

# First Published History of Dania

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Dania is located 345 miles south of Jacksonville and 22 miles north of Miami, on the Florida East Coast Railway, and has had its ups and downs the same as any other new town.

The Florida East Coast Railway Company tried hard for several years to settle the town, but always made a failure, not because the location was bad or the soil worthless (for both are known to be among the best in the East Coast) but because they did not get the right class of settlers.

First they tried to settle the town with Danes exclusive, but made a complete failure, and it was not until A. C. Frost went there that the little village made any progress.

The Florida East Coast Railway made Mr. Frost a land agent at that point as he had had considerable experience in the Colonization business in Wisconsin, having organized and settled two towns in that State, one of which was named after him, "Frostville."

In 1901, when Mr. Frost arrived in Dania, the town was in a deplorable condition. Only one white woman and a few bachelors resided there. The rest of the population being negroes, a white man by the name of Clark, who was then agent for the Florida East Coast Railway

Company at Dania, [who] was running a little store and a blind tiger in a dilapidated shack, opposed the invasion of any white man looking for a home. The land agent before Clark (a Dane by the name of James Paulson) cheated the town out of \$1,100.

There was no schoolhouse at this time, for under the existing conditions such a novelty was not needed. The first improvement was to build himself a \$600 residence, which he afterwards remodeled at a cost of \$1,100. The next thing he did was to build a \$700 store building and made a general store.

By this time the little town had been heard of and settlers were not slow coming in, but Clark was still doing all in his power to thwart Frost's plans. He swore he would make Frost bankrupt inside of one year, and would use his (Frost's) store building for a horse barn.

The need for a school was soon sorely felt, as families could not be induced to settle there without this advantage for their children. Frost went before the school board to get them to establish a school district at Dania and build the schoolhouse. The board agreed to make a school district and to pay a teacher, but said that Mr. Frost and the settlers would have to provide a school-

house for themselves. The settlers nobly responded and a schoolhouse was built. Mr. Frost gave \$169 to this cause, which was afterwards returned by the County.

Mr. C. Eskielson of Chicago spent considerable money in Dania, but not to very much advantage. Mr. P. H. Roper, the Spier family and settlers from Orange County came to Dania to settle there and grow tomatoes but were stopped by Clark, who told them that he controlled several hundred acres of land in the 'Glades owned by the East Coast Railway Company and a company in Jacksonville. These lands, he said, they might use free of rent provided he could sell them all supplies, which they agreed to do. Clark warned them not to let Frost know anything of their little agreement, as he would report it.

Everything went well with Mr. Clark until Mr. Spier went to Mr. Frost to buy a small bit of groceries. Frost said that he did not try to interfere with Clark's customers, but Mr. Spier said that he was going to quit Clark anyway, as he had not treated him right. Frost then asked Spier upon whose land he was farming to which question he did not know [the answer]. Mr. Frost then went out and located the land and

then went to Mr. J. E. Ingraham at St. Augustine and asked the price of forty acres of this land. The reply came to \$200. Then Mr. Spier tried to buy his farm but before the contract could be made, Clark went to St. Augustine and told a lot of falsehoods about Frost, but Mr. Ingraham, believing them, agreed to sell the land to Mr. Spier. When Clark came home he told the farmers in his settlement that Frost had reported to the Jacksonville Company that their lands were being cultivated, and so this company was going to send a man down to take possession of their crops. Clark visited the Orange County people to mob Frost and run him out of the country, at which suggestion they marched over to Clark's store in a body. After being informed of what Clark had said about him, Frost soon established his position and, upon being told that Clark had promised these people to save their crops for them if they paid him \$10 per acre rent, he advised them not to comply but to wait for developments.

When Clark found that his scheme had failed he went to St. Augustine and Jacksonville, returning with a written authority from the land company in the latter place for him to take possession of all the farms, unless the farmers paid the rent asked for. Frost told the settlers not to pay the money and the controversy died.

Shortly after this Frost was sent to the northern states to advertise for the East Coast [Railway Company] and when he came back he brought thirty-five Danes who cropped one year, then became dissatisfied and, all except three families, left.

About four years ago the growers of Dania organized the Packing House Association and built a packing house. This association was Growers Union of which Crutchfield and Woolfolk of Pittsburg are now the distribution sale agents and Mr. H. T. Tubbs, the manager.

Up to this time there had not

been a hotel in Dania; so Mr. Frost, seeing the need of one, built a \$5,000 house and sold it to Mrs. [Miss] Annie Webb, who has operated the Webb Hotel with great success ever since.

About five years ago the county road was built through the heart of Dania. Five years ago Dania was incorporated and John W. Mullikin was made its first Mayor, and for councilmen, the following men were chosen: C. M. Nelson, George Jones, H. T. Tubbs, Roy Roper was chosen Clerk and Mr. Steinhouser, marshal. A jail and council room were constructed of wood. A year after, a fire started in the jail which spread and threatened the main part of town. After this the citizens called a mass meeting to devise ways and means not only to build a new jail but also to construct a city water works. Mr. Frost was then sent to St. Augustine to make arrangements to borrow \$2,500 from the First National Bank for which bonds were given. A stone jail and council room was built and one and one-half miles of water mains laid.

Judge Sands succeeded Mr. Mullikin as Mayor. At this time another four miles of rock road was built west from Dania by the county assisted by the settlers.

Mr. LaBree came to Dania three years ago from Miami and opened a wagon and blacksmith shop and novelty and boat works.

Two years ago fifty-two houses were built in one season. Though Dania is practically only four years old there is a population of 1000, five general stores, three churches, a grade schoolhouse here, city water works, two ice cream parlors, one drug store, one hotel and two boarding houses. An electric and ice plant is promised in the near future. Chase & Co., of Jacksonville, have a branch packing house here. One of the needed improvements is a new passenger depot, which has been promised this summer.

Among those who have spent much time and money in Dania, for

her interest as well as theirs, are Mr. T. A. Price who owns a store here; Mr. George Bloom, the present city clerk; [and] Mr. J. M. Holding, president of the council and one of the most extensive tomato and pineapple growers in this section, having a large private packing house.

John Mullikin is a member of the council and owns a fine orange grove west of Dania. Mr. M. C. Hardee raises tomatoes and pineapples extensively. Mr. F. G. Taylor came to Dania not long ago from Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, and has heavy investments here. Through his influence we have added to our number such influential citizens as Mr. Porter, Mr. Edgar and Dr. Green. W. L. Brown, G. F. Landstreet, Jas. P. Raulerson are also among our largest growers. It is calculated that 800 cars of produce will be shipped from Dania this season.

#### JOHN W. MULLIKIN

Mr. John W. Mullikin, who was the first mayor Dania elected after becoming incorporated, is considered one of the county's best citizens and the honor bestowed upon him by his townspeople in electing him their first mayor was timely. Mr. Mullikin came to Florida from Kentucky twenty-one years ago and has been to Dade County nine years. One of the finest grapefruit and orange groves is owned by Mr. Mullikin, the same being seven years old and located a little west of Dania. Mr. Mullikin owns about forty-five acres of land here and does a general contracting work, handling lumber, stone and concrete.

#### GEORGE W. BLOOM

Mr. George W. Bloom, city clerk and treasurer, came to Dania from Baltimore, Maryland, with his schoolmate Harry T. Tubbs first in 1904. Mr. Bloom bought some property here and left in 1905. Re-

turning later in the year, Mr. Bloom was appointed city clerk and treasurer to fill out the unexpired term of J. P. Nix and has been reelected ever since. In June of last year, Mr. Bloom married Annie Webb. He has about twenty-five acres in tomatoes and although ten acres were lost during the wet weather recently he has already sold enough to clear expenses.

#### A. C. FROST

Mr. Frost came to Dania from Wisconsin in 1901 and, after a hard struggle related elsewhere in this article, succeeded in establishing himself in the town. Mr. Frost is land agent for the F.E.C. [Florida East Coast] railway company and has been the cause of much activity in real estate here for the past few years.

#### S. M. ALSOBROOK

Mr. S. M. Alsobrook came to Dania from Lake County, now owns about two thousand acres of land in and around Dania. Five years ago, Mr. Alsobrook landed here with \$5000 to invest. The following year he bought five acres of land, one acre which was set in pine-apples. He now owns two thousand acres and forty-eight acres of pine-apples. Six hundred acres of this is vegetable land, about the best there is in the county. The rest is spruce and pine land. Mr. Alsobrook has two packing houses two miles south of Dania, in about the center of his land. The land now owned by Mr. Alsobrook is now worth from \$20 to \$200 per acre. Besides this land Mr. Alsobrook owns 15 residences in the town in which he resides, occupying one with his three children Willie, Irene and Charles, all still school children. Mr. Alsobrook is a widower and has accumulated enough money in Dania to make

him independent of frosts or wet weather.

#### L. R. MOSS

Mr. L. R. Moss came to Dade County about five years ago and to Dania in 1906, opened a restaurant with an ice cream parlor and soda fountain in connection, in one of J. W. Mullikin's buildings in the center of town. He has been very successful.

#### THEO DEMRO

Mr. Theo Demro came to Florida sixteen years ago from Lepere, Wisconsin, and to Dania two years ago, where he has a first class horseshoeing and blacksmithing establishment. Mr. Demro also has nineteen acres planted in tomatoes.

#### HARRY TUBBS

Mr. Harry Tubbs, one of the substantial young businessmen of Dania came during the winter of 1901-02 from Baltimore, Maryland. With his friend, Mr. George Bloom, he cultivated and planted large crops during the past several seasons and now has ten acres of land under cultivation. Mr. Tubbs was a member of the first board of aldermen and served one term. He was elected again last November.

#### F. G. TAYLOR

Mr. F. G. Taylor, a member of the Board of Aldermen, came to Dania almost three years ago from Fontana, Walworth County, Wisconsin. He has sixteen acres of tomatoes this year and four acres of pineapples, bearing its first crop this season.

### OFFICIALS OF DANIA

T. A. Price . . . . . Mayor  
George Bloom . . . . Clerk-Treasurer  
J. M. Holding . . . . President Alderman  
L. R. La Bree . . . . . Alderman  
J. W. Mullikin . . . . . Alderman  
F. G. Taylor . . . . . Alderman  
H. T. Tubbs . . . . . Alderman

#### J. M. HOLDING

Mr. J. M. Holding who is now president of the town council is one of Dania's most progressive citizens. A graduate of Wake Forest College, North Carolina, Mr. Holding was an instructor in Mars Hills College in Weston, North Carolina, for six years.

Six years ago Mr. Holding came to Dania and bought some trucking land and has led the life of a farmer ever since. In 1908, Mr. Holding was appointed councilman to fill the unexpired term of W. C. Dykes, who died in office. This year Mr. Holding was elected councilman and made president of that body. He has 120 acres in tomatoes and one of the finest packing houses in the county with every facility for handling crops therein. The packing house is situated on the railroad siding and he has a private road running to his fields a mile to the east. At Hallandale, Mr. Holding has a fine orange grove of forty acres. When Mr. Holding arrived in Dania five years ago, he had only enough money to buy five acres of land at \$20 an acre. Today he is worth about \$25,000.

#### T. A. PRICE

Mr. T. A. Price came to Dania three years ago and opened a general merchandise store. Previous to opening the store, Mr. Price cultivated a large area of land and now has fourteen acres in tomatoes. In

DANIA: continued on page 16.