

History-in-Brief

Often referred to as the “sleeping giant” because of its land size, Winter Springs can trace its history back to the 1600s. The tract of land now known as Winter Springs was historically designated the Levy Grant when it was deeded in 1611 to Moses B. Levy by the King of Spain for supplying horse feed for the King’s cavalry in the war fought over the Florida peninsula. From that time, until 1956, the land lay dormant, a placid area of scrub pines, palmetto trees and swamps, until Raymond Moss and William Edgemon surveyed the tract for its financial potential. In 1957 Moss and Edgemon purchased the land under the name of the North Orlando Company which was subsidiary of the Silver Creek Precision Company out of Silver Creek, New York.

The first 300 residents moved into homes in 1959. The area was incorporated that same year as the Village of North Orlando. The chief reason for the incorporation was to benefit the developers as their instrument to establish their own ordinances and regulations. North Orlando also developed water and sewer utilities at that time. Truly a “company town”, even the political scene was controlled by the North Orlando Company for some years.

From 1959 thru 1961 the Company appointed the five council members. By secret ballot those five members selected a Mayor. It wasn’t until 1962 that the villagers had an opportunity to select members of council who would represent their needs. In 1966, by a referendum charter change, it was decided to have a Mayor who was elected by the people. The Village’s first “people’s Mayor” was George Fuller.

The year 1970 marked the beginnings of the Village’s most dramatic changes. North Orlando contained 300 or so homes located on either side of SR 434, an area of 1-5 acre lots known as the Ranchlands, one store known appropriately as the North Orlando Super Market, and one building on SR 434 owned by Florida Land Company which housed the water company office, offices for Florida Land Company employees and an office used by the Village as a City Hall. Folks who remember “back when” still talk of the cramped smoke-filled room that served the Village as City Hall, Building Department, Fire and Police Stations, Public Works, and Court. Many a night, if there was an important matter under discussion, all windows and doors in the room were opened so that the citizens who could not fit into the small room could stand outside to see and hear the proceedings.

From 1971 through the next few years, progress really took an upswing. Building boomed with Meadowlark, the Terraces, Hacienda Mobile Home Park, and others. The area now known as Tuscawilla, formerly Winter Springs Development, was annexed into the City, nearly doubling the City’s land area, making it the largest land area in Seminole County. The new stores became part of the City - the Shop and Go, and Jack’s Mini Market at Five Points asked to be annexed in. Construction began on the Sheoah Golf Course, the Condominiums, the Highlands and other areas of the City.

The political scene was not being neglected during this time. Fed up with a charter that was designed to aid the developers rather than the citizens, both new and old residents banded together in an inspiring community effort, to make some changes. A new City charter was drawn up and in a City-wide election held in March of 1972, the new charter was adopted, new city officials were elected, and most importantly, the Village of North Orlando became the City of Winter Springs.