The decade of the 1920s was a memorable one in both Broward County and the State of Florida as a whole. The 1920 federal census listed the population of Fort Lauderdale as approximately 2,000, Broward County as 5,000, and Florida as 968,000. The middle of the decade witnessed the fabulous Florida land boom, as people swarmed into the state in unprecedented numbers. By 1925, the population of Fort Lauderdale was estimated at 15,000. George G. Mathews, the founder of the Fort Lauderdale Daily News, proudly predicted that by 1930 the city’s population would reach 50,000. Real estate was bought and sold at a fascinating pace. Prices zoomed out of sight, and often property was purchased for the sole purpose of reselling. A frenzy of building accompanied this land sales explosion, and developments and various construction projects appeared to “spring up” everywhere. Even the county’s smaller agricultural communities experienced the effects of the boom. In north Broward, Pompano’s population increased from 636 in 1920 to 1,750 in 1925, the small downtown district experienced a building boom, and several residential subdivisions were opened.

Along with this fantastic growth, a number of tourist attractions and business enterprises were promoted, including various sports activities. In 1926, there was a serious effort to

A product of the Florida Land Boom of the mid-1920s, the Pompano Race Track was one of Broward County’s most outstanding tourist and entertainment attractions during its short life. Its investors included prominent Miami and northern businessmen, and its opening day attracted a crowd reported to be the largest Broward County had ever witnessed. Despite this promising start, the track floundered and eventually failed, not because of the collapse of the boom, but because of unyielding opposition to the gambling operations there. For most of its two years of intermittent operations, the track was the subject of legal and political controversy, which ultimately involved Governor John W. Martin and the Florida Supreme Court, as well as numerous local notables.

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promote a Gene Tunney-Young Striling heavyweight fight in Fort Lauderdale. Although those plans failed to materialize, optimism remained high and ambitions were great to promote first class sporting attractions in the area. Such was the situation when a group of horse racing enthusiasts announced plans to build and operate a horse track just west of Pompano.

On June 6, 1925, news reports mentioned that “Broward county will have a race track and plant fully in keeping with the Miami Jockey Club property if plans that leaked out Friday mature.” It was stated that the interests in back of the Miami Jockey Club were interested in establishing another horse track halfway between the Palm Beaches and Miami. The project was expected to draw racing fans from throughout Broward County. The papers also reported that many Miami residents had protested against the lengthy racing season there (fifty-four days), because too much tourist money was spent at the track to the detriment of other Dade County enterprises. If the Pompano track materialized, it promised to remedy this complaint as well, since it would operate twenty-seven days and the Miami track would cut back to twenty-seven days.

L. T. Cooper, described as a Dayton, Ohio, and Miami capitalist, reportedly had a big interest in the new track. Cooper had a number of large developments in and around Pompano. He had made millions in the manufacture and later the sale of the rights for Tanlac, a remedy that experienced tremendous sales, and had later entered the real estate business in Miami. Despite such strong financial backing, one very important question remained undetermined—what would be the reaction of Broward residents to a race track, with its accompanying gambling activities, located within the county’s borders?

Not surprisingly, there were soon rumbles of opposition to the proposed track. This opposition came not only from the church element, which should have been expected, but it was also rumored that some business people were dubious about the new venture.

Despite these hints of resistance, by late July 1925, the operation of the Pompano Race Track seemed assured. At that time Governor John W. Martin approved the incorporation papers for a race track to be located one-half mile south of Pompano and one-half mile west of the Dixie Highway. The incorporation documents specified a $1,000,000 organization with $750,000 shares of preferred stock and the balance in common stock. The financing of the proposition was being arranged by northern capital, and plans for construction and operation were being completed. These plans called for a one and one-sixteenth mile oval which would compare with any in the South and would closely follow the style of the Havre de Grace, Maryland, track. Ground clearing and construction was scheduled to start in August.

The incorporators of the company included Charles H. Hyde, R. E. Hall, J. K. Dorn, Joseph A. Adams, and New York associates unnamed at that time. They announced that two big racing programs would be held each year, extending over a period of some three weeks each. By this time, the newspaper reports predicted that the races would draw thousands of people from the North as well as from across Florida.

Many local businessmen and community boosters were thrilled at the impending opening of the facility. “Fort Lauderdale has everything to gain and nothing to lose by the installment of the track just north of the city,” commented one local businessman. He added, “It is evident even now that the track will mean much to Fort Lauderdale and this should be another incentive which will pull strong for more hotels, more rooming houses, etc.”

The track’s grandstand was designed to provide a seating capacity for 5,000 patrons, as well as a clubhouse with gardens. The course was to be known as “Hyde Park,” in honor of Charles Hyde, who first suggested the course. Hyde had long been associated with racing and was for a number of years treasurer of New York City under Mayor William J. Gaynor’s administration. He was once associate counsel for the Jockey Club of the State of New York, and was attorney
for the Brighton Beach Racing Association. His associates in the Pompano venture were J. K. Dorn of Miami, president of the Coliseum Corporation, Joseph R. Adams of the firm of Bradford and Adams, vice-president of the Miami Coliseum Corporation and of the Jai-Alai Association, and R. E. Hall, capitalist of Miami and Tampa and former Dade County school superintendent.

The Pompano Race Track was scheduled to open on Christmas Day 1926 with the running of a $3,000 Christmas handicap and three other races. The races were to start at 2:30 p.m., and a large crowd of spectators was expected from Fort Lauderdale, Hollywood, Miami, and West Palm Beach, as well as many other locations throughout the country.

The racing officials announced were stewards Samuel G. Nuchols, E. C. Smith, and E. H. Garrison, and placing judges Noah McClelland, E. C. Smith, and E. H. Garrison. McClelland was also scheduled to act as clerk of scales, while William Dondas was named racing secretary, Harry Morrissey starter, and W. E. Phillips paddock judge.

To provide for the spectators, a special bus service from Fort Lauderdale to the track was announced, a service supplemented by special trains from West Palm Beach and Miami with stops at intermediate stations. The trains were scheduled to leave the two cities at 12:45 p.m., and arrive at Pompano at 1:45, where the buses would meet them and take the passengers to the track.

Expectations were high, as officials predicted that the Pompano plant would be among the best in the racing
world. It was proudly stated that the clubhouse was the last word in design and construction, the stand having a seating capacity of 6,500, with a spacious lawn in front. Visiting horsemen pronounced the twenty-five stables, with accommodations for 900 horses, ideal in ventilation, light, and comfort.

A feature race with a purse ranging from $1,000 to $3,000 was scheduled for each day of the opening meet, with an additional purse of $3,000 added for the Christmas Day handicap for horses of all ages. Fort Lauderdale was to be especially honored in the fifth race of the third day, a Tuesday, when the Fort Lauderdale Handicap for two-year-olds would feature an added $1,500 purse. On New Year’s Day a feature race at one and one-sixteenth mile for three-year-olds and upward would offer a $3,000 purse. The first race on Christmas Day, the track’s inaugural contest, would be for two-year-olds at six furlongs, the second race would be the Pompano, for three-year-olds and up at one mile and seventy yards, the third a claiming race for four-year-olds and up at six furlongs, and the fourth for maiden two-year-olds at five and one-half furlongs, followed by the Christmas handicap and a final claiming race for four-year-olds and up at one and one-sixteenth miles.

After a year and a half of construction and very careful promotion, and at tremendous expense to the promoters, the Pompano Race Track was completed sufficiently to open on schedule, Christmas Day 1926. The event was well advertised in the daily press. In spite of the fact that horse racing cannot exist on such a grand scale without many people betting on the outcome of each race and the fact that betting on races was clearly against the state law, no serious challenge to the track’s operations emerged. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to understand why the promoters did not anticipate the strong possibility that someone would soon launch a legal challenge to the track’s betting activities.

The Christmas grand opening was a gala event, witnessed by an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 people—reportedly the largest crowd to attend an event in Broward County up to that time. The grandstand was virtually filled, while thousands stood in front of the stand and crowded the rail. Other thousands, during the course of the afternoon, visited the spacious clubhouse. Scores of prominent people from many sections of southern Florida were present, while others, socially prominent in the North and East, could be counted by the hundreds.  

In addition to the meticulous plan-
ning and thorough publicity generated by the track’s promoters, ideal weather undoubtedly added to the large crowds attending this auspicious occasion. Automobiles crowded the Dixie Highway leading north from Miami and south from West Palm Beach beginning early Christmas Day. The Fort Lauderdale Daily News reported that, “Considering the tremendous throng, the traffic system which extended from the Dixie Highway to the plant one mile west of Pompano, was handled in as efficient a manner as possible.”

Paul M. Beacom, president of the Pompano Horse Club, was the recipient of congratulations for his successful endeavor in having completed the plant sufficiently to hold the first race on Christmas, as planned. Beacom was elated at the opening day’s activities, but added that he was already working on various improvements. He stated that the road from the Dixie Highway to the plant would be improved immediately in order to facilitate traffic for future races; a large crew of men would be employed night and day between December 25 and 27 to place the road in as fine a condition as possible. Beacom commented on the opening day, “I was more than pleased with the attendance, but I regret to say that the plant could not be completed in its entirety for this day. However, I intend to keep crews at work day and night in order to rush the plant to completion.” The track proper was also to be improved in the near future in order to make one of the fastest, if not the fastest, tracks in the entire country. Many of the people who attended the grand opening expressed surprise at the enormity and completeness of the plant, which gave South Florida one of the nation’s finest race tracks.

After such a successful opening, many participants and observers expected that racing at Pompano would continue indefinitely. The promoters seemed to have done everything right — one and one-half years of careful planning, expenditures of $1,000,000, and extensive advertising resulting in ample good publicity. However, one serious flaw threatened the entire operation — disregard for the state’s anti-gambling laws. So far, state and county officials remained silent on the subject. The virtually unchallenged operation of racing establishments in Miami, and the fact that Governor Martin had signed the incorporation papers one and one-half years previously seemed to give the promoters a false sense of security. It would take only one person, employing correct legal procedure, to short-circuit the whole operation.

“The other shoe finally dropped.” On December 30, 1926, Broward pioneer and county commissioner John M. Bryan of Dania went to circuit court to seek an injunction that would shut down the betting operations at the Pompano Race Track. Bryan claimed that the track was a public nuisance, because it involved gambling, which was clearly against the state law. Bryan, though a county commissioner, stated that he was acting on his own behalf, although he was represented by County Attorney Willard M. Pope of Fort Lauderdale. Stephen B. Humphrey, L. T. Cooper, and the Sunyans Corporation were named as defendants in the bill. Paul M. Beacom, the Pompano Horse Club
president, declared that the racing program would continue until court action was taken, and added, "beyond that I have no comment to make."

The court hearing was held in West Palm Beach, where Judge C. E. Chillingworth granted a temporary injunction enjoining the Pompano Horse Club from carrying on any gambling or gambling operations, or selling any certificates on a horse race or disbursing any money on such certificates as a result of a horse race. A motion for supersedeas, to stay legal actions, was filed immediately by the attorneys for the Pompano Horse Club pending proceedings to be filed in appellate court, but the motion was overruled by Judge Chillingworth, who granted a stay only until noon, Friday, January 7, 1927.

At the hearing, the defense, through attorneys Mitchell Price and D. Boone of Miami, filed a demurrer on the grounds that the bill was indefinite, contained no statements of fact, that it named no person gambling at the track, and that the statute under which it was brought was unconstitutional. The defense attacked the constitutionality of Act 5630 of the General Statutes on the grounds that, insofar as the action was brought by an individual, it permitted him to obtain an injunction without giving bond. This, Price and Boone argued, was contrary to public policy because it delegated the powers of the state to a private individual.

Arguments on the demurrer consumed the court's time until noon. After the luncheon recess, Judge Chillingworth overruled the demurrer, and arguments for and against the injunction proper started. A petition with nearly 500 names of Fort Lauderdale and Pompano residents, stating that the race track was not a public nuisance, was presented in court.

An appeal against the temporary restraining order enjoining the Pompano Horse Club, Inc., from the sale of mutual certificates on the races at the Pompano track after January 7 was filed with Frank A. Bryan, Clerk of the Broward County Circuit Court, on January 5, 1927, by the Horse Club through its attorneys, Price and Boone. The case was slated to be argued before the Florida Supreme Court on January 7. James E. Calkins was announced as the attorney to argue the case for the Horse Club, and James M. Carson of Miami as the attorney to represent John M. Bryan before the state supreme court.

The Horse Club's defense was that the selling of certificates was not gambling by reason of the fact that the holder was made a participant in the purse prize awarded the horse winning the first, second, or third place. On the back of each ticket was printed the following conditions on which it based that contention: "This acknowledged receipt of the sum voluntarily contributed by the holder hereof as part of the purse prize or premium to be awarded to the owner of the horse winning first, second, or third place (as the case may be) in the race designated by this ticket."

On January 7, 1927, the Florida Supreme Court, after spending an hour in conference, took under advisement the petition for a supersedeas setting aside the injunction against the sale of lease certificates at the Pompano Race Track. The petition was presented by Albert I. Hubbard of Miami and W. J. Owens and W. C. Hodges of Tallahassee, representing Paul M. Beacom, the track operator.

At stake in this legal hassle was the law passed by the Florida Legislature and signed by Governor Albert Gilchrist in 1911, which outlawed

Figures in the legal battle over the Pompano track included Circuit Judge C. E. Chillingworth (left), Broward County Attorney Willard M. Pope (center), and Miami lawyer Mitchell Price (right).
might tend to militate against racing in Miami. After the high court took
the case under advisement, the attorneys for both sides left Tallahassee.
The court appeared to be in no great hurry to settle the case, and gave no
indication as to when the final decision would be reached.

The winter racing season having
proved a disaster because of the in-
junction issued by Judge Chillingworth and the resulting shut-
down of the track, Paul Beacom de-
cided to try his luck during the spring
season. He reopened the Pompano
Race Track on March 8, 1927. Eight
thousand racing fans were on hand
for the event. The press reported that
many improvements had been made
at the track since the Christmas open-
ing, and it was evident that these
improvements had cost much money.
Once again, the track management
announced that prospects were excel-
 lent for a successful racing season,
but, because of the unsettled litiga-
ton, this optimism was not realistic.

After two months of deliberations,
the Florida Supreme Court finally
decided to act, and upheld the injunc-
tion issued by Judge Chillingworth.
The court ruled that the certificate
system did violate the 1911 state law,
and thereby all horse tracks and dog
tracks in Florida that were using the
system were in violation of the law.

Broward County Sheriff Paul
Bryan found himself in a vulnerable
position. On January 27, 1927, the
Broward County Sheriff's Department
was rocked with a scandal of tremen-
dous proportions, possibly the great-
est scandal in Broward law enforce-
ment history. Sheriff Bryan and his
entire deputy force were arrested by
United States prohibition agents for
violation of prohibition laws. Bryan
and his deputies were never officially
cleared. The case dragged on for three
years, and did not end until after
Bryan left office. After two mistrials
at the United States District Court in
Miami, the federal government
dropped the case in 1930. Now, in
March 1927, the sheriff found himself
carried in the middle of the gambling

"bets or wagers upon the results of
any trial or contest of skill, speed,
power or endurance of any man or
beast," and prohibited "any person
from receiving anything of value, bet,
or wagered, upon any such results
and forbidding any person from aid-
ing, assisting, or abetting any such
bets." The defense claimed that the
race track patrons did not bet, but
were invited to "contribute" to a purse
for a particular horse. If the horse
came in, the "contributors" benefitted
by their "donation" by getting a pro-
portion of the horse's earnings. Judge
Chillingworth had rejected that in-
geous method used to get around
Florida's anti-gambling law, and now
Beacom and associates hoped that
the Florida Supreme Court could be
persuaded to allow the certificate sys-
tem.

The supreme court's decision
could be far-reaching, affecting not
only horse racing, but greyhound rac-
ing, which operated at several points
in the state on a similar "donation"
system. The Greater Miami Hotel
Association sent a letter to Governor
Martin, protesting any action that

Parking lot and administration building
at the Pompano track, 1926-1927.
fied, to be exchanged for another ticket whereby the contributor chose the horse he expected to win. The ticket received from the horse owners as a receipt for contributions to an added purse read, “Received of bearer _____ (amount) as a voluntary contribution to be added to the purse to be awarded to the owner of the horse scoring first (or second) place in _____ race at the Pompano Horse Club meet on March 11.”

Carl H. Barlow and Fred M. Wertz were put on the stand by the state, but declared repeatedly during direct and cross examination that they had made voluntary contributions to an added purse, had so understood at the time, did not expect any return, and in fact had been perfectly informed that the money was to go to the owner of the horse winning first place and that any distribution made of it was purely voluntary on the part of the owner. The counsel for the defense then placed Paul Beacon on the stand. Beacon testified that at the time a receipt was issued to a contributor it was explained that the money was to go to the horseman winning the race, and that it belonged to him to do with as he saw fit. If the owner divided the added purse, Beacon added, the Pompano Horse Club had nothing to do with the matter. Beacon admitted that the owner of the winning horse made a contribution of five percent of the added purse to the Horse Club in return for operating expenses, but, under cross examination by prosecuting attorney Crim, emphatically denied that he had any prior agreement with horsemen that they should give him any percentage of the added purse to be distributed to the contributors.

Isaac B. Hilton, editor of the Pompano News, who had selected two of the horses scoring, declared that he had contributed ten dollars to the added purses and felt that Beacon had not been treated fairly and deserved support. Asked by defense attorney Giblin if he was familiar with the contribution cards, Hilton stated that he had printed them and that he had two tickets still in his pocket on horses he had chosen which had scored in the race. Hilton testified that after the race he had showed situation. The governor had the power to suspend local officials even if formal charges or indictments had not been lodged. The Florida Senate had to sustain such action before permanent action could be effective, but since the legislature only met in regular session every other year, an official could be suspended for more than a year before the senate considered his plight. Furthermore, as a matter of senatorial courtesy, the senate usually followed the wishes of the senator who represented the district where the suspended official resided. Sheriffs seemed particularly vulnerable to the whims of Florida governors. In fact, Paul Bryan owed his position to the fact that Governor Cary A. Hardee had removed Sheriff A. W. Turner in 1922 and had appointed Bryan to replace him. The following year, the Florida Senate sustained Turner’s removal. So, the county sheriff, in many respects the most powerful county official, was constantly at the mercy of the whims of various Florida governors.

The embattled Broward sheriff decided to act. He sent deputies Robert Kendall and Jot Shiver to the track, an action which resulted in the arrest of four men: Paul Beacon, president of the Pompano Horse Club; J. E. Downs, secretary-manager; and W. F. Tilford and Frank Bekelheimer, horse owners. The four men were charged with gambling.

Fred B. Shippey, Judge of the Broward County Court, then came on “center stage” in this legal drama. He held a “hurry-up” night court hearing for the four defendants. Apparently, Judge Shippey wanted a rapid resolution of the case in order to accommodate the defendants and prevent an interruption of the racing season. At Shippey’s night court hearing, Broward County Prosecuting Attorney Charles Crim prosecuted the case, while Fort Lauderdale attorney Vincent C. Giblin appeared on behalf of the four defendants.

Deputies Kendall and Shiver first took the stand to explain how the method of the transaction for which they had made the arrests violated the laws of the state. Their testimony described that under the system first put into practice at the Pompano track the day before, a booth with the caption “Horse Owners” over it was set aside where contributions were made as added amounts to the purse offered by the Pompano Horse Club. Receipts were then issued, the deputies testi-
the tickets to the owner of the winning horse and asked him if he was going to give him anything for them. "Not a thing, old fellow," he declared was the answer. He then admitted that the owner had called him back and given him $9.50.

At the close of the testimony, prosecuting attorney Crim asked that the defendants be bound over as having violated the state statute relative to betting. Vincent Giblin, prefacing his plea for the defense, stated that he had been warned before the hearing that if he should attempt the defense of Paul Beacom his political future would be jeopardized. The counsel for the defense contended that the system employed at the Pompano track at the time of the raid differed from the mutual system on which the supreme court had ruled in that the pari-mutuel system mentioned only "voluntary contributions," while the Pompano track's current system was based on "voluntary distribution," and therefore did not fall within the law as interpreted by the high court.

Many prominent Broward attorneys were present at the hearing and, at the request of Giblin, were permitted by the court to express an opinion on the question. J. R. Roach, Miller Walton, Maxwell Baxter, and Everett Hunt unanimously stated to the court that in their opinion, from the testimony introduced and the outline of the system made by Giblin, they believed that nothing done at the Pompano track at the time of the raid contravened the laws of the state.¹⁶

In reviewing the testimony, Judge Shippey stated that the question of betting at races had puzzled some of the best legal minds of the state, and that from the facts deduced, he ruled that the defendants were within the law, and were therefore discharged. So, it can be said that we had a spectacle of a county judge reversing a decision of the Florida Supreme Court. Judge Shippey's decision was greeted by a storm of applause and prolonged hand clapping and cheers.¹⁷ Immediately after the decision, Paul Beacom announced that races at the Pompano track would continue for the rest of the meet, which was scheduled to last until April 5.

When news of the Broward law enforcement fiasco reached Tallahassee, Governor John W. Martin was furious. The chief executive sent two scorching telegrams to Fort Lauderdale, one to Sheriff Bryan and one to Judge Shippey, telling the local officials in effect to "shape up or ship out." He ordered Sheriff Bryan to break up gambling at the track, threatening him with suspension if he failed, and directed Judge Shippey to cooperate. His telegram to Bryan read in part:

I have advised you that the law is plain and distinct as to gambling at race tracks. I shall expect you to break up the gambling at the Pompano race track this afternoon. If gambling continues this after-

noon, as much as I regret it, I am going to appoint a new sheriff for your county. You can advise me immediately whether the county judge is cooperating with you or not. I shall look for a wire Sunday morning as to your conduct this afternoon, which will determine my action by Monday morning.¹⁸

To County Judge Shippey, the governor sent the following message:

I have instructed the sheriff of Fort Lauderdale to break up gambling at race tracks in your county which is clearly in violation of state law as expressed by the supreme court. You will advise me whether the sheriff brings before you offenders and your action in
the matter. I shall expect you to do your whole duty in cooperating with the sheriff in breaking this up. You will advise me immediately what action you take in this matter.

Governor Martin told his secretary, "I am going to see that the decision of the supreme court in the racing question is enforced, even if it is necessary for me to order out the militia to do so." In effect, Governor Martin told Judge Shippey in no uncertain terms that he would not tolerate any decisions or rulings from the Broward County Court that would circumvent the clear and decisive opinion of the Florida Supreme Court. He gave the sheriff and the judge no "wiggle room."  

Bryan and Shippey followed Martin's orders and sent telegrams to the determined governor, each promising to follow the letter and spirit of the instructions. Horse racing in Florida under the certificate selling system gave its last futile kick and expired at Pompano with officers from the Broward County sheriff's office administering the last rites and a large crowd from nearby resorts looking on. At fifty-five minutes after post time for the first race, Deputy Sheriff Bob Kendall announced to the crowd assembled to watch that the races had been cancelled. The deputy sheriff then read to the crowd the telegrams which had been sent to Sheriff Bryan and Judge Shippey. Paul Beacom issued the following statement:

My efforts to provide Florida with the high class racing it deserves has met with a temporary setback. Our newly adopted contribution and distribution method of racing does not appeal to the constituted authorities whom we always have and always will recognize. We must look for relief through legislation. I regret exceedingly that it has been impossible for me to fulfill all my promises to my friends, supporters, and horsemen.

Despite these assurances of obedience to the law and a foreclosure suit instituted against the Pompano Horse Club by the Canal Lands Company of Chicago, previous owners of the property, the club's officers made one last feeble attempt to revive racing at the track in the last months of 1927. On November 30, the Fort Lauderdale Daily News announced that a carload of horses had arrived from Lexington, Kentucky, on the Seaboard Air Line Railroad the previous day, and that a second shipment from Tulsa, Oklahoma, was expected momentarily. Discussing his plans for the track's "second season," Paul Beacom announced that "to provide amusement for the many visitors who will be in this section of Florida this winter," the racing season would open on December 24. Any mention of gambling was conspicuously absent from the announcement.

For reasons not fully explained, the planned opening was postponed for three weeks. In the meantime, the American Legion sponsored auto races at the track on December 26, charging seventy-five cents admission fee. With the coming of the new year, Paul Beacom informed the local press that a forty-five day meet would begin on January 14, 1928. Again, he carefully avoided mention of any system of betting.  

Word of the planned revival of horse racing at the track brought a quick reply from Governor Martin. In a brief telegram to Sheriff Bryan, Martin stated:

December 23, 1927, Fort Lauderdale Daily News advertisement for auto races at the horse track.
I am advised that an effort will be made to violate the state laws regarding gambling at the race track in Pompano. Are you equipped to break this up and will you do it? If you are unable to prevent this violation of the state laws, please advise me, as I propose to see that the laws are not violated. If necessary, I will send state troops to Pompano to enforce them.

No doubt convinced of the seriousness of the governor's intentions, Sheriff Bryan replied that he was "in a position" to enforce the anti-gambling law.

In the following days, many local citizens expressed resentment at Martin's threat to send state troops into Broward County, and the Pompano city council indignantly chastised the governor for "holding the city up to scorn before the state and the nation as a center of lawbreakers." Governor Martin fired back a declaration that he cared nothing for municipal reputations when it came to enforcing the law. Paul Beacom then added to the uproar by sarcastically announcing his candidacy for governor in the upcoming election on a platform of strict enforcement of the laws, which, he jokingly commented, "have been violated openly." This most recent flood of controversy attracted considerable attention in the local press, then rapidly dissipated as the attempts to reopen the track sputtered and died in the face of continuing financial difficulties and the unyielding opposition of state authorities.

Thus ended this strange chapter of Broward legal history. For the next several years there were sporadic efforts to hold other events at the Pompano track. A number of auto races, as well as numerous professional boxing events, took place there. Finally, in 1962, a generation after race track betting was legalized in 1931, trotter racing was established as a regular feature at the Pompano track. A large, modern clubhouse and grandstand complex was constructed on the property, and today, Pompano Park, as the facility has been named, boasts both harness and quarterhorse racing.

One question underscores the brief early history of horse racing at the Pompano track—why did the promoters take such a gamble in clear violation of state law? At a distance of over sixty years, we can only speculate. They probably overrated the influence of tourist industry leaders, such as the Hotel Association, to protect them. They probably also believed they had cleared the last hurdle when Governor Martin signed the incorporation papers in 1925.

In this estimation, they failed to consider the influence of certain local officials who opposed gambling operations. It must be remembered that Governor Martin did not become involved in the case until the courts became involved. The courts did not become involved until County Commissioner John Bryan of Dania became involved. While there had been feeble efforts to obtain injunctions against tracks in Dade County, those efforts had been dismissed by the local judiciary, and there had been no appeals. John Bryan lived in a different judicial circuit. He brought his complaint before Fifteenth Circuit Judge Curtis E. Chillingworth of West Palm Beach, a tough but fair no-nonsense judge whose professional interest was not to aid or injure the tourist industry, but to correctly interpret and apply the law. When Judge Chillingworth granted the injunction, the race track officials had no choice except to appeal to the Florida Supreme Court, causing the high court to rule on the matter for the first time.

It has been suggested that the reason that Governor Martin subsequently acted with so much energy was because he was embarrassed at having signed the incorporation papers and was determined to remove himself from "the whole mess." No matter what his motive may have been, Martin acted in a determined manner, and Florida's anti-gambling laws were enforced. Despite stubborn efforts and ingenious arguments, the promoters of horse racing in Pompano failed in their attempts to circumvent state law.

The old Pompano Race Track's Moorish style grandstand building currently serves as a kitchen at the Pompano Park facility (courtesy of Research Atlantica).
If the Tunney-Stribling fight had materialized, Fort Lauderdale would have certainly received national attention. In 1926, Gene Tunney was the leading contender for the world heavyweight championship, and later that year dethroned Jack Dempsey for the title. Tunney kept the championship for two years, made one million dollars, married an heiress, retired from the ring, studied Shakespeare, and moved in upper class circles. Though largely self-educated, Tunney was very studious, and became a Shakespearean scholar. He, at one time, lectured on Shakespeare at Yale University. Tunney's son, John Tunney, armed with degrees from Yale and the University of Virginia Law School, served as a Democratic member of the U.S. House of Representatives from California (1965-1971) and as United States Senator (1971-1977). William Lawrence (Young) Stribling, famed Macon, Georgia, boxer, was popular in the South and also with the middle class throughout the country. Stribling turned many of the middle class (including this author) into boxing fans.

Fort Lauderdale Daily News, June 6, 1925.

John W. Martin (1884-1958), a strong willed governor of Florida from 1925 to 1929, had previously served as mayor of Jacksonville. Governor Martin developed a reputation as a spoilsman. At the conclusion of his term, he ran an unsuccessful race against U. S. Senator Park Trammell. In 1932 he was defeated by Dave Sholtz in an effort to return to the governor's office. Later Governor Martin became associated with the DuPont interests and served as a receiver for the Florida East Coast Railway. In 1948, he was a candidate for presidential elector on the States Rights Democratic ( Dixiecrat) ticket.

Fort Lauderdale Daily News, July 24, 1925.

 Ibid.

 Ibid., December 26, 1926.

 Ibid., December 30, 1926. Broward pioneer John M. Bryan (1874-1936) moved to present-day Broward County around the turn of the century. His two brothers, both prominent Jacksonville lawyers, each served as United States Senators, William James Bryan (1876-1908) by appointment from 1907 to 1908, and Nathaniel P. Bryan (1872-1925) by election from 1911 to 1917. Nathaniel Bryan was defeated for reelection by former Governor Park Trammell in 1916, and was appointed by President Wilson as Judge of the Fifth District Court of Appeals in 1920. He held that position until his death. John M. Bryan served on the Broward County Commission from 1925 until 1929.

 Fort Lauderdale Daily News, December 30, 1926. Broward pioneer Willard M. Pope (1882-1940), who was very prominent in the county's early history, served as county attorney from 1925 to 1931. Commissioner Bryan insisted that he was taking action against the race track as an individual and not as a county commissioner.

 Curtis E. Chillingworth (1891-1955) served as Judge of the Palm Beach County Court from 1921 to 1923, and as Judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit from 1923 until his death. Judge Chillingworth had an unequaled reputation for knowledge of the law, fairness, and industry. In 1955, he was murdered along with his wife. See Donald G. Lester, "The End of Our Innocence: The Chillingworth Murder Case," Broward Legacy, vol. 16, nos 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1990), 11-30.

 James M. Carson (1887-1950), a nephew of John M. Bryan, was a prominent Miami attorney and an unsuccessful candidate for governor in 1928. Carson's wife, Ruby Leach Carson (dec. 1977), was a prominent Florida historian.

 Fort Lauderdale Daily News, January 11, 1927.

 Paul Bryan (1891-1942), a distant cousin of John M. Bryan and a brother-in-law of Broward pioneers Frank Oliver and Lucian Craig, moved to this area with his family around the turn of the century. He was appointed sheriff in 1922, following the suspension of Broward's first sheriff, A. W. Turner, by Governor Cary A. Hardee for nonfeasance in office. Bryan defeated Turner in the 1924 Democratic primary. The year 1927 proved to be a rough year for Paul Bryan. In January, the entire sheriff's force was arrested by federal authorities for the violation of prohibition law, in March Bryan got caught in the legal battle over horse racing in Pompano, and later in the year he and his deputies were the targets of blustering verbal abuse during the first Hicks murder trial. For an account of Bryan's troubles, see Donald G. Lester, "Justice of the Peace William A. Hicks," Broward Legacy, vol. 15, nos 1-2 (Winter-Spring 1992), 8-17.

 Fred B. Shippey (1877-1934) served as Judge of the Broward County Court from 1920 to 1933, the second man to hold that office. Judge Shippey was not a lawyer, but during that era a county judge was not required to be a member of the bar.

 County pioneer Charles Crim (1896-1972) served as Broward County Prosecuting Attorney from 1925 to 1929. He was defeated for reelection in 1928, and was unsuccessful as a candidate for a seat in the Florida Legislature in 1956. During the 1950s, Crim served the county as probation officer.

 Vincent C. Giblin was a brilliant attorney, who, later in 1927, became the first judge of the newly-created Twenty-second Judicial Circuit. In 1928, Giblin lost in the Democratic primary to George W. Tedder, Sr. He then moved to Dade County, where he specialized in the practice of criminal law. A generation later, Giblin's nephew, Orlando, continued his tradition in the Dade County circuit court. For an account of Giblin's Broward County career, see Donald G. Lester, "Broward Politics, 1928-1938: Political Influence in Depression Era Broward," Broward Legacy, vol. 13, nos 3-4 (Summer-Fall 1990), 3-9.

 The author finds it interesting that J. R. Roach (1888-1960) was included as one of the lawyers requested by Giblin to give his legal opinion to the court. While very successful in the practice of criminal law, Roach was certainly no "insider." In fact the author has labeled Roach and his partner, J. B. Hoyt, as "professional outsiders." The author considers what his father, Fort Lauderdale attorney Hugh Lester (1884-1957) said in a different context. Commenting on the operations of the county court under Judge Shippey, Lester said, "Shippey was inclined to let Roach run his court." That might explain Giblin's interest in having Roach give his opinion in Shippey's court.

 Since it was generally agreed upon that the defendants took part in the certificate system then in use at the Pompano track, the only issue that remained was the legality of the certificate system, in spite of defense attempts to cloud the issue by making distinctions between voluntary "contributions" and "distribution." The Florida Supreme Court held that the certificate system was in violation of state law. When Judge Shippey ruled that the system was not in violation of state law, an unusual situation emerged of a county judge reversing a supreme court decision.

 Fort Lauderdale Daily News, March 12, 1927.

 Ibid.

 The author is very impressed with the manner in which Governor Martin closed all of the loopholes. He certainly left Bryan and Shippey no way out except to comply with the governor's orders.

 Paul Bryan certainly "got the message." The only way Bryan could be certain that no gambling was taking place at the Pompano Race Track was to close the track, which he did.

 Fort Lauderdale Daily News, November 6, 30, 1927.

 Ibid., December 23, 1927, January 6, 1928.

 Ibid., January 6, 1928.

 Ibid., January 8, 1928.