

JAUBON PLANTATIONS
J.F.JAUBON MANAGER.
OCHOPEE FLORIDA,.

Ochopee Florida
April 8th 1936

Mrs Frances Reed, District Supervisor,
Mr. Grover Theis, Federal Writers Project.
901 N.E. Second Ave
Miami Florida.

Dear Friends:-

Your questionnaire and letters received and I hasten to send you the enclosed.

Relative to Ochopee will say we are so "new" that there is not much to write,

Have written a brief history of Lee and Collier County affairs and facts of early settlement in hopes that it would give you some data and names which might be valuable to in your com-pilation of the history of this section.

I shall thy and call on you when I am next in Miami.

With highest regards for you and assuring you both that I will be only too glad to furnish you with such information as may be possible; calling you attention to the fact that most of my early activities were with Miami and Dade County from 1896 to 1917 (having been both city Assessor of Miami 1906-08 State and County Assessor 1909-1917 ; of course my great effort then was for the development of roads throughout Dade County and building up our then "back country" which is now a part of Metropolitan Miami.

Very truly yours,

J.F.Jaudon.

OCHOPPEE
COLLIER COUNTY FLORIDA.
By
J.F. Jaudon.

Collier County Florida was created by the Legislature of Florida from a part of Lee County in 1923 and embraces the Gulf Coast frontage from Bonito Springs Naples, Marco, Caxambas Beach, Everglades and Chokeholeskes----the "Big Cypress" country (about two billion feet of cypress) and the cattle country around Immokalee (Immokalee means in Seminole Indian "My Home for").

Lee County the parent is one of Florida's oldest counties and once embraced a large area of the West Coast of Florida, for nearly a century its interior was "the cattle range" due to the vast pasturage (free). for so called range feeding.

In the early 1880s most of the lands in the county were acquired by either so-called Railroad grants or by the Governor Blexam sale to Hamilton Bixson (who purchased 4,000,000 acres of land at twenty five cents per acre or one million dollars---which by the way put the State of Florida out of debt--- (and it has remained "out of debt" to this day.)). Early settlers of Lee County were--

Walter G. Langford---Pioneer of Fort Myers, a banker, a part owner of some of Lee County's land, cattle, grove and other holdings.

Harvie Heitman and family, also one of Lee County's early merchants, property owners and pioneers. T.E. Evans---Capt. Menge and others are pioneers.

Colonel--- Henry, an early pioneer and a friend of the Seminoles, his plantation was on the Caloosahatchee River. The Thompsons are descendants.

Captain Bill Towles---Early in the cattle business and a mighty man, his activities extended down to his death a few years ago. Jake Summerlin.

The Koreschan Colony---At Estero---Headed by Doctor Teed and young A.H. Andrews this colony moved from Chicago and points west and have maintained this interesting Colony of people (also the "American Eagle" a weekly newspaper) ever since and are valuable citizens.

General W.B. Halderman (of the Louisville Courier Journal) was one of the first ones who saw the beauties of "Naples Beach" and its (at that time complete isolation from the world) he was very much in favor of keeping Naples isolated.

John S. Jones of Columbus Ohio (of Sunday Creek Coal Co. fame) purchased the most of Naples and with his life long friend S. Davies Warfield extended the Seaboard Air Line Railroad to Naples.

Captain W.B. Collier of Marco---One of God's greatest men established Marco the clam industry, etc, he came to Marco almost a century ago from Cedar Keys and Key West, he had a fine hotel and "Paradise" at Marco, he was a real pioneer.

Mrs. Tony Barfield of Caxambas---a worker, a wonderful woman, then and now, a woman who earned and preserved fruits and vegetable, run a hotel, and in every way aided, furthered, and developed Caxambas and its wonderful future; she is now ~~SECRETARY~~ ~~BOARD~~ ~~CHAIRMAN~~ of Collier County (Chairman), she and her family have been and are the mainstays of Collier County its industries and developments.

Captain George W. Sterter---of Everglades---It was he with his father who started a small store and indian trading post at Everglades over fifty years ago and was "a friend of the Indians" a pioneer in every sense of the word; his sugar cane fields, his fisherman's Paradise---his hospitality---his big heart---his love of nature is one of the outstanding "epochs and history of Collier County."

C.S. (Ted) Smallwood of Chokeholeskes---Big Ted big in body, mind and effort, his father and he established a small store and trading post at Chokeholeskes (Indian for food), over fifty years ago; it is still a

"point of interest" located in the Ten Thousand Island" country, a fish camp a "haven" for the Tarpon Fishermen" and boatmen;

Scattered throughout Collier County are such pioneers as Tom Weeks of Naples, Father Brown of Immokalee, (he was the father of the Seminole'education and development). E.W.Crayton of Naples now living at Naples, he was with General Halderman and John S. Jones in their development of that interesting City.

Judge E.O. Wilkenson of Naples a "real man" quiet, retiring, powerful in his influence and efforts for both Lee and Collier Counties; the real "daddy of the Tamiami Trail" as far as Lee and Collier Counties are concerned; it was he that walked, waded, and laid out the Trail in Lee and Collier Counties, he circulated the petitions to create the Special Road Districts which later led to the ultimate construction of the Trail. he now lives at Naples in a quiet home, devotes his time to fine fruits and flowers. It was he in 1915 who saw that the "future" of Naples, Fort Myers and the West Coast depended largely on Miami and with J.F. Jaudon who was then Tax Assessor of Dade County "visioned" the Tamiami Trail; it was he who invited Jaudon to come over to Naples. Marco and Fort Myers and lay plans to build this great cross state highway---from Miami to Fort Myers (across the Everglades) via Naples and if possible Marco (They called it "Miami Marco Highway" He and Jaudon realized that they had years of work ahead of them but they both worked, spent money, time and kept constantly on the job until in 1923 (eight years later) they had induced their counties (Dade and Lee) by special Road District funds to build from each end a fairly passable road; they permitted (by no effort on their part to participate in same) what was known then and now as a "Tamiami Trail Blazers" calvacade, headed by Ora W. Chapin and altho he and Jaudon had made the trip across the Trail via canoe, on foot, and partly by car many times they felt that their work was almost done as they had proven that a "passable road could be built from Miami to Fort Myers" the eight years work in getting that far was ~~xxxxxxxx~~ wonderful for they had been told many times that "it can not be done". but it was done.

COLLIER COUNTY-----As has been said Collier County was created by the Legislature of Florida in 1923 --altho in that year the Legislature had said "no more Counties" so in as much as Barron G. Collier had purchased a large acreage in Southern Lee County, the Trail was incomplete for practical use so an opposition was created, the bill creating the county was first passed on by the Committee on County Organization as "unfavorable" but the bill was re-committed to Committee and was passed on "without recommendation" but after a "bitter fight" the billed was passed and Collier County became one of Florida's Counties.

John W. Martin was the next Governor and with a vast sum of money to a newly created State Road Department he with Fene Hathway then Chairman of the State Road Department in 1935 had the Tamiami Trail designated as a State Highway (a preferential road); the State Road Department spent several million dollars on same and in 1927 opened the road to trafic.

Barron G. Collier had purchased from Captain Geo. W. Storter at Everglades and from Mrs. Tommie Barfield at then Caxambas (now Collier City) their holdings and has since developed these points to real points of interest in Florida.

Tomato growers, saw mill operators and general development has resulted and now Collier County is a prosperous section. Naples and Everglades as is

Immokalee quite some towns; the Collier interests are represented by Mr. B. Graham Copeland of Everglades; I predict great industrial and agricultural developments here in the years to come.