connections at the state and national levels. In 1944 his wife served as a Roosevelt delegate at the Democratic National Convention. Also in 1944, he established a personal friendship with Senator Harry S. Truman of Missouri, who visited Fort Lauderdale that year. This friendship continued after Truman moved up the political ladder to vice-president and finally to president. Clark also strengthened his friendship with Senator Claude Pepper to the point that Pepper remarked in 1946 to one

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 1, 1948

Dear Mr. Clark:

These past few weeks have been so crowded that this is the first opportunity I have had to tell you how much your kind and inspiring letter has meant to me. Your warm words of confidence and your generous expression of hospitality are deeply appreciated.

My special thanks to you!

Very sincerely yours,

Harry Truman

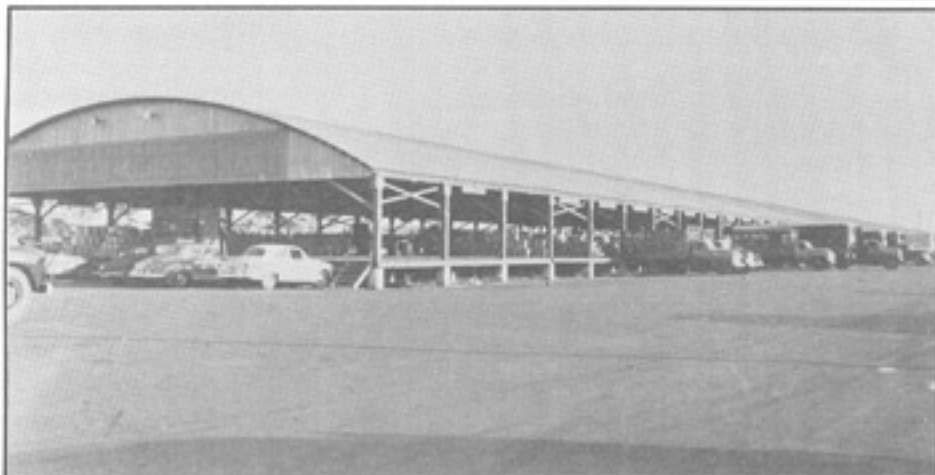
*It was good to see you at Key West
I wish I could call on you again - without
the excuse that has to be with me.*

Mr. Walter R. Clark,
Sheriff of Broward County,
Fort Lauderdale,
Florida.

of Clark's deputies, whom he met while speaking in Indiana, that "Walter and Bob were his boys."²⁵ At the same time, Robert H. Gore grew more adamant in his opposition to the politics of President Roosevelt and his supporters. In a 1944 editorial covering a Truman speech in Broward County, Gore charged that Truman had "grown senile in the service of the New Deal."²⁶ The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* strongly supported Senator Harry F. Byrd of Virginia for president in the 1944 Democratic primary, and launched an all-out attack on Pepper's bid for reelection to the Senate.²⁷

Nineteen forty-seven was a memorable year for Broward County. Heavy rains soaked the county throughout most the year, followed by two fall hurricanes, one soon af-

ter the other. The result was the "Flood of 1947." New River overflowed, covering downtown Fort Lauderdale with water. Flood conditions spread to the outlying sections of the city, and many a resident had to wade through the water in order to reach his residence. While the flood was an inconvenience to the residents of Fort Lauderdale, it was devastating to the residents of Davie, then a small farming community. Crop and livestock losses totaled millions of dollars, and the water supply was contaminated. Sheriff Clark and his deputies "worked around the clock" furnishing relief to distressed Davie residents. The Broward County Sheriff's Office played a herculean part in the massive relief effort, and Sheriff Clark's efforts only strengthened his reputation among the citizens of



The Pompano State Farmers Market, 1948.

Broward County as a benefactor of the community. Throughout his years in office, Clark had used his vast political influence to obtain funding for the Tenth Street (now Sunrise Boulevard) causeway, the lease of the Fort Lauderdale Naval Air Station to Broward County for use as a civilian airport, the Pompano State Farmer's Market, and the locating of the State Road Department's Fourth District offices in Fort Lauderdale.²⁸

As the 1948 election approached,

however, it became increasingly evident that Clark was not invulnerable. With the gambling allegations which had continued to plague him since his reinstatement still hanging over his head, Clark faced his most serious opposition since he was first elected in 1932. Joseph C. Mackey, local aviation pioneer and a Fort Lauderdale city commissioner since 1947, filed against the incumbent sheriff. Frank Tuppen, Broward County Juvenile Officer, also entered the sheriff's race.

Mackey, in particular, waged an aggressive campaign in his efforts to topple Clark.

Through the pages of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, Robert H. Gore launched an all-out effort to oust Walter Clark from office. The paper divided its extreme blasts between editorials and regular news articles. Early in the election year, Gore published a front page open letter to Governor Millard Caldwell as follows:

DEAR GOVERNOR CALDWELL:

*Now that the entire country knows what we've been telling you for the last three years are you going to continue to ignore our plea for the clean-up of Broward county or do you intend to finish out your term with nothing but reminders that the **GOOD PEOPLE ARE ENTITLED ONLY TO THE KIND OF GOVERNMENT THE GAMBLERS PUT IN OFFICE!***

*As chief executive of this state do you intend to permit such law-abiding citizens as the Chicago Crime commission reveal to the nation that **YOUR STATE ANTI-GAMBLING** laws are being violated without lifting a hand, or will you shrug the commission off as "interfering northern carpetbaggers"?*



Scenes from the 1947 flood. Above is Southwest First (Brickell) Avenue at North New River Drive, Fort Lauderdale. At right is the intersection of Broward Boulevard and East Acre Drive in Plantation.



Governor Millard F. Caldwell
(Courtesy of the Florida
Photographic Archives.)

You know as well as Sheriff Clark does that the roots of mobster-evil are imbedded deep in Broward county. What we want to know, is whether or not you are going to act by an immediate investigation of law enforcement in this county or are you going to accept the nation's newspapers' challenge as you have ours in the past by permitting the sheriff's department to "wink" at illegal gambling here?

*Since your own representative in this county—Assistant State Attorney Rogers—has proven in Judge Tedder's court that two big gambling casinos operated without fear of being closed by the sheriff, **DON'T YOU THINK IT ABOUT TIME THAT YOU STEPPED IN AND DEMANDED TO KNOW WHY SHERIFF CLARK PERMITTED THIS VIOLATION OF YOUR LAWS?***

Or do we wait for a mandate of the people in the May elections?

*The people of Broward county expect an early answer to our letter!*²⁹

The paper followed with an editorial which denied that gambling

activity was necessary to encourage winter visitors to come to the county. The article attacked the claim by "certain business men in this area" that "without gambling Broward county would immediately fold up," and asked sarcastically if they meant "that all of the money we spend each year by such agencies as the Chamber of Commerce extolling the advantages of spending the winter in Fort Lauderdale is just so much greenbacks being stuffed down a rathole?" The article went on to cite an unofficial "survey" conducted by the *News*, in which winter visitors were asked why they chose Fort Lauderdale as their vacation destination. "Not one of them uttered one word about gambling!"³⁰

Another scathing denunciation of Sheriff Clark's failure to enforce Florida's anti-gambling laws appeared in a *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* front page news article on February 20, 1948. The article stated in part:

A sordid indictment of Broward county under the political domination of Chicago and New York gangsters and hoodlums who have "absolute control" of gambling here was laid before the nation today.

V. W. Peterson, operating director of the Chicago Crime commission, today told The Daily News that the commission's annual report revealed this situation in Broward county:

"Some of the most elaborate gambling establishments in the country are in Broward county, Fla., with the Costello-Capone combination in control of gambling there.

"Rocco Fischetti and Charles Fischetti, Jack Guzik and other Chicago hoodlums are in close alliance with the New York Frank Costello organization.

Their control of gambling is absolute and for a number of years competent observers have pointed out Broward county is politically controlled by gambling interests . . ."

Guzik, former operating head of the vast crime syndicate orga-

nized by Al Capone and to whom is attributed control of gambling in the Chicago area, has been in south Florida for several months along with Charles Fischetti. Rocco Fischetti came here "on business" shortly after posting bail on a charge in Lake county, Ill.

Costello, a prominent winter figure in Broward county, is one of the most powerful political figures in New York....

Peterson said the crime report does not name any Broward county gambling spots or any officials controlled by the mobs "because we did not specifically list Broward county conditions in our local report — but we are concerned with the nationwide power grabs by these gambling interests which have unlimited financial resources."

"Your local law enforcement officers, specifically your sheriff, can uncover these alliances and, if necessary, can call for help from the FBI or treasury department agents," Peterson said . . .³¹

Walter Clark, obviously irked by the constant verbal bombardment he was enduring from many directions, replied to these charges by declaring flatly that "mob" elements "don't dare come into Broward County and they know it well." He declared that assertions of gangster domination of the county "look like attempts to give Broward county the name that exists in Dade County every winter", and answered the report of the Chicago Crime Commission by stating that Rocco and Charles Fischetti, the Chicagoans said to be working closely with New York interests to control Broward gambling, had not "or ever will be" in the county. They, "like the rest go to Dade county and particularly Miami Beach, because they would be picked up in 20 minutes" if they came to Broward, said Clark. The sheriff then stated that he had investigators keeping tabs on mobsters "all over the nation, at all times." He added that the Fischettis and Guzik were in Chicago. "We are in a position to keep hoodlums out of here and we've been keeping them

out. We would know in five minutes if they were here."³²

When Dwight L. Rogers, Jr. replaced Louis F. Maire as assistant state attorney in 1947, a new official voice was added to the anti-gambling faction. Rogers felt that the continued existence of illegal gambling operations was "just wrong."³³ On February 12, 1948, he went into circuit court and asked for an injunction against the most notorious gambling houses.³⁴ The action was filed in chancery, and was therefore a civil suit, carrying no criminal charges. Rogers listed ten prominent Fort Lauderdale citizens who were willing to testify on behalf of the injunction. These men—Frank O. Bass, Ralph A. Horton, N. N. Case, August Burghard, Fred Cabot, A. Gordon Shand, James D. Camp, Alwen Neuharth, Reverend John H. Hanger, and Russell McCaughan—included banking officials, leading attorneys, the postmaster, and prominent businessmen.³⁵

The injunction had its desired effect. The Lopez Restaurant, owned by Jerry Lopez, and the Club Greenacres, owned by Frank A. Stone, closed. The floor show at the Colonial Inn, featuring Joe E. Lewis, Carmen Miranda, and Ray Bolger among its stars, was scheduled to run four days beyond the injunction deadline. The club ran without gambling for those four nights, then closed permanently as a gambling operation. This action ended the careers of the most conspicuous gambling establishments, but had no effect on smaller houses since they were not named in the injunction and therefore continued to operate as usual.³⁶

At a meeting held soon after the gambling club injunctions, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Ministerial Association made the following statement: "We the ministers of the greater Fort Lauderdale Ministerial Association commend highly the office of the state attorney in its stand to enforce in Broward county the laws regulating gambling. We offer that office the full support of our association." The association went on to decree that it was opposed to gambling in any form, whether conducted under the auspices of religious, fra-



Assistant State Attorney Dwight L. Rogers, Jr. (courtesy of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society).

ternal, or private groups.³⁷

The Reverend Clarence Stauffer of the Croissant Park Christian Church issued a dissenting opinion as follows: "I do not believe we get the true picture through our local press. We get a biased presentation. Therefore, I move you, Mr. Chairman (Rev. Hoyt Tatum, president of the association and pastor of the First Methodist Church) appoint a committee composed of the president and three past presidents to investigate all reports, statements, and allegations before we accept any matter as factual and before we allow that matter to formulate the opinion of the Ministerial Association." It is interesting to note that Walter Clark was an active member of Stauffer's church.³⁸

Although the injunctions issued by the state attorney's office did not implicate Walter Clark or the sheriff's department, the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* continued its two-front verbal assault, with both editorials and news articles condemning the embattled sheriff, as the 1948 election campaign progressed. One news article mentioned a "benefit" scheduled by friends of Walter Clark to assist his reelection campaign. Tick-

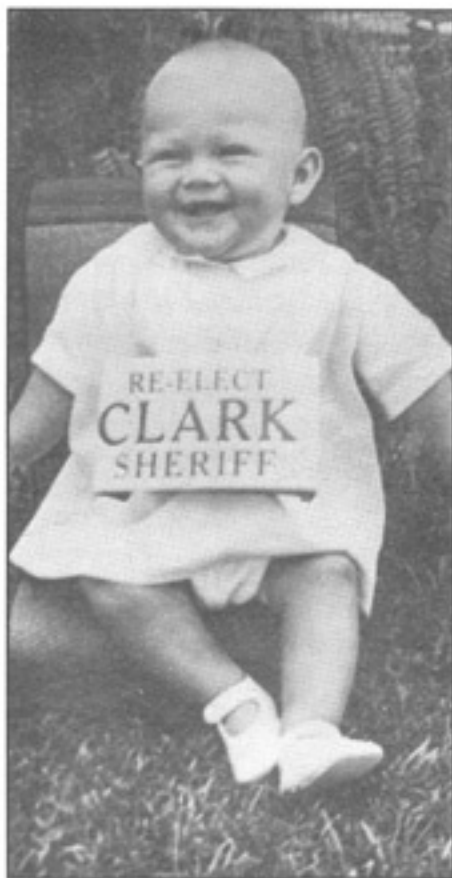
ets were being sold at \$1.50 each with assurances of plentiful entertainment and "prizes." The article made sport that the longtime sheriff with his "rich mobster friends" would need such a "benefit." Another news article charged that "gambling activity has resumed," listed a number of gambling places that had reopened, and then quoted the sheriff's department as saying, "no gambling now exists in the county so far as we know."³⁹

In a February 28 front page news article, the *Daily News* reported:

**MACKEY BLASTS
CLARK LAXITY ON GAMBLING**

Joseph C. Mackey, candidate for the office now occupied by Sheriff Walter Clark, lashed out at the present administration Friday over radio station WFTL...

Mackey told his air audience that should he be elected sheriff of Broward county the law en-



The infant son of Fort Lauderdale Mayor Reed A. Bryan, Jr., campaigns for Walter Clark, 1948.



It's Up to You!

Shall Broward County be known nationally as a haven for gamblers and hoodlums . . . or for law enforcement? Shall Broward County be known for bungling crime investigation . . . or efficient crime solution? The answer is up to you.

Joe Mackey has taken a definite stand against illegal gambling and will do all in his power to drive it out of Broward County.

Listen WFTL
Week Days 7:25 p. m.
Sunday 8:30 p. m.

It's
JOE MACKEY for SHERIFF

"Time for a Change — for the Better"

These advertisements for Clark's rivals in the 1948 Democratic primary appeared in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*.

forcement agency would cease "to be a spot for minor handouts, since I do not consider that charity is a function of the sheriff's office; and since the income of the sheriff's office is established by law, there is no legal way to arrange such handouts...."

Mackey also revealed his stand on gambling in the county by recognizing the work of Ste. Attorney Dwight L. Rogers, Jr., in closing gambling at Colonial Inn and Lopez' restaurant and criticizing the lack of cooperation on the part of the sheriff's office

in helping Rogers to wipe out all existing gambling in the county.

He concluded by warning all interested parties that his candidacy was "not for sale" and remarked that he had turned down "an offer of \$10,000" to help him get elected.⁴⁰

Robert H. Gore continued his vehement attacks on Clark as the campaign progressed. An editorial page article in April was typical:

THE SHERIFF'S RACE

This year's sheriff's race is a study in contrasts.

Broward County needs and wants a new Sheriff

ELECT

Broward County needs and wants a new Sheriff



FRANK TUPPEN SHERIFF

A qualified law enforcement officer with twelve years experience in Broward County. He knows where the breakdown in law enforcement is and can cope with any situation in **DRUG CRIME PROBLEMS, JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, DOMESTIC BELL-THIRNS** and has a **THOROUGH** reconstruction KNOWLEDGE and UNDERSTANDING of **CONVENTIONS** in our County.

Mr. Tuppen has attended **SIX SPECIAL FBI TRAINING SCHOOLS** which were completed with satisfaction to his instructors... With this knowledge **HE WILL** fashion your **SHERIFF'S OFFICE** after the **FBI PLAN** which we all know is the **WORLD'S BEST**, with a complete set of **RECORDS** and **MODERN IDENTIFICATION BUREAU**. The **SHERIFF'S OFFICE** WILL BE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AT ALL TIMES AND WILL BE ONE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY CAN VISIT WITH PRIDE. For your **PROTECTION** and **SAFETY**, deputies from this office will be on call **TWENTY-FOUR HOURS** each day, seven days a week. Mr. Tuppen has been a resident of this County for many years and if there is any doubt in your mind as to his **ABILITY, HONESTY** and **INTEGRITY**, ask your friends.

Preference shall be given to Veterans in law enforcement work.

THE OFFICE ADDRESS WILL BE IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Fort Lauderdale City Commissioner Joseph Mackey, candidate for the sheriff's post, swings hard and often at the incumbent, Walter Clark, via the radio and newspapers.

Frank Tuppen, Broward county probation officer of the juvenile court until he resigned recently and former deputy sheriff under Eddie Lee when Walter Clark was removed from office . . . is conducting a quiet campaign among his many friends throughout the county and

enlisting their aid to unseat Clark . . .

Clark refuses to answer any charges about illegal gambling.

Getting back to candidate Mackey, who has thrown the book at the sheriff's department for the manner in which that office has conducted its affairs, he has questioned illegal gambling, murders and suicides but so far hasn't been able to get the sheriff to answer. He's pointed out that a World War II veteran, who is supporting Mackey for sheriff, was approached by certain members of the sheriff's office and asked to correct his ways. Now we understand that a number of veterans are meeting next week to form a group to work openly for the defeat of Clark.

Mackey has promised that his campaign will get "hotter" as it goes along!

As we said earlier, Frank Tuppen is conducting a very quiet campaign. Too quiet, in fact, if we know Tuppen like we think we do. He knows as much about this part of Florida and what has taken place during the past five years as any person and we are wondering what he'll have to say when the time comes to say it?

If you have ever seen Tuppen pitch softball, you know what we mean—he slips those Strikes over when least expected . . .

And don't forget that there is reported to be more than 8,000 more voters this time. It could be that all 8,000 are in favor of cleaning up Broward county!!⁴¹

As the May primary election day approached, one fact seemed certain — Sheriff Walter R. Clark faced the most serious challenge of his political career. As Robert H. Gore used his newspaper resources in an all-out effort to oust the long-serving incumbent, editorials and news stories covering the campaign became virtually indistinguishable.

Most observers assumed that Joseph Mackey was Clark's major opponent. The Fort Lauderdale city commissioner staged a very aggressive campaign, accusing the incum-

bent sheriff of a variety of deficiencies ranging from failure to enforce Florida's anti-gambling laws to incompetence in office to running a welfare agency from the sheriff's department, implying that the money may have come from questionable sources. Frank Tuppen, the other challenger, waged a low-profile campaign that stressed his qualifications in law enforcement work. Nevertheless, Tuppen was not to be underestimated.

On election day, Sheriff Walter R. Clark overcame the unyielding opposition of the daily press and scored the greatest triumph of his entire career. He received 8,897 votes, while Frank Tuppen totalled 4,446, and the aggressive Joseph C. Mackey lingered in third place with 3,305.⁴²

How was Sheriff Clark able to achieve this remarkable triumph in the face of an almost daily barrage of criticism from Broward County's largest and most influential newspaper? Walter Clark never lost his hold on the ordinary voters of Broward County. Stories of the sheriff's down-to-earth accessibility and personal generosity were legendary. Local residents also remembered with gratitude Clark's tireless and successful efforts to obtain improvements for Broward County, ranging from large projects such as the Tenth Avenue causeway, the Broward County (later Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International) Airport, the Pompano Farmers' Market, and the State Road Department Fourth District headquarters, to the repair and improvement of a number of county roads. The efforts of the Broward Sheriff's Office to help the residents of Davie after the 1947 flood were particularly fresh on many voters' minds. As a result of these factors, Walter Clark's personal following and vote total apparently exceeded any popular opinions against illegal gambling.⁴³

In November 1948, Walter Clark was elected to his fifth consecutive term and stood at the apex of his personal and political power. His solid local power base and his state and national connections made him one of the most powerful politicians in Florida. Nevertheless, some signs remained on the horizon indicating

that Clark could be heading for serious trouble. In addition to the continued opposition of Robert H. Gore and the *Daily News*, shifts in the state legislature loomed as a new threat to Clark's security. When Governor Holland had removed Clark from office in 1943, the sheriff was able to gain reinstatement because the local senator, John Beacham of West Palm Beach, was a long time supporter. With the tradition of senatorial courtesy in full force, the Florida Senate reinstated Clark by a unanimous vote. The 1945 session of the Florida Legislature, however, separated Broward County from the Palm Beach County senatorial district. In the May 1946 Democratic primary, thirty-four-year-old Fort Lauderdale attorney George Leaird defeated state representative John Burwell in the run-off election. The new senator was no ally of Clark, so the sheriff lost his main protector in Tallahassee. Walter Clark's liberal attitude toward the presence of illegal gambling in Broward County, while not a decisive factor in the outcome of the 1948 election, proved to be the sheriff's achilles heel. Civic groups, the state and national governments, and above all the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* all combined their efforts to monitor the gambling situation in Broward County. The lo-



State Senator George W. Leaird



Governor Fuller Warren (courtesy of the Florida Photographic Archives).



Dade County Sheriff Jimmy Sullivan (courtesy of the Historical Association of Southern Florida).

cal paper discussed its concern with wide open gambling in a long editorial that stated in part:

DON'T FORGET BROWARD COUNTY, GOVERNOR!

Gov. Fuller Warren told the Miami Crime Commission that he was reconsidering his previous decision not to remove Dade County Sheriff Jimmy Sullivan, from office.

This apparently means that the governor is beginning to pay some attention to the voices of decency that are being raised in this state clamoring for official action to uphold proper law enforcement in South Florida....

The governor hasn't yet suspended Sheriff Sullivan. But the inference of his visit to Miami Monday is that he will shortly do so. If he does, The Daily News will applaud that move. Sheriff Sullivan has proven his unfitness for public office, and his replacement by a better man cannot help but be a step toward tighter law enforcement in Dade county.

But Governor Warren can

hardly suspend Sheriff Sullivan without taking similar action in Broward county. We have a sheriff who has expressed the same sentiment toward illegal gambling as Sullivan. Our law enforcement situation is equally as bad as Dade county's. The same mobster element is in control here as has infiltrated Dade county.

If Governor Warren only concerns himself with Dade county it will mean that Broward county will immediately become the gambling capital of south Florida. The mobsters and the crooks who are run out of Dade county will seek shelter here. Under the circumstances that prevail the people of Broward county can have no assurance they won't find that shelter.

Our people have only one protection. If Governor Warren suspends Sheriff Sullivan he must also suspend Sheriff Walter Clark and replace him with an abler man. That man is available in the Ft. Lauderdale police depart-

ment. He is Roland Kelly, who as chief of police of this city, has demonstrated time and again his ability and his desire to keep the gamblers out of Ft. Lauderdale . . .⁴⁴

Jimmy Sullivan, a former Miami policeman and former prizefighter, had been first elected Dade County sheriff when three-term incumbent sheriff D. C. Coleman decided to foresake that post to seek a place in the Florida Senate. Coleman succeeded and remained a power in Dade County politics for a number of years.⁴⁵ Sullivan "rode" into the sheriff's office on a wave of personal popularity, but soon found himself on the receiving end of a torrent of criticism because of the existence of illegal gambling in Dade County. In a fiercely contested election, Sullivan trounced former Miami mayor Perrine Palmer in the run-off. Early in his second term, Sullivan continued to be the target of "reformer" attacks, and soon Robert H. Gore joined the long line of Sullivan critics. In a number of editorials, Gore struck hard at Sullivan, usually coupling his



Left to right: Senator Estes Kefauver, Senator Lester Hunt and Miami Crime Commission investigator Dan Sullivan, examine a chart outlining alleged Broward County gambling connections at the July 1950 hearings (courtesy of the Historical Association of Southern Florida).

attack on the Dade sheriff with a jab at Walter Clark.⁴⁶

As the anti-gambling activity among various factions and reform groups grew in intensity, the United States government took an increased interest in gambling and its connections with organized crime. In 1950, at the urging of Estes Kefauver, Democratic United States Senator from Tennessee, the Senate authorized an investigating committee to probe gambling interests with an emphasis on their connections to political office holders. The committee, headed by Kefauver, opened their hearings in Miami.

The Kefauver Committee slated closed meetings for May 1950 and open hearings two months later. Sheriff Jimmy Sullivan of Dade and Sheriff Walter Clark of Broward were both subpoenaed to appear at the May and July hearings. Clark was not an impressive witness at the July public hearings. He gave the impression of suffering from a case of amnesia when questioned about gambling operations in Broward County. When asked if Claude Litteral, a partner in the Colonial Inn, had collected campaign money for him, had been

designated to collect, or had otherwise aided in his campaign, Clark replied that he did not know, admitting only that Litteral was "for me."



Walter Clark (right) testifies before the Kefauver Committee in July 1950. At left is Clark's attorney, C. L. Chancey.

He testified that Jake Lansky, another Colonial Inn partner, "told me that he was going to do all he could for me" in the 1948 campaign, but denied knowledge of Lansky's criminal record. To many questions he simply answered "I don't know" or "I can't recall." When asked about bolita, Clark said that all he knew was that was a game "that niggers play." He also claimed that in 1948 he had been elected on a "liberal basis."⁴⁷

When the committee questioned his investments, Clark mentioned several. Each time, Kefauver asked if there were more. Clark's attorney, C. L. Chancey, asked if Kefauver had in mind anything in particular. Kefauver picked up several items among the papers that were laying on the table in front of him. Then he mentioned the Broward Novelty Company. The "other shoe had dropped."⁴⁸

In 1945, Walter Clark and his brother Bob had invested in the newly-formed Broward Novelty Company, that handled juke boxes and cigarette machines. Apparently the Clarks, though both officers in the company, were not active in its operating management. That manage-

ment was left to Gordon Williams, who allegedly added bolita and slot machines to the items handled by the Broward Novelty Company. The Kefauver Committee, through its access to tax records, had discovered the novelty company's gambling involvement and the Clark connection to the company. Walter Clark stumbled with his answers. He admitted his investment, but denied any knowledge of the company's gambling involvement.⁴⁹

When the news of Walter Clark's damaging admissions to the Kefauver Committee reached the public in the summer of 1950, critics were sure that the "smoking gun" had finally been found. Clark's enemies now felt they had documented proof that the Broward sheriff was actually the county's gambling kingpin. Among the most vocal of those enemies was Robert H. Gore. In a blistering editorial, the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* charged:

SHERIFF STANDS REVEALED AS UNFIT FOR OFFICE

The sheriff of Broward county stands revealed before the people today as a man unfit to any longer wear the badge of public office he has sworn to uphold.

Sheriff Walter Clark has some likeable attributes. But not even his closest friends can deny the fact that Walter Clark's testimony before the Kefauver crime committee in Miami Saturday was a damning indictment of him and the law enforcement office his actions have disgraced.

From his own lips came words that proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the sheriff of Broward county not only didn't enforce the law, but was an active partner in a gambling concern that was engaged in breaking the law. And this despite the fact that the sheriff has on four [actually five] occasions taken a solemn oath to enforce the law.

The sheriff denied knowing that the Broward Novelty co. had paid federal license fees on slot machines and has a lucrative income from bolita operations. The sheriff and his brother, Chief

Deputy Sheriff Robert Clark, are two of the three partners in the Broward Novelty co. The sheriff admitted under oath, after it was reluctantly forced from him by the Kefauver committee, that the biggest portion of his income came from the operations of the Broward Novelty co. His share of the take in a single year was admittedly as high as \$20,000.

Yet Sheriff Clark would have the Kefauver committee and the people believe that he didn't know the source of these profits. He would have the committee and the people believe that he, a law officer in this area for the past 17 1/2 years doesn't even know how bolita is played.

It is no wonder Sheriff Clark sweated on the witness stand Saturday. He was a sorry witness and a pitiful one at times. For years his office has known that the game of bolita is the biggest scourge of our negro population. It is a vicious racket that lives off the dimes, nickels and quarters of the poorer segment of our population....

There were rumors before that the bolita racket in this area

was controlled from the sheriff's office. The Daily News has tried time and again to get proof to substantiate those rumors.

Now there is no reason to get the proof. It has come from the sheriff, himself, and the people now know that the rumors were true, and that a man they trusted enough to elect to office repeatedly has betrayed their trust while his pockets were being lined with the dirty profits of a gambling game of the lowest order.

Sheriff Clark should have the decency to realize that his testimony Saturday reflected his unfitness to further serve the people of this county as a law enforcement officer. He, and his chief deputy, should resign before an outraged public opinion demands ouster action from Gov. Fuller Warren . . .⁵⁰

With that editorial blast, Robert H. Gore continued his all-out campaign to oust Walter Clark from office. In 1948, Gore had tried to convince the voters to remove the sheriff and was unsuccessful. This time, he appealed to the governor to remove Clark from office. Both the Fort Lauderdale and the Florida State



This photo of slot machines at "Papa Joe's Gay Nineties Club" in Hollywood was taken by a private citizen in July 1950 and sent to the State Attorney General's Office.

Junior Chambers of Commerce and the Broward County Republican Executive Committee appealed to Governor Warren to remove Clark from office, and Miami columnist Carlton Montayne, a longtime Clark friend, appealed to the sheriff to resign.⁵¹

Warren himself had endured considerable criticism for what many considered as half-hearted actions against the various gambling interests active in Florida. Deciding that he must act decisively to neutralize his critics, the governor summoned Walter Clark to appear before him on July 21, 1950, to determine if the sheriff would be suspended from office.

At the same time, Assistant State Attorney Dwight L. Rogers, Jr. and County Solicitor Otis Farrington requested a grand jury investigation of the Broward Sheriff's Office. Rogers asked that the jury remain in session and meet as often as necessary to hear evidence and testimony before rendering a verdict. This action allowed the prosecutors sufficient time to gather evidence necessary for a trial. Circuit Court Judge George W. Tedder, Sr. granted these requests and ordered the grand jury to convene on August 3.

On Thursday, July 20, Sheriff Clark and his attorney, C. L. Chancey, left Fort Lauderdale to meet with Governor Fuller Warren in Tallahassee. A student of Clark's career described the meeting in some detail:

The meeting with Governor Warren began promptly at 10:00 a.m. Friday morning in the small cabinet room which was filled with fifty people. Fuller Warren was flanked on either side by Richard Ervin, the State Attorney General, and Reeves Bowen, the Assistant Attorney General. The Governor provided the Senate committee, also assembled in the room, with a copy of the Kefauver committee transcript. Warren began the hearing by saying, 'It appears from this that you are a member of a partnership which since 1945 has been engaged in a violation of the law.' Then Warren asked Clark whether he had testified before

*the Senate crime committee on July 15. Clark answered, 'I did.' Those were the only words spoken by Clark during the hearing.*⁵²

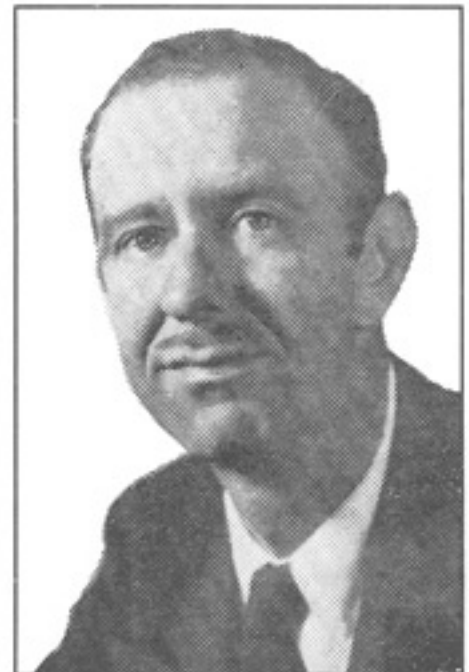
Then Clark's longtime attorney, C.L.Chancey, entered the fray with an eighty-minute verbal plea in behalf of his embattled client. He argued that the governor could not remove Clark from office over the alleged Novelty Company violations because those infractions had taken place before the start of the sheriff's current term. He maintained that the Kefauver Committee had overstepped its jurisdiction when it revealed the Broward Novelty Company's bolita operation. Chancey also stated that much of Clark's trouble resulted from the vendetta of certain south Florida newspapers determined to drive the sheriff from office. Then he produced a thick sheaf of letters written in support of his client.⁵³

At this point, Governor Warren brought the "hearing" to a sudden and insulting end when he tersely stated, "An order suspending Sheriff Clark will be made. The hearing is adjourned." As he spoke, Warren stood up. He left the room without another comment. With the governor's sudden departure, there was nothing for Clark and Chancey to do but return to Fort Lauderdale.⁵⁴

Governor Fuller Warren, viewed by many observers of the political scene as lacking the capacity for swift and decisive action, had now disposed of the Broward sheriff in near record time. Warren's treatment of Clark was indeed inconsistent with several of the governor's past actions. For example, Warren's excuse for not removing Dade County Sheriff Jimmy Sullivan, who faced similar accusations to those leveled at Clark, was that the Dade voters had reelected Sullivan in 1948. He failed to note that Walter Clark had also been reelected that same year, and by a much more impressive margin. But consistency was not Warren's primary concern. He was determined to get out of the firing line, and Clark's damaging admission before the Kefauver Committee gave him

perfect cover. By focusing on that incident as his sole piece of evidence against Clark, he could move quickly and conclusively to end the case, appeasing anti-gambling sentiment throughout the state.

The choice of a replacement sheriff would not be so easy. To help in the selection, Warren appointed a patronage committee made up of three of his main Broward County supporters, Wellington E. Bunch, Sr., R. V. Roberts, and Dave Turner. The three committeemen, however, were divided in their recommendations. A rumor circulated that Fort Lauderdale Police Chief Roland Kelly was under serious consideration for the appointment, but Kelly took himself out of consideration when he stated that he would not accept the appointment. While the patronage committee remained divided, no such indecision bothered State Senator George Leaird. Leaird boldly recommended one of his chief allies, thirty-six-year-old former Hollywood vice-mayor Amos Hall, and Governor Warren made the appointment. The members of the patronage committee were furious and resigned "in a huff." Warren probably had no choice; because of the time-honored system of senatorial courtesy, Leaird could have blocked any appointment which



Sheriff Amos Hall, who succeeded Walter Clark in July 1950.

did not meet with his approval. Nevertheless, the governor should have recognized this fact from the beginning, and avoided placing three of his most loyal supporters in such an embarrassing situation.⁵⁵

Governor Warren's summary suspension of Walter Clark was followed by even greater problems for the Broward sheriff. On August 17, 1950, the grand jury indicted Walter Clark, Bob Clark, and Gordon Williams on separate charges of illegal possession of slot machines and conducting a lottery. Also indicted were James Johnson, a Novelty Company employee, and Trueman Lytle, an alleged bolita operator. Six days later, the grand jury indicted twenty-two reputed "underworld figures" charged with gambling violations at the Greenacres west of Hallandale, the Club Boheme on Hallandale beach, and the It Club just outside Fort Lauderdale.⁵⁶ The principal casino figures quickly pleaded guilty and were fined \$1,000 on each count of operating a gambling house. They paid fines totaling \$16,000 and left the area. In the weeks that followed, the remaining individuals, all people of lesser importance in the gambling house operations, turned themselves in, and each paid a \$1,000 fine.⁵⁷

The disposal of these cases left the three partners in the Broward Novelty Company to bear the brunt of the prosecution. Walter R. Clark, who only a short time before was one of the most powerful politicians in Florida, was now "on the skids." Even more devastating than his legal misfortunes, Clark discovered that he was critically ill with leukemia. His future seemed very bleak indeed.

The trial of Walter Clark, Bob Clark, and Gordon Williams took place before the Criminal Court of Record with Judge William T. Kennedy presiding and County Solicitor Otis Farrington prosecuting. Walter Clark's attorney, C. L. Chancey, represented all three defendants, and was assisted by J. B. Patterson, a successful Fort Lauderdale trial lawyer.⁵⁸

Robert H. Gore, having witnessed and contributed to Walter Clark's suspension from office, was



**Broward County Solicitor
Otis Farrington.**

not through with his fallen foe. The publisher now wanted to see Clark in jail. A *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* editorial stated:

... The grand jury's action, however, doesn't automatically mean that those found responsible will pay the proper penalty. Indictments are not convictions. Indictments are the grand jury's business, but convictions on those indictments are the responsibility of other law enforcement agencies.

In Broward county's case it will be County Solicitor Otis Farrington's duty to prosecute . . .

Farrington won't have an easy task. It can be presumed that the gambling crowd will fight these indictments with all the influence and all the power they can command. The best of legal talent will undoubtedly be summoned to aid the defense . . .

Grand jury indictments followed by convictions with proper punishment can signal the death blow to organized illegal gambling in this area. Gamblers will continue to break the law when they know they are not apt to be convicted even if they might be indicted. But let them once learn

that convictions are apt to follow indictments in this county and it will be an unwary and an unwise gambler who will take a chance on breaking the law.⁵⁹

Robert H. Gore, long convinced that Walter Clark was tied to Broward County's illegal gambling operations, now seemed to assume that the testimony before the Kefauver Committee was sufficient proof of the sheriff's guilt. But Otis Farrington's task as Broward County Solicitor turned out to be much more complicated than that.

The first trial of Walter Clark, Bob Clark, and Gordon Williams began on December 6, 1950. This trial concerned the slot machine charges, with a second trial covering the bolita charges scheduled to take place at a later date. The proceedings were enlivened when Farrington and J. B. Patterson exchanged insults. In an effort to secure needed testimony, Farrington granted James (Jay) Johnson, a top Novelty Company employee, immunity. However, Johnson's testimony proved disappointing to the prosecution. Johnson acknowledged that he worked for the Broward Music Company, as the jukebox company was also known, but he claimed that he did not know who the owners were. He turned all money over to the bookkeeper. Robert Hall, the bookkeeper, in turn testified that he deposited the money in the bank or placed it in a drawer, but did not know who took it out or to whom it belonged. As the trial continued, a parade of witnesses took the stand, but not one of them admitted knowing who owned the machines or with whom they shared the profits. They only dealt with "Jay" — James Johnson.⁶⁰

Throughout the trial, the defense attorneys stressed the fact that the prosecutor had to prove his case "beyond a reasonable doubt." Neither the Clarks nor Williams took the stand. Farrington remarked that several of the witnesses were guilty of perjury, but that proving it would be difficult. The main prosecution witnesses failed to deliver the evidence needed to prove their case. After deliberations that lasted less

Possible Clark Reinstatement Seen

Lottery Charges Dismissed

Former Sheriff Says He Has No Plans

than one hour, the jury announced a verdict of "not guilty." The spectators greeted the verdict with loud applause.⁶¹

One month later, on January 8, 1951, the trial on the bolita charges began. This time, Farrington received permission to try Williams first, with the trial of the Clarks to follow. The prosecutor introduced sales tax reports which revealed the bolita operation into the court record and believed that he had enough evidence for a conviction, but once again his star witness let him down. James Johnson testified that he had indeed thrown bolita numbers, but stated that he had acted on his own without Williams' approval. He claimed the ticket sellers and lottery payoffs were paid from Williams' own money. Bookkeeper Robert Hall, the last witness, admitted receiving bolita receipts, but did not know where those receipts came from, or where the money went once it was placed in the company's safe. The prosecution's evidence was circumstantial. Under the rules of evidence, Gordon Williams was found not guilty of the lottery (bolita) charges. Because the evidence against the Clarks was the same as that against Williams, Farrington nol prossed his case against Walter and Bob Clark. Johnson freely accepted full blame for the company's bolita operation because he had been granted immunity by Farrington. The profits from bolita were never directly traced to the Clarks or Williams, which allowed the three men to avoid conviction.⁶²

While the trials were in process, Walter Clark's health continued to fail. He was forced to use crutches to attend the Williams trial. As he grew weaker, he was admitted to Johns Hopkins University hospital in Baltimore on March 24, 1951.

A few months previously, the evidence against Walter Clark that surfaced during the Kefauver hearings seemed compelling—compelling enough to warrant the sheriff's suspension from office by Governor Fuller Warren. Yet, the embattled Clark won a clear "not guilty" verdict on one charge against him, and saw the other charge dropped. The reason for this shift was probably two-fold. First, the prosecution was "let down" by its witnesses. Despite the efforts of Solicitor Farrington to prove his case, the witnesses were simply unable or unwilling to testify to any Clark connection to the slot machines or the bolita operation. Secondly, in spite of the torrent of abuse the former sheriff received at the hands of the daily press, in spite of a wave of anti-gambling sentiment, and in spite of the Kefauver Committee hearings, Walter Clark remained a popular figure in Broward County. Much of the local citizenry remained stubbornly loyal to Clark, and any jury would have been somewhat reluctant to render a verdict that would have sent the beloved former sheriff to prison.

With the criminal charges dispensed with, the way was cleared for Walter Clark's reinstatement as sheriff. His suspension was based on his part ownership of the Novelty Company, which allegedly owned slot machines and ran an illegal lottery. Since no evidence directly linked Clark to these illegal activities, many people believed that the Florida Senate, in its April session, would decline to ratify the governor's action. As Clark's health continued to decline, it became increasingly obvious that he would be physically unable to assume the duties of office, but many people hoped that reinstatement would serve as a token of support and

appreciation for the ailing former sheriff. Robert H. Gore feared that such sympathy might return Clark to office, and a *Daily News* editorial lamented the implications of such a move, even if Clark was physically unable to serve:

HUMANITARIAN GESTURE?

A few days ago, when it became apparent that former Sheriff Walter Clark was suffering from an incurable ailment, the people of this county saw a quiet move get underway to have Walter Clark reinstated as a "humanitarian gesture" to a dying man.

The Daily News reported this movement for the news that it was. We refrained from editorial comment because we did not feel that it was in good taste to subject a man as sick as Walter Clark was reported to be to any criticism. Nor did we really believe that the move to reinstate Clark would receive serious consideration from the powers that be at Tallahassee.

Now, however, we have learned differently . . .

Walter Clark, himself, is in the picture in name only. His supporters, who claim to be motivated only by "humanitarian" impulses know full well that if Walter Clark's illness is as serious as has been reported, he will never be able to exercise the duties of sheriff. But if he is reinstated by the Florida senate he will have a claim for back pay from the time he was suspended and he will have the power to

name a chief deputy, who to all practical purposes will run the sheriff's office.

This chief deputy would no doubt be Walter Clark's own brother, Robert, who has held down that post in the past, and who was in Tallahassee Tuesday putting pressure on the senate to reinstate Walter Clark to office.

Robert Clark's sentiments as regards law enforcement are as well known as his brother's. As chief deputy under Walter Clark, Robert Clark was just as much a partner to the lax law enforcement policy that was in effect here as was Walter. In fact rumor had it that Robert Clark, and not Walter, was the real power behind the throne and the real business man in the sheriff's office . . .

*The real friends of Walter Clark, and there are many of them in this county, should realize that the former sheriff isn't being helped by this latest move. His illness is being used as a political football in a game to win control of the sheriff's office . . .*⁶³

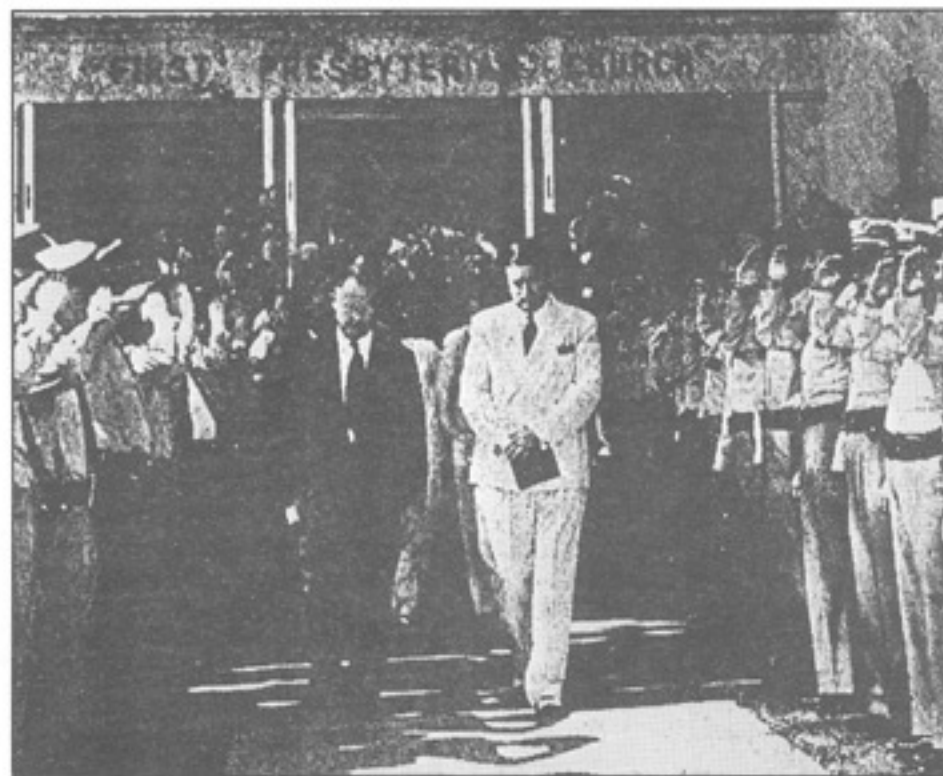
Gore and the *Daily News* had no need to worry. Senator George Leaird was determined to retain his Hollywood ally, Amos Hall, in the sheriff's office. Again, the time-honored tradition that the local senator's wishes be followed held true, and the Florida Senate ratified the suspension of Walter Clark.⁶⁴

Walter R. Clark died April 24, 1951. He was forty-six years old. Thus ended the remarkable career of a man who rose from a butcher's helper to become one of the most powerful public figures in Florida. Clark's funeral, held at Fort Lauderdale's First Presbyterian Church, was magnificent. Lined up saluting the casket bearing the body of the former sheriff as it was carried from the church were police officers from a number of Broward County municipalities. The Reverend Edward P. Downey, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, and the Reverend Clarence C. Stauffer, pastor of Clark's own Croissant Park Christian Church, led the procession.⁶⁵

Robert H. Gore's *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* first directed mild criticism toward Walter Clark in 1940. The paper did not launch its barrage of anti-Clark editorials until 1943, increasing those in number and intensity during the 1948 election campaign and the 1950-51 gambling crackdown, in spite of the fact that illegal gambling operations were flourishing in Broward County for several years prior to 1943. For the first decade of Clark's tenure in office, relations between the sheriff and the publisher remained reasonably cordial. One explanation for this is the fact that although Gore purchased the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* in 1929, he waited for six years to establish his permanent residence in Fort Lauderdale, and thus did not become actively involved in the Broward County political scene until 1935. In the late 1930s, as has already been noted, Gore and Clark supported many of the same candidates and positions, most notably the campaign and administration of Fred P. Cone as Governor of Florida. More than any other single factor, the Cone

connection prevented the Clark-Gore feud from erupting during the 1936-1941 period. After 1940, however, Gore's hostility to Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal administration grew in intensity, and Gore's wrath soon extended to Roosevelt's supporters. Clark's unwavering support for Roosevelt, and later Harry S. Truman, has been considered as a probable cause for Gore's extreme hostility towards him.⁶⁶

Although these state and national political alliances and rivalries form much of the background for the evolving relationship between Walter Clark and Robert H. Gore, it was Walter Clark's testimony before the Kefauver Committee that ultimately destroyed him. The sheriff's damaging admissions before that committee furnished the ammunition for which the anti-gambling element had been searching.⁶⁷ Under severe political pressure and editorial criticism for his reluctance to suspend local officials, Governor Fuller Warren used the Kefauver Committee incident to suspend Clark and thus get his many and powerful critics "off his



Walter Clark's funeral procession at Fort Lauderdale's First Presbyterian Church. Leading the procession at center are Rev. Edward P. Downey (left) and Rev. Clarence G. Stauffer.

back." In spite of his success in eluding criminal charges, Clark was never able to regain his office after Warren suspended him.

While Robert H. Gore applauded Warren's action, he soon had a falling out with the governor, who then joined the long list of targets for Gore's editorial barbs. In April 1951, less than a year after Warren suspended Clark from office, an editorial in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* pronounced that he headed "the list of Florida's sorriest governors," because of his failure to suspend Dade County Sheriff Jimmy Sullivan under similar circumstances.⁶⁸

Gore's editorial feuds with public officials on all levels of government continued unabated until 1963, when he sold the *Daily News* — by that time renamed the *Fort Lauderdale News* — to the *Chicago Tribune* interests. With his political clout and a substantial fortune acquired through his newspaper and real estate ventures, Gore continued to be a powerful and controversial figure in Broward County until his death in 1972.

Over forty-five years after his death, Walter Clark, too, remains a controversial personality. It could be said that there were two Walter Clarks. There was the one pictured by the daily press, who allowed illegal gambling to exist in the county, who allowed mobsters and racketeers to operate freely and openly, and who was assumed by many to be corrupt. Most of these charges were exaggerations—there was never any "mob rule" in Broward County during Clark's term of office. But, as Clark himself admitted, he at the least maintained a tolerant attitude toward the county's numerous "harmless" but clearly illegal gambling operations. At the same time, there was another Walter Clark, the one fondly remembered by many "old timers" still living. They remember a man who used his considerable influence for the public good, who brought roads, facilities, and jobs to Broward County, and who oversaw the rescue operations in Davie during the 1947 flood. They remember the compassionate individual who helped many

people who were "down on their luck" during the lean Depression years, and they remember the sheriff who ran an efficient office, kept the public order, and did his job . . . most of the time.



The Broward County Sheriff's Department, 1946. Left to right: Sara Freeman, Earl Sharp, A. D. Marshall, A. D. Wittcamp, Gene Ryan, Lloyd Miller, Robert Clark, Walter Clark, Roy May, Harry Crook, Claude Tindall, Virgil Wright, unidentified.

Notes

1. For a more detailed account of Gore's early life, see Paul A. Gore, *Past the Edge of Poverty: A Biography of Robert Hayes Gore, Sr.* (Fort Lauderdale: R. H. Gore Co., 1990). Also see, Donald G. Lester, "The Fort Lauderdale Daily News and the City Election of 1937," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 15, nos. 3-4 (Summer/Fall 1992), 11-16.
2. Lester, "Fort Lauderdale Daily News and City Election of 1937," 16-24.
3. William H. Kramer, "Walter Clark, Legendary Sheriff of Broward County," unpublished Master of Arts thesis (Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, 1993), 5.
4. *Ibid.*; Also the author's personal knowledge.
5. "Elected County Officials," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 6, nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 1983), 30; Donald G. Lester, "Broward Politics 1928-1938, Political Influence in Depression Era Broward," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 13, nos. 3-4 (Summer/Fall 1990), 11.
6. For a more complete discussion and analysis of the Darsey case, see Donald G. Lester, "The Darsey Case: Little Scottsboro Revisited," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 11, nos. 1-2 (Winter/Spring 1988), 2-13.
7. It is not known who paid for McGill's services, but it is the author's recollection that

- many contemporary observers thought that the state and national NAACP footed the bill.
8. Lester, "The Darsey Case," 9-10.
 9. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 20, 1935.
 10. Lester, "Broward Politics 1928-1938," 17.
 11. *Ibid.*, 20.
 12. Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark," 20-21.
 13. *Ibid.*, 32; *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, November 4, 1936.
 14. The author's personal observation, coupled with reading various issues of the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* from this period. An early, and relatively mild criticism of Clark's handling of the gambling situation appeared on February 7, 1940, when the paper chastised Clark for being out of town when a joint state-F.B.I. gambling crackdown produced sheriff's department raids on three gaming establishments, and for not taking greater initiative in shutting down gambling.
 15. Governor Holland probably did not take the Clark endorsement seriously. During the first primary, Walter supported Holland while his brother Bob supported B. F. Puty of West Palm Beach. Holland apparently thought the Clark brothers were hedging their bets.
 16. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 24, 1942.
 17. *Ibid.*, May 1, 1943.
 18. *Ibid.*, May 3, 1943.
 19. *Ibid.*, May 4, 1943.
 20. *Ibid.*, May 11, 1943.
 21. Donald G. Lester, "Gore vs. Pepper: The *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* and the Senate Election of 1944," *Broward Legacy*, vol. 17, nos. 3-4 (Summer/Fall 1994), 31-32.
 22. The author's personal observation.
 23. Lee worked for Eastern Airlines in Miami for many years, eventually becoming president of the airline's credit union. He died in 1969. Obituary clipping in the archives of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society.
 24. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, June 1, 1943.
 25. Harry S. Truman to Walter R. Clark, December 1, 1948; Gene Ryan to Walter R. Clark, July 5, 1946, letters in the archives of the Broward County Historical Commission, Fort Lauderdale, Florida; "Pass in Review," undated *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* clipping (ca. 1944) in Walter Clark Scrapbook, Broward County Historical Commission archives.
 26. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, February 18, 1944.
 27. For a detailed account of the 1944 senatorial campaign, see Donald G. Lester, "Gore vs. Pepper," 24-44.
 28. Clark's public service efforts were not without their critics. For example, the source of funding for relief dispensed from the sheriff's office, presumably including 1947 flood relief, was questioned by Clark's opponent Joseph Mackey during the 1948 election campaign.
 29. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, February 20, 1948.
 30. *Ibid.*, February 24, 1948.
 31. *Ibid.*, February 20, 1948.
 32. *Ibid.*
 33. Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark", 68.
 34. August Burghard and Philip Weidling, *Checked Sunshine* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), 269.
 35. *Ibid.*
 36. *Ibid.*
 37. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, March 3, 1948.
 38. *Ibid.*
 39. *Ibid.*, April 19, 1948.
 40. *Ibid.*, February 28, 1948.
 41. *Ibid.*, April 10, 1948.
 42. Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark", 70. Interestingly, despite the bitter battle between Clark and the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, the sheriff purchased advertising space in the paper, and his notices appeared prominently throughout the campaign.
 43. The author's personal knowledge and opinion.
 44. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, February 21, 1950.
 45. D. C. Coleman, long associated with the business and banking power structure in Dade County, had actually lost the 1932 Democratic primary to Dan Hardie, Dade's legendary sheriff, but Governor Dave Sholtz arbitrarily suspended Hardie in 1933.
 46. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, February 21, 1950.
 47. For these quotes, see the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 15, 17, 1950. When asked what he meant by being elected on a liberal basis, Clark responded, "I mean I don't go around snooping in private business and homes to see what everybody's doing."
 48. Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark", 80ff.
 49. For a more complete account of the Kefauver Committee hearings, see Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark", 88ff. and the appropriate articles in the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* of mid-July 1950.
 50. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 17, 1950.
 51. *Ibid.*, July 18, 1950; Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark", 85.
 52. Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark", 86ff.
 53. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, July 21, 1950.
 54. Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark", 87-88.
 55. It is unfortunate that so little has been written concerning the time-honored tradition of senatorial courtesy. Recognition of the views and whims of local senators makes understanding the suspension and reinstatement process simple.
 56. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, August 18, 24, 1950. Among those indicted were Claude Litteral, Jake and Meyer Lansky, W. H. Bischoff, Vincent Alo, and Samuel L. Bratt, all of whom had been mentioned prominently in the Kefauver hearings.
 57. Burghard and Weidling, *Checked Sunshine*, 273.
 58. Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark", 90.
 59. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, August 25, 1950.
 60. Information on the trial is taken from the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, December 7-9, 1950.
 61. Kramer, "Walter Reid Clark", 92.
 62. *Ibid.*; *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, January 8-10, 1951.
 63. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 4, 1951.
 64. The author speculates that had the local senator been Representative John W. Burwell rather than Leaird, Clark probably would have been reinstated as sheriff. Burwell and Clark were close politically.

- However, this speculation cannot be proven.
65. Burghard and Weidling, *Checked Sunshine*, 274ff.
 66. The author's father, Fort Lauderdale attorney Hugh Lester, was firmly convinced that Gore's extreme opposition to Franklin D. Roosevelt was the chief motivation for the publisher's hostility toward Walter Clark.
 67. In a radio speech, Kefauver stated that he was "shocked" at Clark's acquittal and proceeded to criticize the jury for ignoring the work of the Kefauver Committee. James Wilson, foreman of the criminal court jury which acquitted the Clark defendants, told the Tennessee senator where to "head in." Wilson said, "I am shocked and disappointed at the statement of Senator Kefauver in which he, by inference, tied together the testimony that he heard in Miami with the Clark trial. He is apparently unfamiliar with the facts of evidence introduced in the trial. Doesn't Mr. Kefauver know that the evidence he gathered in Miami was not introduced? As foreman of the jury sworn to consider the Clarks innocent until proven guilty, I feel this jury did its civic duty in an intelligent and forthright way. Furthermore, as a taxpayer, citizen, and ex-U.S. Marine, I resent any reflection on my intelligence or veracity. If Kefauver wants to debate the issue publicly, I will meet him either in Florida or in his native hills of Tennessee," *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, January 10, 1951.
 68. *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*, April 20, 1951. After receiving prolonged verbal and editorial bombardment, Governor Warren finally suspended Sheriff Sullivan for failure to enforce the anti-gambling laws, and appointed Tom Kelly, a prominent member of the American Legion, as acting sheriff. Then, suddenly and without warning, Warren reinstated Sullivan, thus removing Kelly and initiating another round of editorial abuse. Warren then removed Sullivan again, this time appointing Sonny Henderson as acting sheriff. When Kelly opposed Henderson in the 1952 primary, the campaign between these two "reformers" soon degenerated into a mudslinging contest. Henderson supporters accused Kelly of extreme moral failure and the *Miami Herald* withdrew its support of Kelly. But the voters decided the charges were simply not believable and gave Kelly a large majority. In 1956, Dade County's game of "musical chairs" ended when Kelly beat Jimmy Sullivan by a large majority to retain the sheriff's office. For the above scenario, the author is depending on his memory.

