The story of the Fort Lauderdale municipal election of 1937, perhaps the most acrimonious election in the city's history, and the part played by the Fort Lauderdale Daily News, has its roots deep in the city's past. Originally titled The Fort Lauderdale Sentinel, the newspaper was established in 1911, the same year that the Town of Fort Lauderdale was incorporated. In the twenty-six years that followed, the newspaper took an active role in city governmental affairs, with both the paper and the city hall reflecting the personalities of their leaders. The convergence, in the mid-1930s, of a number of Broward County's strongest and most colorful characters, set against the background of the Great Depression, insured that political contests would be especially lively and memorable events. For the City of Fort Lauderdale, the 1937 election turned a spotlight on the contemporary power structure and proved to be a turning point in both municipal leadership and electoral policy which would long survive the immediate issues of the day.³

George G. Mathews, the founder of the Fort Lauderdale Daily News, was born in Alabama in 1855. His parents, impoverished by the Civil War and embittered by the Confederate defeat, decided against living in a country "run by a bunch of Yankees," and moved the family to Brazil shortly after the conclusion of the war. Mathews continued to live in Brazil for many years before moving to Marion County, Florida, in 1882. He represented that county in the 1893 session of the Florida Legislature, and, later that same year, was appointed United States consul at Para (Belem), Brazil. He retained that position for five years, and then returned to Marion County. Mathews returned to the Florida Legislature in 1907, where he emerged as a strong supporter of Governor Napoleon B. Broward's Everglades drainage program. It was in this capacity that Mathews made his first trip to Fort Lauderdale in 1907 as part of a legislative delegation investigating factors connected with Everglades drainage. He moved to Fort Lauderdale as a permanent resident on December 30, 1910.²

Southeast Florida was largely empty country when George G. Mathews arrived on the premises. The village of Fort Lauderdale had a population of 143, and Miami, the largest town in the area, had

Political turmoil, a common subject of today's headlines, is nothing new to Broward County. For the City of Fort Lauderdale, one of the most heated elections — and one which had a decisive impact on the municipal power structure — took place in October 1937.

In this article, Donald G. Lester traces the city's political background, defines the issues at stake in the memorable 1937 contest, and relates the powerful role played by the Fort Lauderdale Daily News and its aggressive publisher, Governor Robert H. Gore.

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a population of 5,471. To the north, West Palm Beach, the county seat of newly created Palm Beach County, had a population of 1,743. Fort Lauderdale remained unincorporated, the nearest incorporated towns being Dania to the south, which had incorporated in 1904, and Pompano to the north, which had incorporated in 1908. The 1910 United States census listed the population of these two corporate entities as 269 each. Key West, with a population of 19,945, was the largest city south of Tampa in the state. In 1910, the present county of Broward formed parts of Dade and Palm Beach counties, with the county line running through what is today Oakland Park. The 1910 census listed Dade County's population as 11,903, and the population of Palm Beach, which also included present-day Martin County, as 5,577. So George G. Mathews was a Broward County pioneer in every sense of the word.

At the time Mathews arrived in Fort Lauderdale, the village boasted one local newspaper. It was the weekly Fort Lauderdale Herald, which had been established earlier that year by William Heine. However, the Herald was printed in Deland and shipped to Fort Lauderdale for distribution, so in 1910, no paper was printed locally in Fort Lauderdale.

George G. Mathews was a journalist by profession, having published newspapers in Bartow and Tarpon Springs. He therefore decided to start a weekly newspaper to rival the already existing Herald, and, on March 10, 1911, published the first issue of the Fort Lauderdale Sentinel. Nearly three months after the first issue of Mathews' newspaper appeared, the village of Fort Lauderdale was incorporated, with William H. Marshall as the first mayor. The new town adopted the mayor-council form of government, with the mayor and the members of the town council elected separately.

After much political skirmishing which spanned a period of several years, Broward County was created in 1915 from the northern part of Dade County and the southern part of Palm Beach County. The new county was named for the late Governor Napoleon B. Broward. Fort Lauderdale was designated as the county seat, even though Dania and Pompano were older corporate entities, and former Fort Lauderdale Mayor William H. Marshall became the first Broward County representative in the Florida Legislature.

George G. Mathews had been elected mayor in 1913, succeeding Marshall and thus becoming the second man to hold that position. In 1916, Mathews made an unsuccessful effort to win election as county judge, and two years later he failed in an effort to unseat Marshall as Broward County's representative in the legislature.

By 1920, the United States census listed the population of Fort Lauderdale as about 2,000 and that of Broward County at around 5,000. In response to this growth, George G. Mathews stepped up the publication of the Sentinel to twice a week, a step likewise taken by the Herald, which by now was being published by Fort Lauderdale attorney Carl P. Weidling. Then, late in September 1924, as the Florida land boom began to gather momentum, Mathews took the big step, and the Evening Sentinel, as the paper had come to be known, became a daily. Mathews continued to publish the paper for several months before he sold it to the Galvin brothers of Lima, Ohio, for $140,000. In short order, the Galvins bought out the Herald and renamed the combined paper the Fort Lauderdale Daily News and Evening Sentinel.

From the beginning of his Broward County career, George G. Mathews took an aggressive stand on the political issues of the day. During the Napoleon B. Broward era, he strongly supported the governor, particularly concerning the Everglades drainage program. In 1916, Mathews strongly supported the successful gubernatorial campaign of Sidney J. Catts, who, running on a strongly-worded prohibitionist and anti-Catholic platform, defeated William V. Knott, the candidate of the Democratic establishment. In 1927 Mathews opposed the erection of the new Broward County Courthouse. Then, late in his career, he served as president of the local Townsend Club.

From the time of his arrival in Fort Lauderdale, George G. Mathews remained extremely thrilled over the community's prospects for the future. In 1925, he predicted that the city's population would reach 50,000 by 1930. After his retirement from his publishing enterprises, he remained deeply involved in civic affairs, and subsequently made three unsuccessful efforts to obtain elective office. In 1927, after the city government changed to the commissioner-manager system, Mathews was defeated in an attempt to gain a place on the first Fort Lauderdale City Commission. In 1928 he was defeated in the Democratic primary for a seat on the Broward County Commission. The fol-

Colonel George G. Mathews.

Fort Lauderdale City Hall on the northwest corner of Andrews Avenue and Southwest Second Street, 1930s.
lowing year he was again defeated in a bid to gain a place on the city commission. That final defeat, when he was seventy-four years old, ended Mathews efforts to win elective office.

The middle of the 1920s witnessed the height of the Florida boom. Prices skyrocketed. The Galvin brothers took advantage of the business boom and sold the Fort Lauderdale Daily News to Thomas and Horace Stilwell for $480,000. The Stilwell brothers soon ran into financial trouble as the boom started to break. The downturn in business was accompanied by the devastating hurricane of 1926, a terrific storm which played havoc with much of south Florida and destroyed much of Fort Lauderdale. Property damage in Miami and Hollywood was also extensive, but the largest death toll was at the tiny town of Moore Haven, situated on the southwestern shore of Lake Okeechobee. Of the 392 reported Florida deaths caused by the storm, Moore Haven accounted for 300. Nineteen twenty-eight brought the failure of the Fort Lauderdale Bank and Trust Company, and, later that year, a second devastating hurricane. Thus, by the waning years of the 1920s, south Florida had already entered a period of hard times which soon melted into the Great Depression, by far the longest and most severe economic disaster in American history. This was the situation when Robert H. Gore of Chicago appeared on the Fort Lauderdale scene and bought the Fort Lauderdale Daily News from the Stilwell brothers for $75,000. The fact that Gore paid only one sixth of the amount that the Stilwells had paid the Galvins three years previously indicates the tremendous drop in prices during the depression years.

Fort Lauderdale's municipal government also felt the varied effects of boom and bust in the decades following incorporation. Dr. C.G. Holland had succeeded Mathews as mayor in 1914 and served for two years. In 1916, Will J. Reed, one of the most colorful figures in Fort Lauderdale history, became mayor, and would be in and out of the city's government for more than twenty years. After a three-year administration, Reed was replaced as mayor by Fort Lauderdale attorney C.E. Farrington. Reed regained the mayor's office in 1921, but was succeeded the following year by Russell G. Snow. On November 4, 1924, Reed returned as mayor one more time.

By the middle of the 1920s, the population of Fort Lauderdale had grown tremendously. The mayor-council system seemed inadequate to meet the needs of a city caught in the midst of the Florida boom, so, as a result of a 1925 referendum, the government was changed to the commissioner-city manager system. This new system called for five city commissioners elected at large in a non-partisan special election. Each voter could vote for as many as five candidates. The election would be held in two phases—a primary which would reduce the field to ten candidates, then a general election with the names of the ten surviving candidates on the ballot. The five candidates receiving the highest number of votes would form the city commission, and would choose one of their number as mayor. Generally, the commissioners would choose the top vote-getter as mayor, but they were under no legal obligation to do so. The city commission was then to appoint a city manager whose duty was to carry out the policies set forth by the commission majority.

Some unusual rules were mandated for candidates in the new city commission elections. Section Twelve, page six of the Fort Lauderdale City Charter stated that, "No candidate for the office of city commissioner shall make any personal canvass among the voters to secure his nomination or election or the nomination or election of any other candidate in the same election." The charter thus placed rigid barriers against the usual form of campaigning and penalized those who violated the rules with the edict that their names must be stricken from the list of nominees. It therefore became necessary for the "friends" of the candidates to represent them to the voters. A candidate secured ballot position by means of a petition, but he himself could not circulate the petition. The petition had to be signed by at least 165 registered voters, and the candidate had to sign his acceptance of the nomination. The office was supposed to seek the man.

The 1925 city commission election was held during the wild real estate and business excess that marked the Florida boom. Interest in the election was at a low ebb, with only 244 voters appearing at the polls. Voter lack of interest seems to have been shared by potential candidates, since only six candidates qualified to run for the five city commission positions. C.D. Kittredge, the owner of the Fort Lauderdale Mercantile Company, a hardware store located on Andrews Avenue, was the top vote-getter with 185 votes. John W. Tidball finished in second place with 175 votes. The other successful candidates were W.C. Kyle, a local banker, and Tom Bryan, a local businessman, both of whom had been members of the original town council in 1911, and J.S. Hinton. Will J. Reed, the incumbent mayor, finished dead last, and so was the "odd man out."

C.D. Kittredge, who received the most votes, was a very active citizen of Fort Lauderdale, a charter member of the First Presbyterian Church, and active in many civic enterprises. Nevertheless, the city commission, during its organizational meeting, by a unanimous vote chose John W. Tidball as mayor. Tidball's tenure as mayor is best remembered for the strong stand he took during the aftermath of the devastating 1926 hurricane, when he put the city under martial law.

The 1927 city election saw C.D. Kittredge once again win the highest number of votes, Will J. Reed regain a seat on the commission as fifth place fin-

C.D. Kittredge (left) and John W. Tidball, Fort Lauderdale mayors during the 1920s.
isher, and Mayor Tidball meet defeat since he trailed in seventh place. W.C. Kyle retained his seat, and M.A. Hortt and well-known pioneer settler Frank Stranahan were also elected. This time, Kittredge was chosen mayor by the city commission.

The city commission election of 1929 saw John W. Needham finish first, with J.C. Alley second, M.A. Hortt third, Thomas E. Hoskins fourth, and Hershel Kelso fifth. Hortt, a wealthy real estate tycoon, and Needham, a property owner and hotel manager, would dominate the city commission for most of the following decade, sometimes as rivals and sometimes as allies. At the organizational meeting of the new commission, Kelso nominated Needham for mayor; there was no second. Then Alley nominated Hortt; again there was no second. Because of the impasse, there was nothing for the commissioners to do except to elect Hoskins as the next mayor, which they promptly did. Despite this initial confrontation, Hortt and Needham emerged as allies during most of the several years they served together, and apparently received strong support from the same element, the business community of Fort Lauderdale.14

In the 1931 city election, John W. Needham again led the field, followed by C.C. Adams, who was completing the unexpired term of the recently deceased J.C. Allen, M.A. Hortt, Broward County pioneer Frank R. Oliver, and M.H. Epstein, owner of the Seminole Laundry. Mayor Thomas E. Hoskins, who finished eighth, and Hershel Kelso, who finished twelfth, were defeated. This time the commission chose Needham as mayor. The city election of 1933 saw apartment house owner Ed Pynchon top the field, while Hortt and Needham skidded to third and fourth place respectively. Joel M. Taul, the owner of a typewriter agency, finished second, and was destined to be on and off the city commission for the next twenty years. Fort Lauderdale barber John H. Fidler, active in local Republican politics, finished in fifth place. Frank R. Oliver, M.H. Epstein, and C.C. Adams were defeated. Pynchon was chosen mayor.

The following year, Pynchon resigned his mayoral position in order to accept a federal job, and Fort Lauderdale druggist Lewis E. Moore was chosen in a special election to fill his seat on the commission. However, the commissioners subsequently chose Hortt as mayor. In 1935, John H. Fidler died as a result of an automobile accident while vacationing in the North, and Frank J. Norton, an elderly contractor, was selected in a special election to replace him on the commission.15

The first ten years of the city commissioner-city manager form of government thus set the pattern of longevity for the commissioners. Each new commissioner reached the apex of his popularity when he was first elected, and upon assuming office would see his popularity begin to erode. Will J. Reed, elected in 1927, was defeated in 1929, and failed in come back attempts in 1931 and 1933. C.D. Kittredge was the high man in 1925 and again in 1927, but was badly defeated in 1929. Thomas E. Hoskins, very prominent in the development of Fort Lauderdale during the boom, was chosen to fill the unexpired term of the deceased Frank Stranahan in 1929 and was elected to a full term later that same year, but was defeated in 1931. Fort Lauderdale engineer Samuel E. Lawrence, who was elected in 1928 to finish the unexpired term of W.C. Kyle, who had resigned, provides yet another example of this trend.16 A strong law and order man, who opposed the "wide open town to attract the tourists" concept, Lawrence was defeated in 1929, finishing fifteenth in a field of eighteen candidates. As the experiences of Reed, Frank Oliver, and others proved, name recognition was not a particular advantage. The two exceptions to the expectations of brief tenure were M.A. Hortt and John W. Needham. Hortt was elected in 1927, 1929, 1931, and 1933, and Needham in 1929, 1931, and 1933. Together, they set the record for longevity in office during the 1925-1935 period.

At the present time it is very difficult, if not impossible, to fix individual responsibility for editorial opinions expressed in the daily press. Individual responsibility is hidden under a maze of faceless corporations and editorial boards. This situation presents a sharp contrast to the way newspapers operated during the era of personal journalism. During the 1930s and 1940s, every knowledgeable person in Fort Lauderdale knew who was responsible for the editorial opinions expressed in the Fort Lauderdale Daily News. That man was Robert H. Gore, the publisher of the paper.

Robert Hayes Gore was born in Knottsville, Kentucky, on May 24, 1886. He entered St. Mary's College in St. Mary, Kentucky, and finished his college work and graduated after two years. After several nondescript jobs, Gore began his career in journalism as a reporter for the Owensboro Inquirer. After stints with several other papers, Gore came up with the idea of selling insurance through newspapers and having the paper boys collect the premiums when they made their regular collections. The idea caught on, and Gore eventually became involved primarily in the insurance business.17

His newspaper work also led Gore into the political field. In 1912, he supported Theodore Roosevelt when the ex-president attempted a political comeback by running as the candidate of the Progressive Party. In 1920, Gore campaigned for the release of the famed socialist leader and five-time presidential candidate Eugene V. Debs, who was languishing in a federal prison for having violated the espionage law during World War I. In a newspaper editorial, Gore called Debs a martyr and made the astonishing comparison of the socialist leader with John Brown.18

Fort Lauderdale mayors Thomas Hoskins (elected 1929) and Ed Pynchon (elected 1933).
In 1929 Robert H. Gore was in Fort Lauderdale and paid a visit to the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* to sell insurance. His conversation with Tom Stilwell developed into a strange turn-around. Instead of buying Gore's insurance plan, Stilwell offered Gore the paper for $90,000. In return, Gore offered $75,000, which Stilwell eventually accepted. Robert H. Gore would publish the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News* for the next thirty-four years. Throughout this period, he kept a very firm grip on the operations and policies of the newspaper.

Gore was an early backer of Franklin D. Roosevelt for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1932. He had first met the future president in 1931. After Roosevelt was nominated on the fourth ballot at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago, Gore became active in his campaign, working closely with the Democratic National Committee. In November 1932, Roosevelt overturned twelve years of Republican rule to win the presidency for the Democrats. In a victory of landslide proportions, he carried forty-two of the forty-eight states. He carried Florida by a three to one majority, and Broward County by more than two to one. Naturally, Robert H. Gore was elated at the proportions of the Democratic triumph and stood in line with other "deserving Democrats" to await the spoils of office. He had in mind the position of collector of internal revenue.

Whether Gore was ever under serious consideration for that post is problematical. To obtain such a powerful and prestigious position, he had to compete with genuine political and financial heavyweights. The Democratic Party had been out of office for twelve years, leaving many party hopefuls who had served well during those lean years hungry for the choice political plums. Nevertheless, whatever chance Gore may have had for the internal revenue position vanished as a result of an ill-advised speech delivered in Havana, Cuba, during the interim period between the presidential election in November 1932 and the inauguration of Franklin D. Roosevelt on March 4, 1933.

During the early part of 1933, Cuba was under the grip of the Machado dictatorship. Discontent with the government combined with the effects of the Great Depression had created much unrest on the island. The Platt Amendment was still in force, and most Cubans were touchy to the point of being paranoid about the possibility of American armed intervention in Cuba. That was the Cuban situation when Gore and a group of powerful and "deserving" Democrats journeyed to Havana for a victory celebration in anticipation of receiving the spoils of office. Also among the group was James A. Farley, the chairman of the Democratic National Committee. At the Havana celebration, the American contingent was joined by a number of Cubans. There, over food and drinks, Gore made a speech that caused a furor. He said in part, "I have just come from Warm Springs where I had a long conversation with the President-elect of the United States; and I can tell you gentlemen that unless you put your house in order; unless you put an end to these outrageous going-ons here; the United States Government will send an army to do the job for you." Members of the group, Americans as well as Cubans, were stunned. The effect on Gore's political future was devastating. The immediate result of that ill-considered speech was that Gore's chances for appointment to the coveted position of collector of internal revenue vanished. The job went to Guy T. Helvering of Kansas.

But Gore could not be shoved aside completely. Since he had actively and aggressively supported the victorious Democratic ticket, he still "had to be taken care of." So, in due time, Gore was appointed Governor of Puerto Rico. His appointment was confirmed by the Senate, and he traveled to San Juan with his family to take office. Gore's inaugural address lasted twenty minutes, and, during that speech, he made two proposals that did not sit well with many people in the United States. First, he advocated cock fighting and supported promoting that barbarous activity as a national sport to attract tourists. Many Americans could not help but wonder as to the caliber of tourists who would be attracted by such a cruel "sport." Humanitarian organizations in the United States were outraged and complained to President Roosevelt, who referred them to the appropriate government agencies. Apparently, the matter was eventually lost in the government bureaucracy. Gore's second controversial suggestion was that there be a vast migration of Puerto Ricans to Florida. Puerto Ricans had already been settling in New York City, and Gore commented that New York was too far away and the climate unsuitable for Caribbean emigrants. Florida, he pointed out, was much closer and had a climate similar to that of the island territory. No doubt this proposal pleased many New Yorkers, but it infuriated most Floridians, including Governor Dave Sholtz, who publicly denounced the scheme.

Upon taking office as Governor of Puerto Rico, Gore found himself facing an impossible task. Puerto Ricans were bitterly divided over a number of issues, the most notable being the future status of the island in relation to the United States. One faction favored complete independ-
ence, while another favored Puerto Rican statehood. Still another faction was willing to settle for commonwealth status. None of the groups seemed satisfied with the current situation. This dissonance led to much violence, including attempts on the governor's life. In addition to dealing with this no-win situation, Gore had a feeling that he was losing the support of the Roosevelt administration. His relationship with James A. Farley, chairman of the Democratic National Committee and now postmaster general, had become estranged as a result of the Havana speech. Faced with mounting difficulties, Gore resigned as Governor of Puerto Rico in January 1934. He had served for only six months, but cherished the title of "Governor" for the rest of his life.22

Robert H. Gore had purchased the Fort Lauderdale Daily News in 1929, but waited for six years to establish his official residence in Fort Lauderdale. Soon after settling in the city, he also became a principal downtown property owner. At the urging of Fort Lauderdale attorney George W. English, Jr., Gore purchased the unfinished Will Mar Hotel, a casualty of the collapse of the Florida boom, which had remained an eyesore for many years. Gore completed the unsightly skeleton structure as the Governor's Club Hotel, which opened for business in the fall of 1937. The Governor's Club became Robert H. Gore's greatest property acquisition and remained Fort Lauderdale's most famous and prestigious hotel for the next forty years.

As stated previously, Robert H. Gore, in his capacity as publisher of the Fort Lauderdale Daily News, kept firm control of the paper's policies. He took strong stands on issues, personalities, and candidates, on the national, state, and local levels. Some of his personal feuds became legendary. His rift with Franklin D. Roosevelt, for example, became deeper and deeper, until Gore eventually became a bitter critic of Roosevelt and his policies.

Gore also took a keen interest in the ongoing course of Fort Lauderdale city politics. The city election of 1935, Gore's first year as a resident, was a memorable event. First, the multitude of candidates, twenty-two in all, set a Fort Lauderdale record. Furthermore, the election resulted in the unexpected downfall of the two strong men of the city commission—wealthy real estate mogul M.A. Hortt and wealthy property owner John W. Needham. These two men, rivals at first but more recently allies, had dominated the city commission during the first half of the decade. The 1935 city election also marked the successful comeback of former Fort Lauderdale city commissioner and mayor Will J. Reed, who had been out of office for six years. The list of candidates included three former commissioners: Reed, M.H. Epstein, and C.C. Adams, as well as such interesting personalities as J.K. Huey, a longtime city functionary, Broward pioneer Jasper Lawson, who had served as city clerk under the old city council, and former Fort Lauderdale police chief Lucian Craig.23

The primary election was held on October 21, 1935, and the ten candidates who qualified for the general election and the votes they received were:

1. Lewis E. Moore, incumbent 1,023
2. Frank J. Norton, incumbent 840
3. B.V. Pace 655
4. J.M. Taul, incumbent 572
5. Will J. Reed 533
6. J.F. Dickey 402
7. J.P. Moe 362
8. Samuel L. Drake 346
9. M.A. Hortt, incumbent mayor 320
10. John W. Needham, incumbent 302

Downtown Fort Lauderdale looking eastward on Las Olas Boulevard, c. 1938, showing the Fort Lauderdale Daily News building and the Governors' Club Hotel.
The two top vote-receivers were incumbents filling unexpired terms. Drug store owner Lewis E. Moore had been elected to the commission in the 1934 special election to complete the unexpired term of Mayor Ed Pynchon when the mayor resigned to take a federal job. However, as has been previously related, M.A. Hortt had been chosen mayor upon Pynchon’s departure. Contractor Frank J. Norton had taken his seat as a result of a special election held earlier in 1935 to fill the vacancy left when Commissioner John H. Fidler died as a result of an automobile accident while vacationing in the North. The third place finisher in the 1935 regular primary, B.V. Pace, was a furniture store owner who was very active in civic affairs. J.F. Dickey, the head of a local abstract company, finished sixth, and Joseph P. Moe, a painting contractor active in local Republican politics, finished seventh. Broward pioneer Samuel L. Drake, active in public affairs for a quarter of a century, finished eighth, after which came the dismal showing of M.A. Hortt and John W. Needham, the two strong men of the commission, who brought up the rear. The primary election also saw the failed comebacks of two of the three former commissioners involved. M.H. Epstein finished eleventh with 279 votes, and C.C. Adams came in seventeenth with 209 votes. Other outcomes of interest included long-time city functionary J.K. Huey in thirteenth place with 248 votes, former city clerk Jasper Lawson fifteenth with 240 votes, and former city police chief Lucian Craig nineteenth with a vote total of 204. As in past contests, name recognition proved to be no advantage in this election.38

The day following the primary, questions arose as to whether one or more of the primary survivors met the minimum qualifications necessary to be eligible for a place on the city commission. George W. English, Jr., the city attorney, stated that it was the responsibility of the city clerk to check on candidates’ qualifications. Nevertheless, M.H. Epstein, the eleventh candidate and thus the beneficiary if one of the first ten would be disqualified, refused to issue a challenge. He said, “I am going back to my laundry and mind my own business.” The Fort Lauderdale Daily News, in an editorial, condemned attempts to challenge the election results, calling such efforts “reactionary,” and stating that the people had spoken.39 The matter was dropped.

The general election was held on October 28, and, for the once dominant M.A. Hortt and John W. Needham, it was a crushing defeat, with the vote count as follows:

1. Lewis E. Moore  1,337
2. Frank J. Norton  1,208
3. B.V. Pace  1,138
4. Will J. Reed  1,021
5. J.M. Taul  977
6. J.F. Dickey  668
7. J.P. Moe  635
8. Samuel L. Drake  569
9. M.A. Hortt  473
10. John W. Needham  33137

The top vote-getter, Lewis E. Moore, was chosen mayor by his fellow commissioners at the organizational meeting, but Will J. (Cap) Reed soon emerged as the strong man of the commission. Reed formed an alliance with commissioners Norton and Taul, and together they formed the commission majority, with Reed directing the city’s agenda. Mayor Moore and Commissioner Pace were thus placed in the unenviable position of being the minority on the commission.

William James (Cap) Reed, a colorful character on the Fort Lauderdale scene for over thirty years, was born in Chicago on October 18, 1871, nine days after the Chicago fire, in a former schoolhouse at the corner of Calumet and Twenty-sixth streets. He graduated from the city’s public schools, and enlisted in the army, entering an infantry regiment in 1888. In succeeding years, he served in the Spanish-American War, reached the rank of captain, and retired in 1906 after eighteen years of service. Along with his father, Robert J. Reed, he moved to Fort Lauderdale in 1910, and soon became very active in civic and business affairs. Will J. Reed served as Mayor of Fort Lauderdale from 1916 to 1919, from 1921 to 1922, and from 1924 to 1925, and also served on the city commission from 1927 to 1929. Despite this impressive record, he had also suffered his share of political defeats, being defeated for a place on the city commission in 1925, in 1929, in a special election in 1931, in the 1931 regular election, and again in 1933. During this period he
remained active in a number of fraternal organizations, being a member of the BPOE Number 1517, the F&AM, a thirty-second degree Mason, and a Shriner. Will J. Reed was perhaps best known as a great promoter of sports activities, and as one of the few city commissioners of that era who was a good public speaker.28

As was evident from the *Fort Lauderdale Daily News*’ denunciation of efforts to question the eligibility of the victorious candidates, Robert H. Gore seemed satisfied with the results of the 1935 city commission election, apparently finding no fault with the top city officials at that time. This apparent satisfaction was soon to change into bitter criticism.

In the meantime, Gore continued to express his strong opinions on state and national political figures. As mentioned previously, he was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal administration. He also started delivering bitter editorial attacks on the local congressman, J. Mark Wilcox of West Palm Beach, a man who could equal Gore in trading insults.

In the June 1936 Democratic primary, Gore strongly supported the congressional candidacy of Pat Cannon, a little-known Miami lawyer, who was trying to unseat the two-term incumbent. The Dade Countian also had the all-out support of the powerful Townsend Clubs.29 Gore’s antagonism to Wilcox certainly overcame any reservations he might have had concerning the feasibility of the expensive old age pension plan advocated by the.
Townsend Clubs. Wilcox survived the primary, but in November found himself opposed by Republican attorney Thomas E. Swanson of Fort Lauderdale, who strongly endorsed the Townsend Plan. Robert H. Gore endorsed Swanson with the same enthusiasm that he had previously given Pat Cannon. However, much to the publisher's great chagrin, Wilcox was a beneficiary of the great Democratic landslide that swept F.D.R. into his second term, and won his third consecutive term in the United States House of Representatives.

By this time, Gore's satisfaction with the results of the 1935 city election had also begun to wear thin. He soon became very critical of the city commission's policies—those promoted by the solid majority of commissioners Will J. Reed, Frank J. Norton, and Joel M. Taul. As a new city election loomed on the horizon in 1937, editorials in the Fort Lauderdale Daily News constantly attacked the extravagance of the city commission majority, time and again mentioning the $1,100 a day city commission, and referring to the majority as the "Big Three." As the numerous candidates entered the race, the Fort Lauderdale Daily News continued its assault on the commission majority which it had dubbed "The Big Three." The paper's criticisms included attacks on the commission's financial policies as well as attacks on the major appointed city officials.

On October 13, 1937, a mass meeting was held in Stranahan Park in downtown Fort Lauderdale. All twenty-seven candidates were invited to give a brief expression of their views on the various issues raised during the campaign. The meeting was sponsored by the board of trade, and board president and former city commissioner C.C. Adams presided. Each participant was limited to three minutes speaking time. Three candidates—incumbent commissioners Frank J. Norton, former commissioner and former state representative Tom M. Bryan, and C.W. Allen, a real estate operator and political nonentity—failed to appear. The incumbents spoke first, and were followed by the other candidates in alphabetical order. Joel M. Taul gave a rather weak defense of his stewardship, but Will J. Reed gave a strong defense of his and of the commission's record. Reed was at his oratorial best. Of the challenger, John W. Needham made the most sensational effort when he advised taxpayers who had not yet paid their city assessments not to do so because the new city commission would lower the assessments. Mack Klein, a salesman, used his allotted three minutes to tell the audience, "This office is not all that I expect from you. Later I expect you to send me to Tallahassee and then to Washington."

The primary election took place on Monday, October 18, 1937, and the voters indicated that they were ready for a change. John W. Needham and M.A. Hott lead the field of twenty-seven candidates. For the three incumbent commissioners, Taul, Norton, and Reed, the initial result was a severe setback. They finished fifth, eighth, and ninth, respectively. Two Broward pioneers lagged behind the leaders. Thomas M. Bryan finished in a tie for eleventh place, thus suffering his third consecutive political defeat, and William H. Marshall finished in thirteenth place. An interesting sidelight in the election results was that salesman Mack Klein, who expected the city commission seat to serve as a springboard to take him to Tallahassee and then to Washington, finished dead last in a field of twenty-seven candidates. The primary survivors, with their respective vote totals, were as follows:

1. John W. Needham 1,188
2. M.A. Hott 1,130
3. Thomas B. Manuel 952
4. Mrs. Genevieve Pynchon 659
5. Joel M. Taul 610
6. H.J. Durham 599
7. H.J. Newsham 549
8. Frank J. Norton 545
9. Will J. Reed 516
10. E.H. Hart 379

The defeated candidates, with their vote totals, were:

11. Thomas M. Bryan 326
12. E.L. Kokanour 326
14. C.O. Hayes 318
15. Watson Eltinge 306
16. W.J. Feldman 265
17. W.W. Clark 259
18. Mrs. Blanche Burns 258
19. John N. LaChance 236
20. G. Frank Croissant 232
21. C.E. Parks 167
22. George G. Hanna 159
23. C.E. Allen 130
24. L.N. White 81
25. H.L. Fetter 72
26. Lee J. Saban 57
27. Mack Klein 53

With the primary completed, the list of candidates was reduced to nine men and one woman, and the campaign continued. The "friends" of the three incumbent commissioners defended their stewardship of city affairs, while the "friends" of five challenging candidates, Needham, Hott, Mrs. Pynchon, Newsham, and Hart, continued their severe attacks against the incumbent city government. The "friends" of the two remaining primary survivors stressed the qualities of their respective candidates, but stayed out of the incumbent versus anti-incumbent battle. As was previously noted, candidates were not allowed to solicit votes in
Give the Women a Voice!

Women of Fort Lauderdale are entitled to a voice in the direction of the city's affairs. Long ago women won the right to vote. We believe our contention that we are entitled to a definite part in the management of the city's business is reasonable. We will stand for representation in the City Commission. That request we think, a reasonable and will meet with approval of the majority of voters of this City.

Mrs. Genevieve Pychon is a candidate for election to the City Commission. She ran fourth in the primary. She is fully qualified to serve as a Commissioner. She is a business woman, a family woman, a housewife. Her interests are the interests of property owners, for she is a property owner. She has managed and directed her own affairs successfully. She can and, we are confident, she will prove an efficient City Commissioner.

We believe the women of Fort Lauderdale have a right to representation on the City Commission. We feel that the City's official body should include a woman. We believe the women of the City should have a voice in how the City is operated. We believe a woman on the Commission will prove a definite asset to our City.

We call the support of all the home-loving, home-building, construction-minded citizens for Genevieve Pychon. We know that the city will serve faithfully and efficiently. Women of the City have full confidence in her. Is it asking too much to request that the man of Fort Lauderdale back our judgment of the qualifications of this one woman candidate?

Please vote for Genevieve Pychon on Monday and help the women of Fort Lauderdale in their effort to make this a better, finer, cleaner City in which to bring up their children.

Women Taxpayers of Fort Lauderdale

THE FRIENDS OF MR. MACK KLEIN
CANDIDATE FOR
Commissioner in the City of Fort Lauderdale,

Present the platform on which we base his fitness for the position. Before the broad view he takes of the future of the City as Commercial and Resort Center for Broward County.

1. He is a permanent resident, and a home owner of the City.
2. His experience in business covers a wide range in both managerial and sales capacity, having been associated successfully for seventeen years with two exceptionally large organizations of national scope, as Sales Manager.
3. He has always been honest in his endeavors; upright in the transaction of his business, holds the respect of all with whom he has been associated, either in business or socially.
4. Last but not the least he has always been in favor of Union Labor.

The management of a City is in no way different from that of any other big business. Any private individual or corporation spending more than the becomes sooner or later lands in the bankruptcy court. The City of Fort Lauderdale is no exception to the rule.

He proposes to use his influence to keep the budget of the City of Fort Lauderdale balanced. To keep the expenditures within the revenues. He is in favor of reducing the taxes rather than adding to them, and will work toward that end by endeavoring to conserve the resources and economy in the management.

He will use his earnest and unifying effort to see that the servants of the City, drawing their sustenance from the funds furnished by the tax payer, give back to the public the courtesy and service for which they are paid.

He will use his efforts in advance the interests of this City, both morally and financially. He will help to make Fort Lauderdale what its founders intended it to be, a better and safer place in which to live.

(Told Political Advertisement)

TOM M. BRYAN
Candidate for
CITY COMMISSIONER

One of the first Councilmen and later a City Commissioner, before resigning to represent Broward County in the State Legislature, one of City's largest taxpayers, experienced and familiar with the problems of our City—

STANDS FOR—
1. Dramatic reduction on Real Estate taxation.
2. Furnishing only such municipal services as absolutely essential, and curtailment of expenditures under present City Budget, and there are many items where this can be done.
3. Planned campaign of City beautification—of streets, highways and parks.
4. No Politics or Savoir-faire in selection of employees—on merit basis only.

(Paid Political Advertisement)

TO THE VOTERS
OF THE CITY OF
FT. LAUDERDALE

In asking Commissioners to represent you during the next two years you should be guided by the records of accomplishment of the men who have been elected thereto by your votes. The Committee of the Economic Administration of City Affairs has investigated the records of Mayor, Hart and Hendon during their former terms of office and have given one of the many recommendations from the official records that you, the voters, may have to select from during two able, intelligent, civic-minded men.

Here's what the Records Reveal:

Mayor—During the years of Mayor Hendon's administration, the city has been governed by a mayor who has been known for his efficiency and his ability to get things done. His administration has been marked by a decrease in the cost of government and an increase in the amount of city revenue. The city has been able to improve its infrastructure and services, and has been able to attract new businesses to the city.

Henderson—During the years of Mayor Hendon's administration, the city has been governed by a mayor who has been known for his efficiency and his ability to get things done. His administration has been marked by a decrease in the cost of government and an increase in the amount of city revenue. The city has been able to improve its infrastructure and services, and has been able to attract new businesses to the city.

Henderson—During the years of Mayor Hendon's administration, the city has been governed by a mayor who has been known for his efficiency and his ability to get things done. His administration has been marked by a decrease in the cost of government and an increase in the amount of city revenue. The city has been able to improve its infrastructure and services, and has been able to attract new businesses to the city.

Compare that Record, Please!

During the Henderson-Henderson administration the city government has been characterized by honesty, integrity and efficiency. The city has been able to improve its services and facilities, and has been able to attract new businesses to the city.

Paid Political Advertisement

VOTE ON THE RECORD

A few of the political advertisements which appeared in the Daily News just prior to the October 18, 1937, primary.
their own behalf during that era, and relied upon their "friends" to gather support.

As the regular election approached, the Fort Lauderdale Daily News continued its attacks on the three incumbent commissioners. The paper endorsed no particular candidate, but seemed satisfied with any of the contenders except "The Big Three." Name recognition appeared to be of no particular advantage with many citizens. One voter stated, "I might possibly vote for John Needham, but I will be damned if I will vote for old Hortt, even if everyone votes for him but me." A prominent citizen decided to take the negative route and said, "I will leave out the three present commissioners plus Hortt and Needham." On Friday, October 22, 1937, the weekly edition of the Fort Lauderdale Shopper, a "throwaway" sustained by advertising and edited by O.D. Stiles, who also edited a weekly paper in Hollywood, was distributed throughout Fort Lauderdale. The news portion of the paper was largely concerned with the city election, defended the record of the three incumbent commissioners, and was extremely critical of R.H. Gore and the Fort Lauderdale Daily News. The Shopper ridiculed Gore's stand for economy and pointed out that in previous years the Daily News had regularly supported increases in the city budgets. The Shopper also derogatorily referred to the Fort Lauderdale Daily News as the "Daily Snooze." The Shopper article was not O.D. Stiles' only attack on Gore and the city commission challengers he supported. Stiles also distributed an anonymous circular that made comments on each of the city commission candidates and contained a blistering attack on Robert H. Gore and the Fort Lauderdale Daily News. It accused Gore of using his wealth and power to obtain special favors from the city, including the paving of a public road that led to the Gore home. The circular also accused the five city commission candidates who strongly opposed the three incumbents of being supported by the gambling interests, the liquor interests, and the "wide-open-town crowd." By implication, the circular connected Gore and his paper with those unsavory elements.

Because of the nature of his business, Fort Lauderdale liquor store owner H.J. Newsham, an arch foe of the incumbent commission, was especially targeted for attack. Newsham was labeled as a "Liquor merchant" whose "chief sport [is] cheap gambling" and an advocate of a wide open town. The circular also stated that E.H. Hart believed in "cheaper water and free whiskey—too cheap won't do." It charged that M.A. Hortt, if elected, would "shift one eye on gambling as his past record verifies" and also attacked Hortt as an enemy of union labor. The circular described Hortt as a "Capitalist—against Labor—Daily News candidate," and continued, "Politics makes strange bedfellows—Imagine Hortt laying down with Gore and Needham—If elected, fun will fly before Thanksgiving and the old feud between Gore and Hortt will be renewed as after all Hortt isn't a YES MAN."

John W. Needham, who led the primary ticket, the circular declared: "Politician—tax dodger and former mayor—past record bad (see minutes City Commission March 29, 1932 for record as tax dodger)—mayor during reign of gamblers, bootleggers and wiretappers—Daily News wheelhorse—if you want an open town support this candidate—Gore will dictate this fellow's action—God help City under Gore Rule and Yellow Journalism." Mrs. Genevieve Pynchon was dismissed by the circular as "A bad bet for decency," and accused of being supported by the most unsavory characters in the city.

On the other hand, the circular praised Will J. Reed, the strong man of the current city commission, in glowing terms. Reed was described as "being fought tooth and toe by every gamblers in Broward County." Commissioner Frank J. Norton was described as "Honorable—sincere—fearless and honest—Defeated Gore in his attempt to snatch five years free taxes on the Governors' Club—Against gambling though approached and offered their support." The circular also gave incumbent city commissioner Joel M. Taul a "Clean Bill of Health." Thomas B. Manuel and John H. Durham, the two candidates not involved in the incumbent versus non-incumbent squabble, also received high praise from the circular. Manuel was described as "the Next Mayor" and as being "against illegal gambling." Durham, too, was declared as "against lawlessness such as gambling and other forms of vice." Immediately following the distribution of the circular, candidates Manuel and Durham both came to the Daily News office and disclaimed any knowledge of or responsibility for the attack on the character of their opponents.

M.A. Hortt, when contacted by the Daily News, issued a vigorous response. "I have served this city efficiently as a city commissioner," he stated. "I intend to serve efficiently, practically, and to assist in giving people an economic government based on sound business principles. The records are open for anyone to examine. I
CHARACTER ASSASSINS ATTACK FOES
OF "BIG THREE" COMMISSION GANG

CITY HALL RING TICKET
NOW CLEARLY DEFINED

Anonymous, Unlabeled Circular Produced In Effort
To Blast Down Opposition to Reed-Taul-Norton
Trio; "Big Three" Painted As "Lily White"

DailyNews counter-attack on the
anonymous election circular.

suggest that they be looked into because
the answer is in the records." John W.
Needham told the Daily News that no
answer was required and that "only a
pretty cowardly sort of individual or
organization would make such an attack."
Nevertheless, he went on to defend his
record in greater detail:

"Everybody who has been here
any length of time knows that I
served this town in an efficient way,
and that I helped keep our operat-
ing expenses down. Everybody also
knows that I own some property
here and everybody who has asked
me has learned that I am opposed to
any "wide open town" proposition. I
just think that this circular proves
how desperate the opposition has
become and I'm not worried in the
slightest about its effect. Instead of
being a tax dodger, as this circular
charges, I am just the opposite. Only
this week I had to give up seven lots,
on which the city commission sold
tax certificates to Mr. Burns of
Miami, because I couldn't pay the
high taxes."¹⁰

The circular dismissed H.J. Newsham,
a bitter critic of the city commission
majority who loudly voiced his determi-
nation to "clean out city hall," as a "Liquor
merchant—chief sport cheap gambling—
suits Gore but not strong enough for Daily
News to openly support. Pass this one
up—won't do—open town man." Newsham
told the Daily News, "I don't give a rap
about what's in this dirty thing. The City
Hall gang is against me. I have said I'd
clean out the City Hall and I mean it. I
mean, too, to clean out the FireDepart-
ment, and I've told them so. They don't
like me and this is their way of showing
it." "Friends" of Mrs. Genevieve Pynchon
put a paid political advertisement in the
Fort Lauderdale Daily News in which
Mrs. Pynchon stated that the charges
against her were unfair. She emphati-
cally denied that she favored a wide open
town.¹¹

The Fort Lauderdale Daily News
responded to the circular in a furious man-
ner, attacking it as a "Scandal Sheet" and
calling its anonymous author a "Character
Assassin." Then the Daily News did
some investigative work and traced the
authorship to O.D. Stiles of Hollywood,
the publisher of the Fort Lauderdale Shop-
per. R.H. Gore made an issue of the fact
that the circular did not carry a union
label.¹² Distribution of the circular was
traced to Mrs. Lelah Losey, and she pro-
duced an affidavit which follows:

AFFIDAVIT

Before me a Notary Public in and
for Broward County, State of Flor-
da, there appeared Mrs. Lelah
Losey, who after being duly sworn,
deposed and said:

On Saturday morning the circu-
lars in question were left at my
house for distribution. I was not at
home at the time, but my daughter
took the circulars and three dollars
as part payment for their distribu-
tion. My daughter told me that they
had been left by Mr. O.D. Stiles, for
whom I regularly distribute a weekly
circular. My daughter is acquainted
with Mr. Stiles.

My son told me there were some
"hot things" in the circular and said
I had better show them to someone
in authority before distributing them. I took a copy of the circular to
Chief of Police Kaiser, and Mr.
Kaiser told me there was nothing
illegal in the circular and it would
be all right for me to distribute them.

I met Commissioner Taul on the
street after I had shown the circular
to Mr. Kaiser. I told Mr. Taul that I
had undertaken to distribute circu-
lars in which his name was men-
tioned and I told him that he ought
to see it.

I had no intention of distribut-
ing anything that might cause anyone
any trouble.

LELAH LOSEY

Sworn to before me this 25th day of
October 1937.
Marguerite K. Armbrust
My commission expires 5-9-39.¹³

The controversial city election was held
on October 25, and the results were re-
vealing. For Joel M. Taul, Frank J. Nor-
ton, and Will J. Reed, the three incum-
bent commissioners, it was a crushing
defeat. They finished seventh, ninth, and
ten, respectively. This was the first
election since the city commission form of
government was established in 1925 that
not a single incumbent commissioner was
returned to office. Needham and Hortt
returned to office, after an absence of two
years, finishing third and fourth, respectively. Thomas B. Manuel and John H. Durham, the two
challengers not involved in the anti-incumbent rhetoric, finished first and second respectively.
Obviously, Manuel and Durham received votes from both factions, so their strategy paid off
politically. Mrs. Pynchon finished in fifth place, thus becoming the first woman to
be elected to the Fort Lauderdale City Commission.

The five anti-incumbent candidates finished third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and eighth,
with the complete returns as follows:

1. Thomas B. Manuel 1,507
2. John H. Durham 1,437
3. John W. Needham 1,410
4. M.A. Hott 1,348
5. Mrs. Genevieve Pynchon 1,232
6. H.J. Newsham 1,097
7. Joel M. Taul 777
8. E.H. Hart 761
10. Will J. Reed 507*

The political broom swept clean. An
to
entirely new city commission was sworn
into office and quickly chose Thomas B.
Manual as mayor and John H. Durham as
vice mayor. The new commission then


proceeded to make a clean sweep of the
top city positions by means of mass fir-
ings. City Manager Albert Merrill was
ousted and replaced by John K. (Old Man)
Huay, a former commission candidate and


long-time city functionary who had served
in various city positions during previous
administrations. City Auditor and Clerk
J.A. Warren, a former Broward County
tax collector, was fired and replaced by
Mrs. Florence Hardy. Chief of Police John
Kaiser was fired and replaced by R.B.
McDonald, who had previous law enfor-
cement experience. Fire Chief John Cody
was replaced by Jerry Carter, who had
previously held that office. The twenty-
five-year-old municipal judge, Edward
Heimburcher, who was prominent in the
local Elks Lodge, was fired, but the com-
mission managed to pacify the Elks by
appointing A.L. McMillan, who was also
very prominent in that lodge, to the posi-
tion. City Recreation Director Ernst
Bratzel was removed by means of abol-
tion of the recreation position. Also slated
for the “ax” was City Attorney George W.
English, Jr., who had held that position
for nine years. But English was tempo-
arily retained until current city legal work
could be completed. This “current legal
work” was not completed until 1939, at
which point English resigned. Also tar-
ged for ouster was the long-time man-
ger of the Las Olas Casino and very
successful swimming coach, the vener-
able Al Gordon, who had held that position since the opening of the Casino in 1928, and who had served during four city administrations. But Gordon was protected by contract and managed to hold on to his position until 1938.45

The new city administration also dealt with the budget in a "meat ax" manner. Property assessments were reduced by ten percent, and the city work force was reduced by mass firings. However, as so often happened in the Fort Lauderdale of that era, the commission soon accumulated more than its share of critics. Hortt had a falling out with Gore, as had been predicted by the infamous election-time circular, retained his existing enemies, and acquired new ones. John H. Durham soon lost his popularity, and it became evident that John W. Needham's political days were numbered.

In the 1939 election, Needham did not seek reelection, and Hortt suffered a crushing defeat, finishing eleventh in a field of eighteen candidates, with 343 votes. He never again sought public office. John H. Durham finished seventh in the primary and eighth in the general election. He lived in retirement until his death in 1946. Thomas B. Manuel and Mrs. Genevieve Pynchon were the only incumbents reelected in 1939. However, since he finished fifth, Manuel had to settle for being one of the commissioners rather than serving as mayor. In 1940, he was called into active duty by the army and resigned as city commissioner. He served in combat in the Pacific theater during World War II. In 1946 Manuel returned to the political field as an unsuccessful candidate for a place in the Florida Senate. During the 1950s he served as chairman of the Florida Turnpike Commission under Governors Dan McCarty and Leroy Collins. He died in 1987 at the age of eighty-eight. Mrs. Pynchon did not run for reelection in 1941. She died in 1943. The city election of 1939 sent one message that was both loud and clear—the era of Hortt and Needham was over.46

The other figures involved in the rancorous 1937 election had varied futures as well. B.V. Pace, one of the two incumbent commissioners who did not seek reelection in 1937, died the following year. Mayor Lewis E. Moore, who also declined to seek another term, waged an unsuccessful campaign for congress in 1938. He returned to city government as mayor-commissioner from 1939 to 1941, and again from 1951 to 1953. However, twelve years later, Moore "went to the well" once too often and made an unsuccessful attempt to return to the commission. He died in 1985. The commissioners that R.H. Gore labeled "The Big Three" encountered various fates. The colorful Will J. Reed made several unsuccessful efforts to return to the commission and never again held elective public office. He remained a conspicuous figure in Fort Lauderdale until his death in 1944. Frank J. Norton, well along in years at the time of his 1937 defeat, remained in retirement. Joel M. Taul returned to the city commission from 1941 to 1947, and again from 1949 to 1953. He died in 1964.

Robert H. Gore continued his aggressive editorial policies. His personal feuds with public figures became legendary, and his numerous investments in Broward County real estate continued to increase his already substantial fortune. Gore sold the Fort Lauderdale Daily News to the Chicago Tribune interests in 1963, but remained a powerful figure in Broward County until his death in 1972.

The 1937 city election was significant for several reasons. It was the first time that R.H. Gore took an active and aggressive interest in city politics. It was also the first election in which not a single incumbent city commissioner was reelected. Finally, this election demonstrated once and for all that the system which did not allow candidates to campaign in the normal political manner was not workable. The Fort Lauderdale Daily News, the Fort Lauderdale Shopper, the eleventh hour circular, and others could write or say anything that they chose about and against any candidate, yet the offended candidate was unable to make an adequate response, having to rely upon "friends" for any defense in their behalf. Eventually, the rules would be changed to conform with reality. Only then could candidates for city office campaign in the normal manner. In the meantime, Fort Lauderdale city politics provided a unique and lively spectacle, as strikingly demonstrated by the election of 1937 and the involvement of the Fort Lauderdale Daily News.
Endnotes

1. For material covering the career of George G. Mathews, the founder of the Fort Lauderdale Daily News, the author relied on the Mathews file located in the archives of the Broward County Historical Commission, Fort Lauderdale. An excellent characterization of Robert H. Gore, long-time publisher of the Fort Lauderdale Daily News, can be found in Past the Edge of Poverty, by Gore's grandson, Fort Lauderdale attorney Paul A. Gore (Fort Lauderdale: R.H. Gore Company, 1980). The author also relied on appropriate issues of the Fort Lauderdale Daily News. For characterizations of the personalities involved in city politics during the era 1925-1937, the author is indebted to his father, Fort Lauderdale attorney Hugh Lester (1884-1957), who was a keen observer of the political scene and who knew the leading candidates personally. Some of the material is based on the author's personal knowledge.


4. The official 1930 United States Census results, published by the Government Printing Office that year, also contained the 1910 and 1920 figures.

5. William Heine arrived in Fort Lauderdale in 1909 to serve as principal of the Fort Lauderdale school. The following year he started the Fort Lauderdale Herald. He published the paper until 1916, when he sold it and moved to Deland. After a short stay in Deland, Heine moved to Connecticut and resumed his work in education. He died suddenly in 1918. See Heine's obituary in the Fort Lauderdale Herald, December 7, 1919.

6. Conflicting accounts have led to some confusion concerning the date Fort Lauderdale's municipal government was organized. The dates March 27, 1911, and March 30, 1911 are most frequently cited. See Weidling and Burghard, Checked Sunshine, 35, for a discussion of this question. Despite this uncertainty, incorporation did not become official until June 2, 1911, when the town charter was approved by the Florida Legislature.


8. Mathews File, Broward County Historical Commission archives.


10. Will J. Reed (1871-1944) was a very conspicuous figure in Fort Lauderdale for thirty-four years, and was active in civic, fraternal, and sports activities. The late Broward County Historian Dr. Cooper C. Kirk (1920-1989) has related that Reed coached a town baseball team on which Dr. Kirk participated during the 1930s.

11. Weidling and Burghard, Checked Sunshine, 279-281, contains the names of the Fort Lauderdale mayors during the town's formative years.


13. Weidling and Burghard, Checked Sunshine, 12; The author's personal knowledge.

14. Told to the author by his father, Fort Lauderdale attorney Hugh Lester.

15. The author's personal knowledge.

16. Samuel E. Lawrence (1882-7) lived in Fort Lauderdale only eight years, but he certainly made a big impression during that time. Armed with two degrees from Purdue, a veteran of World War I, and very active in the American Legion and the Masonic Lodge, as well as in civic enterprises, Lawrence assumed the duties of Commissioner of Public Safety in 1928. He was a rigid, unbending puritan who was determined to end vice in the city by strict enforcement of city laws. He made a major political blunder by appointing an outsider, a man from West Palm Beach whom he had met at an American Legion meeting, as chief of police. The new chief became very unpopular because of his allegedly hardboiled and hightailed tactics. This perception contributed to Lawrence's decisive defeat in 1929. In 1933, Lawrence moved to Baton Rouge, Louisiana, where he joined the United States Corps of Engineers and worked on Mississippi River projects. He was a member of the army reserves and was called into active service during World War II. In 1946 he became professor of hydraulic engineering at Louisiana State University. He was the author of a textbook in his field as well as a number of articles in professional journals and in The American Legion magazine. Much of this biographical material was furnished by the author's father, Fort Lauderdale attorney Hugh Lester, a close friend of Lawrence. Lawrence's listing in Who Was Who in America, 1985-1989 does not give the date of his death.

17. Gore, Past the Edge of Poverty, 5.

18. This background indicates that Gore was not always a consistent supporter of the Democratic Party. Also his praise of John Brown (1800-1859), the fanatic abolitionist, is surprising. Considering the political climate of the 1920s, Brown was probably as unpopular in the North during this period as he was in the South. Debs did not appreciate being equated with John Brown, since Brown ended his career on the gallows.

19. The Platt Amendment was adopted after the Spanish-American War and gave the United States the legal right to intervene in Cuban affairs to insure the public order. Many Cubans objected to the amendment. The Platt Amendment was repealed in 1933.


21. Ibid., 341 ff.

22. Ibid., 144 ff.

23. The appropriate issues of the Fort Lauderdale Daily News; The author's personal knowledge.

24. Ibid.


27. Ibid., October 29, 1935.

28. The Reed file in the archives of the Broward County Historical Commission; "Broward County's Development During the Great War: Broward's Businessmen, 1918," Broward Legacy, vol. 10, nos. 3-4 (Summer/Fall 1987), 44.

29. The Townsend Plan was an old age pension plan promoted by Dr. Francis E. Townsend of Long Beach, California. According to this plan, the United States government would pay a pension of $200 a month to every person over the age of sixty, with the provision that the entire amount must be spent within the United States during a one month period. The Townsend Plan attracted wide support during the lean Depression years, and Townsend Clubs sprang up across the country. In Florida they developed much political clout, and elected many candidates to office between 1936 and 1938. Former newspaper publisher George G. Mathews was at one time president of the Fort Lauderdale club. Gore, who later developed a reputation as a conservative, supported the Townsend candidates instead of the more conservative Wilcox because of his strong animosity toward the incumbent congressman. The Townsend Plan never became law.


32. Ibid.

33. Ibid., October 14, 1937. The impressions are those of the author, who attended the meeting.

34. Ibid., October 19, 1937.

35. Told to the author's father, Fort Lauderdale attorney Hugh Lester, by W.C. Burkett. The author overheard the exchange.

36. Told to the author's father, Fort Lauderdale attorney Hugh Lester, by J.F. Charlton, a prominent surveyor.

37. The Fort Lauderdale Shopper, October 22, 1937, copy in the possession of the Broward Historical Society archives, Fort Lauderdale.


39. Ibid.

40. Ibid. During the Great Depression, certain speculators, called "tax sharks," acquired property by paying the property taxes of delinquent taxpayers and then holding on to the property until better times, when they sold it for a large profit. Many a fortune was made by that process. Burns was one of the most notorious of the "tax sharks" in south Florida. Needless to say, "tax sharks" were very unpopular during those hard Depression years. It seems strange that John W. Needham let seven lots go by tax default. Most people thought of Needham as a very wealthy man.

41. Fort Lauderdale Daily News, October 23, 1937.

42. During his long Fort Lauderdale career, R.H. Gore was known for his strong bias against organized labor. It is therefore interesting that he accused Stiles of not employing union labor. He no doubt did so to point out Stiles' hypocrisy for attacking Hoots on this issue.

43. Fort Lauderdale Daily News, October 25, 1937.

44. Ibid., October 26, 1937.

45. The author's personal knowledge.

46. Ibid. It is the author's opinion that Tom Manuel has probably seen as much military action as anyone in Broward County. He was a veteran of three wars, serving in the Mexican Border War, as well as overseas in two world wars.