

# Springs Story

By MARGE SANDERS

(Cont'd. From Pg. 11)

over the countryside. J. A. Michael rode as passenger, and dumped the bags of grass seed, mixed with slips of paper so they could tell which part had been seeded over the area.

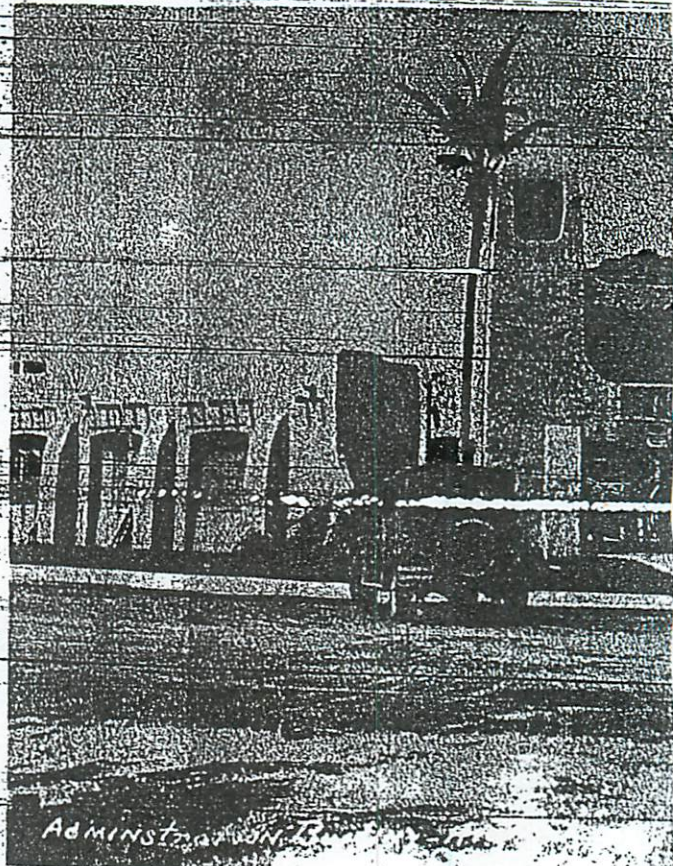
At this time, the Oleeta Lodge Building had given way to the First State Bank in Hialeah. Because banking facilities in Miami were not conveniently accessible to the residents of this area, it became necessary to establish a bank in this community. Thus the first bank was opened in Jan. 1925 by G. H. Curtiss and Associates with Mr. Curtiss as President. He was followed by Mr. C. H. Reeder as president, and in 1932 Mr. H. Sayre Wheeler became president. At this time, since the town had become incorporated, it was necessary to change the name to the First State Bank in Miami Springs. In 1945 the G. H. Curtiss Co. sold their interest, and Mr. A. H. Brannon became president. The name at this time was changed to the Miami Springs Bank. In 1948, the interest was again sold to the present management, which is affiliated with First National Bank of Miami, and in 1951, the bank was moved to new quarters in Hialeah, and has now become the Hialeah-Miami Springs Bank, thus completing its cycle in names.

The town at this time was growing. Mr. Curtiss, having heard Arthur Pryor the eminent musician, decided that the town could support a cultural institution, and arranged for Mr. Pryor to move to this area. A huge bandstand carrying out the pueblo motif was erected in the circle, and Mr. Pryor installed as bandleader. Mr. Pryor lived just across the river in Hialeah and held practice in the cupola topped house that is still standing. Culture held forth until an unfortunate incident occurred. The bandstand caught on fire, and in the midst of a downpour, burned to the ground.

It is difficult to imagine these men setting up their stakes and transits in this vast field of sawgrass. Buildings that were first constructed, carried out the pueblo design. We can see many instances of this today, in our town hall, Miami Battle Creek, the Curtiss Administration building, and the Clune Bldg. 1922 was a flood year, and Dan Clune who built the building that bears his name decided that it would never have water inside, should another flood occur, and that is the reason that it stands 3 ft. above ground level. This building now houses the Miami Springs Pharmacy.

Work was started on the golf course, and Seminoles who were hired by Mr. Bright to plant the grass on this course toiled by day, and by night spread their blankets on the concrete sidewalks in front of the general store, for sleeping. The country clubhouse was built, and the Oleeta Lodge, which in time was utilized as the bank building. The site of the present town hall was first used as a storage house for building supplies, as construction moved further from the circle. One interesting landmark, that has since come and gone, was the "Arabian Nights" cabaret, that stood on Westward Drive, a few doors up from the Miami Springs Woman's Club. This building was a casualty of the 1926 hurricane but its steps can still be seen to this day, a monument to days that are past. Mr. Curtiss took an active interest in the construction of all of the early buildings, and as a matter of fact supervised the construction of many of our early landmarks. He was proud of the community that he was building, and being a photographer of some note, personally took roll after roll of film, recording the progress of each building, as well as bringing in commercial photographers to put this history of progress on film.

At about this time, the pontoon bridge that linked Hialeah with Country Club Estates, was replaced by a narrow steel and concrete



The Administration Building of the Curtiss-Bright Company, site of the first Town Council Meeting on August 25, 1926. The site is parking lot.

Mr. Curtiss' first home in Florida was built in Hialeah in the Park section, but in 1925 his new and larger home in Country Club Estates was completed. This is the beautiful estate on Deer Run occupied by Miami Springs Villas, one of the showplaces of the town.