In addition to being one of Broward County's most prominent early citizens, Andrew Christian Frost led a long, full and adventurous life, from his immigration from Denmark as a young man to his numerous business and political enterprises. Although not the first resident of Dania, Frost is regarded as the city's "founding father." He worked as colonization agent for the Model Land Company which had platted the community, built and operated its first store, post office and packing house, and served as first president of the town council upon incorporation in 1904. Frost was married three times. His third wife, Katrina, accompanied him to Florida and survived him by over twenty years.

This article, written by the Frost's youngest daughter in the early 1980s, offers a view of their lives from a family perspective, preserving, with humor and an eye for detail, many anecdotes and recollections of their personal lives that might have otherwise been lost to posterity. Dewina Frost Branch was born in Wisconsin in 1898 and came to Dania with her family in 1902. A longtime Broward County resident, she died in 1988. Her Memoirs were typed by her daughter Jane Harding, and are reprinted here courtesy of her granddaughter, Cris Pacetti.

PAPA

Papa was born in Denmark on September 30, 1847, in Tstrup, near Skjorpinge Station. He had one brother, Soren, and one sister. He never mentioned his father and said that his mother drowned in the North Sea in shallow water and believed she suffered a seizure. After his mother died different families took the children to live with them. Papa lived with Jeppe Neilson who had a store. Mr. Neilson took special interest in him and taught him store management and he eventually was his chief clerk and bookkeeper for seven years. He also carried the Royal Mail for two years between Aalborg and Balum—a distance of 20 miles.

This area of Denmark was under German rule and they were drafting men in the German Army. When he became a young man he lived in fear that this would happen to him. Uncle Soren was not eligible for the draft because of flat feet.

He read everything he could about America and decided he wanted to make a new life there. His benefactor knew nothing of his plan. At the age of 26 he made his way to Liverpool, but without enough money to pay his passage to America. He boarded a ship unnoticed and came here as a stowaway. He often said he never forgot seeing the Statue of Liberty for the first time and what it meant to him. I believe it was at this time that he changed his name to Frost. He never mentioned his real name and don't know of anyone who knew it.

After his arrival he made his way to Springfield, Illinois and worked on the State Capitol and the Leland Hotel. This job led him to the wheat fields in Illinois where he cut his knee very badly with a scythe. They put him in the poor house because he was unable to care for himself. He was there for about a year and was so neglected that his knee did not heal properly. He contracted typhoid fever and sent for his sister to care for him. She also contracted the disease and died as a result of this illness.

After he recovered from this illness and the loss of his sister, a man befriended him and staked him to a horse and buggy, some patent medicines and yankee notions. He had a spiel about the medicine and what it would do (like the old-fashioned traveling medicine men did which were prevalent in the country at the time).

He never forgot the words to this spiel. He told me of one incident when he stopped at a farm house and the farmer's wife told him their hogs had cholera. He told her it would cure them and he made a sale. About a month or so later he was in this same area. He didn't realize it but knew it when he saw the farm from a hill. As he approached it the farmer's wife came running toward him. There was no turning back. He was afraid her hogs had died. However she shouted to him, "I'm so glad to see you. All my hogs recovered and I want a big supply of your medicine."

He then made his way to southeastern Wisconsin to an area called New Denmark in Brown County. This move was in 1876. He went into business with Hans Beyer and they
started a general store and he renamed the town Kopenhagen, New Denmark. After one year he sold his share of the business to his partner and went a hundred miles from there into the wilderness of Oconto County. He took a homestead of 80 acres, named it Maple Valley and married Marion Gregersen. He built a log cabin first and started a little store and applied to the post office department in Washington, D.C. for a post office. They granted him the post office after one year with the understanding that he would carry the mail, free of charge, from Oconto to Maple Valley—a distance of thirty miles. This post office was named Maple Valley and he was appointed the first postmaster. This post office was supplied from Oconto Falls—a distance of fifteen miles. The postal authorities allowed only forty percent for stamps that were sold and this did not begin to pay the expenses to carry the mail so he had to pay a mail carrier $150 a year until the mail route was established. However, the red tape did not end here—in order to establish the post office he had to have more than one post office. He accomplished this by campaigning and setting up six post offices on the proposed mail route. He then circulated a petition for a mail route to supply these post offices between Oconto and Keshena which was immediately effected.

He then built a hotel, a new store and a home. He also erected other buildings including a blacksmith shop and a wagon shop. He named this area Frostville. During this period in his life he and Marion had four children, Gregers, Mettie, Antone and Martin. He was elected Justice of the Peace, Member of the Town Board and Secretary of the Schools for several successive years.

In 1884 his wife died and left him with four children. In 1885 he married his neighbor's daughter, Charlotte Hansen, and they had one daughter, Lottie. When Lottie was two years old Charlotte died of tuberculosis (she did not drown in a creek as reported in newspaper articles here).

I believe it was at this time that he sold his store and business interests to E. H. Gilkey and H. M. Lord and the hotel to his brother-in-law, Andrew Gregersen. After the sale of his properties he returned to Denmark for six months. His children were left in the care of Myrtle Gregersen, his sister-in-law.

When he returned from Denmark (I imagine it was not easy to find someone to care for his children) he hired my mother who had just come from Denmark and needed employment. Her name was Katrina Johnsen and she took care of the children and his home. They married some time later in Maple Valley.

His ambition took him still farther north and to more wilderness. He built a hotel there so that he would not have to travel to and from the camps. (He was also in the logging and lumber business for about 17 years). He incorporated a town called Mountain, applied for a post office and was appointed postmaster. He also hired a mail carrier from Gillet to Mountain until the Government established a mail route.

In addition to his hotel and lumber business he built a store and a home. During his early years in Mountain he established the town of Armstrong and [was] elected its chairman for four years. He was also a member of the Oconto County Board at this time.

Andrew Christian Frost (above, standing on stump) probably taken at the newly completed schoolhouse in Frostville, Wisconsin, in the early 1880s (courtesy of Cris Pacetti), and (right photo) as a member of the Wisconsin Legislature, ca. 1895.
Despite the fact that he dictated this information to me during the time I was in business college and I still have the original copy, it is very difficult to correctly interpret all of his many personal and business activities. The time lapse between all of these ventures were not dictated to me and all that can be done is to list them as he told me.

There was no railroad in Mountain at this time but they had a stagecoach from Kenesha. He was also elected Justice of the Peace for several years.

In 1895 he was elected Representative from Oconto County to the Wisconsin Legislature. He was well known by this time and was elected mainly for his knowledge of the lumber business. "When the legislature adjourned that year Senator Withee chartered a special train and invited the legislators to take a trip to visit the Illinois Legislature which was in session at the time. There were 100 members invited and they arrived in Springfield in the evening. The next day they were escorted from their hotel by a committee of arrangement to the State Capitol and resolutions of welcome were passed and the courtesy of both houses was extended to the Wisconsin Legislators. The Governor of Illinois gave a reception in their honor and the Mayor granted the freedom of the city to the members." (This was dictated and I interpreted his exact wording.)

Ex-Governor Scoefield was at the meeting in Springfield and invited Papa to visit Tallahassee in the interest of the Tallahassee, Georgia and Carrabelle Railroad Company. They wanted him to advise them about a land grant the company had been given by the State of Florida to build a railroad from Tallahassee to the Gulf. They also wanted him to head a project to bring northerners there to settle on the grant. I suppose this was because he had gained quite a reputation as a colonizer by this time.

While he was in Tallahassee the Florida Legislature was in session and through the influence of the railroad officials the courtesy of both houses was extended to him and recorded in the journal.

When he returned to Wisconsin from Florida, the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Company had started running a branch railroad from Gillet through Mountain to Leona. He donated twenty acres to the railroad company for town and depot purposes and had twenty acres platted in town lots. He also donated six acres for saw mill purposes. His next move was east of Mountain about eight miles. He had sold his hotel to a Mr. Mountour from Antigo, Wisconsin, and erected several buildings on Granite Lake (also known as Crooked Lake). He started a summer resort and hunting ranch. He also went into the sheep raising business with E. H. Gilkey and they bought 500 sheep from South Dakota. Some time later he sold the sheep business to his partner and his resort to Mr. Newall of Gillett.

After this the move was back to Mountain where he built a home and lived there a short time. During his term in the legislature he visited the Chicago World's Fair with his colleagues. While there he met Henry Flagler and J. C. Ingraham who was Vice President of Florida East Coast Railroad. Mr. Flagler was looking for land agents and invited him on a trip to Florida with Mr. Ingraham and him. Mr. Flagler had just extended the railroad from West Palm Beach to Miami.

When the train stopped at Fort Lauderdale they got off and Papa examined the soil. He wasn't impressed with what he saw and decided it was too low for farming. They continued south and stopped about five miles. He examined the soil again and said he thought it was more fertile and was amazed that it was just a mile from the ocean. Their destination was Miami and when they arrived he put in for his land grant.

The following is a quote from an article in the Miami Herald: "We were surprised to find the following in Miami correspondence of March 1897. 'A.C. Frost of Wisconsin is here from Palm Beach with a letter of introduction from the land department of the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad and is seeking land for a colony'—that was ten years before we supposed Frost was to have reached Dania taking over the town from the Chicago Danes who preceded him."

He returned to Wisconsin and brought his family to Florida. We first moved to Titusville. Greg had finished school at Dixon Law College in Illinois and Mettie had taken a teacher's course at the same school. All of the children came to Florida except Martin, who preferred to remain in Wisconsin and work in the lumber company.

No one was very happy in Titusville. Living conditions, especially the water, were very bad and not what we were used to. We had to use rain water for most every purpose. This prompted Papa to move us to Dania.

There were only two married couples and three bachelors living in Dania when we arrived. In a short time Papa had a temporary prefabricated house built while he could have a permanent home built for us. The prefabricated one was sent down from Jacksonville. He also built a store which also housed a post office and he was appointed postmaster. John O’Neal (who had married Mettie) and two of the older boys were in partnership in the store.

The Seminole Indians traded in the store and would buy the splendid cherries he sold. These cherries would sell very quickly. The Seminole women and children would have to wait outside under the trees because their men would not allow them in the store.

In a short time he had Dania settled and sold over $100,000 worth of land for the railroad company. He was elected President of the City Council (I believe Dania was the first incorporated city in Broward County). He then organized the Dania Packing House Association and built a large packing house (prior to this there were only tar paper shacks to pack tomatoes). The railroad company was pleased with his operation and they sent him through several of the northern states to advertise the east coast of Florida. I believe it was at this time that Mr. Flagler gave him a large diamond stickpin for his
efforts. He is wearing it in the picture that was made for the lobby of the Broward County Courthouse. It is a three-section mural made in New York from a very small snapshot. It is something of which we can all be proud.

In 1907 Greg accompanied him to Denmark. They were there six months and the rest of the family stayed in North Carolina.

The following year he made an extended trip through the southern and western states and visited a part of Mexico, San Francisco and ended his trip at the exposition in Seattle. (John O’Neal and J. C. Ingraham accompanied him on this trip.)

He became ill in 1911 and returned to Mountain. The year before he left (1910) he assisted in establishing the Dania Bank and was a stockholder and director in the bank. During this time he also assisted in the hiring of I. T. Parker who came highly recommended to him and was from Louisville, Georgia. I remember the first bank clearly. It was located on the northeast side of the beach road where the big banyan tree was and was a very small, one-story building.

From 1911 to 1914 when he was in Mountain (he still had his home there) and even though he was ill he was elected Chairman of the town for two terms and was also a member of the county board. He also assisted in organizing the Farmers Bank in Oconto and was a stockholder and director for two years. In 1914 he sold out his interest to A. McAllister and returned to Dania.

PAPA REMEMBERED

During the last year that we lived in Mountain (I was about 15) Papa planned another trip to Denmark by himself. He wanted me to go with him but I really had a fear of crossing that big ocean. He had ordered some new clothes from Sears and Roebuck and Mama discovered some fancy shirts in the dresser drawer. Several were silk and one was pink as I remember. She was really upset about this. I don’t recall how long he was gone, but he brought back a gorgeous red Swedish fox fur for me. Perhaps it was because I was the youngest girl but [I] was labeled his favorite from then on.

When we were living in our second home in Dania Papa had given each of us children a lot on Federal Highway located about where the airport is now. He had a chance to sell this at quite a profit and he asked us to deed them back to him and we were all glad to do it.

There were many times when he would need Mama’s signature in his real estate transactions. She would be busy with her household chores and he would say, “Katrina, come and sign this.” She would want to know what she was to sign and he would answer, “Nevermind, just sign it.” She must not have known just how much property they owned.

Papa loved music and we always had a piano and a phonograph (the early ones with the big horn). The only song I ever heard him sing was “In the Sweet By and By.” On Sunday afternoons after our main meal and the table cleared, he would be dressed in his best clothes, and would get his stack of records ready to play. They were mostly patriotic ones, “Under the Double Eagle” and “Stars and Stripes Forever” by John Philip Sousa. When he played the “Stars and Stripes Forever” I almost expected him to stand at attention. He also had “Listen to the Mockingbird” and “My Darling Nellie Grey.” He would turn the volume up so loud and play these records for a long time. Everyone in the house would have some visiting or some other social plans for the afternoon.

Papa was a real American and our flag (ordered from Sears and Roebuck and the biggest he could buy) would fly each day from the top of our house and would almost dwarf the building.

When I was in eighth grade in Wisconsin all of the girls were to make an apron by hand and they would be judged by the County Superintendent of Schools in Oconto and his judges. About 300 aprons were submitted from the schools. My apron won first prize and they gave me a gold pin inscribed for this honor. I remember that he was so proud you would have thought I had really performed some sort of miracle.

When his health began to fail I was in my late teens and he was spending the winters in Dania and the summers in Wisconsin. He would sit in the cellar and drink buttermilk and this made a big improvement in his health. He depended on Martin to carry on his business interest when he was away and relied on him.
a great deal.

Papa was a very hypertensive man and when he was in the legislature he would take a nip of whiskey from a small flask he carried when he would have to make an important speech.

When Papa was interested in politics he would write articles for the *Fort Lauderdale News*. Mr. J. C. Matthews was editor of the paper then. I would type these articles for him and his criticism was sometimes pretty strong. There were times when I would question the use or spelling of a word that he used, but they were always right. I would drive him to Mr. Matthews' home to deliver the articles which was near the present courthouse and is still standing. They would discuss his articles which were often meant to expose crooked politics or other controversial matters and Mr. Matthews would say that he agreed with Papa but that he could not print them. Papa would then ask him what he was afraid of. During these visits I would visit with his daughter, Sara, who was one of my close friends.

What manner of man was my father—to have overcome all obstacles—a foreigner in a new land, poverty, death of loved ones, handicapped with a stiff leg, and many other adversities? I believe he was a man of no horizon.

**MAMA**

Her father was a farmer and her mother was crippled with rheumatism and was confined to a wheelchair most of the time. The only incident I remember of her early childhood was concerning the pet dog that she and her sister had. One day they were playing in the fields and a snake bit the dog. They ran home crying and carrying the dog in their arms. Her mother told her to feed it warm milk and it recovered.

Her parents lived in a section of Denmark that was also under German rule and they were heavily taxed and it was very hard for them to make a living.

Their religion was Lutheran and she studied the catechism regularly when she was a child. She was confirmed at the age of 12. When she was old enough she worked in a bakery in town. When there was a wedding they would have to work extra hard baking fancy cakes and pastries for it. The wedding celebrations would last for days with street dancing, music and feasting.

After this job she learned to sew and had a small portable sewing machine and went from door to door sewing for families. She stayed in town and would go home on weekends to care for her family and her invalid mother. She would take home the food and necessities that she had bought and would cook enough for the week so that she could go out and make the living.

She had heard about America and dreamed of going there. She saved every cent that she could spare and planned her trip and told her sister that she would send for her as soon as she could. Her trip was first to Liverpool and then to America. She spoke very little English and protected her money by pinning it to her underclothing. She made this voyage on a small ship and when they had been at sea about a week they encountered a very bad storm. The ship had three decks and the storm so severe that the waves would go over the entire ship. They had a lot of Jewish immigrants on board and they were weeping and wailing. At this time she had little hope that they would survive, but the storm finally subsided and they landed in New York. I don't know how long she was there or how she got to Wisconsin and the area where Papa lived.

She got a job in Maple Valley doing housework and Papa hired her to take care of his young family. The children were in need of good care and she worked extra hard to get things in order. This was a full-time job with five children which included sewing and knitting. Lottie was very sick with colitis and needed extra care.

I asked Mama why she had married a man with five children and she would answer, "I guess it was counted out for me"—in other words, it was meant to be.

After they left Maple Valley, Mama also cooked for Papa's hotel. She baked all the bread and pies and baked beans on a wood stove. The lumberjacks would come to town on weekends to rest. They would drink beer in the several saloons there. I remember them (during my childhood), they wore bold plaid shirts held together with huge safety pins in the back.

Mama was expecting her first child about this time, Sheridan (named for General Sheridan). He weighed 13 pounds when he was born and she almost died during his birth. It was such a hard delivery that they sent for the doctor in Oconto. She had to walk on crutches for some time.

When Papa was on one of his trips and was gone for several months, she did not hear from him and thought that he had perhaps drowned in the Mississippi River. There was no railroad into Mountain then, only the stage. One day the stage arrived and everyone went to meet it, including Mama. Papa got
off and she said she fainted for the first time in her life.

She often said that she could not have survived if it had not been for Aunt Mary’s help. Greg, Antone and Martin were all young and were of some help, but just like all young boys, they had other things to do. Greg loved to read and sometimes they would find him in the loft reading when he was needed to help with the chores.

I believe it was at this time in Mountain that Mamie and Sherman (named for General Sherman) were born. After Papa sold the hotel and when they moved to Crooked Lake, I was born (Dewina Manilla). He wanted a boy and wanted to name it Dewey, after Admiral Dewey. It did not dismay him when I was a girl, he changed the “y” to “i” and added “na.” I have often wondered if there is another “Dewina” in the world. It was 40” below zero the day I was born and they had to give me a toddy with whiskey to keep me warm and the boys argued over who was to feed me. They piled quilts on Mama to keep her warm and kept a big fire going. Papa, of course, was gone and I believe he was in Madison on business.

We had some bad storms in Wisconsin and one day Papa saw a black cloud coming toward us on the other side of the lake. He knew it was a cyclone. Mama was at the foot of the hill milking a cow and he screamed for her to come to the house but she refused. We had a storm cellar and he had already gathered the children there. The storm came quickly and uprooted numerous trees and dumped them into the lake.

The summers were beautiful and there were wild roses all around the lake. There was a mountain to the north and it appeared to be dark blue from a distance. Indians lived there and when we slept in the boathouse at the bottom of the hill we could hear them passing by. There was another lake nearby, just wagon width between the two and it was called Mud Lake. People used to say that it had no bottom and I wonder if this was meant to frighten us children because it was a deep lake.

Mama used to tell us stories by Hans Christian Andersen whose birthplace was Denmark. There was also the story of “Jack and the Beanstalk.” When she told us this story she would pronounce Giant as “Joint” and this would bring laughter from us children. There was one story we would beg her to tell over and over again called “The Little Match Girl.” It was a sad story about a little girl who was selling matches in the snow and used her last match to warm herself and eventually died from the cold.

After Papa had sold his sheep business and we moved back to Mountain, Lincoln (named for President Lincoln) was born.

All of these events at Crooked Lake and Mountain took place after Papa’s venture to Florida with Mr. Flager and he then wanted Mama to move to Florida. This must have been a shock to her because it meant leaving her relatives (Aunt Mary and Uncle Ote and their children) and friends and starting a whole new life. She must have tried very hard to make the change despite the disease and living conditions in Florida. However she wanted to return to Mountain and we returned to the home that Papa still owned there. I was about 12 years old and we stayed for four years. Papa would come up in the summer and return to his business in the winter months.

The train trips from Dania to Mountain must not have been easy for her. It took three days and nights, with layovers in either Jacksonville or Chicago, depending on what time of the day you left. At first there would be six children to look after and that would not be an easy task for anyone. I remember one trip in particular when we had to spend the day in Chicago. When we arrived there we had to transfer to the Big Four and during the ride from station to station I can see those big horses (like the ones Anheuser-Busch has) and the noise they would make on the brick streets. This was very exciting for us children because even the depot looked like a city to us. Sherman was in knee pants on this trip and Mama couldn’t find him when it came time to board the train.

We all looked and finally found him at a news stand. After we boarded Mama asked the conductor if she had enough time to get some sandwiches for the trip and he assured her she did. However, after she left, the train started moving and we children were frantic because we thought we were leaving Mama behind. The conductor quieted us and told us that we were not leaving and that the train was only switching.

Papa really liked Mama’s cooking, especially her chicken soup with Danish dumplings. No one could make them like she did. Also her vegetable soup with her home grown vegetables and tiny meatballs. She always had a parsley bed and pronounced it parsally (her accent again).

During the four years when we returned to Mountain she boarded two teachers from our school. They must have liked it at our house because they stayed the entire four years we were there. Food in Wisconsin was not a big problem because of the dairy industry and unlike Florida there was no need for refrigeration most of the year.

Papa built another home in Dania (on Federal Highway) so that Mama would come back. Our old home was moved to the back street where Sheridan and Agnes lived. Mama returned to Dania and it wasn’t long before she had her chickens and garden growing.

Mama was always very independent and liked to make her “spending” money. She sharecropped with a black man and they grew cabbage and other vegetables for market.

She was instrumental in organizing the Episcopal Church in Dania (it was near the Lutheran belief). Their first minister was a Rev. Tracy from India. Papa thought very highly of him. (In 1980 I attended a Pioneer Luncheon where about 400 attended and Mrs. Annie Beck sat next to me. Her husband had owned and operated the first drug store in Lauderdale. She told me she was a member of our Episcopal Church and had attended Papa’s funeral which was held in our home and also remembers Rev. Tracy officiated). The 1926 hurricane destroyed the church
was put in shape and Mamie and I painted her bedroom. Mamie was packing tomatoes, but helped all that she could. After I took her home she could not be left alone and I hired a woman to just sit with her during the day while I did the housework and cooking. This meant a 24-hour a day job for me but meant a great deal to me that she did not have to be put in a home and could spend her last days in her own bed.

I am very proud of my mother because she was a hard working lady and was always there to help her children.

MARYLAND

After Papa's health began to fail, we went to Maryland for the summer. Papa had bought a three-story house on the water. You might describe it as a bay. It wasn't far from Baltimore. Rob and Mamie came with us the first time. We would drive through the country and one day Papa saw an old grist mill. The owner said that he did not have the money to repair it and needed a lot of work done on it to make it operative. Papa bought it and had it in running condition again. I don't remember what happened to this property and imagine that he eventually sold it.

While we were there we would take sight-seeing boat trips into Baltimore. We visited one beautiful park there, Druid Hills Park. We also visited Washington D.C. and took in the entire town. We stayed at private residences and went through the Capitol and other places of interest. Rob sat in the President's chair and Mamie and I saw all the first ladies' gowns at the Smithsonian Institute. This was all very tiring for Papa and he had to rest a lot. I didn't go on the next trip because I was married and expecting my first child, Dick. They made the trip again. However Mamie said that Papa was so weak they were unable to go on the trips we had made before.

DANIA KUMTE FACTORY

There was a kumtx factory a short distance from the highway on the south side of the beach road. The fruit resembled a small brown, velvety pineapple in sections and had a terrible odor. The Indians used it for starch. There was another factory (much larger than the one in Dania) close to Hallandale on the Old Dixie and when you approached it you had to hold your nose. They said that it made wonderful fertilizer. The Historical Society in Miami has done a lot of research on kumte.

The Frost family and other Danish settlers at the second A. C. Frost house, referred to by Dewina as the "old home." Frost built his third and final Dania home in 1915 (courtesy of Cris Pacetti).
Katrina Frost with her grandson, Richard Harris (daughter Dewina’s firstborn child), 1922 (courtesy of Cris Pacetti).

DICK’S CRADLE

While we were living in Dania after I was married and Dick was a baby Papa made a cradle. He took two cheesebox covers, cut them in half and put a board in between them. He nailed them on another board and then put a clothes basket on this and secured it. He would rock Dick in the cradle and Mama could not believe it because he had never done anything like this for one of his own children. Of course he had always been a very busy man in his younger years and I believe he really enjoyed being a grandfather.

THE TELEPHONE COMPANY IN DANIA

When Dan and I lived in Miami he worked for the telephone company. A Mr. James owned the telephone company in Dania and had a small office, switchboard and living quarters upstairs in a tin building next to the Roper Hotel. He was trying to get Papa to buy it and he knew that Dan knew the business well. During one of our frequent visits to Dania Papa asked Dan’s opinion about buying the business. He told Papa that before he made Mr. James an offer he would like to look over the equipment and lines and would do so the first chance he had. We came up the next week and Papa said he had already bought it. Dan was upset about it but quit his job of long standing and we moved to Dania. I was ill and had to have an operation. I stayed at Mama and Papa’s and Dan stayed at the office where the switchboard was. After investigating the equipment he told Papa it was in bad shape as the poles had to be replaced and also new lines. He had to get an operator for the board while he worked during the day on the lines and he would take the board at night.

The repair and maintenance took all of our profit and to add to our troubles I had to go to Miami for an operation, which Dr. Jackson performed, and was in the hospital six weeks. When I had recuperated from this we finally moved upstairs in the office living quarters. It had very little furniture and I could not climb the stairs. The business kept getting worse and it was making barely enough money to meet our living expenses.

We finally decided to give it up and move back to Miami. Papa sold it to Mr. Young (Hollywood founder). We had just enough money to move to Miami, but Dan got his job with the telephone company back and we started all over again.

Papa had always helped all of his children and wanted them to succeed in whatever endeavor they entered. I know he was trying to help us too and wanted us to take the money he had received for the sale of the company, but Dan refused.

OUR LIFE IN DANIA—THE EARLY DAYS

On the west side corner of the beach road there was a saloon with a dance hall upstairs. Saturday nights they would have dances. The Danes played violins and they were very good musicians. The parents would spread quilts in the back corners and we children would watch and eventually go to sleep.

Mr. Ed King built Mr. Hinkley’s cabin (he was the first builder in Broward County). Mr. King used the pine trees on the property for the cabin and would ride his bicycle from Fort Lauderdale. Mr. Hinkley was from Jesup, Georgia, and his wife ran a hotel there. I can remember at Christmas time she would send cakes to her husband. Mr. Hinkley was a horticulturist and had beautiful flowers, shrubs and exotic trees which were imported from as far as Japan. He also had a tree house for the boys and built a tower where we could see the ocean (a mile away). His Great Dane dog knocked me down one time and I screamed for help, but Mr. Hinkley came to my rescue and found the dog standing over me.

His gardens were a favorite spot for the young couples to stroll on Sun-

Dewina Frost at age sixteen, 1915 (courtesy of Cris Pacetti).
day afternoons. My sisters, [and] Maggie and Pearl Roper with their escorts would all dress in their Sunday best and spend the afternoon there.

When I was small, about ten, Haley's comet was due to appear. People had predicted it would be the end of the world. I was very frightened, but wouldn't let anyone know. It appeared east over the ocean and I really couldn't look because of my fear. It looked like a kite with a tail. This happened about two o'clock in the morning.

During the First World War we made a trip to Wisconsin for the summer. Papa had a seven passenger Hudson car. He never could learn to drive because of his stiff leg. Hob, Mamie's husband, drove and we camped out. We were really packed in the car and were on the road about ten days. There were no road maps then and Papa would ask someone how far the next town was and they wouldn't know because they had never been there. I think this made Papa a little angry that people could be ignorant about such a thing. The car was very dusty and the boys had written on the back of the car "Damn the Kaiser" and "To Hell with the Kaiser." Of course, Papa, as well as all Americans, hated him too.

It was very rough going through the mountains in Tennessee. The roads were wagon width, nine feet, and the wheels of our car had to ride on the side of an embankment. They also had large bumps in them. These mountaineers didn't want any "furiners" riding their roads. We would take the Old Dixie all the way to Jacksonville and across to Madison, Florida (the road here was brick, very narrow and warped in places). From Madison to Valdosta and on to Wisconsin. The summer would always be lots of fun in Mountain. We would pick berries, fish at Crooked Lake and enjoy the July 4th celebration.

Mettie and Lottie would go to the dances with Pearl and Maggie Roper on Saturday nights at the Pioneer House. The Pioneer House was owned by the Stranahans and to get to it you had to ferry across New River (of course there was no bridge at that time). They danced the "Cake Walk." I talked to Mrs. Stranahan shortly before she died and was delighted to recall those memories and remembered the good times my sisters had there.

I shall never forget the minstrel shows which came to Dania (at that time they did not stop in Fort Lauderdale). There were "Silas Green from New Orleans" and "The Orange Blossom Special." It took them all day to pitch the tent where the woman's club is now. The show started at noon with a parade and "wonderful" music. There would always be a large crowd with people coming from Lauderdale, Hallandale and all surrounding areas. Then there would be the excitement of the big tent filled with people at night. They would be singing, telling jokes and having a delightful time.

After I was married and living in Miami, there were Tomato Day Festivals with a selected queen and tomato fights, ending with fireworks and a barbecue. Many celebrities attended, such as Babe Ruth, Sophie Tucker and many others.

When I was in my late teens another such event was held in Miami. Each city was represented by a king and queen for a parade and celebration. Bert LaBree was to be the king and I the queen. I was very shy and would not accept, even though I knew Papa wanted me to represent Dania very badly. I have always regretted not accepting this honor because it would have pleased him.

There was very little social life for the young people then, but we had beach parties on moonlight nights and we would roast marshmallows and play games. We were always
chaperoned, usually by the first Mrs. Frank Neville and we all loved her. Mrs. Luther Sparkman was also interested in young people and she had many parties in her home for us.

We all went to grade school in Dania (where the park is located now) in a small building. All of the students were in one building. Our teacher was Mrs. Harry Tubbs. When I was about 12 years old we went to Wisconsin and I graduated from the eighth grade there. We came back to Dania and I entered the first year of high school in the new and larger building which held the lower grades and the first two years of high school. The lower grades were on the first floor and the high school students were on the second. The principal taught the high school students. Miss Kitrell was our music and art teacher. She was from Nashville and had composed a march and played this for all grades to march up and be seated at assembly time. She taught two days a week in Hallandale. She taught me her march and I played it for the students on the days when she wasn’t there. In my class there were Sidney and Jessie Mullican [Mulliken], Loretta LaBree, Ethel Kindred, Lillian Dixon (these were the people that I remember well). After I completed the first two years we were bused to Fort Lauderdale High (where the Landmark Bank Building is now).9 The driver started at Hallandale, picked up students there and then Dania. The bus was very rickety and the main road (U.S. 1) was white rock and had large holes in it which really shook us up. On the return trip home we would go via Davie and return students. One student, Ed Viele, was from Davie and owns Viele Groves. The trip to Davie was even worse than U.S. 1 and I can remember what a bouncing we took.

Paul Bryan’s mother lived across the street from school. Her home was on the south side of the school and she would serve a cafeteria style lunch for the students. (Paul was once sheriff of Broward County.)

All the girls took French and the boys Botany and the same teacher taught both subjects and was from Paris. She was a big fan of Luther Burbank and when the boys didn’t know their lesson they would ask her a question about him and the lesson would stop. Before you knew it the class would be over and she would have forgotten about the time.

When I was in my first year of high school, D. W. Griffith, the movie producer, came to Fort Lauderdale to make the movie “The Idol Dancer.” It starred Richard Barthelmess and Clarine Seymour. They all were staying at the Fort Lauderdale Hotel which had just opened.10

I had just seen “Birth of a Nation” and was so thrilled that these famous people were near us. We girls would ride our bicycles to the Marshall home (just north of the airport) and watch the filming. I remember one scene where Miss Seymour, who had black hair and was very beautiful, had a red hibiscus in her hair and Mr. Barthelmess had on a brightly colored shirt. The scene was under a coconut tree and they shot this scene over and over again. This was a great thrill for all of us girls and we couldn’t stop talking about it.

After high school, Papa wanted me to go to college. He wanted a good education for all of us and I could have gone to any college I wanted, but I chose to go to business college in Miami. I lived in an apartment there for some time, but never was interested in following a business career.

Lil Dixon was my best friend and her mother ran the boarding house in town. The young people would attend Epworth League at the Methodist Church and then go to the black services to hear and enjoy their music. The next stop was the swing on the porch at the boarding house. I was dating a young man, Al Mathers, whose brother was depot agent in Dania and he acted as his assistant. Al stayed at Mrs. Dixon’s boarding house and one Sunday night we had a date. Papa had strict rules about being in by 10:30 p.m. Unfortunately young people really don’t realize how fast time passes when you’re out on a beautiful Florida moonlight night. As harmless as it was, we were late getting home and as Al and I turned the corner we could see Papa walking down the middle of the street toward us. I was very frightened but Al assured me he could handle the situation. He went through a long ex-
planation about time slipping by too fast, and Papa finally said, "Well, don't ever let this happen again."

Mama kept chickens but the chiggers would eat at their heads and they would become infected, especially their eyes. Mama would put kerosene on them to kill the insects. There was sand everywhere and Papa had a high board fence built around our backyard so the wildcats couldn't take the chickens.

The boys hunted quail in the pine woods between Dania and Hollywood and also deer west of Dania. This was quite a treat in those days because there was not an abundance of fresh meat.

Mr. S. M. Alsobrook bought land from a Mr. Clark, who grew pineapples (Abecca variety). It was located where the cemetery in Dania is now and extended to near Sheridan Street in Hollywood. Papa also grew pineapples on the adjoining land. A man whose name was Nelsen also had a peach orchard near here (approximately where Martin's house is). They were very small but very sweet. He would always let us children eat some for a treat.

There was no fresh meat at first, but Papa would meet the train where the meat was kept in the baggage car. They would cut off a piece and it always had to be cooked immediately because we had no refrigeration. We had a cow and kept it on the marsh, but it ate the poisonous oleander and died. We grew bananas on the marsh and called them "horse bananas." They resembled plantain. The Indians brought us fish and in turtle season the boys would turn turtles. We used the turtle egg yolks for pancakes. We only had pumpwater and Mamie came down with black typhoid fever which was a very severe case. Dr. Thomas S. Kennedy stayed at our house several days nursing her through the crisis. He gave her strychnine (a drop at a time) when her heart would stop beating. Mama had to pin diapers on her and all her hair fell out. She had had straight hair, but when it grew out it came in curly ringlets. She had to learn to walk again. Mama took us to Wisconsin when summer came and she recovered rapidly. She picked and ate the wild sauerkraut growing around the rocks and had a very strong craving for the tart taste. Martin had walking typhoid and he had to be watched because he would go to the train station in his underwear and try to catch the train.

Dr. Kennedy was also our dentist but he had only forceps for pulling teeth. At one time Mamie had a toothache and Mama sent for Doc. Mamie stood between his buggy wheels and he extracted her tooth. However, this time he pulled the wrong tooth, one of her big jaw teeth. I can remember her running and screaming to hide.

They had a piano in one of the grocery stores in the black section of town. I remember the music well. It was jazz and sounded just like Fats Waller's music. There were fights on Saturday night in this section and they would cut each other with razors. Papa would send for Doc to sew them up. When the black population in Dania seemed to be getting out of hand Papa sent to Georgia for a tough constable. I remember he walked our streets and wore a double gun holster.

The big tent revivals would come to town and they would give the "old fire and brimstone" routine. Papa would never go, but Uncle Press (Roper) would send the preacher to visit Papa. Papa would tell the preacher that he lived by the Golden Rule, read his Bible and believed that honesty was the best policy. (If he owed a debt that was due and didn't have the money to pay it he would borrow again so he could pay it back on time and keep his credit good.) He asked the preacher to do him a favor during one of his sermons. He said that he farmed extensively and other farmers borrowed his equipment, but they didn't return it, and he would appreciate it if he could bring this subject up in one of the meetings. The preacher agreed that he would. The night of the first sermon it was very late when he heard clinking noises in the backyard. The next morning he went out and found some small pieces of equipment that were returned all broken and rusted. The preacher returned to see Papa and he reported that some old things had been returned, but none of any value and that he was still missing his larger equipment. Late that night the same thing happened and they had returned plows, harrows, etc., but they were in the same condition as the smaller pieces.

Mama attended the Methodist Church and helped with the benefit suppers they gave. They served oyster stew (one of Papa's favorites). Papa was disappointed because he only got about two or three oysters in the stew so he told the minister, "You know, I don't believe the Lord wants you to steal for Him."

The visiting ministers would stay at the Roper Hotel and Uncle Press tipped a little. He had indulged one evening and he heard the minister returning so to hide the odor he grabbed for an onion and choked on it. Papa sent Antone after Doc in Lauderdale. Papa said, "I don't care if you have to kill the horse, but hurry!" When Doc arrived he took the buggy whip and pushed the onion down Uncle Press' throat.

When I was dating, my girl friend and I, with our beaus, would go for a boat ride. They had a small boat with an Evinrude motor. We would go through Whiskey Creek, through Lake Mabel (Port Everglades) and follow the Intracoastal Waterway to Fort Lauderdale Beach and to the lighthouse at Hillsboro Beach. It would be dark when we returned. When we went through Whiskey Creek we would blow a small whistle for the old man to let us through. We would have to do this several times before he would appear. He looked like a hermit with long, tangled hair and beard. We waited after many blows from our whistle and he would finally appear uttering a few profane words and let us through. The rum runners from Nassau would hide the whiskey in the tomato fields near the water there and then the bootleggers would pick it up at night.

When I was about six years old I would ride with Papa to Miami in a horse and buggy. He had a good friend there, Fred Morse, who was in the real estate business. He would
visit with Mr. Morse and do his banking there. Flagler Street was 12th Street then and Miami Avenue was Avenue D. I remember the bank with the lion heads in front and there was a small grocery store with a sagging roof where I would go to get my penny candy and cracker jack. I remember some time later Papa mentioned that Mr. Morse told him he had a bargain for him which was a block on Biscayne Boulevard. It was available for $1,000. Papa declined and said that he would rather invest in Dania and continue farming. When we left Dania for Miami, we went through Hallandale on the Old Dixie (then a sand road), then Ojus (the Indians named it), Buena Vista (163rd Street) and Lemon City. We had to leave Dania very early, about daybreak, and start back early because the horse flies would almost eat the animal.

There was much talk about renegades living in the Glades west of Miami and killing egret and smuggling out the feathers. They were shipping them out in mattresses because it was illegal at the time. They would embark south of Miami at Coconut Grove. They were finally brought to justice for the killing of these birds.

We really looked forward to Christmas. We didn't have a tree at home, but they would have a community tree in the Methodist Church. There was always a Santa Claus with presents.

One morning in 1911 the wind started blowing and Papa said that this was a hurricane. There was a hotel across the street which was then run by a Mrs. Webb (later Mrs. Bloom). They had just put a new addition with four pillars in front which made an "L" shape. The wind blew all day and most everyone made it to the hotel. I crawled under a sofa. The ocean rolled up the streets of Dania a tidal wave. The blacks' shacks were blown flat and a lot of them were killed. There were numerous tin buildings on the main street of Dania and sheets of tin flew through the air and there were a number of people killed. There was no weather bureau then or a daily newspaper. The new pillars of the hotel were taken off. We only lost a few shingles from the roof of our home. The Danish carpenters had built it well and it was all Dade County pine.

The opening of the Dixie Highway after its completion was a big event. They had a parade and some of the people rode in those old model cars with the tops down. I was about ten years old and remember the big archway they made from palm fronds and native flowers. This was important for us because the road was then open for us through Florida to Chicago. I remember I had a good spot near the archway to watch everything closely.

About ten years ago the Junior League of Fort Lauderdale gave a coffee at the Pioneer House for the Pioneers. I was undecided whether to attend or not, but decided to go out of curiosity and the pioneer subject. When we entered we were all given name tags which included the date we had first come to the county. My year was 1902.

After refreshments and speeches the president of the League requested that the person having the 1902 date come forward. It was I, and reporters interviewed me and took my picture. The Junior League was celebrating the baring of the King-Cromartie home up the New River to a site next to the New River Inn (Fort Lauderdale's first hotel and built by the first builder, Mr. King). This was a very expensive project to undertake, and I believe that they deserve a great deal of credit for preserving some of our past.

Soon after, several of the League members visited me in Plantation and asked for my help in details of finishing their project. This included landscaping and other details for the home. I found a Milk and Wine lily and a Louis Phillippe rose for them because these were very popular at that time.

I also told them about Crop-Ear Charlie, the Seminole Indian who was ostracized from his tribe because he had warned a family who lived on the river of a raid that the Indians had planned. They punished him and croppped his ears and from then on he existed alone by begging for food and living alone. Carl Goodbread told me that his mother would give him food from her kitchen door. Carl and I attended high school together and we would see each other at our recent reunions. The League had a puppet show built at the home telling the story of Charlie for the children.

NOTES

1. Frost must have seen the Statue of Liberty on a subsequent trip to New York, since he arrived in the U.S. in 1873 and the statue was not constructed until 1886.
2. Frost was actually elected in 1894, and began his legislative term in 1895.
3. Edward Scofield actually served as Governor of Wisconsin from 1897 to 1901.
4. This chronology is incorrect. The World's Columbian Exposition took place in Chicago in 1893, Frost began his term in the Wisconsin Legislature in 1895, and the Florida East Coast Railway was extended from West Palm Beach to Miami in 1896.
5. "J.C." Ingraham was actually James Edmundson Ingraham, vice-president of the F.E.C. and who, as president of the Model Land Company, was responsible for the development of towns along the rail line.
6. "Mr. J. C. Matthews" was actually Colonel George G. Mathews, founder, editor and publisher of the Fort Lauderdale Sentinel from 1910 to 1924. After Mathews sold the paper it was renamed the Fort Lauderdale Daily News and is today the Sun-Sentinel. Mathews and Frost became close friends and political allies during the 1910s.
7. Rev. R. D. Tracy, who was also minister of All Saints Episcopal Church in Fort Lauderdale.
8. Although recounted here after the account of the 1917 trip to Wisconsin, this reminiscence evidently refers to an earlier period. The first bridge across New River was constructed in 1904 at Andrews Avenue. Ferry service resumed in 1906, when the bridge collapsed, but stopped permanently when the bridge was replaced the following year. See Cooper Kirk, "Foundations of Broward County Waterways," Broward Legacy, vol. 8, nos. 1 & 2 (Winter/Spring 1985), 8.
10. Actually the Broward Hotel, on Andrews Avenue and Las Olas Boulevard.
13. The New River Inn is Fort Lauderdale's oldest surviving building constructed as a hotel. It was erected in 1906 on the same property as an earlier, wooden hotel building, also owned by the P.N. Bryan family. The King-Cromartie House, built by Edwin T. King on the south bank of the New River in 1907, was moved to the city's historic district adjacent to the Inn in 1973.
14. Crop-Eared Charlie has been the subject of much confusion and many legends in Broward County. According to Lake Worth pioneer Charles Pierce, who came to south Florida in 1872, Charlie Tiger had his ear cropped that year for betraying the identity of another Seminole who had participated in killing a white family near New Smyrna years before. Crop-Eared Charlie died in Fort Lauderdale in 1918.
Photo above shows the parade opening the Dixie Highway through Dania, 1915. Below is Dewina Frost Branch, 1981, standing in front of a photo mural in the Broward County Courthouse showing her father (far right) with a grandson and A. C. Campbell (courtesy of Cris Pacetti)