

The Las Olas Casino Pool

Reprinted from the

Fort Lauderdale Daily News
The Gore Publications
Monday, December 1, 1930
Page A-6

CASINO POOL IS POPULAR PLACE FOR SWIMMERS

MUNICIPALLY OWNED BATHING PLACE IS FAVORITE SPOT ON LAS OLAS BEACH

Picturesquely set against the alluring tropical background of one of Fort Lauderdale's largest and most beautiful natural parks, Las Olas casino is an enchanting spot to while away hours and relax amid restful surroundings unsurpassed in their attraction and comfort.

Provided as it is with the most modern facilities for either pool or ocean bathing abetted by the unusual demand for the place as a recreational center, the popularity of Las Olas Beach has increased a hundred fold since the building was opened to the public over two years ago. Previous to that time the beach was unable to offer suitable accommodations to many present-day patrons who did not care to patronize a beach that was not furnished with locker rooms, showers and other conveniences for bathers.

SPANISH STYLE

Representing an investment of \$118,000, the stucco structure, which is municipally owned, is of the Spanish

type of architecture. The building is decorated in a soft tan and with its gay red tile roofing it harmonizes perfectly with the bright greens of the woods and tropical foliage which surround it. Along the north side of the pool there is a long patio provided with tables and chairs, where patrons of the tea-room operated in conjunction with the place

may dine and watch the water sports or merely dream in the shady comfort of a restful atmosphere and listen to the peculiar soothing roar of the surf as it pounds its way over the smooth golden beach. Facing the patio on the opposite side of the pool there is adequate accommodations for the people who flock to the casino during

The Las Olas Beach Casino and Pool, which opened in 1928, was only two years old when this article appeared in the Fort Lauderdale Daily News. The structure replaced the city's original beach "casino," a two-story wooden structure which contained dressing rooms and a dance floor, but no pool. Promoted by a group of Fort Lauderdale businessmen led by local promoter Commodore A. H. Brook, the new casino and pool was widely regarded as a means of lifting the city out of the depression which had followed the collapse of the land boom. It was designed by architect Francis Abreu and constructed by building contractor John Olsson at a cost of \$118,000, according to this 1930 account. The 1928 newspaper article which announced the building's opening, however, placed the cost at \$125,000. Thirty-five thousand people attended the opening ceremonies and the accompanying swim meet, which were presided over by City Commissioner Will J. "Cap" Reed.

In the ensuing decades, the casino lived up to its promise as the center of beachfront activities in Fort Lauderdale. Beginning in 1935, it hosted the annual Collegiate Aquatic Forum, a Christmastime college swim meet which introduced vacationing college students from around the country to the attractions of Fort Lauderdale beach. The casino remained a popular location for competitive swim meets, for visiting tourists, and for local citizens until it closed in 1965. It was subsequently demolished to make way for the International Swimming Hall of Fame complex.

the winter months for the water pageants, swimming events and other entertainments which Al Gordon, manager of the place, provides for his guests.

REGULATION POOL

The pool itself, which is reputed to be one of the finest in the state, is constructed to conform to every regulation for the conducting of both state and national meets. Fifty-five yards

long, twenty yards wide and with a varying depth of from 3 to 12 feet, the pool has a capacity of 422,000 gallons. There are twelve swimming lanes and in all other requirements the pool has met with the warm approval of swimmers of both state and national note, who have at different times visited the casino. There is a complete change of water once a week, and considerable new water is added daily. Weekly tests made by the board of health show that the pool has never fallen short of maintaining the highest sanitary qualifications.

SWIMMING TEAMS

Since the operation of Las Olas casino, boys' and girls' swimming teams have been developed which are regarded with much pride by the people of the community. These two teams attended the state meets this year and won the state championship both for the high school and amateur A.A.U.

events. The casino is prepared to offer the best in swimming instruction, and many strong swimmers have been the result of this feature of casino life.

Las Olas casino also maintains a Red Cross Life Saving Corps, members of which are on regular duty at both the pool and beach. The organization here is rated at Red Cross headquarters as one of the best in the state. This summer the casino accommodated the playground children one morning each week, when many of them were taught the rudiments of swimming.

Many persons of note have visited the casino in recent years, one of the most famous being Al Smith, who attended one of the water meets here two years ago and presented the prizes to the winners. Johnny Weismueller is expected to visit the casino this season. There have been innumerable others of both state and national note who have been outspoken in their praise of the beach casino and pool. They will come back — and best of all, others will come with them.



Collage of photos from the casino pool, 1936. At bottom right is Al Gordon, longtime swimming coach and pool manager.

POOL WATER FILTERED

Before water flows into the pool it is filtered through sand, thus eliminating every danger of bathers coming in contact with stingers or other injurious small inhabitants of the sea which occasionally come in close to shore.

Of the most important events which will take place at the casino this season, there will be the Girls' Junior and Senior State Championship meet, which will be held here in January. The best women swimmers and divers in the state will participate, and the casino is preparing to accommodate a capacity attendance made up of people from many Florida cities.

There are various other water contests scheduled for the winter months, and Manager Gordon is planning to offer special entertainment in the way of aquatic sports every Monday during the season.

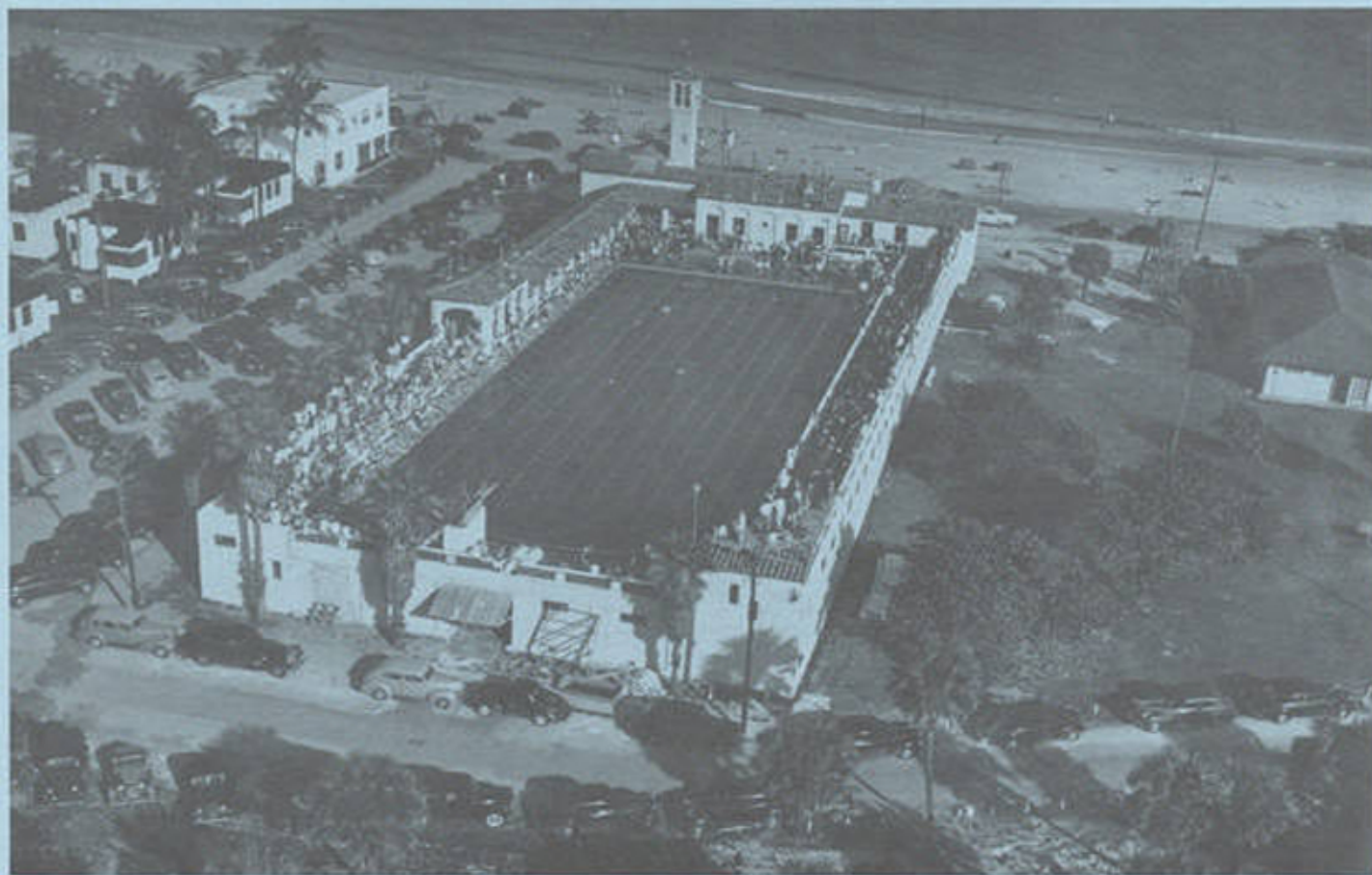
WIDE USE

As a recreational center, possibilities of the Las Olas casino are unlimited in their range. Dancing in the patio or out in the moonlight on the wide cement walk in front of the building, picnic parties which may be given in the pavilion splendidly equipped for this purpose just south of the casino, bridge parties, children's entertainment where the kiddies may play in perfect safety under the constant surveillance of a competent lifeguard, luncheon parties and every variety of water sports imaginable — these are but a few of the diversity of recreational pursuits that one may follow at the beach casino. For those who care for gymnastics, volley ball, hand ball and other sports, there are adequate facilities on the beach within a few yards of the building.

COMPLETELY EQUIPPED

The pool will accommodate three or four hundred people and is fully equipped with slides, diving towers, spring boards and other contrivances that tend to make people feel that the casino here offers the same attractions that may be found in larger cities. Recently the casino has been extensively redecorated. All iron-work has been painted a silver gray and diving boards and other pool equipment have been decorated in bright tropical shades.

The locker rooms are modern in construction and have all facilities in the way of showers and other conveniences that are so essential to pleasant ocean bathing.



Las Olas Casino and Pool in the late 1940s.

BACK COVER:

Aerial view of downtown Fort Lauderdale, 1950.