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A HISTORICAL SKETCH OF MY HOME
TOWN, DANIA

Turn back the hands of time nearly three score years—the same perpetual spring in the air; the same balmy skies ; the same blue Atlantic, with its climate-tempering Gulf Stream rolling lazily along ; the same Florida, with its vast opportunities which then were just beginning to visualize as some rainbow's pot of gold of the future.

Miami there was and Ft. Lauderdale. Between these, vast stretches of waste land, supposedly ; Everglades and swampy marsh-lands ; but there was one higher, pine-covered ridge some twenty miles north of Miami and five miles south of Ft. Lauderdale rising 12 ft. above sea level. "Modelo" it was called—just a small agricultural community, composed of a handful of people who saw the possibilities of this land. Surely such a climate, such rich self irrigated soil should produce profitable vegetation. But what should it be? Tomatoes? They required moisture, much of it. Yet a few plants were set out, they thrived and bore luscious fruit. They could be raised all the year around. This was an opportunity for the thrifty settlers.

The news of the possibilities in tomato raising traveled north. Interest was shown in this section of Florida. So, entirely as an experiment, in 1898 a party of four people, with the agent, Paulson, came down from Chicago to view the country. Later he brought down some dozen families of Danish people from Wis-

Note—This essay won first prize in the last Bachelior-Florida Historical Society Essay Contest for Florida high school students. The next Contest will be held at Rollins College on February 19, next. It is open to students of the junior and senior classes of accredited Florida high schools. For information inquire of Professor A. J. Hanna, Rollins College, Winter Park.

consin. They changed the name of the town from Modelo to Dania.

A genuine paradise it seemed to these sturdy pioneers, with its marvelous climate, unchanging the year around. They wanted to stay, remain here always. The land continued to yield better and better tomatoes, more and more of them. Due to this it was reasoned that other things could be grown with success.

To the west were the real Everglades of Florida. Living back in them were the Seminole Indians, who rowed into the settlement in canoes to carry on trade with the white men. These Indians spoke only their own language save for the guttural "Yah" or "Naw" to the pioneer storekeeper, who was forced to interpret their language and satisfy their wants as best he could. Friendly fellows were these big, burly Seminoles, never harming anyone without cause. Silently they marvelled at the white man's extensive raising of "love apples", as they named the tomatoes.

Early in 1901, A. C. Frost moved to Dania from another section of Florida. From his earliest arrival Mr. Frost by his generous public spiritedness, came to be looked upon as a sort of guardian for the town.

The following year, 1902, saw other present-day citizens coming to Dania: Mr. and Mrs. P. Hansen, P. H. Peterson and O. P. Hurning of Pittsfield, Wisconsin. For a time Mr. and Mrs. Hansen lived at Hinkley Hammock, one of the old landmarks of the community, now the attractive Wyldeewood estate. Mr. Peterson and Mr. Hansen put up the first two-story building erected in Dania, located on the corner now occupied by the Dania Hardware Company.

The next four years showed such an increase in the vegetable-raising industry, and in the population that in the year 1906 the town was incorporated with J. W. Mulliken elected as mayor. A first class hotel had been erected by A. C. Frost, and was managed by Mrs.

Annie Bloom. The building was destroyed by fire in 1911. A year after, Mr. Frost had put up another building for a hotel which was run by Mrs. Roper. It was also destroyed by fire December, 1925.

The first church of Dania was of the Methodist denomination, the congregation holding services in the first old hotel building until the completion of the church in its present location. Soon the Baptist Church was built.

The first school was held in a small building where the Roper hotel was later built. The need of a larger school was sorely felt, as families could not be induced to settle without this advantage for their children. The first schoolhouse was built by the F. E. C. Railway Company, Mr. Alsobrook and Mr. Frost, with the help of a few settlers. Later on a new and still better one was built on the present site.

Dania's first bank was established in 1912 by A. C. Frost, M. C. Hardee, M. C. Frost, and Mr. Tompson. It began business with a capital of \$13,000 and surplus of \$3,000.

The year 1916 saw a vastly improved Dania in every respect over the little ambitious colony of fifteen years before. The population had grown to 1,500 ; now it boasted three churches, four hotels, a drug store, dry goods store, three general stores, thirteen large packing houses and many other places of importance.

Farming was productive to a great extent at this time. The greatest step of progress was achieved through the efforts of Governor Broward-the drainage of the Everglades. What a future! In 1917 a contract was let for the Dania cut-off canal, another great aid to agriculture and a dominant factor that has aided the community of Dania in becoming what it is today.

Even with the results of a boom and a storm the town of Dania is still progressive. Nearby the Florida

Power & Light Company is located, giving employment to many men who make their homes in Dania. Also the new Port Everglades, just a little north of the town, will mean much to the progress of the city. These things cause Dania to look forward to nothing less than being the industrial metropolis of Florida.

LILLIAN JORDAN