



The Brevard County Historical Commission  
Catherine Schweinsberg Rood Central Library  
308 Forrest Ave.  
Cocoa, FL 32922

RETURN POSTAGE GUARANTEED

## THE BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The Brevard County Historical Commission (BCHC) was established by ordinance of the Brevard County Commission to "collect, arrange, record, and preserve historical materials" and to perform other functions such as obtaining narratives of the early pioneers, marking historical locations throughout the county, and recording historical information.

Regular meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:15 PM in the Genealogy Department on the second floor of the Central Brevard Library in Cocoa. For more information call: (321) 633-1794.

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Paula J. Beckner  
Roz Foster

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Jack Ratterman  
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# THE INDIAN RIVER JOURNAL

BREVARD COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION



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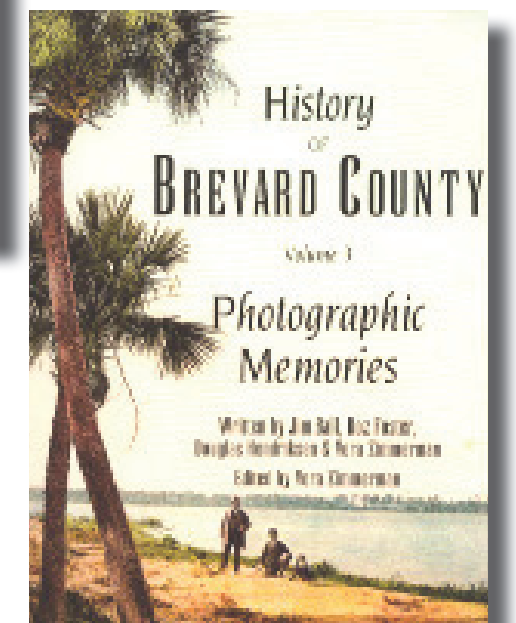
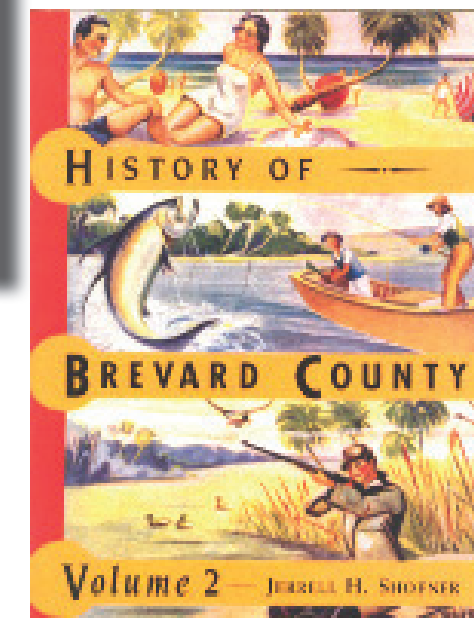
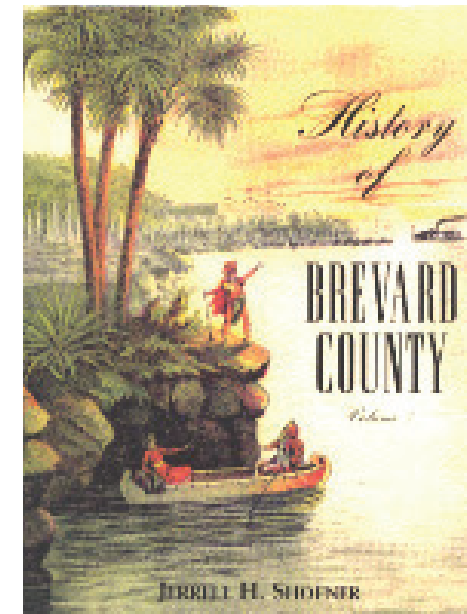
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On the cover... from left Byrnina, Adrienne, Edward and Arthur Porcher , 1898 — Courtenay, Merritt Island, Florida.

*Courtesy of the Florida Memory Project Collection # N029307*

## THE HISTORY OF BREVARD COUNTY

Three illustrated volumes written by Jerrell Shoffner et al. and published by the Brevard County Historical Commission.



For pricing and shipping information call (321) 633-1794 or shop on-line at <https://www.brevardfl.gov/HistoricalCommission/BookStore>

## MORE LOCAL HISTORY RESOURCES

Brevard County Historical Maps

<http://fcit.usf.edu/florida/maps/county/brevard/brevard.htm>

Florida Historical Museums

[http://www.floridasmart.com/attractions/museums\\_hist.htm](http://www.floridasmart.com/attractions/museums_hist.htm)

The Florida Historical Society

<http://myfloridahistory.org>

The Florida Memory Project: An interactive Web site of Florida history, photos and letters

<http://floridamemory.com/>

Brevard Genealogical Society

P.O. Box 1123, Cocoa, FL 32923

<http://www.flbgs.org/>

Canaveral Lighthouse Foundation

P.O. Box 1978, Cape Canaveral, FL 32920

<http://www.canaverallight.org/>

Florida Historical Society

435 Brevard Ave., Cocoa, FL 32922

<http://www.myfloridahistory.org/>

Florida Public Archaeology Network (FPAN)

74 King St, St. Augustine, FL 32085 • 904.392.8065

<http://www.flpublicarchaeology.org/ecrc/>

Genealogical Society of North Brevard

P.O. Box 897, Titusville, FL 32781

<http://www.nbbd.com/npr/gsnb/index.html>

The Historical Society of North Brevard

301 S. Washington Ave., Titusville, FL 32789

<http://www.nbbd.com/godo/history/>

Indian River Anthropological Society: Chapter of the Florida Anthropological Society

P. O. Box 73, Cocoa, FL 32923 • irasarchaeology@yahoo.com

<http://www.nbbd.com/npr/archaeology-iras/>

North Brevard Heritage Foundation, Inc.

P.O. Box 653, Titusville, FL 32781

<http://www.nbbd.com/npr/preservation/>

South Brevard Historical Society

P.O. Box 1064, Melbourne, FL 32902-1064

<http://www.southbrevardhistory.org/>

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

The past year and a half has been strange and difficult for all of us. While most of us have not experienced anything like the corona-virus pandemic before, The United States and Brevard County has a long history of thriving during the most challenging times in global history, including during war, the Great Depression, and the Spanish Flu pandemic of 1918. I am confident that one day soon, the corona-virus pandemic will be added to the list of challenges that we have weathered and come through with a greater appreciation and respect of ourselves and our fellow citizens.

A lot has happened since our last publication some twenty months ago!

I would like to introduce myself. My name is George Kistner and I currently serve as Chairman of the Brevard County Historical Commission, having been elected to my second term in January of this year. I am a third generation Floridian, and also serve as Records and Information Manager and Historian for the Canaveral Port Authority. I love all things history and Florida and I would like to sincerely thank all of my fellow Commissioners for their confidence and support. It is an honor to serve as your Chairman.

In the last year, two of our long time fellow Commissioners have made the difficult decision to retire from the Historical Commission; Mr. Bob Swenson and Dr. David Paterno.

Bob Swenson has served on the Historical Commission representing District 2 since 2005. During his 15 years on the board, Bob has served as Vice Chairman and since 2008, was editor of the Indian River Journal.

Dr. David Paterno has served on the Historical Commission representing District 5 since 1997. During his 23 years, Dr. Paterno served as Chairman of this board as well as serving on the Cape Canaveral Lighthouse Board.

On behalf of all the Brevard County Historical Commissioners, I would like to thank both Bob and David for their many years of dedicated service to this board. Their knowledge and contributions to the preservation of the history of Brevard County is irreplaceable and greatly appreciated by all of us. You will both be sorely missed!

Coming on board representing District 2 is Jack Ratterman. Jack is a resident of Merritt Island, a fellow historian and serves as President of the North Merritt Island Homeowners Association. Welcome!



I want to encourage everyone to go out and experience all of Brevard County's history.

For a full list of our new and current State historical markers, visit:  
<http://apps.flheritage.com/markers/>

We hope you enjoy this publication of the Indian River Journal and look forward to many more.

Looking forward to celebrating the past,

GEORGE P. KISTNER III  
*CHAIRPERSON*

## 2020: AND JUST LIKE THAT... SUDDENLY EVERYONE CARED ABOUT HISTORY

BY MOLLY A. THOMAS • DISTRICT 2 REPRESENTATIVE

While 2020 will certainly be a year that goes down in the history books, it has inevitably and perhaps deservedly, become a year where people have started taking a critical and more motivated look at history. From assessing the ethical integrity of public monuments and revisiting memories of the Spanish Flu, to sorting through old family photos in a desperate attempt to quell the quarantine boredom — this has been a busy year for archivists and historians who have suddenly found themselves bombarded with hobbyists, activists and journalists digging for engaging content.

But it's not a bad thing! For many in the history profession, we can finally say, "They're listening to me!" I am hopefully speaking for the majority when saying, it's wonderful that you (finally) want to know where your great-grandfather served during WWI or that you're trying out some of your grandmother's recipes for the first time. As historians, we have always enjoyed these things, not just our own families' but yours as well — that's what we do. But the best part is, that for the moment, those who actually 'own' this history are finally sharing in our nerdy excitement and concern for the future of this knowledge.

So for those who are just now finding the drive to research the whats, whens and wheres of who you came from, you are in luck!

We live in a time where libraries, historical societies, museums and even vital records offices are going digital, and not just because of COVID-19. In an era where space is expensive and convenience is critical, it's not practical for a municipality to keep the hard copy of your grandparents' marriage license for another hundred years, or for a small museum to expect would-be researchers to just assume what's in their collection. Now that we have a pandemic to contend with, those who weren't already on-board with digital and virtual accessibility options have started to come around.

So where does one start? Well, it depends on what you already know. In many cases, a full legal name and a birth date, or death date, are enough to get the ball rolling — even if the dates are sketchy. If all you have is a last name and a location, the odds of tracking down your ancestor is better than you think and if that ancestor was in the U.S. military or married to someone that was, you are almost guaranteed a home run. Here are some sources to get you started:

### NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

*The Citrus Hall of Fame of Florida honors distinguished leaders who have made significant contributions to the Florida citrus industry. Nominations are due November 1st of each year and individuals may be automatically resubmitted for three consecutive years. Mr. Leo Griffin of Seattle, Washington came across MR. Maxwell when he was researching another citrus grower. He reviewed and oral history of Maxwell taken by Works Progress Administration staff during the Great Depression and though the Maxwell's life was very interesting and worthy of the nomination. Griffin contacted the North Brevard Historical Museum requesting information and support for Maxwell's nomination to the Florida Citrus Hall of Fame. They put him in contact with Titusville resident and historian, Kirk Davis, who happens to be Maxwell's adopted great-grandson and Kirk contacted Roz. Kirk and I have worked together on document Black History for several years and this project was right up our alley. The three of us continued to work together gathering articles, photos, etc. in support of the nomination, discovering new information about Wm. Henry Maxwell. The package was turned in on time, the nomination committee reviewed all nominations and selections were made in December. Mr. Maxwell did not make the cut this year, but his nomination will be automatically resubmitted for three consecutive years and we will continue researching additional information for the nomination package. We are very happy to have had the opportunity to compile this inspiring story of success and share it with the community. Amazing where history will take us! — Roz Foster*

### SOURCES

1. "William Henry Maxwell," Findagrave.com, Last accessed September 2, 2020.
2. Ewart Henry, "Pioneer Negro Grower Gains Wide Acclaim for Culture Abilities," The Orlando Evening Star, January 26, 1941, page 11, accessed October 3, 2020.
3. Dr. E. W. Berger, "Control of the White Fly by Natural Means," Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Meeting of the Florida State Horticultural Society, 1905, page 69, accessed October 3, 2020.
4. Henry Rolfs and Samuel Howard Fawcett, revised by P. H. Rolfs. Fungus Diseases of Scale Insects and Whitefly. Florida University of Florida, Agricultural Experimental Station. Bulletin 119, November, 1913. Page 27, accessed October 3, 2020.
5. Ewart Henry, "Pioneer Negro Grower Gains Wide Acclaim for Culture Abilities," *ibid*.
6. Associated Press, "Dr. Berger Resigns Post," The Miami Herald, January 31, 1943, page 17, accessed October 3, 2020.
7. "Scientists Give Addresses on Citrus Pests," The Tampa Tribune, February 22, 1939, page 2, accessed October 3, 2020.
8. Ewart Henry, "Pioneer Negro Grower Gains Wide Acclaim for Culture Abilities," *ibid*.
9. "Mims," The Florida Star. The Florida Star, January 5, 1900, page 1, accessed October 3, 2020.
10. "Frost No Longer Feared, McFarland Tent Assures Protection From the Frost to the Orange Tree," The Boston Globe, February 26, 1900, page 3, accessed October 3, 2020.
11. Ewart Henry, "Pioneer Negro Grower Gains Wide Acclaim for Culture Abilities," *ibid*.
12. "The Goodall Citrus Exhibit," *ibid*.
13. "William Henry Maxwell," Findagrave.com, *ibid*.
14. Ewart Henry, "Pioneer Negro Grower Gains Wide Acclaim for Culture Abilities," *ibid*.
15. Roz Foster, "Atlantic Coast, St. Johns and Indian River Railroad," North Brevard Business District, accessed October 3, 2020.
16. Ewart Henry, "Pioneer Negro Grower Gains Wide Acclaim for Culture Abilities," *ibid*.
17. "Mr. William Henry Maxwell," The Orlando Sentinel, Orlando, Florida, December 1, 1952, page 17, accessed October 3, 2020.





Mr. William Henry Maxwell (he seldom used his first name) was one of the early African American settlers an prominent citizens of the Titusville area, when the population of the town was a mere 746 people. In 1894, at the age of 44, he purchased his first grove and began to cultivate oranges. He married his lovely wife, Matilda “Tillie” Irwin in 1900. They lived in a beautiful large home on Dummit Street with two adopted sons and one adopted daughter. Henry and Matilda were pillars of the community and often helped in supporting neighborhood schools and churches. Matilda dies in 1943. At the time of his death in 1952, at the age of 94, Henry Maxwell owned citrus groves and spent more than 66 years in the citrus business in the Titusville area. He also owned considerable rel estate and other investments — and was often referred to as one of the wealthiest African American men in the area. He was survived by his adopted children, William and Henry Maxwell and Mrs. Louise Teal. Henry and Tillie are both buried a the historic LaGrange Community Cemetery in Mims, Florida.

**PHOTO ABOVE:** Home of William “Henry” and Tillie Maxwell

**Find-A-Grave:**

[www.findagrave.com](http://www.findagrave.com)

If the person you are looking for is deceased and buried in a marked grave in the United States, you have a great chance of finding them here. Sometimes even with photos and lists of relations that are buried in the same cemetery or with links to even more information.

**National Archives (Military Records):**

[www.archives.gov/research/military/veterans/online](http://www.archives.gov/research/military/veterans/online)

The National Archives website is vast. There are a lot of rabbit holes to fall into - which isn’t always a bad thing for a history nerd - but if you are not looking to purchase hard copies of your ancestor’s records or replace lost service medals, the link above is your go-to for digital military service records for as far back to the War for Independence.

**National Archives (Census Records):**

[www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/census/online-resources](http://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/census/online-resources)

As mentioned above, the National Archives collection is more than enough to get lost in. This link will take you to the individual Census year data that is available on-line. The first thing you will notice is that the most recent, complete set of records available is the 1940 Census. For privacy reasons, Census records in their full capacity are not available publicly for 72 years. Only general statistics are available within that 72-year window, so if the person you are looking for was born after 1941, you will not find their personal details via Census records. It is also advised that if you are searching for someone (1940 or before) that you start with the most recent record they would have been part of and work your way back. Fortunately, these early records hold a wealth of information; not only names and addresses, but birthplace, parents’ nationalities, occupation, literacy and housing status.

**National Park Service (Arrival Records):**

[www.nps.gov/elis/learn/education/finding-arrival-records-online.htm](http://www.nps.gov/elis/learn/education/finding-arrival-records-online.htm)

There is a large proud segment of the American populace that can say their ancestors passed through Ellis Island and for them, accessing these records is both free and pretty easy... right down to the name of the ship; which makes for a quick Google photo search. But not all of this nation’s immigrants came through New York and luckily the National Parks Service has collected an extensive list of other organizations that work tirelessly to assemble lists of arrivals.

**Cathrine Schweinsberg Rood Central Library:**

[www.brevardfl.gov/HistoricalCommission/Home](http://www.brevardfl.gov/HistoricalCommission/Home)

Located in Cocoa, Florida and home to the Brevard County Historical Commission, visitors can request a copy of the Genealogy Start Kit that highlights, not only tips and best practices for research, but also the many resources available through the Brevard County Public Library System and other local history repositories. Also, thanks to COVID-19, one of the library’s most popular genealogical tools, the Ancestry.com Database, is now - although perhaps temporarily - accessible remotely through the library’s website at; [www.brevardfl.gov/PublicLibraries/OnlineResources](http://www.brevardfl.gov/PublicLibraries/OnlineResources)

**PHOTO LEFT:**

Mary Teresea Harrison Daniel and family, 1903 — Cocoa, Florida



## FROM CIRCUS TENT TO CITRUS TENT:

WILLIAM H. MCFARLAND &  
THE MCFARLAND FRUIT PROTECTION TENT COMPANY

BY ROZ FOSTER • DISTRICT 1 REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. William H. McFarland was taking his annual winter vacation at the Indian River Hotel where he always stayed in his adopted home of Titusville, when he made up his mind to invent and perfect a system of protection from frost for citrus trees. His business up to this time was that of a circus manager in which he commanded the highest salary. As time approached for him to go back on the road with his traveling circus, he canceled his contracts (although he depended on this salary for a living and at the time had no money) and made up his mind to devote his entire time to the restoration of the lost orange industry in the state of Florida.

After the freezes of 1895-96 and 99, Mr. McFarland was determined to perfect an alternative method to "firing a grove" when damaging frost was predicted. He began experimenting with his invention in February of 1899, the very night of freezing temperatures in the Titusville area. He applied for and was issued a patent by the United States Patent Office, Washington, D.C. for a protective tent for trees in December 1899. The object of the patent was to provide a covering to orange and other tender fruit trees in Florida and to protect them from the sudden frosts which sometimes occur during the winter months and does extensive damage.

He also realized that after the loss of their trees and crops by a succession of freezes, the majority of orange growers would not have the necessary funds to purchase the tents no matter how anxious they would be to protect their groves. He came up with the idea that a system could be established with a sufficient amount of capital to enter into contracts to protect groves for a percentage of the crop for a term of years. This would be extremely attractive to grove owners when readily available cash was scarce.

He worked laboriously, continuing through the summer and spring to perfect a tent that would protect fruit trees from the damaging cold. It would have to be made of a durable material, constructed in a way that it could be easily and readily handled and at a cost that would make its general adaption feasible. McFarland spent many hours developing and experimenting with different designs and made several prototype tents that were exhibited to an admiring crowd of his many friends and neighbors. During his

demonstrations he would discover some error of construction design or other defect that he was not satisfied with and would begin all over again. Some potential buyers were skeptical of raising citrus under cover and other close friends advised him to give up this "visionary" idea as he was ruining his health but with self-determination and enthusiasm, he continued to experiment with construction designs. Many times when he seemed to meet with success, some unforeseen obstacle would postpone the realization of his dreams.

### NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

*As I was going through my newspaper files, I came across an interesting article that was published in the Florida Star newspaper December 21, 1900 entitled: "THE FATHER OF PROTECTION – Some History Connected with the Making of the McFarland Tent". I also compiled information from other articles and writings to bring you this story of determination of one of Titusville's pioneer entrepreneurs.*

Despite Henry's four score years and more, Ewart Henry reported that this veteran citrus expert was constantly on the job, "He doesn't even take a brief siesta after lunch, and he drives his own service truck from grove to grove." In an interview, Maxwell makes no secret of his own convictions that "the citrus industry is over-regulated and the small grower is doomed. Too many men produce citrus for reason other than to make a living and when these have succeeded in regulating the small grower out of existence, then of course, they will run the industry entirely to suit themselves, as they do now too a great extent." Henry contributed produce to local fairs and exhibitions to further the reputation of Florida's citrus. His longevity in the citrus business allowed him to share his experience with other in the area. In 1953, the Housing Authority of the City of Titusville established 130 units of housing, named the "Henry Maxwell Homes" in his honor.

### BORN INTO SLAVERY

He was seven years old and living near Naylor, Georgia when his family was freed from slavery in 1865. Before he was 21, he decided to become a schoolteacher and secured a first-grade certificate — a distinction he says he acquired by answering satisfactorily these three questions: "Have you a horse, saddle and bridle — and can you ride a horse" He worked for a year as a certified schoolteacher in Georgia before moving to Titusville (then Sand Point) somewhere around his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in 1880. His arrival in Titusville was before the Atlantic, St. John's and Indian River Railroad would arrive in January 1885, and transport would have been done by steamer and mule team. Citrus had just begun to claim the attention of a few scattered pioneers, but the ambitious young man was able to obtain employment for what he referred to as "very low wages." Two years later, he bought and almost infinitesimal parcel

of land and planted his first oranges. Maxwell set himself a goal for expansion of one acre of grove per year, based upon the aspiration of his white contemporaries, most of whom he says never expected to plant more than 40 acres. While slowly building his own grove, he continued to work for others in the expanding citrus industry, familiarizing himself with every phase of production and shipping methods. Fruit was then hauled more than 30 miles by boat. Packers and growers made their own crate hoops from palmetto leaf stems and hickory branches. Oranges brought from \$15 to \$20 per thousand fruit in the grove and the grower got his money promptly without questions asked.



**PHOTO LEFT:**

William "Henry" Maxwell



**WILLIAM HENRY MAXWELL**  
OCTOBER 12, 1858 – NOVEMBER 25, 1952  
FLORIDA CITRUS HALL OF FAME NOMINATION

BY LEO GRIFFIN, KIRK DAVIS & ROZ FOSTER

William Henry Maxwell was one of Titusville's earliest settlers, as well as one of Brevard County's pioneer citrus growers and researchers. He most often went by the name of Henry Maxwell and at 82 years old, had spent 60 years in the Titusville area by the time Ewart Henry wrote the article about in him the *Orlando Evening Star* entitled, "Pioneer Negro Grower Gains Wide Acclaim for (Agri) Culture Abilities." It stated, "He achieved recognition as a citrus expert — an outstanding contributor to the growth of the industry, who has added materially in the solution of some of its pressing cultural problems, and who by his quiet modest manner, has gained the respect and esteem of the people that know him."

**FIRST IN HIS SECTION TO USE COMMERCIAL FERTILIZER**

In 1886, against the almost vehemently offered advice of his white friends, Maxwell decided to try commercial fertilizer on his trees, and thereby acquired the distinction of being the first in the section to use it. His fertilizer, Simon Pure No. 1, manufactured by the H.O. Painter Company of Deland, arrived on the first train to reach Titusville in 1885 over the old Atlantic, St. John's and Indian River Railroad.

In the bleak days immediately following the 1895 freeze, Maxwell found that he had three or four orange trees with enough life left in them to provide budwood to graft other trees. But other desperate growers learned about them too and some of them, Maxwell laughingly said, did not always take the trouble to come to his house on their way to his precious source of new life for their devastated trees.

**PIONEER RESEARCHER**

The yellow fungus, mortal enemy of the whitefly, which makes possible the certain control of this pest, was discovered in one of Henry Maxwell's groves. Cooperating with Dr. E.W. Berger, entomologist of the Gainesville Experimental Station, Maxwell made a close study of the effects of the fungus, and modestly asked the experts if they had found that the whitefly "carried its enemy with it." Some weeks later, after further observation, the scientist informed him that they had found this to be the fly-destroying fungus from his grove. He still contended that the yellow fungus was more efficacious against the whitefly than either of the subsequently discovered red and brown fungi, but pointed out that it was harder to propagate and transplant than the other species. In 1912, Dr. Berger presented this research and received a silver medal in London for his Exhibition for the "fungi which parasitizes scales and whiteflies." The research proposed spring "friendly fungi" on the trees to prevent pests.

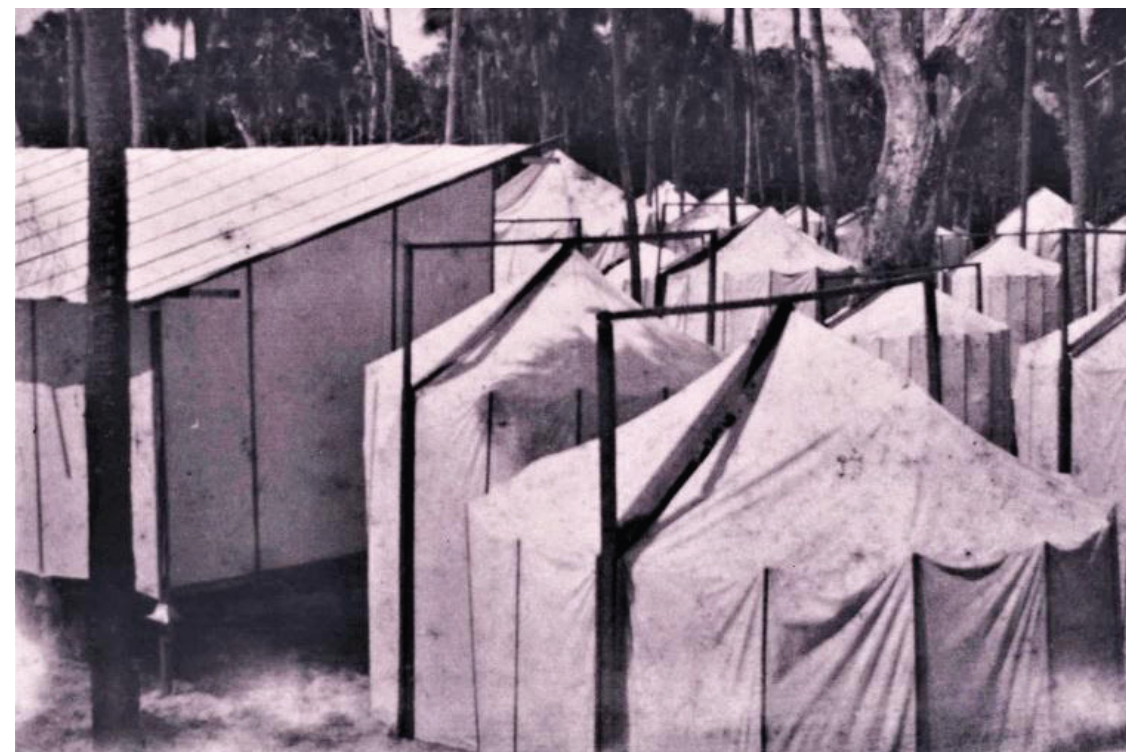
**OWNED 30 - 40 ACRES OF CITRUS**

Mr. Maxwell was a pioneer grower, owning 30 - 40 acres of citrus in the Mims area. They were planted with Duncan and Marsh seedless grapefruit, pineapple, Valencia and Parson Brown oranges. He was one of the first to use the locally manufactured McFarland Fruit Protection Tents to guard against frost, in 1900, the tent company's first year of operation. His groves survived the freezes of 1894, '95, '99 and 1917. He also owned a half share in the B.H.W. Groves and had extensive real estate holdings in north and central Brevard County. He was employed as a production superintendent by several other grove owners, including Goodall Grove.

He was going further and further into debt while endeavoring to start his factory and organize a company when his ideas attracted the attention of Florida East Coast railroad magnate, Mr. Henry Flagler. Mr. Flagler saw the potential and the effect that a practical method of protection would have on the bank accounts of the people who lived on the East Coast of Florida, particularly when his own business interests were there. Flagler's small amount of investment money enabled McFarland to take the first steps toward erecting a plant. It would be supplemented by an offer to put in a certain sum of money in a company provided that the citizens of Titusville took stock in an amount equal to one third (1/3) of that proposed by Mr. Flagler. McFarland by that time had erected a plant and was ready for business with advance orders for tents in the amount of several thousands of dollars. The Titusville Board of Trade voted unanimously that the opening of the McFarland Fruit Protection Tent Factory would be good for Titusville. Several prominent citizens discussed organization and it was agreed that stock be issued in the amount of \$2,500 at 10% interest (payable annually) and that such stock in order to get ready money, should be sold to the city capitalists at \$80 per share at \$100 face value. The proposal also required that McFarland as plant manager, was to give security by signing a mortgage with an absurdly high interest rate of 37 1/2 %, which he refused to do and sadly but firmly turned the proposition down.

One thing was still missing – no sewing machines. McFarland was determined to persevere and contacted all of the sewing machine companies in the country and offered to pay for them on an installment plan. They responded by notifying him that sewing machines for manufacturing purposes were not sold on credit. He was persistent and continued to keep in contact with them. He frankly told them he had no money and the formation of the company he hoped to establish was uncertain unless he was able to obtain his required sewing machines. Finally his persistence paid off! The manager of the Standard Sewing Machine Company replied in a letter explaining that because of McFarland's persistence and frankness he proved to be sincere and if he could give them a reference of good standing and reputation among the businessmen of Titusville, along with a check for \$100 paid in part for installation of the machines, the company would consider sending the machines. McFarland hustled up \$100 and sent them a certified check. In a few days \$1,200 worth of sewing machines were set up in his factory and work began immediately.

Although financial means were lacking to conduct business as planned, McFarland formed his company and the effectiveness of the tents received every test that could be given in the absence of a killing frost before numerous groups of orange growers. McFarland was expecting to employ approx. 150 people at Titusville and orders came in faster that they could be filled!

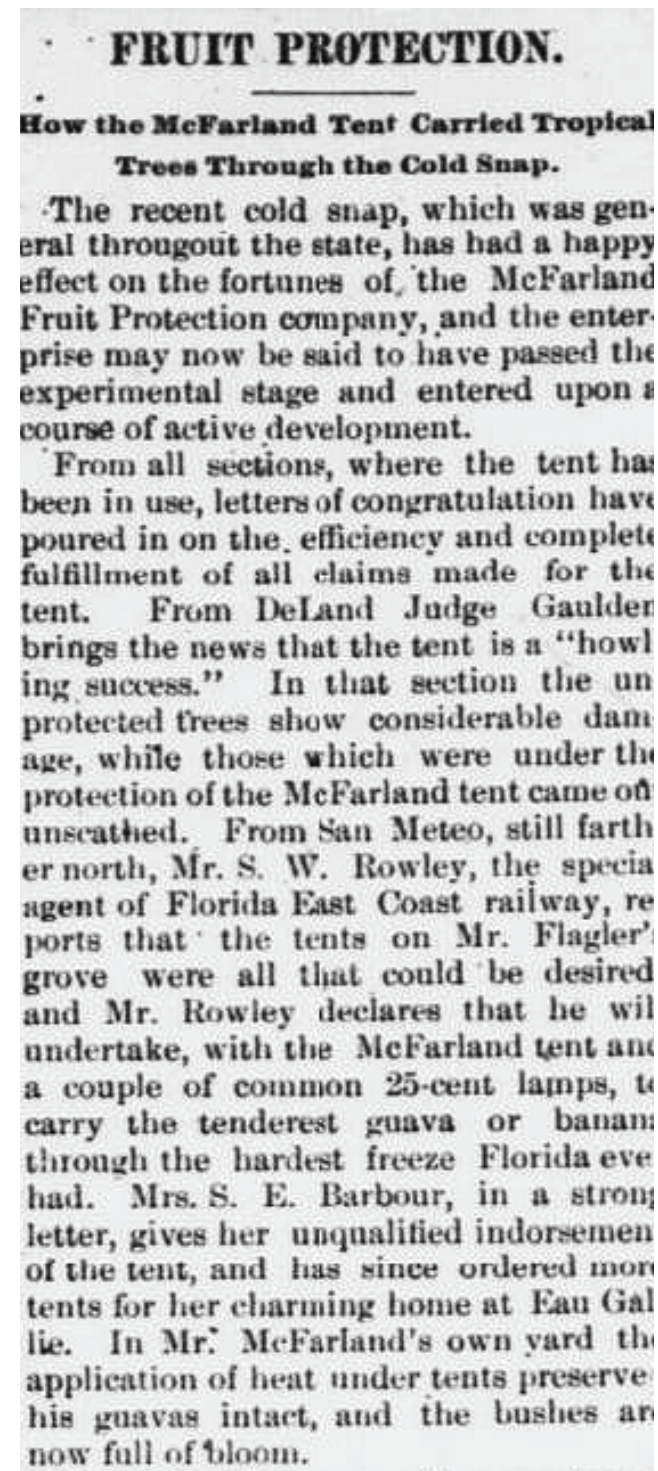


**PHOTO LEFT:**  
McFarland Citrus Tents

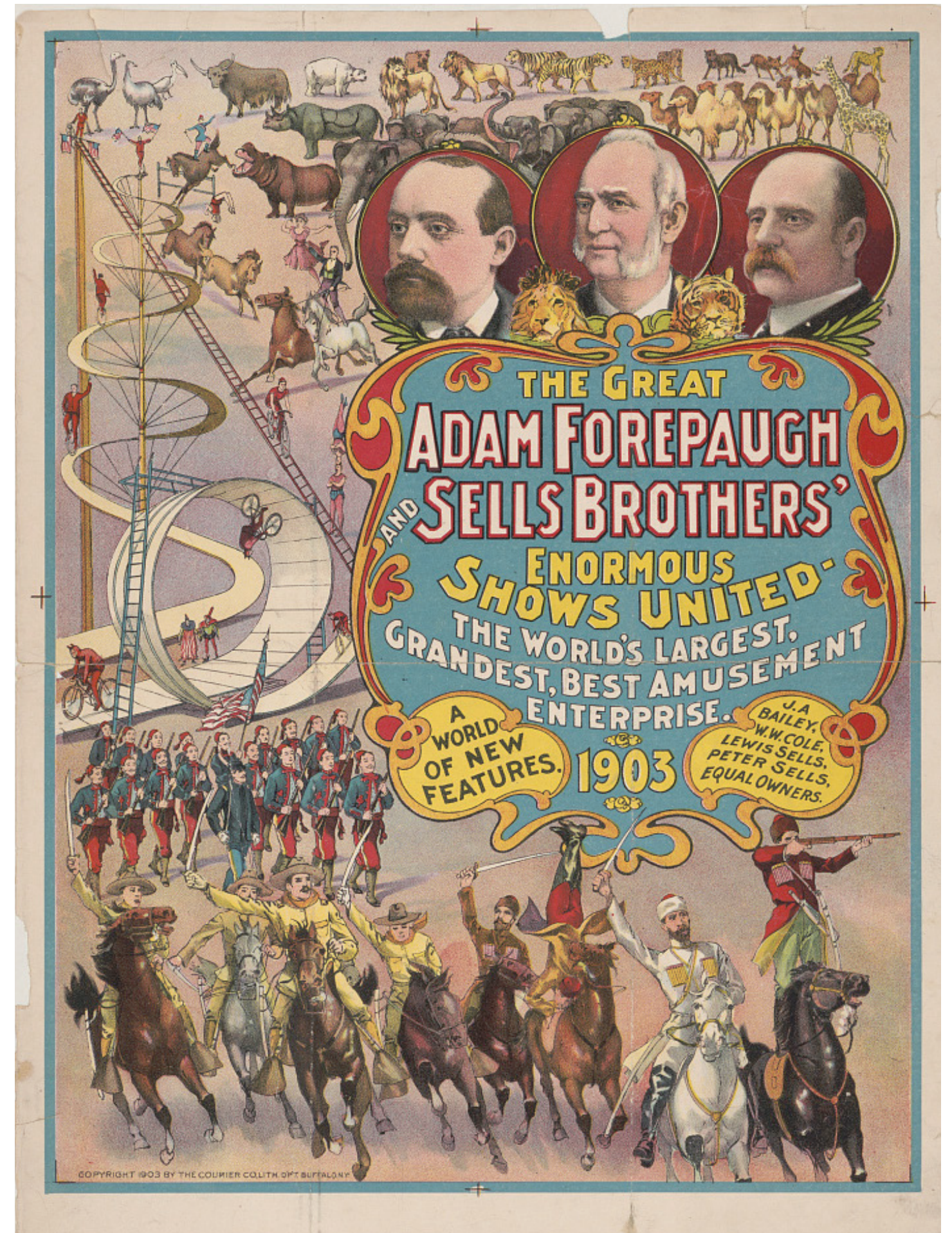


McFarland and his associates were ignorant about the details of manufacturing tents but he was remarkably familiar with the process for treating the cloth. The training of "raw" workmen, a poorly equipped plant, exploring new grounds and the lack of knowledge of economical manufacturing methods resulted in mistakes and spoiled work, so work was slow and costly.

Mr. McFarland's ideas were too far in advance for his partners to whom he had relinquished a large share of company stock. They decided to get control by offering to buy him out. McFarland found himself in a desperate situation and seemingly was at the end of his rope when (in circus parlance) he made one of those wonderful "shifts" that would get him out of his present difficulties. The date was set for the meeting at which the proposal of buyout or sell out was to take place. McFarland wanted to buy out his partners but had no financial means – but he thought there might be a way out! While the company was approaching a state of crisis, two well-known circus managers were making their way to Titusville, both intent on laughing McFarland out of his "mad scheme" and were prepared to offer him a high salary to go back to work for the circus company and even agreed to bid against each other in their proposal offer. McFarland happily and warmly greeted the circus men and began unfolding the immense possibilities of his "mad scheme" of fruit protection by tent. He charmed and captivated them to the point of being overwhelmed with what they believed to be his "bonanza" idea. They informed McFarland that they would withdraw their offer and go away, regretting that they could not secure his valuable services. McFarland then said he had a proposal for them and explained his predicament about being "squeezed out" by his partners and deprived of the prospective profits of his own invention. There was to be a meeting of stockholders held that night and they were to offer him a certain sum for his interest or they would sell out to him on the same terms. The meeting was held and the results went like this: The offer to sell out to McFarland was - to the great surprise of his partners - promptly accepted (in less time than it takes to tell) and the two circus men were the new directors and stockholders of the McFarland Fruit Protection Tent Company. This was on December 8, 1899 and the first consignment of the McFarland Tent manufactured under patent by the McFarland Fruit Protection Company was made to Mrs. F.A.W. Shimer of Deland.



**PHOTO ABOVE:** Clipping from *The Florida Star*, Titusville, Florida  
 – Published January 12, 1900





It must have caught the attention of several investors because a follow-up article was published January 11, 1901 as follows:

**McFarland Fruit Protection Company**

*“Messrs. E.W. Walker of Springfield, Mass, George F. Miles and George W. Gibbs of St. Augustine and W.H. English of Jacksonville arrived in town Tuesday last and joined Dr. Robert Amory and Mr. A.T. Harris of Boston, who preceded them by a few days. On Saturday Mr. Fisher Ames of Boston arrived. They all came here upon matters connected with the McFarland Fruit Protection Co. and were busily engaged from Friday last until Tuesday overlooking everything pertaining to the factory and forming a new company. Mr. Miles returned to his home in St. Augustine and Mr. English to Jacksonville Tuesday afternoon. On Wednesday Mr. Walker left for his home in Springfield, Mass. and Mr. Gibbs returned to St. Augustine the same time. Yesterday Dr. Amory left for his home in Boston but will return about the end of the month.*

*The above factory has been turning out many hundreds of tents this winter and a big force of men and women are employed trying to keep up with the orders that are rapidly pouring in. The success of the above company is now assured, for the above capitalists will at present put into it the sum of about \$40,000.”*

Evidently, McFarland sold the company that he so laboriously established. Another article published in the local newspaper in July 1901 indicated that upon returning to Titusville Mr. McFarland looked better than ever, having gained weight, and looked very healthy after his recent sea trip. It also mentioned that he would be in charge of the dispensing of attractions and amusements for the forthcoming state fair that was to be held in Jacksonville, Florida - a perfect selection to do the job.

Tents were still being manufactured and offered for sale during 1901 and 1902. Nothing more was heard of the McFarland Fruit Protection Company after 1902.

In journal written by an unknown author about the Frederick Losely family (given to me many years ago) was a mention of the McFarland Tent Factory: Frederick Losely, a well-known businessman of Titusville, had become a close friend of McFarland’s over the years when the circus wintered in Titusville and noted that he always stayed at the Indian River Hotel. Losely supported his hardworking friend by investing in the tent factory. It is mentioned that the tent factory was located at the corner of Washington Ave. and Broad Street. Losely’s sister-in-law, Kate Meyers was given a job as head seamstress and worked there for three years until the business failed.

By the spring of 1903 it was noted that Mr. W.H. McFarland of Titusville had accepted the position of manager of Forepaugh & Sells Brothers’ Circus for the coming season. One of his first assignments was to purchase Sampson, the big snake that was exhibited by Dana Thompson Carnival Co. In June 1903, he was traveling with the circus through the states of Wisconsin and Michigan, exclaiming that he was making more money than ever before and planning on returning to Titusville during the next winter, ready to give his old friends a grand “blow out”. The Forepaugh and Sells Brothers Circus was a major American circus that operated from 1896 and was a major competitor of the P.T. Barnum and Ringling Brothers Circus. A combination of financial troubles and internal problems amongst the revolving lineup of owners constantly plagued the show and the circus toured for the last time in 1911.

Mr. McFarland possibly continued to work in the circus business, joining the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus which was organized in 1907. But that’s another story!

An article published in the Indian River Advocate newspaper February 9, 1900 gives notice of McFarland receiving a U.S. Patent entitled:

**To Protected Fruit Trees Patent**

*“A patent had been issued by the U.S. Patent Office, Washington, D.C. to W.H. McFarland of Titusville, Florida for a protective tent for trees. The object of the patent is to give a covering to orange and other tender fruit trees of the South and to protect them from the sudden frosts which sometimes occur during the winter months in the far South and do much damage to trees. Orders for these tents are pouring in from nearly every county in Florida.”*

*Some other grove owners who had purchased McFarland tents were listed in another article published the same date: “J.B. Chamberlain has tented his young orange grove with McFarland’s Freeze proof tents. H.M. Goodall has tented one hundred trees as has also W. Henry Maxwell. Ex-Sheriff Bowman has his entire grove under canvas. Freeze or no freeze we can grow oranges in north Brevard.”*

Another newspaper article was published on March 2, 1900 in the Florida Star Advocate entitled:

**Protect Orange Trees**

*“The great center of attraction at the three days fair of the Winter Park Agricultural Society, just closed, was the exhibit of the McFarland Tents. Hundreds of orange growers in Orange and adjacent counties, inspected the tents, and a large number of orders were secured mainly for fall delivery. Mr. E.J. Seymour had the exhibit in hand.*

*Mr. John. M. Pirie, a wealthy winter resident of Plymouth, Florida has recently placed an order with the McFarland Fruit Protection Company for tents to cover his fine grove. Mr. Pirie has, like many other growers, became tired of the uncertainty and expense of firing his grove and is convinced that the tent system is practical and economical.”*

By May 1900, the McFarland Fruit Protection Company had begun making awnings in addition to making tents and hose. The Advocate newspaper office gave the first order for awnings that were to be hung over the windows of the editorial rooms. It was reported that they were neat, ornamental, serviceable and a credit to the tent factory.

According to an article published in the newspaper on December 14, 1900, the Tent Factory had a narrow escape from a fire:

**Tent Factory’s Narrow Escape: Proofing Room Burned – Only Favorable Wind Saves Main Building**

*“The McFarland Tent Factory had a close call to being destroyed by fire last Saturday morning. A northwest wind saved the main building from catching afire. The alarm was given about 11 o’clock, the fire starting in the water proofing room, a small building detached from the factory on the southeast about 25 feet away. In this room Messrs. Van Worley and Jibb were at work water proofing cloth with paraffine and gasoline, when an explosion took place and the building instantly caught fire, the gasoline and waterproofed clothe being at once ignited. By prompt action and the response of many willing hands the fire was confined to the detached building, but an enormous quantity of cloth was destroyed as the fire was too hot to save thousands of yards of cloth just outside of the waterproofing room. It is estimated that about 25,000 to 30,000 yards of cloth was burnt up but the real loss cannot yet be computed.”*

**PHOTO RIGHT:** Poster printed by Courier Litho. Co., c. 1903 — *Courtesy of the Library of Congress*



Since the first tent was shipped in December 1899 the reputation and demand for the McFarland Tent continued to increase. While the percentage plan had been postponed due to lack of sufficient capital, cash orders continued to increase. Mr. Flagler who had saved a large number of his trees from frost using McFarland tents, loaned thousands of dollars to needy and worthy growers so they could purchase tents to protect their groves.

By late 1900, the McFarland Fruit Protection Company was one of the largest manufacturing enterprises in Florida, with offices in Titusville and Jacksonville. E.I. Seymour, one of his partners and salesmen, published the "Freeze or No Freeze" marketing the tents as protection against freeze for oranges, pineapples and even vegetables. W.H. English managed the Jacksonville office and W.M. Brown was in charge at Titusville. It not only occupied the original depot of the old Jacksonville, Tampa & Key West Railway and also occupied the passenger offices, built a large addition for the woodworking department, increased its horsepower, added a complete sawmill and woodworking plant, and built and installed in the building the largest laundry plant in the state. The number of double-stitching machines had increased and the capacity for turning out tents had doubled within two months, yet with orders increasing there was no catching up.

Capitalists from the north had inspected the factory and carefully examined the company business. The feasibility of undertaking to protect orange and grapefruit groves of Florida on a larger scale for a term of years had been carefully considered. It was determined that the large capacity of the factory would not permit any considerable amount of protection on the percentage basis being attempted during that time. There were too many cash orders to fill in the future and others coming in that it was not advisable to do anything for at least another year, but it would be done. If there was the possibility of a killing freeze in the future, grove owners were urged to provide any type of protection, whether by banking, fire, boards, or temporary expedients to protect their groves.

**PHOTO BELOW :** Canvas covered wooden box frames and workers with mule in grove



The McFarland Fruit Protection Company had sent out the following letter before the end of December 1900 and signed by the president:

*I have just returned from a four-week trip north, the object of the trip being to try and secure capital sufficient to protect groves on the percentage plan. Before I left for the north I communicated with a number of growers on the subject and encouraged them to a certain extent to expect protection this coming winter upon the percentage plan. I believe that you are one among the number so encouraged. I therefore hasten to enlighten you as to the results of my negotiations north, i.e., I am quite certain that I have succeeded in interesting capital to the extent of securing sufficient money to carry out my original idea of furnishing tents to the grower who could not afford to pay cash for them, the plan being for our company to receive a percentage of his crop for a certain number of years.*

*As I said before, I believe that I have secured capital to furnish such protection but before his capital is absolutely assured it will necessitate a visit to the factory and an investigation as to the correctness of the statements, I have set forth by the parties who are to furnish the money to carry out my plan.*

*This, at the least, will take three weeks and the season now being so far advanced, it would be impossible for me, even with unlimited capital at my disposal, to increase my facilities for turning out tents in time to furnish tents other than those we already have orders for. Therefore, I feel it my duty to make the above statement to all those who I have encouraged to expect protection on the percentage plan this winter. Although I believe the McFarland tents to be the only practicable method of protection on the market, at the same time, I believe that all kinds of protection are to a certain extent, good. Therefore, I would advise banking, firing, sheds, boxes, veneering, homemade tents, in fact any protection that one's pocketbook will allow him to secure. A great many are using square boxes, also square frames covered with canvas. If you contemplate using anything in this line, I would be pleased to suggest practicable ideas for constructing the same. I have several methods that are far superior to any that have thus far been tried in that line. I offer these suggestions to you in the cause of protection. I do not expect, in fact I would not accept, any remuneration for any suggestions I may offer, but would deem it a pleasure to answer any questions you may ask upon the subject.*

*I will close by saying I am satisfied that you may feel safe in expecting our company to furnish a large number of tents next season upon the percentage plan.*

*Yours truly,*

*W.H. McFarland  
President, McFarland Fruit Protection Company*

A notice was published in the local newspaper January 8, 1901 by Mr. McFarland that a McFarland Fruit Protection Company stockholders meeting was to be held at the company office in Titusville February 9, 1901 at 4 o'clock. Purpose of the meeting was to consult and act upon a proposition to increase the capital stock of the corporation, to alter or amend the charter of the corporation and to transact any further business which may legally come before the meeting.