Andrew Christian Frost:
Developer Had A New Vision Every Day

Frost, grandson and unidentified neighbor in 1916 with harvest of tomatoes. Note the wooden hampers which protected the fragile produce. (Mrs. Jeanette Eby).
Two diametrically opposed inclinations characterized the life and achievements of Andrew Christian Frost, the founder and most prominent early developer of Dania, Florida. Although this European immigrant settled and developed communities in the North and South, he was consumed by an overpowering wanderlust which carried him to many sections of the United States and Europe. No less than a half dozen communities owe their existence to his pioneering efforts. Dania, however, is his crowning achievement in community settlement and development. Of significant importance to the development of this community were his numerous and energetic children. But, the father led the way in all the early undertakings.

A.C. Frost, as he was commonly known, when composing a short sketch of his life in the early 1920's, scarcely referred to his first twenty-six years. He simply recorded that he was born in the country of Denmark on September 30, 1847 and that, for two years, he carried the royal mail between Aalborg and Ballum, a distance of twenty miles. For seven years he then held the position of chief clerk and bookkeeper in "Mr. Jeppe Neilson's store in Tustrup near Skjorings Station." He offers no reason for his emigration to the United States in 1873.

Aware of the great opportunities which the State of Illinois provided for the energetic, he did not hesitate to move immediately from New York to Springfield. Virtually penniless, he sought and found employment at the construction site of the State Capitol and supplemented his income by doing odd jobs at the local Leeland Hotel. Tied to jobs whose routine performance offered little hope of substantial advancement, his innate thirst for wanderlust was kindled. With his meager savings he purchased a horse, wagon, "and a supply of yankee notions and patent medicines" and began to peddle his wares in the back country of northern Illinois. The thriving Danish and Germanic settlements in Wisconsin irresistibly beckoned him to southern Wisconsin where his wares found a ready sale among the newly arrived immigrants.
Sometime in 1876 Frost arrived in New Denmark, Wisconsin, where he peddled his wagon-borne wares for a few months among the Danes who had settled nearly twenty miles south of Green Bay. Tiring of this itinerant life, he sold his peddler’s equipment, plunged into the wilderness with Hans Beyer, founded a general store, and named the site Kopenhagen, New Denmark. After a sedimentary year, Frost sold his store and journeyed a hundred miles north to Maple Valley in the wilderness of Oconto County. There he homesteaded eighty acres and married Marian Gregerson.

Together they erected a log cabin and founded a general merchandise store. Sensing that a post office in his store would be beneficial to business, he made application to postal authorities in Washington, D.C. They agreed to appoint him postmaster of Maple Valley on the condition that he conveyed the mail free between there and Oconto, a distance of some thirty miles. As he prospered he founded several post offices along his route, including one at Keshena.

Thrifty and enterprising, Frost entered the lumber business as a cutter and hauler. His profits enabled him to erect a hotel, a store building, and a handsome private dwelling. In addition, he constructed other buildings such as a blacksmith shop and wagon shop and named his community Frostville. The few Danish settlers thereabouts demonstrated their confidence in him by electing him Justice of the Peace, Member of the Town Board, and Secretary of the School for several successive years.

After seven happily married years Marian died. Saddened and left with four small children named Gregors A., Mettie, Anton and Martin C., Frost sold out, placed his young children under the care of his brother-in-law Andrew Gregerson, and returned to his native Denmark. Realizing that Europe could not compete with the United States for opportunity, Frost returned to Wisconsin after six months to begin life anew.

Moving north of Frostville, he earnestly entered the logging business. He applied for another post office, was appointed postmaster, and named this location Mountain. From this site he organized several mail routes which he subsidized. Within a year he organized the town of Armstrong where he served as chairman of the Board of County Commissioners of Oconto County and doubled as an elected Justice of the Peace. Meanwhile, he married Charlotte Hansen who bore him a daughter named for her mother. Tragedy again struck when his wife died, apparently of a heart attack while washing the family clothes.

Frost when a member of the Wisconsin legislature in the 1890's.

As a logger, Frost deeply resented the pervasive and extensive power which United States Senators Philetus Sawyer and John C. Spencer wielded over state affairs through their dominant role in the Republican Party. He sided with reformist, United States Congressman Robert M. Follette. In 1896 the electors of Oconto County sent Frost to the State Legislature where he fought the special interests with some success. After the legislature adjourned in 1895, prominent railroad men invited him to colonize a community along the route of the Tallahassee, Georgia and Carrabelle Railway which extended from Tallahassee to the Gulf of Mexico. Journeying to Tallahassee, the Florida legislature extended to him the privilege of both houses but Frost, however, disapproved of what he learned and returned to Wisconsin. There he entered the sheep-raising business on a large scale.

During an 1897 visit to Springfield, Illinois, with other Wisconsin legislators, he was introduced to James E. Ingraham, a Green Bay native, who was Vice-President of the Florida East Coast Railway and in charge of its land-sales subsidiaries. Ingraham was then touring the midwest to locate settlers and land agents who would enable Henry M. Flagler to pioneer the wilds of South Florida through which his railroad recently had been extended. Frost admitted that he had, by that time, gained quite a reputation "as a colonizer in Wisconsin."

Encouraged by Ingraham, Frost decided to colonize in Southeast Florida. He sold his sheep-raising interests to his partner E.H. Gilkey and headed to Miami with his third wife Catherine and their children during the winter of 1899. He passed some time in Miami with Ingraham who placed him in charge of land sales for the Model Land Company at the Town of Modello. This Flagler-owned site had been platted in June 1896 in Section 34, Township 50 South. Frost arrived in Modello late in 1900, erected a pre-fabricated dwelling and relocated his family from Miami in early 1901, with the exception of his son Gregors A., who settled in Titusville and became mayor. The Frost family now had two married couples and three bachelors as neighbors.

Primitive living conditions prevailed along the lower Southeast Florida coast when the Frosts arrived. Oil magnate Henry M. Flagler had extended his railroad from Palm Beach to Miami in 1896 to open up a wilderness for settlement. In the present city of Deerfield Beach the only settler was J.D. Butler who found most of his employment in working for the railroad. The 1900 United States Census incompletely listed only ninety-five men, women, and children in the unincorporated village of Fort Lauderdale. Flagler’s periodical Homeseeker attempted to lure settlers to the embryonic communities along the coast by describing them in glowing terms. For example, the January 1899 issue of the Homeseeker hailed flood-prone Fort Lauderdale as "a beautiful townsite located on both sides of the river (New), with a road passing through the center of it. Trains daily. Has one store, hotel, post office, etc. An excellent place to
locate in. Rich fruit and trucking lands all around it, and promises to settle up rapidly the coming year. Lots $50 to $250." This was the kind of environment which Frost was expected to create for the Model Land Company in behalf of Modello.

In 1900, eight miles north of Fort Lauderdale the Isaac I. Hardy family, W. H. McNab, and R. A. McNab lived in Pompano. Fortunately for the Hardy family, and for some later families, their members did not have to cut the hard Dade County pine trees to build their dwellings. So much lumber had been gleaned from passing ships that the Hardy's simply gathered the driftwood and erected a modest dwelling. South of Modello in Hallandale lived several Swedish families who arrived via the railroad. There in 1896 W. C. Valentine, civil engineer and postmaster in Fort Lauderdale, had laid out the Town of Hallandale for Albert P. Sawyer, President of the Boston and Florida Atlantic Coast Company. Luther Halland, who acted in a similar capacity for Sawyer as Frost did for Ingram, operated in the northeastern United States to colonize Swedes for the town named in his honor.

Thus, along approximately thirty miles of the Southeast Florida coast in 1900 lived somewhat less than two hundred inhabitants. To the north, Deerfield had no more than ten people; Pompano could boast of no more than fifteen; Fort Lauderdale had perhaps one hundred and twenty-five, Modello twenty and to the south, Hallandale probably could count twenty inhabitants.

Compared to the leaders in Fort Lauderdale, Frost was the oldest. Frank Stranahan and William H. Marshall were thirty-five and twenty-four, respectively. Now fifty-three, Frost and his wife Catherine had five children. Sherman, Sheridan, Mamie, Dwina and Lincoln, in addition to his five older ones.

Soon after Frost moved to Modello, other families arrived to join him and the three Danes from Chicago who preceded him. The latter were named James Paulsen, Mr. Hinniberg and Mr. Jurgesen. Soon there arrived W. H. Clark and family, Charles Willers, Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Reames and George B. Hinkley, the latter the original developer of the property now known as Wyldwood. Abandoning Occee, Florida, P. H. Roper and his family arrived in a covered wagon in 1900 and joined the settlement which included four Blacks who had drifted from various locations.

After putting into operation a small tomato farm in the East Marsh near the Florida East Coast Canal, now the Intracoastal Waterway, Frost headed in early 1904 for Oconto, Wisconsin to colonize for Modello. He returned with thirty adult Danes, including Peter Hansen, who was the father of Broward County's longtime Tax Assessor L. O. Hansen. Most newcomers began small scale farming on drained land either in or bordering the East Marsh.

Two matters were of great concern to the Danes of Modello in 1904. First, the name of their unincorporated town was constantly being confused with a town of the same name located south of Miami. Second, no town government could prevail so long as the community remained unincorporated. Dade County then extended the coast to St. Lucie River. This huge area had little or no government outside of Miami, the county seat. As community leader, Frost initiated a petition to incorporate the community under the name of Dania, a name which reflected the Danish origin of most of its settlers. State law required twenty-five adult petition signers, one less than Frost was able to garner. Consequently, the City of Dania came into existence in November 1904 as the first incorporated community in present-day Broward County. While Dania's first mayor was John W. Mullikin, Frost became President of the first city council which also included W. S. Sands, W. H. McFarland, and J. H. King. The first tax assessor was Peter Hansen and the first town marshal was P. H. Hart.

The primitive condition of Dania's government is well illustrated by the fate of its first prisoner. Marshal Hart's first prisoner was a man named Kelly from Fort Lauderdale who was arrested for drinking and disorderly conduct. Hart secured Kelly to a tree in lieu of a jail cell. Kelly slipped his trace chain and made his escape from the jailless town.

Vitally interested in education for his own and other children, Frost constructed the first school building in 1905 and donated it to Dade County. In return, the Dade County school system assigned Miss Blanche Betershaw as the Dania teacher six years after it had sent Miss Ivy Cromartie to teach in Fort Lauderdale. In 1908 or 1909 the community required a larger schoolhouse to serve its increasing population. In conjunction with S. M. Alsobrook, Frost built and donated a larger structure to the school system. The original schoolhouse was then purchased by P. H. Roper who added another story and converted it into the Roper Hotel.

Prosperity followed Frost. He abandoned his pre-fabricated dwelling in 1902 for a newer, larger house and constructed a general store. The United States Government appointed him as Dania's first postmaster and he provided this service from his
Frost proudly displays the American flag in 1918 before his Dania home. With him are all his children and grandchildren. (Mrs. Jeanette Eby).

store. On his advice, the Florida Coast Railway Company dredged a canal from the Atlantic Ocean to the center of Dania for drainage purposes. While Frost eventually sold more than $100,000 worth of property for the Flagler interests, more and more residents and prospective residents resorted to him for financial assistance and advice.

In those halcyon days conditions were far from ideal. Rampant mosquitoes necessitated sleeping under netting. Snakes and other tropical wildlife were a constant menace. Meat was scarce, milk was almost nonexistent. The country was overgrown with palmettoes on the three-mile wide, pine ridge; marshes lay to the east and the swampy Everglades lay to the west. Many settlers contracted typhoid fever and died. Among others, many Danes became disheartened, pulled up stakes, and wearily headed north in lumbering wagons over sandy roads. Frost did what he could to help establish the town by extending credit for groceries, by working out credit terms for land purchases, and by constantly exhorting to the weary that they lived over a gold mine which needed labor and perseverance for the extraction of its riches.

Nevertheless, amid the frontier privations were varied pleasures. The large, spacious grounds of the Hinkle homestead were the scene of numerous family outings where Danian adults discussed agriculture, religion, politics, and family affairs. While the children climbed trees, rolled discarded automobile tires, and played on the swings. Swimming outings took place in the Florida East Coast Canal and northerly in Lake Mabel while special occasions required the use of boats to cross the canal where ocean swimming and cookouts were enjoyed. Webb’s Hotel was a favorite gathering place for adults who were anxious to exchange news and for children who romped on its stairs and spacious porches.

From 1907 to 1914 Frost succumbed to his innate drive to travel, colonize, and develop virgin territory. In company with his eldest son Gregors, whom he had helped through the Northern Illinois College of Law at Dixon and who had served as Mayor of Titusville, Florida, before removing to Dania, he went on a six-months’ tour of Europe in 1907. Shortly after his return to Dania, Frost went for several months to Mexico and California. He concluded this trip by attending an exposition at Seattle, Washington. None of these locations, however, lent themselves to the kind of ventures which appealed to Frost who looked daily for new horizons to explore and exploit. Upon his return to Dania, he and other enterprising Danians laid plans to establish the Bank of Dania. Finally, on April 18, 1912, the bank opened with M. C. Hardee designated as President and I. T. Parker of Louisville, Georgia, appointed as cashier.

When illness struck the sixty-four year old Frost in 1911 he left for Oconto, Wisconsin, where he accurately anticipated that the invigorating climate would restore his health. He purchased various parcels of property and operated them successfully. Old-time friends in Oconto welcomed his return by electing him Chairman of the Town Council of Oconto for two terms and placing him on Oconto County’s Board of County Commissioners for one term. In addition to these multilateral engagements, he helped to organize the Farmers Bank of Oconto and served as a director for two years. Having regained his health, he liquidated his Oconto interests and returned in 1914 to Dania where an even more productive career awaited him.

While traveling abroad and laboring in Wisconsin from 1907 to 1914, Frost never relinquished his property interests in Dania. Under the leadership of Martin C. Frost, his numerous sons banded together and continued to develop their father’s holdings. In addition, brief flurries of development schemes were hatched and executed by Frost himself when he was in Dania. In July 1909 he helped to layout Dania’s first cemetery in Section 3, Township 51 South. Although this was a very extensive area for such a small town, Frost anticipated that Dania would grow northward and he moved to profit in that area.

In March 1911, under the direction of Civil Engineer C. E. Pratt, he platted Lakeview community in the north-
ern part of Sections 22 and 23 of Township 50 South. This property was located directly west of Lake Mabel which is now Port Everglades. Envisioning the lake as a future port, Frost platted the seventeen block subdivision to take advantage of this belief. Because Frost held his colonizing and land sales' position with the Model Land Company throughout his meandering residence, he, doubtlessly expected to reap rich plums from Lakeview's newcomers.

Fort Lauderdale was incorporated in March 1911. This pleased Frost immensely. His Lakeview community served as a gateway between Dania and Fort Lauderdale. Self-government would tend to stabilize affairs there and lead to the development of the southern section of the new town. Thus, Lakeview might be incorporated into either Dania or Fort Lauderdale, depending upon the best deal Frost could squeeze out.

When Frost planted his winter tomato crop in 1914-1915, Dade County extended northward to south of Pompano. Palm Beach County had been created in 1909 from Dade County and included Pompano. But loud voices were being raised from Hillsboro Canal south to Hallandale for the creation of a new county to be named Everglades, for most of it would be included in this watery wasteland. The fundamental reason for the move to create a new county was that Dade and Palm Beach counties were simply too large to operate effectively in behalf of the residents living from the canal south to Hallandale. The new county advocates pressed for local government which could and would take effective measures to drain, reclaim, and develop the Everglades. Back in 1907 Governor Broward and the Internal Improvement Board had placed official boundaries on the Everglades after Governor Broward had stood on the banks of the New River in Fort Lauderdale on July 4, 1906, and commissioned the first dredge which dug the drainage canals. Most of the land for a new county lay within the official boundaries of the Everglades and could never be developed unless Governor Broward's drainage plan was fully implemented.

Frost actively supported the movement in Dania for a new county and secured signatures of most electors on its behalf. He presented this petition to State Representative Tom Bryan of Fort Lauderdale. In a rush of horsetrading, Bryan secured legislative approval on April 24, 1915, for the creation of Broward County which would extend from Hillsboro Canal to the south of Hallandale and west into the Everglades, a distance of approximately forty miles. The effective date of the new county's creation was set for October 1, 1915. Celebrations in Fort Lauderdale on April 24 and October 1 featured Frost who was one of several prominent speakers to extol the greatness facing the new county.

Although he was one of the first settlers and chief supporters of the creation of Broward County, Frost knew little more of the new county's composition than most other Broward Countians. With one exception, no one farmed or lived more than five miles west of the Atlantic Ocean. Only the approximate, three hundred people who lived in Davie knew much about the area beyond the coastal settlements. In this vicinity, R. P. Davie of Colorado Springs, Colorado, had purchased 28,000 acres of land for sales' purposes and the location of his Everglades Sugar Company. Originally, some former laborers in the Panama Canal Zone had moved in, purchased land from Davie, and named their settlement Zonia. But the name gradually changed to Davie as new settlers such as Hamilton M. Forman, A. B. Lowe, and the Salvinos, the Aunapus, the Hammers, the Griffins, and the Lloyds moved in.

Davie was important to Frost for two reasons. In addition to offering a location for colonizing, the development of Model Land Company holdings in this region meant an increase in his own wealth and that of the Flagler rail interests.

Even the war in Europe did not excite Southeast Florida in 1915 so much as the opening of Dixie Highway from Chicago to Miami, the first paved road constructed along Florida's east coast. The first stretch of the completed highway was the 366 miles from Jacksonville to Miami. The wildest excitement prevailed on October 24 when the first cars from Chicago entered Dania conveying the Dixie Highway Commission headed by Carl Fisher, newspaper reporters, and friends of the Commission. They completed the trip from Chicago in thirteen days, inspecting the new highway as they went. While Pompano could boast of fifteen cars at this time and Dania scarcely more, one of them belonged to Frost. The opening of the highway served to increase the value of the Frost holdings.

When Frost returned from Wisconsin in 1914 he struck up a friendship with one of the most remarkable men in Broward County history. He was a man with a very different background than Frost. For the next seven years Frost and Colonel George C. Matthews of Fort Lauderdale cooperated on a variety of matters but especially on the drainage, reclamation, and development of the Everglades and the East Marsh.

Born in Alabama of parents im-

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A social gathering on Sunday in 1905 at the Hinkley's homestead. Frost is seated sixth from the left holding a child. (Mrs. Jeanette Eby).
poveryrished by the Civil War, Matthews had settled in Marion County, Florida in 1882, where he was elected a Florida legislator in 1893. In the same year President Grover Cleveland appointed him United States Consul at Para, Brazil, where he served for five years. Afterwards, Matthews returned to Marion County and was elected to the Florida Legislature in 1907. There he organized the "Fore-Day Club" which saved Governor Napoleon Bonaparte Broward’s plan to drain the Everglades from voracious canal and railroad interests. Dedicated to Broward’s Everglades program, he moved to Fort Lauderdale where in 1911 he established the Fort Lauderdale Sentinel, a journal which crusaded for Everglades’ development with a fervor unmatched by any other organ of the day. Eventually, his paper became the contemporary Fort Lauderdale News.

Most of that which Frost and other Broward Countians knew of the extent and potential of Broward County came from his friend, editor George C. Matthews. Matthews adjusted his figures as his own understanding of the new county increased. For example, he estimated Broward County’s population upon its inception and shortly thereafter from 6,000 to 9,000 and its size to be up to 1280 square miles. The editor analyzed Broward County in August 1915 as having 6,000 people and approximately 1152 square miles or 737,280 acres. Approximately one-eighth of the county, that is 92,160 acres, was in pine woods and cypress swamps. The balance, that is 645,120 acres, was in the Everglades. He estimated that Broward Countians had under cultivation 10,000 acres or a little more than ten percent of its pine lands, that is, 1.4 percent of its total area. It was easy to comprehend that Broward County was an agricultural area and that its future development should be along that area. Everglades land sold for one dollar an acre and was taxed at three and one-half cents per acre. Altogether, the total valuation of all Broward County property amounted to $2,600,000 which annually would yield about $75,000 in taxes. Obviously, the 75 miles of unpaved and rock road would have to be greatly improved and expanded in order to open up more of the county to settlement and development.

The portion of the Everglades of immediate concern to Frost in 1915 was in the Dania region. The completion of the North and South New River Canals from Lake Okeechobee to Fort Lauderdale accommodated drainage in the center of the county although, even in this area, flooding occurred on a large scale when thirty inches fell in one week as it did in the fall of 1915. But, these two canals did little for the area to the south. Frost and other Danians, joined by A. B. Lowe and Hamilton M. Forman in Davie, worked to have the state cut another canal which would serve the Davie-Dania area. Their efforts were successful. In December 1915 the Internal Improvement Board announced that it would carve another canal from the junction of North New River and the South New River Canals which would empty into either Lake Mabel or the Florida East Coast Canal. The "Dania Cut-Off Canal" contract was awarded in mid-1917 to the Megthlin and Clark Company of Miami; work began on the canal within three weeks.

Governor Park Trammell appointed the first Broward County officers in the summer of 1915 who stood for election the following year. Frost’s son Gregors was appointed the county solicitor and served gratis as the county attorney. Frost took great pride in the accomplishments of his only college-educated child who served the county for many years and drew up its legal papers for a new courthouse and the present State Road Seven.

As the tempo of World War I increased, Frost, like the overwhelming majority of Broward Countians, adopted an anti-Catholic hierarchy stance. In 1915 the County School Board dismissed Miss Murphy, newly hired as a teacher in the Fort Lauderdale High School, for being a Roman Catholic. The vote among the citizens of the city was 181 to 7 for dismissal. At a public meeting in March 1916 either Frost or his son Gregors moved to thank a citizen who had spoken against the Roman Catholic hierarchy "which is trying to destroy our public schools" and a "church which is trying to overthrow American institutions, and make America Catholic." Like editor Matthews, Frost supported Sidney J. Catts for governor in 1916 when Catts ran on an anti-Catholic hierarchy platform. Religious prejudice reached its peak in Florida during this gubernatorial campaign in which Catts won over W. V. Knott.

In the general election of 1916 Frost supported the Democratic slate of county officers which won handily. All the officers appointed by Governor Trammell in 1915 won election except that George L. Blount had replaced County Commissioner Isaac I. Hardy, who died on December 24, 1915. A. W. Turner was elected sheriff, W. O. Berryhill tax collector, William H. Marshall State Representative, and Gregors A. Frost County Solicitor. County Commissioners W. L. Bracknell from Deerfield, George L. Blount from Pompano, J. J. Joyce from Fort Lauderdale, A. B. Lowe from Davie and C. E. Ingalls from Hallandale were elected from Districts One through Five. As one of the largest property holders in the county and as county representative of the Model Land Company, in turn a huge county property holder, Frost was vitally concerned about who held public office. In particular, he formed an intimate association with County Commissioner A. B. Lowe who represented the Dania-Davie area and who served as the first Commission Chairman.

In the early years of Broward County’s history, the raising and processing of vegetables formed the backbone of its industry. In some fashion, every Broward Countians’ livelihood depended upon farming. Near the top of the vegetable list in importance was tomatoes. Banded together for mutual benefit, Frost organized the Dania growers into the Dania Packing House Association. This group affiliated itself with the East Coast Growers Association some years later.

The Fort Lauderdale Sentinel in May 1917 printed some statistics on countywide tomato growing to underscore this product’s significance. On Saturday, May 12, Dania shipped 19 full cars of tomatoes and on the following Monday, fifteen more. During the week Dania’s total shipments ran to one hundred cars; each car was worth about $1,000 to the growers. After Dania, Hallandale daily averaged 10 to 15 cars, Fort Lauderdale 10 to 12, Pompano and Colo-
hatchee 10 each, While Deerfield produced the least.

Such a large production of tomatoes attracted industry. A catsup factory was located in Fort Lauderdale. In Dania the V. Taorning Company of New Orleans in 1917 erected a tomato paste factory, west of the railroad in the packing house district at a cost of $7,000 for its 38 by 136 foot fireproof building, installed $35,000 worth of machinery and made plans for a similar factory installation. The huge, agricultural productions and the location of industry in the county prompted editor Matthews to fly these headline banners: "A Million People a Reasonable Population with Good Drainage" and "The Glades Is An Eldorado Soon to Become the Wonder of the World." Such praises of Broward County and the Glades resulted in an influx of settlers. Moreover, the Flagler railroad interests sent Frost on a tour of the northern states to promote the East Coast of Florida.

Frost lent his support to the Everglades Drainage League which was organized in January 1915 at the instigation of William H. Marshall. The purpose of the League was to represent and protect the rights and interests of the 20,000 men and women of the United States who had purchased land in the Everglades and to furnish an efficient organization which would "get a square deal for them." Backers of the League were convinced that the state had mainly abandoned Governor Broward's program for Everglades' development and had, instead, given much of the Glades to special interest groups, particularly the Flagler railroad system and its subsidiaries. In 1916 the League backers formed another organization in the county known as the "Back to Broward" movement. Eventually, these boosters pressured the state legislature to form the N. B. Broward Drainage District in early 1917 which voted to apply an annual tax of twenty-five cents an acre on the 500,000 acres of Everglades land in the District. W. C. Kyle, A. B. Lowe, and Robert Watson were appointed as the first members of the district board.

The Model Land Company began to come under increasing pressure. Ralph Horton and other League members accused it and other land companies of failure to pay the special tax assessment levied by the Drainage District board in order to effect Governor Broward's farsighted vision of the Everglades' drainage and reclamation. Frost and other land agents sought to meet the criticism. In a special meeting of the Model Land Company representatives, held in St. Augustine on October 25, 1917, under the aegis of James E. Ingraham, Frost deliberately questioned Ingraham whether or not the company had paid the special assessment on its Everglades land. Ingraham replied in the affirmative and stated that the company intended to continue to do so because it had a great stake in the development of the watery wasteland. Frost's written account of the meeting which emphasized his questioning of Ingraham, was published under Frost's signature in the Fort Lauderdale Sentinel. No doubt, this public relations thrust was designed to take the heat off Frost and the Model Land Company in Broward County.

Frost, along with the other residents of Dania and Hallandale, had a tremendous stake in the rich marsh land which extended east of Dixie Highway to the Florida East Coast Canal. In 1917 this marsh was the center of agriculture for the area from Dania to Hallandale. Tomatoes were the prime crop grown on the marsh land. By mid-March 1917, the East Marsh Drainage District had completed the drainage of four miles
of land which extended north and south of Dania, covering 6,000 acres farmed by over 200 farmers. The drainage was planned and supervised by the Everglades Engineering Company of Fort Lauderdale and constructed by V. M. Heim of Miami. The drainage project consisted of ditches cut one quarter mile apart, extending from the western boundary of the marsh to the coastal canal, and were nine feet wide at the top and five feet deep. The water in the ditches rose and fell with the tides. The spoil banks along the twenty-five miles of ditches were leveled and a firm roadway was constructed on each. Half of the district’s land was from 1.3 to 3 feet above the high tide level and formed what was "probably the best and safest farming proposition in the South," according to the backers. After the tomato season ended, farmers expected to plant corn and castor beans which exempted farmers, engaged in the latter product’s cultivation, from the United States Selective Military Service. Frost and the Model Land Company profitted from the drainage of the marsh because they had large holdings either in or adjacent to the district. The Flager railway would stand to gain by drainage from the greatly increased production of vegetables which would be shipped to northern markets. 

By 1918 Frost was the acknowledged spokesman for Dania affairs. On April 5, editor Matthews of the Sentinel published a long article after an interview with Frost and entitled it "A.C. Frost Talks of Dania Progress." Matthews saluted Frost as "a true American and his patriotism is of the highest order." Formerly a warm supporter of Wisconsin’s Senator Robert M. LaFollette, Frost now believed that the Senator should be expelled from government service for his disloyalty in the war effort. With regard to Dania’s tomato interest, Matthews wrote: "Mr. Frost is deeply interested in tomato farming but said his crop would be short this year. He said his community has 1,500 acres of tomatoes this year which will probably produce 200,000 crates or about 500 carloads which should net more than $1,000 per car or $500,000." Frost, at this time, seemed to be unloading some of his commercial property in Dania. He had sold a lot for $1,000 to Reverend J.E. Gault of the Methodist Church South. Gault subsequently erected one of the finest homes in Dania on it, paying $3,000 for its construction. Matthews added that Frost had sold his lucrative store building for $2,000. In addition, Hence Jensen had purchased Frost’s ten cent store for $2,000.

By early 1919 Broward County had sent nearly two hundred men to fight in World War I while seven hundred others had registered for Selective Service. As editor Matthews claimed, Frost was extremely pro-American. The names of this immigrant’s last group of children were a testimony to his patriotism. They were Sherman, Sheridan, Mamie, Lincoln, and Dwina, in honor of Admiral George Dewey. Frost daily displayed a huge American flag which almost drewfed the front of his home. The Dania pioneer applauded when Davie townspeople tarred and feathered R.G. Laycock after he spoke against American involvement in the war late in April 1918.

Frost publicly supported the United States’ fight against the Central European Powers. He caused quite a sensation when he addressed a letter to editor Matthews and informed him of the pro-Germans’ attempt to kill pro-Americans. His daughter Mrs. John R. O’Neal had just returned to Dania from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, when Frost sent his letter to the Sentinel which printed it on February 1, 1918. At great length, Frost delineated how German sympathizers had tried to poison American loggers in Oconto County, Wisconsin. Frost supported the execution of anyone convicted of conspiracy against the war effort. Frost further reported that just recently Elton Huring of Dania had purchased two cans of peanut butter which contained ground glass. These had been manufactured by the same New Jersey company which had sent poisoned food into Wisconsin. Frost said local ministers gave God credit for the war in order to claim that Christ was bringing in his eternal kingdom or else they blamed Satan for it. Frost edged into the camp of the latter and declared: "I don’t believe that God has anything to do with directing this terrible war, but I believe that according to the correspondence passing between Satan and the Kaiser that these two are the instigators."

While Broward County was quite patriotic it still had a good deal of trouble raising money for the war effort. In April 1918 the Third Liberty Loan was kicked off under the chairmanship of W.C. Kyle. During the same month, county authorities would have to furnish 29 selectees; nine whites and twenty Blacks. Frost’s son Sherman was voluntarily serving in the United States Navy and Frost invested heavily in war securities to support him and other Americans. Eventually, the county raised its required $105,000 for the Third Liberty Loan.

Frost had remained on intimate terms with James Paulsen ever since the former had arrived in South Florida. Paulsen had never married and had no close relatives in the fall of 1918. He sought out Frost for advice on what he should do with his estate. He took Frost’s advice and left his entire estate of $20,000 to build a county hospital, the first Broward Countian to make a contribution of this sort for hospital construction. This appeared of more moment than buying war bonds.

Strangely, it was Frost’s special brand of patriotism which caused him to publicly engage another prominent Danian in a fierce struggle. Both combatants aired their views in the Sentinel from November 1918 to February 1919 in a series of long articles, filled with acrimony. M.C. Hardee, banker and farmer, headed the finance committee of Dania’s United War Work Campaign Committee in the latter’s efforts to raise $2,000 toward the national quota of 200 million dollars. President Woodrow Wilson had asked seven charitable organizations to raise this amount to hasten "bringing the boys home" from Europe. This non-governmental organization would provide such services as religious counsel, educational opportunities, and other auxiliary services to returning servicemen. Frost refused to contribute, his argument against doing so were directed against Hardee.

Frost argued he was as patriotic as anybody in Dania. He had already donated more than $200 to aid servicemen and in addition had purchased $3,300 in war bonds. It was the government’s business to bring
home the servicemen, not that of private organizations. Frost particularly objected to the Red Cross and Salvation Army not being included in the organizations soliciting money to bring the boys home.

Hardee responded to Frost and the war of words was on. A long and dreary battle was waged between the two in Dania and in the Sentinel. Hardee’s main argument for raising the money was that it was done at the personal behest of President Wilson. Finally, Hardee thrust a hot-tipped spear at Frost. He called him a Bolshevist — a Communist! In reply, Frost said he had thought the matter with Hardee had closed but that Hardee had asserted that “I have a strong leaning in the teaching of Mr. Eugene V. Debs, which is plainly Bolshevist.” Yes, Frost replied to this accusation, he did not deny he favored Deb’s policies but he emphatically denied he was a Bolshevist. The latter believed in “free love” and the wholesale extermination of citizens. Such were foreign to Frost’s convictions. In the end the Campaign Committee raised its quota.

Apparently, editor Matthews’ sympathies lay with Frost. During the Frost-Hardee controversy, Matthews solicited and received from Frost an article which the editor entitled “Tells of Rapid Growth of Dania” in which Frost extolled the virtues of Dania. But the fight between Frost and Hardee involved much more than contributions to a campaign. The Sentinel editorialized: “Fort Lauderdale needs men like these two,” referring, of course, to Frost and Dr. Wickham.

Frost’s rancorous controversy with Hardee appears not to have diminished his popular acceptance in the Dania-Davie area. He served as a member of the Broward County Board of Commissioners in 1921 just as the great Florida Land Boom got underway.

It is not certain why Frost left Dania for Maryland in 1921 or early 1922. He may have departed in response to the wanderlust or colonizing fever which gripped him at varying intervals. His departure, however, appears to have followed closely that of Commissioner A.B. Lowe for Chesterton, Maryland.

County Commissioner Lowe and Frost had stood shoulder-to-shoulder on a number of issues, particularly that of draining and reclaiming the Everglades. One of Broward County’s greatest boosters, the people of Davie, where he operated a general merchandise store, recognized that “he has been an inspiration, always contending that the Glades section was ‘the Promised Land.’” Clearly, he was cut from the same cloth as Frost.

The last three years of Frost’s life are enveloped in a blanket of obscurity. It is reputed, however, that he migrated to the extreme western portion of Maryland where he followed the familiar pattern by founding the town of Frostburg. Afflicted in the last years of his life by a dogged sickness, he died in Dania in 1924 at the age of seventy-seven. After funeral services in the Florida town which he had founded, he was buried in the Dania cemetery.

Frost’s career reveals many facets of his character. Instinctively, he was a colonizer, promoter, and developer. Paradoxically, no place was so dear to him that his innate longing to travel to new locations and establish roots was thwarted. From the wilderness of Broward County he helped to carve a town and a personal fortune. Like many of his contemporaries, the Everglades in Broward County appeared as a New Eldorado and he proceeded to mine its riches in behalf of himself and his fellow citizens.

Stern and rigorous in his personal attitudes he, nevertheless, was a devoted family man who brought his sons into his various enterprises where they continued his work before and after his demise. Personally acquainted with the European class system, he rejected it in favor of the freedom and unbounded opportunities which the United States offered to immigrants. Consequently, he developed a fierce sense of pro-Americanism which he vigorously asserted in the face of opposition. He was no less determined in his political beliefs and often parted company with those who held contrary opinions.

No doubt the United States no longer offers the same frontier wilderness opportunities it held out to Frost and his generation. His life and career, nevertheless, still exemplify the abiding American trait of looking for and finding new frontiers to conquer.