



Andrew Aulin Sr. and Andrew Aulin Jr.

OYITO

Supplement to Outlook

HERITAGE '77



Loading celery

Oviedo began as Solaria's Wharf

By DONNA NEELY
Oviedo Historical Society

Oviedo's roots go back to a tiny settlement on the south shore of Lake Jessup. This little settlement, known as Solaria's Wharf, boasted two general stores and a post office in 1865. White settlers had just begun to appear, attracted by the warm climate, the promise of a long growing season, and the expectation of homesteading. The land toward the interior, away from the lake's shores, was still largely uninhabited except for Indians.

A river packet made weekly trips between Jacksonville and Solaria's Wharf to bring supplies, mail—and more settlers. Not everyone settled at Solaria's Wharf, however. A few miles further up the lake was White's Wharf (now known as Hiley's Fish Camp). Some of the people settled here. Others gradually moved inland, planting orange groves and clearing some of the rich muck land between Lake Jessup and a small village that was later to become Oviedo. The settlers tried to grow other

crops as well, including cotton and sugar. But citrus and vegetables proved to be the most successful.

Some of the settlers were attracted to a very small lake which was not far from Lake Jessup. By 1869 several houses and a hotel had been built along its shores. A New York physician, Dr. Henry Foster, opened a convalescent home there and encouraged his patients to come to the area to recuperate from illnesses. One of these visitors, believing that the beauty and charm of the lake had helped to bring her invalid father back to health, is said to have given Lake Charm its name.

Another of the earlier settlers was Joseph Watts. He left north Florida and came to this area in an effort to keep his slaves. By 1870 he realized that he could not escape the forces of abolition even here; so he left.

A third early settler, Steen Nelson, is responsible for much of what we know of the Lake Jessup

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Farming success came hard for Andrew Duda and family

When Andrew Duda came to the Oviedo area, there weren't any sophisticated tractors...no pre-coolers to prolong shelflife of vegetables...no computers to speed inventory.

The Czechoslovakian immigrant came to Slavia to form a religious community with friends who moved South from Cleveland. He brought with him his wife Katherine, and three sons...Andrew, Jr., Ferdinand and John.

Together they plowed the difficult, sandy Florida soil with strong backs while fighting the rigors of winter weather. Twice, their crops failed and the Dudas were forced to return North to factory and truck farm jobs. But they saved to come South again.

On a third try in 1927, they succeeded with a small celery crop to feed the family in Depression years. And, there was still produce left to sell at markets nearby.

As their crops succeeded in the coming years, Andrew Duda's three sons assumed management of the company and branched out from Oviedo. They bought acreage near Lake Apopka and learned to

raise vegetables on Zellwood's muck soil.

Crops were expanded...carrots, sweet corn, leaf vegetables and other crops became the products of Oviedo's A. Duda and Sons, Incorporated.

Over the 50 years that followed that first successful crop, A. Duda and Sons has continued to operate from its Oviedo headquarters.

Duda has branched out from Oviedo to locations across Florida. Today, there are farms at Belle Glade, Naples and LaBelle. The company has cattle ranches and sod farms in Cocoa and in South Florida, and two cattle feed lots...one at Ocala and another at LaBelle.

There are citrus groves in Central and South Florida, and Duda joint ventures with another firm in a bulk citrus concentrate plant at LaBelle. Another plant, near the Zellwood farm, makes the most of Duda celery crops by processing celery crescents for large volume industrial food companies in the United States.

The company owns Southland Produce, a California firm which

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Three views of downtown: [top] Looking down Broadway toward Chuluota around 1920. [center] Looking up Broadway toward Winter Park in the early 1940's, and [bottom] looking down Central toward what is now FTU about 1916. The hotel is standing on what is now the site of the Masonic Lodge. [right] Oviedo's biggest unsolved mystery: the blowing up of the old bank around the time of the Great Depression. The bank was located on the corner of Graham and Broadway. To this day, the culprit, if he's still alive, might be walking the streets of Oviedo gloating.



Duda

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markets fruits and vegetables for other Western growers in California, Arizona, Idaho and Missouri.

And, in Australia, the company owns or has under lease nearly three million acres for cattle ranching.

From a small white frame office outside Oviedo, Duda has grown to a position as a leader in the U.S. food industry. Still modest offices here are headquarters for a worldwide marketing operation that provides a great deal

of Europe's vegetables supply.

Duda has become a leader in many fields of agriculture. A recent trade publication article noted Duda pioneered in applying computer techniques to farming. Everything from inventory control to cost analysis is programmed on its Oviedo computers, and, tied to each farming location gives farmers an instant information system.

With a priority on equipment and engineering development, Duda

operates an ongoing program in its Oviedo shop. Specialized tractors, harvesting equipment and transplanting devices have greatly increased the speed with which farmers may work their fields. And, the environment of the field worker has been enhanced by Duda techniques.

The company has continued to be involved in research programs that improve crops and protect the environment. Biologic control research has led to greater crop yield and

reduced unnecessary applications of pesticides to crops.

Despite the modern advances...computers, sophisticated field equipment, biologic research programs...Oviedo's A. Duda and Sons has held to basic farming beliefs.

It was President Ferdinand Duda who said: "The best fertilizer for a crop is the farmer's shadow." It is still the responsibility of a Duda farm manager to walk his fields every day...to keep the human element in farming.



Grandfather Duda, on right, in celery seed bed.



John and Andy, Jr. in their Sunday best.



Andy, Jr. and Ferdinand "horsing" around.

WE'VE DONE A LOT OF GROWING IN 50 YEARS.

Half a century ago Andrew Duda, Sr. brought three sons to America and began growing in Florida, first to feed his family and then to feed his neighbors. As John, Andy, Jr., Ferdinand and their eight sons have grown, so have the family's farm operations. Today, Duda, a leader in America's Agribusiness Community, is dedicated to producing quality fruits, vegetables, citrus, beef cattle, and sod for the benefit of millions of "neighbors" here and abroad.

DUDA

A. Duda and Sons, Inc.
P. O. Box 257 Oviedo, Florida 32765
Phone: (305) 365-5681 Telex: 056-4481

Citizens Bank founded in 1946

By LARRY NEELY

A prospering town of about 1,100 at the end of World War II, leading citizens and businessmen decided Oviedo needed a bank of its own.

On March 1, 1946 a meeting was held at the agriculture building (located where the administrative offices of Lawton Elementary School now stand) and the bank was chartered by the State and opened for business on July 2, 1946 with deposits of \$704,117. By the end of the first six months the bank's assets exceeded \$1 million.

The bank was first located on E. Broadway in half of a building now shared by Pot Latch and Olliff's Barber and Style Shop. The vault still remains.

When it was first organized, B.F. Wheeler Sr. was the president of the bank. Vice president was C.R. Clonts, who now serves as the bank's president.

To celebrate the opening of Citizens Bank, a barbecue was held in the gym of Oviedo High School (now Lawton Elementary School and formerly a

consolidated high school with grades one through twelve). State and local dignitaries joined the local residents, who turned out in numbers to feast on the 2,500 pounds of beef donated for the occasion by S.F. Long, Andrew Duda Jr. and W.G. Kilbee. J.H. Lee headed a crew of the 25 which worked through the night to get ready for the feast.

Seminole School Superintendent T.W. Lawton presided over the ceremonies. On hand also were Oviedo's Mayor, Dr. W. J. Martin; F.W. Talbott, president of the town council; and Ben Jones, the town clerk and the town druggists who later served on the Board of Directors of the bank.

In 1949, the bank moved next door to what is now Oviedo City Hall. Ten years later the bank expanded by adding on to the original building. In 1962 an adjacent building was remodeled and incorporated into the complex.

The bank's new facility opened its doors on March 25, 1974.



Our lobby in 1959



Our lobby today



Dr. T.L. Mead and friends

Mead left his mark

By RANDY NOLES

One of Oviedo's most renowned citizens, Dr. T.L. Mead, famous hybridizer of orchids and entomologist, left his mark in the scientific world, and on social life in Oviedo.

Mead, who died in 1936, had an 85-acre estate in the Lake Charm area where he conducted experiments with plants and accumulated one of the world's largest butterfly collections. His work and estate attracted many thousands of visitors and some of the great scientists of the world to Oviedo.

The noted researcher was a native of New York, where he attended school. He first visited Florida in 1889 with his parents, and moved to Oviedo from

Eustis in 1886, where his work in hybridization of orchids, amaryllis, and caladiums attracted national attention.

Mead was also active in civic affairs in Oviedo. He was said to have had a colorful and jovial personality, and sponsored the local Boy Scout Troop. His wife, Edith, who died in 1926, was also active in civic work.

Until the early 1960's, however, there was no memorial to Mead in Oviedo, although Orlando had dedicated a large park to the scientist. Even today, the only local remembrance of Mead is the subdivision that bears his name, Mead Manor.

Some things never change.

Sure, we've moved to modern, new facilities, and offer the most up-to-date and efficient methods available for handling your banking needs. But, we still give the same personalized, friendly service you've enjoyed for the last thirty years. And we always will.

The **CITIZENS BANK**
of Oviedo



156 GENEVA DRIVE, OVIEDO

PHONE 365-6611

Railroad came in 1886; celery, citrus top crops

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community of that period. Nelson was born here in the 1880's. His father's homestead was not far from the southwest corner of Central Avenue and Broadway. Before he died, Steen Nelson set down some of his early recollections in a booklet called *Old Time History of Bygone Days of Lake Jessup Settlement*.

By 1875 mail was being brought to Solaria's Wharf twice a week by rowboat from Sanford. Efforts to secure a railroad into the territory had not met with success. But the post office itself had been moved inland not far from Lake Charm; and in 1883 the settlement which had sprung up around it was named Oviedo by Andrew Aulin, Sr., the first postmaster.

In 1886 the long-sought railroad finally came into Oviedo. Celery had by now

taken its place with citrus as one of the area's most important crops. The new railroads—there were two—made possible the shipping of Oviedo's crops to Jacksonville and the northern markets. Within a very short time Oviedo became one of the state's largest, busiest shipping points for citrus.

Religion was an integral part of the town's life. The townspeople held religious services from the very beginning. At first the services were inter-denominational, but by the middle 1880's there were both Baptist and Methodist churches. By 1890 Oviedo had grown to four churches, a school, two drug stores, five general stores, and a number of specialized businesses, including a newspaper.

People from the north were encouraged to settle here. The Lee and Todd

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The store that had everything: the old Jones Grocery on Broadway. J.

B. Jones, whose son was Oviedo's postmaster for many years, was the

proprietor, and is shown behind the counter. This photo was taken around 1914.

Early photo of Nelson and Company Packing House



We've been doing business pretty much the same way for years.

That's why Oviedo is now synonymous all over North America with quality citrus. And that's why Nelson and Company has remained Oviedo's industrial leader ... season after season.



NELSON AND COMPANY

Oviedo, Fla.

1894: Disaster freeze hit

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Real Estate Company distributed a brochure which claimed that "there is no more healthy place in the state than the plateau south of Lake Jessup." The area was claimed to have "intelligent, hospitable, law-and-order loving people, good preaching every Sunday and plenty of young and old bearing groves."

In 1894 disaster struck. A hard freeze hit the orange groves late in December, followed by another in February of the following year. Many grove owners were ruined. Steen Nelson wrote that "some of them nearly lost their minds." Many of them left, never to return.

The more determined stayed. They replanted groves, cut trees back to the stump, plowed under frozen vegetables, and began to piece their lives together again. New settlers slowly replaced those who had left. But it was to be 25 years before the effects of the freeze were to be completely overcome.

In 1910 land was selling for less than ten dollars an acre. The town had grown somewhat, but had the reputation of being "sleepy"—that is, if you didn't live in Oviedo—and if you knew where it was, even. Often, when asked how to get to Oviedo, people would reply that they didn't know.

Freezes were not the only hardships that the people endured. In 1914 fire wiped out much of the downtown area. Fifteen years later the only bank was bombed. To this day the bombing has remained an unsolved crime, although some sources offer theories. One of these includes vague references to "Chicago boys." The bank folded soon afterward in the crash of 1929.

In that same year the fruit crops were decimated by an infestation of fruit flies. At one point the situation became so bad that growers dug huge pits in which to bury the infested fruit.

In spite of their hard work and worries, the townspeople still found time to relax. Oviedo at one time had a bowling alley and a movie theatre, where "live" piano music was featured while the reels were changed. The circus came to town regularly, and picnics and fishing were favorite pastimes. There was a touch of metropolitan culture, when traveling actors from New York presented plays in the long summer evenings.

When the country suffered in the depression of the thirties, Oviedo suffered too. Proud but needy citizens tried to avoid resorting to welfare. The government sponsored the construction of a swimming pool and employed local labor to build it. But this was only a partial solution. Food stamps became a well-known medium of exchange in the stores.

But the community survived. It was incorporated in 1925. By 1927 there were 10 miles of paved streets. Four years later 24 street lights were installed at an operating cost of \$80.00 a month.

Oviedo had another rather famous resident during those years. Theodore Meade, an internationally famous botanist, spurned several huge offers of money if he would reveal his botanical secrets. He devoted many years to the development of new strains of orchids and gladioli. He is credited with producing the first white orchid, but was less successful in developing a black amaryllis.

Eighty-two young men served in the armed forces during World War II. Four of them gave their lives. Gas rationing was taken seriously in Oviedo. One man drove his car to church on Sunday, and later discovered that someone had painted a yellow streak along the

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Church life in early Oviedo centered largely around the Baptist and Methodist Churches (right and bottom). The earliest church was an interdenominational one, but by the mid 1880's, the Baptists and Methodists had established separate congregations. The wooden structures have long since been replaced, and the First Baptist Church of Oviedo and the First United Methodist Church of Oviedo are still by far the largest in town.



Typical community gathering, probably a July Fourth barbeque, held in Sweetwater Park in the

1940's. If you look close, you may recognize some of the town's leading citizens of the day.

Fire destroyed fertilizer plant

Thursday, June 30, 1977

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middle of the car on either side.

With the close of the war, the economy improved but the population remained relatively stable. In 1946 the original Wheeler Fertilizer plant was destroyed by fire. It was replaced by a new, modern plant. A year later the roads to Geneva and Chuluota were paved. In 1948 the Citizens Bank first opened its doors. Until that time, if you wanted to buy a meal, you had to go to a hotel. Now there were cafes.

Gwynn's Cafe was located on the southeast corner of Broadway and Central. It gained statewide fame for its mince and banana cream pies. Truckers coming from Jacksonville would time their meal stops so they could enjoy some of Mrs. Gwynn's pie.

By 1949 Oviedo had once-a-day Greyhound bus
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R.W. Estes graphically demonstrates the size of cypress trees that can still be found in the Black

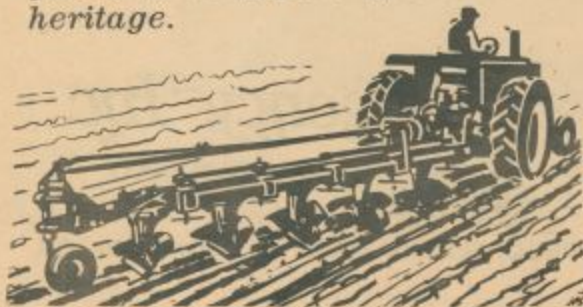
Hammock area, although many of the trees were cleared over the years.

"I don't like to be hemmed up."

C. R. Clonts, founder and president of C. R. Clonts and Associated Growers, came to Oviedo in 1923. He worked in the local bank several years, but said that being cooped up behind a teller's cage just wasn't his cup of tea.

So Clonts began farming, first on three and a half acres in Oviedo. Today, C. R. Clonts and Associated Growers boasts extensive acreage in Zellwood and Oviedo, and grows celery, carrots, and sweet corn.

A pioneer in local vegetable farming, the Clonts organization is proud to be a part of Oviedo's heritage.



C. R. CLONTS

& ASSOCIATED GROWERS

Oviedo, Fla.

Daily buses

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service to Orlando. That year, construction totaled more than \$75,000. This included the Citizens Bank building, Spencer's Store, and an \$8,000 canning kitchen. By 1950 Oviedo was the second largest town in Seminole County, with a population of 1,800. Nearly a million crates of celery and a third of a million crates of citrus were being shipped from here each year. And the town now had a new fire truck, although the building to house it was not built for some time.

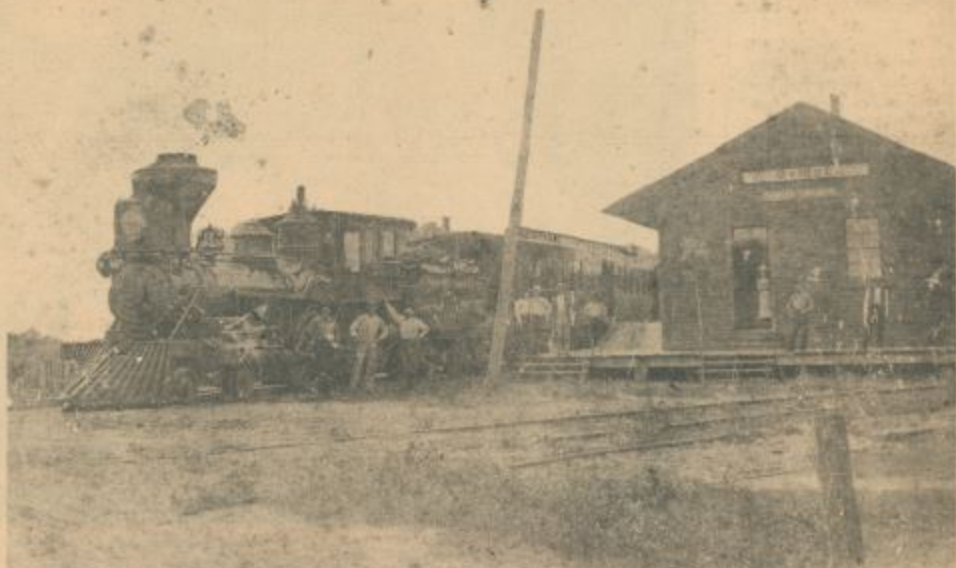
Medical treatment was still a problem. Doctors charged upwards of \$15 to come from Orlando, and there was no local physician here. Few Orlando doctors would make the trip; few had the time to spare from their practices. In the black sections of Oviedo the infant mortality rate was high. Drugs and medicines were difficult to obtain, and prescriptions were out of the question. So the townspeople built a clinic; and Oviedo got its first doctor.

A city hall was built in 1950 at a cost of \$18,903. The town was beginning to feel the pangs of growth. Zoning problems arose. An increased city budget required more time, and more careful planning. With the selection of the FTU site in 1964 came the promise of greater growth and more growing pains. But despite its growth the city tried to keep its small-town atmosphere. For the most part, the townspeople were pleased with the growth and welcomed newcomers—provided they were prepared to slip into the easy style of country living.

During the sixties, however, the rate of growth accelerated. New housing developments appeared, a new high school was built, a shopping center erected, roads leading into Oviedo were widened and repaved, and Florida Technological University brought new residents to the area.

The city's budget jumped from \$8,500 in 1970 to \$250,000 in 1972. It was expected at that time that the population (then 2,200) would double by 1975. But this was not to be.

The sluggish economy of the past few years has slowed the building of new homes. Business has felt the pinch too. But the town has seen the addition of a new bank building, a savings and loan association, a new post office, a restaurant, and the face-lifting of some of the older buildings. The growth is slower, but it is still present. The face of the city changes with the times. The people change very little.



The Oviedo Railroad Depot. Until the 1960's, Oviedo was served by two

railroads, the Seaboard Airline Railroad, and the Atlantic Coastline Rail-

road. This photo was taken in the early part of the century. The depot is now

being used as a barn on the Jonnie Conley property.

JOIN US

In Oviedo, a community rich in character and heritage. Oviedo offers fine schools, beautiful churches, convenient downtown shopping and the peaceful atmosphere and leisurely pace of country living, but is just a short drive to Florida Tech University and the Naval Training Center.

We have a variety of custom built homes and homesites available. Please call us.

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