

# Behind The Scenes . . .

The years between the end of the Seminole Wars and the arrival of the F.E.C. Railway are often considered "lost pages" of Broward County's past. During much of this forty-year period, the region which was to become Broward was entirely devoid of non-Indian inhabitants. Yet it was this era which saw such developments as the House of Refuge, the "Barefoot Mailman," and the Dade County stage route from Lantana to Lemon City. Most of our knowledge about this period derives from accounts written by a handful of individuals who passed through the unspoiled wilderness. The longest and most complete of these accounts was written by Charles W. Pierce.

A native of Illinois, Pierce moved to south Florida in 1872, at the age of eight, settling with his family on Hypoluxo Island in Lake Worth. As a boy and as a young man, he sailed the Atlantic, walked the beach, and paddled through the Everglades and the inland waterways, becoming, in the process, more familiar with the territory between Lake Worth and Biscayne Bay than any of his contemporaries. In the late 1920s, Pierce, then serving as postmaster of Boynton in Palm Beach County, began to record his recollections of youth in a wilderness that had already disappeared. When completed, his manuscript, which he entitled "On the Wings of the Wind," numbered 695 pages. Pierce died in 1939, shortly after finishing the manuscript. Several members of his family continued to reside in southeastern Florida, and his manuscript was eventually donated to the Historical Society of Palm Beach County. In 1970, it was edited and abbreviated by Professor Donald W. Curl and published by the University of Miami Press as the book *Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida*.

"Broward County One Hundred Years Ago" is a compilation of sections of the original Pierce manuscript dealing with the Broward County area. Many descriptive passages appear in print here for the first time, having been deleted from *Pioneer Life in Southeast Florida* to preserve the flow of the narrative. Pierce's original spelling and

punctuation have been for the most part retained; minor corrections have been made only where necessary for clarity and readability.

From its early days as a wilderness retreat to its present status as a metropolitan center, Broward County has been visited by numerous celebrities. Novelist Kenneth Roberts visited the county during the 1920s as a reporter for the *Saturday Evening Post*. In his article entitled "Broward, Ballyhoo, and Kenneth Roberts," Joe Knetsch analyzes Roberts' activities in and views of boomtime Broward County. A former history teacher and historical commissioner in Broward County, Knetsch is currently working on his Ph.D. at Florida State University in Tallahassee.

Not all of Broward's "celebrities" were out-of-town visitors. Henry L. "Bud" Lyons, for instance, was an important figure in his hometown of Pompano, in the west Broward area where he farmed, and in national agricultural circles from the 1920s until his death in 1952. His holdings included land in what is today Margate, Coral Springs, North Lauderdale, Tamarac, and Lauderdale. Although his many business interests included cattle ranching and real estate, Lyons is remembered principally as a bean farmer. "Titan of the Bean Patch," reprinted from the January 1939 issue of *The Country Home Magazine*, tells how Lyons turned a flooded tract of Everglades into the largest bean farm in the United States and provides a first-hand look at his operations.

Three articles on Seminole Indian culture and living conditions round out this issue of *Broward Legacy*. "Seminole Indians in the Florida War" examines an often-overlooked facet of military sources on the Second Seminole War — the soldiers' view of the Indians they were fighting. Among these soldiers' accounts are some of the first descriptions of Seminole life in what is now Broward County.

The second Indian article, "Two Seminole Tribes, Different Customs," appeared first in the *Fort Lauderdale Sentinel* in 1923, almost seventy years after hostilities between the Seminoles and white

settlers ended. In the first decades of the twentieth century, however, south Florida's Indians faced a new crisis as drainage and expanding white settlement made great inroads on their hunting, gathering, and subsistence farming economy. Despite dislocation and poverty caused by increased development, the *Sentinel* presents a cheerful and romanticized version of Seminole life, a version similar to that presented at Seminole tourist attractions along the Gold Coast during the boom and depression years.

A sharply contrasting view of the impact of white development on Seminole life is presented in the 1935 annual report of special commissioner James L. Glenn, reprinted here as "Dr. Glenn Struggles For Seminole Improvement." Glenn, a Presbyterian minister, served as special commissioner to the Seminoles from 1931 to 1935, and during this time worked tirelessly in the face of political opposition to improve conditions for the Indians. Although his duties took him throughout south Florida, his headquarters were at the Dania (now Hollywood) Reservation, which had been established in 1926 and became a home for Indians displaced by boomtime development along the southeast coast. Additional material on Glenn's service and observations of Seminole life can be found in his book, *My Work Among the Florida Seminoles*, edited by Harry A. Kersey, Jr. Dr. Glenn is currently retired and lives in Rockwall, Texas.

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