

## **Port St. Lucie looks back to first residents, first business, first church**

By Tyler Treadway

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Parents often keep records of their children's "firsts" — first words, first steps, first birthday, first day of school.

General Development Corp., the "parents" of Port St. Lucie, apparently didn't keep a record of the city's firsts, but if the company did, it might look something like this: First reference to "Port St. Lucie": In 1958, as the Mackle Co. was getting ready to build 250 houses, General Development Corp. began referring to the area as Port St. Lucie in keeping with its intent to have "Port" in all its communities' names.

First residents: Dr. Harold Nottley, a former physician from Scarsdale, N.Y., and his wife, Janet Nottley, were looking for a place to retire and decided on Port St. Lucie because of the then-planned golf courses in what is now the Sandpiper area. The couple bought a villa on Pruitt Road, designed a house and had GDC build it for them on Santa Anita Street.

First doctor's office: Dr. Bernard Ross opened a practice in 1962 in the shopping center at U.S. 1 and Prima Vista Boulevard.

First religious service: On Thanksgiving Day 1959, a minister from First United Methodist Church in Fort Pierce officiated at a service at the marina on the North Fork of the St. Lucie River.

First church: GDC donated land at 260 S.W. Prima Vista Blvd. for a church on Dec. 31, 1959. Port St. Lucie Methodist Church, now First United Methodist Church of Port St. Lucie, was founded at a meeting with 49 members May 29, 1960. The first pastor, the Rev. James Baugher, was appointed June 6, 1960. Ground-breaking for the first church building, a social hall to hold services until a sanctuary could be built, was on March 15, 1961. The first service in the building, known as Goddard Hall, was on Sept. 3, 1961.

First business: Shell Bazaar on U.S. 1 opened in 1953, years before the city's incorporation. In 1961, GDC built a shopping center at what is now Westmoreland and Morningside boulevards. It housed City Hall, a general store, a barber shop and a beauty shop. Across the street, GDC built a gas station and rented it to Dick Lounsbury.

First police chief: Bruce Parsons

First city council meeting: May 11, 1961. All members were appointed by GDC, and none lived in Port St. Lucie. (Three were from Miami, two from River Park.)

First city council elections: March 1965, 40 people voted. In 1967, there were 75 votes, and Dr. Harold Nottley, who with his wife, Janet, was one of the first two residents of the city, was elected to the council. He served until retiring in 1974.

First city budget: \$7,000. The city budget for fiscal year 2010-11 is \$421 million.

Sources: "The Early Years of Port St. Lucie, Florida" by Strelsa Schreiber, City of Port St. Lucie, First United Methodist Church of Port St. Lucie



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