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***History of Keystone, Odessa and Citrus Park* edited by Henry J.
Binder**

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natural enemies! The land question is best summed up in a speech made by John Quincy Adams in 1802: “Their cultivated fields, their constructed habitations . . . a space for their subsistence, was undoubtedly by the laws of nature theirs. But what is the right of the huntsman to the forest of a thousand miles over which he has accidentally ranged in question of prey? . . . Shall the lordly savage not only disdain the virtues and enjoyments of civilization himself, but shall he control the civilization of the world?” As the result of this consensus about the lands that the Indians lived on, a protracted war was carried out with the sole purpose of removing the Indians to the west in order to get their lands.

The war was costly to the United States. It involved the services of eight generals to lead campaigns into Florida. “The lives of fifteen hundred white soldiers and at least thirty million dollars (two hundred fifty million dollars in today’s dollars,) had been sacrificed to remove less than six thousand Indians and a handful of Negroes,” Peters somberly notes. “There is no way to measure the loss of black and Indian property, the misery and heartache they endured in defense of their liberty. If one counts at least two men severely wounded, maimed or chronically ill for everyone who died on the battlefield, Americans paid with one of their own for every two of the Seminole allies removed!”

Mrs. Peters has written an excellent account of the Florida wars. Her research has been supported by primary records and unpublished materials from the National Archives. E. Glendon Moore has drawn several maps for this volume that are clear and very useful in following the events of the text.

Joseph Hipp

History of Keystone, Odessa and Citrus Park. Edited by Henry J. Binder (Published by Keystone-Odessa-Citrus Park Historical Society, 1979. 62 pp. Photographs, drawings, maps)

History is everything that has happened, small as well as large, and assembling an account of the past in a manner to mesmerize unconcerned readers in the present is a prodigious feat.

Happily, Henry J. Binder and his associates of the Keystone-Odessa-Citrus Park Historical Society have succeeded in preserving a delicacy with a great deal of ripeness. Their project was conceived as a phase of the area’s participation in the nation’s Bicentennial and now, in 1979, has achieved public attention in a soft-cover book.

At the outset I realized that such histories may be written solely for participants and their descendants. Yet the obvious authenticity of research shines through for future historians who may want to build on it at some time in the future—say, the nation’s next centennial.

The History of Keystone, Odessa and Citrus Park may be interpreted, then, to be intended primarily for the posterity of people in the area. Mr. Binder, as the editor, surely never expected an outsider to be looking over his labor of love and did not bother to bring it into perspective for a stranger.

His technique was to present thirty-nine articles by twenty-eight individuals without interpolation, relying on two deftly stylized cartographs by artist A. John Kaunus to depict the interrelation of the three communities along a 10-mile stretch of State Road 587.

This winding thoroughfare is labeled Gunn Highway in deference to a former Hillsborough County commissioner, John T. Gunn, who arranged to get it paved during the Depression of the 1930s. Most roads, circulating like veins through the area, were named for settlers and Mr. Binder fashioned an intriguing chapter on their sources.

The first settler in 1860 appears to have been William L. Mobley, who brought his large family and many slaves from North Carolina to found a plantation. The Civil War soon ensued and he gave much of his land to his freed slaves.

In a chapter on churches, author Wilma “Billy” Bonar recalls Mobley’s hospitable home on Lake Keystone and identifies him as the founder in 1868 of a Methodist church, the first place of worship. It was constructed of logs with space in back for his former slaves to join in the services. This church burned and was replaced by one made of hewn boards before Mobley was killed by a runaway horse. The family is memorialized by two roads, North Mobley Road and South Mobley Road.

Keystone was first to get a post office, but the postmaster there tipped off federal authorities to growth in Odessa, a mile north of the Hillsborough-Pasco county line and one was established there in 1900.

Thus Odessa, a flagstop on the Atlantic Coast Line Rail Road, subsequently became postal headquarters for the entire two-county area, now serving about 6,000 patrons. The present Odessa postmaster, Charles R. Wilson, was born there in 1925 and is a principal contributor to this historical account.

Lumber interests discovered the region at the turn of the century and built a network of railroads with tendrils reaching from Tampa to Tarpon Springs. Two huge saw mills were erected, employing hundreds of workers from Florida and other states. The economy soared. One of the mills had the only telephone in the area and executives had the first three automobiles there. But it was not an unmixed blessing. There were knife fights almost every night and in one two-year, span eight men were slain.

Finally the lumbermen cut and sawed their way out of existence and some tranquility was restored. Agriculture with citrus and cattle as principal commodities became prevalent, scarcely fazed by a land boom in 1911-12. The North Tampa Land Company of Chicago advertised in the *Saturday Evening Post* and other publications the great lure of Florida living, offering land at \$25 an acre with a building lot free.

Four wars, a depression and various recessions later the population has stabilized and several of the contributors to this history proudly identified their “Cracker” ancestry.

The families now there have found a satisfying way of life and endeavored to preserve traditions and landmarks, notable among them a revered, “Little Red School House” at Citrus Park. Author Cleo Bissonnette believes it is the oldest standing school in the county and possibly in the entire state.



The little red schoolhouse

(courtesy of the Tribune Company).

Among the chapters on Indian massacres, railroads, post offices, saw mills, stores, organizations and memories of people is a tender “Black History” by Lille Mae Mix Madison. If life was rugged over a spread of eight decades for the whites, it was rougher for the blacks.

Mrs. Madison closed with an eloquent epilogue for this whole gentle inspection of local history. She wrote:

“One of these days our children’s own children will laugh and say, ‘This is unbelievable, those must have been some hard days.’

“To every person who will read this book, remember: Let brotherly love continue to abide among all mankind; regardless of race, creed or color; whether rich or poor, young or old, it is our responsibility to love one another. Most of all, keep this in mind: ‘There is but one race, and that race is the human race’.”

Judson Bailey

The History of Zephyrhills, 1821-1921. By Rosemary Trotman. (New York: Vantage Press, 1978. 224 pp. \$8.50)

After a lifetime residency and forty years of teaching school in Zephyrhills, Rosemary Trotman possibly knows more about that community’s past than any living individual. Her purpose in this work is to recount the first century of the Zephyrhills area as part of the American nation, from the acquisition of the Florida territory from Spain to the Sunshine State’s land boom of the 1920’s. Presumably, the author has decided to leave the account of the succeeding years to another writer.

The best sections of this book vividly describe the incipient lumber, railroad, and agriculture (principally the orange and sugar) industries. Here, Trotman evokes a sense of those post-bellum years of development chiefly by relying on the testimony of early settlers and their descendants. These narratives breathe life into the seemingly mundane activities of pioneer existence, and thereby the personal anecdote becomes a microcosm of the frontier experience.

As fine as these depictions are, there exist throughout the rest of the work several problems in form and interpretation. The organization of this volume would have benefitted greatly by the