

# The Palm Coast Historian

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*On the road ... again! (see page 5)*

## HAPPY 40th ANNIVERSARY of PALM COAST

*by Art Dycke, City Historian*

The birth of our Palm Coast community came about as a result of the “marriage” of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corporation (ITT) and Levitt and Sons when the former bought the latter in 1967 and added it to the ITT conglomerate as a wholly-owned subsidiary in 1968. The initial planning and naming of Palm Coast took place that year.

ITT had started as an international communications firm in the 1930's. It bought into companies that specialized in all forms of electronic communications throughout the world, becoming a dominant competitor in U.S. and international telecommunications by the time Harold Geneen was elected CEO in 1959. In 1963, ITT attempted to purchase the ABC television network for \$700 million. The sale was stopped by federal anti-trust regulators who claimed that ITT was becoming a monopoly. ITT then turned to the acquisition of companies outside of their primary industry, pioneering a new business form called the conglomerate. By 1968, ITT owned 300 subsidiary companies that included Rayonier (forest products and land), Sheraton (hotels), Hartford Insurance, Avis (car rentals) and even Wonder Bread. By 1968 the ITT conglomerate's income was estimated to be over \$7 billion.

Levitt and Sons was the legendary builder of affordable post-war American housing developments. The first Levittown, on Long Island in New York, begun in 1946, was completed in 1951 with 17,447 homes. Others followed in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Maryland. After the death of the founding father, Alfred Levitt, in 1966, his son William struck a deal with ITT in July 1967 to sell the company to them for \$92 million. ITT would completely own the Levitt and Sons trade name. Bill Levitt was to receive \$175,000 annually for five years and agree not to compete in the building of homes for ten years. On this basis Levitt and Sons Inc. became a wholly owned subsidiary in 1968.

The local subsidiary was named ITT/Levitt and all the earliest development platting and sales were done under this name.

From the outset ITT provided the financial muscle to purchase large tracts of land and pay the enormous cost of constructing an infrastructure. It had a long term vision of involving as many of its subsidiaries as possible in creating a huge new development in rural Flagler County, Florida. But let there be no doubt that the early planning, layout, construction, and even naming of the future Palm Coast community was squarely in the hands of the Levitt and Sons engineering and marketing departments.



*Dr. Norman Young*

The man in charge of the Palm Coast development from its inception until 1975 was Dr. Norman Young. NEWSWEEK described Young's background in an article about Levitt and Sons in 1965.

“Levitt began to surround himself with a team of experts in administration and marketing. Some, like senior vice president Norman Young, hardly knew what to do with the business end of a hammer, but as a doctor of psychology and a veteran of a Madison Avenue advertising agency – Young knew a good deal about how to upgrade an organization's sales and research staffs.”

In the Fall of 1968, Dr. Norman Young began making presentations of his vision of a huge environmentally attractive planned community with 500 miles of infrastructure to service the sale of 48,000 lots (mostly quarter acre) that would eventually sustain 700,000 residents.

*(see ANNIVERSARY on page 5)*

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF FLAGLER COUNTY

by Sisco Deen

While many of the Flagler County Pioneers came to till the land in the early 1900's, some, as most do today, came here for other reasons. The writer's paternal great-grandfather moved here in 1907 from Bergen County, NJ for health reasons. His daughter married my grandfather who had come here from Appling County, GA about 1902 to operate a turpen-tine still for his uncle and the rest is, as they say, history.

To quote from the printed word, "These are the days of high-soaring prices for food, clothing and shelter. They are difficult days for thousands of salaried employees living in cities; prosperous days for part of the past army of wage-workers, precarious days for the rest. They are days of stress and strain; of wars abroad, of grave anxieties in the homeland."

This quote is not from this week's edition of the FLAGLER/PALM COAST NEWS TRIBUNE, but rather from a brochure published around 1912 by the Dupont Land Company's northern office in Scranton, PA, attempting to sell land in what is now Flagler County to farmers from the north and west.

### The DuPont Land Company

The DuPont Land Company, like IIT of later years, offered prospective land buyers a place to stay while they traveled to present-day Flagler County to take a look at the land. Granted it wasn't a Sheraton Hotel on the ocean, but rather the company's 16-room (some equipped with private baths) hotel overlooking the railroad tracks in Dupont, some six miles south of Bunnell on U.S. 1.

Since there were no major roads leading to present-day Flagler County, most prospective land buyers arrived on Henry Morrison Flagler's Florida East Coast (FEC) Railroad.

In the early 1900's, the DuPont Land Company wasn't the only developer attempting to bring in buyers from the northern states. Following are some of the other companies.

### The St. Johns Development Company

This company held their first meeting at Omega (now St. Johns Park) in December 1908. They contracted with the Ben Levin Advertising Agency of Chicago to promote their company in northern

newspapers.

The St. Johns Development Company also had a hotel for guests, most of whom arrived by steamboat coming south from Jacksonville on the St. Johns River to Palatka, then southeast on Dunn's Creek to present-day Crescent Lake, then across the bottom of the lake to Dead Lake and up to the landing at St. Johns Park.

### The Bunnell Development Company

This company was chartered in June 1909 and had offices in Bunnell and Chicago. In December 1912, the Chicago office began publication of a monthly house organ entitled THE BUNNELL HOME BUILDER. The slogan in the masthead said, "The Truth about Florida." The publication was sent to all Bunnell-Dupont Colony land owners and others who were interested in "securing homes in the Sunny Southland."

Polish immigrants in Chicago, Detroit, and other cities, recent arrivals in this free land of ours, were told of a fabulous land called Florida through Polish-language editions of THE BUNNELL HOME BUILDER. The land promotion gimmicks of 96 years ago were employed to spin tales of three crops a year, no snow or ice and ideal farming conditions. The price per acre was \$35.

While IIT in later years used passenger airplanes to fly prospective buyers here, the Bunnell Development Company used a special chartered train they called the "Dixie Flyer" for the same purpose. Round trip, Chicago to Bunnell, was \$41.89.

Like the other developers, the Bunnell Development Company also had a hotel. It was originally called the Bunnell Hotel and later the Halcyon; this relic of the past still stands today on the corner of Railroad and Lambert Streets. Its windows are boarded and it is surrounded by a chain-link fence. The hotel could accommodate 75 guests who paid \$3 per day. The less affluent could stay at the Pine Grove Inn located on the northeast corner of Church Street and Moody Blvd. at \$2 per day.

### The Ocean City Improvement Company

This company was chartered in June 1921 in  
(see Flagler County on page 3)

**Flagler County** (from page 2)

Ocean City Beach (present-day Flagler Beach) to "develop Ocean City Beach by building streets and sidewalks and other dwellings, hotel ... and other things for the beautification of one the finest town sites along the east coast of Florida..." Not mentioned in the charter was the goal of selling land and making money, but that was what the company was about.

The two hotels built in present Flagler Beach by the company or one of its principals are now gone. One was located on the site where the present-day Farmers' Market is held on weekends (Moody Blvd. and Central Ave.) and the other was located across from the pier where the Bank of America now stands.

**Our Early Inhabitants**

The original settlers of this portion of Florida, be they Indian, French, Spanish, or British, came here for the land, as did most of the early 20th Century pioneers. Some of these early inhabitants left still visible evidence of their presence in our county.

**The Indians**

The Frenchmen and Spaniards who came to Florida in the 1560's found themselves in the midst of one of the great culture areas of native peoples in the southeast continent. Here lived a people known as Timucuan. There are many remains of their mounds and middens in Flagler County.

The midden at Washington Gardens State Park on A1A north of the Hammock is perhaps the most accessible. The park has an interpretive museum and park rangers are most happy to tell you about the Timucuan village located on or near the property.

**The French**

In 1564, the French established a settlement called Fort Caroline near Jacksonville at the mouth of the St. Johns River. Perhaps the only Frenchmen who ever set foot in now Flagler County were those shipwrecked sailors who had set out from Fort Caroline to attack the Spanish at St. Augustine in September 1565, only to be driven southward by a hurricane, their ships stranded and broken up.

Three of the heavier ships were wrecked in the vicinity of Mosquito Inlet (Ponce deLeon) near present-day Daytona Beach, and the flagship was

grounded intact not far from Cape Canaveral. Two separate groups of sailors made their way north toward Fort Caroline.

The first group of sailors reached the south side of what is now Mantanzas Inlet just north of present-day Marineland, around September 29, 1685. They surrendered to the Spanish under the command of Pedro Menendez deAviles and were ferried across the inlet where they were put to the knife (with the exception of the French pilot, four carpenters and caulkers, and twelve Breton sailors).

The second group arrived around October 11, 1685, and the drama that played out followed much the same course as before. The next morning, half the French force chose to retain their liberty and retreated southward through now Flagler County. Jean Ribault, together with several of his captains and 70 men, surrendered and were ferried across the inlet. A few of the Frenchmen were taken as captives, the remainder were killed, among them Jean Ribault.

There is a plaque which tells of these events on the north side of the Claude Varn Bridge over the inlet. More information is available at the Matanzas Park visitor's center.

**The Spanish**

The Spanish were in possession of Florida on two occasions – 1565-1763 after they defeated the French and 1784-1821 (they captured Pensacola from the British in 1781, then in 1784 regained control of the rest of Florida as part of the peace treaty that ended the American Revolution). According to the terms of the Adams-Onis Treaty, Spain formally ceded Florida to the United States in 1821 and Andrew Jackson returned to establish a new territorial government.

On May 26, 1788 Joseph Marion Hernandez, who later had some major developments in present-day Flagler County, was born in the Spanish colony of St. Augustine. On February 25, 1814 he married Ana Marie Hill, widow of Samuel Williams, who had an extensive plantation on the Halifax River in present-day Daytona Beach.

Joseph was a lawyer, residing in St. Augustine, and when the Spanish left Florida in 1821, he transferred his allegiance to the United States.

(see **Flagler County** on page 4)

### Flagler County (from page 3)

Upon the formation of the Florida Territory, he was elected as a delegate to the Seventeenth Congress and served from September 30, 1822 to March 3, 1823. He was a member and presiding officer of the Territorial House of Representatives and was appointed brigadier general of volunteers in the war against the Florida Indians.

Joseph entered the United States service, served from 1835 to 1838, and commanded the expedition in 1837 that captured the Indian leader Osceola. He was appointed brigadier general of Mounted Volunteers in July 1837 and was an unsuccessful candidate of the Wig Party for the United States Senate in 1845. He later moved to Cuba and engaged as a planter in the District of Coliseo, near Matanzas.

He acquired a large acreage in northeast present Flagler County, known as the Hernandez Grant, mostly Spanish land grants he purchased from several parties.

Included in his holdings were three plantations known as St. Joseph (north of Palm Coast Parkway on Florida Park Drive), Bella Vista (present-day Washington Gardens State Park) and Mala Compra (present-day Bing's Landing County Park), with his plantation house at Mala Compra on the east bank of the Matanzas River.

Christmas 1831 the Hernandez family entertained a visitor at Mala Compra who later became a world famous personality – John James Audubon, the wildlife artist. While staying in St. Augustine, Audubon met Joseph Hernandez, to whom he had letters of introduction. Hernandez invited the artist to Mala Compra about 30 miles south of St. Augustine. Audubon stayed at Mala Compra for about ten days before moving south to the Halifax River area.

Joseph was a prominent planter in the early history of Florida. Toward the end of the Indian War, Hernandez's two plantations were destroyed by Indians after being occupied by federal troops – one known as St. Joseph's, a sugar plantation, and the other as Mala Compra, a cotton plantation.

He filed claim against the U.S. government for approximately \$100,000 for damages for the destruction of his buildings and personal property

in East Florida by the Seminole Indians in 1835, 1836, and 1837.

In March 1839 Congress approved the first of the monetary awards made to Hernandez as a result of the war claims. Between that time and May 1842, he had received a total of \$34,521.30. In 1844, Hernandez went back to Congress to ask for the balance of \$64,494.89 – his request was denied.

Copies of the voluminous Hernandez documents are on file at the Flagler County Historical Society in Bunnell as well as some pieces of the china he used when he was a representative to Congress.

According to an article in THE FLAGLER TRIBUNE of May 10, 1969, early in the days of the Palm Coast development, ICDC engineers found the remains of the floor of an immense sugar mill, said to be the largest on the Florida East Coast, commonly called the St. Joe Sugar Mill after its owner, General Joseph Hernandez.

ICDC asked some of the then Flagler County commissioners to visit the site to tell them if it had any lasting historical significance. Reportedly, the commissioners said it was a pile of useless rocks and so advised the ICDC planners.

As a result, fill dirt dredged from finger canals was put over the plantation ruins. For all intents and purposes, St. Joe Sugar Mill was obliterated.

If you desire additional information on the Spanish, a most outstanding book to read on the Spanish occupation of Florida is Eugene Lyon's THE ENTERPRISE OF FLORIDA, published by the University of Florida Press.

#### The British

Britain gained control of Florida in 1763 in exchange for Havana, Cuba. Florida was then split into two parts: East Florida, with its capital in St. Augustine, and West Florida, with its seat in Pensacola.

For more information on the British influence in our area, please refer to two books by Palm Coast Historical Society member William P. (Bill) Ryan; THE SEARCH FOR OLD KINGS ROAD, the first route into Florida, and I AM GREY EYES, a story of old Florida. I'm sure Bill will be most happy to sell you copies and autograph same.

(more Flagler County History in next issue)

**Meeting Notice**

1:30 PM Wednesday, October 8, 2008  
**Early Settlements in Flagler County**  
 Sisco Dean  
 Holden House  
 204 E. Moody (across from old court house)

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1:30 PM Wednesday, January 14, 2009  
**Election of Officers and Board of Directors**  
**Benefits of the Museum & Opportunities in Archeology**  
 Bruce Piatek, Agricultural Museum Director  
 Watson Realty  
 1410 Palm Coast Pky, NW (at Pine Cone Dr, N)  
 • Guests are always welcome! •

The Palm Coast Historical Society is currently looking for back issues of THE PALM COAST NEWS for 1977, '78, '79, '80, and '81. If you have any of these issues, contact Art Dycke, 446-8636. We appreciate your support.  
 Patricia Eldridge, Cataloging Chair

**ANNIVERSARY** (continued from front page)

One of the ITT representatives who attended an early Young presentation in 1968 was Alan Smolen, who took over as head of the Palm Coast development from 1975 to 1985. Meanwhile, ITT was preparing to purchase the enormous land acreage necessary for the development, mostly through its Rayonier subsidiary, which already owned large tracts of forest land in Flagler and St. John counties and had the advantage of buying land at less expensive forest land rates. ITT set up other small subsidiaries to make additional land purchases.

The seeds were planted in 1968, but the first visible sprouts of what was to come did not appear until THE FLAGLER TRIBUNE announced ITT's purchase of an abandoned cement factory on January 2 of the following year.

(next issue will feature 1969)

*Welcome New Members*  
*Stewart & Alice Manthey*

*It was a beautiful summer day recently when the community said goodbye to the Father of Palm Coast, Alan Smolen. With reminiscences tender, humorous, factual, those not as familiar with the man came to understand how this unique person became such a beloved and respected part of his adopted community. His contribution was great – and everlasting.*

**For Sale**  
**Palm Coast License Plate**  
 Donation \$10  
 (plates are available at the Community Center, Clubhouse Drive & Palm Coast Parkway West)  
**Black & white prints of Palm Coast's early buildings and golf courses**  
 by **Starr Coale**, local artist.  
 Donation: \$10 for 1, \$15 for 2  
 Or call Debby, 446-9031

ALAN SMOLEN: FATHER OF PALM COAST, 1975-1985 by Art Dycke, Palm Coast City Historian, is available. In 138 pages of text and photos, it tells the story of the man who shaped the development of Palm Coast in his years as president of ITT Development Corporation. It also presents a fairly complete history of the Palm Coast community. Older residents can relive the "good old days" and newcomers can learn how Publix and the I-95 Interchange became fixtures here. This book sells for \$15.

Also available are a few remaining copies of IMAGES OF AMERICA: PALM COAST, a picture history, for \$19.99, also authored by Mr. Dycke.

Contact Art Dycke, 446-8636, for additional information.

**On the Road ... Again!**

The History Center will relocate by November 1 – where, we have no clue. With the sale of Palm Coast City Hall, we have lost our home. Once we have a new address, you, our members, will be notified.