

The Palm Coast Historian

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Connie Horvath and the History of Palm Coast, 1970–2011

by Art Dycke

One of the very first people involved in the earliest development of Palm Coast passed away on November 4, 2011. Connie Horvath had been personal secretary to Dan Cooper, the ITT/Levitt project director in charge of surveying, lot planning, and building canals, roads, and infrastructure on the 20,000 acres considered a “big pine covered swamp” in 1970. They and approximately a dozen other project employees worked in the office area of the abandoned Lehigh cement factory on what is now Colbert Lane. The factory had been in full operation from 1952 until 1965 when it closed, resulting in the loss of 300 local jobs. ITT and its Rayonier subsidiary purchased the abandoned factory in January 1969 and ITT’s Levitt and Sons subsidiary started planning and construction of a vast residential community in rural Flagler County.



Lehigh Cement Plant property acquired in 1969

Connie always emphasized the dominant role of the legendary Levitt and Sons name in regard to the layout, construction, and marketing of the early Palm Coast community. She respected the elder William Levitt and felt badly that the Levitt subsidiary was eventually spun off after 1973 to become the ITT Community Development Corporation (ICDC.)

She described the following incident to illustrate what it was like to be the big boss’s secretary in an isolated building with Flagler Beach a few miles away and having to contend with waiting for the Intra-Coastal Waterway (ICW) drawbridge or having the county seat in Bunnell many miles to

the west: “There were many ITT visitors from the Miami and New York headquarters during my tenure. Mr. Cooper would be on the job site mostly and communicated with me via radio. He always spoke briefly and stated only what was needed. One time he radioed that ten or 12 ITT executives from Miami were coming for lunch. The time was 11 AM and lunch was scheduled for 1 PM. I planned the menu, ordered from the only restaurant within miles, Bunnell Diner (which still operates today). Some of my fellow employees together set up tables in the only place available – the hallways of the cement factory.”

Connie made the 50-mile round trip from her home in Daytona Beach for almost three years, even during hurricane season when A1A was often flooded. Her job also required that she drive to the Miami ITT headquarters on occasion.

In 1972 the first nine holes of the golf course were complete and the first residents were moving into their homes. She remembers ITT starting the second nine holes; she personally ordered the clubhouse furniture just before leaving ITT employment after their 1972 Christmas party. Later, she and her husband purchased a home in Palm Coast and she became an active member of the community, participating in the annual International Food Festival with her longtime friend Fannie Herrera.

When Palm Coast became a city, Connie became a founding member of the City of Palm Coast Historical Society in the fall of 2000. She contributed many stories regarding ITT/Levitt’s earliest development of our community which



Connie (far left), Fannie Herrera (third from right) and friends awaiting signal to “dig in.”

Connie Horvath and the History of Palm Coast, 1970–2011

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helped me write my book, **IMAGES OF AMERICA: PALM COAST.**

Connie continued to contribute historical knowledge and active participation as a Historical Society board member until her health required her stay at a nursing home. The Palm Coast Historical Society executive board bestowed an honorary lifetime

board membership and continued mailing copies of The Palm Coast Historian to her.

We honor your spirit and we will miss you, Connie.



Connie Horvath in front of cement plant undergoing removal, circa 2002



An early meeting of Palm Coast Historical Society officers and members. From left, Mary Ann Canfield, Connie Horvath, Sandra Rose Friedman, Margaret Davie, Art Dycke, Kay Stafford, Debby Geyer, Jean Sedlak, Bob Crocetta



The City of  Historical Society

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