

Wynnes of Wa'es and the Burns of Scotland (the latter tracing their lineage to Bobby Burns) owned over 3,500 acres in Georgia from 1803 to 1940. His father, who died in Atlanta, November 23, 1937, was a prominent attorney in Clarkesville, Georgia, where he practiced his profession for nearly half a century and served in both the Georgia House of Representatives and the Senate.

Gus Edwards was graduated from Piedmont College Academy at Demorest, Georgia, in 1909, and attended the University of Georgia for the next two years. Having studied law, he was admitted to the bar in 1912, and practiced law with his father and brother, Howell, in the firm of J.C. Edwards and Sons at Clarkesville. He also practiced law in Washington, D.C., serving for two years as Associate General Counsel of the Home Owners Loan Association, and then as Special Assistant to the General Counsel of the Federal Housing Administration.

He came to Cocoa, Florida, at the invitation of the late S. F. Travis, one of Cocoa's earliest and most prominent citizens, for whom the firm of J. C. Edwards and Sons had won an important case in Georgia. Liking what he saw, Mr. Edwards closed out his business in Georgia and located in Cocoa on October 23, 1915. He was appointed City Attorney the following week, a position he held for eight years, during which time Cocoa's first paving program was carried through, the Indian River and Banana River bridges were built, and a system of paved roads in and around Cocoa, on Merritt Island and portions of the peninsula, was built; also, Cocoa's first modern schoolhouse, the present high school building, was erected. Mr. Edwards was attorney for all these projects and handled the legal work of all bond issues voted for their construction. During this period he often worked eighteen hours a day.

When Mr. Edwards came to Cocoa he and an associate bought land in the section now known as Highland Park and developed it as a home site. To attract attention to this area he installed a zoo in which were many wild animals found in Florida. In partnership with several associates, he also bought land at Cocoa Beach, visualizing there the next great center along the east coast of Florida. The lands which Mr. Edwards and his associates purchased extended along the ocean front for two and one-half miles where the Town of Cocoa Beach was originally established and was later incorporated by Mr. Edwards, consisting of approximately 600 acres. Originally, several prominent men were associated with Mr. Edwards in the ownership of the vast acreage on the ocean peninsula, but in 1923 he bought out all of his associates and added considerable acreage to his town site, and as sole owner began the active development of the beach lands, having resigned from his position as City Attorney in February of that year and given up his law practice to devote his entire time to this project.

In the early development of Cocoa Beach Mr. Edwards spent more than \$300,000. Fifty acres were cleared and graded in and around what is now the center of the town of Cocoa Beach at a cost of approximately \$100,000.

A forceful figure in presenting his views, Mr. Edwards was joined by citizens of Cocoa and Merritt Island in building the first bridge from Cocoa to Merritt Island, which was opened to traffic on May 1, 1917, from funds derived from the voting of \$40,000 in bonds in the Merritt Island District and \$35,000 in bonds of the town of Cocoa. This was the first step in making the Beach accessible to the mainland. About the year 1922, the citizens of Cocoa, Merritt Island and the ocean

GUS CALLAWAY EDWARDS

The name of Gus C. Edwards, developer of Cocoa Beach, ranks with that of other great builders of Florida's East Coast and has a permanent place in its history. Mr. Edwards had great visions for Cocoa Beach when it was nothing but a wilderness of saw palmettoes, and everyone thought he was addled. The opening up of Cocoa Beach, making the peninsula and surrounding territory accessible to the mainland, was one of the main contributing factors which decided the Navy to establish a Naval Air Station at Banana River, and the northern part of the station was located on land which was owned by Mr. Edwards.

Gus Callaway Edwards was born at Cornelia, Georgia, on March 28, 1886, being one of twins, who were the youngest of six children, there being two other boys and two girls. Mr. Edwards and his brother, Howell E. Edwards, an attorney in Atlanta, Georgia, are the only survivors of the six children of James Callaway Edwards and Emma Eugenia Wynne Edwards, both natives of Banks County, Georgia, where his grandparents, James Frank and Anne (Jordan) Edwards, owned a plantation. On his mother's side of the family, the

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peninsula joined in a bond issue to build additional roads on Merritt Island to connect with the beach across Banana River, which road and bridge were opened to traffic on July 4, 1923. Thereafter, development and action were fast at Cocoa Beach. Mr. Edwards built the first electric power line from the village of Merritt to the Beach in 1925, which by that time had been incorporated by Mr. Edwards and, by him, named Cocoa Beach.

Among other outstanding contributions to the cultural side of Cocoa Beach, Mr. Edwards built the first community church in 1927 as a memorial to his mother, which church still stands, and in recent years has been greatly improved and enlarged. A unique feature of this church is that it has a bell tower and bell which is electrically operated, which Mr. Edwards had manufactured in Holland, with appropriate engravings on the bell to show that the bell and the church were built as a memorial to his mother. At the present time this church is utilized by new congregations forming at the Beach until they can erect their own buildings. So far, the Cocoa Beach Community Church, the Cocoa Beach Episcopal Church, the Cocoa Beach Presbyterian Church, and the Cocoa Methodist Church have started in this building, and at the present time the Cocoa Beach Christian Church is enjoying the use of the building until it can develop to a point where its own independent church can be built. Mr. Edwards is a great believer in churches, and has made a liberal donation to practically all of the churches which have been established in the Cocoa Beach area.

In the past two years Mr. and Mrs. Edwards have donated a park to Cocoa Beach to be known as Central Park, on one portion of which has been built a very substantial Little League Baseball field which the League, in honor of Mr. Edwards, has named Edwards Field.

When the land boom of the twenties came, plenty of attention was focused on this area, and particularly the beach, but the dealings of those days did not last long. In the collapse of the boom in 1926 Mr. Edwards was hurt, as were many others, but he still held onto as much of the Cocoa Beach property as he could.

The records will no doubt show that he bought and sold more individual pieces of property than any other man in the area. At one time he owned seven miles of ocean property on the peninsula. He is given credit by newspaper people as the only advertiser who ever took eight pages of the local weekly paper to advertise his real estate holdings. For his dynamic activity in promoting the area he was known as the One Man Chamber of Commerce. He also drained his own lands to control mosquitoes before there was any real attempt at mosquito control by the authorities.

His principal and original development was Cocoa Beach; next, Snug Harbor Estates, a rather large development on the Banana River side of the peninsula; and then the West Point addition to Snug Harbor Estates, which in beauty and plan of development is one of the most outstanding subdivisions in Central Florida. Mr. Edwards has said, "Frankly, I've put my heart and my hand into the entire Central Brevard area, and it is all very dear to me, but I regard Snug Harbor Estates and West Point Addition to Snug Harbor Estates as my masterpiece." He also has left his stamp upon Cocoa itself and upon Merritt Island. His name is associated prominently with the development of such subdivisions as Rockledge Park No. 1 and No. 2, Highland Park, Forest Park, and the many subdivisions he cre-

ated and developed at Cocoa Beach. As a real estate broker he lists properties of practically every kind.

As an active civic worker interested in the welfare of Cocoa and Central Brevard County, Mr. Edwards was instrumental in the establishment of the local newspaper, the Cocoa Tribune, whose brilliant and enterprising editor Mr. Edwards induced to remove her paper and plant from Manatee, Florida, to Cocoa in 1917. This Mr. Edwards considers one of his greatest accomplishments. The Cocoa Tribune celebrated its fortieth birthday in 1957. Back in 1917 he placed an advertisement for an editor to start a weekly paper in Cocoa in each of the three big daily papers of the state—The Florida Times-Union of Jacksonville, The Miami Herald, and The Tampa Tribune. Mrs. Marie R. Holderman, who then published a weekly in Manatee, saw the ad in The Tampa Tribune and got in touch with Mr. Edwards, with the result that she came to Cocoa as editor of its first and, to date, its only newspaper, which approximately one year ago was enlarged to become Cocoa's first daily newspaper. Mrs. Holderman is still at the helm.

Mr. Edwards served as Mayor of Cocoa Beach for six years, 1925 to 1931. He is, of course, a member of the Cocoa Beach Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Cocoa Chamber of Commerce, and is a charter member of the Cocoa Presbyterian Church. He retains his membership in the Florida Bar and the Brevard County Bar Association and still does a small amount of advisory law practice. As a young man he served in the Georgia National Guard.

At Atlanta, Georgia, on November 22, 1911, Gus C. Edwards married Miss Clara McKinney of Gainesville, Georgia, daughter of James Dyer McKinney, M.D., and Ann Louisa Williams. Mrs. Edwards is the author of a great many articles, and more especially, articles about the history of early Florida which are now appearing in the Cocoa Tribune, and also author of a children's book called "The Wonderful Gift." Mr. and Mrs. Edwards are the parents of a son and a daughter, James Edwin and Patricia Ann.

James Edwin Edwards, born at Clarkesville, Georgia, July 29, 1914, attended the University of Texas and was graduated from George Washington University with the degrees of Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Laws. During World War II he enlisted in the Coast Guard, trained at the Coast Guard Academy at Groton, Connecticut, and was commissioned an Ensign. He served in the European theater of war, participating in the invasion of Normandy, and was honorably discharged with the rank of Lieutenant (senior grade). He now holds the rank of Major in the Air Force Reserve. After leaving the service he held a responsible position in the State Department for several years before establishing himself in law practice in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he now resides and practices his profession. He first married Helen Godwin and they were the parents of a daughter, Clare. He is now married to Frances Stanley of Mayfield, Kentucky, and by this marriage he has two children, Robin Ann and James Christopher.

Patricia Ann Edwards, born in Atlanta, Georgia, on February 16, 1927, was graduated from Cocoa High School and attended Rollins College. She later transferred to Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts, where she majored in English and was on the Dean's List for high scholastic achievement. She was graduated in June, 1950, with a Bachelor of Arts degree.