

OUR BRYAN PIONEERS

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PART II

PHILEMON LEIGH BRYAN (1779-1858) was blessed with seven sons. One son, WILLIAM JAMES BRYAN, was profiled in Part One of this article. William's great-grandsons, LOURCEY and (JOHN) MURRAY BRYAN described their experiences as early Broward pioneers out at Pine Island — now populated with gentlemen farmers on glamorous multi-acre estates and burgeoning shopping centers as well as just plain folks like the original Bryans. As suggested in Part One, reference should be made to the Family Group Sheets (FGS) and Pedigree Charts (PED) included herein for information not included in the main text.

LEWIS HAWTHORNE BRYAN, born in 1817 in Wayne County, Georgia, was the seventh of eleven children of PHILEMON LEIGH and ANNE NANCY HAWTHORNE BRYAN, (see FGS 5 of part one). Lewis served three enlistments in the Seminole Indian Wars and was later a justice of the peace in Hamilton County, Florida. After the Civil War, he and his family moved to Volusia County, where they engaged in farming and citrus growing. By the time of his death in 1882, Lewis and his family were residing at Glencoe Station, Volusia County, which was situated between New Smyrna and Blue Springs. LEWIS HAWTHORNE BRYAN married twice. His first wife was AMANDA ELIZABETH LOWE, daughter of Horatio and Elizabeth Lowe.

Amanda died in 1873, leaving nine children (FGS 12).

REED ASA BRYAN, born 1839, was the first child of LEWIS and AMANDA BRYAN and the older brother of PHILEMON NATHANIEL (P.N.) BRYAN. Military records show that he was twenty-two when he signed up as a private with Company I, 2nd Florida Infantry, the Jasper Blues, in 1861. The muster roll shows that he was listed as sick in the hospital between that date and September 1, 1861; but there is no further explanation. Many Confederate records are incomplete, some spotty, others completely in error. The records for Reed Asa Bryan are no exception. For instance, his records show a promotion to sergeant on May 11, 1862, and then say that he deserted between November and December of that same year "on the road between Culpeper and Fredericksburg [Virginia]." Hardly a deserter, Bryan had actually been hospitalized December 2 at Florida Hospital in Richmond. His records show his return to active duty on January 13, 1863, and then readmittance to the hospital a week later. February 3 he returned to active duty but died in that Richmond hospital May 15, 1863, of "Disease." During the War Between the States, the figures for deaths from disease were more staggering than those for battle casualties. The estimate for Union deaths from disease was two and a half deaths for every combat loss. The

ratio for Confederates was three to one. Civil War historian Bruce Catton quoted a North Carolina soldier who wrote that the battles "were not as bad as the fever." Many soldiers felt safer on the battlefield than in the hospital.

While noting an accurate count might never be possible, an unofficial 1912 list claimed that 52,954 Confederate soldiers were killed in action, 21,570 died of injuries, and a whopping 59,297 died of disease. The Union forces, with an estimated almost three times as many soldiers to begin with, lost 279,995 men; 183,287 of them to disease.

PHILEMON NATHANIEL (P.N.) BRYAN, second son of Lewis and Amanda Bryan, was born October 16, 1844, in Hamilton County, Florida. He followed his older brother, Reed Asa, into service on October 6, 1862. Originally Captain Bryan's Independent Company, Florida Infantry, this company joined six others to become Company D, 9th Regiment, Florida Infantry. One year later, P. N. Bryan was a nineteen-year-old second sergeant, and Reed Asa Bryan was dead. Within months, P. N. was himself listed as on sick furlough, and by April 1864, was listed as hospitalized. In June 1864, he was again listed as hospitalized in General Hospital, Howard's Grove, Richmond, Virginia. P. N. attained the rank of first sergeant of Company D before the year was out, possibly by

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Bryan Family

PEDIGREE CHART X

WILLIAM BRYAN
1757-1838

PHILEMON LEIGH BRYAN
1779-1858

AMANDA ELIZABETH LOWE
c. 1816-1873

1st Marriage

LEWIS HAWTHORNE BRYAN
1817-1882

2nd Marriage

GEORGINA GOODRICH
1844-1934

PHILEMON N. BRYAN
1844-1925

GADSDEN BRYAN
1852-

FRANKLIN AMERICUS BRYAN
1874-1934

DAISY MABEL BRYAN
1876-1915

REED ASA
BRYAN, SR.
1876-1937

THOMAS MURRAY
BRYAN
1878-1969

FRANK W.
BRYAN

CHRISTINE LUCILLE
BRYAN

DOROTHY EUGENE
BRYAN

REED ASA
BRYAN, JR.
1915-1976

JAMES
HAWTHORNE
BRYAN
1917-

PERRY NATHAN
BRYAN
1908-1953

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attrition. The last paper in his military jacket lists him as among the prisoners of war surrendered to E. M. McCook, brigadier general of the Union forces, by Major General Sam Jones, C.S.A., at Tallahassee, Florida, May 10, 1865. Five days later he was paroled.

The raw farm boy returned home a man. Two years later, on August 29, 1867, P. N. Bryan married Louisa Catherine (Lucy) Murray in Volusia County. She was the daughter of Jackson and Susan Lourcey Murray and a sister of Thomas Jefferson Murray. Thomas Jefferson Murray was the father of Guilda Rose Murray who married John Milton Bryan, Jr., great-grandson of Philemon Leigh Bryan.

Seven children were born to P. N. and Lucy Bryan. Their first son was named REED ASA BRYAN in honor of a brother who would father no children. The name Reed Asa Bryan has since become part of the history of Broward County through the contributions of those who have claimed it.

In 1981, JAMES HAWTHORNE BRYAN (see PED X), retired dockmas-

ter for the City of Fort Lauderdale and grandson of P. N. Bryan, gave a lengthy interview about his father, Reed Asa, and his grandfather, Philemon Nathaniel (P. N.), and the events that brought them to Fort Lauderdale. Born July 13, 1917, in a house on the banks of New River at Southeast First Avenue, the second son of Reed Asa and Stella Ummel Bryan, Jimmy shared a wealth of information about his family. He described the big general store P. N. had in New Smyrna, selling everything from a hundred pounds of sugar, saddles for horses, clothing for the whole family, and other provisions. It was a big operation for that little territory.

In the late nineteenth century a railroad ran from New Smyrna to Orange City Junction with a twenty-two mile spur track running from New Smyrna down into the orange groves. P. N. sold supplies to the railroad contractors until the railroad went into the hands of receivers to be sold at a shapers' sale. P. N. went to the sale. The railroad owed him almost \$5,000, he worked on a small margin, and he hoped to recoup some of his loss. As Jimmy tells it, some big-city

lawyers struck a bargain with P. N. — they promised him all his back payment if he would not bid. They shook hands on the deal, but no papers were signed. A lot of business was done that way during the years when a man's word was his bond but, in this case, P. N. was never paid.

P. N. suffered a double whammy even before the Big Freeze in 1895 when temperatures as far south as West Palm Beach dropped briefly to twenty-four degrees. His uninsured store burned down. The only income he had left came from his citrus and cattle holdings. Then came the Big Freeze of '95.

Jimmy relates that P. N. Bryan was one of the largest citrus growers in Florida at the time, owning seven huge groves and four packing houses. He combined his own fruit with that of smaller growers for shipment north. In one night during January 1895, P. N. lost every tree in his seven groves. Bryan, however, still had his cattle, a strong back, a fine mind, and — best of all — friends. This last came in handy during those dark days of early January 1895.

P. N. Bryan had shipped so much cit-



The Philemon N. Bryan family, c. 1921. Standing (left to right): Tom M. Bryan, Catherine Barrett (daughter of Florence), Perry N. Bryan, Florence Bryan Barrett, Eliza Bryan Dreka, Virginia Dallas Bryan, Constance Bryan Gardner, Stella Bryan, Reed A.

Bryan. Sitting: Lucy Bryan, P. N. Bryan, Lucy Gardner (daughter of Constance). On ground: James H. Bryan, Reed A. Bryan, Jr., Betty Gardner (daughter of Constance). (Photo courtesy of Reed A. Bryan, III.)

rus over Henry Flagler's railroad that the two men became acquainted. Flagler asked Bryan to accept the job of constructing the roadbed for the Florida East Coast Railway from New River north to what is now Pompano. P. N. left for Fort Lauderdale with his sons, Thomas Murray and Reed Asa, and 400 laborers. One of Tom Bryan's favorite stories in later years was about his adventure during that trip. When their sailboat got to Delray Beach, Tom felt he could make better time on foot, so he got off, along with many of the laborers, and walked the rest of the way to Fort Lauderdale. Even though it took three days, Tom still beat his father's sailboat. Within a few years, the rest of the P. N. Bryan family was also in Fort Lauderdale.

We have the 4,800 "Beachcomber" columns written by Wesley Winans Stout for the *Fort Lauderdale News* to thank for much of the information we have on the Bryans as well as on so many other Broward pioneers. In 1957, Stout described the hardships encountered in building the roadbed for the railroad. He wrote, "Before the grade was finished, the area was flooded by the September rains until only the embankment was visible. The rain stood a foot deep in what is now Southwest First Avenue." Stout went on to say that the Bryans rowed across the New River and back three times a day to eat at Mrs. Andrew Jackson Wallace's boarding house. The Wallaces lived on the south bank where Rodi Boatyard stood in 1957. Tents had been used for shelter until the rainy season; then P. N. brought lumber from West Palm Beach by boat and built a frame mess hall and a dormitory for the 400-man work crew.

February 22, 1896, the first steam-engine train arrived in the New River settlement of Fort Lauderdale. This first train brought an assortment of people, tourists and settlers alike, much as our jet planes do now . . . with one exception. Until April 1896, when the railroad was completed to Miami, through passengers went the rest of the way to Miami by stagecoach. Talk about roughing it! Nevertheless, by October 1902, *The Weekly Miami Metropolis* was crowing over the progress of tourism in Fort Lauderdale, gleefully tabulating the thirty-four trunks put off from one recent train.

By August 1897, the Jacksonville *Florida Times-Union* was reporting that P. N. Bryan had a contract with the F.E.C. Railway to drain a large amount of "prairie" at New River, but by 1898, the farmer in Bryan began resurfacing. The November 25 issue of *The Weekly Miami Metropolis* that year carried the news that P. N. Bryan had "120 acres of fine land on the edge of the 'Glades at the head of the river with about six acres cleared, upon which he has 500 fine young orange

trees growing. Mr. Bryan will cultivate four-and-a-half acres of tomatoes and a half acre of beans on his land and two acres of tomatoes at 'Old Tommie's Camp' — just across the river from Osceola's camp.

Possibly in anticipation of the human cargo the trains would bring, P. N. Bryan also bought Block C of fledgling downtown Fort Lauderdale for \$200 and built a small hotel. The September 11, 1900, *Times-Union* reported that P. N. Bryan, formerly of New Smyrna, was building a nice eight-room dwelling near the depot. Lumber was on the ground, and the work would begin that day. The paper went on to say that P. N. had realized several thousand dollars from his farm in Fort Lauderdale during the last season and would ship several hundred boxes of oranges that fall from his three-year-old grove. Each additional newspaper article told of the progress of the Bryan fortunes, which coincided with the growth of Fort Lauderdale. By September of 1902 they were reporting the start of a new addition to P. N.'s hotel, which would bring the capacity to fifty guests. In 1968, Stuart Bryan, son of Virginia Dallas Bryan and grandson of P. N., told Florence Hardy, then director of the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society, that the original Bryan Hotel on the New River Inn site was sawed into two or three pieces in 1904. The part facing the river was moved to the next corner and became an annex. The rest was moved to old Nugent (now Southwest Third) Avenue and eventually torn down.

As in every life some rain must fall — and did it ever for P. N. The September 1903 newspapers reported that March floods had destroyed sixty acres of his tomatoes. He replanted ten acres on higher ground and still managed to come out a little ahead. *The Weekly Miami Metropolis* went on to say that P. N. would have cleared \$10,000 were it not for the floods. At the same time, his son Tom had ten acres in tomatoes and two in potatoes. Life see-sawed along like this for the Bryans for years, triumph and tragedy following one after the other. No matter the height he toppled from, P. N. Bryan was like a cat, always landing on his feet and hitting the ground running. He was canny enough to realize it was folly to concentrate all his resources on one venture, and thereby he cut his losses considerably. Everything seemed to come to a head each September, and in September 1906, P. N. was planning his new Bryan Hotel. It would be built by E. T. King, also formerly from New Smyrna. Much was made of Bryan's handsome new stone hotel, later known as the New River Inn, when it opened January 22, 1908. Governor Napoleon B. Broward and a delegation dined there and then took boats to the scene of the dredging operations in the Everglades which P. N.'s son, Reed, was supervising. Life was

good. Just a few weeks before, P. N. had shipped one huge load of oranges north and was anticipating the departure of the second load.

By this time, P. N. was over sixty. From a seat on his own porch he could watch a whole world go by. Glancing in one direction, he could see the river and watch the pop boats propelling themselves along amid the rapid, loud explosions of their gasoline engines. Straight ahead he had a ringside seat for the parade of people brought to Fort Lauderdale by the railroad that had played such a big part in his own prosperity; and, beyond that, the frenzy of building generated by the dollars these newcomers were bringing.

P. N. could enjoy the six children he and Lucy had raised to adulthood and anticipate the pleasures of grandchildren visiting. Blessed with a seemingly-inherited longevity, Bryan lived to be eighty, dying in 1925 less than a year after his beloved Lucy. His grandson, James Hawthorne Bryan, had the luxury of time with P. N. when the old man could finally relax from his long, active life and reminisce about all he had seen and done. Jimmy was not quite eight when his grandfather died, but he remembers the old gentleman very well. A tall, slender man with snow-white hair and beard, P. N. resembled a judge or some other figure of authority. Jimmy says his grandfather drank a little bourbon whiskey — for medicinal purposes — and had it shipped in from Jacksonville by the case, paying seventy-five cents a quart for it. "P. N. Bryan was a fine, honorable man who worked hard, raised a big family, paid his own way. A civic-minded person; everybody liked him." A fitting epitaph spoken by an admiring grandson. Jimmy has equally fond memories of his grandmother, LUCY MURRAY BRYAN, as a really good-natured southern woman always in the kitchen of the old New River Inn, or out back in her own kitchen taking care of the needs of her large family.

Jimmy Bryan remembers many of the early pioneers. Dr. John A. Stanford, the third doctor in Fort Lauderdale when he arrived in 1913, delivered James Hawthorne Bryan in 1917. Dr. Thomas S. Kennedy was also a familiar figure. Dressed in white shirt, dark tie, and blue serge suit, much like P. N. Bryan, Dr. Kennedy did most of his doctoring making house calls. His pharmacy was his pocket; his prescription for almost everything was a certain number of the seemingly same black pills — a different amount depending on the complaint. When things got more organized in Fort Lauderdale, it was decided that Dr. Kennedy must become better qualified — which he did.

Jimmy was twelve when Frank Stranahan died a suicide in the New River. Although some members of the Cromartie

family had seen him jump in and had attempted to rescue him, the weights Stranahan had attached to his waist prevented them from bringing him to the surface in time.

Many of the pioneers, to young Jimmy's thinking, took on the persona of the title they held. Captain Dennis O'Neill was a slightly-built man, like Stranahan, who looked just like the stereotypical old sea captain of films. Jimmy remembers Ed (Edwin Thomas) King as a super carpenter, cabinetmaker, and contractor who built the New River Inn for P. N. Bryan as well as the homes for his two sons which now comprise the Historic Bryan Homes Restaurant. The unusual and distinctive hollow building blocks used were made from sand barged in from the beach and poured into iron molds.

P. N. Bryan told his grandson that New River was as clear as gin in 1895, and people could see thirty-five feet and more down to the bottom. Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward had a dream of draining the Everglades and making it all farmland. Toward that end, he hired Jimmy's father, Reed Bryan, to manage dredging operations out into the Everglades. Jimmy says that the result was that the dredging let muck silt float down into New River. The tidal action kept it constantly stirred up, boiling the muck deposits, which were like fine powder, and keeping the water cloudy. As a small boy, Jimmy watched the Indians pole up and down New River in dugout canoes made from cypress logs, to trade. His earliest recollection is of a great many Indians downtown. He knew many of them. Squaws made beautiful multi-colored dresses for themselves. They wore them long and made a shorter, knee-length version for their men to wear. The women wore beads made from berries stacked one atop the other, and a strange hairdo fashioned with some sort of grease to look like a black hat with a brim on it. Jimmy's father asked the Indians for venison and swamp cabbage — a favorite of the old settlers. Taking this heart of the cabbage palm destroyed the tree, of course, but there were plenty of trees to spare then. Alligators were plentiful too in the river, and sightings were common, everyday happenings. The Indians made many things out of the hides.

Jimmy took Frank Buck of "Bring 'Em Back Alive" fame up the New River many years ago. Buck was fascinated with the river, saying it looked just like the Amazon and some other rivers he had explored.

VIRGINIA DALLAS BRYAN, first child of P. N. and Lucy (see FGS 13), married Milton Bryan in 1887 when she was nineteen. In some articles about the Bryans, Milton is described as a cousin; in others, it is stated that he was not related at all. We have been unsuccessful in our efforts to answer this question. Milton and Virginia were often described as



James H. Bryan, son of Reed A. Bryan, Sr., and future Fort Lauderdale dockmaster, stands on the dock at Andrews Avenue with Mrs. Boyd Anderson and Commodore Tammy Cain after a successful day of fishing aboard the *Bolu*, 1938.

Mr. and Mrs. Dallas Bryan, probably to reduce the confusion with all the Milton and John Milton Bryans already in the area. Their only child, Stuart, spent most of his later life in Oklahoma, returning in 1982 for a sentimental visit. He toured a much-changed Fort Lauderdale and talked about being the last innkeeper of the New River Inn. Before becoming the Discovery Center children's museum, the old hotel suffered a checkered past. The city once used it for its building and engineering departments, and it eventually fell into disrepair. Now it sparkles in the sunshine on the New River and echoes with the delighted laughter of children learning about the exciting world that awaits their discovery.

Two of P. N. Bryan's daughters, Constance and Eliza Ann, married and moved away from Broward, but Susan Florence married Fernando Andrew Barrett, better known as Fred Barrett, who became president of the First National Bank of Fort Lauderdale when it opened in 1921.

P. N. Bryan's two sons, Reed Asa and Thomas Murray Bryan, figured prominently in Broward County history. Both boys arrived with their father when he came on Flagler's mission. Together the teenage boys found early success in farming. From there, their paths diverged — Reed's to developing the land and the canal system for south Florida and Tom's toward developing the City of Fort Lauderdale itself.

There was life-long confusion as to the correct birthdates of the two boys and, in fact, 1878 is given on both of their tombstones at Evergreen Cemetery. However, Jimmy says his father Reed was two years

older than brother Tom. In 1943, Tom Bryan got affidavits from Martha S. Bryan and W. M. Lourcey attesting to the fact that they had been present when Tom was born on July 29, 1878. Therefore, we can conclude that Reed was born June 16, 1876, in New Smyrna, Florida (see FGS 13). Named for the young man who died during the Civil War, he was the first of a long line of Reed Asa Bryans in Fort Lauderdale. Reed Asa Bryan, IV, was born in 1963 — one hundred years after the death of his original namesake.

REED ASA BRYAN, SR., experienced a tragedy early in his life that forever convinced him of the importance of medical care in a new community. His first wife was Anna W. Baker, daughter of Mrs. Tom M. McRay or McCray. Originally from Baltimore, Anna's mother and sister Carol were living in Delray in 1908 when they visited the Bryans in Fort Lauderdale. The Reed Bryans had been married a little over a year before in Baltimore, according to *The Weekly Miami Metropolis*, when on January 5, 1909, the young Mrs. Bryan died one month after her stillborn son. She had become violently ill, possibly with dengue fever, late in her pregnancy, and no medical help was available. Jimmy Bryan says his father ran into the Everglades and stayed there with his grief for several weeks, drinking the 'Glades water and catching typhoid fever. After he recovered, he always traveled to Miami to get Dr. James M. Jackson, Jr., when there was a medical emergency. Jackson Memorial Hospital was named for Dr. Jackson.

A December 1909 issue of *The Weekly*

Miami Metropolis carried an item telling about a new business venture for the Bryan brothers. They had started a transportation company, operating boats between Fort Lauderdale and Miami from New River. It connected with the Cook Steamship Company and was called "The New River Transportation Company." Several of their freight and passenger boats would "touch at all points along New River and the canal." Cargo to Miami was expected to be hides, household goods, and empty gasoline drums; on the return trips, the Bryan's boats were expected to carry freight to Fort Lauderdale. Eight years earlier, the *Tropical Sun*, a newspaper which was printed first in Juno and then in West Palm Beach, had mentioned a business venture between Reed Bryan, Captain Dennis O'Neill, and R. C. Goodwin to build launches. The newspaper went on to say that Fort Lauderdale should be proud of its new inlet "which the late high water tore out five miles north of the old inlet, just below the House of Refuge." A depth of nine feet at the bar at mean low tide was mentioned, and vessels drawing ten feet now could moor at the railroad dock. Later stories said it was the best inlet on the east coast. Nature and man sometimes worked hand in hand to improve Fort Lauderdale.

Reed Bryan worked closely with nature all his life. His son tells that he once had several sections of tomatoes on State Road 84 where the Secret Woods County Park is today. He had so many tomatoes back in there that he couldn't get them out, so he built a tramway along what is

now Southwest Twenty Sixth Avenue across State Road 84 and down the river through the present park. He built a packing house there. A small-gauge tram was used to take cars from the tomato fields down to the railroad where they would be graded, packed, put on a boat, and taken to the Florida East Coast Railway produce dock to be sent north. It might sound a little like a Rube Goldberg-inspired idea, but it worked when nothing else would. Jimmy Bryan feels his father grew to like farming because he was very successful with it from the time he first came to the area. Even when he didn't need to farm, Reed farmed as a hobby and had a large agricultural operation because he liked to see things grow. A foreman ran the farm, however, because Reed was also deeply involved in real estate most of his later years.

Although Reed Bryan made a reputation in farming, he made a name for himself first for carrying out Governor Broward's campaign promise to drain the Everglades. The governor asked Bryan to construct two dredges for the project. Built at Sailboat Bend on New River, they were named the *Everglades* and *Okeechobee*. At this same spot stands the Riverfront Marina where Doug Mackle recently opened "Shirrtail Charlie's," a bar and restaurant. From any table inside or out is a clear view of the F.E.C. railway bridge, Discovery Center, and the Historic Bryan Homes Restaurant, as well as the Landmark Bank and other skyscrapers in the downtown Fort Lauderdale area. It all comes together in this rustic setting conducive to contemplation of where

we've been and where we're going.

The majority of the drainage project was completed after Broward's death, but Reed Bryan got the ball rolling as supervisor of dredging on the North New River Canal. Lest we write off this important undertaking with the mistaken idea that the Everglades was some swampy area there in the boonies somewhere, take a look at the map on the back cover and consider how many of us enjoy the fruits of Reed's labor unperturbed by all but the most torrential rains. As far out as University Drive near Broward Mall land is less than nine feet above sea level in most areas. Few Broward Countians can walk more than a few blocks without being in sight of a canal to lessen the danger of flooding.

Reed Bryan married again in 1914. His second wife and mother of his sons, Reed Asa Bryan, Jr., and James Hawthorne Bryan, was Barbara Estelle (Stella) Um-mel. Stella was a Yankee schoolteacher born in Trenton, Ohio. She was offered a job teaching in Dade County. Before she left Ohio, the superintendent wired her that he would pay her \$50 more if she would take a job in Fort Lauderdale. Wires flew back and forth with Stella asking the superintendent where Fort Lauderdale was as she couldn't find it on any map, and he wiring back its location and the information that it was twenty-five miles north of Miami. Stella wired her acceptance, met Reed Bryan at a church social, and married him in her hometown of Middletown, Ohio, in August of 1914. After a month-long honeymoon, the new Mr. and Mrs. Bryan returned to Fort Lauderdale. *The Weekly Miami Metropolis* said of the event, "Reed looks ten years younger and wears a smile that no practiced cake walker can equal."

Reed was a "catch;" good looking, well-to-do, and connected to all the important people in town. Jimmy says his father owned the first automobile in town — an expensive car with forty-two inch wheels. Among the family's possessions is a photo of Tom Bryan's only child, Perry, standing in the front seat, which dates the photo at about 1909-1910.

Reed Asa Bryan, Jr., was twenty-two and his brother, James Hawthorne Bryan, just twenty when their father died suddenly. As a young man, Reed, Jr., was associated with Port Everglades while Jimmy eventually became dock master for the City of Fort Lauderdale. Reed got interested in politics and was mayor of Fort Lauderdale for one term and city commissioner for several terms. REED ASA BRYAN III, an attorney in Fort Lauderdale, continued to carry out the family legacy of being first or youngest in an important endeavor when he became the youngest president ever elected by the Fort Lauderdale Symphony Orchestra Association.



Fort Lauderdale's first automobile was a "Glide" with forty-two inch wheels, owned by Reed A. Bryan, Sr. Reed's nephew Perry is in the driver's seat, and the New River Inn is in the background, c. 1909-1910.

We are indebted to a high school project for which REED ASA BRYAN, JR., was interviewed for insight into that interesting, amusing, and patient man. The interview dates from 1974-75. On this tape, one can hear the youthful voices of high school students almost rushing through the interview with this famous man and his patient answers to what must have been a pat format of questions. Because of his lifetime in Fort Lauderdale and his real estate business, most of the questions concern themselves with real estate and provide insight into what this area was really like in the early years.

Bryan said the importance of the New River could not be overestimated, as it ran through the center of town and was the main outlet for settlers to the open sea. It was used to take fruits and vegetables to the train for their trip north to market. According to Bryan, it took a full day to go up New River to Lake Okeechobee by boat, and there was no other way to get there in the early days.

While a horse was essential in the old West, in Fort Lauderdale the "horse" was a boat. No family could survive without a boat of some sort. Reed Bryan, Jr.'s family had a houseboat-type vessel while his Uncle Tom had a sixty-foot pleasure boat.

Travel was done by boat, on foot, or by the few horses available during the early times before the railroad came in 1896 and changed things forever. After that, it was possible (and infinitely more desirable) to go to Miami and the Keys by railroad. During the '20s, there were only two stops between Miami and the Keys. Once you got there, though, you had to have your own boat to provide housing. Hotels and marinas were far in the future, and you had to work hard for this "fun" outing!

Before the blessed establishment of weather systems and a system of communicating hurricane warnings, each hurricane came as a surprise. The 1926 blow was no exception. Making simple preparations for what they must have felt was to be a typically windy, rainy storm, the people were surprised by a full-blown hurricane. It brought high water which flooded Fort Lauderdale downtown all the way to the beach. Martial law lasted for three weeks afterward.

Reed Bryan, Jr., vividly remembered another hurricane just two years later. It took the roof off his house, sucking the windows in instead of outward. This hurricane caused Lake Okeechobee to flood, resulting in tremendous loss of life. Although most of its damage took place along the lake and in Palm Beach County, the hurricane delivered a punch to downtown Fort Lauderdale in the form of a twister along with extensive flooding. Slapped twice in two years by the unpredictable weather, some settlers went down for the count, heard the bell, and threw in the towel. Feeling they had turn-

ed the other cheek long enough, many people accepted the free rides offered by the railroad to anyone who wanted to return north. They saw no alternative, having nowhere at all to sleep, nothing to eat, possessing only the clothes on their backs. Others, however, had nothing to take back north, not even what they had brought with them to start a new life in sunny Florida. Given these conditions, many chose to stay, having nothing at either end of the railroad line. Bryan said there were few injuries and "everybody just got busy and rebuilt."

The hurricane of 1928 prompted stricter structure requirements, including adequate beams, and columns to withstand high winds. It was no longer acceptable to throw together a tarpaper shack to live in while you built your dream house in Florida. Luckily in those early years before building codes, some of the beautiful islands — like Hendricks Isle — had yet to be developed, or the loss of property would have been far greater. By the time new, extensive development came, building codes were right on its heels. Even so, early homes were often built of wood and chicken wire covered with plaster.

Reed Bryan, Jr., gave a telling account of the progress in real estate and revenues derived from the building improvements. William Robert Boyd, a construction supervisor, built one of the Bryan family homes in 1915. It had a steeply-pitched roof, a necessity at that time as water was collected off these roofs for drinking and washing. By the '30s, good houses cost between \$3,500 and \$4,000. Even until World War II, the going price for these homes was around \$7,000. The earlier homes were built three or more feet above ground, reducing the problem of rising water. Pitched roofs provided a bonus of attic storage space which we today forgo for the convenience of large, two-car garages where we store belongings with little fear of flooding. By the late '30s and early '40s, another ingenious invention was adopted which is enjoying a resurgence of popularity now in these times of high utility bills. Solar water heaters are again beginning to sprout on the roofs of energy-conscious home owners. As in the past, the sun's rays, magnified by glass panels, heat copper pipes in the grid work to heat water. Electric boosters provide year-round comfort on the few sunless days. As utility bills rise, home owners seem to be reaching into the past for relief. Pitched roofs, solar heaters, and houses built three feet or more above ground, as well as the porches on two or three sides which provided ventilation in those years of no air conditioning are all examples, not to mention the resurgence of ceiling fans. Bryan concluded his interview with the comment that he had built, in 1942, a house for \$7,200 consisting of three bedrooms, two baths,

closed garage, and screened porch on a seventy-five-foot lot in Rio Vista which he sold at the time period of that interview for \$48,000.

Many stories are told about the fantastic profits made in Florida real estate, but Reed Bryan, Jr.'s brother, Jimmy, likes to tell about the proposition made by Governor Broward to his grandfather, P. N. Bryan. Governor Broward offered P. N. acreage in Fort Lauderdale — any acreage and as much as he wanted at fifteen cents an acre — if he would go down to Miami and find a surveyor to complete a survey to send up to the governor. P. N. could have bought the beach from Miami to Palm Beach for fifteen cents an acre. He had \$16,000 from the sale of his cattle herds in New Smyrna, but he simply could not see the potential tourist development. The beach was bleak and desolate and it wouldn't grow anything! The island areas were all mangrove swamps, and the only way to get to the beach was by boat down the New River. To Jimmy's thinking, the first to realize the potential was Henry Flagler. While building the railroad, he also built some fabulous hotels in Palm Beach and Miami. The railroad itself was not a business with Flagler but a rich man's hobby, and even building the railroad to Key West was strictly a hobby with him, to Jimmy's way of thinking. Jimmy said, "Flagler sure didn't expect to get rich out of it. He didn't need to, I suppose..."

Jimmy says the Bryan family did buy quite a bit of acreage from Governor Broward's proposition, but they bought grove land out in southwest Fort Lauderdale and Davie as well as land in the area that runs from United States Highway 441 east along the north side of the North New River Canal. This last area was known as the New River Groves. In addition, they bought land in downtown Fort Lauderdale, but they didn't buy any beach land at fifteen cents an acre.

The sons of farmer P. N. Bryan eventually recognized the potential for beach development. Except for three small parcels of land, Reed and Tom once owned all the property in the Harbor Beach area running from Bahia Mar Yacht Center to Port Everglades Inlet, including all the islands. One of the three parcels was a little subdivision called Harbor Heights; another was Breakwater Beach where the Point of the Americas condominium is now located, and the third was a little strip of oceanfront about a quarter of a mile long where Lago Mar stands. In 1939, the Bryans organized the Harbor Beach Company and started developing this property and selling lots. Eventually they got an easement through the old Coast Guard base to build a road to open up what is now known as Harbor Beach. According to Jimmy Bryan, a bridge was projected to cross Lake Mabel at Southeast Fifteenth Street. Started during the

land boom and called the old jackknife bridge, it was never finished and was eventually torn down. Later on, the Brook Memorial Causeway (Seventeenth Street Causeway) took its place. The federal government established an excess profits tax during World War II which caused the Bryans such a tax problem that they eventually sold the remaining holdings to L. C. Judd. By 1981, one vacant Harbor Beach island lot sold for \$300,000 — more than the Bryans' whole capitalization in 1939. According to Jimmy, three of the ordinary lots would have been more valuable in 1981 than the entire Harbor Beach Company ever was.

Let's take another step back in time to another of the sons of LEWIS and AMANDA BRYAN, the youngest brother of P. N. Bryan, named GADSDEN BRYAN (see FGS 12). Gad Bryan is a genealogist's dream come true — a man who will be forever remembered for his high jinks while his more circumspect relatives probably shuddered. GAD BRYAN, born January 1852, was the youngest son among the nine children of Lewis Bryan's first marriage. About 1878, Gad married Mary Braddock. Although he resided at Glencoe, Volusia County, with his wife and six children, Gad spent a lot of time traveling around south and central Florida. When his brother, P. N., came to Fort Lauderdale to work on the roadbed for Henry Flagler's railroad, Gad came along too. To supply the railroad workers, he started what was perhaps the first saloon on the banks of the New River. After the job was done, he folded his tent — literally — and moved on. That site today is graced by the Historic Bryan Homes Restaurant with its elegant glass-enclosed lounge with harpist and gleaming cherry-wood bar. The restaurant was created by a skillful joining of separate homes built by P. N. Bryan for his sons, Tom and Reed.

Gad made the newspapers a lot between 1891 and 1910. In the *Florida Times-Union* newspaper, dated August 17, 1895, and datelined West Palm Beach we find mention of "Gad and P. N. Bryan, brothers and politicians of Volusia, have purchased valuable land on the New River and are going full force to farm with teams and all necessary equipment." The article also says that they had a large railroad contract. Elsewhere in that same newspaper is mention of a civil engineer beginning to survey the new town on New River and describing the location as "about half a mile from the present stage crossing known as New River Camp, post office Fort Lauderdale, named for the old Indian fort nearby." On September 13, 1896, there appeared the following advertisement in the same paper, "New River lands at a bargain. 880 acres adjoining on the south the new town of Progresso. \$25.00 to \$100 per acre."

In the autumn of 1891, both the

Tampa Tribune and the *Tropical Sun* carried articles about Gad. It seems a man arrived from Kissimmee saying he had seen Jim Alexander and Gad Bryan training nine Seminoles for a "Wild South Show" which would tour the southern states and "rival Buffalo Bill's show." Jim was letting his hair grow long to mimic Buffalo Bill while Gad was shaving his and painting himself "Seminole style." Gad wanted to be billed as "The Bald-headed Seminole of the Everglades." Unfortunately, we haven't any subsequent news reports of the tour actually taking place or pictures of the "tribe." Although Gad was occasionally in the company of Phil and Lucy Bryan, they may have wished to downplay the kinship. Fast becoming pillars of the community of Fort Lauderdale, they must have looked askance at this relative who bucked the system they were upholding. Perhaps we've found the origin of the expression, "E*, Gads!")

In Dec. 1898, *The Weekly Miami Metropolis* newspaper quoted a *Florida Times-Union* dispatch from Deland about Gad Bryan which "may or may not surprise our readers. Mr. Bryan is well known in this section." I went on to detail a cow-stealing case with Gad as the accused. United States Representative Frank Clark of Jacksonville appeared for the State of Florida while the defense was conducted by Judge Palmer of Orlando. Taking just over an hour, the jury voted five to one on the first ballot for guilty. An appeal was planned. The penalty for cow stealing was not less than two years or more than five years in prison. It seems that Gad Bryan had purchased 1,000 head of cattle from the Clifton estate, to be paid for as butchered. The estate was to butcher the cattle. After thirty-two head were butchered and delivered, an argument brought the two parties into circuit court, where Gad Bryan was charged with stealing a cow. It's not as simple as that. Bryan's attorney claimed presiding Judge Stewart was a personal enemy of his client and had caused Bryan's arrest to help the Clifton estate in their civil suit against Bryan. Judge Stewart proceeded to try the case. It came out during the trial that Gad Bryan did not take the cow. Supposedly, a man named Davis, described as Bryan's agent, took the cow. Bryan denied Davis was his agent. The plot thickened. The state claimed that Bryan only paid for thirty-one of the thirty-two cows killed and delivered to him, and was guilty of larceny. After Bryan's conviction, however, the Florida Supreme Court reversed the lower court, and the reversal was not unexpected.

For several years Gad seems to have kept a low profile, but by December 9, 1903, a GAD BRYAN, JR., was making the papers. Described as a "well-known sportsman and saloonist," he was to begin a three-month jail term for operating a

gambling house, carrying a concealed weapon, and keeping his bar open on Sunday. E*, Gads! The *Tampa Tribune* went on to say Gad had recently been involved in a "shooting scrape" among gamblers at his saloon. Almost a year later, on October 6, 1904, the *Tribune* was saying that Gad Bryan, Jr., had surrendered in Savannah, Georgia, to begin serving three months. Was this from the original case or a new charge against him? No matter, by November 20, Gad was pardoned out of jail at Savannah, and in August of 1905 acquitted in Savannah on charges of keeping a gambling house. Sure pays to have friends in high places. Prior to surrendering, Gad had been in Tampa very visibly serving on the Democratic State Committee!

Since the original Gad Bryan was not a junior, we have to wonder if the above-mentioned Gad, Jr., was one of his six children. Unfortunately, we have the names of only four of them: Grover, Estelle, Henry P., and John S. However, the 1880 Florida census shows Gad and Mary in Volusia County with one six-month old son named Spica. The 1900 Florida census lists four children still living at home and states that six were born of the marriage and still living in 1900. Some of these newspaper reports may span two generations in the same family. This seems likely as in 1903 Gad (Senior) would have been fifty-one years old and considered a graybeard in an era when people thought themselves old at forty.

By the final mention of Gad Bryan in the *Florida Times-Union* in January 1910, Gad was into tamer stuff. He was promoting a Palm Beach-Lake Okeechobee highway with George Butler, Dade-Palm Beach County representative. Gad Bryan may have been a wild man and an embarrassment during those years when even "a glimpse of stocking was something shocking," but don't you wish you could sit at his feet and hear about things he did that never made the papers? He could probably talk for hours!

P. N. Bryan's family lived down the notorious Gad Bryan, and anything detrimental he did for the name was more than compensated for by the sons of Philemon Nathaniel and Lucy Bryan. Historians face an enviable problem when they try to detail the contributions of many of the Bryans. While it is sometimes necessary to stretch a few facts into a sizeable story with some subjects, with the Bryans there is so much to choose from that paring it down to a manageable size is the problem.

We mentioned in Part One that the Bryans did almost everything first or, failing that, were the youngest to do something when they got around to it. This is particularly true of THOMAS MURRAY BRYAN. Volumes could be written about this tireless, interesting gentleman. Tom M. Bryan, more than

any other member of the clan, epitomized Webster's definition of pioneer as someone who "precedes the main body and builds bridges, roads, trenches; or as someone who goes before into that which is unknown or untried, to prepare the way for others."

THOMAS MURRAY BRYAN was the sixth of seven children born to Philemon Nathaniel (P. N.) and Lucy Bryan. In November 1904 he married the beautiful Camille Perry of Covington, Georgia. Many times during her long lifetime (1879-1981), Camille Bryan described the sleepy town she found on arrival in "downtown" Fort Lauderdale. At 10:30 p.m. on November 12, 1904, the new Mrs. Bryan stepped away from the noise and bright lights of a train and followed her bridegroom along a sand path through a circle of lantern light to the P. N. Bryan home and into her future. For almost seventy-seven years, Camille Bryan watched Fort Lauderdale grow. She was often interviewed over the years and usually expressed approval for the changes she witnessed. According to Mrs. Bryan, meeting the train and getting the mail was the chief excitement in the early days. She marveled at the resilience of the tiny Mrs. Stranahan, who had already been in Fort Lauderdale for several years when Camille arrived. She described the simple pleasures and necessary compromises which were daily occurrences as well as the frightening realities of life in that more primitive culture. One such was the loss of precious minutes when one person was snakebitten or another in labor and the only help was Dr. Kennedy, who could be reached only by ferry across New River. During a 1935 interview, Mrs. Bryan said that, in the early years, husband Tom paid \$25 for fifty by 150 foot lots in the business district and \$5 to \$20 per acre for outlying property. Camille Perry Bryan celebrated 101 years o. a full life at a tea party for 120 in February 1980. During yet another interview at that time, her charm and wit were evident. Discussing her most recent birthday, Camille Bryan opined, "A woman who will tell you her age will tell you anything!"

THOMAS MURRAY BRYAN and REED ASA BRYAN were just teenage farmboys when they accompanied their father, P. N. Bryan, to Fort Lauderdale in 1895. They used what they knew best — farming — to establish themselves financially. In 1897 the Bryan family started putting in orange groves. The following year, Tom attended Emory College in Oxford, Georgia, returning in 1902 to his adopted town. He and Reed built two boats to bring vegetables to market from outlying areas while continuing to farm themselves. As young men, Tom and Reed tried many different ventures. In 1907 they undertook hauling steel for the Hillsboro Lighthouse, which

would be built by John Gardner. Gardner married their sister, Constance, on May 14, 1908. Later on, Reed involved himself with the dredging of the Everglades, while Tom's interests became more diversified.

Jimmy Bryan, his nephew, remembers Tom as a very astute businessman with a lot of foresight. When Tom Bryan saw a need, he filled it — and Fort Lauderdale needed a lot of things. Tom Bryan lit up Fort Lauderdale, literally! He also kept the residents cool in the summer and brought news and music to the airwaves with the creation of the original radio station WFTL. And, if that wasn't enough, he built roads to take people straight to the beach or out into the countryside.

The seemingly improbable name Fort Lauderdale Ice and Light Company, Tom Bryan's company, has a very plausible explanation when one knows "the rest of the story." Before there was an ice company in town, ice was delivered twice a week from Miami, and locally was delivered by mules pulling wagons. The original ice plant in Fort Lauderdale turned out a less than ideal product tinged red and yellow from tannic acid and leaf mold. A Frick compressor, belt-driven by a gigantic gas engine, comprised the set-up. Tom bought the plant and immediately made changes. He used distilled water, a steam engine, and a shaft-driven dynamo for his new, improved system. To make ice, the dynamo had to run twenty-four hours a day, so ownership of an electric company seemed like a sensible idea. Jimmy Bryan tells that his Uncle Tom got an electrical contractor named J. J. Clinton to install his equipment. Wesley Stout said in one of his "Beachcomber" columns that a franchise was granted Tom in 1912 for the electric company, and that Sam Oliver was the only man in town who knew anything about electricity so he acted as Tom's advisor. General Electric sent a man down to install the plant. Perhaps this man was Clinton. On December 10, 1912, the street lights were turned on in Fort Lauderdale for the first time. They lit Andrews Avenue immediately north and south of the river only, but this was the important start of nighttime activity in downtown Fort Lauderdale. Before he sold to the Southern Utilities Company, which was eventually taken over by Florida Power and Light Company, Tom had another idea. Soon after he put the poles up for his electric company, Bryan saw an opportunity for them to do double duty, so he asked Clinton if phone lines could go on the same poles as the power lines. Armed with an affirmative answer, Bryan got another franchise and started a phone company. Eventually Bryan moved the phone company to larger quarters so Clinton and his daughter, Esther, the operator, could live in and answer calls at night even from their beds if necessary. The

company was later sold to Southern Bell and Telegraph Company.

It wasn't all work and no play for this human dynamo named Tom Bryan. He was first with acquisitions too — a grown man's toys. In 1925, Bryan paid \$7,500 for the first private seaplane in Fort Lauderdale and took out the first permit for a hangar on the Las Olas causeway. Within a year, the hurricane of 1926 destroyed the hangar and blew the Curtiss Seagull seaplane across the sound and into a bunch of Coast Guard boats. Wesley Stout says Tom got \$800 for the wreckage of his plane.

Bryan packed a lot of pleasure into the short time he had the plane. He employed a Maine native, Merle Fogg (1898-1928), to pilot his seaplane. Bryan liked to hunt and fish, and had a lodge far out in the Everglades to which he often traveled by plane. The story has been told and retold about the time his pilot, Fogg, lassoed a deer from the plane while in flight. We'll probably never know if this story was true or not. It wasn't told until much later because the deer was out of season! If it was true, how hard it must have been to keep that to themselves! Fogg lived a short, exciting life. He died in 1928 along with his student pilot in an air crash. In 1929 Broward County's first airport was designated Merle Fogg Field, later changed to Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport. The granite monument commemorating Fogg Field disappeared for years. When found it was saved by the Daughters of the American Revolution and placed in a city park on Las Olas Boulevard.

Tom Bryan's accomplishments in road building were frequently noticed in the newspapers. In 1917, Tom joined in partnership with S. P. Snyder, Sr., to build many roads. Among others they laid out the main artery through Fort Lauderdale to the beach, East Las Olas Boulevard. The cost \$5,035. By 1922, Tom was in partnership with Captain Hampton T. Holloway and built Connors Highway from Twenty-Mile Bend in Palm Beach County to the city of Okeechobee — more than forty miles of roadway. Bryan also built State Road 25 from West Palm Beach to Belle Glade. It was the first hard-surfaced Everglades road. In 1941, Bryan and Holloway cleared the right of way for the Sunrise Boulevard causeway.

At ninety, Tom Murray Bryan was still going to his real estate office every day. At his retirement he still managed an 800-acre orange grove in Broward County and a cattle ranch in Palm Beach and Hendry counties. In other words, he never retired completely. His accomplishments filled a whole page, single spaced, in the Fort Lauderdale Historical Society's *New River News*. His life had been filled with service to his adopted city of Fort Lauderdale, and to Broward County too, as



Frank A. Bryan was chairman of the Dade County Commission, and in 1915 became the first clerk of the circuit court for Broward County when it was formed.

banker, city councilman, city commissioner, and state representative. He had been instrumental in forming Broward County from parts of Dade and Palm Beach counties. Despite all Tom Bryan had accomplished in his lifetime, he was succinct with his answer to the question, "What was your formula for financial success?" Bryan answered, "Collect early and pay late!"

This concludes the story of the first family of Lewis Hawthorne Bryan, but it's not the end of the story, for Lewis married a second time. GEORGINA GOODRICH (1844-1934) was the mother of his last two children, and several children from each of these marriages contributed greatly to the growth and development of this area. FRANKLIN AMERICUS BRYAN and DAISY MABEL BRYAN were the children of his old age, a second family born when he was already in his late fifties. By 1882, Georgiana Bryan was a widow with two young children in Volusia County. Frank A. Bryan came to Fort Lauderdale about 1896-97. For a while he had a store with one of his Goodrich relatives, but by 1898 he was no longer in partnership and was instead trying his hand at farming. That year he was preparing land out at Little Snake Creek in today's North Miami. In 1902, his widowed mother and his sister, Daisy, who had married Fred Fisher in Volusia County in 1894, joined him in Fort Lauderdale. The

Fishers became the parents of six children: Leslie, Franklin, Winifred, Mary, Louie, and Lena, who married Pompano pioneer H. L. "Bud" Lyons in 1917.

By 1911 Frank Bryan was exhibiting the leadership qualities shared by all the other Bryans. He was chairman of the Board of County Commissioners of Dade County almost five years before Broward County was formed. In 1915 he became the first circuit court clerk of Broward County. This job lasted until 1932, when he retired due to poor health. He had been ill for three years when he died in October 1934, just weeks after his mother, who lived to be almost ninety.

Frank married one of the five Bessent sisters from Starke, Florida. When Dade County advertised for teachers in 1907, Frances Josephine Bessent, first grade teacher, answered and accepted a job at Ojus. She married Frank in 1914, and they were parents of three — Francis William, Christine, and Dorothy Eugene Bryan. All five of the Bessent sisters came to Fort Lauderdale. Louise Bessent married Dave Turner, and Miss Eugene Bessent (named for an uncle) became Mrs. David Oliver. Minnie and Juanita (crippled by polio as a child) also resided here until 1950, when they returned to Starke. They were the daughters of William Abraham and Ursula Pauline Wall Bessent. Like her father, one of the Bryan girls has served the public for many years.

Dorothy Eugene Bryan has worked in the courthouse in the County Clerk's Office since 1945.

It would be impossible to produce any work on the Bryans without mention of LEWIS HENRY BRYAN and his wife ELIZABETH M. WILLIS (see FGS 412). Similarities in family given names and proximity of settlement suggest that Lewis Henry Bryan was related to all the other Bryans in Broward County. The temptation is strong just to tie this up in a neat little package, but genealogy doesn't work that way any more than real life does. You can't go around assigning relatives to people. Sometimes you reach dead ends in some areas of your research. Such is the case with this branch of the Bryan family. Perhaps additional information will become available in the future. Lewis Henry's lineage has been traced no further than NATHAN and NANCY MANNING BRYAN, his parents. This information comes from his son, MORGAN BRYAN, given for his death certificate in 1918. Even then, Morgan Bryan could only list "America" for the birthplace of his grandparents. This dead-ends our research for the moment, but it is likely more than coincidence that brought Lewis Henry Bryan to Fort Lauderdale in 1895 to help build the railroad south of New River toward Miami as Philemon Nathaniel (P. N.) Bryan had done north from New River toward Pompano. Lewis Henry and Elizabeth Bryan had three sons and three daughters (see FGS 412). Their eldest daughter, Susie, came down to Fort Lauderdale in 1898, at nineteen, to work at Frank Stranahan's store. She was postmistress from 1911 until 1922 and was the wife of Lucian Craig. In 1900, her younger sister, EVA ANNE BRYAN, came down to visit and stayed to pick tomatoes during the harvest season.

Usually it is the Bryan sons who stand out, while the daughters remain more in the background, but in the Lewis Henry Bryan family it was Eva Anne who made the most waves. Within two years, Lewis Henry Bryan brought the rest of his family to Fort Lauderdale, and Eva Anne had a new home, a new husband in FRANK ROBERTS OLIVER and was expecting the first of her five children.

The September 25, 1902, issue of the *Tropical Sun* newspaper carried the information that F. R. Oliver and L. H. Bryan had recently completed houses on the north side of the New River and that P. N. Bryan was completing an addition to his hotel which would bring the capacity to fifty. L. H. Bryan owned Lot 6, Block 32 of the original plat of Fort Lauderdale.

When Frank Oliver and Eva Anne Bryan married, the *Tropical Sun* called it one of the most important events of the season. The article went on to make the tongue-in-cheek observation that they were married in the "Yacht Trenton,"

a rowboat, and had stood up to be married in the gently rocking boat at the request of Justice of the Peace Captain W. C. Valentine. This was an unusual beginning for the marriage of a girl who seemed to collect many unusual firsts. From then on, Eva rocked the boat a lot. After being the first pioneer girl married in the village of Fort Lauderdale, Eva was the first woman to drive a car in south Florida and possibly the whole state, the first baptized in New River, and the first president of the Fort Lauderdale Women's Club. She was chairman of the committee that named Port Everglades, formerly called Port Bay Mabel. She married a man who racked up a few firsts for himself. Frank Roberts Oliver was reportedly the second white man to permanently settle in Fort Lauderdale. He was the first president of the

city's first bank, the Fort Lauderdale State Bank.

In her later years, Eva Bryan Oliver used to say, "The best way to renew your youth is never to let go of it in the first place. Keep going. Keep going as long as possible." Blessed with the longevity enjoyed by many of the Bryan clan, Eva kept going until she was eighty-one.

Eva's brothers didn't let any grass grow under their feet either. PAUL C. BRYAN (1891-1942) was Sheriff of Broward County from 1922 to 1929, and his wife, the former Maude Gensen of Dania, owned Bryan's Cafe in Dania, which became the Dania Grill in the '50s. LOUIS MORGAN BRYAN (1888-1945) worked in the tax collector's office and was a policeman who became a police chief. He once played Santa for a dance in 1929 and somehow set his Santa suit

on fire. Embarrassing enough for the police chief, but what if he had been the fire chief? Morgan Bryan married Eliza Alberta Goodbread, daughter of another Broward pioneer.

We hear the expression "the right stuff" bandied about a lot lately with the recent release of the film by the same name. Nowhere is that expression more accurate than in describing the Bryans. They accepted their hard lives with a wry humor, indomitable spirit, and determination common in all successful people. There are still special people — pioneers — like the Bryans out there. Like the poetic definition from Webster's, they are the ones who are looking for new worlds to conquer — perhaps in the space program — "going into that which is unknown and untried, to prepare the way for others."

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